

FEMINIST TAKES

Early Works

by Želimir Žilnik

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with
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(editors)

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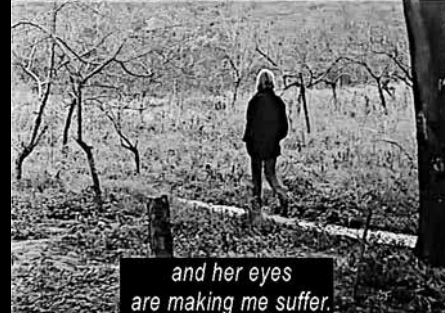


rezija. zeln
mir zirk
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written and directed by



*I love her,
as she's got it all.*



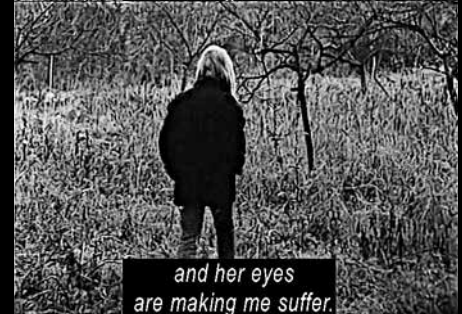
*and her eyes
are making me suffer.*



*I love her,
as she's got it all.*



*and her eyes
are making me suffer.*



*and her eyes
are making me suffer.*



*Sweetheart, you're
my guardian angel.*



*the prettiest among
all flowers*



*Her lips –
rose red.*



*breasts blooming,
golden head.*



*It's her I love
and no one else,*



*I live for her...
For her I'll die.*



*It's her I love
and no one else,*



*I live for her...
For her I'll die.*



Returns of and to *Early Works*

Several months after the failed student uprising in Belgrade, the 26-year-old Želimir Žilnik¹ gathered a group of friends and acquaintances and set out toward the Vojvodina countryside to film his first feature, borrowing not only the title but also the lines from the 1953 collected volume of Marx and Engels' "Early Works."² The central character of this cinematic performance, melting together universal revolutionary discourse with the ambience of local political disillusionment,³ was a militant

1 → Želimir Žilnik was working as a cultural organizer and the director of Youth Tribune in his native Novi Sad. He was a member of a generation of cine amateurs, including Karpo Godina and Lordan Zafranović, who were influenced by the older generation of filmmakers affiliated with Yugoslav New Film/Yugoslav Black Wave, a cinematic tendency of the late 1960s and 1970s that was critical of the Yugoslav state. *Early Works* was funded by a loan from the local bank and produced by Avala Film Belgrade and Neoplanta — a local state-funded production company from Novi Sad. Žilnik narrates in detail the story of the production and the eventual censorship of the film in his conversation with Boris Buden in Boris Buden et al., *Uvod u prošlost* [Introduction to Past] (Novi Sad: kuda.org, 2013).

2 → The scenario, co-written by Žilnik and the film critic and writer Branko Vučićević, was drafted as an immediate response to the two historical events that marked 1968 in Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe: the violent statist backlash against the June 1968 student revolts in Belgrade, and the brutal ending of the Prague Spring. The actual script based on Marx and Engels' "Early Works" was to be fine-tuned as part of the filming process. See this book on page 254 for the final version of the script. Contrary to the style used in this book, we will place the publication "Early Works" by Marx and Engels in quotation marks to be distinguishable from Žilnik's film *Early Works*, which will be italicized.

3 → *Early Works* uses montage and title cards to loosely connect Brechtian learning-play elements with Zolaesque naturalism. Stylistically, *Early Works* did not diverge much from the Western 1960s' avant-garde canon inspired by the socio-political flashpoint of May 1968. One crucial aspect was missing, however. Despite its theme, its montage, and tactics such as the use of

female rebel, played by Milja Vujanović.⁴ The narrative of *Early Works* ends with a return. But it begins with the female protagonist leaving her patriarchal family to join three male comrades in undertaking revolutionary action in the countryside. In the course of this expedition, she recites long passages from Marx and Engels' "Early Works," and quotes Zetkin and Kollontai while delivering motivational lessons on contraception to headscarved peasant women. Subsequently, she and the others perform jobs in the local concrete factory, to "share the destiny of the masses" if they cannot change it. After a series of unsuccessful proselytizing actions aimed at bringing revolutionary theory to peasants and workers, the young woman declares that their action has failed since their approach was based on an "abstract humanism." Condemning

non-actors, *Early Works* does not seem to attempt to manufacture political solidarity between the intelligentsia and the working classes; nor does it "give voice" to the proletariat — a staple of the May '68 film movement. On the contrary, although iconographically resembling some of the films made in the same period, it is decisively not a piece of militant cinema. While the combination of industrial and rural *mise-en-scène* and its *verité* elements allude to the contradictions of Yugoslav state socialism, the film as a whole remains firmly on the horizon of avant-garde "(artistic-)universality," invoking, at once bitterly and melancholically, a return to the authenticity of revolution and revolutionary theory. As such, it is rather a piece of "post-militant" cinema, a cosmopolitanism with a local flair, aimed at the audience of urbanites and savvy Marxists "reformists" at home and at the art house intelligentsia of the emerging New Left abroad.

4 → The crew was made up of young people with almost no experience of filmmaking. At the time, Milja Vujanovic was a student of film management who had recently held the title of Miss Serbia. The black-and-white photography was produced by Karpo Acimovic Godina, a student of film direction who had never operated a film camera before. Meanwhile, the three male characters were played by Žilnik's friends and acquaintances from Belgrade: an architect, an actor, and a journalist.

the men for indifference and nihilism, she abandons the group and returns to that house where, at the beginning of the film, we saw her leave her mother and young sister. When the three men find her there, subdued and cutting firewood, they push her out to the barren field behind the house. She provokes them by insinuating their impotence and chastising them for only half finishing things. One of the men then pulls out a gun and shoots her. They cover her with a Communist Party flag and finally immolate her body by throwing Molotov cocktails. Nothing is left on the horizon except the grainy image of smoke and the endless mud of the Pannonian flatlands.

While rewatching this canonical film several years ago, I was struck by the fact that gendered readings of it are all but absent.⁵ All the gender sensitive readings I could find were dedicated to the treatment of women in the official films, bypassing this "dissident" cinematic tendency critical of the Yugoslav state. I found this lack especially baffling in the

5 → Even though the film received substantial press coverage, both locally and internationally, after it was awarded the Golden Bear at the 1969 Berlinale film festival, none of the available reviews at the time took the perspective of gender. Similarly, in the entire special issue of the Yugoslav magazine *Rok*, not a single contributor reflected on the leading female character or the gendered aspect of the dynamic in the group (see Jelena Vesić's text in this book). Rare recent gendered readings of Yugoslav New York Film (not specifically *Early Works*) include Svetlana Slapšak, "Žensko telo u Jugoslavenskom filmu: status žene, paradigma feminizma" [The Woman's Body in Yugoslav Film: The Status of Women, the Paradigm of Feminism], in *Žene, Slike, Izmišljaji* [Women, Images, Imaginaries], ed. Branka Arsić (Belgrade: Centar za ženske studije, 2000); and Branko Dimitrijević, "Suffragettes, Easy Lays and Women Faking Pregnancy: Representation of Women in the Film When I Am Pale and Dead," in *Gender Check*, ed. Bojana Pejić (Cologne: Walther König, 2010).

case of *Early Works*, since its heroine is imbued with such a striking iconicity, and, even more so, because of the fact that she is literally immolated by her male comrades. “Feminist Takes: *Early Works*,” an open-ended experiment in feminist epistemology, starts with a return to this ambiguous scene of murder. This book is the result of a gathering of an interpretive community to consider the excess of significations present in this scene: on the one hand, the triangulation of the dead female body, the communist party flag, and fire; and, on the other, the three men who burn the woman’s body — the worker, the student, the unemployed. *Early Works*, in all that it brings forth and in all that it forecloses, is a super-charged cipher, encapsulating the pitfalls of the artistic and gender politics of the (post)revolutionary Left of the late 1960s that stretch to the present day. Our takes brought together here thus also have wider implications for the entanglements of feminist political subjectivation and its suppression in the context of revolutionary struggle and postrevolutionary forms of “normalizations” and reifications — in politics, theory, and art.

In this book, we call the character played by Milja Vujanovic “Jugoslava,” because that was her name in the first draft of the script written by Želimir Žilnik and Branko Vučićević. The dialogue list, finalized a posteriori, mentions her simply as “Girl,” while the three male protagonists retain their names.⁶ The question of her name is pertinent in as much as it determines the reading of that last scene. If she is Jugoslava,

6 → The name Jugoslava appears only in film reviews of the time, which were apparently based on a first draft of the scenario that was sent out to critics by the producers. Želimir Žilnik shared this information with me in an informal conversation [December 15, 2020].

then what we are witnessing is an allegory that is hard to identify with, and even harder to mourn. In that case, her death, although associable with the 1968 student uprising in Belgrade as well as the brutal ending of the Prague Spring of the same year, is too performative to explicitly point to either of these failed revolutions. Rather, her death is closer to the siren call of a phantasmatic, unnamed revolution, the call of a transhistorical abstraction. Jugoslava is, one could add, a platonic ideal of a revolutionary death drive — an immaculate goddess of the revolution. At the same time, since a beautiful female corpse is always an ideal muse, she is a perfect source of inspiration for endless revolutionary mythic return.

Yet, submitting to reading the female character of *Early Works* as an allegory defers to the masculine trope whereby a dead beauty always stands for something else. Should we infer instead that we are simply witnessing three men murdering a woman, a “girl”? After all, isn’t Girl more indeterminate, more “universal” than Jugoslava? Girl is any girl, and if she is any girl, then when we see her body being set on fire, we witness the murder of a woman — any woman — through a long history of misogyny and femicide. In this take, I want to suggest that she be thought of as a concurrence of both the heroic Jugoslava and an ordinary girl; and that her murder — apparently triggered by her abandonment of the group — signifies not a form of punishment for past deeds, or an elimination of a witness to male inadequacy, but a preemptive, purposeful suppression of a feminist praxis that is about to subversively (re)surface. I want to dwell on the figure of return, through the sequencing of three temporalities: the Second World War; the early years of the Yugoslav state and the year 1953; and, finally, 1968. Through the perspective of

the “resolution of the woman question” and the interrogation of that ambiguous last scene of *Early Works*, I aim to reiterate or further iterate a broader inquiry often posed in relation to the events of 1968 that apparently prompted the making of this film: *what actually happened?*

Marx and Engels’ early works, including Marx’s *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, actually became accessible to the public quite late. They were first published in Russian and German in the late 1920s and early 1930s, but remained unavailable in English until 1947, when they were translated by the Johnson–Forest Tendency, a dissident Trotskyist group in the United States formed by Raya Dunayevskaya and C. L. R. James. The Johnsonites mobilized the “Early Writings” as foundational texts in their conception of a Marxist humanism opposed to Stalinist authoritarianism, which they saw as having precipitated the decay of the Soviet Union from a workers’ state into “State Capitalism.” The first comprehensive publication of Marx and Engels’ “Early Works” appeared in Yugoslavia in 1953, just a few years after Yugoslavia was expelled from Cominform as a result of the Tito–Stalin split. The collection was published by young philosophers who would later form their own school of Marxist humanism, known as Praxis. In the words of the editors, the writings of the young Marx and Engels (produced between 1843 and 1846, when they were in their early twenties) represented a genealogy of dialectical, historical materialism, and were a vivid testament to a turn away from idealism towards a materialist critique of society. In the newly-opened ideological battlefield between the rigid, patriarchal Stalin and the progressive, flexible, colorful Yugoslavia (the gendering of the two here is not entirely unintentional), the return to Marx and Engels’ “Early Works” was to herald a new paradigm of

revolutionary praxis based on dealienation. In the preface to the 1953 Yugoslav edition, Predrag Vranicki established that, for Marx and Engels, the period covered by the publication was a time of youthful turbulence, inner struggles, and intellectual and political searching, but was fundamentally driven by “the love for humanity and human emancipation.”⁷ Writing just two years after defending his doctorate at the University of Belgrade, this young philosopher spoke not only for the generation of postwar Yugoslav Marxists, but for the Yugoslav emancipatory political project itself.

In historical narratives of Yugoslavia and its aftermath, 1953 tends to be remembered less for the first publication of the “Early Works” and more for a set of amendments to the constitution, designed to introduce greater economic decentralization and “workers’ self-management.” It is not completely clear what, if any, correlations can be seen between this concurrent revitalization of a philosophy of human emancipation and a new emphasis on individual, or at least smaller-scale collective, autonomy in the sphere of political economy. An especially puzzling coincidence lies, however, in an equally consequential event that took place the same year: the abolition of the Women’s Antifascist Front (AFŽ) — a revolutionary women’s organization, founded in 1942 as part of the partisan struggle during the Second World War.⁸ During

7 → Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Rani radovi* [Early Works], trans. Stanko Bošnjak and Predrag Vranicki (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1976), 5–30.

8 → On the historical role of the AFŽ, see for example the essays by the Yugoslav feminist and ethnologist Lydia Sklevicky (1952–1990) in *Konji, žene, ratovi* [Horses, Women, Wars], ed. Dunja Rihtman Auguštin (Zagreb: Druga,

the war, around thirty-four percent of anti-fascist guerrilla fighters were women, most of whom were very young and came from peasant backgrounds. Tito declared these women fighters to be “the right hand of the anti-fascist insurrection,” and the partisan poet Vladimir Nazor announced that the “woman question” had been resolved by these heroic “Amazons” joining the battle on equal footing with their male comrades.⁹ Despite the iconic image of the partisan-woman-as-Amazon, reified in state propaganda as a militant female heroine with a rifle, the actual role of women in the war was mainly, or at least equally, focused on what can be called

1996). See also the recent anthology *Izgnubljena revolucija: AFŽ između mita i zaborava* [The Lost Revolution: Women’s Antifascist Front Between Myth and Forgetting], ed. Andreja Dugandžić and Tijana Okić (Sarajevo: Crvena, 2016), and the special issue of *Pro Femina journal: Jugoslavenski feminizmi*, ed. Jelena Petrović and Damir Arsenijević (Summer/Autumn 2011).

9 → “Above all of those women about whom the history of our peoples speaks and our folk poems sing, like the Serbian mother of the nine Jugovics and the Croat Mother Margarita, the most radiant is the character of the Partisan woman ... When our today’s man says to a woman: Comrade!, it is not a conventional word, used customarily or out of courtesy — it is the word whereby the Partisan man admits that the Partisan woman is his equal in everything. For us the woman question has been solved. And we can be proud that in these difficult but also great days we gave to the world a new type of woman — the Partisan woman” (Vladimir Nazor, in a speech presented in Otočac, Croatia, January 1944). As has been written by Jelena Batinić, whose translation of Nazor’s speech I borrow, Nazor found the forebears of the Partisan women “in the military and political tradition that, fusing myth and history, spanned several millennia and many cultures — from the ancient Amazons, through Joan of Arc and various female sovereigns, to the South Slavic epic heroines.” The *partizanka*, in Nazor’s view, was the Amazon’s ultimate resurrection that miraculously appeared “exactly in our lands.” See Jelena Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 26–27.

collectivized care work: tending to the wounded, elderly, and children, collecting firewood, and preparing food in the dire circumstances of a guerilla war fought in the mountains and forests. The AFŽ was one of a number of countrywide organizations, including the extremely popular Anti-Fascist Youth League, that were supervised by the Communist Party but were founded independently and maintained a substantial degree of autonomy. The AFŽ continued its efforts to involve women in building postwar society, through literacy courses and political education, the organization of institutional childcare, and voluntary actions that encouraged women to enthusiastically join the cult of work.¹⁰ Over the years, however, the organization was gradually merged into the National Front, which officially declared in 1953 that the “woman question” had been resolved, thus leading the AFŽ to be (self-)abolished. Further promotion of the literacy and political education of women, especially in the countryside, was soon abandoned, and the divisions between urban and rural life, which the AFŽ had endeavored to bridge, were deepened.

