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The Yugoslav Partisan Art

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After the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the vast majority of commentators, opinion leaders and social scientists of the new nation-states proclaimed a final farewell to everything connected to Yugoslav socialism. As a consequence, even the anti-fascist legacy of the Partisans, which had been inscribed in the official ideology of the former state, received a much more negative connotation.[1] But already in socialist Yugoslavia the revolutionary dimension of the Partisan culture and art was neglected whenever the (local) communist leadership decided to instrumentalise them for celebrations of various anniversaries connected to the People's Liberation Struggle 1941–1945. A rich network of museums, galleries and community centres across Yugoslavia was employed in the exhibition and archiving of the Partisan art. However, this statist glorification of the Partisan past effectively ended long before the break-up: as Lilijana Stepančič notes, the last major exhibition of the Partisan art took place in 1981 (see Stepančič). Thus, the 1980s introduced an increasingly dominant view of the Partisan art as something belonging to a history that had been long gone, an object of ritualistic reproduction by the state, which in turn began to be viewed by many commentators as an authoritarian, even totalitarian system. In the post-Yugoslav climate of 'historical revisionism' (Buden; Močnik, 'Excess') and nationalism,[2] the Partisan legacy became either a marginal refuge of the old generation, which continued to visit the 'sacred places' of the People's Liberation Struggle, or else an element of the Yugonostalgia of a certain subculture of the urban youth (see Velikonja). No serious political, academic or cultural group would address the history of the Partisan art, now a spectre of the former ruling ideology. By the end of the 1990s, the Partisan art seemed to have been left on the ash heap of history.

1
Numerous exhibitions, books and newspaper articles have been dedicated to the 'dark side' of the 'totalitarian regime' and even to the nationalist recounting of the bones from World War II.

2
For a good long-term analysis of the rise of nationalism during the last years of socialist Yugoslavia, see Wachtel. For the rise of (post)fascism in the cultural apparatuses of the new nation-states, especially in Slovenia, see Močnik, *Extravagantia*.

However, twenty-three years after the last exhibition and almost fifteen years after the break-up of Yugoslavia an unexpected return to the Partisan art took place. In 2004–2005, the exhibition *Partizanski tisk / The Partisans in Print*, curated by Donovan Pavlinec and held in the International Centre of Graphic Arts (MGLC) in Ljubljana, introduced a selection of Slovenian Partisan graphic art created mostly in the framework of an organised art initiative during the last two years of World War II. The exhibition was supported by an excellent catalogue which consisted of a series of archival artefacts that were put in dialogue with theoretical texts, one of which in particular triggered exceptional theoretical effects. A new edition of this essay as well as a series of responses are published in this volume. The core of the volume consists of the debate between Rastko Močnik, the author of the original essay, and Miklavž Komelj, the author of a subsequent seminal book on the Slovenian Partisan art; other articles either draw on this debate or review and build on other notable contributions to the above-mentioned return to the Partisan art and culture.

THE CONTOURS OF THE MOČNIK–KOMELJ DEBATE

No matter which side one takes in the debate between Močnik and Komelj, one thing is certain: it is to be viewed as belonging to a series of recent processes that have made the Partisan art and culture a valid object of investigation, a recognised subject matter among artists, and even a driving inspiration for a number of cultural and political organisations. In short, due to such events as this debate the Partisan art has become a 'living archive'[3] that can again be reappropriated, revisited and elaborated on. Of course, one cannot attribute this renewed interest in the Partisan art only to such things as the debate

3
The term *archive* is used here in the sense developed by Jacques Derrida. For Derrida, there is no 'authentic' beginning of any archive, since any beginning is always already determined by political or scientific authority. Hence, the existence and continuation of the archive is linked to power relations and discursive formations, as implied already by the old-Greek word *arché*. *Arché* as beginning is linked to the specific *space* of the archive as well as to *archonts*, the political body of sovereign leaders. The latter not only guards the space of the archive, but also interprets its meaning. This is why the archive cannot be taken in a historicist and naive terms as a reservoir of objective truth, or the space of 'authenticity', but is always already 'infected' by political and discursive struggles. (See Derrida.)

between Močnik and Komelj; one can, however, point to a series of effects of such events, effects that transcend the local Slovenian scene and 'infect' different artistic and theory scenes in the post-Yugoslav space. In retrospect, one can map out a field occupied by individuals and organisations that are starting to engage critically with the topics of historical revisionism, the legacy of recent wars and the transition to capitalism.[4] And in this respect both the Partisan struggle in general and the Partisan art in particular are becoming privileged points of departure for theoretical, artistic and political critiques of the contemporary ideological conjuncture.

The opening question of Močnik's original essay itself concerns conditions of possibility of returning to the Partisan art. According to Močnik, with time the Partisan art was able to be viewed beyond the ruling ideology of the former state. However, while it is true that the collapse of the state has finally made the Partisan art intelligible beyond the official ideology, we should also be able to approach this art beyond the opposite ideology, the one of aestheticisation, Močnik argues, and to ascribe to the Partisan art a political dimension that is irreducible to the politics of the former state. One of the most informed attempts to escape this double bind of real-socialist politicisation and post-socialist aestheticisation in relation to the art of Slovenian Partisans is arguably Miklavž Komelj's 2009 book *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost?* (How to Think the Partisan Art?), a text that is also one of the key theoretical effects of the Močnik–Komelj debate.

If one is to briefly sketch this debate and especially its reflection on the relationship of the People's Liberation Struggle to art and ideology, one should first note the most vital points of agreement: both for Močnik and Komelj, the People's Liberation Struggle is a major political and revolutionary rupture with undeniable political and artistic con-

4
Journals such as *Arkzin* (Zagreb), *Prelom* (Belgrade) and *Agregat* (Ljubljana) as well as autonomous cultural centres in the region were of vital importance in terms of sustaining an emancipatory space needed for a critical revaluation of the present to emerge, as they managed to bring together an extremely heterogeneous generation of emerging intellectuals, activists and artists from the various ex-Yugoslav countries.

sequences; and they both criticise not only neoliberal capitalism but also real-socialism and the way in which it made socialist art return to anachronistic, pre-Partisan paradigms. As for the main differences between Močnik's position and Komelj's, they mostly concern the questions of the politicisation and aestheticisation of the Partisan art.

DIFFERENTIAE SPECIFICAE OF THE PARTISAN ART

The first difference concerns the question of artistic predecessors and immediate successors of the Partisan art. If both Komelj and Močnik argue that the Partisan art constitutes a striking novelty in relation to the so-called relative autonomy of bourgeois art, they seem to locate this discontinuity differently. For example, Močnik sees the Partisan art's reliance on popular forms as a continuation of the practices of Slovenian pre-war social realism. So, rather than approaching the Partisan art as a complete break with the past, Močnik sees the real achievement of this art in its intensification of certain devices inherited from the immediate past. Komelj, on the other hand, claims that even if the Partisan art appropriated the elements of the past its major artistic and political resources came not from social realism but rather from the experiments of the avant-garde.

This difference between the social realist and the avant-garde influences leads us to the second difference. For Močnik, the rupture that was the Partisan art can be understood only in the context of the People's Liberation Struggle and its project of political transformation: the nature of this art's intensification of the experiments of previous artistic movements cannot be understood without the awareness of its connection to the political project of liberation from fascism. This is why Močnik insists on the relevance of the explicit politics and even

propagandism of this art. At this crucial point, the debate returns to the famous interwar controversy about the 'Partisan birch-tree', the propagandistic doctrine according to which even a well drawn birch-tree cannot be a work of art if it is not pierced by a burst shot. Although the doctrine was quickly rejected by Partisan artists and ideologues alike, Močnik does try to be attentive to the potential it bore in terms of emancipatory politicisation of art. Komelj agrees with the negative aspect of Močnik's claim, namely his critique of the bourgeois relative autonomy of art, but refuses to share his positive alternative, the emancipatory politicisation of art that is supposed to be offered by the Partisan birch-tree doctrine. Instead, Komelj argues that the Partisan art invented a new, post-bourgeois kind of artistic autonomy: only the autonomy from politics can make any politicisation really count, since only politicisation that is not prescribed in advance has the power to actually intervene in a given situation—and the Partisan art is a paradigmatic example of such intervention, according to Komelj.

If both interlocutors seem to agree that the post-war one-party system betrayed the political innovation of the Partisan art, then Močnik seems to partly disregard the heterogeneity of interwar positions that has contributed to this political innovation, while Komelj seems to forget that the Partisan defence of autonomy enabled the subsequent argument about the autonomy of art in socialist Yugoslavia, which after 1953 neatly fit the new self-representation of Yugoslav socialism as a project irreducible to top-down model of the Stalinist state.

This difference can potentially lead to the following pair of mutually exclusive positions: either one defends a strong political interpretation which 'robs' art of its plural forms and its own political enunciation, or one embraces the 'avant-garde' interpretation of the unique heroism of the Partisan aesthetics. Močnik and Komelj avoid this false

alternative between propagandism and aestheticism by approaching the Partisan struggle as a historic encounter of extraordinary cultural productivity and political experimentation. It is precisely as such an encounter that this struggle seems to invite ever new readings today, be they academic, artistic or political. ❦

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The Partisan Symbolic Politics

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The common argument that today the symbolic production of Yugoslav Partisans can finally be perceived as culture and as art because it has finally escaped from ideological confinement is itself a captive of the modern ideology of aesthetics according to which, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin, artefacts can be monuments of culture only if we pretend that they are not also monuments of barbarism. Such a framing of the discussion of the Partisan symbolic production would divert us from those characteristics of this production that are essential to it and that make it attractive to us in the first place. The Partisan art was produced in a radical and liminal situation and is hence itself radical and liminal. So, if we want to think about it at its own level, we must think radically and assume a liminal perspective.

SLOVENIAN PARTISAN ART, YUGOSLAV SOCIALISM, ANTI-FASCISM, MODERN AESTHETICS, CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Популярный аргумент, что символическую продукцию югославских партизан сегодня можно воспринимать как принадлежащую к культуре и искусству, так как она наконец освободилась от идеологической нагрузки, сам находится в плену модерной идеологии эстетики, согласно которой, перефразируя Вальтера Беньямина, артефакты могут стать памятниками культуры, только если мы притворяемся, что они в одно и то же время не являются памятниками варваризма. Такому подходу к партизанской символической продукции недоступны те её признаки, которые существенны для неё и благодаря которым она и вызывает наш интерес. Партизанское искусство возникло в радикальной и лиминальной ситуации, поэтому и оно само — явление радикальное и лиминальное. Итак, если мы хотим мыслить его на его собственном уровне, мы должны мыслить радикально и занять лиминальную точку зрения.

СЛОВЕНСКОЕ ПАРТИЗАНСКОЕ ИСКУССТВО, ЮГОСЛАВСКИЙ СОЦИАЛИЗМ, АНТИФАШИЗМ, ЭСТЕТИКА ЭПОХИ МОДЕРНА, КУЛЬТУРНОЕ ПРОИЗВОДСТВО

The further in time the Partisan symbolic production is slipping, the closer it is to us in a dimension that, although not merely of an 'aesthetic' nature, is nevertheless closely related to the effects that contemporary artistic practices exercise upon the functioning of our senses and the procedures of our thought.[1]

But let us begin at the beginning and ask the following question: Why, at least in retrospect, did the Partisan symbolic production seem remote to us at a certain point? Why was it difficult, at that point, to establish direct, authentic and sincere contact with it? The very unsuitability of these categories—'sincerity', 'authenticity'[2]—which belong to the anachronistic Romantic aesthetics, warns us that it may be more difficult to formulate this question than to answer it. For neither is our present, and presumably more intimate, attitude towards the Partisan symbolic production constituted within the framework of 'sincerity and authenticity'—and is precisely for this reason more open, more *productive*, than it used to be.

A somewhat precipitate, and hence banal, answer could be that the Partisan symbolic production is now more accessible to us because it is no longer involved in the dominant ideology. According to this view, the art, and the symbolic production in general, of the struggle against fascism are beginning to speak to us, are becoming visible or, more precisely, viewable only today, when they are free from the parasite that was a specific form of social domination, that is, when they are free from ideological servitude.

In this view, the anti-fascist symbolic production has once again become relevant because it has finally found its way to where it actually belongs, to the sphere of culture, and to the field of art, after having initially served the propaganda purposes of the People's Liberation Struggle and after having later, in socialism, been kept prisoner by

1
The first version of this article was published on pp. 19–40 in *Partizanski tisk / The Partisans in Print* (see Škrjanec and Pavlinec).

2
The historical rise and fall of the ideology of authenticity was brilliantly demonstrated by Lionel Trilling (1972). A classic portrayal of this historical position is given in Denis Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew* (written in 1762 and revised several times by 1775), and a classical philosophical presentation is given as early as 1807 in the chapter on the 'disintegrated consciousness' ('zerrissenes Bewusstsein') in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (296–328).

the official ideology of domination. Indeed, it seems that in modernity, the aesthetic dimension is constitutively linked to the abstraction of artefacts from the concrete social and historical context in which they not only emerged but also had a very specific function. Against the backdrop of the aesthetic power of Giotto's frescoes, the information that the chapel was built for the purpose of expiation and symbolic redemption for the sins of a family of professional usurers seems to have but anecdotal value. But the relation should perhaps be inverted: in order to establish the aesthetic perspective from which we view Giotto today, it is crucial that concrete historical circumstances, practical presuppositions, social causes for the production of artefacts and the contemporary effects of this production be degraded to the level of base anecdotal curiosity.[3]

The argument that today we can finally perceive the Partisan symbolic production as culture and art because it has finally escaped from ideological confinement is itself a captive of this modern ideology of aesthetics, according to which artefacts can be monuments of culture only if we pretend that they are not also monuments of barbarism. Such a framing of our discussion of the Partisan symbolic production would divert us from those characteristics of this production that are essential to it and that make it challenging and attractive to us in the first place. The Partisan culture and art were produced in a radical situation, or, in existentialist parlance, in a liminal position. As a result, they are themselves radical and liminal. If we want to think about them at their own level, we must think radically and assume a liminal perspective.

I will try to sketch such a necessary radicalisation along three lines of argument. I will begin with the most general historical consideration and then move towards increasingly particular issues of culture and finally art.

3
In her study of the historical emergence of the modern autonomous sphere of culture and art in the Renaissance, Maja Breznik demonstrates that this sphere emerges both as the result of class struggles and as a decisive factor in the march to power of the new proto-capitalist classes. Hence, Benjamin's dictum that '[t]here is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism' (Benjamin 392) cannot be understood in the sense of the two sides of the coin: barbarism is not the flip side of culture; on the contrary, culture is precisely barbarism, if barbarism is taken to mean the violence of the ruling classes. Modernity, that is, capitalism, replaces the awkward physical violence of the Middle Ages with a much more effective symbolic violence that we call 'culture'. (See Breznik.)

1. The first step towards the radicalisation of our approach would be to estrange our own perspective: can we even start to think of the Partisan symbolic production if we still use the notions of culture and art as they are automatically understood and used today? As we have already seen, a measure of caution is necessary with regard to both notions: today, aesthetics implies for us distance and disinterest, and culture entails oblivion, perhaps even a hypocritical ignorance of its own conditions of possibility and effects. Such notions will not bring us closer to the symbolic production that was born out of the struggle for life and was perceived by its producers as a weapon in their fight for freedom and emancipation.
2. If we rely on our intuition that the Partisan symbolic production is now somewhat closer to us, we must not act as if we did not know that the present historical period, at least in its own dominant self-understanding, claims that it has done away with socialism and undertaken the task of restoring capitalism. In other words, according to its own dominant self-understanding, the present historical period liquidated the historical form that emerged from the Partisan symbolic production and similar processes. This forces us to face an unusual question: Why has the Partisan symbolic production become more readable and viewable as soon as its historical effects have been eliminated? The question is perverted, but the answer is simple if only we pose an intermediate question as well: *'More readable' from which standpoint, 'more viewable' from which point of view*? In which *ideological perspective* does the Partisan symbolic production now appear as art and culture *precisely because* its social and historical effects have been eliminated? Certainly, this is the perspective from which 'culture and art' are understood and experienced through the traditional lenses of modernity, that is, capitalism—as something that has separated

itself from its own social dimension, refusing to acknowledge its own historicity and constituting itself through a hypocritical ignorance of its own social and historical embeddedness and effectivity. Only within the horizon of this cognitive and affective pattern is it possible to claim that the Partisan symbolic production has become 'culture and art' once it has freed itself from the ideological servitude that had marked its emergence and its subsequent role in the relations of one-party domination, that is, once historical events have released it from its social and historical contexts. Yet the Partisan symbolic production *wanted* to produce ideological effects: through the historically given artistic devices and aesthetic procedures, it sought to produce effects at the level of the social bond. This is why the dominant modern (that is, bourgeois)[4] view, which understands ideology as the opposite and the denial of art, perceiving the relationship between art and ideology through the notions of instrument and means, misses the historical, more precisely, the epochal transformation and innovation introduced by the Partisan symbolic production.

3. Hence, we should not view the present time as a new cooking pot into which one is to place an old ingredient, the Partisan symbolic production, which now whets new appetite. The present time is not homogeneous, and the Partisan symbolic production is not a passive object, since it still affects us through its symbolic efficiency. Only when the present time began to produce new artistic devices, new cultural practices, could our eyes be opened to the historical innovation introduced by the Partisan artistic and cultural practices. In the present time, new political processes had to emerge for an old ally to resurface in these new struggles.

4
'And now we come to the question of propaganda. All painters have been propagandists or else they have not been painters. Giotto was a propagandist of the spirit of Christian charity, the weapon of the Franciscan monks of his time against feudal oppression. Breughel was a propagandist of the struggle of the Dutch artisan petty bourgeoisie against feudal oppression. Every artist who has been worth anything in art has been such a propagandist. The familiar accusation that propaganda ruins art finds its source in bourgeois prejudice. Naturally enough the bourgeoisie does not want art employed for the sake of revolution.' (Rivera 57)

Each of these three *problématiques* can be further developed in relation to one of the three historical periods in which the Partisan symbolic production has operated.

The problem of *how to theoretically revolutionise the concept* of 'culture and art' in order to make our analysis capable of addressing the actual revolution performed by the anti-fascist production in the fields of culture and art, in their social roles and historical positions, will be presented in the context of the first period of the Partisan symbolic production—the time of *the anti-fascist People's Liberation Struggle*.

The relationship between *ideology and art* will be presented in reference to the second historical period—*the socialist era*.

And the *present efficiency* of the anti-fascist cultural and artistic production will of course be demonstrated in the context of *the present time*.

1. WHAT CULTURE, WHAT ART?

If we want to analyse the anti-fascist culture, we first need to modify our spontaneous notion of culture. However, we will not be able to discard this spontaneous notion and formulate a new theoretical concept unless we bring ourselves to face, radically and without prejudice, the anti-fascist cultural and artistic practices. We are caught in this double-bind primarily because the Partisan symbolic production was born out of the struggle against the very historical processes one of whose products and sediments is our spontaneous, unreflexive, raw and automatic notion of culture. The Partisan cultural practices endeavoured to escape from the ivory tower of the so-called relatively autonomous spheres of culture and art. In retrospect, we could say that the available traces of these cultural practices *are in themselves this historical and structural break*. On the one hand, a break with the

refuge of 'culture and art' was a necessity at the ideological level of the direct struggle for freedom. On the other hand, the anti-fascist symbolic production was through this break itself constituting a new culture, a new position for symbolic practices, and with it a new structuring of the social space. Thus, by mobilising the masses in the anti-fascist struggle, the Partisan culture was already producing the new social and historical circumstances that would eliminate the social constellation that had enabled the emergence of fascism in the first place. The Partisan cultural practices were therefore more than just 'a means' in the struggle against fascism: on the one hand, they were securing material conditions for this struggle (such as the activation and mobilisation of the masses, or the consolidation on the frontline); and on the other hand, by doing this they were already establishing a new social structure and within it a new position for culture, a new web of human relations, which was precisely a historical negation of fascism. The conditions that enabled the anti-fascist struggle in the first place could be secured only through a cultural action that as such produced the basic elements of a social structure in which *fascism would no longer be possible*. On the one hand, the cultural action was but a forerunner of the armed struggle, and on the other, it already anticipated its results. More precisely, in the given historical circumstances the cultural action had to *ensure* the elements of the social structure that could be secured *only after* the victory in the armed struggle.

This is why the symbolic activity—or 'cultural creativity', as it was called at the time—was already in its producers' self-understanding an essential component of the People's Liberation Struggle. This struggle for national liberation was a struggle against fascism, that is, against a historical outcome of the modern, capitalist social structuring. In the Slovenian People's Liberation Struggle, as in all other struggles

for national liberation of the twentieth century, the nation could be liberated only by undoing the entire structure of human non-freedom, of the oppression of nations, that is, by undoing the capitalist society. This is why the People's Liberation Struggle was possible only as an anti-fascist struggle, since fascism and Nazism were at that time the most advanced forms of capitalist barbarism. Simply put, the People's Liberation Struggle cannot be separated from the socialist revolution. This means that the 'nation' that is liberating itself through an anti-fascist struggle is actually revolutionising the modern, capitalist social order characteristic of the modern articulation of society into relatively autonomous social spheres (that is, economy, politics and culture)—since this order is a structure of exploitation, oppression, the non-freedom of humans and hence of nations.

However, a nation that was historically formed within this structure of non-freedom, a nation that was marked by this structure of oppression and was hence itself a *structure of non-freedom*, had to revolutionise, in the socialist revolution that was the anti-fascist struggle, *itself, too*.[5] National culture is one of the basic elements of all nations; it is even the crucial element for those nations which at the time of their formation did not possess their own states (which is the case of, say, the German nation and the Slovenian nation). Hence, the People's Liberation Struggle was also a cultural revolution—and in the twentieth century, the cultural revolution was radical because it transformed not only the inner structure of culture but also the very position of the cultural sphere within the social structure. It abolished culture as a sphere whose very existence realises the barbarity of the ruling classes, and transformed it into a space of emancipation.

Any reading of the Partisan symbolic production that attempts to retroactively link it to bourgeois and basically Romantic aestheticism

5
The protagonists of the time were aware of this. In *Temeljne točke Osvobodilne fronte slovenskega naroda* (Fundamental Points Issued by the Liberation Front of the Slovenian Nation), Point 4, proposed by the poet and essayist Edvard Kocbek, is significant here:

> *Through the liberating action and activation of Slovenian masses, the Liberation Front transforms the Slovenian national character. Fighting for their national and human rights, Slovenian masses are creating a new pattern of active Slovenianness.*

is therefore but an escape from the historical and *cultural* significance of this production, an act of escapism running away from the effects of this production's intervention in history. Adorno (36) describes the crisis of the contemporary novel as a 'capitulation … to the superior power of reality—a reality that cannot be transfigured in an image but only altered concretely, in reality'. The Partisan cultural production is an example of such a transforming intervention in an aggressive and overly powerful reality. Granted, this was an intervention using representations, but representations that were produced from the perspective of another reality, one that first had to be won in a struggle—an armed struggle, but also a struggle with representations.

6
Lev Centrih, using Gramsci's conceptual apparatus, accurately and concisely defines the historical situation after the victory in the anti-fascist armed struggle:

> *The hegemony of the new historical block of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was securing social consent by various means, including the monopoly over the (ideological) interpretation of the People's Liberation Struggle and related merits of the Communist Party. (Centrih)*

2. WHAT IDEOLOGICAL MECHANISMS, WHAT EFFECTS?

During post-war one-party socialism, Partisanship and its cultural and artistic production were undoubtedly important components of the ideology of domination[6]—but in a very ambivalent manner that deserves to be analysed. The integration of the People's Liberation Struggle into the ruling ideology implied that, generally, this struggle was considered as something 'good' (as I write these lines, this is no longer the case), and that this positive evaluation was shared by the masses. The anti-fascist project was an emancipatory and solidarity-based undertaking, while the ideology of domination was counter-emancipatory and based on subjection. If the one-party domination wanted to obtain legitimacy, mass approval, it had to incorporate the anti-fascist project. But by incorporating the revolutionary emancipatory project of anti-fascism into its ideology, it also introduced a fundamental contradiction at the crucial point of this ideology—the point of unification of all the practices of domination. It had to present

the new practices of oppression and exploitation that it had introduced as a continuation of the historical practices of liberation and emancipation, that is, as a realisation of the project of eliminating exploitation. For those whose task was to implement the practices of domination this meant that they also had to take on the commitment to solidarity and to the emancipatory project (as I write this text, this is no longer the case). At any moment they could be called to account for the promise which they made by accepting the Partisan project. This means that the anti-fascist symbolic production was indeed a component of the ruling ideology—but also a fundamental element of *resistance* against the one-party rule during socialism. Yet this was not a case of the classical problem of historical interpretation; it was not just another fight over who would appropriate history by enforcing a specific historical interpretation. The interpretation was identical on both sides: they both understood the anti-fascist liberation struggle as a revolutionary and emancipatory struggle. So, the clash over the so-called Partisan heritage was transposed from the level of *ideology* and *interpretation* to the *practical* level. In socialism, the issue was not whose interpretation would win the Partisan tradition for itself, or who would use it to better ideological advantage; on the contrary, the clash revolved around the question of who actually was *practicing* the anti-fascist heritage.

The implications of the historical horizon created by the anti-fascist armed struggle and particularly the Liberation Front as a mass *political* force of the emancipatory anti-fascist struggle are too complex and far reaching to be presented in the confines of this essay. Yet even at this stage it is possible to discern the outlines of the world-historic significance of Slovenian and Yugoslav socialism. It should be pointed out that as early as the mid-1980s, Slovenian socialism was able to

secure freedom of expression, abolish capital punishment and permit a reasonable exercise of other human rights. This refutes the current (domestic and 'European') attempts to retroactively confine Yugoslav socialism and revolutionary politics to the sphere of the 'really existing socialism' of the Soviet type. The clash over the practicing of the anti-fascist tradition also explains why in socialist Yugoslavia all the historically relevant critiques of the domination in the conditions of socialism, as well as all historically productive practices of resistance against this domination, were ideologically 'leftist'.[7]

This resistance and these clashes were not just about the clash of ideologies, nor about the clash of different types of politics. The central object of political clashes in Yugoslav socialism was the determination of the general social *structural framework* within which different types of politics would be confronted and exercised, and within which the ideological struggles would be fought. The objects of these clashes were the transformation or, on the contrary, the reproduction of the existing social structure; in other words, the fundamental issue was whether to continue or to stall revolutionary processes. In the sphere of culture, which concerns us here, the resistance against one-party domination endeavoured to push forward the withering-away of culture as a relatively autonomous social sphere. This was a continuation of the process that the Partisan symbolic production initiated by dismantling the cultural ghetto and starting to change 'culture', transforming it from a means of class violence of the ruling classes into a space of human emancipation. In contrast to those who carried on the Partisan politics,[8] the bearers of domination in the specific conditions of socialism endeavoured to re-traditionalise the society in certain strategic aspects and to eliminate the achievements already won in the anti-fascist struggle.

7
At the moment, this is a forbidden topic. Let me mention as a curiosity that some years ago the Slovenian Ministry of Science and Technology (under the liberal government and headed by a minister of the conservative Slovenian People's Party) refused the application for (very limited) funding for the project titled 'Criticism of Communism Under Communism' and proposed by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana and the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna. The Austrian Ministry of Science (headed by a minister of the conservative Austrian People's Party) supported the project. When I requested a re-application of the project at the Slovenian ministry, I received the answer that the original application and its evaluation cannot be retrieved, presumably because the person in charge left the ministry.

8
For the introduction of the concept of the Partisan politics, and for the constitution of its *problématique*, see Stojanović.

