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

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 наследие, 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, ЮГОНОСТАЛГИЯ,
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 clear 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

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

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.

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 or 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. (Komelej 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 *Čěmu 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

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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).

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

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.

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

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-

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

sion of the film was designed by Pablo Picasso. These epic films had a double function: on the one hand, they exported positive PR for Yugoslavia and marketed the country's most celebrated film product, the so-called 'red westerns' (Štefančić); 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.

Nowhere can all these features be observed more easily than in Željimir 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

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'.

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 REVOLUTION⁶

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

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,

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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 else 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

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.

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

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 preločnosti 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 odgovoriti na vprašanje, zakaj in kako bi se lahko k temu prelomu vrnil danes, v post-jugoslovanski in post-socialistični situaciji.

Če partizanski boj pojmuje 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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