Parallel to this, the “workers’ self-management” initiatives, together with a program of intensive industrialization, addressed women mostly as potential labor supply. In addition to working at home to reproduce (socialist) workers, women were also pressed to themselves labor in factories

10 → While in popular representation, until AFŽ was abolished, there were several different “images” of women — the heroic figure of the anti-fascist female partisan, heroines of labor, and peasant women with headscarves — from the early 1950s, the representation of women in popular culture more or less aligned with the bourgeoisie Western cult of domesticity or low-level organizational jobs, epitomized by the proverbial socialist secretary.

and administrative jobs, in companies run by “socialist self-management.” Initially, the new system granted workers — nominally including women — considerable decision-making powers, through a combination of local workers’ councils paired with central planning. Over time, however, adjustments were made that introduced ever more competitive and market-based mechanisms, creating a compromised, state-socialist, technocratic system marked by the persistence of pre-socialist, hierarchical, class, and gender relations — rather than continuing the tradition, inherited from the partisan struggle, of revolutionary self-organization as a dealienating force for “universal human liberation.” Women’s participation in the revolution was reduced in the official historical narrative to state-regulated memory politics, emphasizing the individual heroism and martyrdom of women fighters. As the female heroine of *Early Works* suggests, when she declares “feudalism rules in this house,” while the old patriarchal matrixes from previous state forms remained intact, the new laissez-faire socialism did little to make things better. In the Western anti-communist imagination, women’s inclusion in the formal workforce was seen as part of an evil conspiracy to destroy the patriarchal family. In reality, however, not even the ideal (working, urban, colorful) New Socialist Woman, with her minimal economic independence, was liberated from the reproductive burdens of the heteronormative household. It is therefore necessary to reappraise the historical mythology of Yugoslav exceptionalism — including its tradition of authentic popular revolutionary communism, its experiments with workers’ self-management and its fostering of “dissident” theoretical and cultural practices — from the perspective of the “woman question,” whose inadequate “resolution” actually served mostly to obscure real revolutionary feminist praxis,

and the broader question of forms of radical self-organization. When, thirteen years after its initial publication, Predrag Vranicki wrote a new foreword to the third edition of “Early Works” — now as an established Yugoslav philosopher, the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, and a member of the newly-formed Praxis school of Marxist humanist philosophy — he praised the apparent congruence between theory and practice in all that had happened since the first edition of 1953. The practice of self-management, philosophical critique of bureaucratic statism and alienation, and theoretical engagement with “the problems of history and man” were, as he phrased it, “the material actualization of authentic [thought of] Marx and Engels.”¹¹ The Praxis school of Marxist humanism saw itself as an intellectual affirmation of such “authentic” Marxist theory. Milan Kangrga, another prominent member of Praxis, thus boldly — and perhaps somewhat hubristically — declared that the school represented the first instance of Marxism being treated in Marx’s true sense, and was nothing less than a renaissance of Marx anywhere in the world. At this point, however, in parallel to the theoretical rebirthing of Marx, the Yugoslav state project was facing a deep crisis in practical, material terms, as the economic reforms that had been implemented proved increasingly unsuccessful, provoking an ever-greater number of free market concessions. Yugoslav society, with its low level of technological development and the leadership of aging and corrupt Communist Party members, seemed irreversibly headed for a downfall. When, in June 1968, the students came out on the streets of Belgrade in mass demonstrations against

11 → Predrag Vranicki, foreword to *Rani radovi*, by Marx and Engels, 36–38.

the authoritarianism in their universities and in society at large, they were supported by local academics associated with the Praxis school of Marxist humanism, as well as artists, actors, and filmmakers. At this time, in France, Althusser was accused by the Communist Party of corrupting the youth with his insistence that a rupture had taken place in the late 1840s between the early, humanist theory of alienation in the “young Marx” and the later scientific analysis of the capitalist mode of production by the “mature Marx.” The aging president Tito called for the dismissal of Praxis philosophers based on the similar accusation that they were corrupting the youth — although in this case it was inferred that the young Marx was the source of corruption. Suddenly, the Yugoslav state — which was supposed to incarnate optimistic, youthful socialism with a human face, standing rebelliously against Stalin, the tyrannical ur-father of all state socialisms — was confronted by its own actual youth, questioning the practical corruption of Marxist theory. However, the 1968 revolutionary turn was, in large part, itself a return to mythic authenticity, and, again, a return to the “humanist abstraction” that is denounced by the female leader of the group in Žilnik’s *Early Works*. In other words, 1968 in Yugoslavia was a manifestation in practice of what the publication of “*Early Works*” had meant in theory a decade earlier. Echoing the way the young Vranicki described the return to authentic Marx in his original preface to “*Early Works*,” the students now tautologically declared that they wanted to “fight socialism with socialism.” In this, the students’ rebellion could be imagined as a return to the radicalism (in theory, if not in militant praxis) of the past, where a new generation of youth would perform their own version of their parents’ revolution, in a struggle that, despite its oedipal aggression, was ultimately a way to affirm

and renew the established order, and come into their own as subjects within it. In regard to the “woman question,” however, the transformations and transgressions of gender roles and hierarchies that were won during the revolutionary war had, to a large degree, been refigured in the official mythology as traumatic disruptions to be overcome, rather than victories that should progress the emancipatory political project.

June Turmoil, Žilnik’s short black-and-white documentary about the 1968 student demonstrations in Belgrade, is a striking, real-world prolepsis of his post-1968 return to “*Early Works*” and the ritualistic death of Girl/Jugoslava in his first feature, filmed a couple of months later. I want to argue that this well-known documentary must be read less as a film about the 1968 protests as such, and more as a testament to the violence directed against women in that context; and that these particular acts of violence against women marked the suppression of the only element of actual subversion during the protests — the participation of women in political action as a return to the legacy of their wartime mobilization. During the revolts, Žilnik conducted short interviews with several female students who, one after another, portrayed vividly the police brutality directed against them. In one of the first scenes, a male student in a wheelchair recalls: “While two policemen were holding her, the third was beating her with a baton on her chest.” From him, the camera pans up to the dejected face of a girl, framed by blond hair, a real-life look-alike of Jugoslava, who some months later would burn in the fictional cinematic rendering of the event described. Next, a young, pregnant woman quotes a policeman as saying: “You whores! If you give birth to more of what you are like, then we do not need you or your offspring.” Women’s bodies are explicitly derided as

vessels to be demolished, if the product of their womb labor would disobey the established order. Another report centers on a female student who, heavily wounded and unable to walk, was being assisted by a male student. “But the police did not attack him,” cries the women retelling the event. “They went straight for her and continued to hit her, even though she could barely stand.” Another woman goes on to describe how she was begging a policeman to hit her on her back rather than on her stomach. The montage then shifts abruptly from the embodied narratives of all these women to the courtyard of the Philosophy faculty building, which the students renamed “The Red University of Karl Marx” and decorated with political slogan and portraits of Marx, Lenin, and Tito. Through a megaphone, a confident male voice declares that the occupation of the university will be continued by singing, playing music, and reciting poetry.¹²

How is it possible that none of the historical accounts of the 1968 uprisings in Yugoslavia acknowledge that the repressive violence deployed by the authorities was so explicitly directed against women? How is this omission reflected in the near complete absence of any gender reading of Yugoslav New Film from the same period, including *Early Works*, shot just a couple of months after these events? Some of the women participating in the 1968 revolts were wounded by gunshots, including Tamara Kaliterna, who became a prominent journalist and activist in Women in Black, the feminist anti-

12 → In one of our recent conversations, Žilnik told me that what was most shocking to him, however, was not the police violence against these women but the way that their male comrades treated them — as, in his words, “their secretaries.”

militarist organization established during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. Other female members of the movement, such as the sociologists Neda Nikolić, Jelka Kljajić, and Ljiljana Mijanović, are rarely mentioned by name in historical work on the events of Yugoslavia in 1968, and remain overshadowed by their better-known male partners. Just as the leading individual student “revolutionaries” tacitly agreed with the party line that the “woman question” had been resolved, Yugoslavia’s 1968 did not return to questions of women’s liberation.¹³ In fact, when Neda Nikolić, Nada Dugojević, and others attempted to publicly raise the issue during the protest, she was hushed by the male leaders under the premise that the student movement was about much broader and more important issues.¹⁴

The 1968 demonstrations in Belgrade ended when Tito famously addressed the students on national television, acknowledging that their criticism was well-founded and their demands justified. In the same way in which the Communist Party was able to recuperate the Praxis group’s anti-Stalinist Marxist philosophy, by understanding it as derivative of its own political practice, Tito neutralized the student protest

13 → From the moment of the (self-)abolition of the Women’s Antifascist Front (AFŽ) in 1953 to the conference “Drug-ca Žena” in Belgrade more than a decade later in 1978, the question practically disappeared from the public sphere.

14 → I am grateful to feminist anthropologist Svetlana Slapšak for sharing this information with me in an informal conversation we had on March 1, 2021. Slapšak was herself part of the student movement and had been brutally beaten by a group of unknown men in the courtyard of her home one evening after the end of the June protest.

by congratulating them on their self-organization, in effect coopting them as part of the mainstream political process of self-management. For the most part, it seemed that the students received Tito's public approval with relief and, just as the authoritarian leader suggested, went back to doing their homework. While it certainly does not do justice to some of the students and their Praxis teachers — including Zagorka Golubović, a rare female Praxis philosopher, who continued to protest until she was removed from the university by the police — one could infer that the revolution ended up as an act of juvenile rebellion, epitomizing Jacques Lacan's notorious claim that the 1968ers were just looking for a new master. In this case, however, the students — who were predominantly male and themselves products of patriarchy they failed to recognize — had set out to establish a new relation between theory and practice, under the premise of yet another return to the "authentic humanism" of the mid-19th century; while the "new master" ended up being the same old authoritarian patriarch they had known all along.

Later that year, the Praxis summer school on the island of Korčula marked the 150th anniversary of Marx's birth with the theme "Marx and Revolution." Students flocked to Korčula from all over the country, mobilized by the experience of the student revolts, and attracted by the theme of the gathering and celebrity speakers including Herbert Marcuse, who had by now been elevated to the status of the countercultural star philosopher of alienation. The program of the gathering, however, bypassed the topic of the student demonstrations, not to mention the status of women in the protests. The conversations on the island were dramatically interrupted by the news of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia, further

derailing any possible discussion about the June events. The members of Praxis hurried to issue a statement condemning the occupation, and penned a letter to Tito urging him to publicly oppose Soviet aggression. A year later, Praxis published a special reader titled "June 1968: Documents," in which its editors described the student rebellion as a "social conflict not between two sides but within society," and concluded that, since the students and the Party nominally held the same position, it represented a conflict of unique historical significance. This reader, published just two years after the jubilant second edition of "Early Works" which had celebrated the harmonious congruence between theory and practice, attempted instead to decipher "what actually happened?"

This question remains an important one for the diligent (male) historians of younger generations in (post-)Yugoslavia, as well as for contemporary Praxis aficionados. The gender-critical and feminist take on Yugoslavia's 1968 is, however, still to be written. Incredibly, even Žilnik's *June Turmoil*, with its explicit representation of violence against women, has never been interpreted from the perspective of gender. Rather, it is customarily celebrated as the only cinematic document of 1968 to be produced in the whole of Socialist Eastern Europe. We know that some of the women involved, such as Jelka Kljajić — who, in the re-Stalinized atmosphere, were persecuted and imprisoned for their "counter-revolutionary activity and Trotskyism" — were involved in a group that continued to search for new modes of praxis, and even planned to form a new revolutionary party. When Kljajić attended the Korčula summer school of 1971, just prior to her imprisonment, she presented a paper arguing that (Praxis) philosophy was not enough; and, although she did not explicitly address female

liberation, she claimed that what was needed instead of abstract humanism was a concrete and embedded critique of Yugoslav society.

What kind of a system would the students have established had 1968 been successful? How could it have been successful? What would have constituted the truth of that return to Marx's "Early Works"? Was Yugoslavia's 1968 a revolutionary failure because the "return to the authenticity" of abstraction and theory absorbed a more specific set of political demands,¹⁵ making it susceptible to prompt recuperation not only by political leadership, but also by the undifferentiated pathos of theater, art, and philosophy? If it had to be a return and not a prefiguration, why had it not been — more decisively and explicitly — a return to the actual, historical revolutionary praxis before the formation of the state? But a truthful return to that struggle would have had to be built on a different ground from those claimed by the state itself — on the ground of what has been suppressed and obscured by the state-sanctioned memory politics of heroism. If the revolutionary guerrilla struggle of the Yugoslav communist partisan was an event of genuine human liberation, it was so *because* of gender-transgressive collective emancipation; and not only because of the acts of women and men celebrated as "people's heroes," but also because of all the unsung revolutionary labor reproducing the anti-fascist struggle. Could such a return to non-statist praxis of gender transgressive self-organization, which I want to understand here as fundamentally feminist, also have

15 → The Student Action Program was included in the script of *Early Works* published in *Rok* magazine. See this book, 254.

served as a blueprint for a new relationship between theory and practice? To put it bluntly, was it not precisely the lack of (return to) (feminist) praxis understood in these terms that precluded both the philosophy and the student mobilization from being more than a poetic negation that reaffirmed the political order by other means? How was it possible to believe that there could ever be communism without abolishing gender and the rules of heteronormative social reproduction? Or, for that matter, the cult of (waged) labor that continued to reproduce them?

If, as Silvia Federici asserts, "human nature" is not natural but constructed and historical, then this is what should still interest us, unapologetically, in Marx and Engels' "Early Works." What I invoke here is not the tautological humanism that so enamored the young Marxist philosophers in Yugoslavia, who first published "Early Works," hoping that the young Marx could inform a program for a new socialism "with a human face." It is also not the "struggle for socialism with socialism" of the 1968 students in Belgrade, supported by the members of the Praxis school — a heroic "return" to an invocation of revolution, whose practical universals somehow were never evenly distributed. In the 1980s, Yugoslav feminist philosopher Blaženka Despot incorporated a long quote from the 1953 edition of "Early Works" at the start of "What Do Women Name Male Thinking?" [Što žene imenuju muškim mišljenjem?], the opening essay of her book *The Woman Question and Socialist Self-Management*.¹⁶ To this she added a declarative, capitalized statement: "The governing thoughts

16 → Blaženka Despot, *Žensko pitanje i socijalističko samoupravljanje* [The Woman Question and Socialist Self-Management] (Zagreb: Cekade, 1987).

of an epoch are the governing thoughts not only of its ruling class but also of its ruling gender.” I wonder if she had in mind the self-assured humanist Marxist philosophy that founded its project on a “return to authentic humanism.” As a *longue durée* collective inquiry, Feminist Takes instead proposes a *return* of a different order, a thinking anew of that long-invoked universal liberation, on different ground and by different means, and without the capitalized, torch-bearing human at its forefront. Against all the faces of what Sylvia Wynter called “monohumanism” and the structural binaries that reproduce it, the return I suggest here is based on a radical abandonment of heroism — in politics, art, and philosophy.