One of the successful features of the establishment of domination in the conditions of socialism was the re-constitution of the modern cultural sphere in its relative autonomy. Even though the autonomisation of culture in Yugoslav socialism was part of the strategy of domination in the conditions of socialism, it had a number of positive results, notably the exceptionally rich cultural, intellectual and artistic production of Yugoslav socialism. And most of all, it contributed to the establishment of modernism as a prevalent and dominant artistic formation, in many respects even as the 'official' art of Yugoslav communism. Yet, despite this, the autonomisation of culture in the specific conditions of one-party rule also tried to revive the historical situation which Gramsci (149), writing under a fascist one-party rule, described as follows:

> *[I]n countries where there is a single, totalitarian, governing party … the functions of such a party are no longer directly political, but merely technical ones of propaganda and public order, and moral and cultural influence. The political function is indirect. For, even if no other legal parties exist, other parties in fact always do exist and other tendencies which cannot be legally coerced; and, against these, polemics are unleashed and struggles are fought as in a game of blind man's buff. In any case it is certain that in such parties cultural functions predominate, which means that political language becomes jargon. In other words, political questions are disguised as cultural ones, and as such become insoluble.*

By granting autonomy to the cultural sphere, the ruling ideology and its practices operating under the conditions of one-party rule achieve the depoliticisation of social tensions and conflicts (which thus become accessible to the technical, propagandist, police and, say, moral

operations of the apparatuses of domination) and at the same time a situation in which those resisting domination can articulate social struggles only through a 'cultural jargon', directing themselves onto a dead-end street of historical ineffectiveness. Generally and hence superficially, yet perhaps still with sufficient accuracy, once could say that the strategy of domination in Yugoslav one-party system acknowledged the so-called autonomy of culture precisely for reasons analysed by Gramsci in relation to the historical case of Mussolini's fascist politics. The one-party domination would have probably achieved the results such as those described by Gramsci, had not anti-fascist cultural politics found a solution to circumvent the pitfall of the autonomous cultural sphere even before this domination was established. For in the case of the Partisan cultural politics, the cultural disguise of which Gramsci speaks was no longer ineffective, as the anti-fascist cultural activity transformed the very position of culture within the social structure. This required, and at the same time induced, a transformation of the entire social structure, that is, a social revolution.

Thus, in conditions of Yugoslav socialism resistance against one-party domination had to hide, in large part, under a cultural disguise, but this did not render it ineffective insofar as it referred to the anti-fascist tradition in which 'culture' had already ceased to be but an arena for cultural masquerade.

3. WHICH ARTISTIC METHODS?

Yet precisely because the cultural and artistic practices that were opening new historical horizons in the specific conditions of one-party domination were connected to the Partisan cultural politics, the Partisan symbolic production was not accessible during the socialist era:

it was perceived merely as an outdated, transcended, irrelevant stage of one and the same project. The historically, culturally and artistically relevant cultural practices in socialism were speaking precisely from the position of enunciation that was produced by the Partisan symbolic production and were largely unperceptive of, if not blind to, it, insofar as any practice is partly blind to the position from which it is exercised. For the same reason, these practices were not able to evaluate in any significantly positive way the results of the Partisan establishment of their position of enunciation, since, viewed through such lenses, these results were seen as even more outdated, irrelevant and without currency.

However, these results of the Partisan symbolic production are presently contributing to the opening of our eyes: today, we can understand the positions that even the Partisans considered to be radical excesses of headquarters propagandism. Today, for instance, we no longer have difficulties with understanding the famous doctrine of the 'Partisan birch-tree'. As passed on to us by its opponents, this propagandistic doctrine, supposedly unworthy of art, maintained that even a well drawn birch-tree cannot be a work of art if there is no rifle leaning against it or if it is not pierced by a burst shot.[9] Who could not recognise today in this demand the device, praised by French film theorists as 'acousmatism', whose effects are achieved by not showing the killer and by registering only his heavy breathing instead, or by showing not the killer's axe-wielding hands but only the wide open eyes of the horror-stricken victim? This method is used with particularly strong effect in the film *The Wages of Fear*,[10] in which Yves Montand is rolling a cigarette when a gust of wind blows away the cigarette paper, and the spectator becomes aware that this was a gust caused by the explosion that killed his friend.

9
The debate took place during 1944 in the 'cultural workers' company' on the liberated territory and in the agitation and propaganda department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia at Base 20, the People's Liberation Army Headquarters. The majority of Partisan artists and cultural workers took part in discussions, together with top political, ideological and military cadres of the liberation movement.

10
Le salaire de la peur, France and Italy, 1953, director Henri-Georges Clouzot, cast Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Peter Van Eyck and Véra Clouzot.

This also explains why the circular letter, signed by Nikolaj Pirnat, who was by no means a naïve person, excluded from the invitation to contribute works of art 'still life and landscapes typical of the work of petit bourgeois painters'.[11] This exclusion derives from a refined sense of the historical, that is, class character of artistic genres, thus effectively escaping from the ivory tower of 'autonomous culture', which for us is the most important achievement of the Partisan cultural politics.

11
Pirnat graduated from the Arts Academy in Zagreb and went on, in 1925, to specialise with Ivan Meštrović; he later studied in Paris and was influenced by Picasso for a while. In 1942, he was confined in the Gonars concentration camp, and in 1942, after the capitulation of Italy, he joined the Partisans.

CONCLUSION: WHY IS IT THEN 'CLOSE' TO US AGAIN?

Now we can say, at least approximately, why anti-fascist art used to be remote from us: the difficulty stemmed from the crossbreeding of two processes—the *continuity* of social and political practices and the *discontinuity* of artistic practices.

The process of *continuity* was propelled by the politics of resistance against the domination in the conditions of socialism. These politics saw in the anti-fascist symbolic production merely an outdated phase of their own struggle for emancipation, yet this very embeddedness in the same revolutionary horizon as the anti-fascist production made them also blind to the transformation of the structural location and structural effects of cultural practices, that is, to the historical transformation initiated by anti-fascist practices and necessarily carried on by subsequent practices of resistance.

On the other side, the processes of *discontinuity* took place in the field of art, which during socialism found its place within the re-constituted relative autonomy of the cultural sphere. The main discontinuity with respect to the Partisan symbolic politics and anti-fascist cultural practices was precisely this re-establishment of the so-called independent cultural sphere, that is, the introduction of relations of

domination in the new, socialist circumstances. One of the results of the cultural politics of domination during socialism—results that were made possible by that domination and which in their turn *reproduced* that new domination within their specific sphere—was the predominance of modernism in post-war socialist art. This predominance of modernism within the re-established independent cultural sphere buried the Partisan art in the history of art, ascribing to it the status of a harmless episode in which the aesthetic dimension, faced with the external pressure of historical circumstances, had to give way to the demands of agitation, tendentiousness and propaganda. This process, too, contributed to that blindness to the historical break that was the Partisan cultural politics; yet in contrast to the blindness of practices of resistance, which was a 'practical' blindness, the 'aesthetic' blindness was ideological. While the practical blindness of politics of resistance was a condition for their practicing, the ideological blindness of the autonomist aesthetics of modernism was a *result* of mechanisms that served the reproduction of domination during socialism.

Why, then, does the Partisan symbolic politics 'feel close' now? Roughly speaking, the reasons are inversely symmetrical to the reasons for its former 'remoteness': because of the *discontinuity* of the ruling social and political practices, which call for the kind of resistance that can establish a *continuity* with the anti-fascist symbolic politics. The social and political rift that restored capitalist domination and involves the depoliticisation and culturalisation of social tensions and conflicts puts the practices of resistance that continue the former emancipation project in a situation similar, in many respects, to the situation of the anti-fascist struggle during the occupation.

On the other side, in the specific field of art contemporary practices are once again attacking the sterile 'autonomy' of the cultural sphere.

Contemporary art is either political art or mere aestheticising kitsch. The Partisan symbolic politics cannot be alien to any sensibility touched by contemporary artistic practices. There is of course no 'continuity' in this case, but there are more and more *encounters* that are becoming less and less contingent with time. ❦

— *Translated by Jernej Habjan and Olga Vuković*

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Povzetek

Prevladujoča argumentacija, da je danes simbolno produkcijo jugoslovanskih partizank in partizanov končno mogoče obravnavati kot kulturo in kot umetnost, saj se je končno osvobodila ideološkega nadzora, je sámo ujeto v moderno estetsko ideologijo, po kateri, rečeno benjaminovsko, artefakti morejo biti dokumenti kulture samo, če se pretvarjamo, da niso obenem dokumenti barbarstva. S takšno zastavitvijo razprave o partizanski simbolni produkciji bi zgrešili tiste poteze te produkcije, ki jo temeljno določajo in ki nam jo sploh približujejo do te mere, da želimo razpravljati o njej.

Partizanska kultura in umetnost sta nastajali v radikalni situaciji oziroma, rečeno eksistencialistično, v mejnem položaju. Prav zato sta tudi sami radikalni in mejni. Če ju želimo obravnavati na njuni lastni ravni, moramo misliti radikalno in zavzeti mejno gledišče. Ta članek skicira tovrstno nujno radikalizacijo v treh smereh.

Prvi korak k ustrezni radikalizaciji svojega pristopa k partizanski kulturi in umetnosti napravimo, če potujimo svojo lastno perspektivo. Kajti mar lahko sploh začnemo razmišljati o partizanski simbolni produkciji, če se oklepamo pojmov kulture in umetnosti, ki sta danes avtomatično v obtoku? Kot rečeno, moramo z obema pojmoma ravnati previdno, saj danes estetika implicira distanco in brezinteresnost, kultura pa pozabo ali celo hipokritsko ignoranco njenih lastnih pogojev možnosti in učinkov. Takšni pojmi nam zagotovo ne morejo približati simbolne produkcije, ki je nastala iz boja za življenja in ki so jo njene lastne producentke in producenti doživljali kot orožje v boju za svobodo.

Partizanska simbolna produkcija je namreč hotela imeti ideološke učinke: s pomočjo zgodovinsko danih umetnostnih postopkov je poskušala producirati učinke na ravni družbene vezi. Zato običajno moderno

umevanje ideologije kot nasprotja in zanikanja umetnosti – umevanje, ki razmerje med umetnostjo in ideologijo obravnava s pomočjo pojmov sredstev in instrumentov – zgreši zgodovinsko preobrazbo in inovacijo, ki ju je vnesla partizanska simbolna produkcija.

Zato sodobnosti ne velja obravnavati kot nove posode, v katero lahko vržemo staro sestavino, partizansko simbolno produkcijo, ki naj zdaj zbuja nov apetit. Sodobnost ni homogena, partizanska simbolna produkcija pa ni pasiven objekt, saj še zmerom simbolno učinkuje na nas. Šele ko je sodobnost začela proizvajati nove politične procese, nove umetnostne postopke in predvsem novo, politično umetnost, so naše oči mogle uzreti zgodovinsko inovacijo, ki so jo vnesle partizanske umetnostne in kulturne prakse. V sodobnosti so morali vznikniti novi politični procesi, da se je v novih bojih mogla vrniti stara zaveznica.

Rastko Močnik

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to such journals as Cultural Critique, Eurozine, Migrations Société, Rue Descartes, Traneuropéennes *and* Transversal. *He has co-edited and co-translated Slovenian editions of works by Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Durkheim, Lacan, Barthes, Veyne, Davidson, Derrida, Althusser and Saussure.*

The Partisans in Print

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Responding to Rastko Močnik's contribution to this volume, this essay is an attempt to subtilise his proposition that the break the Partisan art introduced in relation to bourgeois aesthetics consists in its open embrace of propagandism. The thesis of this essay is that, pace Močnik, the Partisan doctrine of propagandism was not an epochal transformation of the relationship between art and ideology, but a vulgarisation of it. Moreover, it was also quickly rejected as such in the Partisan debates and art themselves. This rejection seems to have followed from the insight that any reduction of art to ideology paradoxically blocks art's ideological charge itself, just as the bourgeois aestheticist elevation of art beyond the reach of ideology misses no less than the artistic charge of art. This insight, not propagandism, is what makes the Partisan art relevant today.

SLOVENIAN PARTISAN ART, ANTIFASCISM, SLOVENIAN GRAPHIC ART, MODERN AESTHETICS, BORIS KIDRIČ

Эта статья является отзывом на в этом сборнике размещенную статью Растка Мочника и особенно на её предпосылку, что новизна партизанского искусства в сравнении с буржуазной эстетикой состоит в его полном восприятии пропагандизма. В этом отзыве демонстрируется, что партизанская доктрина пропагандизма являлась не эпохальной трансформацией взаимоотношения искусства и идеологии, а его вульгаризацией. Сверх того, от этой доктрины как таковой быстро отказалось и само партизанское искусство. Этот отказ свидетельствует об убеждении партизанских художников, что любое подчинение искусства идеологии парадоксально блокирует его идеологический потенциал, точно так же, как буржуазное эстетическое возвышение искусства по ту сторону идеологии приводит к уничтожению его художественного потенциала. Это убеждение, а не пропагандизм, и делает партизанское искусство актуальным сегодня.

СЛОВЕНСКОЕ ПАРТИЗАНСКОЕ ИСКУССТВО, АНТИФАШИЗМ, СЛОВЕНСКАЯ ГРАФИКА, ЭСТЕТИКА ЭПОХИ МОДЕРНА, БОРИС КИДРИЧ

I

The exhibition *Partizanski tisk / The Partisans in Print*, curated by Donovan Pavlinec and held in the International Centre of Graphic Arts (MGLC) in Ljubljana between November 2004 and late March 2005, introduced a selection of Slovenian Partisan graphic art created mostly in the framework of an organised art initiative during the last two years of World War II. Alongside commissioned propagandistic works there also existed a steady production of works that were no less politically engaged, even though they were created independently. To a great extent, the exhibition consisted of well-known material that was already exhibited on multiple occasions in the past decades, but has for the last fifteen years been more or less systematically pushed into oblivion, together with the consciousness of the momentous historical importance of the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle. The exhibition was the first monumental overview of this specific artistic production after more than fifteen years. The openly political quality of its intensive message, so rare in Slovenian art, came as a surprise—the Partisan print was in fact a powerful symbolic weapon in the anti-fascist struggle. The exhibition, no doubt held at an appropriate moment (just before the sixtieth anniversary of the victory over fascism, and already in a time when fascism in its various forms was threatening to rise again both locally and globally), was undoubtedly a political act.

This is also the meaning given to the exhibition by Rastko Močnik in the conceptually key text of the catalogue (a new version of which appears in this volume).[1] The text reactivates, as it were, the programme of the Partisan art, or, broadly speaking, 'the Partisan symbolic politics', connecting its effects to the effects of contemporary politically

1
Other contributors to the catalogue included Lilijana Stepančić, Božo Repe, Donovan Pavlinec, Andrej Šemrov and Breda Škrjanec. For my first review of the exhibition, which is also the basis of this article, see Komelj.

engaged artistic practices. This is certainly a radically new approach to the topic. Essential here is Močnik's claim that the new proximity of the Partisan artistic production does not rest on some new perception of these works beyond ideology, as art in its pure aesthetic dimension, as the opposite of ideology, thanks to the weakening of the ideological pressure that during the past decades identified the memory of that production with the ruling ideology. On the contrary: for Močnik, the relevance of these works derives from the fact that only now we can see their specific ideological charge—which was never reducible to the ruling ideology in the first place: in socialism, the anti-fascist artistic production did indeed function as a source of its legitimisation, but it was 'also a fundamental element of *resistance* against the one-party rule during socialism' precisely because it brought attention to the ruling ideology's origins in the emancipatory revolutionary project (p. 28 in this volume). This specific ideological charge is contained in the basic standpoint from which these works problematised the relative autonomy of art understood in the bourgeois sense:[2] 'This is why the dominant modern (that is, bourgeois) view, which understands ideology as the opposite and the denial of art, perceiving the relationship between art and ideology through the notions of instrument and means, misses the historical, more precisely, the epochal transformation and innovation introduced by the Partisan symbolic production.' (P. 23 in this volume.)[3] This redefined the field of culture itself: 'It abolished culture as a sphere whose very existence realises the barbarity of the ruling classes, and transformed it into a space of emancipation.' (P. 26 in this volume.) Močnik's approach to the Partisan culture and art tries to adhere to the following principle: 'The Partisan culture and art were produced in a radical situation, or, in existentialist parlance, in a liminal position. As a result, they are

2
The strongest challenge to this autonomy was put forward by Boris Kidrič during the discussion about art and the People's Liberation Struggle at the second meeting of the Slovenian Art Club in Črnomelj on 8 November 1944. At the meeting, Kidrič said the following: 'There is also the theoretical defence of art. But if at this time you stand to defend art, then you are already outside time.' I quote Kidrič's words as they are found in the transcript of the first meeting of the Slovenian Art Club in Črnomelj on 14 October 1944. All other passages from the transcripts of both meetings are quoted from a copy kept in a separate collection; the transcripts themselves are available in the The Archives of the Republic of Slovenia.

3
It is interesting how, for instance, Matej Bor, the poet who after the war took the direction of a somewhat traditionalist intimism, insisted that his first Partisan book, the 1942 *Previharimo viharje* (Let Us Outhurricane the Hurricanes), be read according to different criteria than his later poetry.

themselves radical and liminal. If we want to think about them at their own level, we must think radically and assume a liminal perspective.' (P. 21 in this volume.)

To this I want to add that even as we analyse this artistic production *at the level of formulation*, its 'liminality' must be understood beyond its stylistic characteristics, as *signs take on new meaning in radically changed conditions of their production*. Karel Destovnik—Kajuh, a revolutionary poet who was killed as a Partisan fighter in 1944 at the age of twenty-one, writes about the new meaning of signs in his poem *Mrtvim tovarišem* (To the Dead Comrades), in which the blood of fallen Partisans transforms into trailblazing symbols. Ultimately, the black-and-white printmaking technique itself, with its sharp borders without shading (the prevalence of the linocut technique was indeed determined by the difficult material conditions in which the Partisan artists created), corresponded in an extraordinary way with the manner in which the world appeared under these extreme conditions.

What interests me in this essay is the question of *what exactly* does this transformation, this break, this epochality, *consist of*—the question of how we can connect it to concrete historical material. And it is here precisely that the answer suggested by Močnik is quite questionable. We can understand some of Močnik's elaborations as suggesting that the break is in propagandism itself: that what transcended the bourgeois conception of art was precisely the identification of art with propagandism. Močnik quotes Diego Rivera's statement about art *as* propaganda (p. 23 n. 4 in this volume), which, however, does not outline a narrow, merely propagandistic position, but instead warns that what we admire as the aesthetic dimension in Giotto and Breughel was actually created in the context of ideological and class struggles of the time by an unambiguous taking of sides in those struggles. Yet Močnik

uses this argument as a basis for a full-fledged apology of the so-called Partisan birch-tree, which represented a traumatic moment in the encounter between the *vulgarised* version of ideological propaganda and (visual) art in the Slovenian People's Liberation Struggle:

> *[T]oday, we can understand the positions [within the Partisan symbolic production] that even the Partisans considered to be radical excesses of headquarters propagandism. Today, for instance, we no longer have difficulties with understanding the famous doctrine of the 'Partisan birch-tree'. As passed on to us by its opponents, this propagandistic doctrine, supposedly unworthy of art, maintained that even a well drawn birch-tree cannot be a work of art if there is no rifle leaning against it or if it is not pierced by a burst shot. Who could not recognise today in this demand the device, praised by French film theorists as 'acousmatism', whose effects are achieved by not showing the killer and by registering only his heavy breathing instead, or by showing not the killer's axe-wielding hands but only the wide open eyes of the horror-stricken victim? (P. 32 in this volume.)*

What is problematic here is, of course, not the description of acousmatism, but something else entirely: Močnik *displaces* to the level of the description of the device something that *was never given* as a description of the device, but as a dictate, a ban, a coercion, a constraint. His interpretation veils the reason *why* the birch-tree was considered an excess, namely the fact that it was really about the birch-tree as a dictate, and *not* as a device. The device itself did not seem problematic even to such advocates of 'timeless' art as Josip Vidmar, a prominent literary critic and co-founder of the Liberation Front of the Slovenian People. Moreover, it is precisely in those Partisan works that were the *furthest away*

from short-term propagandism that we can discover this type of device: France Mihelič's images of a burned village with trees damaged in battle, which can be regarded as some of the most 'non-ideological' works of Partisan graphic art (even though, as we will see, attributes such as 'non-ideological' cannot work here), perfectly fit, as far as the *device* is concerned, the doctrine of the Partisan birch-tree. At the same time, as we will clearly see from Boris Kidrič's argument, the Partisan birch-tree was in reality not at all about the relationship between art and ideology, but about an *erroneous conception* of that relationship, of its vulgarisation. Kidrič, a leading figure of the Partisan movement in Slovenia and the president of the first Slovenian revolutionary government, clearly emphasised that such a banalisation *takes away* the entire ideological edge of the problem of this relationship. Hence, the issue was neither about the device, nor about the problem of the connection between art and ideology—but about an absurdity so blatant that it was immediately condemned by both the cultural workers and the political leadership. At the same time, this absurdity can of course be read as a symptom of the latent tensions that became obvious precisely at the moment when all sides declared that it was an absurdity. The birch-tree triggered two member meetings of the Slovenian Art Club in Črnomelj, on 14 October and 8 November 1944 (Kidrič attended the second one); but the birch-tree 'theory' itself was never discussed during these debates, since not only Vidmar but also Kidrič and Aleš Bebler dismissed it as nonsense. This was certainly not just a matter of tactics, of a (temporary) retreat of politicians and ideologues in front of the demands of cultural workers for the (relative) autonomy of the cultural sphere, or, say, a matter of pacification of cultural workers by the Communist party. The question about art and ideology was only really opened at the moment when it turned out that it was not at all a question about the birch-tree. A dif-

ferentiation in the discussion, which was also a differentiation *within* the 'cultural workers camp', was delineated precisely *beyond* this vulgarisation, about which there was absolutely no disagreement.

It is not my intention to criticise Močnik's essay, which represents a break in the study of the Partisan cultural production as it makes its object radically relevant. I approach his text above all as an encouragement and a starting point against which I try to develop my own reflection on the political dimension of the Partisan art and culture—a question that is certainly *not* the question about the Partisan birch-tree, but is nevertheless connected to the questions raised in autumn 1944 by the discussion brought about by the unfortunate birch-tree. I especially want to stress that even when we think the break that the Partisan movement introduced into the social status of art and culture, we need to acknowledge the ideological differentiation in the Partisan movement itself, as well as the specificity of the formulative level of artistic production. No simplification can make these issues 'clearer', or 'sharper', but can instead miss them altogether. The problem lies in the fact that it is precisely the *ideological charge of art* that disappears when we try to *reduce* art to ideology (just as it is the specifically *artistic* charge that disappears when art is perceived by bourgeois aesthetics as something that exists in some sort of vacuum, a protected space of aestheticisation beyond the reach of ideology). It was precisely this fact that was perfectly clear to Boris Kidrič, too, when he attended the Slovenian Art Club meeting with the intention to say the ideological 'final word' in the discussion triggered by the doctrine of the Partisan birch-tree.[4]

I will therefore try to use concrete historical material to provide a few starting points in an attempt to give a somewhat more precise answer to the question of the means and the way in which the transformation that Močnik outlines so invaluably was actually accomplished.

4
At the second meeting of the Slovenian Art Club, Božo Vodušek addressed Kidrič with the following provocative remark: 'Well, for instance, let us take theatre, where you would use political subject matter. You would make your characters perfect, their opponents degenerate. Such a play would be weak'; Kidrič immediately replied: 'Not only artistically weak, but also politically weak.'

II

The standard way of reading the transcripts of the discussion led in the two Slovenian Art Club meetings is quite contrary to Močnik's and can be found in Donovan Pavlinec's contribution to the catalogue of the exhibition *Partizanski tisk / The Partisans in Print*. Pavlinec sees the dispute occasioned by the Partisan birch-tree as a dispute between the party, which is supposed to have launched the birch 'theory', and the artistic camp, which managed to withstand this attack on its autonomy (see Pavlinec). Such a reading, however, makes the differentiation *within* the so-called artistic camp disappear—and with it also the emancipatory potential created in the discussion precisely by problematising the role of art in bourgeois society.

The most subtle formulation of the question of what was at stake in this discussion was given by the painter Alenka Gerlovič in her fascinating memoir 'Moja partizanščina' (My Partisan Years), even though—or perhaps precisely because—it was posed from a very personal viewpoint. In the text, Gerlovič wrote the following lines about the second meeting, which took place one day after the death of Franc Rozman—Stane, the commander-in-chief of Slovenian Partisans, right after the commemoration ceremony, that is, in an extremely difficult and serious moment of the People's Liberation Struggle:

> *That afternoon, we had another meeting about the wretched birch-tree after all. It was called by the Liberation Front. If I remember correctly, the meeting must have taken place on the ground floor of the house whose address is now Stane Rozman Street 8, where the office of the police magistrate is located today. At the meeting, there was a discussion between Josip Vidmar and Boris Kidrič. Vidmar claimed that it was*

> *not necessary for the art of the new society to be different than before because people had not changed essentially. Maybe on the outside they had, but the 'secret chamber' of the heart remained untouched by external events, the war, the revolution. He mentioned love as an example. Kidrič disagreed. He believed that the People's Liberation Struggle had utterly transformed the people and that the relationship between man and woman was bound to change as well. I quietly agreed with Kidrič then. I was convinced that the paradise of the future would know neither patriarchal heads of the family nor the kitchen drudgery of women. Everything would be completely different. Love would be freed from the banality of the quotidian. (Gerlovič 132)*

If we compare this text to the transcript of the meeting, we find direct mentions neither of love nor of the relationship between man and woman in Kidrič's statements; this, however, does not mean that Kidrič did not talk about this. The transcript does not contain everything that was said at the time, and the written summary is approximate, as the transcript itself says. Love is mentioned in Vidmar's elaboration:

> *It is beyond any doubt that we can demand that the artist side with the People's Liberation Struggle. But there is also the following issue. We know artists who intuitively have talents only for certain aspects of life. Gogol, for instance, is deaf for one sphere, the sphere of Love. Love for him is only the subject of farce, of comedy. In what position is an artist who has no talent for that sphere, for the sphere of our struggle, today? What is he to do, and what are we who judge him to do? We must accept that he has the right and duty to speak of his own proper sphere.*

Kidrič's reply includes the following: 'I agree we have to approve of such art, too. But one thing I do not agree with. There is no sector beyond the reach of our struggle.' Gerlovič had certainly brought a powerful personal emphasis in her perception of the discussion—it is by this means that she became susceptible to the emancipatory potential of the position that demanded a political transformation of art in connection with the radical transformation of society. (Kidrič formulated this demand by demystifying the separation of 'artist' from 'man': 'The question of art and tendency should not be posed at all. If you are an artist, you are necessarily also tendentious. And by that I don't mean sloganeering. I mean the artist co-experiencing the unfolding of current events. We can demand that not only of the artist but of every other man as well. It is impossible not to demand of the artist what we demand of everyone.')

Gerlovič's remark that she 'quietly' sided with Kidrič tells us that a generalised interpretation of the polemic between Vidmar and Kidrič as a polemic between artists and those in power is false. What is really interesting about both member meetings is the differentiation among the cultural workers themselves. And not only that: as we will see, in the polemic with Vidmar Kidrič hints at the idea that precisely as an advocate of the essentially unchangeable absolute art Vidmar acts from the standpoint of ideology and even power (the ideology of so-called absolute art as a subtle kind of decreeing, as we will see below).

I should stress here that we cannot talk about the People's Liberation Struggle as an ideologically homogeneous and monolithic movement, since the movement joined together fundamentally different perspectives. (This difference continued to exist even after the organisational unification of the leadership structure under the hegemony of the Communist party in 1943.) Today, it is easy to forget how *very* different

and even opposing these ideas and perspectives were. The easiest way to perceive the vast distance between different intellectual *foundations* of the people who went on to unite as a single Liberation Front without changing those foundations in any essential way is to read Edvard Kardelj's sharp and lucid review of Vidmar's *Kulturni problem slovenstva* (The Cultural Problem of Slovenianness) published in the journal *Književnost* (Literature) in 1932. (Significantly, the review was not republished in the various selections of Kardelj's works after the war, even though it is one of his most radical texts.) In the case of visual artists, who mostly joined the Partisans only after the capitulation of Italy, it would be pointless to talk about a single ideology or to identify their motivation *en bloc* either with the desire to revolutionise bourgeois art or with the opposite desire to safeguard the traditional tenets of that art.