Jugoslava’s return should be thought of along these lines. When, at the end of *Early Works*, she returns to that wretched place where it all began, to that house surrounded by endless mud, she is not returning because, disillusioned in the revolutionary action, she is ready to yield to the hierarchy of the heteronormative household. Quite the opposite. She is there, cutting firewood and, we could speculate, preparing to set something on fire, because she knows that the actual revolution can only start with an intervention into that unchanged ordering of the archaic *oikos*, that place outside of the transparency and logos and of the polis, where the firewood is cut by those who have been inhabiting it throughout history — the enslaved, women, and children. The revolution must start there, at point zero (as Federici writes), or it will not be. Against the backdrop of histories of heroic returns to the mythic authenticity of revolution, or to melancholic revisitations of revolutionary failures, Jugoslava’s “retreat” signifies an understanding that the act of “repurposing” political and theoretical technologies of the polis will never

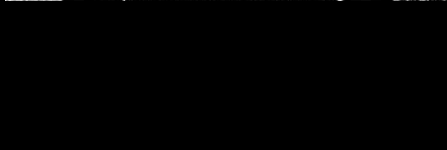
bring emancipation to those whose logos and logic have subjugated them in the first place.

When the young Marx described marriage as a form of “exclusive private property,” he wrote not only that women are treated “as the prey and servant of the social lust (*Wollust*),” but that the infinite degradation of humanity is expressed in the relation of marriage. For Marx of the “Early Works,” it is this relation that becomes the essential condition of human existence under capitalism, which then claims the legacy of universal humanism as its own. In his late “Ethnological Notebooks,” however, the elderly Marx started to look beyond Europe, to ponder non-Western societies and relations outside the patriarchal matrixes of the nuclear family. When the transcripts of these last writings (dated 1879–82) were first published, it was Raya Dunayevskaya, the early translator of “Early Works,” who pointed out their focus on gender and their relation to the Man/Woman concept developed in the manuscripts of 1844.¹⁷ To follow the resonance of such recognitions of return, I wonder whether, before his death, Marx himself performed a modest yet significant return to those essential claims of his “Early Works” — but now taking into account the perspective of a different, worldly *oikos*, of non-Western women, children, and peasants, prefiguring a different path to dealienation by way of a different relation to mud and soil, beyond the cement factories of *Early Works*. Might it be that what still remained unwritten was this: that

17 → Dunayevskaya took up these insights as the basis for her book *Rosa Luxemburg, Women’s Liberation, and Marx’s Philosophy of Revolution* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1982).

universal liberation requires consideration of the fire in relation to the tree and the forest as well as to who collects and cuts the firewood; and as much as, if not more than, the rebellions and mythic returns of the heroic Prometheus?





What would they ask for if they did this?

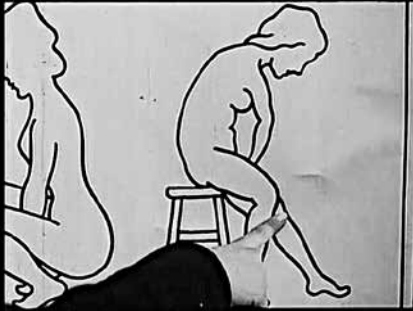
This is a stupid situation. Where should we send the invoice?

This is a stupid situation. Where should we send the invoice?

This is why no one takes us seriously!

It's lunch time!

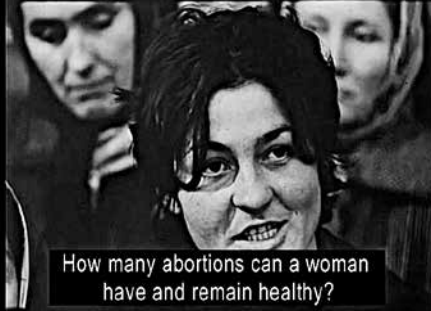
All true revolutionaries get a per diem when traveling.



I would like to ask you what is a better contraceptive:



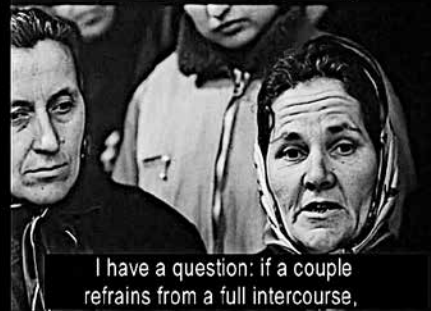
pills or diaphragms?



How many abortions can a woman have and remain healthy?



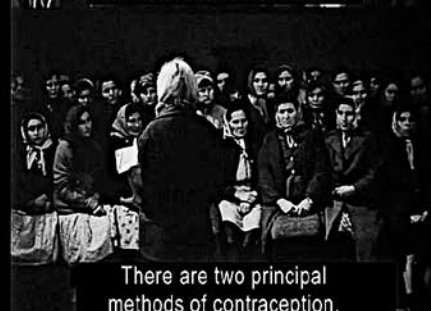
What is the best age to have a baby?



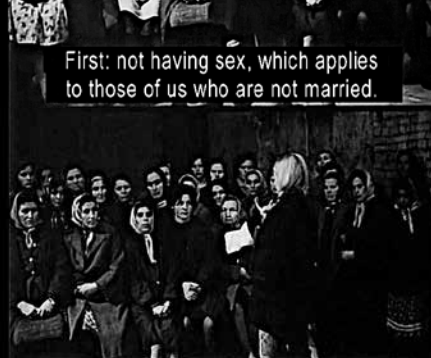
I have a question: if a couple refrains from a full intercourse,



does that affect their health?



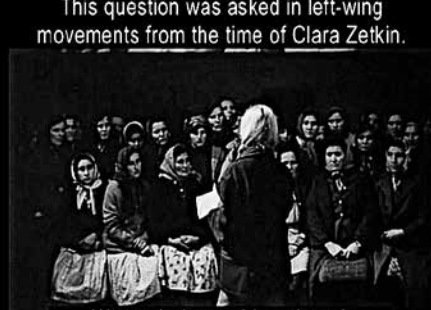
There are two principal methods of contraception.



First: not having sex, which applies to those of us who are not married.



The second method applies to married women: use contraceptives.



This question was asked in left-wing movements from the time of Clara Zetkin.



We can't do anything about it until the man of the family stops behaving like a lord, an aristocrat and an owner.



long live our work.



Co-op unions are among the many mistakes of the collectivization policy.



It is sad to see these walls that were built



with so much sweat and unpaid working hours.



A question for debate: do unions even conform to the



psychology of our countrymen?
- Cut the crap! Pass me the newspaper!



Look, an excellent article written by D. Husic!



If we were smart, we wouldn't go to the villages.



That is the way it is. That is a part of our program.

Comradess Fatale, a *Trauerspiel*

In June 1968, during the student demonstrations in Belgrade, photographer Tomislav Peternek took a picture that shows the main building of the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade covered with three giant portraits painted by students: Lenin on the right, Tito in the middle, and, on the left, a portrait of an elderly Marx with his beard almost gray. Beneath these visual representations of Marxist-Leninist celebrities, there was also a textual element — a hand written slogan, or rather a demand addressing the *here* and the *now*: “Personal responsibility of each individual.” In an anecdote murmured during these June days in Belgrade, a policeman — a joke character who, if you disregard the blondes, is usually represented as the stupidest person among us — made the following report without mentioning the slogan: “At the building the students hung the portraits of comrade Lenin, comrade Tito, and an unidentified hippy.”

In their film *Early Works (Rani radovi, 1969)*, the scriptwriters, Želimir Žilnik and Branko Vučićević, refer to young Marx, affirming in the opening credits of the film: “Additional dialogues: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.” In the closing title, the film delivers its final message, quoting Louis-Antoine-Léon de Saint-Just’s reputed statement of 1793: “Those who make revolution halfway, only dig their own graves.” Between these opening/closing texts, the film submits the full text of the *Belgrade Students’ Action Program, June 1968*, including the issue of individual responsibility. Yet, the film is about the morning after this utopian yesterday, as suggested by the boldly indicated genre in its subtitle: “COMEDY.” How come? Walter Benjamin explains: “Comedy — or more precisely: the pure joke — is the essential inner side of mourning which from

time to time, like the lining of dress at the hem lapel, makes its presence felt. Its representative is linked to the representative of mourning.”¹

Revolution

The first shot in the film is an extreme close-up of a face covered by a thick layer of foam; faintly alluding to the scenes in X-rated movies where a woman’s face is covered in semen. In any case, the initial take signals a female Eros. This is Jugoslava. When her mouth appears, she cheerfully pronounces three times: “Good morning!” Between these pronunciations she does not simply wash and dry her body. Situated in the events to follow, she is actually performing a cleansing ritual so as to wash away the traces of the yesterday, which had quickly turned into dystopia; she is also washing off the scents of the claustrophobic home, as a bastion of domesticity she is about to abandon, while leaving her mother, who will carry on the unpaid affective labor that women are generally assigned to do out of love. The female family members are left to cope with the presence of the abusive husband/father and the absence of the washing machine. Jugoslava is truly convinced that Yugoslavian communism begins not with women’s right to vote, but with the washing machine. Indeed, in the late 1970s, Yugoslav feminist sociologists supported her claim.² Jugoslava,

1 → Walter Benjamin, “Allegory and Trauerspiel,” in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborn (London: Verso, 1998), 125–126.

2 → The international conference, *Drug-ca žena: žensko pitanje, novi pristup* [Comradess Woman: Women’s Question, a New Approach], held in the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade in October 1978, addressed the domestic, that is, the “women’s” sphere. The question, partly borrowed from

with her body cleansed, is now ready to renounce the domestic feminine domain and actively access the androcentric and often hostile public sphere. There, she will cause tumults, experiencing restlessness and passion, testing the limits of orderliness; all of which constitute, according to Gilles Deleuze, an “orgiastic representation.”³

This film is rich in textual citations about revolution, authored by those illustrious theoreticians and practitioners who had been considered classics of the field. Visual references concerning the same figures and events are somehow more discrete. The Great October and Soviet avant-garde are present, but more in cinematic collage/montage structure than in imagery. Nonetheless, a shot where Jugoslava uses a megaphone while giving a passionate speech to the peasants is a perfect citation of the Alexander Rodchenko poster made in 1924 that frames the New Soviet Woman holding a megaphone on which it is written “*KNIGI*” (books). This propaganda poster with a female allegory of knowledge tackles a critical issue in the Soviet Union of the time: namely illiteracy, particularly among female peasantry.

Certainly Žilnik, but especially Vučićević, could not resist citing *the* most iconic representation of the revolution, of its

The Communist Manifesto, was formulated as a slogan: “Proletarians of all countries, who washes your socks?” Incidentally, the film shows Jugoslava, not her comrades, washing socks.

3 → This notion is further explored by Gerald Raunig in a chapter dedicated to the women who participated in the Paris Commune of 1871. See Raunig, *Art and Revolution – Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, trans. Aileen Derieg (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 67–96.

glory and its terror. In a short sequence, Jugoslava stands on a car brandishing a flag, her posture mimicking the victorious female figure in Eugène Delacroix's painting *Liberty Leading the People* (*La Liberté guidant le peuple*, 1830), produced soon after the "three glorious days" of the July Revolution in 1830 (July 27–29). Here, a triumphant Liberty steps on the mound of corpses, waves the French tricolor flag with one hand while holding a rifle in the other. Analyzing the painting, Linda Nochlin contends: "True, in Delacroix's picture, woman is permitted such force, such a position of active and aggressive leadership of men, only by virtue of the fact that she is neither a historical personage nor a contemporary member of the crowd she leads but rather, an allegorical figure."⁴ Delacroix notably abandons the common verbal and visual conceptions of virginal Liberty by offering a non-virginal physique to his Liberty/Revolution. Her eroticized body, with her breasts so shamelessly exposed — indicated by her "slipped chiton"⁵ — is the motif borrowed from antique representations of the Amazons. Then, as later, the meaning of this politicized femininity has induced various readings. After seeing the painting in Paris in the official Salon of 1831, Heinrich Heine, for example, was unable to decide whether the Goddess of Liberty was a "peripatetic female philosopher" or actually a "Venus of the street," that is, the "whore who symbolized

4 → Linda Nochlin, "The Myth of the Woman Warrior," in *Representing Women* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 49.

5 → For an analysis of the meaning of the "slipped chiton" in public statuary, see Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens – The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Vintage, 1996), 267–293.

the will of an untamed people."⁶ This account may be taken to summarize the "masculine anxiety" caused by women's political struggle for participation as citizens in revolutionary public life.

Why are the allegories of Revolution and Liberty always female? Allegory, meaning "other speech" (from the Greek *allos*, other, and *agoreuein*, to speak openly as in the agora), is a literary and visual device known from antiquity. It was the French Revolution that introduced a completely novel model for the visual representation of power. This turn manifested in a paradigmatic move from historical narrative to gendered ahistorical female allegory. When the absolutist power of the sovereign had been removed and his monumental statues dismantled around 1792, on the empty pedestal now stood the statue of Liberty, a female body standing for "the people." With the father executed, the power was to be shared among equal brothers, and this "horizontal comradeship" forms the foundation of the nation or what Benedict Anderson called "imagined community." The new republican female body came to personify invisible civic values, ideals, and norms such as revolution, freedom, and victory, for which the fraternity dies.

The allegorical female figures surfacing in public space, like the female figures topping the national monuments, became particularly utilized during and after the revolutions of 1848, known as the "birth of nations." During the establishment of the modern nation-state, female allegories were given

6 → Cited in George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), 91.

a nation-building task. Around that time, Liberty's sisters started to mushroom in every corner of Europe; their identities adapting to the place of their use: *Hungaria*, *Germania*, *Polonia*, *Hellas* (Greece), *Serbia*, *Hispania* (Spain), etc. These days there is hardly a nation-state worldwide lacking such a figure. They are imagined and imaged as the mother of the nation. As Ann McClintock writes: "Excluded from direct action as national citizens, women are subsumed symbolically into the national body politic as its boundaries and metaphoric limit. [...] Women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but denied any direct relation to national agency."⁷ So while the Goddess of Liberty and *La Marianne* were adopted — by around 1793 — as the allegory of the French Republic and prominently displayed in public space, the French women who took an active part in the Revolution were banned from active and passive participation in the republican public sphere. Notably, French women only got the right to vote as late as 1944. Emerging soon after 1789, political caricatures in the press represented the female revolutionaries bearing arms as the "disorderly viragos" and referred to them as "*filles publiques*," or prostitutes. Interestingly, in 1850, Karl Marx "likened the anarchists — double agents and agents-provocateurs of the Parisian underworld — to prostitutes, whose painted faces concealed duplicity and evil."⁸

7 → Ann McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven: Nationalism, Gender, and Race" (1991), in *Becoming National — A Reader*, ed. Geoff Elley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 261.

8 → Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 55.

The "wild women" known as "*pétroleuses*" during the Paris Commune of 1871 were labeled "red virgins." In a similar vein, the inimical local press described women partisans who fought in the Greek Civil War as "hyenas."

Yes, Jugoslava could be any of them. Over the course of the film she assumes the identities of so many revolutionary women, often anarchists, those *femmes fatales* calling for social change, transgressing the boundaries of patriarchy. Like a Bakhtinean *unruly woman*, comrades Jugoslava belligerently follows in words and deeds her drive to lead the people: she is boldly challenging the masculine angst that runs through the entire *Early Works*. Still, in doing so, she does not renounce "the joys of the flesh," as Friedrich Engels once called them.⁹

Trauerspiel

Watching *Early Works* after so many years, I was wondering whether this film is a belated or even the last Yugoslav socialist realist picture, due to the fact that it has a powerful woman standing for Revolution? Conversely, is *Early Works*, made in 1969, masquerading the socialist realist pathos, turning it into a socialist Gothic?