But even more important than the heterogeneity of the relationships between subjective intentions was the specific duality of the objective conditions of artistic production. It is interesting that, say, Nikolaj Pirnat, a leading author of the Partisan graphic art in Slovenia, was engaged in both anti-academism, which most radically questioned the legitimisation of art in bourgeois society, and the preparatory work for the establishment of the Slovenian Art Academy: the courses whose function was to serve as a provisory Partisan art academy were from the onset viewed of as the embryo of a future Slovenian art academy, whose establishment after the war was legitimised precisely by the break accomplished by the People's Liberation Struggle. In short, there simultaneously appeared a necessity to establish a civilisational structure that was supposed to enable the fulfilment of cultural needs in the traditional bourgeois sense, which was still only an expected future development having in mind the general level of Slovenian cultural

achievement, as well as a very sharp break with the ideological origins of academism, a break that did not hesitate to problematise the fundamental notions of art.

Here, I have in mind Pirnat's reply at the first of the two member meetings. The reply was his only contribution to the discussion, but at the same time it was the point of the most radical auto-problematisation of art in the Partisan movement (that is, an instance of the liminal position of which Močnik writes). I am quoting here the corresponding part of the discussion initiated by Marjan Tepina, an architect who worked in Le Corbusier's Parisian atelier before the war:

> COMRADE TEPINA: *I see a paradox here. There is a lot of talk here about how the gap between intellectuals and masses has been bridged. We can't claim that, however, because we need to acknowledge that our group consists exclusively of people from Ljubljana. And we also have to acknowledge that among us there are no artists formed in the People's Liberation Struggle. We deny those artists. But we should support the new, self-made artists.*
> COMRADE JAKAC: *Indeed, any art, but not dilettantism.*
> COMRADE PIRNAT: *Who legitimises us as art? We brought our legitimisation with us from Ljubljana. But what do the people have to say about that?*[5]

In principle, this last question could be understood as a simple usage of the rhetoric of the time and as a hint to the need to lower the bar, to make a populist adjustment to uneducated 'masses'. But Pirnat's subtle art, accomplished with the use of a well-thought-out and extremely purified artistic technique, does not allow for such an interpretation. It is more likely a case of the same auto-problematisation that was

5
Comrade Jakac: Božidar Jakac, a prominent Slovenian painter, a personal friend of Tito since 1943; in 1944, he became the president of the Slovenian Art Club, and after the war, the first dean of the Art Academy in Ljubljana.

so significant for the historical avant-garde: a case of subverting the ruling symbolic foundations, not in the sense of Pirnat giving up on his art and advocating dilettantism, but perhaps in the sense of creating awareness of the fundamental uncertainty, risk, 'liminality of the situation', which is the condition of every symbolic production of the new. When Pirnat realises that the ongoing radical transformation of the social infrastructure is taking away any assurance of legitimacy for what he does, he does not give up on his work; on the contrary, this very realisation is what enables him—in compliance with the imperative that it is impossible not to demand of the artist what is demanded of any other individual—to conceive of his work as a contribution to the symbolic production of the new and as partaking in revolutionary activity.

At the second meeting, where the artists kept silent about their positions, there occurred in the polemic between Vidmar and Kidrič something that could be understood as Vidmar advocating art, and Kidrič trying to discipline it. But if we read Kidrič from the perspective pointed out by Gerlovič, we cannot overlook the possibility that it is actually Kidrič who in the given historical situation speaks *for the artists*[6] much more radically than Vidmar, as he problematises the bourgeois conception of art and demystifies the anti-intellectualist conception of artistic practice. Granted, we can read everything that he says as a rhetorical tactic of pacification in a dispute for which in that phase of the revolutionary process the time has not yet come to be solved by other, administrative, means; but Kidrič does for a brief moment open up a space in which it is possible—even if only briefly and 'quietly'—to recognise a real, emancipatory potential (emancipatory also for art itself) that was felt so sensitively by Gerlovič, an artist who was always extremely emphatic about the freedom of art.

6
Interestingly, in that particular historical situation certain cultural workers' advocating of absolute art as something that even during the war should remain untouched in its essence by politics could in relation to the concrete artistic production of the time function as ideological censorship at least as powerful as the direct demand to completely politicise this production.

What is Kidrič's key emphasis when he dismisses the question about the Partisan birch-tree and transfers it to another level? It is the assumption that the bourgeois ideology of absolute art, advocated in accordance with his aesthetics by Vidmar, has itself the effect of a kind of ideological dictate *analogous* to the propagandistic dictate of the Partisan birch-tree. Furthermore, Kidrič's assumption is that this bourgeois ideology occurs at the same level of ideological struggle for hegemony in the space of the ruling culture; that the thesis about the non-ideological nature of art is an *ideological* thesis—and that at the same time the very subordination of art to propagandistic *dictate* deprives art of its ideological charge; that it is precisely in its political and ideological dimension that art can occur *beyond* dictate; and that this very fact obliges art to participate in the emancipatory political project. There is no difference between the metaphysical and the propagandistic dictate. Among other things, the transcript contains the following statement by Kidrič:

> *The universal human values are absolute, but nevertheless they are relative because they were impossible to realise. At the same time it is clear that our struggle eliminates this opposition between the absolute and the universally human. It eliminates the opposition, so to speak, between the masses and the intelligentsia. . . .*
> *Our struggle, our time, must connect the artist to the people.* Art cannot be decreed neither by the People's Liberation birch-tree, nor by absolute art. *So it is my opinion that this debate is unnecessary. (My emphasis.)*

The discussion is therefore not about the Partisan birch-tree *contra* bourgeois culture but, on the contrary, about the fact that the Parti-

7
Kidrič demands here, from a position of power and in the name of the desire to make art politically co-creative, something that actually meant the depoliticisation of art because the 'realisation' of politics was taken to be a static fact rather than a process that should be constantly open to criticism. Such a conservative position was very powerful in the post-war cultural politics. In those times, the following platitude was often repeated: by participating in the People's Liberation Struggle, art has fulfilled its crucial political role and can now finally enjoy the freedom of its autonomy, which it can most clearly express by supporting the ruling politics; art does not have to worry about the rest, and should stay away from the problems that have been solved once and for all. It is interesting that it was precisely this ideological tendency that was farcically reconstructed in the 1990s, after Slovenia declared independence. At the time, many representatives of the ruling culture argued that after the Slovenian thousand-year-old dream had come true, and after totalitarianism had finally ended, literature did not have to be politically engaged anymore, as it was awarded once and for all its natural →

san birch-tree theory and the ideology of the eternal bourgeois culture share the same the mental horizon. For Kidrič, the difference between art and propaganda is in the fact that propaganda operates 'more roughly and generalises things'. There is then no opposition between art and propaganda for him, but a distinction; and *this distinction* is that to which the specific ideological and political effect of art is tied: a theatre piece depicting the opposing ideological sides as black and white would be, according to Kidrič, 'weak not only artistically, but also politically'.

→ space of pure aesthetics. How ironic, and symptomatic of their historical amnesia, that these representatives of the new ideological order simply repeated the argument used by the conservative tendency of the post-war government structure when it tried to depoliticise the role of art in World War II!

Once we realise that the ideology of absolute art, too, is a type of decreeing, it becomes clear that *the very logic that abolishes the bourgeois conception of art simultaneously abolishes the possibility of a 'decree by the people's liberation birch-tree'*. The demarcation line of class struggle is thus drawn not between the two sides of this opposition, but between the opposition itself and the space that opens up *beyond* it.

It is true, however, that it is possible to read Kidrič's statement as part of tactics in the Party strategy to assume hegemony in the sphere of cultural politics and to discipline the artists. Kidrič even explicitly mentions their discipline. Moreover, his final emphasis[7] can be understood not only as a command, but also as a ban: 'What is the artist's relation to politics? One of a demand for new politics. And as soon as the demanded politics is realised, it is its right that the artist supports it.' There is an impression that a certain door, only just opened, was now being closed. It is precisely the moment of openness, the distinction between the intention contained in the argumentation itself and the intention that had instrumentalised this argumentation, that I want to address here. The intention contained in the logic of argumentation, independently of the instrumentalising intention, was able to open the space of possibility of transformation. Quite a few statements made

by Kidrič at the meeting show us very clearly that Kidrič here already talks from the position of power. But while doing so, he still relies on the argumentation that belongs to an ideological project that is *in its origins* a radically emancipatory project. His thought should be read in its internal tension in which only the break with the bourgeois logic of art, problematic for him from the standpoint of art itself,[8] enables him—precisely beyond *advocating* art—to invoke art in its transformative potential *beyond* decreeing, even though it is possible to conceive of this very gesture as a tactical move intended to instrumentalise art. *It is essential that we do not overlook this distinction*. If we fail to perceive it, the *ideological* potential of a large part of the Partisan cultural production cannot be grasped as a break at all, given its continuity of style, which in visual art relates to the pre-war socially critical figural art in the tradition of Expressionism and New Objectivity.

If we are to discuss this break here, one thing needs to be emphasised (and has already been emphasised by Močnik): the *real* break occurs precisely at the moment of openness that I tried to thematise, and not, say, in the sense that it also implies a continuity with it in later production. As early as the summer of 1945, the promise of the new in art, related to the transformation of the world and recognised by Gerlovič in Kidrič's intervention in the Slovenian Art Club debate in Črnomelj, could seem like something outdated. It is enough to read Miško Kranjec's text in the catalogue of the June 1945 exhibition of Slovenian Partisan artists to understand the scope of the change: Kranjec seems to be apologising on behalf of those who have been inappropriately expecting complete newness, and says that culture is not really something that could function one way today, and the other tomorrow.[9] (The problem, of course, is the fact that in this case 'today' and 'tomorrow' were not just any 'today' and 'tomorrow'. The epochal

8
He introduces his treatment of that problem in the following way:

> *Behind the defence of the freedom of art there often hides the lack of artistic talent.*

For Kidrič, artistic talent implies a certain level of openness to the binding social issues, a certain readiness for political engagement.

9
See Kranjec; incidentally, that exhibition was the last activity of the Slovenian Art Club.

revolutionary break achieved by the People's Liberation Struggle was silenced by the very logic of uttering such a statement: it was reduced to a normal, usual sequence of hours between 'today' and 'tomorrow'.)

III

The encounter with the Partisan art is an encounter with a revolutionary moment that has opened a gap in the sequence between 'today' and 'tomorrow', thus producing the space for transformation. It is this gap that also constantly traverses the Partisan artistic production itself. If we can look for the ideological charge, the emancipatory potential, the historical break of the Partisan artistic production neither in the possibility of its reductive identification with mere propaganda, nor in its reduction to an 'innocent' aesthetic sphere, perhaps we can discover the ideological charge, the emancipatory potential and the historical break precisely in the *relationship* between the 'propagandistic' and the 'artistic' (the artistic in the sense of the Marcusean 'aesthetic dimension',[10] which I conceive of here as being diametrically opposite to aestheticisation). It was precisely in the context of propaganda that the emphasis on the specific aesthetic dimension was not apolitical, but *became* instead extremely political. And it was in the context of the specific aesthetic dimension that the choice of propaganda *received* its specific political charge. What is essential is the way in which this relationship was established.

It is interesting to read here what Filip Kumbatovič Kalan, the organiser of the professional Slovenian National Theatre on the Liberated Territory and a participant in the Črnomelj debate, wrote in 1975 about the painter France Mihelič, once again in relation to the Slovenian Art Club debates:

10
'[L]iterature is not revolutionary because it is written for the working class or for "the revolution." Literature can be called revolutionary in a meaningful sense only with reference to itself, as content having become form. The political potential of art lies only in its own aesthetic dimension. Its relation to praxis is inexorably indirect, mediated, and frustrating. The more immediately political the work of art, the more it reduces the power of estrangement and the radical, transcendent goals of change.' (Marcuse XII–XIII)

> *In this deafening noise of big words and dishonest acts, sometimes a memory of the romantic discussions about the value or non-value of art that we carried on so often in the Partisan days of long ago flashes in my mind. And then it seems to me that we were certainly not so very romantic as it is claimed today by those who do not know that we saw things for what they were, and ultimately for what they still are today. We saw them as such because life forced us to see them as such. I can still hear the exciting chord of peasant wisdom and worldly irony in the wheezy Partisan baritone of France Mihelič speaking about the reasons why the Slovenian wartime graphic art was the way it was. We were in Semič, in the hospitable Bela Krajina, at the founding general assembly of the Slovenian Art Club during the first days of October 1944. Every art has a deeply ethical significance, he said. Those were the words of a painter who was hardly the favourite of the many impatient activists of the time, because of his fondness for spreading the unpleasant truth. And so, spoke on the calm voice of the painter to his armed comrades, every true art is antimilitarist. Nothing can change this, not even the fact that we are at war, at war against crime and tyranny. But he did not stop at this simple conclusion. Not only in the words he spoke, but also in that chord of wisdom and irony, one could distinctly hear that he wasn't ready to cut anyone any slack, be it in times of war or of peace. He spoke of how the revolution and its aspirations were often represented unconvincingly and were formally inadequate, that there appeared everywhere the so-called social kitsch, and that many people, sharply revolutionary in their content, expressed this content in a sharply conservative, and yes, even dilettante style. He spoke against empty declarativeness, against the superficial art of David's glitzy decorativeness, which merely followed an external dictate rather than expressing the artist himself and his true convictions. (Kalan 206–7)*

Is all this about a simple affirmation of art as something that is timeless, eternal, independent from any historical context, unchangeable? Is it perhaps, in opposition to the politicisation advocated by the 'impatient activists', about the affirmation of *apolitical* art? Obviously not, as Kalan stresses the *political* effect of Mihelič's position: it is *antimilitarist*, that is, *explicitly political*; which also means that there exists a socially critical element at the very moment of the establishment of the new social relations. It was precisely as an artist who was aware of the antimilitarist dimension of art that Mihelič decided to create propaganda material for the liberation and revolutionary struggle after he joined the Partisan movement; among other things he made the most brilliant (*and extremely antimilitarist*) Partisan propaganda cartoons, full of wild, grotesque, sometimes even dark humour. *His awareness of the fundamental incompatibility of art and war* was the very reason that led him, at the moment when that was necessary, to make a conscious decision to become a militant of the people's liberation and revolutionary struggle—and it was only by consciously and radically entering the space of this incompatibility that he, as an artist, was able to assert the power of resistance inherent to the antimilitarist potential of art. It was by consciously deciding to create propaganda that Mihelič most drastically opposed any aestheticisation of war (aestheticisation so significant for fascism). He constantly *condemned* the attempts to aestheticise the war. Even in his less propagandistic, more personal Partisan works he opposed his *condemning* images of ruins to the romantic aesthetic of ruins that was so close to fascism. It is *in this* that his Partisan art is at its most political. Simultaneously, *only this* allows Mihelič not only to preserve his artistic sensibility undiminished in times of war, but to increase it. His burned trees are not *emblems* of war, but its *victims*.

This quality makes them the ideal opposite of the Partisan birch-tree doctrine: if the Partisan birch-tree is about the claim that because of the war trees are not important in themselves any more but only as an *emblem* of the war, then Mihelič maintains that trees are important precisely in their concreteness and foreignness and that the very standpoint from which we become aware of their importance is also the standpoint from which we can resist the attempt at any *aestheticisation* of war devastation.

The very assertion that 'every real art is antimilitarist' is a case of extreme politicisation of the consciousness about art *precisely in the sense* in which art is (or, can be) the freest.

It was this consciousness that demanded two things at the same time: the break with the bourgeois identification of the aesthetic dimension with aestheticisation (fascism and Nazism were ravaging the world in the very name of the total aestheticisation of life and the 'spreading of high culture') and the defence of culture and its best tradition *against* the fascist and Nazi devastation, the defence by means of this very break, that is, by way of problematising the fundamental ideological tenets of bourgeois culture, in the sense in which Pier Paolo Pasolini later claimed that only revolutions can save the tradition. The Partisan art was constantly created under the presupposition that by fighting fascism it was in fact rescuing the emancipatory potential of cultural tradition, the presupposition that was constantly and explicitly emphasised in the international anti-fascist movement ever since the Spanish Civil War and the congresses for the defence of culture. The Slovenian Partisan culture was created by following the trajectory traced by the international anti-fascist movement—and simultaneously, in the context of that movement, its importance stood out on an international scale.

The radical problematisaton of art—art in the bourgeois sense—was *necessary* in the People's Liberation Struggle precisely because of the fundamental incompatibility of the aesthetic dimension and war. And it is from this break that the Partisan art, which was at its most intensive at the moment it *addressed* this incompatibility, *had to be created* and *could be created*.

Fascism and Nazism, on the other hand, presupposed the perfect compatibility of art and war. Moreover, they equated war and aesthetics. The cruellest of their acts were committed in the name of total aestheticisation. And it was precisely in the name of total aestheticisation that they were actually *destroying* art and culture. Walter Benjamin's notion of aestheticisation of politics[11] goes to the heart of the matter. When we read the last official reports by Germans from the Stalingrad hell, written moments before their breakdown, we can recognise that the aestheticisation intensifies as the hell gets worse: Wagnerian aesthetics, enchantment with fire, smoke and ruins, allusions to the Nibelungs (for primary sources, see Piekalkiewicz). But even at the moment of cataclysm there is no problematisation of aestheticisation: the cataclysm is its final fulfilment.

As for the Slovenian Home Guard movement, even a superficial overview of its propaganda makes it clear that the movement, or more broadly, White Guardism, was evidently a fascist ideology, a 'native', Slovenian variety of fascism—which is what gets systematically forgotten today; of course, I do not wish to derive from this fact the individual responsibility of the members of the movement as a military formation; they were themselves in relation to that ideology largely victims of their leadership, which had produced it. In this movement, too, we can find a very perverse fascist aestheticisation, even though in comparison to the bombastic style of the German Nazis the sentimental Home Guard

11
"The masses have a right to changed property relations; fascism seeks to give them expression in keeping these relations unchanged. The logical outcome of fascism is an aestheticizing of political life." (Benjamin 121)

aestheticisation seems very humble. War is not aestheticised by way of beating on drums in the name of Nibelungian or Siegfriedian heroism, but by way of representing its physical, destructive fire as the heart of the warming spiritual fire of God, in harmony with the homestead tradition. Hence the aestheticisation of, say, Christmas imagery[12] or the rural idyll, all heartily seasoned with racism:[13] everything strives to maintain the illusion of the intimate sphere of 'beauty' and 'good' as *untouched* by ideology. *While the Partisan art was producing radically antimilitarist messages by engaging in militant action, the Home Guard was producing extremely militarist messages by perversely cultivating the appearance of the pious and humble 'depths of the heart' untouched by current events.* (It was this very ideology that finally drove the Home Guard to make the disgraceful oath to Hitler, which was in turn no obstacle for the 'intimate' expectation of Allied victory.) Granted, poems by France Balantič, a poet who was killed as a Home Guard fighter, were certainly not written with the intention to become what could be called 'Home Guard poetry'; moreover, when the unfortunate poet became a Home Guard fighter, he stopped writing entirely. Yet it is typical that after Balantič's death it was quite simple to use his poetry as Home Guard propaganda. For it was precisely its aestheticised 'non-ideology' that was the necessary element that the ideology of the White Guard needed to legitimise itself. What happened in the Partisan movement was exactly the opposite: the problematisation of the fundamental points of the aestheticist conception of art and its role in a given socio-political situation was what made the Partisan art *possible*.

The paradigmatic illustration of this principle occurred as early as the so-called cultural silence of 1941: by demanding of Slovenian cultural workers not to collaborate with the official, that is, the occupiers' cultural institutions, the Liberation Front found a way *not* to silence culture.

12
In Vinko Žitnik's poem *Domobrančev pomenek z Božičkom* (Home Guard's Conversation with Santa Claus) the home guard addresses Santa Claus, cheering: 'Oh how poor you are, my child sweet and homeless, my baby heavenly and penniless! / Come into me, in my warming heart you will find the manger and the stables!', etc.; and Santa Claus replies: 'Oh trust in me, the new world is in blood, in fire by my hand created!', concluding with the following lines: 'Oh, that you may fight bravely, my soldier, and burn in your love for me! / I brought fire to the world and wish all catches it indeed!' (Žitnik; in the original: 'O kako si beden, sladki moj brezdomček, moj nebeški revček! / Pridi vame, v mojem gorkem srcu najdi jaslice in hlevček! … O zaupaj vame: moja roka nov svet v ognju, krvi ustvarja! … O, le bori hrabro se, vojščak moj. In v ljubezni gori zame! / Ogenj sem na svet prinesel in kako želim, da ves svet vname!')

13
Not only did the Home Guard ideologues constantly place the anti-Partisan fight within the Nazi, racist context of what Leon Rupnik, the leader of the Home Guard movement, called the 'war between Judaism and humanity', but in the excesses of their propaganda →

In that same sense should be understood the demand *to suspend love in order to still be able to love*—to love, without resorting to the illusion that the intimate sphere is untouched by the political, the very illusion that serves as the ideological pillar of militarist ideologies: 'Crush the love inside you— / you who love the new world!' ('V sebi zatri ljubezen— / kdor ljubiš novi svet!').[14] This seems like an extremely harsh appeal, but it was its inexorable bluntness that made it radically ethical. It was precisely the fidelity to this appeal—the radical fidelity in which the very adherence to the appeal discovers its limits, the radical fidelity supplemented by 'unfaithfulness', that is, by the manifestation of love that was *not* possible to crush—that made possible the Partisan *love* poem, which was not simply an aestheticisation but was in its aesthetic dimension deeply political (I am thinking primarily of Kajuh's poems here). The concluding verse of the first poem in Kajuh's cycle *Ljubezenske* (Love Poems) can be read as a direct reply to Bor: 'And yet in my heart I could not / shatter such a poem!' ('A vendar nisem mogel v srcu / te-le pesmi streti!'). In the way in which the poem and love break through the ethically motivated attempt at their shattering, Kajuh's position is related to the position of someone whom he admired very much—Vladimir Mayakovsky (225), who in his propaganda work, as he states in the testament-poem *Vo ves' golos* (*At the Top of My Voice*), had consciously 'set [his] heel / on the throat / of [his] own song' ('stanovjas' / na gorlo / sobstvennoj pesne'). But this very act is what *gave* his poem a voice; Mayakovsky's statement needs to be read in the context of the fact that he had *not* reduced his poetry to propaganda.

(On the other side, the most important thing for the Home Guard propagandists and ideologues was that Home Guard fighters remain, even when they kill, 'free of bad thoughts', that their souls continue

→ they identified communism with 'Orientalism' and 'Asianness', going even so far as representing the Slovenian Partisans as a movement through which the domestic communists and internationalists brought the violent non-Slovenians and even 'Asians' into the country. (This was, of course, one of the rhetorical mechanisms designed to aid the Nazi collaborationists in their attempt to map their fight against Slovenian Partisans as a collective fight of the 'new Europeans' against foreigners.)

14
This is the final verse of Matej Bor's poem *V novi svet* (Into the New World): see Bor.

to feel Catholic, pure, and full of blessed forgiveness. Moreover, when the 'ideal' Home Guard fighter, as imagined by the propaganda, shoots at the Partisans he is filled with Christmas inner peace and goodwill, while praying perversely to baby Jesus to save the Partisans' souls and touch their misled hearts with his baby fingers [see, e.g., Mejač].)

Therefore, when we discuss the Partisan art we must think simultaneously the break with aestheticisation (aestheticisation as the very principle of the bourgeois isolation of art) and the power of resistance inherent to the aesthetic dimension, which is constituted only *in this very break with aestheticisation*. The aesthetic dimension should *in this constellation* be seen as the very opposite of aestheticisation, as the resistance to aestheticisation. It was the problematisation of the bourgeois conception of art that gave this aesthetic dimension of the Partisan artistic production its ideological charge, which, even insofar as it *is* propaganda, increases not with the degree of *reduction* to propaganda (because the perfect *reduction* to propaganda *is* really a form of aestheticisation) but, on the contrary, with the degree of sensibility, with the power of enduring in the engaged position, in the 'existential' range described so subtly by Rosa Luxemburg in her prison letters. ❦

— *Translated by Hrvoje Tutek*

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Povzetek

Povod za ta članek je bila razstava *Partizanski tisk / The Partisans in Print*, ki jo je Donovan Pavlinec leta 2004 postavil za ljubljanski Mednarodni grafični likovni center. Članek se odziva predvsem na ključni tekst kataloga razstave, tj. na članek Rastka Močnika o partizanski simbolni politiki (nova verzija katerega je izšla v tej reviji). Močnik v tem članku reaktivira program partizanske umetnosti, s tem ko njegove učinke poveže z učinki sodobne, izrazito politične umetnosti. Po njem novi interes za partizansko umetnost ne izhaja iz nekakšne nove recepcije teh umetnin onkraj socialistične ideologije, pač pa, nasprotno, iz dejstva, da lahko šele danes prepoznamo njihov specifični ideološki potencial. Ta po Močniku tako in tako ni bil nikdar zvedljiv na vladajočo ideologijo: v enostrankarskem socializmu je bila antifašistična umetnost ne le vir njegove legitimacije, ampak predvsem ključna forma upora proti njemu, saj je opozarjala na njegovo utemeljenost v prelomnosti partizanske politike.

Toda v čem je sploh bila ta prelomnost? Prav Močnikov odgovor na to vprašanje se zdi najbolj problematičen. Po njem je bila partizanska umetnost prelomna s svojim anti-esteticističnim sprejetjem propagandizma, predvsem t. i. doktrine partizanske breze, po kateri niti podoba breze ne more biti umetnina, če breza ni prestreljena ali če ob njej ne sloni puška. Močnik v partizanski brezi vidi primer modernega postopka akuzmatizma, s tem pa podeli status umetniškega postopka nečemu, kar sploh ni bilo podano kot postopek, temveč kot diktat. Zato Močnik tudi ne upošteva dejstva, da je že v partizanskih razpravah partizanska breza obveljala za diktat in s tem eksces. Obravnavana je bila kot vulgarizacija – in ne kot zaželena transformacija – prevladujočega esteticističnega razmerja med umetnostjo in ideologijo.

Močnikov članek, ki je prelomen prispevek k proučevanju partizanske umetnosti, saj to obravnava z vidika njene relevantnosti za današnjo umetnost in kulturo, je torej lahko izhodišče premisleka o politični razsežnosti partizanske umetnosti in estetike. Ta problematika sicer ni problematika partizanske breze, je pa vsekakor povezana z vprašanji, postavljenimi v partizanski obravnavi in končni zavrnitvi doktrine partizanske breze. Problematičnost te doktrine je v tem, da vsako podrejanje umetnosti ideologiji paradoksno blokira sam ideološki naboj umetnosti (tako kot buržoazno esteticistično postavljanje umetnosti nad ideologijo zgreši sam umetniški naboj umetnosti). Tega se je zavedal tudi Boris Kidrič, vodilna osebnost partizanskega gibanja v Sloveniji in predsednik prve slovenske povojne vlade, ko je leta 1944 bistveno prispeval k argumentirani zavrnitvi doktrine partizanske breze.

Tukajšnji članek tako poskuša na podlagi zgodovinskega gradiva podati izhodišča za odgovor na vprašanje, kako je bila umetniška in kulturna transformacija, ki jo prelomno oriše Močnik, dejansko realizirana.

Miklavž Komelj

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Function of the Signifier "Totalitarianism" in the Constitution of the "East Art" Field' (in Retracing Images: Visual Culture after Yugoslavia*, ed. Daniel Šuber and Slobodan Karamanić, Brill, 2012). English translations of his poetry have been published in* The Iowa Review, Inventory *and* jubilat*. He has received national awards for his poetry, his essays and his doctoral dissertation on the fourteenth-century Tuscan art.*

A Further Note on the Partisan Cultural Politics

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This short essay returns to the author's earlier article on the Partisan symbolic production and to Miklavž Komelj's response to it (both articles appear in this volume). Komelj argues that by rejecting a certain type of propagandism, Slovenian Partisan artists and ideologues successfully repudiated the instrumentalisation of art to protect authentic creativity. This, however, can already be read in mainstream Slovenian literary historiography. As such, Komelj's argument misses the fact that Slovenian Partisan art effectively solved the contradictory position of the various avant-garde groups as it retained their political project but not their rootedness in the depoliticised bourgeois culture. And the way the Partisan art broke out of this depoliticised culture was by not shying away from propagandism, which at the same time allowed it to realise the politics of the Slovenian strand of The New Objectivity.

SLOVENIAN PARTISAN ART, THE AVANT-GARDE, THE NEW OBJECTIVITY, YUGOSLAV SOCIALISM, BOŽIDAR JAKAC, MILE KLOPČIČ, NIKOLAJ PIRNAT

В статье коротко представлен предыдущий текст автора о символической продукции словенских партизан, и проанализирован отзыв Миклавжа Комеля на этот текст (оба текста вошли в настоящий сборник). По мнению Комеля, словенские партизанские художники и идеологи, отвергнув определённый тип пропагандизма, успешно отказались от идеологизации искусства и таким образом защитили подлинное творчество. Но эта точка зрения, будучи весьма конвенциональной, не учитывает того, что партизанские художники в Словении разрешили противоречие авангарда: они сохранили его политический проект, а не его укоренённость в деполитизованной буржуазной культуре. Это преодоление рамок деполитизованной культуры партизанам удалось именно благодаря смелому принятию пропангандизма, с помощью которого они в то же время осуществили и политику словенского варианта Новой вещественности.

СЛОВЕНСКОЕ ПАРТИЗАНСКОЕ ИСКУССТВО, АВАНГАРД, НОВАЯ ВЕЩЕСТВЕННОСТЬ, ЮГОСЛАВСКИЙ СОЦИАЛИЗМ, БОЖИДАР ЯКАЦ, МИЛЕ КЛОПЧИЧ, НИКОЛАЙ ПИРНАТ

Mainstream Slovenian literary historiography presents the debate about the doctrine of the so-called Partisan birch-tree, according to which even a well drawn birch-tree cannot be a work of art if there is no rifle leaning against it or if it is not pierced by a burst shot, as a successful repudiation of a vulgar instrumental attitude to the arts by the defenders of authentic artistic creativity, a victory of artistic freedom decisively backed by the political leadership of the Slovenian resistance movement.[1] The episode deserves to be re-examined since it indicates important political processes during the liberation struggle and socialist revolution in Yugoslavia, while also presenting an original and surprising solution to the contradiction of artistic avant-gardes. The general avant-garde project is to break out of the aesthetic closure and to intervene directly in historical processes. Artistic practices are not able to accomplish this project unless they encounter a political movement equally committed to transform history. At the point of this encounter, however, avant-garde practices reveal themselves caught within the bourgeois 'autonomous' sphere of culture with its specific elitist idiosyncrasies,[2] and masses appear to be trapped within the mechanisms of dominating ideologies. The encounter seems doomed to fail. And yet Yugoslav and in particular Slovenian Partisan artistic practices and cultural politics produced a solution to this contradiction.

Since its foundation in April 1941, the Liberation Front in Yugoslavia committed itself to constructing a 'state within the state',[3] a counter-state that would comprise not only military apparatuses but also juridico-political apparatuses (institutions of direct and indirect democracy, legislation, courts of law, monetary emission, etc.) and ideological apparatuses (radio and print media, elementary and secondary schools, scientific institutions, national theatre, etc.). Ideological effort (or 'cultural work', as it was called) integrated in a specific way the

1
See Glušič-Krisper and Kmecl; Smolej; Bernik and Dolgan. Dissenting views come mostly from the active participants in the liberation struggle. For a recapitulation, see Komelj; Komelj embraces the established view and refreshes it with a shot of contemporary French philosophy.

2
For the historical constitution of the so-called autonomous sphere of culture, and for its consequences for the present, see Breznik, 'La borsa' and Breznik, 'General Skepticism'.

3
The term was launched by Boris Kidrič, leader of the Slovenian resistance, in 1942. For a historical materialist analysis of the construction of the revolutionary state through armed liberation struggle, see Centrih.

sharp pre-war debates on the intellectual left (see Lasić) and re-directed them towards the common goal of national and social liberation, while preserving the specificities of various politico-ideological orientations within the movement.[4] In Slovenia, revolutionary cultural work broke the ideological monopoly of the Catholic Church (compromised by the collaboration of the high ecclesiastical hierarchy) and progressively achieved hegemony across popular masses.

The debate about the role of artistic practices within the liberation movement was intensified by a circular letter issued in January 1944 by the Propaganda Department of the Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Units of Slovenia (see Visočnik and Pavlinec). This invitation to contribute to an anthology of paintings contained the statement that was to galvanise a debate that until then had been dispersed and latent: 'We leave you complete freedom at the selection of the motive. … Excluded are still life and landscapes typical of the work of petit-bourgeois painters'. The letter was signed by the head of the visual propaganda section, Nikolaj Pirnat, who certainly was not an uneducated propagandist. The painter Božidar Jakac riposted with a linocut entitled *Still Life*, a bold expressionist rendition of a railway viaduct destroyed by the Partisans (who at that time had just destroyed the Otovec viaduct).

4

Liberation Front is not a coalition … [it is] a bloc of Com-Party with the middle strata and other patriotic elements, transforming itself into a unified movement under the leadership of the Party.

This is what Edvard Kardelj, a member of the politbureau of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, reportedly said, on 17 January 1943, to Josip Broz—Tito, the supreme commander and general secretary of the Party; quoted in Centrih 183.

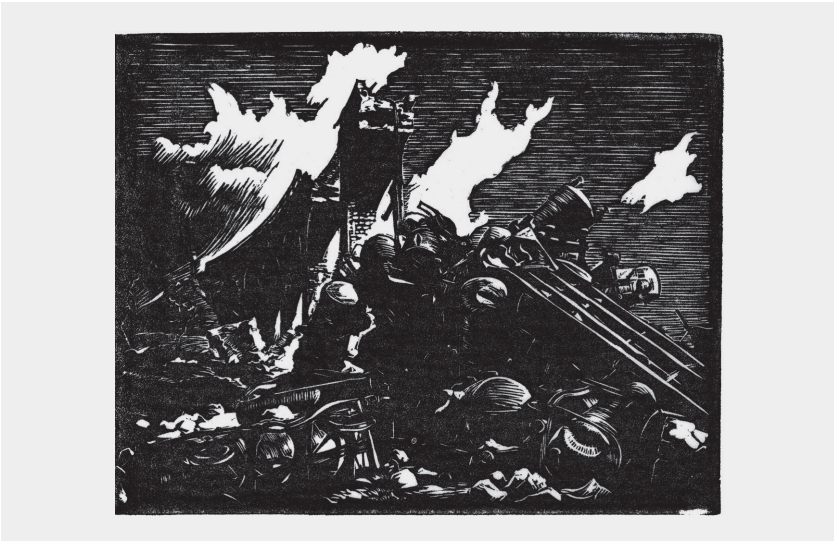

FIG. 1 →
Božidar Jakac,
Still Life, 1944

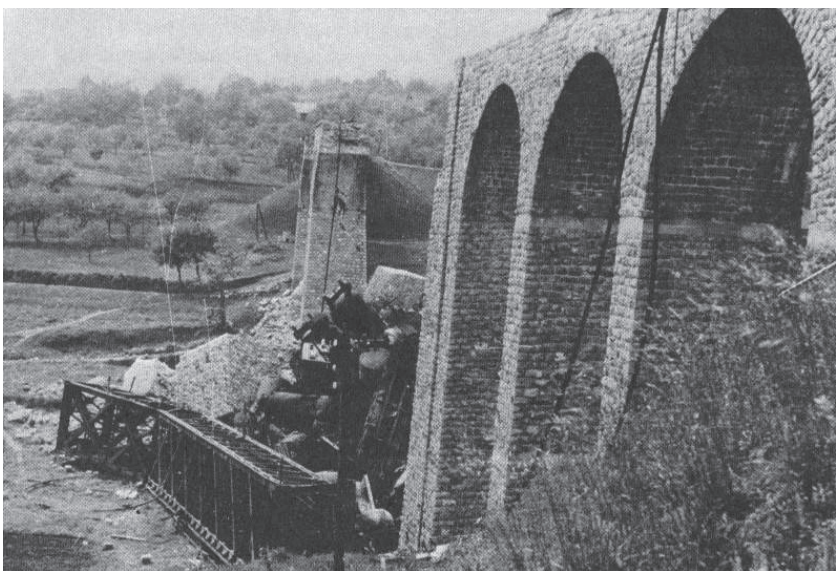

FIG. 2 →
The Otovec viaduct,
destroyed by the
Partisans on
14 September 1943

Jakac took the ideological form of a standardised mass visual product, reportage photography, as the material for his aesthetic elaboration. By then, this was a well-established modernist procedure; more importantly, reportage photography was also a form familiar to the target public of the engraving. Jakac established the meeting point of the modernist aesthetics and popular sensibility, and used it as the material of his own elaboration. Jakac's elaboration proceeded by three reversals: first, expressionist stylisation with apocalyptic suggestions[5] is a reversal of the Christian ideology (what is apocalypse for the enemy is victory for the Partisans); second, the reversal of the modernist fascination with technology affirms the superiority of the Partisan dedication and wit over sheer technical force;[6] and finally, the title reverses a 'bourgeois' genre—still life—into what is actually a double polemic: it is a revolutionary appropriation of the opponent's ideological form, and a comradery rebuttal of Pirnat's over-simplification in ideological struggle.

The procedure of reversing or, more generally, transforming and appropriating the established ideological forms of class oppression had actually been developed in Slovenian 'social literature'[7] of the 1930s. Progressive and revolutionary writers of the time refused the established and traditional literary forms and would have logically opted for avant-garde procedures. However, having rejected

5
The assimilation of revolution to apocalypse is a frequent motif in various strands of the avant-garde; in Slovenian poetry of the 1930s, it is often used in a reversed way: apocalypse, the end of the world of suffering and exploitation, is the beginning of the 'new world'. See also the ending of *Matere, ljubice, žene* (*Mothers, Lovers, Wives*), the 1939 poem by Ivo Brnčić ('Matere' 442):

> *But when the sky breaks apart / and when from human blood / a new day finally dawns / … / only then, with laughter and joy, / you mothers, lovers, wives, / … / only then tell us, the deadmen: / Rise now, our loved ones, and behold— / you have become the seed of the world.*
>
> *A ko se razkolje nebo / in ko iz človeške krvi / nov dan se nekoč zazori / … / takrat šele vse nasmejane / matere, ljubice, žene / … / takrat nam, mrličem, povejte: / Vstanite zdaj, ljubi, in glejte— / postali ste seme sveta.*

6
This is a motif formulated particularly by Matej Bor (7) in the poem *Kri v plamenih* (Blood in Flames), which in 1942 he included in his first anthology of resistance poetry:

> *[F]ists are stronger than steel and tanks and bombs / the spirit is ecrasite*
>
> *pesti so močnejše od jekla in tankov in bomb / duh je ekrazit*

7
'Social literature' and 'social art' were local variants of what was internationally generally called neue Sachlichkeit, *or, The New Objectivity.*

the consecrated forms of the dominating cultural ideology, they confronted the question of how to address the masses. The first answer was negative: certainly not with avant-garde extravagance. Blocked by this impossibility, they reverted to the material disseminated among the masses by the hegemonic ideology, especially to the material of the school canon (forms such as the sonnet, consecrated metric and rhyme systems, text-book 'pieces') and to the forms of popular devotion (funeral rites, apocalyptic visions, prayers). Contrary to what one might expect, parody and travesty[8] were only marginally used, and never in direct polemics against the material so elaborated. Rather, artists took hegemonic clichés in their materiality, as material fragments of speech seemingly devoid of meaning, and offered them to the popular audience they wanted to reach as familiar material support for radically innovative secondary elaboration. They used those fragments literally as the 'common ground' upon which, and with which, they constructed new textual formations.[9]

Breaking out of the ivory tower of bourgeois culture[10] entailed the appropriation of its most prominent fragments with the aim of building upon them a new construction whose formative principle was the explicit integration of its own social and historical determination into artistic practice.

For the present purpose, let us define aesthetic practice as a secondary elaboration of ideological material that itself is a more or less spontaneous refraction of social and historical constraints. In this light, practices of the 1930s 'social aesthetics' took popular and prevailing aesthetic forms, genres, motifs as the *ideological* material of their elaboration (a typically modernist procedure), while endeavouring to emancipate themselves from the social and historical determination of their procedures by articulating it as 'artistic tendency'.[11] Practition-

8
Parody and travesty are the simplest procedures of Bakhtinian 'double-voiced discourse' (Bakhtin 185–204); in the 1930s, 'social poets' used them mostly for direct polemical purposes, for instance, to attack the so-called abstract subjectivism of their expressionist contemporaries.

9
In theoretical production, this textual strategy was practiced by Soviet literary theorists Mikhail Bakhtin, Pavel Medvedev and Valentin Vološinov. (See Močnik, 'East-west'.)

10
The 'modern', that is, bourgeois notion of culture (as an autonomous sphere) constitutively takes ideological formations as emancipated from their socio-historical conditions of production and existence. (See Breznik, 'La borsa'.)

11
The question of the 'tendency in art' was widely debated during the 1930s. (See Brnčić, 'Umetnost'.)

ers of 'social art' were perfectly aware that it was the adoption of a political tendency that distinguished them from ordinary avant-garde artists. What is more, by introducing the tendency, 'social artists' accomplished the avant-garde project that ordinary avant-gardes were unable to achieve. For it was the tendency as both recognition of and emancipation from social and historical determination that empowered 'social artists' to break out of the aesthetic closure of bourgeois culture and to intervene into historical processes themselves. But if the tendency opened the dimension of freedom, the material of aesthetic elaboration was a matter of constraint: the ideological material upon which 'social artists' worked was imposed upon them by ideological apparatuses of the capitalist state, namely the school and the church.

However, 'social artists' of the 1930s were not aware of this constraint. They entertained an empiricist notion of their own practice and believed that the 'objects' of their artistic elaboration were 'the breakdown of cultures and civilisations', 'everyday brutal tragedies', 'the ruin of millions of existences', 'the militant optimism of the classes who fight for new human relations' (Brnčić, 'Umetnost'). They believed that artistically strong treatment will make the tendency spring out of any relevant 'object'. Their ultimately bourgeois understanding of their own practice was imposed upon them by the limitation of their historical situation: only marginally connected to the illegal revolutionary political work, their practical existence was caught within the small world of literary journals and intellectual circles.

Progressive artists developed a satisfactory ideological *problématique* of tendency that enabled them to produce distinctive and powerful artefacts. However, they remained caught within an empiricist notion of the 'material'[12] and have not been able to reflect upon their treatment of hegemonic ideological forms. The Partisan practices retroactively

12
Marxist writer Ivo Brnčić ('Umetnost' 326) formulated the notion of tendency as follows:

> *[N]o problematic can be excluded from art. It is not the material which the artist has chosen that matters; what matters is justness of his attitudes, purity of his consciousness, consistence of his method. Such a method will know how to entice from any material irrefutable facts that will enounce a loud and positively tendentious discourse.*

explain this failure: pre-war 'social art' remained enclosed within the 'educated public', where its work on hegemonic ideological forms passed largely unnoticed and was understood as stylistic moderation, 'concreteness' and loyalty to tradition.[13] Artists themselves seem to have focused upon the (empiricist) problem of the 'object', and to have treated the problem of the specific material of aesthetic practice only marginally as a question of their dealing with tradition, without being aware of the class character of tradition. It was only with the armed resistance and revolution that the problem of addressing popular masses imposed itself with urgency. In a very short time, the Partisan artistic practices retraced the itinerary of the pre-war 'social art' and reached beyond its limitations.[14] They radicalised their attitude towards the material of their 'secondary elaboration' and, while occasionally still working on ideological forms of the school-apparatus,[15] they definitely turned towards 'popular' forms. And there were also two important supplementary causes that had over-determined the preference for traditional meters and 'popular' style: first, the lack of paper imposed oral dissemination of poetry, often forcing the authors to memorise their own creations ('This is why the Partisan poets had to rely on highly ordered rhythms, the bearers of memory.' [Javoršek 353]); and second, visual works were distributed as leaflets and posters, and poems were intended for singing.

Objective conditions of struggle constrained the artists to consider seriously the ideological forms which they would have simply repudiated as 'passéist kitsch' in their previous avant-garde years. Also, the older generation of 'social artists' now started to be concerned with the class character of the canon and 'tradition'.[16] The older generation nevertheless viewed with certain dismay the debate triggered by Pirnat's circular: it was one its representatives, the poet and translator

13
This misunderstanding can be inferred to from contemporaneous critical appraisals of 'social literature and art'.

14
Matej Bor is a case in point: he passed from free verse and Mayakovskian style to canonical verse and meter in a matter of months (between 1941–1942), and then on to 'popular' forms in less than a year.

15
Karel Destovnik—Kajuh, while having an extraordinary sense for 'popular' formulation, experimented, for instance, with the Mayakovskian 'stepladder' stanza (see Javoršek 1981: 352); in 1944, Levec published a poem in six elegant elegiac distichs and solved a century long debate about the transfer of classic quantitative metric schemes into Slovenian accentual-syllabic metrics.

16
It was this radicalisation that led Pirnat to reject still life and landscape as 'petit-bourgeois' genres.

Mile Klopčič, who coined the derogatory label 'the Partisan birch-tree'.[17] During the debate Klopčič proposed a reasoning that was the exact opposite of Goebbels's claim about *Volkstum* in the arts:[18] 'There are still people who say that art which is not people's art is no art at all.'[19] This was a way to suggest that 'popular' ideological forms are to be secondarily elaborated, quite as the canonical and traditional forms of the (bourgeois) school ideology need to be re-worked.

Political leadership finished the debate by proclaiming the standard petit-bourgeois view: 'The origin [of art] is the artist. The condition of his creation is his experience … sincere and deep experience.' (Bebler) This position was a stage within the processes that led, after the Liberation, to the composition of the ruling coalition uniting the political bureaucracy as the senior partner and the cultural bureaucracy as the junior partner. The practices of the two bureaucracies and their ideologies differed. Political bureaucracy intensively developed variants of communist ideology and passed from soviet orthodoxy to socialist self-management. And the cultural bureaucracy of ideological state-apparatuses nurtured various versions of nationalism and finally formulated cultural fascism (see Močnik, 'The Balkans'), which served as ideological justification for the destruction of socialist federation, mobilising masses for the post-Yugoslav wars. Compared to all this, the Partisan birch-tree was a far cry indeed. ❦

17
Mile Klopčič was also the designated opponent of Pirnat in the two-night debate organised by the agitation and propaganda department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia in the autumn of 1944 at the Headquarters in Rog. After this debate, the doctrine of the Partisan birch-tree was officially abandoned. Its repudiation was explained by Aleš Bebler, one of the high commanders of the armed struggle. (See Klopčič and Bebler respectively.)

18
'It is not enough that art be only of good quality, it also has to grow from the people… only the art that draws on the whole *Volkstum* can finally be of quality.' (Goebbels to Furtwängler, 11 April 1933; quoted in Brenner.)

19
Mile Klopčič in a letter to the member of the politbureau Vida Tomšič; quoted in Mikuž 177.

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Povzetek

Ta krajši zapis se vrača k avtorjevemu starejšemu članku o partizanski simbolni produkciji in k daljšemu odzivu Miklavža Komelja na ta članek (oba članka sta v posodobljenih različicah izšla v tej reviji). V tem odzivu Komelj nereflektirano povzema institucionalizirano stališče povojnega slovenskega literarnega zgodovinopisja in to stališče zgolj posodablja v govorici sodobne estetske teorije. Po tem konvencionalnem stališču so se slovenske partizanke in partizani v polju umetnosti borili za svobodno umetniško ustvarjanje, pomembno zmago v tem boju pa so dosegli z argumentirano zavrnitvijo t. i. doktrine o partizanski brezi, po kateri niti podoba breze ne more biti umetnina, če breza ni prestreljena ali če ob njej ne sloni puška. Z zavrnitvijo te doktrine naj bi slovenski partizanski umetniki in politiki zavrnili instrumentalizacijo umetnosti in obranili avtentično umetniško ustvarjanje. Kot poudarja Komelj, naj bi bilo prav zato to dejanje izjemno relevantno tudi v današnjem času.

Toda medtem ko je bila doktrina partizanske breze res zavrnjena v imenu avtentičnega umetniškega ustvarjanja, se težko strinjamo, da je prav boj za avtenticizem v umetniški produkciji izjemno relevanten danes, ko je umetnost ravno politična umetnost, ki svojo kritiko usmerja ne le v politično sfero, temveč tudi in najprej v avtenticistični kič, ki prevladuje v njeni lastni, estetski sferi. Še več, z današnjega post-socialističnega gledišča lahko rečemo, da je doktrino partizanske breze in mobilizacijo umetnosti za revolucionarno propagando nasploh ustavilo vodstvo slovenskega narodnoosvobodilnega boja, in sicer na pobudo bivših socialnorealističnih in podobnih umetnikov med partizani, prav ti skupini pa sta si po vojni razdelili oblast kot nadrejena politična in podrejena kulturniška birokracija.

In nasprotno, sama doktrina je ponudila rešitev protislovij ne le socialnega realizma kot slovenske verzije t. i. nove stvarnosti, temveč tudi historičnih avantgard. Doktrina je namreč predpostavljala uporabo modernih postopkov, kakršen je akuzmatizem prestreljene breze, na ljudskem gradivu, znanem iz šolskega kanona in verskih ritualov. S tem je doktrina omogočila izhod iz protislovja socialnega realizma, ki je sicer moderne postopke že v desetletju in pol pred 2. svetovno vojno uporabljal na širokim ljudskim množicam znanem simbolnem gradivu, a tega ni počel v prid politični mobilizaciji ljudskih množic, pač pa v imenu abstraktne politike v tradiciji t. i. kulturnega pesimizma. Z uporabo modernih umetniških postopkov na ljudskem simbolnem gradivu pa je doktrina partizanske breze pokazala tudi na izhod iz protislovja avantgard, ki so sicer že v času pred nastopom socialnega realizma imele radikalen politični projekt, ki je bistveno presegal abstraktno apokaliptičnost kulturnega pesimizma, a kot izhajajoče iz t. i. avtonomne sfere buržoazne kulture tega političnega projekta niso mogle uresničiti brez naslombe na revolucionarno ljudsko gibanje, kakršno je imela na voljo šele partizanska simbolna produkcija.

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The Partisan Art Revisited

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This short essay returns to the author's earlier article-length response to Rastko Močnik's article on the Partisan symbolic production (both articles as well as Močnik's own reply appear in this volume). In the original article, Močnik argues that the art of Slovenian Partisans is an increasingly relevant example of revolutionising bourgeois culture by embracing propagandism. This poses two problems. The first one was addressed in the initial response, where it was shown that propagandism was ultimately rejected by Slovenian Partisan artist and ideologues, as any direct ideologisation of art would paradoxically block the art's ideological potential. And the second problem is that, as shown in this short essay, there is a collectivism to the Partisan art, but it is based on the splitting of the subject between the individual and something irreducible to him or her, not on the subordination of individuals via propaganda.

SLOVENIAN PARTISAN ART, OTON ŽUPANČIČ, KAREL DESTOVNIK—KAJUH, RASTKO MOČNIK

Эта статья является кратким комментарием предыдущего отзыва автора на статью Растка Мочника об искусстве словенских партизан (обе эти статьи, как и отзыв самого Мочника, вошли в настоящий сборник). В первой статье Мочник рассуждает о словенском партизанском искусстве как о всё более релевантном примере антибуржуазного принятия пропагандзима искусством. Здесь возникают две проблемы. Во первых, как показано в первом отзыве на статью Мочника, партизанские художники и идеологи отказались от пропагандизма, так как любая прямая идеологизация искусства парадоксально блокирует его собственный идеологический потенциал. Во вторых, как показано в этой краткой статье, партизанскому искусству действительно свойствен коллективизм, но он возникает не из подчинения индивида пропагандизму, а из расщепления субъекта на индивида и на нечто к индивиду не сводимое.

СЛОВЕНСКОЕ ПАРТИЗАНСКОЕ ИСКУССТВО, ОТОН ЖУПАНЧИЧ, КАРЕЛ ДЕСТОВНИК—КАЮХ, РАСТКО МОЧНИК

> *[The British allies] could not grasp why today, here,*
> *our shepherds were asking for pencils to be able to learn to write.*
>
> — FROM THE WAR DIARY OF YUGOSLAV PARTISAN COMMANDER AND FORMER SURREALIST KOČA POPOVIĆ

It is somewhat embarrassing to re-read one's own texts written several years ago; as for my 2005 debate with Rastko Močnik, it was for me above all part of the preparation for my further work; I consider my critical essay on the exhibition *Partizanski tisk / The Partisans in Print* as the very first draft of my book *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost?* (How to Think the Partisan Art?), which was published in 2009 and is indebted to Močnik's ground-breaking essay 'The Partisan Symbolic Politics' (whose new version appears in this volume) at one crucial point. This point is Močnik's approach to the Partisan art as a new way of inscribing art in the social structuration, as a very specific case of the art's merging with the revolutionary process. Such a view brings the Partisan art in relationship with the historical avant-garde as well as with certain political practices of contemporary art, even though the formal characteristics of some Partisan artefacts may today appear very traditionalist or, in the case of the production by the masses, even unskilful. Močnik's essay constitutes a turning point in the contemporary discussion on the Partisan art in Slovenia: rather than rehashing the old question of how to inscribe this production in the so-called national culture (which, of course, appears, in the eyes of its ideologues, as something far too noble to include the ideologically charged production of Slovenian Partisans), Močnik makes a number of key steps towards a theory of the Partisan art as a radical criticism not only of the national culture but also of the autonomy of art in the bourgeois sense.

However, although I found these premises profoundly inspiring, I also came across certain deficiencies in Močnik's argumentation as I tried to follow the procedure that he himself had formulated as follows: 'If we want to think about [the Partisan culture and art] at their level, we must think radically.' For Močnik's text is more or less speculative, without a close investigation of the material, which results in a somewhat simplified view, which does not acknowledge some of the inner contradictions of the Partisan symbolic production. The Partisan art as it emerged in Yugoslavia in the years 1941–1945 was by no means a monolithic entity; it was full of serious inner tensions and often irreducible individual positions. Against any simplification, I focused my study, which was based on the Partisan archives, precisely on these inner contradictions, which forced the Partisans to question the very possibility of art in the time of armed struggle. I have suggested that these inner tensions — and not some subordination of art to politics — were that which allowed the Partisans to conceptualise the emergence of art out of its own impossibility, as something that touches on the very kernel of the collective Partisan subjectivity; it was the very incompatibility of art and war that corresponded with the utmost inner tension of the revolutionary war, the tension that consisted in an armed struggle against war — against the social conditions that engender war. The political impact of such art is by no means in its conformity with the armed struggle, but in its confrontation with its own impossibility and thus in its tracing of a new horizon of the possible — this is how the logic of artistic creation meets the logic of the Revolution (as in a well-known statement by Rosa Luxemburg according to which nothing is as impossible as the revolution one hour before its outburst, and nothing as natural as the revolution after its first victory).

In this essay, I want to focus on one of Močnik's statements in particular. Močnik offers a very hard alternative: 'Contemporary art is either political art or mere aestheticising kitsch.' One is immediately tempted to reply: What about the political kitsch which is so prosperous in so-called contemporary art? This statement by Močnik forced me, however, to ask myself about the political in relation to art. To this end, I tried to elaborate a distinction between the political and politicisation as well as between the aesthetic and aestheticisation. This distinction allowed me to detect, within the Partisan problematisation of the so-called relative autonomy of art in bourgeois society, articulations of a different, non-bourgeois, intrinsic autonomy of art as a specific mode of the existence of art. This kind of autonomy is indispensable for any revolutionary conceptualisation of art; Lenin's famous statement from 1917 about the necessity of treating revolution as art was certainly not an argument for the aestheticisation of revolution; rather, it addressed a specific way in which the art becomes possible by facing its own impossibility. This is why in the context of the revolutionary Partisan movement the process of artistic creation cannot be subsumed under the realm of culture. And indeed, the link between the revolutionary movement and artistic creation was in this context not limited to the cultural field; it consisted in the very process of creating new revolutionary subjectivity by confronting with the impossible. (In the Yugoslav Partisan movement participated several former surrealists, such as the legendary commander Koča Popović, and the famous pre-war almanac of the Belgrade Surrealists is titled *Nemoguće* [The Impossible].)