9 → Engels writes: "It is high time that at least the German workers get accustomed to speaking in a free and easy manner about things they themselves do every day or night. They are natural, inevitable and highly pleasant things" Friedrich Engels, "The Joys Of The Flesh," in the article "Georg Weerth" (1883), reprinted in *Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary*, ed. Maynard Solomon (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 70–71.

During my recent viewing, I became confident that *Early Works* is a genuine Benjaminean film: it is a *Trauerspiel*, a play of sorrow, a mourning play. In his extraordinary work, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama (Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels, 1928)*, Walter Benjamin investigates the uniquely German baroque theater, performed during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) and staged as the reaction to the Counter-Reformation. He writes: "Everything about history that, from the very beginning, had been untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful, is expressed in a face — or rather in a death's head."¹⁰ These plays are not premised on heroic sacrifice like the Greek tragedy that is grounded in myth; *Trauerspiel* is rooted in the mundane, corporeal, earth bound, and cruel. Benjamin thus remarks: "It has often been said that these plays were written by brutes for brutes."¹¹ They are centered on the mournful and this work of mourning is taken up in allegory: "For the only pleasure the melancholic permits himself, and it is a powerful one, is allegory."¹²

In this road movie, four urbanites — the (anti-)heroine Jugoslava and three (anti-)heroes — are seen operating exclusively in outdoor spaces or at least those meant for public use. Karpo Acimović-Godina's camera, embracing a strategy of "spatial realism," frames the road, the factory, the village, the raft, the farm, the barn, the factory bathroom — even the palace as a bourgeois remnant loses its original purpose as a

10 → Benjamin, "Allegory and Trauerspiel," 166.

11 → Ibid., 53.

12 → Ibid., 185.

private domicile. All are now collectively used by the working class. In these spaces, *alles ist kaputt*. The outdoor toilet in front of Jugoslava's house is out of order; factory and agricultural machinery is malfunctioning; the village is in mud; the toilet paper is sheets of newspaper. Even the natural environment, where the group mocks partisan films, is shown in autumn, with dead leaves. These incidents showing material remains, rubble, wreckage, relics, and remnants could be easily read via Benjamin as "the allegorical physiognomy of the nature-history, which is put on stage in the *Trauerspiel*, is present in reality in the form of the ruin. In the ruin history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay. Allegory thereby declares itself to be beyond beauty. Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things. This explains the baroque cult of the ruin."¹³ Occasionally, the rebellious quartet even manages to repair some of these wrecked things. But, following their revolutionary and/or anarchist zeal, they cause further destruction: their car, a French Citroën 2CV, which could be taken as a cipher indicating the "red bourgeoisie" (or at least stands for the Belgrade intelligentsia's favorite vehicle), is soon decomposed and eventually dragged by a horse. The car they later destroy with a Molotov cocktail is not just any car; it is an abandoned and already demolished Fića, the most affordable automobile in the country, called the "people's car."

13 → Ibid., 177–178.

Benjamin's "allegorical way of seeing" could be, I think, extended to the female allegory. Indeed, he mentions a "peculiarity" in the *Trauerspiel* plays, some of which construct "ahistorical women."¹⁴ Until about the mid-1950s, Yugoslav cinema in its socialist realist phase produced a number of such ahistorical women: allegorical heroines bodying forth Yugoslav freedom and war victory. These women would die honorably, offering their bodies to the "altar of the Revolution." Historically, the Yugoslav Liberation War and parallel socialist revolution had been initiated by the Yugoslav Communist Party (CPY), which by the end of the war itself came to be imagined as an allegory. As Lydia Sklevicky remarks: "Resolute and strong like the granite rock in front of the enemy, but tender to our peoples like a good mother to her children, the Communist Party was fighting for the national survival and freedom of all our peoples."¹⁵ In 1942, the "mother" had already launched the AFŽ (the Women's Antifascist Front), an organization which fulfilled various tasks during wartime. The prime objective of the AFŽ in the immediate postwar years was rooting out illiteracy among women, particularly in the rural areas, where Jugoslava tries to teach the female peasants about sex and marriage. In 1953, the AFŽ was banned, since the CPY had nursed a lingering unease over a separate women's organization. The ban generally delighted the male populace, especially in the patriarchal rural areas. The peasant women,

14 → Ibid., 73–74.

15 → Lydia Sklevicky (1952–1990) was the very first ethnologist who, in the 1980s, offered a feminist reading of the AFŽ. This account of 1944 is cited in Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi* [Horses, Women, Wars], ed. Dunja Rihtman Auguštin (Zagreb: Druga, 1996), 49.

though, were truly disappointed, as the AFŽ meetings had enabled them to leave home and family and to access the public space — at least for a while.¹⁶ The mission of "emancipating the emancipator" (Sklevicky) had failed. This failure, I believe, is suggested in the aforementioned sequence where Jugoslava, with her non-motherly body, waves the flag of the Yugoslav Communist League (a new name the CPY adopted in 1952). The final take in the film shows her corpse covered with the same flag. The *Trauerspiel* is over.

When considering masculinity in *Early Works*, in effect the film could be viewed as a *Trauerspiel* about patriarchal manliness. Jugoslava's three male comrades do not manifest the type of male bonding nor flashy heroism typically featured in Yugoslav partisan epics of the 1960s made à la Hollywood. These partisan "buddy movies" are informed by men's homosocial (not homosexual!) attachments. More brutal aspects of masculine anxiety are evident in the scenes in which Jugoslava is exposed to rape (which is graciously not visualized) and finally to death. Male sexuality is also tested, but it seems that only Jugoslava learned the lessons from the sexual revolution of the 1960s; the film demonstrates that men, even though they talk all the time about fucking, feel rather embarrassed by undressing, as in a sequence with Jugoslava and Dragiša. It is true that the cameraman fetishizes Jugoslava's beautiful body, fragmenting it in his

16 → Women used to say: "Men are gathering all the time, they have their *kafanas* (taverns) and football. Nobody is gathering us, women. We are willing to hear something, to converse about our female things." In Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku* [Women's Question in Serbia in the 19th and 20th Centuries] (Belgrade: Žene u crnom, 1996), 170.

paneling shots. His male gaze floats over her body as if it were a landscape. And yet, this same male gaze is directed at a male body as well, filming a subject that is rarely, if ever, seen in Yugoslav cinema of the time: the male nude! Before he enters into an erotic encounter with Jugoslava under the shower, Marko, the worker, is captured in a wide shot as a full nude figure; moreover, he is performing (however clumsily) a striptease. It is a taboo-breaking episode. While, by the late 1960s, female nudity in cinema, advertising and printed media, as well as in art photography, was well domesticated, the male nude had been sanctioned in the Yugoslav public sphere until about the early 1980s. These are the effects of patriarchal culture, of which socialist culture is a part: the male nude is taken to render a non-heroic masculinity by representing an effeminate, weak, and vulnerable maleness. In other words, the male nude takes over the very signs attributed to the “feminine.”

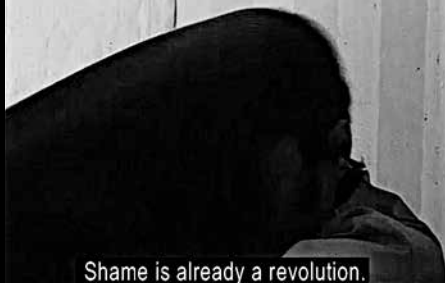
Coming back to Benjamin and his concept of allegorical fragmentation: the structure of *Early Works* is based on the cinematic collage/montage procedure, scattering narrative fragments here and there, without aiming to establish a coherent whole. It is true that Žilnik usually relies on this method in his other productions, both documentaries and features. But I am positive that the Benjaminean *pulsation*, which could be sensed in almost every instance of this film, is what the co-scriptwriter, Branko Vučićević, personally invested in this picture.¹⁷ Expanding on the *Trauerspiel*, Christine Buci-

17 → Branko Vučićević (1934–2016) was a film and cultural critic, writer, and translator. He was not only the script author of films directed by Dušan Makavejev, Behrudin Bata Čengić, and Karpo-Aćimović-Godina, to name just

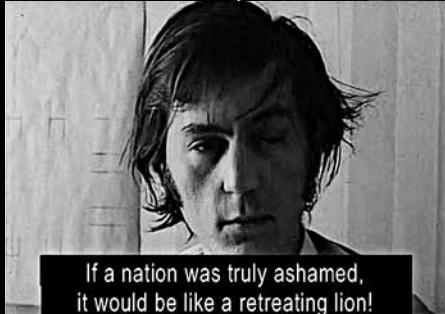
Glucksmann holds that the baroque allegory as posited by Benjamin anticipates the role of shock, montage, and the alienation effect in the twentieth-century avant-garde: “Long before *modern* art, the allegory testified the preeminence of the fragment over the whole, of a destructive principle over a constructive principle, of feeling, as the excavation of an absence, over reason as domination. Only the fragment is capable of showing that the logic of bodies, feeling, life and death does not coincide with the logic of Power [...]”¹⁸ In her view, the allegorical play of images and the fragmentation of language lead directly to the epic theater of Brecht. Not only to him, I would add, but also to Dziga Vertov, to Meyerhold, to Piscator’s political theater and to ... *Early Works*.

a few directors whose pictures had been labeled “black”; he was also the best connoisseur of Walter Benjamin’s oeuvre that I have ever met. Moreover, he possessed profound knowledge of Dada as well as the Soviet and Yugoslav avant-gardes, both in film and the visual arts.

18 → Christine Buci-Glucksmann, “Baroque Space — *Trauerspiel*: Allegory as Origin,” in *Baroque Reason — The Aesthetics of Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 71. Italics in original.



Shame is already a revolution.



If a nation was truly ashamed,
it would be like a retreating lion!



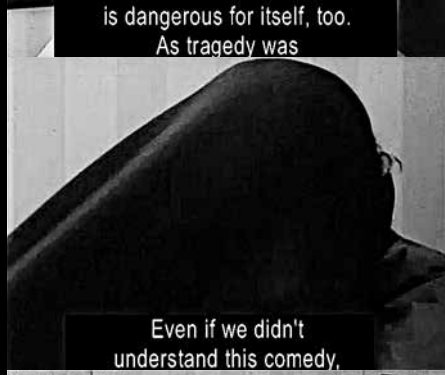
The comedy that despotism
performs on us,



The comedy that despotism
performs on us,



is dangerous for itself, too.
As tragedy was



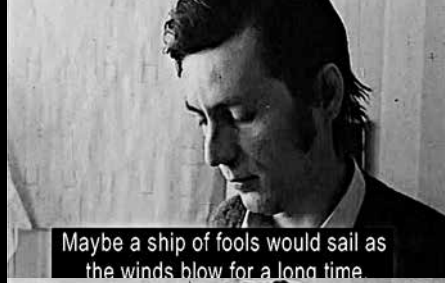
Even if we didn't
understand this comedy,



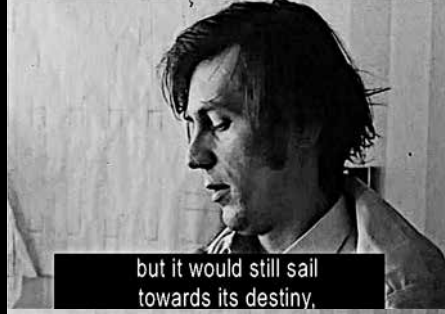
it still would be
a revolution.



The state is too serious an affair
to allow any mockery of itself.



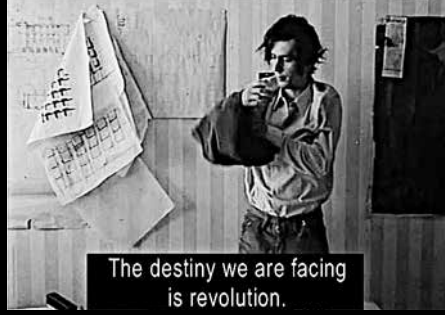
Maybe a ship of fools would sail as
the winds blow for a long time



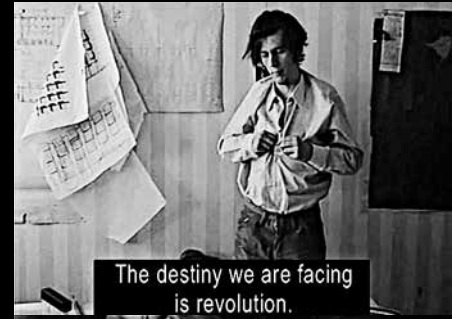
but it would still sail
towards its destiny,



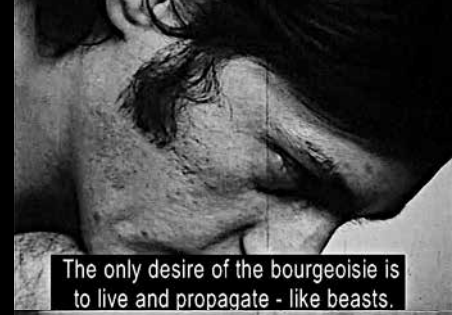
because the fools would
never believe in it.



The destiny we are facing
is revolution.



The destiny we are facing
is revolution.



The only desire of the bourgeoisie is
to live and propagate - like beasts.



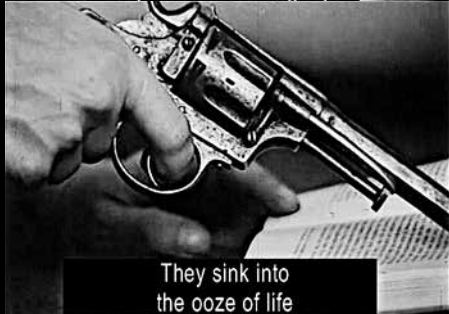
We must re-awaken in them
the feeling of their value - freedom!



The Philistine's world is
the Philistine animal world.



The autocrat sees people
deprived of their dignity.



They sink into
the ooze of life



out of which they reappear,
like frogs.



out of which they reappear,
like frogs.



The herd is silent, submissive,
and obeys its stomach!



The herd is silent, submissive,
and obeys its stomach!



KRUNO



DRAGIŠA



MARKO





Marko, come in the morning!



Dragisa!



You know what?
You should go... I can't.



Why are you sitting?
You faggots!



I can't help you. Ask her if
you can call Marko instead.



Kruno, here!



I'm not begging anyone!
Lepa, come over here!



Lepa, don't do it
with both of them!

Nomen Est Omen: A Brief Review of the Death of the Female Character in One of the Emblematic Films of the Yugoslav Black Wave

From a feminist perspective, Žilnik's *Early Works* is extremely interesting. Jugoslava is one of few female characters in Yugoslav cinema given a central role as an active participant in the development of the film's narrative. At the same time, she also holds the rare position of a revolutionary political subject — a role typically reserved for male protagonists in Yugoslav cinematography.