So, in my search for the political I have shifted the focus of my book on the Partisan art away from the Partisan manifest politicisation of art (which, of course, cannot be denied) to the political impact of

the (self-)questioning of the very (im)possibility of art as it has been conceptualised within the Partisan movement. I examined the political nature of the very emergence of art in what could be seen as an impossible situation. The Partisan art was politically engaged art *par excellence* — and yet *this was not enough*: the very fact that propagandistic goals did not suffice for the real political impact of this art was clearly observed by such political leaders of the Partisan movement as Boris Kidrič. The Partisan staging of Molière with Baroque costumes made of parachute silk was able to be perceived as a far more revolutionary act than a staging of some propagandistic *agitka* simply because something that had seemed impossible became possible.

For instance, I have closely examined a significant example from the Partisan poetry. The very first (published) Partisan poem in Yugoslavia was written in summer 1941 by Oton Župančič, who was never a Partisan. As a poet (and a superb translator of Shakespeare), Župančič was considered a coryphaeus of Slovenian national culture (even Roman Jakobson has written a short essay about one of his poems: see Jakobson) and had been in the twenties even criticised by the radical Left as a bourgeois poet. But in 1941, Župančič assumed the alias 'Neznani' (The Unknown One) and composed the poem *Pojte za menoj!* (Sing After Me!), a dialog between an anonymous voice representing the collective 'We' and the voice of the poet. The anonymous voice demands from the poet 'a poem that is useful today' ('pesem za današnjo rabo'), which can easily be seen as a utilitarian demand. But the poet cannot accomplish this task without facing the impossibility of his own singing as it burns his throat. The way in which his poem faces its own impossibility is by no means utilitarian, as it questions the very conditions of enunciation in poetry. The poet goes here beyond instrumentalisation; in order to sing a poem adequate to the revolutionary situation, he must no less

than transgress the borders of symbolic order: in the poem he identifies himself with a wolf howling and screeching on the mountain rocks and crying into the wind and to other wolves. (The English-speaking reader could even be reminded here of the terror-inspiring 'lycanthropia' of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*.) Yet this very invocation of wolves howling merges with an evocation of the historical dimension of language: the poem uses fragments of a Slovenian battle-poem of the 1515 peasant uprising (the only event of Slovenian history that was positively evaluated by Marx and Engels). The demand for 'a poem that is useful today' as such is oriented towards the instrumentalisation of poetry, but it cannot be fulfilled in the realm of instrumentalisation; it is fulfilled only through the very opposition to any instrumentalisation, through the inner splitting of subjectivity.

Župančič's was a highly individualised poetic voice. On the other hand, there emerged within the Partisan movement an enormous symbolic production by the masses; people who had never been concerned with art suddenly started to write poems, short plays and stories, but also to draw and act in public manifestations … All this production was systematically supported by the Partisan political leadership. In the Partisan anthologies, we can find such poems as Župančič's *Pojte za menoj!* alongside poems by anonymous poets from the battle units, without any hierarchisation. The awakening of all these new talents was recognised as an unquestionable political *and* artistic event; the very fact that the masses took up organised symbolic production meant that the impossible became possible, as it were. This eruption of the people's creative forces in their symbolic production was interpreted by the leaders of the Partisan movement as a sign of the depth of the revolutionary process and its impact on the collective subjectivity. Hence, this production — regardless of the crudity of its initial articu-

lations—was seen as a far-reaching break in the very structuration of the field of art, as something that would make possible the emergence of great art in the future, a future which this very break had already inscribed in the revolutionary present. Yet such an evaluation did not imply that all this production is art; on the contrary, in the Partisan discussions on art emerged even the question whether the symbolic products of the Partisan movement deserves to be treated as art; in these discussions we can also come across the statements that '[t]he Partisan art does not exist yet'. This tension between nothing and everything (reminiscent of the famous formulation in *The Internationale*) is by itself revolutionary.

Hence the importance of the question posed by Nikolaj Pirnat in the Slovenian Art Club (as quoted in my first piece in this volume): 'Who legitimises us as art? We brought our legitimisation with us from Ljubljana. But what do the people have to say about that?' The very fact that the masses took up symbolic production indicated a shift in the definition of art; yet we should not see this is a shift towards a cheap democratisation of art: the new participation of the masses in artistic production did not mean that everything could be accepted as art but, on the contrary, that the very definition of art had been problematised, starting with everything that has figured as self-evident before the war. And this new criticism implied new self-criticism as well.

This self-criticism went on to become an important symbolic weapon. Karel Destovnik—Kajuh, a revolutionary poet killed as a Partisan fighter and posthumously celebrated as a people's hero, took Mayakovsky's (109) metaphor of pens-as-bayonets—'fork-prongs, / bayonets / are pens are' (nashi per'ya – / shtyk / da zub'ya bil)—and directed them not to the enemy but to the people's hearts as that which must be transformed. In one of his poems, Kajuh calls the new collective

revolutionary subjectivity 'we, the modern Raphaels' ('mi moderni Rafaeli'). These 'modern Raphaels' are the Partisan fighters, and their work as described in the poem is a kind of theatre of cruelty: they paint bloody canvases and they *are* the canvases on which bloody actions are performed. The way in which Kajuh writes Raphael's name in plural can remind us of a thesis from Marx and Engels' *German Ideology* that was explicitly quoted by the Partisan leadership: the Communists do not think that in the new society everyone will produce Raphael's work, yet everyone in whom a raphael is hidden will have a possibility to develop his or her creativity. Yet if we read this formulation, 'modern Raphaels', against the backdrop of Lenin's position on the Revolution-as-art, it is clear that everyone must be included in this new 'raphaelesque' subjectivity. The Partisans are 'modern Raphaels' *qua* fighters. Yet the very idea of the Partisan revolutionary struggle as it was articulated in Yugoslavia included a systematic political, cultural and even artistic awakening of the people, which was also considered as the main specificity of the Partisan fighters compared to the soldiers of bourgeois armies. The same subjectivation that puts such a name as Raphael in plural evokes a revolutionary splitting of the subject that multiplies every individual, making him or her more-than-one through the emancipation of his or her creative forces. Needless to say, all this was somewhat vertiginous. Even those people who were barely literal had to be able to endure and articulate dialectical tensions of the Revolution in order to orientate themselves in a revolutionary situation. Their own symbolic production was an indispensable element of this orientation. Moreover, the Partisan fighters not only wrote poems, but were also asking the following question: 'Why poems?' (We can imagine the astonishment of German soldiers when they found in the bag of a killed Slovenian Partisan his poem with this title.)

So, the real *problématique* of all this production by the masses could not be grasped as an adaptation of art to the popular masses (although such attempts were articulated within the Partisan movement as well), but as participation of these masses in the process of transformation, of the emergence of a new revolutionary subjectivity that demanded of everyone to be more than him- or herself, to be more than one. The idea of collectivism as it was articulated in the Partisan art is based not on subordination of individuals to the collective, but rather on the multiplication of each individual that occurs through the inner splitting of the subject between the individual and something that is irreducible to him or her, a subjectivity which is as such uncountable. If we want to grasp this process of subjectivation, it is not enough to embrace the parameters of so-called committed or engaged art; we have to see this art in the light of the most radical articulations of the subjectivity-as-multiplicity in the twentieth century. From this point of view, I recently tried to read the Partisans with Pessoa (see Komelj, "Fernando Pessoa"). Therre is a kind of paradox here: the reactionary ideologues who tried to inscribe the Partisan art into the field of national culture have considered this symbolic production as a kind of regression from art to pre-modern folklore; yet, seen from a planetary perspective (from which the Partisans insisted on the planetary coordinates of their struggle for what they called the 'new world'), this production reveals itself as condensing the utmost inner tensions of its century by working with nothing against everything and thus creating its own context (something that Monique Wittig, in a completely different context, discovered in the opus of Djuna Barnes).

POST SCRIPTUM. We are taught to perceive the Partisans as speaking 'at the top of their voices'. An extensive study of the material revealed to me, however, also many manifestations of the Partisan art as something subtle, fragile, transient, full of nuances and silences. A most beautiful symbol of this fragility, one that also tells us a lot about the material conditions of this artistic production, is a cyclostyle booklet of Kajuh's poems, produced in a cavern during an offensive and a snowstorm. The pages are barely legible as the snow wetted the paper during the printing. It is profoundly touching to see inscribed on the same paper both human words and snowflakes. ❦

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Povzetek

Ta krajši zapis se vrača k razpravi o simbolni produkciji slovenskih partizank in partizanov, ki jo je avtor sprožil z daljšim odzivom na članek Rastka Močnika, ki je pozneje tudi sam odgovoril na ta odziv s krajšim zapisom (vsi trije teksti so v najnovejših verzijah izšli v tej reviji).

Močnikov izhodiščni članek je razmeroma spekulativen in neodvisen od arhivske vednosti, zato prezre nekatera notranja protislovja slovenske partizanske simbolne produkcije. Po Močniku je ta simbolna produkcija, ki je bržkone predstavljena preveč monolitno, obravnavana kot vse bolj relevanten zgodovinski primer uspešnega revolucioniranja esteticizma t. i. relativno avtonomne buržoazne kulture, to preseganje buržoaznih omejitev pa naj bi partizanska umetnost dosegla z odkritim sprejemanjem propagandizma, zlasti t. i. doktrine partizanske breze.

Ta teza je problematična zaradi dveh razlogov. Prvi je bil obravnavan v omenjenem prvem odzivu na Močnikovo razpravo, ki je pokazal, da so propagandizem slovenski partizanski umetniki in ideologi zavrnili, saj so se zavedali, da sleherno doktrinarno podrejanje umetnosti ideologiji paradoksno blokira sam ideološki potencial umetnosti. Drugi problem pa je v tem, da, kot pokaže tukajšnji krajši zapis, partizanska umetnost ima kolektivistično razsežnost, ki pa ne izhaja iz podrejanja individuov s pomočjo propagande, pač pa iz notranjega razcepa subjekta na individua in subjektiviteto, ki ni reduktibilna na individua in je kot takšna neštevna.

Močnikova izhodiščna razprava je sicer prelomen prispevek k proučevanju partizanske umetnosti, saj to obravnava z vidika njene relevantnosti za današnjo kulturo. Toda šele na podlagi zgornjih dveh korekcij te razprave in z dopolnitvijo njegovega spekulativnega pristopa z arhivskim raziskovanjem je mogoče locirati in analizirati notranja protislovja jugo-

slovanske partizanske umetnosti, kakršna je vzniknila v letih 1941–1945. Prav ta protislovja so partizane silila, da so postavili vprašanje o sami možnosti umetnosti v času oboroženega boja. S tem so ta protislovja – ne pa nekakšna doktrinarna podreditev umetnosti političnemu propagandizmu – partizane spodbudila, da so konceptualizirali vznik umetnosti iz njene lastne nemožnosti. Politični potencial partizanske umetnosti tako ni bil prepoznan v nekakšnem brezšivnem prilagajanju umetnosti propagandi in oboroženemu boju, temveč, nasprotno, v nujnosti njenega spoprijemanja z lastno nemožnostjo, spoprijemanja, ki je nakazovalo nov horizont možnega in s tem to umetnost napravilo veliko bolj revolucionarno, kakor bi jo mogel sleherni doktrinarni propagandizem.

Miklavž Komelj

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Towards the Partisan Counter-arϲhive: Poetry, Sculpture and Film on/of the People's Liberation Struggle

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This essay argues for the construction of a Yugoslav Partisan counter-archive capable of countering both the dominant narrative of historical revisionism, which increasingly obfuscates the Partisan legacy, and the simplistic Yugonostalgic narrative of the last few decades. But if we are to engage in rethinking and recuperating the Partisan legacy we should first delineate the specificity and cultural potential of this legacy. This can only be done if we grant the Partisan struggle the status of rupture. The essay discusses three artworks from different periods that successfully formalise this rupture in three very diverse forms, namely poetry, sculpture and film. The aim of these three studies is to contribute to the (counter-)archive of the Yugoslav Partisan culture.

SLOVENIAN PARTISAN POETRY, YUGOSLAV MODERNIST SCULPTURE, YUGOSLAV BLACK WAVE, YUGONOSTALGIA, HISTORICAL REVISIONISM

Эта статья посвящена восстановлению югославского партизанского анти-архива с целью дезавуирования как доминантного нарратива исторического ревизионизма, все более игнорирующего партизанское наследие, так и упрощенного югоностальгического нарратива, возникшего после 1991 г. Но если мы хотим переосмыслить и восстановить партизанское наследство, необходимо в первую очередь определить его специфические черты и культурный потенциал. Это возможно только в том случае, если мы предоставляем партизанскому движению статус прорыва. В статье обсуждаются три художественные произведения, созданные в разные периоды, в которых удалось формализовать этот прорыв в трёх весьма разных формах, т. е. в поэзии, скульптуре и кино. Изучение этих произведений задумано как вклад в анти-архив югославской партизанской культуры.

СЛОВЕНСКАЯ ПАРТИЗАНСКАЯ ПОЭЗИЯ, ЮГОСЛАВСКАЯ МОДЕРНИСТСКАЯ СКУЛЬПТУРА, ЮГОСЛАВСКАЯ ЧЁРНАЯ ВОЛНА, ЮГОНОСТАЛЬГИЯ, ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЙ РЕВИЗИОНИЗМ

INTRODUCTION: THE PARTISAN LEGACY AFTER HISTORICAL REVISIONISM

During the last few decades, the public discourse in the West has experienced a deep ideological transformation. On the one hand, the so-called grand narratives have been declared dead and succeeded by a postmodern plurality of micro-stories and realms of memories; on the other hand, a new wave of historical revisionism has targeted no less than the emancipatory legacy of the Enlightenment. The academic and political task of historical revisionism consists in erasing all the revolutionary projects spanning from the Jacobin moment to the October revolution (see Losurdo)—including the Yugoslav revolution during World War II and the anti-colonial struggle post WWII. Furthermore, historical revisionism rests on the equation of communism with fascism, which produces an epistemological obstacle to any attempt to think emancipatory political and cultural practices (see Badiou). The sheer evocation of concentration camps and Gulags made sure nothing could be resurrected from the twentieth century; so, why should anyone experiment after the 'end of history' (see Buden)? Finally, this historical revisionism influenced and brought together variations of neoliberalism and authoritarianism (see Losurdo).

In the case of Yugoslav revisionism, these political and ideological coalitions helped fuel nationalist sentiments in the recent wars as well as restructure the memory of WWII and the People's Liberation Struggle. From the 1990s onwards, the post-Yugoslav discussion about WWII can be divided in two major argumentations: the first one, which is strongly represented in the new state apparatuses, rehabilitates local Nazi collaborators and demonises the Partisan struggle, while the second argumentation embraces the Yugonostalgic view that glo-

rifies the Yugoslav and especially the Partisan past (see Kirn, 'Transformation'). There occurred a major displacement of what Pierre Nora has called 'realms of memory' (see Nora): the major Partisan battles, such as the victories at Neretva or Sutjeska, were gradually left out of public memory, as the attention shifted towards Srebrenica and the main genocide during the post-Yugoslav wars. However, the realms of memory that triggered the most hate speech concerned the period immediately after WWII in southeast Austria and Slovenia: Bleiburg, Kočevski rog, Huda Jama and other places of post-war killings of fascist collaborators (mostly Ustashi, Chetniks and Home Guards) who waged a civil war against the Partisans during WWII. As early as mid-1980s, these post-war killings were revisited in the name of so-called national reconciliation, which introduced new divisions along ethnic lines and a new anti-communism. This discourse of reconciliation made sure that the new states would gradually reconcile their respective communities and heal the wounds of the past. But this came with a high price, namely the rehabilitation of local fascisms, whose role during the WWII was neutralised, while the real struggles both from WWII and the present were left aside. The revisionist memorial strategy pushed pro-Partisans and the remainders of veteran organisations in a defensive position, and as a result even the Partisan struggle was eventually reinterpreted along national lines: (Slovenian, or Coatian, or Serbian …) Partisans became part of the historical cornerstone of (Slovenian, or Coatian, or Serbian …) national statehood. Yugoslavia, the international solidarity of the anti-fascist struggle, the social(ist) revolution, the Non-Aligned Movement—all these notions and were swept under the rug, if not openly demonised.

TOWARDS THE PARTISAN COUNTER-ARCHIVE

In such ideologically charged circumstances, the last decade saw a political and scholarly revolt against historical revisionism that started to reinterpret the Partisan past in a more affirmative manner. The Partisan art in particular was vested with the vanguard role of opening up the discussion and recuperating the Partisan (counter-)archive from the above-mentioned nationalistic reinvention of tradition. This article is deeply inspired by Susan Buck-Morss's plea that any emancipatory archive that cultivates different ways of seeing and saying take into account the following:

> *History is layered. But the layers are not stacked neatly. The disrupting force of the present puts pressure on the past, scattering pieces of it forward into unanticipated locations. No one owns these pieces. To think so is to allow categories of private property to intrude into a commonly shared terrain wherein the laws of exclusionary inheritance do not apply[.] (Jacir and Buck-Morss 83)*

Once we analyse closely, as Miklavž Komelj and Rastko Močnik do in this volume, the radical nature of the Partisan experience, it becomes cleat that this kind of plea for the de-privatisation of the archive should be accompanied by a call for the archive's de-nationalisation and decolonisation. The construction of the Partisan archive thus demands not only a critical method of reading but also a setting in motion of the emancipatory past as a venue that can open up gaps in the dominant discourse by dispersing the fragments of emancipation in our present. The 'items' of the Partisan archive are fascinating not only because they emerged in a time of war but also because they were engaged in

a cultural politics of the popular masses. The richness of the Partisan inventory highlights moments when the masses entered the stage of history. Komelj (104–5) is quite correct to highlight the liberation of speech as one of the major achievements of the Partisan art:

> *It was not necessary for the masses who spoke up for the first time to formulate revolutionary slogans; they were included in the revolutionary process already by speaking up within it. One of the things the liberation struggle introduced was the liberation of speech, as the right to speak publicly was reclaimed by the people to whom it had been denied.*

For Komelj, the words of the Partisans freed the creative potential of the masses in the midst of utter destruction; moreover, they were the initial weapon in the struggle against occupation and in the imagining of a new world.

The Partisan struggle was a major revolutionary event in twentieth-century Europe, an event that, however, is mostly forgotten or ideologically reframed (see Levi). In an attempt to elaborate on the cultural lesson of the creativity of the masses and on the political importance of constant reinvention, this article analyses three elements (and at once interpretations) of the Partisan archive. These three cultural artefacts, which were produced in different parts of the mid- and post-war decades and in three different art forms (poetry, sculpture and film), can help us sophisticate and correct the dominant representation of memorial practices and art forms. Furthermore, these three art forms triggered alternative memorial practices beyond the real-socialist spectacularisation and romanticisation but also beyond the current alternative between Yugonostalgia and anti-communist demonisation. The wager of the article is that these three art forms were able to produce a

highly nuanced relationship between the Partisan rupture and memory (including the memory of the rupture), which embraced a paradoxical revolutionary temporality. For alternative memorial strategies may speak about the past, but they speak, first and foremost, to the future and the (im)possible task of constructing a new, classless society. In this respect, memory is not a social mechanism that generates consensus; it maintains not the order but, on the contrary, the Partisan rupture.[1] If we take the rupture seriously as a political process that yields strong transformative effects on the whole social field, then the memory of the rupture, and art in general, has to be radical as well as it is employed in formalising the rupture and practicing what Walter Benjamin has called the 'technique', in his attempt to overcome the traditional dilemma between the artwork's content and form, the false dilemma which, for Benjamin, can be sublated in the tendential articulation of art and politics in technique, where art is radical not only in its content (as it takes on marginal topics and speaks from the perspective of the oppressed, etc.) but also in its form (as it experiments with mediums, formalises gaps, etc.). The following three case studies will hopefully shed some light on the idea of the Partisan archive and on the ways in which the Partisan rupture has been or could be remembered.

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For more on the Partisan ruptures, see Kirn, *Partizanski*.

THE PARTISAN POEM: AN ANTHEM TO THE STRUGGLE OR THE DISSOLUTION OF POETRY?

More than twelve thousand Partisan poems were written between 1941 and 1945 in Slovenia alone. Selecting the poetic texts that best represent the memorial dimension of this poetry is therefore a difficult task. Most of the poems that explicitly refer to memory evoke the memory of home, of the beloved (mother, girlfriend, children …),

the memory of peaceful times or the memory of the comrades whose death had triggered the relation of fidelity to them and to the cause of liberation. But there exist also a series of poems that already during the war realised the rupture that was taking place, and the necessity of being constantly reminded of this differentia specifica.

One of such poetic texts is the self-reflexive poem *Čemu pesmi?* (Why Poems?).[2] This poem could be read as an anthem to the Partisan struggle, which is how its author referred to it. It is particularly interesting in terms of its temporal paradox, but also in terms of its paradoxical reference to a poem designated as 'our anthem' ('naša himna'). But let us first recount the poem's afterlife, which was very adventurous and deserves to be presented in detail. The author of this poem was not an anonymous Partisan, but also not someone who was famous either before of after the war. His name was Franc Pintarič—Švaba (1924–1942) and he was a Partisan fighter in the Štajerska battalion. On 23 August 1942, Pintarič was poisoned by a local Nazi collaborator and then taken to the Nazi encampment to be questioned, but he died on the way to the hospital. No image remained of him, no real biography, no grave, only his personal notes, which, as it turned out, were his poems. We don't know whether these poems were recited to the Partisan battalion or perhaps read silently during the long nights by his Partisan friends or even just by himself? Pintarič's notes came into the hands of Nazis, who, with the help of the same collaborator who had poisoned him, translated them into German. The Nazis perhaps hoped to find in the poems important information on the moral or the movements of the Partisans; instead, they received some of the most striking lines of the Partisan poetry and memory. These poems remained in the Nazi hands, and by a curious irony of history they survived in a Nazi archive and in German translation; even the author's Partisan name, Švaba,

2
For more on this poem, see Komelj 189, 342–3, 551, and Kirn, 'Multiple'; for Pintarič's poems themselves, see Paternu 294–7.

which is a Slovenian derogatory term for a German, is profoundly ironic in this context. After the war, the poems were confiscated by the Partisans and moved to the archive of the new socialist republic, where they remained practically invisible—until forty-five years later, in 1987, Boris Paternu edited, in collaboration with Irena Novak-Popov and Marija Stanonik as well as numerous lecturers and students at the Slavic Department of the University of Ljubljana, the first volume of the four-volume anthology titled *Slovensko pesništvo upora 1941–1945* (Slovenian Poetry of Resistance 1941–1945), which included the first Slovenian back-translation of Pintarič's poems. This, however, was soon followed by another catastrophe: when the poems finally appeared in Slovenian, ready to address once more the rupture that was the Partisan struggle, nobody cared except for a handful of Partisan veterans, as the bloody end of Yugoslavia was approaching and with it yet another denunciation of the Partisans by local collaborators. Perhaps this irony simply reflects the historical moment when the 'addressees' (the future Partisan generations) of Pintarič's poem and its historical context had disappeared. It seems that this historical coincidence corresponds with the specific paradoxical temporality inherent to the structure of the poem, a temporality due to which the poem had to wait for more than two decades to be read again (if not for the first time).

> Why Poems?
> *We wrote poems in different times, when we had nothing else to do. But today, when justice belongs to those in power, when weapons do the talking, our poem is loud and clear: 'We want to live, to live freely in a free land.'*

> *This poem of ours is our guidance, it is our anthem. Victims are falling for this poem—innocent victims—they are falling by the thousands. When this poem becomes a reality, when freedom approaches in all its shine and power, come forward, you poets and writers! To the victims fallen for this poem—poems of eternal glory and memory.*
>
> Čemu pesmi?
> *V drugih časih smo pisali pesmi, ker nismo imeli drugega dela. Danes pa, ko je pravica na strani močnejšega, ko govori orožje, je naša pesem dovolj glasna in jasna: 'Živeti hočemo, živeti svobodno na svobodni zemlji.'*
> *Ta naša pesem je naše vodilo, je naša himna. Za to pesem padajo žrtve—nedolžni—padajo tisoči.*
> *Ko bo ta pesem postala resničnost, ko se bo svoboda približala v vsem svojem sijaju in moči, tedaj na plan, pesniki in pisatelji! Padlim žrtvam za to pesem—pesmi neminljive slave in spomina. (Komelj 551)*

Franc Pintarič-Švaba wrote this poem in the spring or summer of 1942, when the situation on the military front at home and abroad could only be seen as one of defeat, as Nazis occupied the entire continental Europe. The poem is directed against the 'realism' of this situation and introduces a complex and condensed memorial-revolutionary temporality, which makes an attempt to grasp the Partisan rupture. The poem refers to pre-war poems, that is, poems from time of peace, but also to the poems of the future, poems which will be written about the fallen heroes; at the same time, it is a highly self-reflexive poem that speaks about a poem of the present, a Partisan anthem. It is not only a memorial poem, but itself an anthem, a song, a thought engaged in the Partisan struggle. In its very title, *Čemu pesmi?* (Why Poems?), it refers to the vocation of the poet or, more importantly, the vocation of

the poem. One can read it in the literal sense, as Komelj (342–3) seems to do: in a time when weapons do the talking words in turn become weapons. In the first years of the war, the Partisans were a small group that didn't have heavy weapons and had to resort to guerrilla warfare; in this situation, words became crucial weapons in the attempt to mobilise and symbolise the struggle. Hence the poem. In this respect, we could even entertain the option of back-translating the poem's title in a slightly different manner than Paternu and Komelj, namely as *Čému pesmi?* (Poems to What?); this title opens a different perspective as it poses the following question: what does the poem speak to, what does it address? This is no longer a simple call, not a mere duty of the poet to speak to others about the Partisan struggle; it addresses the Partisan struggle itself and attempts to 'formalise' the rupture, namely the social and cultural revolution. As a poem written in and because of the Partisan struggle, it participates in the process of changing the existing state of affairs, in making the land 'free' through the use of words.

The self-reflexivity points to the temporality of the poem. As mentioned above, for years this poem was neither accessible nor published; it could easily have remained lost or buried under all the volumes of writings on nationalistic reconciliation. But the question of the 'real' addressee is not so crucial; more important is a certain temporal impossibility which is structurally inscribed in the poem. This poem stages a temporal paradox as well as a paradox pertaining to the vocation of poetry. Temporally, the poem is related, per negationem, to earlier poems, poems which were written in a time of leisure and can no longer satisfy the demands of the 'vocation' of poetry. In the final paragraph, the poem refers to the poems of the future, poems which will commemorate the Partisan struggle. Thus, it oscillates between past bourgeois poetry and future memorial poetry while introducing

the present impossibility, the Partisan art which has no choice but to participate in the struggle to 'free' the land. This not only differentiates between different vocations of poetry, but is also itself articulated from a paradoxical point in time; it evokes the perspective of the future, of that which does not yet exist—or, in Pintarič's words, the perspective of the 'free land' to come. In this way, the poem formulates the political maxim of the Partisan struggle, condensing it in a single sentence ("'We want to live, to live freely in a free land.'"), which produces an engaging relationship between the present of the poem and the future to come.

Slavoj Žižek (460) formulates this temporality when he notes that in a revolutionary situation a call to 'overtake oneself towards the future' is necessary. This demands that one thinks and acts as if the future already existed, and thus effectuates the transformation before it takes place in reality. One side of this specific temporality therefore has to do with affirming something in the future, as if it has already come; but there is another side, and this side has to do with retroactively asserting that whatever has been asserted will be achieved. Žižek takes this temporality from Lacan and Badiou, who connect it to futur antérieur. It is not enough for a revolutionary event like the Partisan struggle to simply take place: in order for it to take hold it needs to be named and retroactively acted upon.

Pintarič's poem in effect recognises this temporality and demands two things from poems: to be poems for the future as well as poems of the future. Pintarič's poem asks of poems of the future to replace it as a poem for the future; poems of the future ought to recite and memorialise the glory of the past struggle. Could it then be said that the Partisan anthem would ultimately be dissolved in the commemoration of the Partisan struggle? This invitation to poets would seem to dissolve precisely the vocation of poetry that is advocated in the very title of

Pintarič's poem. The loss of this poetic function would put all poems of the future in the service of commemoration, whereby the revolutionary weapons would be transformed into state weapons or ideological vehicles of conveying the glorious aspects of the struggle. The continuation of the post-evental truth cannot do without the struggle for hegemony, as it warns against the forgetting of the struggle. This would be one way of defending the closing call through which the 'poem' ('pesem') dissolves into 'poems' ('pesmi'). This mediation is necessary, yet it is not a necessary evil. To return to the initial question: what is the task of these new poems? What purpose do they fulfil? It cannot be mere commemoration; it has to include the systematisation of the experience and the restoration of belief in the Partisan struggle, which at some point will surely be lost despite being—or even by being—duly 'archived'. The poems of the future should recreate the conditions of the struggle and reactivate its revolutionary core.

However, these poems of the future will not easily replace Pintarič's Partisan anthem, since they cannot be thought of without any reference to it. The anthem signals its immanent inability to memorialise that which is still to be realised and hence cannot be anticipated. Is not the key characteristic of the anthem precisely its disappearance through its final realisation? It will disappear the moment the land is freed, not the moment it is replaced by the poems of the future. It will be realised through its disappearance, through its becoming a reality. The poem was written solely for this purpose: once the struggle achieves its goal, the anthem will only be stating the obvious, a fait accompli. One could even argue that this poem is structured like the proletariat, for it, too, would disappear as soon as it would fulfil its world-historic role.[3] Once liberation is achieved art becomes life, as if to fulfil the old German Romanticist desire. But it is not the task of

3
In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, Karl Marx employed the Hegelian logic to relate the task of philosophy to revolutionary practice. Although much ink has been spilled over the theses, here I would only like to mention that it is along these lines that Georg Lukács posits the formation of the proletariat as the embodiment of the negation of all classes; the proletariat is a class that is actually a non-class, since its realisation entails the dissolution of capitalist society and therefore the advent of a classless society (see Balibar).

the poem to change the world: this is the task of the Partisan struggle. The Partisan anthem 'only' participates in this change. This futuristic poem, however, will not disappear until the change really happens. It remains here as a remainder which makes us see both the never fully achievable end of emancipation and the poem's relevance in our time. This poem is to be forever re-actualised in specific historical periods, in all the revolutions to come, as an unfinished project, as a 'fait à accomplir'. Without new struggles and new poems to those struggles, Pintarič's poem would disappear, even—or especially—if it were archived in numerous languages and publications.

HOW TO MAKE A (PARTISAN) FILM THE PARTISAN WAY?

Is there any corresponding case of such poetic complexity in the field of Yugoslav Partisan film? If there is, it obviously cannot be found in the interwar production, since the Partisan units had very scarce resources and have only produced a few film documents and interventions.[4] However, film occupied a central role in the (re)construction of socialist Yugoslavia, and the People's Liberation Struggle became a major topic of the Yugoslav film. Between 1945 and 1985, more than two hundred films about the People's Liberation Struggle were produced. This means that the Yugoslav film contributed at least one general 'genre platform' to the history of world cinema. This genre platform consisted of psychological and existentialist dramas, docu-fictions, re-enactments, actions movies and WWII epics. For the latter millions of dollars were spent: in Stipe Delić's 1973 film *Sutjeska* Richard Burton portrayed Tito, and Veljko Bulajić's 1969 film *The Battle on Neretva* featured such international stars as Orson Welles, Yul Brynner, Franco Nero and Sergei Bondarchuk, while the poster for the English ver-

4
For a detailed analysis of the Partisan film production during WWII, see Kirn, 'On the Specific (In)existence'.

sion of the film was designed by Pablo Picasso. These epic films had a double function: one the one hand, they exported positive PR for Yugoslavia and marketed the country's most celebrated film product, the so-called 'red westerns' (Štefančič); and on the other hand, at the national level, they contributed to the official memory, which soon became very present in the Yugoslav popular culture. However, there was also an array of much more critical films, the so-called Black Wave films,[5] which managed to communicate sympathy or open support for the Partisan cause and the communist revolution without having to sacrifice complex narrative structures or a fresh engagement with the Partisan past. These Black Wave films can be seen as important contributions to the Partisan (counter-)archive, as they engaged in an immanent critique of the official representation of the regime, which in the 1960s and 1970s attempted to neutralise the student and labour movement in their critique of market socialism.

5
For details on the Black Wave and for a general overview of the Yugoslav film, see Goulding.

Nowhere can all these features be observed more easily than in Želimir Žilnik's *Ustanak u Jasku* (Uprising in Jazak). By 1973, when he directed the film, Žilnik was already an established independent film director who had won the Golden Bear at the 1969 Berlin Film Festival. Žilnik has since directed many other outstanding films, but *Ustanak u Jasku* remains his only film to directly address the Partisan archive. Ironically, Žilnik was originally commissioned by local authorities to shoot a kind of filmic advertisement for the tourism in the region of Vojvodina. The actual film, however, is neither a documentary nor a fictional film, but a 'docu-fiction', a form that will later become the main feature of his work. In a kind of Brechtian alienation effect, docu-fiction constantly renegotiates the borders of film itself and challenges the audience to rethink the opposition between fiction and documentation. The story of *Ustanak u Jasku* begins with a film crew arriving in

the village of Jazak, accompanied with sounds resembling those of a German tank but connected to an image of the locals. Depicted in a film that Žilnik shot almost thirty years after the end of WWII, the film crew interviews the locals, former anti-fascist fighters who are now 'just' ordinary farmers in Vojvodina. As such, these protagonists are a complete novelty in the history of the Yugoslav film; they tell stories about the arrival of Nazi soldiers in 1941 and speak about their ways of resistance, about how they took their Partisan oath, about women who were hiding to be able to provide food for the Partisans, etc. The film ends these Partisan stories with a rather romantic recount of the liberation as it came with Katyushas and the Soviet troops that helped liberate parts of Vojvodina.

It is not enough to say that Žilnik offers a more truthful account of affairs than the war epics; what is more important is the method, the way in which the film impacts on the audience and the kind of memory of the Partisan struggle it activates. *Ustanak u Jasku* is a film that reconstructs and visually re-enacts a series of events by introducing voices of multiple protagonists who at times also contradict each other and negotiate the(ir) popular memory. This collective bottom-up construction of memorial narrative of the villagers' resistance is dynamised by the movement of the camera, focused as it is on more than one storyteller. One might call this method the collective participatory interview, as it resembles a technique that was used by the Italian 'wokerists' who in the 1960s visited factories to speak to the workers through surveys intended to mobilise them outside the trade-union and party apparatus. Žilnik's film assumes the standpoint of the masses; it tells the story from below, the people's history of resistance, and points to the central lesson of the struggle: the victory of the Partisan struggle would not be possible without a broad popular support, especially

from those on the countryside. So, in this film the screen is occupied by the actual witnesses of the Partisan struggle. This accounts to a major shift in representation: the inhabitants of Jazak are no longer passive civilian victims, but rather civilians who actively supported and even engaged in the anti-fascist struggle. In terms of the visual language we are struck by rather raw images which, however, do not betray, say, the laziness on the filmmakers or poor equipment, but are rather the product of a deliberate technique introduced to oppose the dominant aestheticisation of the Partisan struggle. This is arguably the deepest Partisan gesture of the film, the gesture of taking sides with the means of film, which Žilnik takes as seriously as the Partisans took the means of speech. Thus, Žilnik was able to make a film on the Partisans the Partisan way, as the film's raw images introduce the idea of the masses making history both in the past and in the present of the film.

MONUMENT(S) TO THE REVOLUTION[6]

If Pintarič's poem worked with a specific poetic temporality and a discursive network of rupture, and if Žilnik's film visually re-enacted the former anti-fascist fighters' memory, what can then be brought to the Partisan (counter-)archive by a monument, a product of the most 'statist' art form, the one that is supposed to serve collective memory? Like films, monuments were a priority to the new socialist state, which even established a commission to deal with the questions of memorialisation, representation and form in relation to monuments to the revolution. Monuments to the revolution therefore seem to be the last place to look for if one is to construct a Partisan (counter-)archive. However, the term itself can cause some tension in relation to the official memory politics: monuments to the revolution? The term can easily

6
The introductory paragraph of this section is indebted to a discussion with architect Robert Burghardt; for a broader comparative perspective on the individual studies, see Kirn, 'Transformation'.

be understood as a kind of contradiction, or perhaps as a productive condensation between discontinuity and continuity. Revolutions are generally associated with overthrows of governments, as they dismantle certain (oppressive) heritages and transform social relations; from this perspective, revolutions primarily have to do with the destruction of the given state of things and are as such not interested in erecting monuments in the name of institutionalisation. But if we understand revolution as a process that needs to sustain the original rupture and continue the process of transformation, we arrive at a somewhat different conception of history and memory. From this perspective, history is seen as an open process that demands a permanent place for potential transformation. This demand could be met by monuments understood as interventions in space that no longer presuppose the simple passive spectator that we know from the official interpretation of the socialist past.

Between 1945 and 1990, several thousand monuments to the revolutionary People's Liberation Struggle were erected. Many were built as early as the 1940s and 1950s, often as simple memorial plaques listing the names of local victims of the enemy. This first phase of memorialisation was based on a combination of various popular forms of sculpture and had a realist undertone; interestingly, these monuments to the Partisan struggle do not resemble the massive socialist realist monuments from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.[7] In the second phase, roughly between the 1960s and 1980s, a sweeping movement of memorialisation emerged under the label of socialist modernism. These monuments were modernist artefacts, yet not without their own peculiar typologies, such as the monumental, the symbolic (representing fists, stars, hands, wings, flowers, rocks, etc.), the bold (sometimes structurally daring), the otherworldly and the fantastic. Finally,

7
For a good overview of the politics of memory in socialist Yugoslavia, see Karge.

the Partisan rupture had received a proper sculptural formalisation. The Partisan struggle, far from being imposed from outside, authorised itself; so too, the monumental movement initiated by such artists, architects and sculptors as Vojin Bakić, Drago Tršar, Edvard Ravnikar, Bogdan Bogdanović, Dušan Džamonja, Miodrag Živković and *Gradimir* Medaković was not initiated from above but was instead an immanent process that managed to find an aesthetic innovation worthy of the political invention that was the Partisan struggle. Some of these monuments were destroyed in the 1990s as part of 'memorial cleansing', or lese they were simply left to natural processes; the others, however, remain inscribed in the symbolic map of the Partisan Yugoslavia.

Most of the Yugoslav monuments to the revolution were erected on historic sites of the Partisan struggle, mostly in open landscapes outside villages and towns. They form an invisible network of symbolic sites that still generate a consciously constructed Yugoslav space. However, they do not occupy the much more classic and visible sites of representation such as the avenues and squares of big cities. Many of these memorials were placed in parks and other leisure-time destinations with picnic facilities, restaurants or even hotels. In some memorial parks, museums or amphitheatres served as open-air classrooms. In addition to their double function as sites of commemoration and celebration, memorial parks were conceived as hybrid complexes, merging leisure with education, architecture with sculpture, objects with surrounding landscapes. An amphitheatre was often integrated in the sculpture, and sometimes the monument itself unfolded into a stage set. As classical modernist works of art, the monuments stood as objects in the landscape, and the surrounding landscape was transformed into a park that in turn staged the monument. There is a certain fascination with the very paradoxical character of the monument, whose formal

effects outlive its time while being the result of very specific historical circumstances. This 'untimely timeliness' generates a multi-layered space and opens up a dialogue between the history of art and specific historical experiences.

Let us now turn to a monument erected by sculptor Miodrag Živković in Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely the Tjentište monument. The monument is also known as Sutjeska, in honour of the famous battle and the equally famous filmic depiction of this crucial turning point in the Yugoslav Partisan struggle. Tjentište was thus one of the most important monuments to the struggle; as such, its construction was highly debated for almost a decade. When it was finally erected in 1971, the monument consisted of two monumental rocks that mark the site of the Partisans' breakthrough while forming an artificial gorge. In this way, one can walk through the monument and experience how the formal configuration of the rocks changes together with his or her point of view. When approached from below, the rocks seem massive and monolithic. But once the passage between the rocks is crossed the form opens up, relinquishing the initial quasi-symmetrical and monolithic appearance. If one climbs further up the path and looks down at the monument, the rocks seem to turn into wings. And if one keeps walking along the path leading down to a small museum, which houses a large mural by Krsto Hegedušić depicting the events, the rocks seem to dissolve into fingers. The shifting perspectives on the object thus produce very subtle effects; as one passes through the monument, the initial impression of symmetry offered by the frontal view of the rocks gives way to the impression of fundamental asymmetry. So, besides representing the letter V (for victory), the monument reproduces the experience of marching through the mountains while being exposed from both sides, evoking the idea that even the hard rock of a siege can

be broken. As such, Tjentište represents the asymmetrical nature of the struggle in which the Partisans managed to prevail over superior forces, and without much foreign help.

This monument belongs to a series of twenty to thirty late modernist monuments that have offered an alternative to the dominant monuments to the revolution. Despite the fact that they were monumental and hence attractive to the socialist regime (or any other regime, for that matter), and even though they were formally quite heterogeneous and as such did not provide a clear alternative to the dominant monuments at the formal level, these monuments did not fit easily in the dominant memory politics, which was rather conservative in its demand of figurative representation. The monuments were too abstract for this kind of politics; however, financed by various self-managed entities, they have become very popular, which does speak of a certain level of freedom of that society. Visited not only by the locals and tourists but also by school groups, these monumental parks had an important pedagogic function. More importantly, however, they had a socialising role, as the practice of memory, far from being simply delegated to a given monument, was able to return to the spectators themselves. In this respect, at least some of the monuments introduced certain features of what would later become the counter-monument movement, while insisting on the development of new monumental forms.[8]

8
As James Young noted in 1992, the delegation of memory onto the monument releases us of the responsibility to remember: we don't have to do any work, the monument does it for us. However, does this not also hold for the so-called counter-monument, where experiential rather than pedagogical dimensions of memory are at play? Indeed, one can argue that the invisibility of the new counter-monument inevitably becomes but a moment in the ever-growing monumental landscape.

CONCLUSION

After twenty-five years of the institutional march and day-to-day functioning of nationalistic ideological state apparatuses, the Partisan counter-archive is finally being re-actualised in a series of artistic,

political and scholarly interventions. The artefacts analysed above constitute some of the fragments of the archive, which invites us to mobilise and expand our historical resources. They also hint at some of the ways in which we can still make sense of the complicated relation between (future) memory and a long gone revolution. These artefacts emerged in different periods of socialist Yugoslavia, performing different operations, but they all continued and strengthened the Partisan rupture. In this respect, Pintarič's Partisan poem was a poem to the struggle but also a text that managed to establish a very complex relation to the bourgeois past as well as the socialist future, a poem that, from its own perspective, can be abolished at the moment of liberation. Similarly, Žilnik's Partisan film performs a collective memorial reconstruction of events, where the masses are recognised as the storytellers in an attempt to counter the spectacularisation of the Partisan movies. Finally, Miodrag Živković's Tjentište monument, despite belonging to the most 'statist' art form, a form designed to construct the Yugoslav collective identity, is just one in a series of monuments to the revolution that were able to experiment with the art form and invent an immense variety of memorial forms and practices; one could even say that if these monuments had not been so monumental, the anti-fascist memory would have disappeared from the regions of former Yugoslavia even faster. The presence of these monuments but also poems, films and other elements of the Partisan archive does constitute the imaginary map of the Partisan Yugoslavia, it does continue to trigger solidarity with the rupture that extends to our present. This is something even their opponents unknowingly affirm each time they physically attack them and what they stand for, namely the Partisan rupture-revolution and the ongoing memory of it. ❦

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Povzetek

Članek intervenira v polje nedavne politike in kulture partizanskega spomina, ki sta ga v preteklih desetletjih odločilno zaznamovala zgodovinski revizionizem in jugonostalgija. Prispevek zavrne izsiljeno alternativno revizionizem/jugonostalgija in pokaže na točke, skupne njenima poloma, predvsem na njuno skupno vlogo pri brisanju prelomnosti in sodobnosti partizanskega boja. Če naj partizansko problematiko konceptualiziramo na neredukcionističen način, mora naš cilj biti vzpostavitev partizanskega (proti)arhiva. Na poti do takšnega arhiva, ki bi lahko kljuboval tako revizionizmu kakor jugonostalgiji, pa moramo afirmirati specifično univerzalnost partizanskega preloma in odgovoriti1 na vprašanje, zakaj in kako bi se lahko k temu prelomu vrnili danes, v post-jugoslovanski in post-socialistični situaciji.

Če partizanski boj pojmujemo kot prelom, potem mora biti tudi spomin na prelom prelomen. Zato ne zadošča, da je določen element partizanskega (proti)arhiva, na primer določena umetnina, partizanski problematiki posvečen zgolj vsebinsko, ne pa tudi formalno. Zato tri izbrane umetnine, ki jih članek analizira, poskušajo vsaka v svojem obdobju in mediju formalizirati partizanski prelom. Članek tako predlaga benjaminovsko branje umetnine onkraj ločnice med vsebino in formo, branje, ki je ne le posvečeno umetniški formalizaciji preloma, temveč tudi samo poskuša biti prelomno. Članek tako bere izbrano pesem (»partizansko himno« Franca Pintariča-Švabe *Čemu pesmi?*), film (*Vstaja v Jasku* Želimira Žilnika) in spomenik revoluciji (»Sutjeska« Miodraga Živkovića). V vseh treh primerih so v središču formalni elementi, ki širijo in obenem reflektirajo splošni dispozitiv kulturno-političnih bojev za partizansko dediščino. Od tod problematika kompleksne revolucionarne časovnosti (nedokončanosti) in

možnosti ponovnega prilaščanja partizanske dediščine. Članek s tem poskuša prispevati k prihodnjemu partizanskemu (proti)arhivu, ki naj bi mobiliziral pretekla sredstva za današnje boje, in obenem nadaljevati razpravo o partizanski umetnosti, ki sta jo nedavno v slovenski javni diskurz prelomno vrnila Rastko Močnik in Miklavž Komelj.

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Slovenian Sociology of Literature and Slovenian National Poet: France Prešeren between the Partisans, Dissidents and Theorists

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In the 1960s, Boris Ziherl provided Slovenian sociology with its theoretical and institutional foundations—historical materialism and an academic department. After Ziherl, however, the two foundations have only grown apart, so much so that two recent studies had to assume an anti-institutional perspective to reaffirm (Ziherl's) historical materialism. Both these texts—Miklavž Komelj's book on Slovenian Partisan art and Rastko Močnik's book on Prešeren studies—intervene in Slovenian sociology of literature, which Ziherl helped found as well. I will hence address the key field shared by Slovenian sociology and literary criticism: Prešeren studies. Ziherl's view of Slovenian national poet France Prešeren was formed during and post WWII. His interwar Prešeren is an adversary of German Romanticism, and his post-war Prešeren is an ally of Hegel's anti-Romanticism. I will read the former with Komelj's Ziherl, and the latter, with Močnik's.

SLOVENIAN SOCIOLOGY, PREŠEREN STUDIES, BORIS ZIHERL, RASTKO MOČNIK, MIKLAVŽ KOMELJ, DUŠAN PIRJEVEC

В 1960-е гг. Борис Зихерл дал словенской социологии её теоретическое и институциональное основание: исторический материализм и университетскую кафедру. Но после Зихерла эти основания настолько разошлись, что две недавние реактуализации исторического материализма Зихерла не могли не быть анти-институциональными. Оба эти текста — книга Миклавжа Комеля об искусстве словенских партизан и книга Растка Мочника о прешерноведении — интервенируют в словенскую социологию литературы, пионером которой также является Зихерл. Эта статья посвящена прешерноведению как точке пересечения словенской социологии и литературоведения. Подход Зихерла к словенскому национальному поэту Прешерну формировался во время и после Второй мировой войны. Во время войны Зихерл считал Прешерна противником немецкого романтизма, а после войны сторонником антиромантизма Гегеля. В статье первый Прешерен читается на фоне Комеля — второй на фоне Мочника.

СЛОВЕНСКАЯ СОЦИОЛОГИЯ, ПРЕШЕРНОВЕДЕНИЕ, БОРИС ЗИХЕРЛ, РАСТКО МОЧНИК, МИКЛАВЖ КОМЕЛЬ, ДУШАН ПИРЬЕВЕЦ

Two decades ago, marking the thirtieth anniversary of the Slovenian Sociological Association, Marko Kerševan (444–6) noted that Slovenian sociology, though being practised in important ways already in the early twentieth century by such researchers as Andrej Gosar, Aleš Ušeničnik and Janez Evangelist Krek, received its theoretical and institutional foundations only after World War II, when Boris Ziherl provided it with with its theoretical and institutional foundations: historical materialism and an academic department.

Today, in the fifty-second year of the Association's existence, it seems that after Ziherl the two foundations—historical materialism and the academic department—have only been growing apart. This growing apart, however, has been not only temporal but, first and foremost, structural.[1] It has often taken the shape of institutional ignorance of Ziherl's legacy. It is then no coincidence that this legacy was recently revitalised in view of historical materialism by a pair of texts that assume an anti-institutional perspective, namely Miklavž Komelj's book *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost?* (How to Think the Partisan Art?) and Rastko Močnik's book *Julija Primic v slovenski književni vedi* (Julija Primic in Slovenian Literary Studies). Both these texts intervene mostly in sociology of literature, a discipline whose Slovenian version was importantly developed by Ziherl as well. Let us therefore take a look at the most important intersection of sociology and literary studies in Slovenia, namely Prešeren studies.

1
This paradoxical role of historical materialism as both foundation and lacuna of the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana is addressed in Rastko Močnik's recent study on historical materialism and sociology of culture in Slovenia (Močnik, 'Od historičnega materializma' 139). The study appeared in the volume dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary of the Department, which was also the occasion for which I wrote the Slovenian-language version of this article, which was published in a special section of essays on Slovenian sociology of culture that I co-edited, with Rastko Močnik, as issue 1 of volume 7 (2013) of *Arts & Humanitas*.

ZIHERL'S INTERWAR PREŠEREN

Ziherl's approach to France Prešeren, the Slovenian national poet celebrated for his Romantic poetry and nation-building, is formed during and in the years after World War II. In what follows, Ziherl's writings

on Prešeren will be read against the background of the two abovementioned reactualisations of Ziherl: his interwar Prešeren will be read via Komelj's book, while his post-war Prešeren will be viewed through Močnik's.

The specificity of Ziherl's interwar Prešeren can best be demonstrated in relation to the two kinds of contemporaneous readings of Prešeren that resemble Ziherl's the most and which are documented and interpreted in Komelj's book as well. Both approaches to Prešeren register and then undo Prešeren's metaphoricity. In the first kind of interwar readings of Prešeren, this metaphoricity is undone in the sense that it is understood as realised in the ongoing People's Liberation Struggle; and in the second kind of readings, Prešeren's metaphoric language is simply read non-metaphorically. What Komelj does is to show that the truth of both interwar approaches to Prešeren lies in their respective negation. When the first approach, as it was practised, say, by Matej Bor, sees in Prešeren a Partisan *avant la lettre*, a Romantic poet who foresaw the liberation of the Slovenian national soul, it simultaneously romanticises the Partisans and thus effectively negates itself (Komelj 305). And the second approach to Prešeren is represented, say, by the following demand made by Josip Vidmar: 'Anything incomprehensible to the masses must go. … Think of Pushkin! There is no metaphoricity there. Or think of Prešeren!'—a demand, that is, that is negated by Vidmar's own public defence of the '"freedom of art" in the face of political decrees' (Komelj 218 n. 47).[2] So, when Bor reduces Prešeren's metaphoric language to a prophecy of the People's Liberation Struggle, he in fact reduces the Struggle itself to Romanticism; and when Vidmar refuses to even acknowledge the metaphorical dimension in Prešeren, he only reiterates *per negationem* the abstract character of his aestheticist defence of art against politics.

2
In Pushkin's case, this negation is demonstrated also by Močnik (*Spisi* 105–7), according to whom the metaphor-free pronoun poem *Ja vas ljubil …* (*I Loved You Once …*) is readable only from God's point of view.

If we read these two kinds of interpretations of Prešeren together, as two kinds of undoing of his metaphoric language, we can begin to see the originality of Ziherl's Prešeren. According to Ziherl, an anti-fascist poem can reach the level of Prešeren's poetry even though—rather than insofar—it is metaphor-free: of concentration-camp sonnets he says that a '[m]eticulous critic and aesthete' might notice 'poor vocabulary and overrepetition, whereas we sense in these verses the spirit of Prešeren', which 'nevertheless was able to dictate to the author a *beautiful* sonnet' (quoted in Komelj 138 n. 10). As for Prešeren and the People's Liberation Struggle, Ziherl sees in Prešeren not a prophet of the People's Liberation Struggle but a poet engaged in the struggle against Novalis's 'reactionary Romanticism' (quoted in Komelj 289 n. 5), a struggle that Prešeren is said to have fought in his own time and in his own, poetic field.

In other words, Bor's Prešeren is a proto-Partisan (which implies that the Partisans are merely Romantics in action), and Vidmar's a proto-socialist realist poet (which implies that socialist realism is only a Romanticism without metaphors). Ziherl's Prešeren, on the other hand, is a 'revolutionary Romantic' (quoted in Komelj 289 n. 5) who joins Shelley and Byron in their struggle against the reactionary nature of Romantic poetry. And precisely insofar as Prešeren was a revolutionary in his own time and in his own field, the turn of Partisan poets to his poetry was 'healthy', according to Ziherl (quoted in Komelj 467). Moreover, even when he comes closest to the so-called theory of reflection, Ziherl remains at the level of poetry: in 1944, he demands tendentiousness of poets, but only because he dialectically inscribes in reality itself a tendency worthy of progressive poetry: 'Reality itself is full of tendentiousness. As soon as the tendency is depicted in a beautiful and faithful manner, it will itself begin to speak

3
In the same year of 1957, working in a similar strand of humanist Marxism, Theodor W. Adorno returned to Hegel himself from the perspective of this kind of turn:

> *A historical occasion like the 125th anniversary of Hegel's death could have elicited what we call an 'appreciation.' But that concept has become untenable, if indeed it ever had any value. It makes the impudent claim that because one has the dubious good fortune to live later, and because one has a professional interest in the person one is to talk about, one can sovereignly assign the dead person his place, thereby in some sense elevating oneself above him. This arrogance echoes in the loathsome question of what in Kant, and now Hegel as well, has any meaning for the present.... The converse question is not even raised: what the present means in the face of Hegel; whether perhaps the reason one imagines one has attained since Hegel's absolute reason has not in fact long since regressed behind the latter and accommodated to what merely exists, when Hegelian reason tried to set the burden of existence in motion through the reason that obtains even in what exists. (Adorno 1)*

for the proletariat. … The tendency needs to be recognised as part of social processes itself, rather than following the old black-and-white model.' (Quoted in Komelj 356 n. 10) Whereas both the Proletkult of the interwar Vidmar and the *fin-de-siècle* aesthetic of the post-war Vidmar see in the subject a substance, Ziherl presupposes, in a uniquely Hegelian gesture, that the substance itself is the subject, that reality itself is tendentious.

ZIHERL'S POST-WAR PREŠEREN

It seems, then, that Ziherl's interwar Prešeren is a poet and hence an adversary of German Romanticism. After WWII, however, Prešeren becomes for Ziherl a thinker and as such an ally of the chief philosophical adversary of German Romanticism, namely Hegel. This shift occurs in Ziherl's 1949 paper 'France Prešeren—pesnik in mislec' (France Prešeren—Poet and Thinker) and is recapitulated in his 1964 paper 'Hegel in Prešernov krog' (Hegel and the Prešeren Circle). Furthermore, Ziherl speaks about Prešeren's 'humanist and democratic thought' (*Književnost* 259–60) also in his 1952 article 'Ob Prešernovem dnevu' (On the Prešeren Day), where he rejects the Zhdanovite as well as the Sartrean deviations in Slovenian literature of the time, introducing the article with the following dialectical turn of historicism: '[O]n this [Prešeren] day, we should not be speaking *only* about what Prešeren has given us. We should *also* be speaking about what exactly is our relation to Prešeren and to his spirit.' (Ziherl, *Književnost* 257)[3]

Here, Ziherl clearly portrays Prešeren as a thinker in order to intervene in the contemporary intellectual conjuncture. This agenda is, however, even more obvious in the other two post-war papers mentioned above.[4] Of these two, the 1949 paper offers the best example

4
In the conclusion of the latter of the two papers, Ziherl himself reflects on this, at least insofar as his reading of Prešeren as a progressive thinker is concerned:

> *When I took on the task of … saying something about Hegel's influence on Slovenian poetry of the first half of the nineteenth century, I did not intend to provide philosophical analyses of individual poems. What I wanted was, first and foremost, to stress the fact that even in Slovenian history Hegel's dialectical thought … produced revolutionary effects, providing the intellectual representatives of the most progressive strata of Slovenian society with a powerful tool in their search of productive solutions to the problems of their time. (Ziherl,* O humanizmu *194)*

of Ziherl's ungrounded transition from a discussion of Prešeren to a critique of his own contemporaries. In this particular case, Ziherl dismisses the Leftism of Ivan Prijatelj, the central interwar literary and cultural historian in Slovenia, by supplementing a discussion of one of Prešeren's epigrams with the following footnote: 'The late Ivan Prijatelj was wrong to attempt to prove Prešeren's evolution from Hegelianism through Young Hegelianism to Feuerbachianism on the basis of the dialectic of this epigram… . As we know, one of the main inadequacies of Feuerbach's philosophy was to throw out Hegel's progressive dialectical method together with his idealist mysticism.' (Ziherl, 'France Prešeren' 303, n. ******) It is clear that Prešeren serves Ziherl here as a pre-text for a pressing Marxian epistemological debate; in other words, Prešeren is here an excuse for such a debate and at the same time a basis for it, a basis the dialectical character of which is obvious, according to Ziherl, even to someone who, like Prijatelj, is blind to the flaws in the dialectics of Feuerbach's philosophy.