Two questions imposed themselves upon me after a close viewing of *Early Works*. The first question is: why must Jugoslava die at the end of the film? The answer to the above question depends on the feminist standpoint from which it is approached. On one hand, it may be reasoned through a classic feminist critique, which would assert that Jugoslava committed too many felonies (transgressions) of her assigned gender role. She is neither a mother figure, nor a devoted wife, a loyal lover, or a wanton widow. Jugoslava leaves the traditional, patriarchal family for a radical political adventure. In the "theater of revolution," as Žilnik terms his film, Jugoslava assumes the role of leader and stands at the center of the plot. By contrast, the film's male characters appear uniform, interchangeable, and almost lack communication among each other: the male characters literally communicate *through her*. Jugoslava also takes the initiative to have sex, thereby subverting the usual hierarchy and division of roles and responsibilities of men and women — she provokes and belittles her comrades' masculinity, she detests their immaturity, opportunism, and inability to take action.

I personally find an ideological-political approach to this question more interesting. At the allegorical and metaphorical level, Jugoslava personifies the unfinished Yugoslav revolution. The

film develops around the adventures of a revolutionary group, consisting of four characters, whose social statuses bear the classic markings of revolutionary subjects: “a woman, a worker, a student, and an unemployed man.”¹ The ideas drawn by this textbook example of the revolutionary group are propagandistic and barren: they are not based in any concrete socio-political reality, nor do they capture the sympathies of the workers and peasants who are supposed to be led by them to a revolutionary future. Žilnik’s “bearers of the revolution” are overly playful, just as the representation of the surroundings in which they operate. The film’s story could be outlined as follows: a youth activist group concludes that the revolutionary awareness of workers and peasants has still not matured. Therefore, they decide to join the ignorant proletariat to enlighten them about their “deplorable existence.” This idea, however, does not yield the desired outcome: the revolutionary masses remain immature, while the activist group fails as the avant-garde of the revolution. Wavering in their beliefs, they eventually give up their revolutionary practice and thereby, seemingly, the revolutionary idea *per se*, which, naturally, is tantamount to treason in revolutionary ethics. While this apparent treason is also committed by her comrades, they are, however, not punished with death. Jugoslava, born a woman and therefore a potential allegory for revolution, must be eliminated. Here we return to the feminist theorem of the inseparability of the personal and political, which broadly manifests in the division

1 → Statement by Rastko Močnik in “Tri pogleda na koketovanje s revolucijom” [Three Views on Flirting with Revolution], in “Rani radovi,” ed. Bora Ćosić et al., special issue, *Rok — Časopis za književnost, umetnost i estatičko ispitivanje stvarnost* [Rok — Journal for Literature, Art and Aesthetic Investigation of Reality], no. 3 (December 1969): 89–90.

of civil society into public and private spheres — a division that was supposed to be surmounted by the communist revolution.

Last but not least, in the 1960s, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was the only socialist project in postwar Europe that attempted to continue and supplement the political revolution by fundamentally changing the relations of labor and capital through the introduction of workers’ self-management. The failure of this project resonated through the 1968 student movement. In fact, Žilnik seems to point to a feeling that the revolutionary historical and political idea of a new Yugoslavia was dead since 1968. The brutal civil wars of the 1990s could then be thought of as an extended final part of this process.

The second question would then be the following: what connection could be drawn between the death of Jugoslava and the death of Yugoslavia? Women in Yugoslav cinema are killed, beaten, abused, raped, and degraded in every possible way and in all cinematic genres: from war and partisan action films to civil dramas, melodramas, and comedies. Women are subjected to especially cruel treatment in films of the so-called Yugoslav Black Wave, which could be categorized as a dissident cinematic subgenre of Yugoslav *film nouveau*. In this domain, female deaths are often quite expressive and naturalistic: the abused female body is repeatedly used as a function of the film’s erotization. Is Jugoslava different from other female characters in Yugoslav’s misogynist cinematic reality?

There is no easy answer to this question, as *Early Works* cannot be ascribed to banal allegories about the revolutionary *femina*. Jugoslava neither embodies the figure of the romantic revolutionary — as expounded in Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading*

the People — nor is an image of the socialist realist ideal of women as the element of unity between workers and peasants — as would be found in the monument *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman (Rabochiy i kolkhoznitsa, 1937)* by Vera Mukhina, which was used for decades as the opening logo of Mosfilm.²

Rather, Jugoslava represents the revolution as a young urban woman, more reminiscent of the Hollywood icon of the “golden California girl” or, more aptly, the infantile *femme fatale* as iconically represented by Brigitte Bardot in European cinematography — think of Camille in Godard’s *Contempt (Le Mépris, 1963)*. At the Berlinale, where *Early Works* won the Golden Bear award in 1969, the audience was invited to see “Yugoslavia’s most beautiful female body.” It seems that absolutely nobody was bothered by this, neither the Yugoslavian nor German progressive public or critics. The only ones who raised their voice against the film, on an ideological-political level and for its gender and erotic implications, were Yugoslav Committee intellectuals and system bureaucrats.

Until *Early Works* there had been no female characters in Yugoslav cinema whose sexuality operated — at least as a pretense — toward sexual emancipation. The only women permitted to provocatively perform their sexuality were adulteresses, loose women, and those from the bourgeoisie

2 → Mosfilm is a Moscow-based film studio established in 1923, famous for the production of Soviet-era films, including those by Andrei Tarkovsky and Sergei Eisenstein. The studio’s logo is a representation of Mukhina’s socialist realist monument of a male worker and female peasant, depicting the two figures — holding a hammer and a sickle respectively — joining hands above their heads.

who used it to manipulate men. Other women of Yugoslav cinema were either companions of partisans or faithful wives, or even ideologically engaged youth — e.g., in *Superfluous (Prekobrojna, 1962)*³ — who hid their own erotic desire by looking down and chastely pulling their skirts over their knees.

In general, the cinematic portrayal of Jugoslava as an erotic subject-object derives from a male perspective on the so-called sexual revolution of 1968 and more generally from male fantasies of eccentric left-wing rebels. Their expectations were not disappointed — either in reality or on film. To be fair, one must admit that the character of Jugoslava is not entirely depleted by the “male view” — her character being at least more complex than what was typical of the Black Wave. Take, for instance, the moments where Jugoslava doubts her ludic-revolutionary crusade through the factories and countryside. In these scenes, the viewer is presented with the challenges of maintaining intimacy and femininity as the intersections unfold of the personal and political / the intimate and ideological. Several scenes are symptomatic of this tension and all of them have erotic and/or sexual content. In the first one, immediately prior to having sexual intercourse with one of her comrades, Jugoslava reads to him a letter written by the young Marx (who was twenty-five at the time) to his friend Arnold Ruge. In this letter, Marx criticizes the philistine petit bourgeois morality, summarized in the popular folk saying

3 → *Superfluous*, directed by Branko Bauer according to the script by Krešo Golik, depicts work activities of Tito’s Youth. The film introduced actress Milena Dravić as the first and, eventually, Yugoslavia’s most prominent female film star.

“*u se, na se i poda se*” (loosely translated as “every man for himself”). The young man appears to be uncomfortable, his undressing proceeds through an array of repetitive frames from which the young woman is absent, but her voice is heard off-screen as she reads.

In the same sequence, the revolver that will eventually be used to shoot Jugoslava appears. The young man pulls it out of a drawer and puts it on a book, supposedly the one from which Jugoslava has been reading. At this point, both of them appear in the nude: the young woman transforms into a jovial nymph who capers around the young man’s naked body. In a humorous and offensive tone, insinuating his sexual impotency, she poses a typically male question: “What is the maximum number of times you’ve cum in one night?” Their dialogue spins in a circle of gender stereotypes about male and female sexuality. Here, Jugoslava, whose revolutionary mission also includes teaching peasant women about contraception, does not preach free love as advocated by popular local lore but, rather, by the dictates of Alexandra Kollontai and Soviet revolutionary youth. One of the revolutionary sexual models from that period was the “glass of water theory,” according to which the gratification of sexual instinct under communism would be as simple as drinking a glass of water.⁴ Unlike this view of sex and revolution, in her

4 → In Alexandra Kollontai’s story “The Loves of Three Generations,” young communist Genia, a prototype of the New Woman, proclaims that sex “is as meaningless as drinking a glass of vodka to quench one’s thirst.” “The Loves of Three Generations” is one of three stories published in *Love of Worker Bees*, trans. Cathy Porter (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1978). First published in 1923, the trilogy is a feminist critique of Lenin’s New Economic Policy introduced in 1921. Kollontai, a radical-left leader of the Workers’ Opposition movement within the Bolshevik Party, fighting

action of enlightening peasant women, Jugoslava accentuates that single women, such as herself, should avoid pregnancy by abstaining from sex. The viewers realize that Jugoslava is lying, as we know she herself is not abstinent. One therefore witnesses her transgression of the enlightenment framework in her transgression of traditional sexual regulations. We ask ourselves: Why is Jugoslava lying? Is it out of pure conformity toward her enlightening role? Out of cowardice over the possible reactions of the unenlightened, sexually restrained women? Or is it out of shame for overall hypocrisy? Shame is a feeling described by Marx in the aforementioned letter to Ruge as “a revolution in itself.”⁵

Although Jugoslava seeks to surmount both traditional and bourgeois gender conventions — adapting her subjectivity to revolutionary teachings — she finds no satisfaction in her intimate and sexual relationships with men. The following question is thus posed: Is Jugoslava also emancipated enough to make love with the simplicity of drinking a glass of water? Or are her male partners not capable of simultaneously putting

for greater control of the economy by unions and against the bureaucratic party hierarchy, was a staunch opponent of NEP, viewing it as giving in to capitalism and the peasantry. Kollontai’s manifesto “The Workers’ Opposition” was first published in *Pravda* on January 25, 1921, and then censored in Soviet Russia. See “The Workers’ Opposition — Alexandra Kollontai,” *libcom.org*, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://libcom.org/library/workers-opposition-alexandra-kollontai>.

5 → The trilogy of short stories could be seen as a piece of popular fiction accompanying the manifesto. The same thesis appears in “Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations,” in which Kollontai suggests that sexuality is simply a human instinct as natural as hunger or

revolutionary ideas into practice and, in a relationship with her as a woman, expressing all the complexity of human intimacy and sexuality? Whatever the case may be, Jugoslava eventually begins to separate herself from the group, to scorn and humiliate her male comrades and lovers more and more cruelly, calling them “homos” at one point. However, she also lets them down, and doubly so at that: both as leader of the rebellion *and* as the desired object of pleasure. As previously stated, it is unwise to disappoint the expectations of male characters, just as it was to disappoint the expectations of the male rebels of 1968 in the real world.

thirst: “In the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat relations between the sexes should be evaluated only according to the criteria mentioned above — the health of the working population and the development of inner bonds of solidarity within the collective. The sexual act must be seen not as something shameful and sinful but as something which is as natural as the other needs of a healthy organism, such as hunger and thirst. Such phenomena cannot be judged as moral or immoral.” See Alexandra Kollontai, “Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations,” *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1921/theses-morality.htm>.





what to eat,
to be content at work.



Our life is no better
than in old Yugoslavia.



what to eat,
to be content at work.



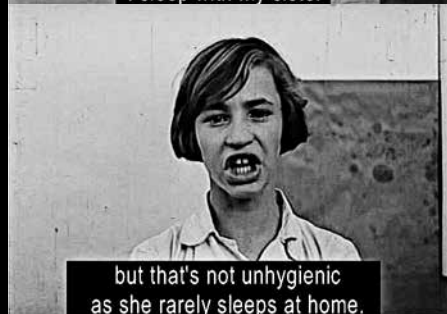
Daddy lived like this
before the war.



We don't buy that.
I sleep with my sister



We are taught
in school



but that's not unhygienic
as she rarely sleeps at home.





What do you want?
- Can you make it with the three of us?



It's over! I'm not interested in you.



Let's see who will be the first!

The Revolution Has Burned, Long Live Art

Handcuffs (Lisice, 1969), Krsto Papić's portrayal of the dramatic effects of Yugoslavia's 1948 clash with the Soviet Union, develops its plot around a wedding in a small village of the Dalmatian hinterland. During the celebration, the bride Višnja (whose name translates as "cherry") is raped by the wedding's honorary guest Andrija, a WWII partisan hero, who is denounced as a Stalinist by the end of the film. As the police drag away the newly declared enemy of the people, the village mob turns their vengeful rage toward Višnja, who they viciously chase and ultimately kill in the bare, rocky landscape of the Dinara mountains. Watching this film several years ago was a deeply disturbing experience for me — not simply because of the violent plot, but because of the director's complicity in this violence. Through a series of narrative and cinematic choices, such as (unconvincing) hints toward Višnja's seductive behavior — which serve to vaguely justify the sexual violence against her — and a blatantly scopophilic treatment of the rape and the chase, Papić perpetuates the violence that he supposedly intends simply to represent. The film, moreover, demonstrates the persistence of the Western cultural trope of deploying the woman's body as a territory for an artistic exercise in political allegory: the violence against Višnja can ultimately be read as an allegory for the relentless persecution of political enemies in Yugoslavia following 1948.¹

When Antonia Majaca proposed Želimir Žilnik's *Early Works* as a case study for a (long-needed) feminist intervention in the history of Yugoslav New Film, my prior frustration

1 → Having been raped and thus tainted by a "Stalinist," Višnja's body becomes the projection screen for the social and political hysteria caused by the Tito-Stalin conflict and Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform.

with the absence of feminist readings of Papić's film incited me to consider the two films together — not only for the parallels that can be drawn between their plots and their misogynous endings, but also because of the obvious aesthetic and ideological differences that make them unequally “susceptible” to feminist critique.

As was outlined above, *Handcuffs* is an easy target. The scopophilic violence inherent in the plot, aided by the cinematic devices, is encapsulated in the seemingly banal resonance between the name of the heroine and that of the lead actress. Jagoda,² a “strawberry,” plays Višnja, a “cherry,” thus unveiling fruit as the metonymy for the place of women as objects of pleasurable consumption in film and art; inviting interpretation along the lines of classic feminist critiques of representation, such as those pioneered by Laura Mulvey in film and Linda Nochlin in visual art.³ Žilnik, by contrast, seems to have done everything right. His heroine Jugoslava, although also allegorical, no longer signals luscious fruit, but Yugoslavia, a political project representative of equality and emancipation. A far cry from the rural postwar bride,

2 → Jagoda Kaloper (1947–2016).

3 → Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen*, no. 16(3) (1975): 6–18; and Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists,” in *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, ed. Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 480–510. Jagoda Kaloper was a visual artist who, however, developed her career primarily as an actress, often celebrated for her beauty, including her nude body, which appeared in a number of films. She addressed this double role of artist and actress in her autobiographical film *Woman in the Mirror* (2011), which also forms the basis of Leonida Kovač's monograph on her work: Leonida Kovač, *In the Mirror of the Cultural Screen: Jagoda Kaloper*

Jugoslava is an emancipated “baby boomer” who leaves her countryside home — marked by poverty and paternal violence — in order to carry out a revolutionary program together with three young men who she appears to dominate both verbally and sexually. Seen in historical and generational terms, Jugoslava is the symbol of the progress that the socialist revolution had engendered for women and the dependence of that emancipation on urbanization and industrialization. While Višnja's only choice in pre-socialist patriarchal rural life is between an honorable life endowed by marriage and the disgrace of spinsterhood or illegitimate sex, Jugoslava explicitly denounces the “idiocy of rural life” and, having overcome the imperative of marriage and monogamy, pursues sexual pleasure on her own terms. Her narrative destiny is nonetheless the same: she is first raped by a group of peasants who also beat up her comrades, and then her comrades kill her and burn her body at the end of the film.