THE RECEPTION OF ZIHERL'S PREŠEREN IN PREŠEREN STUDIES

By 1969, this kind of mobilisation of Prešeren is given a label that institutional Prešeren studies will not be able to get rid off to this day (just as institutional ignorance of Ziherl's legacy will not cease to separate that which he brought together, namely historical materialism and an academic department at Ljubljana). This label is the 'Prešernian structure'. In the essay 'Vprašanje o poeziji' (The Question Concerning Poetry), Dušan Pirjevec introduces the 'Prešernian structure' to name the instrumentalisation of literature for Slovenian nation-building. This instrumentalisation is said to structure the entire first century of interpretations of Prešeren, a conjuncture supplemented and tran-

scended by Janko Kos's 1966 book *Prešernov pesniški razvoj* (Prešeren's Poetic Development), the first systematic and non-contradictory study of Prešeren, according to Pirjevec (55–6). As an alternative to the Prešernian structure, due to which the works of Prešeren, but also of writers and essayists Fran Levstik and Cankar, had been read as representations of the spirit of the nation, Pirjevec senses in his own time the emergence of literature as an autonomous play free of any ideological demand. Or this is at least how Pirjevec's essay was understood in the by then more or less postmodern mainstream. This understanding of Pirjevec culminates in 1986, when sociologist and writer Dimitrij Rupel publishes the book *Sociologija kulture in umetnosti* (Sociology of Culture and Art). Pirjevec's rejection of Marxism on behalf of phenomenology is made explicit and even personified by Rupel, who discards Ziherl in the name of Vidmar (Rupel 41–51) and even Pirjevec himself (97–104). Pirjevec rejects Marxism as a charismatic Heideggerian professor of Comparative Literature and as a former Partisan political commissar; Rupel, on the other hand, rejects Marxism as a conservative professor of Sociology and a soon-to-be foreign minister of the Republic of Slovenia. The former reproduces the Yugoslav nationalist cultural politics; the latter reproduces the Slovenian post-socialist identity politics.

In the 1969 essay, Pirjevec quotes in passing Vidmar's claim that Vladimir Nazor, Croatian writer and President of the State Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia (ZAVNOH), said the following as he was skimming through Prešeren's book of poetry: 'This one created the Slovenian nation.' (Pirjevec 56) Neither Vidmar nor Pirjevec valorise this statement. Even Rupel is silent on the matter, even though all he had to do was to apply a concept that was already produced.[5] For in 1981, Rastko Močnik introduces in Prešeren studies the idea of the Slovenian as a presupposition of a text on a Slovenian

5
With some charity of interpretation, we could find a proto-concept already in Ziherl's text. According to Ziherl, Prešeren thought that the so-called Illyrian movement was an unrealisable project and that, if it were to be realised, ought to be stopped in the name of the construction of the national language (Ziherl, 'France Prešeren' 314). In other words, that which is unrealisable has to be prevented if it is realised. Now, in structural anthropology the act of preventing the unrealisable has the status of the prohibition of the impossible, the paradigmatic case of which is incest taboo, the prohibition that interpellates its addressee precisely into the national language as a key social institution.

(Močnik, *Mesčevo zlato* 36–9). Thus, the materialism and the Hegelian dialectic that Ziherl ascribes to Prešeren the thinker Močnik locates in Prešeren's text (ibid. 113). As a consequence, after Bor, Vidmar and Ziherl himself, Prešeren's metaphoricity can now finally be interpreted. This metaphoricity is generated out of itself, according to Močnik, as the result of the work of linguistic oppositions themselves, which undo themselves by reappearing at higher levels of the text, where they lay bare the work they did at lower levels. This work is condensed in Prešeren's metaphors, which are elliptical and as such invite the addressee to supplement and saturate them with his or her own spontaneous knowledge, that is, the knowledge contained in the language that serves as the material of the text itself. (Močnik, *Mesčevo zlato* 103–6) The ideological moment lies no longer in the Prešernian structure, in the political appropriation of Prešeren, but, on the contrary, in the open, elliptical, non-saturated structure of Prešernian texts. The poetic polysemy that Pirjevec was said to regard as that which will succeed the Prešernian structure is reconnected, by Močnik, with Ziherl's problematic of the relationship between poetry and ideology. Polysemy is no longer a projected alternative to ideology, but a key to it.

In his 2006 book *Julija Primic v slovenski književni vedi*, Močnik returns to this interpretation of Prešeren's texts, adding a defence of Ziherl's Prešeren as well as a critique of the contemporary global disintegration of the national type of the social bond. He returns to what Rupel saw as an antagonism between Ziherl and Vidmar, without, however, starting from the notion of the Prešernian structure. On the contrary, Močnik shows that Ziherl intervened in Prešeren studies as a discipline, more precisely, in both the liberal and the clericalist readings of Prešeren's main text, *Krst pri Savici* (The Baptism on the Savica), readings that had been reproducing the national canon in

their very antagonism (Močnik, *Julija* 147–9). As an intervention in the pre-theoretical institution of the canon, Ziherl's interpretation of *The Baptism* therefore could not have been pre-theoretical. At the same time, however, it had to be pre-theoretical; Ziherl had to remain 'a prisoner of the old Marxism who, for instance, referred neither to Russian Formalists nor to their Marxist adversaries of the 1920s' (ibid. 162), insofar as he was left 'without an interlocutor' (ibid. 161), without a theoretical response that could force him into a dialogic refraction of his merely punctual, philosophical intervention.[6]

6 Moreover, even when the historical materialist interpretation of Prešeren developed by Močnik in 1981 replaces the humanist problematic with a theoretical conceptualisation of ideological interpellation, Prešeren studies (as represented by Marko Juvan's articles on the modernity of *The Baptism:* see Juvan 'The Nation' 389 and Juvan, 'Modernost' 357–8) registers this conceptualisation only indirectly, by referring only to a punctual, philosophical intervention in the problematic of interpellation in *The Baptism* (as outlined by Slavoj Žižek: Žižek 34–9).

ZIHERL WITHOUT AN INTERLOCUTOR

Thus, the reception of Ziherl's Prešeren can be delimited by referring to two extremes: Močnik's 2006 book on the treatment of Prešeren's muse and unrequited love, Julija Primic, in Slovenian literary studies, on the one hand, and Slovenian literary studies itself, on the other; that is, a book on Slovenian literary studies, at one extreme, and Slovenian literary studies, at the other. In other words, the reception of Ziherl's Prešeren varies between positive and negative readings of Ziherl. Furthermore, both predicates, the 'positive' and the 'negative', apply both at the level of the enunciated (*énoncé*) and the level of enunciation (*énonciation*). Močnik's reception of Ziherl is a positive one both at the level of enunciation, the level at which he actually acknowledges Ziherl's reading of Prešeren, and at the level of the enunciated, where he generally agrees with this reading. And vice versa, the reception of Ziherl's reading of Prešeren in Slovenian literary studies is a negative one at the level of enunciation, where it refuses to acknowledge this reading, and, consequently, at the level of the enunciated, where there

simply is nothing enunciated about Ziherl's Prešeren in Slovenian literary studies.

This opposition between Močnik's book on Julija Primic in Slovenian literary studies and Slovenian literary studies itself—the opposition between, at one extreme, enunciating and enunciated acceptance of Ziherl and, at the other, enunciating and enunciated rejection of Ziherl—is also what overdetermines the mutual reception of Močnik's book and Slovenian literary studies. Here, too, there is the opposition between a positive and a negative reception, but there is no more unity of enunciation and the enunciated. For Močnik's reception of Slovenian literary studies is a positive one only in its enunciation, where it actually acknowledges Slovenian literary studies post Ziherl, while being a negative one at the level of the enunciated, where it treats Slovenian literary studies as an epistemological obstacle. The reception of Močnik's book in Slovenian literary studies, on the other hand, is a negative one both at the level of enunciation, where the book remains unacknowledged, and at the level of the enunciated, where, as a consequence, there is nothing enunciated about the book.[7]

So, for Močnik, Ziherl's Prešeren is productive, whereas Slovenian literary studies after Ziherl is ignorant of Ziherl and as such unproductive. Which implies that for Močnik, Slovenian literary studies is also ignorant of him (which in turn implies that Miklavž Komelj's engagement with Močnik's reading of the Partisan art, as published in this volume, is truly unique). Thus, Močnik's about-quoted proposition about 'Ziherl without an interlocutor' is an implicit proposition about, as it were, *Močnik without an interlocutor*. Now, this claim puts us in the position of someone who merely makes a clearly implied proposition explicit. In general, such a position is, of course, redundant, if not tautological. But in our case the position is one of explicitly stat-

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With the exception, that is, of reviews of Močnik's book by Jelka Kernev-Štrajn, Matej Krajnc and Maša Ogrizek (see Kernev-Štrajn, Krajnc and Ogrizek respectively), and references to the book in Maja Čakarić's interview with Juvan (Juvan, 'Figura') and in Marijan Dović's article on the so-called Slovenian cultural syndrome (Dović 207). Outside Slovenian literary studies, an epistemological commentary of Močnik's book is provided by Primož Krašovec (Krašovec).

ing precisely that Močnik is without an interlocutor, that is, without anyone who would be able to acknowledge his implication and then reject as redundant or even tautological the position of making this implication explicit. So, what is made explicit here is that the text that is being made explicit is unable to presuppose an interlocutor and yet addresses a kind of addressee. Which, of course, is a pragmatic paradox. But we can resolve the paradox if we distinguish between empirical interlocutors and structural addressees, and then locate the text that we just made explicit in the empirically existing Prešeren studies, thereby calling on to Prešeren studies to assume the position of the addressee of the text that we have made explicit. So, by making Močnik's implication about his non-existent interlocutors explicit, we try to make Slovenian literary studies acknowledge the implication and thus become the interlocutor of Močnik's and, by extension, Ziherl's Prešeren.

THEORY WITHOUT THE UNIVERSITY

By calling on to Slovenian literary studies in this way, however, we merely reiterate the strategy of performative interpellation of an addressee to the position of knowledge. Močnik himself has analysed this strategy in his various lectures by referring to the way in which Karl Marx and Frederick Engels address in *The German Ideology* a not yet fully formed proletariat in order to contribute to its formation by precisely addressing it as it had already been formed; according to Močnik, *The German Ideology* addresses the proletariat as a political subject irreducible to the existing working class and thereby, in the address itself, creates the space needed for the inscription of this subject. More importantly, Močnik not only analyses but also prac-

tices this strategy, most notably perhaps in his recent critique of the so-called Bologna Process and its neoliberal reform of the European academia. This critique, as he himself comments, 'has found no reader at the university—just as the author has found no interlocutor there' (Močnik, *Spisi* 535). The pragmatic paradox therefore seems to reappear here, insofar as Močnik's critique of the Bologna reform addresses the academia with the theoretical proposition that the academia is unable to acknowledge theoretical propositions.

Močnik reflects on the contemporary academia in relation to the Bologna reform. The argument is threefold: first, the subordination of higher education to the market pursued by the Bologna reform is already an accomplished fact; second, the reform cannot guarantee further subordination of higher education to the market; and third, there is no need to subordinate higher education to the market because the market is increasingly determined by knowledge itself (Močnik, *Spisi* 418–9). Now, this argument seems to follow the symptomatic structure of the Freudian borrowed kettle. 'The story of the borrowed kettle which had a hole in it when it was given back', writes Freud, 'is an excellent example of the purely comic effect of giving free play to the unconscious mode of thought. It will be recalled that the borrower, when he was questioned, replied firstly that he had not borrowed a kettle at all, secondly that it had had a hole in it already when he borrowed it, and thirdly that he had given it back undamaged and without a hole.' (Freud 254) Nevertheless, the symptomatic character of Močnik's argument against the Bologna reform can be given some legitimacy if the symptom is ascribed to the very reference of the argument, that is, if the argument about the Bologna reform is viewed as the negative of the reform itself: the reform itself symptomatically pursues something that, first, is an accomplished fact, second, unachievable

by the reform, and third, needs not be achieved at all. In this respect, Močnik's argument is a negative model of the Bologna reform, a model that Močnik later on supplements with a positive proposition that what the reform does achieve is, first and foremost, to reject the pursuit of theory, to sacrifice theoretical production to a symptomatic pursuit of something that is already achieved, out of the reform's reach and obsolete. The negative model is then, to use Freud's terms, an 'example of the purely comic effect of giving free play to the unconscious mode of thought', an effect that triggers a positive proposition.

But precisely insofar as a positive theoretical elaboration of the initial argumentation dispels the symptom at the level of the enunciated, the symptom reappears at the level of enunciation. For insofar as the elaboration brings the three points together by claiming that the reformed university rejects theory, it is clear that the claim is addressed at the university as a kind of addressee that, precisely from the perspective of this theoretical elaboration, is unable to take up theoretical elaborations (or, for that matter, the comical structure of the borrowed kettle). At the level of enunciation, the chapter on the Bologna reform presupposes an addressee whose inability to understand the chapter itself is conceptually demonstrated at the level of the enunciated.

Thus, the symptom at the level of the enunciated is dispelled only to the extent that it reappears at the level of enunciation: it disappears by way of reappearing on the next level; in a word, it is *aufgehoben*, sublated in the sense given to this Hegelian category by Lacan's return to Freud (Lacan 710). Yet the level of enunciation is also where the symptom is nevertheless reflected upon. For the author of the chapter on the Bologna reform has already reflected upon the political implications of a theoretically grounded address to a non-existent Other as he,

as mentioned above, referred to the case of *The German Ideology*. Hence, just as *The German Ideology* creates a space, a position for proletarian addressees endowed with class consciousness, so too the chapter on the Bologna Process creates a position for academic addressees equipped with theory—and thereby calls on academics to assume that position. ❦

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Povzetek

V šestdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja je Boris Ziherl slovenski sociologiji zagotovil teoretsko in institucionalno podlago: historični materializem in univerzitetni oddelek. Toda po Ziherlu se je med tema podlagama začel odpirati prepad, in sicer pogosto prav zaradi institucionalne pozabe Ziherlove dediščine. In obratno, nedavni študiji, ki to dediščino reafirmirata v okviru historičnega materializma, dosledno zavzemata anti-institucionalno gledišče. Ti študiji – knjiga Miklavža Komelja o slovenski partizanski umetnosti in knjiga Rastka Močnika o prešernoslovju – posegata v slovensko sociologijo literature, ki jo je prav tako utemeljeval Ziherl. Tukajšnji članek se zato posveča osrednji disciplini, relevantni tako za slovensko sociologijo kakor za slovensko literarno vedo, namreč prešernoslovju. Ziherlov pristop k slovenskemu nacionalnemu pesniku Francetu Prešernu se formira med 2. svetovno vojno in v letih po njej. Ziherlov Prešeren obeh obdobij je v članku obravnavan na ozadju omenjene nedavne dvojice reaktualizacij Ziherla: medvojni Prešeren na Komeljevem ozadju, povojni pa na Močnikovem.

Med vojno Ziherl v nasprotju z večino drugih partizanskih kulturnih delavcev poudarja, da je Prešernovo pesniško govorico mogoče brati ne kot aluzijo na antifašistični boj, temveč kot orožje v boju proti Novalisovi reakcionarni romantiki. Šele kot takšna, tj. kot orožje v boju, bojevanem v Prešernovem lastnem času in v njegovem lastnem, pesniškem polju, lahko Prešernova pesniška govorica po Ziherlu navdihuje partizansko poezijo. Ziherlov medvojni Prešeren je torej pesnik in s tem nasprotnik nemške romantike. Kot pozitivni protipol te negativne opredelitve pa je Ziherlov povojni Prešeren mislec in s tem Heglov zaveznik v boju z romantiko.

Konec šestdesetih let je tovrstna politična mobilizacija Prešerna zavrnjena kot nacionalistična instrumentalizacija, ki bi se morala umakniti domnevno prihajajoči literaturi svobodne jezikovne igre onkraj ideologije. Leta 1969 namreč Dušan Pirjevec, nekdanji partizanski politični komisar, sproži to kritiko kot heideggrovski profesor komparativistike; leta 1986 pa Dimitrij Rupel to kritiko uporabi kot profesor sociologije, ki želi jugoslovansko nacionalistično kulturno politiko zamenjati s slovensko post-socialistično identitetno politiko, politiko, ki jo bo Rupel manj kot desetletje pozneje reproduciral kot zunanji minister Republike Slovenije.

Ne Pirjevec ne Rupel ne konceptualizirata Prešernove vloge v nacionalističnem projektu, za katerega naj bi bil Prešeren žrtvovan. A že leta 1981 to opravi Rastko Močnik. Dialektiko, ki jo je Ziherl pripisal Prešernu kot mislecu, Močnik locira v sam Prešernov tekst, s tem pa nazadnje omogoči dejansko analizo Prešernove pesniške govorice in njene vloge v nacionalističnem projektu. Ideološki moment zdaj ni več v tem, v čemer Pirjevec in Rupel vidita Ziherlovo instrumentalizacijo pesništva, pač pa v interpelirajoči strukturi pesniškega teksta samega. Močnik tedaj pesniško polisemijo, ki jo Pirjevec in Rupel branita pred Ziherlom, analizira v samem okviru Ziherlove problematike ideologije. V zadnjem desetletju pa mu to omogoča, da v omenjeni institucionalni pozabi Ziherlove dediščine prepozna primer slovenske neoliberalne identitetne politike in da na tej podlagi refleksivno totalizira prešernoslovje s kritično študijo tako Prešernove govorice kakor samega prešernoslovja.

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The Return of the Partisan Art

REVIEW OF

KOMELJ, MIKLAVŽ, 2009: *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost?* Ljubljana: Založba /*cf.

PAVLINEC, DONOVAN, ed., 2008: *La stampa partigiana.* Trans. Maria Rita Rodinò, Claudia Roma and Costantino Saccheddu. Ljubljana: International Centre of Graphic Arts; National Museum of Contemporary History.

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After the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav Partisan movement, too, has dissolved as a legitimate object of public discussion. Moreover, after 1991 this sudden lack of interest in the People's Liberation Struggle 1941–1945 was itself left unnoticed in the ex-Yugoslav societies for almost two decades. This lack of interest (in the lack of interest) cannot be explained away by simply presuming a kind of overcoming of the grip of distant past. For in the same time much more remote cultural phenomena were given new attention in the post-socialist identity discourse; historically and conceptually premodern folklore practices were revamped as so many pillars of the newly invented identity communities. At the same time, the culture of the Yugoslav Partisans, whose unique role in the international antifascist struggle had long been acknowledged all over the world, was treated in an undeservingly patronising tone, if not completely ignored. The postmodern and post-socialist culturalisation and depoliticisation of the public discourse has led to the oblivion of the most widespread burst of cultural activity ever recorded in the territory of today's Slovenia. In short, culturalisation manifested itself as oblivion of culture.

This process is not without a certain real-socialist pre-history, however. As early as the 1980s, two major interpretations of the Slovenian Partisan culture competed for domination. On the one hand, the official Yugoslav narrative granted this culture a key role in the political formation of the Slovenian nation. On the other hand, many of the so-called dissidents within the official cultural apparatus developed the idea that the Partisan culture, which they tended to reduce to artistic artefacts, was an overvalued regression in comparison to pre-war artistic models as well as to the post-war production of the dissidents' own cultural apparatus. What these dissidents ignored was the fact the prestigious status of Slovenian and Yugoslav culture post World War II was secured

precisely by the cultural and political intervention that was the Partisan movement. In other words, the success of the Partisan culture manifested itself as the rejection of the Partisan culture.

But no matter whether the Partisan culture was indeed indispensable for the Slovenian political development, as the official Yugoslav line went, or a mere politically motivated myth, as the dissidents implied, the sudden pacification of both contradictory narratives is all too symptomatic to be neglected. Even if the official interpretation of the Slovenian Partisan culture was indeed biased, as certain commentators have long claimed, the general (and sudden) amnesia still demands explanation. If nothing else, in the supposedly undemocratic Yugoslavia there were at least two major interpretations of the Partisan culture, whereas in the supposedly pluralist Republic of Slovenia there suddenly was none. In short, pluralisation manifested itself as dismissal of a productive debate.

By the early 2000, the lack of interest in (the lack of interest in) the Slovenian Partisan culture would truly deserve the status of a rather urgent object of analysis, had there not appeared a genuine new wave of reflection on the Partisan movement. This new wave coincided with processes that have significantly altered the conditions secured by the People's Liberation Struggle for the Slovenian national culture; most of these processes had to do with the integration of the Republic of Slovenia into the EU and NATO. Interestingly, this did not strengthen the trend of the disappearance of the Partisan heritage from the public space. Quite the contrary, as Slovenia was joining major anti-socialist alliances the Partisan culture slowly reappeared as a legitimate topic. This reappearance was first limited to critical public intellectuals. As a consequence, these new studies on the Partisan culture included as their side effect some of the most pertinent social criticisms of con-

temporary public amnesia regarding the Partisans. The lack of interest in the Partisan culture eventually manifested itself as a pre-text for a return to this culture.

Furthermore, these critical intellectuals, far from simply readjusting the Partisan perspective to the present historical frame, approached this perspective as a violently quelled legacy that has yet to be understood at its own level. So, in 2004, the year Slovenia entered the EU and NATO, the International Centre for Graphic Arts in Ljubljana and the National Museum of Contemporary History hosted the exhibition *Partizanski tisk* (The Partisans in Print). Curated by Donovan Pavlinec, the exhibition attracted a lot of attention, especially through the bilingual catalogue *Partizanski tisk / The Partisans in Print* (see Škrjanec and Pavlinec), which contains essays by major Slovenian experts on the topic. Four years later, the year the Great Recession truly started to be felt in Slovenia, Pavlinec brought the exhibition to the A + A gallery in Venice, on which occasion he edited the Italian edition of the catalogue, titled *La stampa partigiana* (see Pavlinec). In the same year, Sebastijan Horvat's new staging of Matej Bor's Partisan play *Raztrganci* (The Ragged People) was awarded for its innovativeness at the annual national theatre festival, while a group of young critical theorists organised the international conference *Uneventment of History: The Case of Yugoslavia* (see Centrih, Krašovec and Velagić). Next year, poet and essayist Miklavž Komelj released his ground-breaking book *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost?* (How to Think the Partisan Art?). By 2011, Lev Centrih published the book *Marksistična formacija: zgodovina ideoloških aparatov komunističnega gibanja 20. stoletja* (The Marxist Formation: A History of the Ideological Apparatuses of the Communist Movement in the Twentieth Century), and three years later Gal Kirn published the book *Partizanski prelomi in protislovja tržnega socializma v Jugoslaviji*

(The Partisan Ruptures and the Contradictions of Market Socialism in Yugoslavia). In the meantime, Tanja Velagić edited numerous volumes of the journal *Borec* (The Fighter) and publications of the publishing house ZAK, while colleagues from other parts of former Yugoslavia produced such volumes as *Partisans in Yugoslavia: Literature, Film and Visual Culture* (see Jakiša and Gilić) and *Retracing Images: Visual Culture after Yugoslavia* (see Šuber and Karamanić). In other words, the turn away from a culturalised politics and an unpolitical culture revitalised the idea of political culture—and of cultural politics.

There are obviously many differences between these projects; none of them, however, is as notable as the difference between them as parts of a new wave, on the one hand, and the most prestigious socialist project on the same topic, on the other. This was a project that ran for almost two decades (1970–1986) under the leadership of Boris Paternu, Professor of Slovenian literature at the University of Ljubljana, and his assistants Irena Novak-Popov and Marija Stanonik. Generously state-funded, the project enabled dozens of professors, lecturers and students to collect more than 12,000 Slovenian poems that were written both by canonical poets and anonymous fighters, prisoners and refugees between 1941 and 1945 (see Paternu); a selection of this enormous archive was published in the four-volume anthology of Slovenian poetry of resistance titled *Slovensko pesništvo upora 1941–1945* (Slovenian Poetry of Resistance 1941–1945). The new wave of studies on the Partisan culture, on the other hand, consists of monographs and essays written by individuals or small collectives, in most cases without any public funding and in all cases in a time when public project funding is no longer a welcome addition like in Paternu's case but more or less the only source of project work in Slovenian humanities and social sciences. As a result, these studies were not able to expand or revise the

archive produced by Paternu's project; instead, they reinterpreted, even rehabilitated this archive, thus effectively saving Paternu's project from the institutional amnesia that had set in even before the publication of that project's four volumes. The most important new publications in this respect arguably include the catalogue to the 2004 exhibition and Miklavž Komelj's book, which partly grew out of his reply to Rastko Močnik's contribution to the catalogue; both this reply and the subsequent dialogue between Komelj and Močnik are published in this volume of *Slavica tergestina*.

The introductory chapter of the catalogue *Partizanski tisk / The Partisans in Print*, written by Lilijana Stepančič, Director of the International Centre of Graphic Arts at the time, sketches the history of Slovenian exhibitions of the Partisan art. Stepančič notes that the more the Partisan struggle was distant in time the more it was commemorated, with the fortieth anniversary of the Slovenian Liberation Front in 1981 witnessing the most comprehensive commemoration. This, however, was followed by a rapid decline: 'Just four years later, in 1985, on the 40th anniversary of the end of the war and victory for the revolution, not one major exhibition of Partisan print was staged to mark the occasion.' (Škrjanec and Pavlinec 13)

If Director Stepančič offers a sketch of the history of the reception of Slovenian Partisan art, Pavlinec, the curator of the exhibition, sketches the history of this artistic production itself. Pavlinec focuses on the graphic art, which peaked after the first congress of Slovenian cultural workers in January 1944, when the quality of printed matter improved, especially in the regions of Kočevje and Bela Krajina, the locations of two major printing plants. In the process, Pavlinec provides numerous details that speak of the artists' extraordinary imagination and flexibility in creating ad hoc materials: 'For example, they made

knives for linoleum cutting from spoons, steel umbrella tips, watch springs and English machineguns; to obtain material, they scrapped linoleum off floors; the wooden rollers for applying colour to linoleum were coated with patches of bicycle inner tubes.' (Škrjanec and Pavlinec 73)

If Pavlinec's chapter is focused on graphic art, Božo Repe's contribution addresses the Partisan press. In 1944, for example, Slovenian Partisans have printed 378 serial publications, including two daily newspapers, 60 periodicals and 30 wall newspapers. *Partizanski dnevnik* (The Partisan Daily), one of the very few European daily resistance newspapers, is particularly indicative of the rapid popularisation of the Partisan movement, according to Repe; initially released in 400 copies as a gazette of the Partisan Triglav Division (later the Thirty-First Divison), its circulation rose to 20,000 by the end of the war and continues to be published widely to this day as *Primorski dnevnik* (The Littoral Daily). On the other hand, *Delo* (Labour), the main Slovenian daily since 1959, took its name from a paper with a different aim and recurrence: in the interbellum and in 1941–1942, *Delo* was the gazette of the central committee of the Slovenian Communist Party, whereas the daily newspaper of the same name appeared only in 1959 after the merger of two dailies, *Slovenski poročevalec* (Slovenian Reporter) and *Ljudska pravica* (People's Justice).