We thus come full circle: the film opens with Jugoslava's sister proclaiming that they live no better than their father, yet by the end of the film, it is clear that they also live no better than their mother — no better than “Višnja” had lived. Further, Jugoslava's gesture of leaving home at the film's beginning

(Zagreb: Croatian Film Association, 2013). See also my analysis of the film in the context of a discussion of the work of Sanja Iveković and the use of the figure of the woman as a sign of societal corruption in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and in the post-Yugoslav and postwar context of the 1990s: Ivana Bago, “The Question of Female Guilt in Sanja Iveković's Art,” in *Sanja Iveković: Unknown Heroine*, ed. Helena Reckitt (London: Calvert 22, 2013), reprinted in *Art and Theory of Post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Roxana Marcoci et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

is confounded by her return at the film's end: she leaves in order to make life better for her sister or, rather, for her *sisters*, and after recognizing the failure of her revolutionary quest returns to the family home. Paternal violence has remained intact; it turned, in fact, into *brotherly* violence, committed by her comrades and brothers-in-arms. If we again think in terms of allegory — and lacking psychological depth, Žilnik's characters are hardly more than slogan-chanting allegories — this brotherly violence aligns with the police and military violence employed by the communist elites against the 1968 communist rebels and reformers. This violence was committed in revenge for exposing the impotence of political power and the betrayal of the original political project. Such a reading ensues from Žilnik's description of the film as an immediate reaction to the brutal suppression of Belgrade's June 1968 student demonstrations — an experience further exacerbated by the news of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and the suppression of the Prague Spring.⁴ Friend could easily become foe within the communist "Treaty of Friendship," as had already happened with Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform in 1948.

4 → Žilnik talks about this in a conversation with Boris Buden, organized by the Multimedia Institute Zagreb at the MM Center on February 3, 2014. Video documentation of the conversation can be accessed at pmilat, "Želimir Žilnik & Boris Buden: Zagrebački razgovor," YouTube Video, 1:44:28, February 6, 2014, <https://youtu.be/HWFa2r3EBpE>. In his captivating reconstruction of the Belgrade 1968, Branislav Jakovljević notes that the police brutality was especially directed towards women. He cites, among other sources, Živojin Pavlović's memoirs, according to which "the girls suffer the worst humiliations [...]. Provincial cops, mad from sleeplessness and primordial peasant hatred toward city dwellers, impassionedly attack

Albeit in very different ways, it could be said that both Papić's and Žilnik's films aim to expose violence as a mechanism for displacing and disguising the impotence of "revolutionary brotherhood" and the broader contradictions of the communist project both nationally and internationally. In both cases, the "natural order" of rural life and the inherent violence of the patriarchal sexual order — and, more concretely, the violated woman's body — become the carriers onto which this greater historical narrative is displaced. However, in the case of *Handcuffs*, the woman's destiny is merely a symptom of a deranged social structure — or, rather, infrastructure — while in *Early Works* it is identified as a key factor informing the derangement. This makes for a crucial ideological gap between the two films. Papić utilizes art as a tool for unveiling hidden social truths and conflicts, and was accordingly celebrated for daring to tackle the silenced theme of post-1948 political persecutions. Žilnik, by contrast, proposes, or at least identifies, in the figure of Jugoslava the motor of potential social transformation, or the condition without which no revolution can keep its promise.

In thus suggesting that there can be no revolution without sexual revolution and no sexual revolution without the dissolution of patriarchal oppression, Žilnik performs a Marcusean merger of Marx and Freud and is a quintessential 1968-er. The target

their manes, their thin and transparent skirts and their white flesh that glows through their torn clothes. They beat them up, step on them, and tear their shirts and bras, yelling: 'Whores!'" Živojin Pavlović cited in Branislav Jakovljević, *Alienation Effects: Performance and Self-Management in Yugoslavia, 1945–91* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 308–309.

of his satire is the four young rebels, whose ultimate failure stems from their blind adherence to the “program”: they are comic characters to the extent that they are portrayed as walking citation machines, reproducing general Marxist postulates and periodically engaging in disassociated reenactments of WWII partisan movie scenes, dances, and songs. If the demands of the rebelling Yugoslav students of 1968 were not dissident but rather consisted in a call to order — i.e., a summoning of the “elders” to be true to the original project and program of socialist Yugoslavia — Žilnik satirizes precisely this oxymoronic situation in which a revolution is envisioned as repetition and therefore cannot but repeat its original failure. In this sense, the explicit framing of the film as a “comedy” at its beginning is in itself satirical: a comedy implies a moment of recognition of a new society, while in *Early Works* we are faced with a glaring absence of change: a comedy of errors in which the new generation has mistaken itself for that of its parents.

In such a stalemate, Jugoslava represents the potential for change, but only to the extent to which she strays from the “program.” This happens most notably in the scene of her sexual encounter with one of her comrades under the shower in the factory, which her two other comrades take as an unmistakable act of betrayal and for which they eventually punish her. Why should they be so offended, given that her sexual freedom is already an established element of their common revolutionary endeavor? Perhaps not simply because she now engages in sex with the only man among the three who is explicitly designated as a worker — the true carrier of revolutionary potency and change — but even more so because she does so spontaneously, embracing an event of mutual sexual attraction, which takes

place outside of the program.⁵ Jugoslava of course rationalizes her unexpected arousal by quoting Engels on the authentic nature of proletarian love; but this dogmatic wisdom comes only in the midst of ongoing arousal, just the opposite of the way she usually engages in sex with her comrades, e.g., by planning and announcing, by drawing straws, or challenging them to demonstrate their sexual powers in one way or the other. In suggesting the liberatory potential of releasing the repressed instinct (in Marcuse’s terminology), which unsettles the logocentric structure of revolutionary dogma, and in simultaneously portraying the violent repression of this potentially transformative impulse, Žilnik diagnoses the nature of the failure of both the original Yugoslav project and its 1968 performative reenactment.

Further, he points to the key social actors of this potential transformation: a worker and a woman, both of whom were at the center of the socialist project of emancipation, but only nominally so — the worker still drinks and beats his wife after

5 → The blind and blinding adherence to the “program” is thematized in the scene in which the group is collectively defecating, which, at the same time, presents a satirical metacommentary on the adherence to discourse. While squatting down and presumably having a bowel movement, the three members of the group provide commentary on the social situation in the villages, while the third one retorts: “Give us a break and stop bullshitting,” or, in the literal translation: “Come on, stop shitting letters, and pass the newspaper.” The newspaper — containing, as we learn, an “excellent article” by a “Dž. Husić” — is then used as toilet paper. Still, the group is not able to completely discard their attachment to the “letters” excreted by their own creed: when one of them suggests that, had they been smart enough, they would have never come to the countryside, the other retorts: “You can’t change it now! We’d put that in our program.”

an unbearable workday (as Jugoslava notes in the film), while his wife, in turn, still gets beaten. The “marriage vow,” so to speak, between the socialist state and the worker/woman’s emancipatory desire is never fulfilled; the marriage never consummated due to the state’s impotency — as suggested by the ongoing analogy between sexual and revolutionary potency that the film insists on — as well as the inability of Jugoslava’s three comrades to fulfill her sexual demands and desires. The intercourse with the first comrade apparently takes place, but only once instead of seven times in a row as he had promised. On another occasion, the second comrade — chosen as Jugoslava’s sex partner for the night in a draw organized by Jugoslava and her girlfriend — is unwilling to perform and asks the first comrade to replace him. Finally, Jugoslava’s desire — for proletarian love, i.e., for revolution — seems on the verge of being truly fulfilled by the third comrade, the “worker,” but the alliance of their desires is intercepted by the first two comrades and condemned as a violation of the preplanned revolutionary procedures.⁶

The worker ultimately joins the other two men in accusing Jugoslava of perpetrating this violation, to which she responds not so much by relinquishing her revolutionary desire as by asserting, once again, her diagnosis of the comrades’ impotence. This exposure is, in turn, repeatedly punished with violence in the course of the film: the comrade reprimanded for not being able to get it up seven times in a row shoots at

6 → The emancipatory and egalitarian drive of this alliance is suggested also in the introductory part of this scene, in the dressing room, when the worker tells Jugoslava: “We never talk. I don’t really see that there are so many differences between you and me.”

Jugoslava multiple times in a row — the image of the penis even inserted in place of the firing gun for one brief moment. On another occasion, she is kicked out of the house for challenging the second, unwilling comrade, and when she finally abandons them all and they come to dare her to “do” all three, it is again they who do not dare to follow through and instead burn Jugoslava’s body in order to destroy the mirror and the proof of their (revolutionary) impotence. Their murder of Jugoslava ultimately suggests the inability of the revolutionary brotherhood to keep up with the revolutionary demands and desires of its sisters: those women who crucially contributed to the Yugoslav anti-fascist struggle and socialist revolution, but who were later left behind in the state’s pledge of “brotherhood and unity.”

Perhaps, then, we should not see Jugoslava’s return to her home as an act of surrender, but rather an act of recognition: of what her struggle in fact consists and where her allegiances lie. True, she realizes she cannot do anything to change society, just as her group of four was earlier forced to admit, when they decided to get a job at a factory and in this way solidarize with those whose misery they could not change. She repeats this gesture a second time, only now solidarizing with her mother and sister, as it is ultimately their misery that underlies her revolutionary drives. In addition to her betrayal of the program, it is also this gesture of remembering her revolutionary sisters for which she is punished by her comrades/brothers.

Yet, the source of the punishment is, in the end, ultimately in the narrative and its direction. Despite the fact that we could argue Jugoslava is the figure that Žilnik partially rescues from his satirical swipe at the old-young revolutionaries, the decision

to grant his film a spectacular ending by means of the burning of Jugoslava's body — albeit covered by the Yugoslav League of Communists' flag and thus invisible, or rather, fully identified with and melted into the flag — places him in collaboration with the killers. This conflagration, at the same time, leaves his film with an image of a revolutionary desert: an absolute absence of any revolutionary subject. Very much unlike Krsto Papić — and in line also with Žilnik's avant-garde aesthetics that were inspired by the French New Wave and especially Jean-Luc Godard — Žilnik consistently avoids, at least to a significant extent, a scopophilic treatment of Jugoslava, as well as of the sexual and murderous violence committed against her.⁷ However, he falls into the same trap of the spectacle of burning witches and the quintessential misogynist rule according to which, in Susan Brownmiller's words, "[a] good heroine is a dead heroine [...] for victory [...] is incompatible with feminine behavior. The sacrifice of life, we learn, is the most perfect testament to a woman's integrity and honor."⁸ Certainly, we could say that he, just like Papić, only represents

7 → Jugoslava's rape by the peasants and the sexual intercourse with one of her comrades are not shown, but only implied, for example. Admittedly, opportunities to expose the attractiveness of Jugoslava's body are duly used by the camera; but the female character is granted a level of agency in this, just as the naked male body equally draws the camera's libidinous attention, as in the shower scene.

8 → Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Bantam Books, 1976), 364. In regard to Papić's film, of particular relevance is also Brownmiller's identification of the perpetuation, in popular culture and the media, of the "myth that rape is a crime touched off by female beauty," and that "women are influenced to believe that to be raped, and even murdered, is a testament to beauty:" *ibid.*, 380. However, even when the films evidently avoid such exoticization of rape, as, for example, in so-called

the cruel social reality; but the line between representation and complicity is never easy to draw. Jugoslava does not win, but rather, in a New Testament manner, challenges her brothers by surrendering herself in declaring, "Let's see who'll be the first!" — thus sacrificing her life. Even worse, the burning of Jugoslava's body — and, by extension, that of the Yugoslav League of Communists, or of Yugoslavia — is not the last scene in the film, but is followed by a moralizing — as well as satirically placed — quote by Saint-Just: "Those who make revolution halfway only dig their own graves."⁹

By choosing to conclude with this quote, Žilnik decidedly places himself not merely in the position of an all-knowing narrator, but also that of a self-righteous *auteur*. While the post-1968 desert of *Early Works* leaves us without any revolutionary subject, and without any hope for the future, it does so only on the surface. For as Žilnik eliminates — one after the other — the party, the peasant, the student, the worker, and the woman from the revolutionary stage, a new subject discretely

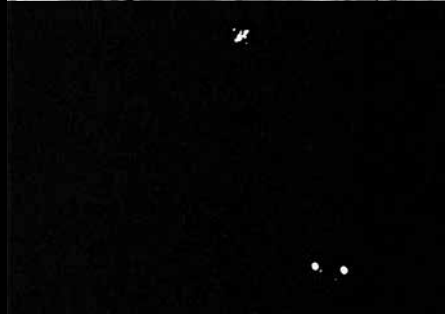
rape-and-revenge films — including *Thelma & Louise* (1991, dir. Ridley Scott), *Ms. 45* (1981, dir. Abel Ferrara), *Baise-moi* (2000, dir. Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trinh Thi) — this trope of the never-victorious, dead heroine is regularly repeated. This despite the fact that their aim is to solidarize with the rebellion and revenge that the rape survivor mounts against her abusers and, usually also, against men in general.

9 → The recent Canadian movie *Those Who Make Revolution Halfway Only Dig Their Own Graves* (2016, dir. Mathieu Denis and Simon Lavoie) uses this coda as the title of a film about four contemporary rebels — three women and a man, "largely middle-class radicals" — who branch out of Quebec's 2012 student demonstrations. I have not had the chance to see this film, but it seems very likely that the intertextual link to Žilnik could be deliberate — in that case there would be a reversal of the group's gender structure.

arises behind this desolate curtain: the artist. Žilnik seemingly avoids the moralizing position exemplified by *Handcuffs*, of the courageous artist who dares to touch the repressed truth — e.g., there is no pathos in *Early Works* and there is no clear difference between the good and the bad; between the ruling and the oppressed; between the old and the young. Yet as we watch the Yugoslav revolution burn away together with Jugoslava's body and the Yugoslav League of Communists' flag, we are left to remember that there is an *artist* — indeed, an avant-garde artist, an *auteur* — who will live on to tell the story and perhaps also salvage from the wreckage the spoils of the revolutionary flame. This latent suggestion once again takes on a libidinal form: if the judgment of the inability to finish off the revolution is the final evidence of the revolutionaries' impotence, then the film's decisive ending, with the burning of Jugoslava's body, and the even more decisive historical judgment, is evidence of the conclusive potency of the artist, and the power of art to bring things to an end (with all the ambiguities inherent in that metaphor). As has become clear in the aftermath of the series of repressions and recuperations of the student and workers' rebellions in 1968 until today, that is precisely the problem, or one of them: the more the revolution burns, the more art remains.¹⁰

10 → I wrote more about the post-1968 link between revolution and art in Yugoslavia in: Ivana Bago, "First as Yugoslav Revolution, then as Post-Yugoslav Art: History and A(na)estheticization around 1968 and Now" (2020), *Mezosfera*, accessed December 1, 2020, <http://mezosfera.org/first-as-yugoslav-revolution-then-as-post-yugoslav-art-history-and-anaestheticization-around-1968-and-now>.





I am happy that peasants will no longer exist in communism.

The origin of our weakness lies in the fear of power.



Jugoslava and the Revolutionary Refutation of the Revolution

There are three manifest levels of antagonism in the narrative of Žilnik and Vučićević's *Early Works*. Of them, the most central is the general antagonism of the 1968 generation, as represented in the film by its main protagonists (Jugoslava, Marko, Dragiša, and Kruno) toward the “red bourgeoisie,” who are accused of betraying the foundations of the socialist revolution. Notably, the red bourgeoisie do not appear in the film, they are only implied — there is no single character in the story who would appear as an adversary on this level of signification. For this antagonist is presupposed, it belongs to some previous story, a story that has already been told. In fact, the critique of the red bourgeoisie, for profiteering and idleness, had already been present in Yugoslav cinematography, and not only in films associated with the Black Wave. Writing about *Early Works* in the midst of a heated debate about it in the Yugoslav press (as well as in court), Taras Kermauner argued against the easy labeling of the film as “dissident,” which was, according to him, an already institutionalized formula. To the contrary, Kermauner argued that Žilnik avoided “critique of the restoration, critique of the semi-bourgeoisie world, alienation, reification.” Kermauner goes on to argue that if the film had followed this formula, it would have achieved what such films had already achieved: “to be nicely and easily swallowed within the restorational reality, to be applauded, acclaimed and domesticated.” Kermauner locates the “revolutionarity” of this film in its “refutation of the revolution.”¹ Thus, on the

1 → Taras Kermauner, “Dijalog sa dva teksta Želimira Žilnika” [A Dialogue with Two Texts by Želimira Žilnik], in “Rani Radovi,” ed. Bora Čosić et al., special issue, *Rok — Časopis za književnost, umetnost i estatičko ispitivanje stvarnosti* [Rok — Journal for Literature, Art and Aesthetic Investigation of Reality], no. 3 (December 1969): 98–99.

level of the initial antagonism that drives the protagonists to act, the film switches our attention to the falsity of this very antagonism and therefore becomes a critique of the *domestication* of the 1968 movement.

But let us move to the second manifest antagonism in the film, the one clearly vital to its plot and personified by its characters: the antagonism between the urban and the rural. Within this antagonism, members of the student group represent the urban and, shall we say, “bourgeois” pole in relation to the rural community. The peasants are exasperated by the group’s presence and their revolutionary political slogans. The unhappy encounter between the urban youth and rural folk ends in violence. In one of the most memorable scenes, the group members are attacked by the peasants, beaten up in the village mud, and Jugoslava is raped. This scene is immediately preceded by a scene in which Jugoslava (through the open top of their hipsterish Citroën 2CV) shouts passionately through a megaphone:

All vital forces fight against the idiocy of rural life, and you are mired in it up to your necks. Even though the classics claim that you are the class that will wither away with the development of productive forces, and even though your petty individual farm is unprofitable, in this transition period we espouse an alliance of workers and poor farmers! We are with you — be with us!

Finally, the third manifest antagonism is within the group itself. This antagonism is shaped by gender and sexuality. Although clearly influenced by the Maoist group in Godard’s *La Chinoise* (produced a year earlier), in Žilnik’s group it is Jugoslava who has the upper hand in decisions. Jugoslava

initiates (at the beginning of the film) the group’s agitprop tour through the villages. Throughout the film she acts as a leader: she is the most engaged, dedicated, and resolute member of the group. Male resoluteness, on the other hand, is expressed only through purely violent and sexual drives. Violent gestures populate the behavior of the male members of the group throughout the film: Dragiša’s habitual pulling of a gun and all the sexual innuendos, which culminate in the murder of Jugoslava. While the rationale for murdering Jugoslava is her alleged abandonment of revolutionary action, the film leads one to conclude that this murder is motivated by frustrated sexual drives.

The character of Jugoslava has precedents in numerous heroines of Yugoslav cinematography. Comparison is particularly evident in films of the Yugoslav Black Wave. Although the genre has generally been accused of misogyny, the works of Živojin Pavlović would be far more susceptible to such critique than those of Dušan Makavejev or Puriša Djordjević.² As argued by Nebojša Jovanović, gender and sexual issues have been taken up in Yugoslav cinematography since its very beginnings. The first Yugoslav postwar film, *Slavica* (1947, dir. Vjekoslav Afrić), features a heroic and tragic heroine who represents “the female revolutionary subjectivity.”³ Although the role of Jugoslava may not be new for Yugoslav film, the novelty of the

2 → See Branislav Dimitrijević, “Suffragettes, Easy Lays and Women Faking Pregnancy: Representation of Women in the Film *When I Am Pale and Dead*,” in *Gender Check*, ed. Bojana Pejić (Vienna: Mumok, 2010), 46–52.

3 → Explored in the lecture by Nebojša Jovanović, “*Rod i pol u jugoslovenskom filmu*” [Gender and Sex in Yugoslav Film], at CZKD in Belgrade, May 25, 2015.

film is in depicting how her political actions are confronted by a rampant male inability to act outside of the language of violence. Whereas Slavica is a martyr who has been avenged by her male co-fighters through an act of tribute (the first boat in the Partisan fleet is named after her), Jugoslava is confronted with male passivity, arrogance, and even cowardice: after her comrade Dragiša escapes the beatings of the villagers, he leaves Jugoslava to the rapists. Thus, it is not only male backwardness that is at stake here, but also a more general mistrust toward women. This mistrust is already present in the second film of Yugoslav cinema *The Unconquered People* (*Živjeće ovaj narod*, 1947) by Nikola Popović,⁴ where one finds a blatant inability of men to act outside the vices of revenge, cynicism, self-importance, and sexual frustration.

In contrast to the men of the group, Jugoslava repeatedly exhibits a progressive and emancipatory orientation. This is particularly explicit in the scene where she gives a lecture about contraception to local women and speaks about family patriarchy as the greatest obstacle to women's liberation and revolutionary social development. Following this declaration, she pronounces against the "idiocy of rural life" and the patriarchal relations at its core. Yet, even in the context of the urban and rural divide, her fate cannot simply be inscribed in the narrative of urban arrogance provoking brutal punishment by rural fists. She becomes a victim of rape precisely because the "idiocy of rural life" is based on male sexual violence safeguarding patriarchal power — an imperative one could easily find in an urban setting.

4 → Ibid.

The structure of the group, as Rastko Močnik specified at the time, is built on the identities of the four protagonists: "a student, a worker, an unemployed and a woman."⁵ And, as Močnik argues, the "three male characters communicate exclusively through the woman." Thus, the woman becomes an "embodiment of integration — Ruler (Mother) Heroine." While this interpretation imposes an "allegorical" perspective on the character of Jugoslava, one can also construct another argument: Jugoslava's abandonment of the revolution as a revolutionary *refutation* of the revolution. She refuses subsumption in both the allegory of the ruler and the hero because these are simply male fantasies. Her "rule" is powerless and her heroism meaningless. Her abandonment and refutation of the revolution, however, may be taken as a new revolutionary act; an act that reveals that the revolution cannot be a real revolution if it is based on patriarchal foundations. To paraphrase the quote from Saint-Just that ends the film: the revolution that does not abandon its patriarchal forms digs its own grave.⁶

5 → Statement by Rastko Močnik in "Tri pogleda na koketovanje s revolucijom" [Three Views on Flirting with Revolution], in "Rani Radovi," *Rok*, 89–90.

6 → All quotations from the film are translated from a published script by Branko Vučićević and Želimir Žilnik in "Rani Radovi," *Rok*, 16–47.



Left, left...



According to you, Fidel Castro should never have come down off the mountain.



Lenin should have stayed in Switzerland and Gorkic should lead the party.



And Trotsky next to him! According to you, Kamenev, Zinoviev



and Bucharin shouldn't be on the garbage dump of history.



According to you, Imre Nagy should still be alive.



According to you, Hegel should be left hanging upside down



Five, four, three, two, one...
Fire!



Five, four, three, two, one...
Fire!

Early Works as the Social Reproduction of the Revolution's Failure

Early Works was filmed in a Yugoslavia shaken by a student movement that embodied the possibility of a leftist critique of state socialism. I was born in neighboring Greece under a military dictatorship, which operated under the reactionary slogan “fatherland, religion, family.” Originating in the nineteenth century and resurfacing in the country’s darkest periods, the slogan was mobilized against socialism and feminism, but also, more broadly, against modernity. The CIA-instigated military junta adopted the slogan in this spirit. In its name, the junta decreed those arrested for anti-state action would have their hair shaved as a mark of shame and subordination. However, such a measure was not new: the shaving of hair is a long-standing punishment for disobedience, which certainly exceeds the borders of Greece.

Unsurprisingly, *Early Works* presents a scene where three young males, representative of the youth rebellion (as student, worker and, unemployed), are subjected to this punishment. Indeed, one of them tries to escape and continues to struggle as he is brought back to his chair for the completion of the humiliating act; an act intended to deprive the men of the public symbol of their insurgency — their hair. Notably, this scene depicts violence, perpetrated by men in uniforms, taking as its target *the bodies of men*. By contrast, even in the scene where the peasants attack the four protagonists (the fourth being the beautiful, young, idealistic, revolutionary, female Jugoslava) after they bring them a message of total emancipation — far more radical than what Tito had to offer — it is the woman’s body that is ultimately assaulted. Jugoslava’s body is assaulted

in a manner that signifies real, recognizable, grassroots power: she is assaulted sexually. In a striking *mise-en-scène* containing the muted sound of physical struggle, the peasants succeed in removing Jugoslava's shirt and her youthful, pert breasts are exposed; yet again, for all to see — with the added kinkiness of being covered in mud.

The contrast cannot be missed between the state violence against the male insurgents and the peasantry's violence that culminates in the sexual assault of the female insurgent. This contrast is both a telling symbolism and re-scripting of the culture/nature divide, which was to be a salient theme of second wave feminism. The re-scripting proposed in *Early Works* concerns an implicit identification of state violence with the realm of culture or history, and of sexual violence with the primordial or the realm of nature. Historical, state oppression is executed by the male army and the police. Primordial, natural(ized) oppression is executed by the male peasants.

"I am happy that peasants will no longer exist in communism," Jugoslava states matter-of-factly in the scene following her assault. A few decades earlier, Alexandra Kollontai had also written about the peasants in her essay "Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle" (1921),¹ which I happened to re-read in 2016, just before Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election was to generate headlines about a peasants' revolt. From the nascent Soviet Union to Yugoslavia, to the USA, the dots are both hard and easy to join. They are

¹ Alexandra Kollontai, "Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle" in *Selected writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, trans. Alix Holt (London, Allison and Busby, 1977).

easy to join insofar as, in the spirit of *Early Works*, the class struggle encounters a complex obstacle in the peasantry: the imbrication of the natural and the naturalized; tradition as nature; the connection to the earth as the manifest order of women's sexual subjugation. The problems of unity then — as captured in the spirit of *Early Works* — are in the peasants' oscillation between bearing a class identity and a non-class guardianship of *what remains* when the classes assume battle positions; when class struggle becomes apparent as a process through the nodal markers of its acceleration. What then is this *what remains* when class struggle is waged?

On the Use and Exchange Value of Female Comrades

It is in its effort to answer the above question that *Early Works* becomes a straightforward social document, despite its allegorical pretensions. The film's narrative on revolutionary potential — or, more precisely, on what counts as the revolution's potential — is marked by a tempo of progressions and regressions. Every progression in male and female comradely action is stunted by a regressive reassertion of Jugoslava's primordial function: sex. The camera languishes on her naked body — her youthful, sensual, curvy yet slim, symmetrical, blonde body, shaped by the gender ideology of the late twentieth century — approaching it vertically and horizontally. For every scene in which Jugoslava pushes a car uphill "like a man" and with the men; for every scene in which she waves the revolutionary flag of common emancipation; for every scene where she wears trousers and a loose jacket; we can expect the counterweight that will drag her to her proper place, in the final instance: the sexual role.

The distinction between consensual and nonconsensual sex is hard to make, as even consent (as in the shower scene) is underpinned by the dictates of revolutionary ideology. Somehow Jugoslava's shower instruction to her male comrade — "You can come in too, but don't look!" — is followed by her admittance that "if Engels had not said that truly honest love exists only among the proletariat — you would have been tossed aside today." Here we find ideology in the Marxist sense, for even the revolution is not spared from the naturalized, the habitual, the what remains — of precisely what the peasants defend when they bare Jugoslava's breasts. Perhaps this ideology is most clearly captured in the scene where the young, attractive, modern Jugoslava speaks to the peasant women about contraception as essential for freeing their sexuality and their lives. In stark contrast to Jugoslava's wild, blonde head, the peasant women have their heads covered and are characterized as unattractive and old — past reproductive age and thus past being desirable, or even past being women. "Do these women actually need contraception?" must be the question that hovers in the heads of the bemused and perhaps amused spectators.

The peasants, it seems, are a lost cause. The very presence of the peasant women, through their "looks," clearly exemplifies the problem of the peasantry: how can they recognize enlightenment when they don't even know what is the light? How can they value the liberating beauty of sex when "their women" look like this? And so, this is why Jugoslava is a necessary weapon in the class struggle, signifying not so much the possibility of an awakening of proletarian consciousness, but the reason why this awakening might actually happen. Jugoslava is the impetus. Jugoslava is the prize. A prize in the

sense that, in an emancipated society, women would be, and look, like her. This is Jugoslava's use value in the class struggle. And she is indeed *used* throughout the film, to make apparent the desirability of the social transformation proposed by the insurgent students. What this revolution will produce is intelligent, modern, sex loving, beautiful, and young women. And yes, Jugoslava will not be allowed to grow old; she will die young, beautiful, and desired. Desired, in fact, by all three of her male comrades who chase after her in the startling final scene, wherein they ask her to have sex with them all. She refuses and is shot dead. Whatever symbolism Jugoslava carries after her murder (as her comrades throw a Molotov cocktail, causing her body to explode in flames), it is the symbolism of a corpse. Jugoslava dies, persecuted sexually by her three comrades, who use deadly violence against her refusal. The revolutionaries made a choice: that Jugoslava should die. Does something else die with her or does she die alone?

Jugoslava's last words are worth remembering: "It's all over! None of you interest me at all!" She goes on: "Let's see who'll be the first." Had Jugoslava not expressed her refusal, we'd have probably witnessed a typical woman's-exchange-among-men, as described by Claude Lévi-Strauss, the anthropologist, writing long before modern pornography gave us easily-accessible realizations of that which "remains." Let me then suggest a feminist twist on the Marxist theory of value, with the thesis that the exchange value of women reasserts itself as the use value of female comrades in revolutionary practice, when this practice is not subverted by the sexualization of women.

On the Social Reproduction of the Revolution's Failure

For all its dark humor and ironic expositions on what remains, *Early Works* is a melancholic film. Its melancholy is alluded to in the film's title, which, besides invoking Marx and Engels, fits the film's storytelling perfectly: revolutionary practice is stuck in the "early works." Rather than looking for the limits to *Capital*, *Early Works* set out to search for the limits of revolution. It examines discursively quite a few such limits, while principally visualizing one: what happens to the demand for free sex, beyond the normative strictures of gender morality, in a society shaped by a sexual ideology that becomes hegemonic in forms both historically specific (the male students) and trans-historical (the peasants). Seen in this light, *Early Works* is a film of, and about, sexual realism. Ultimately, Jugoslava rejects not only the peasants but also her male comrades, and, in consequence, is fated all along to be a dead woman walking. It is hard not to imagine the director Želimir Žilnik pondering by whose hand — rather than if — she will die. It must have been a difficult choice to ultimately conclude that her comrades should execute her, and yet that choice is consistent with the rhetoric that male comrades have long fed female comrades: that they shouldn't be divisive and that all will change for women when the revolution is realized. Admittedly, *Early Works* goes further than this — or, in fact, takes a step back — in offering a convincing (might we call it "realistic"?) portrayal of *how* the revolution would be realized *again*. The social reproduction of the revolution's failure, as a combined effect of ideology and material practice, is affected by both men and women who validate the somehow cynical proverb that the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Or is it? Why does Jugoslava's affirmation of her own sexuality need to rest on the verbal abuse of her male comrades, through her repeated insults of their sexual prowess? It is unclear why a sexually liberated woman would have to embody the cliché of demanding that a man show if he can "get it up"; and it is therefore unclear what investment *Early Works* has in this depiction of female sexuality as both insatiable and emasculating. In shooting Jugoslava after she utters her insult, as if to make her shut up, the gun-holding hand of the demeaned male comrade executes a fantasy of power: regardless of Jugoslava being resurrected in the next scene to continue her role in the film. If Jugoslava's insults are meant to register as an example of how revolutionary women are mired in ideology, this is an ideology in its own right: the fear of female sexuality, a female sexuality that, given the chance, could also become overpowering. While this may constitute further evidence of the deep entrenchment of sexual ideology — where, one way or another, sex is about power — it is also evidence of the inability to imagine what the revolutionary process might bring forth. There is a thin line separating sexual realism and a revolutionary lack of confidence in the revolutionary process as such — a line that *Early Works* walks as if on a tightrope and from which it ultimately falls, along with Jugoslava's body. We are left to watch, with caution.