Breda Škrjanec, who co-edited the catalogue with Pavlinec, provides a welcome addition to both Pavlinec and Repe, as she sheds light on the material basis for the production analysed by them, namely the illegal printing plants. Škrjanec meticulously traces the logistical problems in the occupied territory and the ways in which they often dictated the final form of the Partisan graphics as well as of their many newspapers. In this way, Škrjanec manages to demonstrate the incredible contrast

between the extreme conditions and the extraordinary quality and quantity of the Partisan print production. This contrast also shines from Andrej Šemrov's chapter on the design of the Partisan money, coupons and bonds. This design was often of outstanding quality, as it was regularly entrusted to architects and artists such as Edvard Ravnikar and Marijan Tepina, who both studied with Jože Plečnik and Le Corbusier.

The central chapter of the catalogue comes from Rastko Močnik. Močnik focuses not only on the Partisan graphic art, but makes a further step to discuss the Partisan symbolic production in general. His text comes closest to the new critical generation of researchers of the Yugoslav Partisan movement. Compared to most of the chapters of the catalogue, Močnik's essay does not take the post-1991 capitalist restoration as the point from which to approach the Partisans. Instead, Močnik rejects the question of whether or not the Partisan movement lead to the supposed political culmination of 1991, and thus clears the space for new interpretations. He begins by discarding the widely accepted idea that only now, after the end of socialism, the Partisan art can again be received as art; for him, this notion is premised on the bourgeois aestheticist ideology according to which art is perceived as art only if its material conditions and impacts are ignored or at best degraded to the level of anecdote. Nothing could be further from the program of the Partisan symbolic production, according to Močnik, which did want to intervene in its own material conditions, the conditions brought about by the same bourgeois ideology that is reproduced in the contemporary idea that the Partisan art can only be viewed as art once the conditions of its production have become a thing of the past. The Partisans wanted social emancipation through art, not the emancipation of art from its social conditions.

This radical position prompted one relatively young public intellectual to start what Močnik (82 n. 52) later termed 'a productive dialogue' by writing a review of the exhibition and in particular of Močnik's essay, which he later described as 'one of the key theoretic interventions in the discussion on the art of the People's Liberation Struggle in recent years' (Komelj 350). This was Miklavž Komelj, the author of the above-mentioned book *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost?*, a groundbreaking volume that appeared only four years after his review of the exhibition and its catalogue. In the book, Komelj boldly sets on the path demarcated by Močnik. The original polemic between the two, however, is still buried within the impressive 640 pages of Komelj's book. In the polemic, Komelj criticises Močnik for not taking into account the positions among the Partisans themselves that demanded artistic autonomy, albeit not in the bourgeois sense of the autonomy of art from society. For Komelj, not every suspension of artistic autonomy is emancipatory. Indeed, 'in the years before World War II the problematisation of the autonomy of art was characteristic of the Slovenian clero-fascist press—and aimed precisely at the Marxists, who were said to refer to the autonomy of art in order to serve their Marxist poison to the people under the guise of art' (Komelj 352). Komelj draws on propositions by such divergent thinkers as the Partisan leader Boris Kidrič and contemporary philosopher Alain Badiou to demonstrate the necessity of distinguishing between art and propaganda as two separate procedures of truth. Combining such seemingly incommensurable figures as Alejandra Pizarnik and the early Mao Zedong, he consistently shows that the political potential of progressive art lies precisely in its inherent artistic qualities (Komelj 353–356).

For Komelj, the Partisan movement is neither a famous episode from the standpoint of continuity (which was the standpoint of the official

socialist interpretation), nor an infamous episode from the standpoint of discontinuity (which is the standpoint of the mainstream post-socialist revision). Instead, it is a famous episode from the standpoint of discontinuity: according to Komelj's main thesis, the Partisan art was a ground-breaking transformative practice that set new coordinates of thinking about art in connection to the formation of a new revolutionary subjectivity (Komelj 7).

This kind of conceptual work is completely absent from Paternu's project, which limited itself to archiving and anthologising the poetry of anti-fascist resistance. This self-limitation to the empiricist scope of the mainstream literary studies of the time is perhaps even the reason why the work on the four-volume anthology (1987–1997) survived the state that had funded it from the beginning; the culturally invaluable yet theoretically and politically conventional achievements of the project may have been the main reason why the anthology was able to escape the fate of such similar projects as critical editions of Marx and Engels, Boris Kidrič, Edvard Kardelj or even Anton Fister, the most internationally acclaimed Slovenian in 1848. When only slightly later the last consequences (of the consequences) of the Partisan political culture were undone, the lack of criticism that can be traced back to the early 1980s became evident again. And yet it is not enough to say that what has here been dubbed 'the new wave' of commentators is rethinking the 1980s and the 1990s in their studies on the 1940s—what they are rethinking is, first and foremost, our time. ❦

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It Is About 'Now', Comrades. On Gal Kirn's Partizanski prelomi

REVIEW OF

KIRN, GAL, 2014: *Partizanski prelomi in protislovja tržnega socializma v Jugoslaviji*. Ljubljana: Sophia.

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'Always historicize!'—if this famous slogan with which almost a half century ago Fredric Jameson (9) opened his seminal book on *The Political Unconscious*, a claim in which he saw a '"trans-historical"' imperative of every dialectical thinking, has ever found an authentic addressee in the post-Yugoslav spaces (and beyond), an addressee who not only understood Jameson's message but also practically realised it, than it is Gal Kirn. This is precisely what Kirn has accomplished with his *Partizanski prelomi in protislovja tržnega socializma v Jugoslaviji* (The Partisan Ruptures and the Contradictions of Market Socialism in Yugoslavia), a book that historicises a past that has already lost any contact to our present, let alone to our future.

This was far from an easy task. First and foremost, we live in a time that is generally reluctant to any sort of serious historical analysis. This is not to say that we are not interested in the past; quite the contrary, our age is almost pathologically obsessed with it, yet this obsession no longer has the form of historiography in terms of knowledge of the past. As Pierre Nora has shown, historiography has been replaced by memory. Professional historians have lost the monopoly over the interpretation of the past; today, almost everyone, in whatever form of cultural memory, can participate in the production of the past. We live in an age of commemoration, Nora argues, emphasising the connection of this upsurge in overall memorial concerns with all sorts of identity politics.

It is in this general context that Gal Kirn's book opposes its time in a most radical way and, what is more important, uncompromisingly challenges the dominant narratives on the past that concerns its object of inquiry, namely the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, the book does all that in a time of increasing general interest in the Yugoslav past. The reason for this renewed interest is to be found in our pre-

sent, which Kirn explicitly defines as the catastrophe of democratic transition. This is to say that the promise of democratic capitalism, which a quarter century ago motivated the peoples of Eastern Europe to bring down the Communist system and open new historical perspectives, has failed. This is undoubtedly true at least for those living in the spaces of former Yugoslavia, whose actual reality is in many respects worse than the Yugoslav socialist past. Their dreams from the late 1980s about a new Europe, a democratic community, free market economy and national independency turned, as Kirn explicitly states, into a nightmare.

While there is no wonder why those people look back into the past, the way in which they do it, which is almost exclusively reduced to a sort of nostalgic cultural retrospectivity, seems to prevent them from establishing any cognitively meaningful and historically productive relation to it. In the memory of today's generation, former Yugoslavia exists mostly in the form of cultural heritage. Yet the more books, films, exhibitions and discussions are dedicated to the truly impressive cultural achievements of Yugoslav socialism, the more distant and obscure it appears from today's perspective. A past that is perceived exclusively through the prism of cultural difference, that is, merely as another, different culture, is at the same time lost for us as a space of our experience—which for Reihnart Koselleck is just another name for history in its modern meaning. In other words, what seems to have been saved culturally is in fact lost historically. In being reduced to a mere object of cultural memory, former Yugoslavia dies once more. All that remains of it now is a sort of monument to an unknown history, highly praised for its cultural value yet thoroughly untranslatable into the political present, that is, into the reality of global capitalism and the social forces that inform it and struggle along its fault lines.

Gal Kirn's book challenges this historical stalemate at two neuralgic points of the post- and anti-communist discourse. The first point is the discourse's historicist developmentalism, a feature that legitimates the process of the so-called transition to democracy after the fall of Communism. From this perspective the whole space of the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe appears as historically belated, that is, as having been prevented from a normal historical development by Communist totalitarianism. After the so-called democratic revolutions of 1989–1990 have removed this totalitarian obstacle, the developmentalist line goes, the societies of the former East were able to catch up with the historical development, which simply meant the West. Understood in that way, the transition to democracy is on the one hand reduced to a historically predetermined process whose teleology can be best described as a simple case of westernisation; and, on the other hand, the transition to democracy has retroactively deprived the Communist past of Eastern European societies of any historical value whatsoever, which is why it was possible to leave it to oblivion.

It is at this point that Kirn reaches deep in the Yugoslav past—more precisely, in the historical origins of the Partisan anti-fascist struggle and the social revolution that was intrinsically tied to it—in order to recover what he calls the 'politics of rupture'. At stake is a concept that revives the idea of history in its truly modern sense, as a subject able to create its own temporalities and open spaces of new experiences. It is only within such alternative temporalities and on the ground of an unprecedented experience that what is commonly called a historical event can occur. In the case of former Yugoslavia such a historical event was the People's Liberation Struggle of 1941–1945, a break that created a radically new sense of what is historically possible. In only a few years, a relatively small illegal Communist Party

managed to mobilise a mass political movement that not only liberated the country from fascism but also initiated a social revolution. Kirn calls this event the 'Partisan rupture' in order to stress the fact that it had activated an enormous amount of emancipatory energy which was subsequently discharged in additional historical aftershocks. The first of these additional ruptures was the traumatic break with Stalin and the Soviet block, even with what up to then was an ideologically and politically homogenous Communist movement, which in turn led to yet another rupture in the geopolitical order established after World War Two, namely the establishment of the Non-Alignment Movement and a radical redefinition of the international role of Yugoslavia as the state that has historically connected the anti-fascist struggle and a social revolution with the anti-colonial struggle of the Third World. And the second crucial historical rupture following from the Partisan 'politics of rupture' occurred at the national level with the introduction of self-management as a new radically democratic model of social relations at both the level of economic reproduction and the level of (anti-statist) organisation of the state.

In order to save the legacy of these historical ruptures from contemporary ideological oblivion, Kirn himself had to make a series of theoretical ruptures. First and foremost, he liberated the figure of the partisan from Carl Schmitt's quasi-dialectic of order and disorder. But at a much broader theoretical level he also had to liberate the concept of historical temporality from the historicist constraints of the everyday empiricist notion of linear, chronological time, the notion that is still the norm in contemporary developmentalist ideologies, particularly in the teleology of the post-communist 'transition to democracy' as well as in its dogmatic Marxist versions insofar as they still follow the historicism of, say, the Second International. It is no coincidence that in

order to accomplish this task Kirn chose to seek theoretical support in Louis Althusser, the most radical Marxist critic of historicism (besides Walter Benjamin) who has been haunting the Communist movement like a ghost, fighting its omnipresent tendency to reduce the dialectical complexity of historical materialism to the simplest version of a common-sense Hegelianism. As is well known, Althusser (106) countered this tendency by producing the concept of the real historical present as a reflection of the temporal structure of social totality. It is important to note that Althusser did not understand the real historical present as a simple temporal co-existence of all the elements of the social whole. On the contrary, these elements, that is, the structural levels of the social whole, have each their own particular time and their own temporal rhythm. These different 'presents', different constitutive temporalities or histories that co-exist within the social whole as a complex structural unity, never transpire in what Benjamin (395) has called 'homogeneous, empty time'. Instead, we experience them only relationally as a series of absences.

It is clear that from the perspective of this concept there is no place for the experience of one common social temporality, of one single history, and therefore for the idea of the development of the social whole as a social whole. As a consequence, this theoretical concept also rules out the idea of the historical transition from one social formation to another. As such, it necessarily undermines the whole ideological edifice of the so-called transition to democracy, the ideology that was imposed on the post-communist societies after 1989–1990 as their only historical present. From the Althusserian standpoint, the process of historical transition can be thought only in terms of breaks or ruptures between different temporal conjunctures. This is how we should understand Kirn's Partisan ruptures: as both the true historical

and political legacy of former Yugoslavia and as a radical critique of the historicist developmentalism that is at the ideological core of the post-communist transitology.

But the same theoretical perspective makes it also possible to critically address yet another neuralgic point of the post- and anti-communist discourse, namely the notorious claim to the end of history. I am thinking of the well-known vulgar Hegelianism of Francis Fukuyama's (see Fukuyama). Eclectically misusing Alexandre Kojève's interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of history, Fukuyama has argued, at the historical threshold of 1989–1990, for a sort of post-historical quasi-break, the transition not only from one social formation to another, not only from the totalitarian system of the so-called actually existing socialism to capitalist democracy, but a transition from history to post-history, that is, a break between a historical temporality and a post-historical one. In relation to the Yugoslav past, it would hardly be an exaggeration to state that the obsessive memorialism that finds its concrete expression in what is not without good reason derogatively called 'Yugo-nostalgia' is but a sort of ideological parasite of the alleged turn to post-history.

However, the Althusserian theoretical perspective, which is consistently implemented in Kirn's analysis of the Yugoslav past, does not allow for the idea of such a clear-cut break between a failed social and political praxis (such as that of former Yugoslavia) and its post-political and post-historical cultural commemoration (such as that of Yugo-nostalgia). There is no such thing as a wrong historical praxis that can be properly remembered in a purely cultural retrospective. Moreover, Kirn's book compels us to find curious continuities beyond the alleged historical turn, continuities which are cognitively and politically much more conducive to the thinking of our historical

present. Kirn's analysis of Yugoslav market socialism clearly shows deep ambivalences in the process of the socialist transition both at the level of the political organisation of the society and in the mode of the latter's economic reproduction. The past cannot be understood in terms of a clear cut between socialism and capitalism, totalitarianism and freedom, history and post-history. What is commonly presented as the post-communist process of transition to capitalism, Kirn's interpretation of the Yugoslav past traces all the way back to the 1960s. Again, the past of former Yugoslavia cannot be conceived of in terms of a continuous, homogenous time that started in 1941, 1945 or even 1918 and ended in 1990 or 1991, but rather as a conflictual co-existence of socially, politically, ideologically and, finally, historically specific temporalities that, in today's critical retrospective, disclose a historical drama which could have ended differently than it actually did, but which at the same time could also be carried forward today in terms of its emancipatory stakes. This is why we cannot say that Gal Kirn's book is simply about the Yugoslav past. It is not about the past at all, but rather about our own historical present and its radical openness to different futures. Kirn's book *Partizanski prelomi* is even less a book about the theory and praxis of emancipation. Rather, it is a book that emancipates our knowledge about the past from today's ideological constraints; moreover, it emancipates our political imagination from its post-historical and post-political commemorational baggage as well as from the moralistic burdens of anti-totalitarianism and anti-communism. Simply put, it is a book about the possibility of a better future. This is why Gal Kirn and his work could be seen as positive examples of what Mark Fisher, the author of *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, meant when he recently proposed to left thinkers that 'instead of depressively reclining at the end of history, looking back

longingly at all the failed revolts and revolutions of the past, we need to resituate ourselves in history and claim the future back for the left’ (Andrews). Fisher went on to say that today the right has no monopoly on the future and that it has manifestly run out of ideas. In this sense, Kirn’s book addresses what Lenin once called the ‘current moment’ (Lenin), what Althusser conceptualised as the ‘real historical present’, and what we can understand in terms of historical temporality as the time of politics. ❦

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On the New Life of the Partisan Songs in ex-Yugoslavia

REVIEW OF

HOFMAN, ANA, 2015: *Glasba, politika, afekt: novo življenje partizanskih pesmi v Sloveniji.* Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU.

HOFMAN, ANA, 2016: *Novi život partizanskih pesama.* Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.

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For decades, songs by the Yugoslav Partisans and masses have been something of an ostracised topic in musicology and ethnomusicology. Even before the break-up of socialist Yugoslavia, a tide of laudatory essays praising the role of these songs in the liberation and rebuilding of the country was largely ignored by scholars, as neither their historical impact nor aesthetic value were deemed worthy of thorough scholarly treatment. And once new national borders were eventually imposed on the Yugoslav space, and new parochial agendas were introduced in the humanities of the new countries, a renewal of the scholarly interest in the Partisan songs seemed almost impossible. However, Ana Hofman's book *Novi život partizanskih pesama* (The New Life of the Partisan Songs), which was just published by the renowned Belgrade publishing house Biblioteka XX vek, proves not only that the Partisan songs are a viable research topic but also that it is possible to swim against the mainstream and actually pursue the topic. The book itself comes from Hofman's ethnographic research in the practices of post-Yugoslav self-organised choirs from Skopje, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Pula, Vienna and elsewhere. The book published in Serbian is largely based on Hofman's Slovenian book *Glasba, politika, afekt: Novo življenje partizanskih pesmi v Sloveniji* (Music, Politics, Affect: The New Life of the Partisan Songs in Slovenia), which appeared in 2015 with the publishing house of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and focuses on the Ljubljana-based self-organised choir Kombinat. However, through the prism of this case study Hofman manages not only to speak about the importance of reviving the repertoire of the Partisan songs in the ex-Yugoslav space but also to address wider questions of the politics of empathy in the conditions of neoliberal capitalism.

Hofman divides her book in six chapters and a conclusion. In the first chapter, she introduces the Partisan songs in the ethnomusicological discourse on heritage, unravelling the long history of mainstream deprecatory comments on the Partisan songs and showing how the concept of heritage is by itself unavoidably exclusivist. Hofman pays particular attention to the specific position of the Partisan songs in Slovenia compared to the rest of Yugoslavia; specifically, she focuses on the contested processes of post-Yugoslav 'nationalisation' of Slovenian Partisan songs, through which the ruling elites have endeavoured to divest these songs of their explicit anti-fascist legacy and to interpret them as a kind of 'national songs'. Hofman uses her second chapter to introduce the reader to her case study, in which she positions the above-mentioned Ljubljana-based choir in the wider landscape of ex-Yugoslav self-organised choirs. Founded in 2008, Ženski pevski zbor Kombinat was conceived as a women's choir, yet it also comprises a group of male instrumentalists who accompany the performances. Dedicating her attention to the inner dynamics of the choir, Hofman succinctly delineates the vicissitudes of a self-organising community. Openly presented as an amateur and egalitarian community, the choir struggles with its own success in order to maintain these principles: as their activities gain more prominence in Slovenia, Kombinat's inclusiveness is challenged by the sheer number of membership applicants, and the management of the choir is increasingly prone to taking into account the applicants' vocal qualities. Hofman is particularly sensible in describing the implicit structures of power within the choir as well as the members' different agendas and interests, which range from female solidarity and political engagement to enjoyment in perfecting the musical performance itself.

In the third chapter, Hofman addresses the very theoretical lens through which she interprets the music practices she writes about, namely the so-called affect theory. Hofman's use of affect theory is inclusive, and while the main tenants of the theory she uses are of Deleuzian lineage, she also engages throughout her book with the linkage of affect and emotion in order to reframe the autonomy of the affect by insisting on the material messiness of the sound. While this chapter partly aims to fill in specific gaps in the post-Yugoslav ethnomusicological studies, which rarely discuss affect theory, Hofman is never too far from the object of her study, using affect theory to underpin the historical narratives on the Yugoslav Partisan songs as well as to interpret the experience of singing in Kombinat.

Hofman uses the last three chapters of *Novi život partizanskih pesama* to offer three different yet complementing views on Kombinat, conceptualising their practices as partaking in anti-sentimentalism, resistance and protest. Engaging with the discussion on the ideology of Yugonostalgia, which is centred on the accusation of defeatism, Hofman analyses the position of Kombinat as one of open anti-sentimentalism, as the choir refuses the label 'nostalgia' and discusses the revival of the Partisan repertoire as a contribution to anti-fascism. However, Hofman is critical of Kombinat's membership referring to their repertoire solely in terms of songs of resistance; she poses the question whether a practice which reduces rather than accrues meaning can truly be politically engaged. In other words, is it possible to divest the Partisan songs of the deeply embedded layers of historical meaning that has come to be rather undesirable as it is connected to the experience of socialist Yugoslavia, and still employ them as a potent vehicle of social change? This question is reiterated and left open to interpretation in the last chapter, in which Hofman tells the

story of Kombinat's local involvement with mass anti-austerity protests in 2012.

Hofman's account of the revival of the Partisan songs in general and the activities of Kombinat in particular has immensely benefitted from her relentless commitment to rigorous ethnographic research due to which she is able to contextualise the social micro-practices she is observing. One of the most engaging aspects of this study is that it often offers more questions than answers. In a time when we are constantly reminded of the importance of social resistance, Hofman writes about a music collective which openly embraces the position of resistance and uses the repertoire which is inconsistent with the prevailing neoliberal ideology, to say the least. However, in her search of radically different material practices, practices which are truly irreducible to the neoliberal agenda, Hofman cannot refer to the activities of Kombinat as a whole: under the veneer of their rhetoric of resistance, their activities are often more distant to radical amateurism or anti-consumerism than one might guess as an outsider. But Hofman's investigation does not stop there: it is in the micro-practices of self-organised collectivity and in the common engagement with the affect of sound that she finds the truly unique realm of empathy and solidarity. In this way, Ana Hofman makes the promise of radical social change seem more distant and at the same time closer than one might have thought before reading her book—which is an invaluable scholarly and cultural achievement in itself.

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Retracing Images after Yugoslavia

REVIEW OF

ŠUBER, DANIEL, and SLOBODAN KARAMANIĆ, ed., 2012: *Retracing Images: Visual Culture after Yugoslavia*. Leiden: Brill.

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Retracing Images: Visual Culture after Yugoslavia is an inspiring collection of essays edited by Daniel Šuber and Slobodan Karamanić which offers a fresh approach to the visual culture of post-Yugoslav societies.[1] As a whole, the book addresses a wide range of cultural products and strategies, from street iconography and other cultural artefacts (including graffiti, films and posters) to the visual aspects of the politics of remembrance. One of the key research questions shared by most of the contributions is how to overcome the dichotomy between the view from below and the view from above. The approach illustrated in the editors' introduction firmly relies on classical and pioneering sociological studies with the explicit aim to contribute to and sophisticate this tradition. The editors articulate this point with a convincing argumentation which, however, could have been even stronger had they also considered the rich tradition of anthropological studies of the so-called circulation of cultures, as this phenomenon already encompasses the kinds of interrelation of high and popular culture which are at the centre of *Retracing Images*.

In the attempt to address these interrelations of high and popular culture, several contributors focus on the dialectic between state and popular initiatives. For example, Isabel Ströhle examines the private initiatives which celebrate the UÇK fighters in contemporary Kosovo (see Šuber and Karamanić 223–50), while Gal Kirn analyses the disputes about monuments to the Partisan fighters and their ideological meaning both in the Yugoslav and the post-Yugoslav period (ibid. 251–81). The tension between high and popular culture is also thematised by Gregor Bulc, who investigates the relationship between subcultural graffiti and high culture (ibid. 107–31), by Šuber and Karamanić, who discuss the relationship between street graffiti and so-called official

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The first version of this review appeared in German in *Südosteuropa*, Vol. 61 (2013), Iss. 1, pp. 146–8.

graffiti (ibid. 313–35), and by Mitja Velikonja, who focuses on Yugonostalgia (ibid. 283–312).

In this kind of work, there is no space for simplistic interpretations of the transmission of ideas, as these cannot be treated simply as being imposed from above and then passively accepted by the people. Indeed, the socio-cultural phenomena examined in the volume are not understood as mere reflections of reality; Zoran Terzić, for example, even theorises the usefulness of and even the need for 'fantasy' and 'fiction' in social research (ibid. 39). So, the contributors clearly share the desire to reveal the constructed nature of social and ideological dynamics behind their apparent 'natural' and 'self-evident' origin.

The object of the book as a whole is thus to critically defamiliarise certain cultural practices by linking them to their social and historical contexts. However, the appearance of their 'natural' and 'self-evident' origin is taken very seriously: the aim is not simply to unmask 'reality' but rather to deconstruct the relationship between the 'mask' and its context, to observe the mask in action. Therefore, at stake is the invisibility of the 'construction' of alleged objective representations, such as the 'ethnic maps' addressed by Terzić (ibid. 42–4), or capitalism itself, which, according to Miklavž Komelj, has been 'naturalized' in its post-socialist neoliberal version and supplemented with the 'exoticization' of socialism and its arts, to the point that artistic traditions in Yugoslavia have been lumped together with those in the USSR (ibid. 55–79, 62–6). Similarly, Nebojša Jovanović examines, in his chapter on Emir Kusturica, the notion of 'authentic' art and critically analyses the myth of the 'innocent' artist who is supposed to be synonymous with 'freedom' and 'democracy' (ibid. 149–69).

Collective self-representations are critically examined as well. Davor Beganović engages with the socialist 'formation' films in Yugoslavia,

in which the heroic fighters engaged in the ideological and military struggle that the audience had known from the epic films on the People's Liberation Struggle were increasingly endowed with tormenting doubts (ibid. 135–47). Conversely, Robert Alagjozovski addresses the Macedonian cinema and focuses on the dominant nationalistic narrative, whose authors defeated their initial uncertainties and discovered their new nationalist sentiments (ibid. 171–92). In her chapter on the Bosniac representations of Bosnia, Elissa Helms identifies various forms of self-victimisation and demonstrates that they are not immune against gender prejudices or political manipulation (ibid. 195–222).

Another achievement of the book is that it is not a mere assemblage of studies weakly held together by the book title; on the contrary, the book really brings the results of what the editors call a 'joint endeavor' (ibid. 1), The book's many common research goals include the criticism of the 'totalitarian paradigm', the approach that has become a commonplace in post-communist studies. The majority of contributors vigorously tackle the epistemological weaknesses and the ideological bias of this approach. 'Totalitarianism' and 'democracy' are theoretical and historical categories which are far from being self-evident. The anti-communist historical revisionism predominant in the post-socialist countries obscures the past (the 'pre-') and with it the present (the 'post-') as it presents various historical experiences in vague metaphysical and apolitical notions. Relying on empirical case studies, many of the contributors to *Retracing Images* critically analyse such collective spectres.

The result is a radically engaged book in which academic concerns are always supplemented with explicit political concerns. The book thus addresses such contemporary phenomena as the 'post-traditional authoritarianism' of peace-keeping missions and the replacement of

'politics' with 'administration' (see Ströhle's chapter: ibid. 235–7, 248), the policies of 'reconciliation' in post-Yugoslav countries and their disregard for the distinction between fascism and anti-fascism (see Kirn: ibid. 267–79), the post-Yugoslav ideological disorientation in Serbia and its everyday effects of violence (see the editors' chapter: ibid. 313–5), and the general political apathy of contemporary societies (as tackled by Bulc and many other contributors).

When it comes to artistic practices, which is the main focus of the book, the emphasis is often on their emancipatory potential, which is said to enable us to critically engage with the past, the present and the future and thus to rethink the supposedly clear distinction between 'democracy' and its opposite (as the editors do: ibid. 320–1), or between the democratic West with its democratic art and the authoritarian East with its restrained art (as Komelj does: ibid. 74). Like art, critical research is supposed to problematise exactly such oppositions.

The contributors to this book do exactly that as they focus on 'visual cultures'. As most of the many studies on Yugoslavia and its dissolution fail to take visual cultures into consideration, *Retracing Images* is also necessarily an attempt to surpass the traditional methodology, mostly by drawing its inspiration from cultural studies and sociology. At the same time it is clarified that the time has not yet come to delineate a definite 'research field': as the editors make clear in their introduction, the margins of the field—'the advancing field of Visual Studies', as they define it (ibid. 3)—are not yet demarcated; there is only 'a pool of diverging theoretical conceptualizations and methodological accounts' (ibid.). Hence, it is impossible to evaluate the precise range of the book's innovation at this point.

Finally, it must be said that it is not necessary to establish a new disciplinary academic subfield at all; what is truly important is to ad-

vance knowledge. And this is exactly what *Retracing Images* does. The volume offers topics and interpretative tools which are fresh, inspiring and effective. As such, it represents a relevant contribution to a new understanding of post-Yugoslav societies. ❦

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