Let's be friends!



When communism is established



there can be no freedom



for the enemies of freedom!



Survival is not art - one should live properly, with an aim!



We could glass it in and start afresh!



You'll be fine in the women's dormitory.



Rasha Salti

My Jugoslavas in Beirut

She was not burned at the stake, like a medieval witch or a Joan of Arc; she did not even get a trial. Morbidly, her trial was by fire: literally, not allegorically. She was shot down, as she tried to walk away from the three men — her body immobile and lifeless, as one of the men pulled out a Molotov cocktail, lit it, and lobbed it at her body. As the flames rose thick and high, the three men walked away, unmoved. She was already dead. Setting the young woman's body ablaze was obviously intended to evoke an allegory, an ancient ritual even; a spectacular reinforcement of what socialism, communism, and any other form of egalitarian ideology has failed to accomplish so far, namely: the overthrow of patriarchy, of male domination.

I did not know Jugoslava when she was sixteen, eighteen, or twenty years old. I was born in 1969, the year that Želimir Žilnik was awarded the Golden Bear for directing *Early Works*, his first feature. I met Jugoslava years later, when she was in her fifties, sixties, and seventies; I met several different versions of Jugoslava, in Beirut — in women who had taken part in radical political movements, who believed that a more egalitarian, honest, and radical version of socialism would bring justice, progress, and emancipation to Lebanon. They were as young as she was when they rejected the expectations and aspirations that their social or familial microcosm coerced them to fulfill. They marched, attended endless meetings and debates, distributed leaflets, infiltrated factories and agricultural estates to mobilize other women to join the movement.

The destiny of the mainstream and radical left in Lebanon is not the object of this essay. It has a specific and local history, intimately intertwined with the seventeen-year-long civil war that tore the country apart. Although this destiny is certainly

very different from the story of the left in Yugoslavia, an indulgence in the pathology of patriarchy seems like a shared, borderline universal, motif. In Lebanon, some Yugoslavas left the movement early, disenchanted or hurt by the attitudes of their male comrades. Of those who departed, some married well, scarred their wounds, and folded away the memory of their experience as the sweet vagrancies of youth or early adulthood. Others married badly, or several times, comrades from “the struggle,” deepening their wounds, their disenchantment souring into bitterness and a manifest sense of betrayal. While others married earnestly, finding the strength to forge their own path — with irony, but generosity. To them, looking back is not as painful and looking forward is still energizing. Finally, some became reactionary, and as their disenchantment hardened into rage, they found comfort and made sense of the world in the opposite camp, in right-wing nationalism.

I was surrounded by so many of these Yugoslavas: I drank their stories, imagined them young, I constructed scenes, channeled their sense of loss and disenchantment. I idealized that moment in history, that chapter they forged in their own hands, and felt in turn that my life was doomed to be smaller than theirs, because there was no way I could live anything close to “1968” in my own life. The world I inherited from them was in ruins, ideologically bankrupt, morally conflicted, corroded by cynicism, and gouged by neoliberal capitalism. It took some time, insight, and sobering tragedies for me to understand that I had internalized their melancholy of loss or failure that I had not experienced myself, and that my own reality beckoned for a different political imaginary, language, subjectivity, and mode of action. This realization was, in a way, an emancipation. It was foremost grounding, as I was finally able to reconcile the

legacy of an unsettled past and a fractured present — a present whose fractures were gradually deepening.

I don’t see Jugoslava as a symbol, and neither does Žilnik seem to have intended her as such. She is far too lively, temperamental, and charming to embody just one, two, or three notions. Neither is she a signified object. Although *Early Works* is infused with a unifying dialogue between symbolic acts, plot twists, scenes, and phrases, the four main characters (with Jugoslava in the lead) cannot be flattened into mere effigies. The film unravels like a cautionary Marxist tale, in the wake of the student uprisings that inflamed Europe and the world — not to mention the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. It is a warning against the dangers of using dogma to outbid reality, in the hope of provoking profound and concrete social change from the bottom. It is interesting to reflect on the vitality and relevance of the film’s political urgency today, almost fifty years after its fabrication. Has it aged? Does it reveal the passage of time? The necessity that motivated Žilnik is so honest and acute that its self-critique remains engrossing. What has aged is the understanding of how political change comes about, how ideas and actions relate, and how imaginaries and subjectivities are interpellated and mobilized. The film ends with the admonishing and morbid citation from Saint-Just: “Those who make revolution halfway only dig their own graves.” Notably, it is only the woman who is called to bear this indictment.

Why did Žilnik choose to sacrifice Jugoslava and not one of the men? Men have often been sacrificed in revolutionary struggles, wars of independence, and fights for dignity. Why did Žilnik cast his small group of revolutionaries as three men and a single woman in the first place? Had the gender

composition of the protagonists been different — had they all been women, or had it been reversed, with three women and a man — how would the dramaturgy have changed? How would it have been perceived? Generally, history is rife with many more stories of men who pursue a redress of justice than women. Nations have more male heroes than female. Jugoslava was no witch, but she bewitched by arousing her male comrades more often than they did her. She is the central erotic presence in the film: indulging her carnal yearnings at her own whim, entirely detached from romantic aspirations until the end of the film, when she invites one of her lovers to start a new life in the ruins of a ravaged, abandoned, once luxurious, presumably aristocratic estate. He, stubbornly, remains deaf to her beckoning. Her male comrades parade less often in full nudity than she does, they are far less in the realm of erotic arousal. In nationalist lore and mythology, while the *patria* is often translated as “fatherland,” the female body is often depicted as the effigy for the “motherland” or, simply, the land. The dissident woman, emancipated from the social conditioning that assigns her the fecund role of performing child-bearing female “duties” — so as to incarnate and perpetuate the “nation” — then becomes a figure of beguilement, distraction, and toxicity.

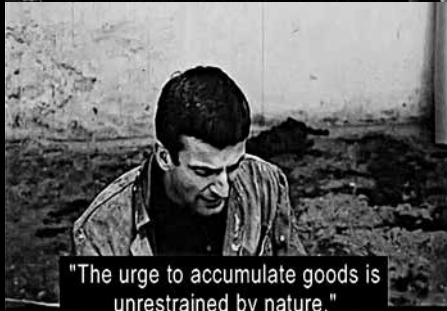
Since 1969, the accomplishments of women’s movements across the world are nothing short of awe-inspiring. They have successfully instituted innumerable laws to protect women from the injustices inflicted by patriarchy. Moreover, militant queer movements have further dented deeply entrenched heteronormative notions of gender identities. Although queer movements may not have impacted legal writ as widely in the world as possible, their struggle for representation and

recognition has made remarkable strides. Obviously, legal protections are not enough to guarantee safety from the deeply entrenched socio-cultural values that exclude and justify violence. I don’t want to lament the deplorable regress of this present moment, nor underestimate the threats posed by the global resurgence of fascism. I simply want to recall the wisdom of an old poetess who once explained to me: when men fall, they break, and when women fall, they get up and move on, because men fall from very high. Žilnik burned his Jugoslava and Yugoslavia itself burned a little more than twenty years later. Premonitory? Visionary? I don’t know. I know the Jugoslavas who raised me taught me to get up after every fall, gather the ashes of those who burned and, give them a dignified burial. Some have the patience to patch up their broken men. Yet most cannot be patched back up, as it requires them to learn to stand by their women, not above them.*

*I wish I had been able to phrase differently that entire last paragraph. Instead of implicitly affirming the normative patriarchal binary genders of “men” versus “women,” I would point to relations of dominance versus subordination, because my Jugoslavas, in Beirut, were not only women, they were also queers.



"Capital" published by Kultura in 1947,
translated by Pijade and Colakovic.



"The urge to accumulate goods is
unrestrained by nature."



Because of that, treasure-hunters
sacrifice carnal pleasures



to the golden fetish."



Our international obligation is
to sing the "Internationale".



"Away with all
superstitions,



Servile masses,
arise, arise.



From now on we'll change
the old conditions!"



From words to deeds!



The village is left
to itself,



yet it carries everything
on its back.



Let's start from the bottom.



People must know
their aim.



People must know
their aim.



You lack the sense for ideas that change the world!



It stinks!
Evil days are near!



Three tank men...
...jolly pals...



What'll we eat from?



Damn the plates!
We'll all die!



Feudalism reigns in this house!



I'm not coming back!



Here!

Giovanna Zapperi

Automatons of the Revolution

Looking at Želimir Žilnik's *Early Works* from a feminist perspective, two questions seem relevant to me. The first one concerns the main female character's allegorical role within the film's narrative and the problems that this entails for a feminist reading of the film. The second point concerns the problematic relationship between feminism and Marxism in the wake of 1968 — both within and outside the boundaries of the so-called Eastern Bloc. In what follows, I will look at these distinct concerns as integrally connected with the film's failure to present women as political subjects.

Early Works is an allegory about failed revolutions: its narrative revolves around the impossibility of bringing forth a revolutionary Marxist program that would instigate the united revolt of workers and peasants against the capitalist-owned means of production. The film follows a group of young people through a series of failed attempts to overthrow the structures governing social life. The group's central agent is an attractive young woman named Jugoslava, who directs a small crew of three male comrades across the countryside. While their revolutionary endeavors will inevitably fail, the conflicts punctuating the film's narrative don't just involve confrontations with a reluctant outside — antagonisms are equally as fierce within the group, however ambivalent they may appear.

At the beginning of the film, we see Jugoslava leaving her family house in the country, where poverty, exploitation, and patriarchal violence are part of everyday life. This biographical background functions as a generic context of oppression from which to escape. Her decision to leave the family thus marks the beginning of a journey in which her singular desire comes

to shape and to be contained in the collective dynamics of the group. Further, Jugoslava's peasant background appears to distinguish her from the male comrades, who look more like politicized students coming from the city. Despite its narrative structure, the film's general tone is deliberately allegorical: much like her three comrades, Jugoslava can hardly be considered a realistic character. All are equally deprived of subjectivity, of any psychic complexity. The group's statements and actions are represented as though driven by external forces: they act like automatons of the revolution. Jugoslava in particular appears as the personification of a liberated woman in her frank awareness of her sexuality and the forms of oppression endured by women. Nonetheless, the pursuit of women's liberation comes to be subsumed under the supposedly higher cause of her embodiment of revolutionary ideals. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the failure of the group's shared revolutionary effort has specific consequences for the female character; within the allegorical structure of the film, the failed revolution is dually received as the persistence of women's oppression. In the final scene of the film, Jugoslava leaves her revolutionary group and returns to her native village, where she is killed and burned by her comrades — after their unsuccessful attempt to rape her. This last sequence emblemizes her ambivalent status as both the symbol of the failed revolution and the embodiment of the failures to address women's oppression. In *Early Works*, history and allegory are entwined, and yet, despite numerous references to the "woman question" — as it has been historically posed in Marxist terms — women are never represented as revolutionary subjects in their own right, because the overthrow of patriarchal relations is never a goal in its own right.

This I take to be an integral problem of allegory, as allegorical subjects always belong to the realm of images and symbols. As Craig Owens has famously argued, allegory is identified with representation, its structure is sequential, and its result is not dynamic, but static, ritualistic, and repetitive.¹ Thus, women appear within allegorical narratives as mere binding agents for (male) community. Jugoslava's violent death illustrates this point and clarifies the impossibility of women's self-manifestation within the film's symbolic order. Yet her allegorical nature also puts her in a complicated relation with her fellow comrades' erotic desires, as the symbol and the woman are constantly superimposed. The group's composition — three men and one single woman — not only exacerbates the woman's symbolic role, but also opposes the woman's singularity to the male congregation.

The other important aspect of the gender problem in the film concerns the representation of the alliance between the woman and the politicized male students. Here, questions are raised about the ambivalent relationship between the 1968 uprisings and the birth of the feminist movement. There is a widespread notion that the latter was somehow prompted by the revolutionary post-'68 climate and that the feminist movement was thus secondary to it. In her 1970 text "Let's Spit on Hegel," Italian feminist (and former art critic) Carla Lonzi theorized how such a subordination is symptomatic of the historical exclusion of women from history as a whole.

1 → Craig Owens, "An Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 52–68.

Lonzi fiercely criticizes Marxism for its dependence on Hegel's dialectical conception of history, which is seen simply to eliminate women as autonomous historical subjects.² Hence, Lonzi radically questions the capacity and intention of the Marxist revolutionary program for the liberation of women. Lonzi's mistrust of 1968 is thus rooted in her rejection of power itself: this is the reason why she argues for the autonomy of feminism from the revolutionary ideologies of her time, thereby embracing separatism as a fundamental feature of feminist politics. Women are the "unexpected subject"³ of history, whose revolutionary potential interrupts the historical continuum of their oppression.

Moreover, she also challenges the kind of alliances, which we see in the film, between women and students. In their aim of overthrowing social structures, the student movement attempted to take power from the outside, whereas Lonzi argues that a true revolutionary endeavor must transform power structures from within.⁴ This includes a reconsideration of the political meaning of what is carried out in the personal sphere. Woman's autonomous sexuality is therefore the crux of her revolutionary politics. In order to be the subject of her

own struggle, woman must then reject traditional assumptions of revolutionary Marxist thinking, which considers her as a "question" and not as an autonomous subject.

2 → Lonzi, Carla. "Sputiamo su Hegel" (1970) in *Sputiamo su Hegel. La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale e altri scritti*. Milan: Scritti di Rivolta Femminile, 1974, 19–61. Translated by Giovanna Bellasia and Elaine Maclachlan as "Let's Spit on Hegel" in *Feminist Interpretations of G. W. F. Hegel*, ed. Patricia Jagentowicz Mills (PA: University Press, 1996), 275–297.

3 → Ibid., 60.

4 → Ibid., 29.



Good morning.



Good morning.



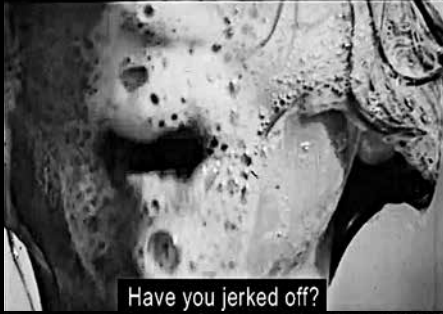
Good morning.



Good morning.



Have you jerked off?



Have you jerked off?



Good morning.



I want a better life for all of us.



I want a better life for all of us.



Our life is no better than in old Yugoslavia.



Down with romance!



**Communist party,
fragrant flower.**



**communist party,
precious treasure!**



**All the people
follow you!**



**The people follow you,
precious treasure!**



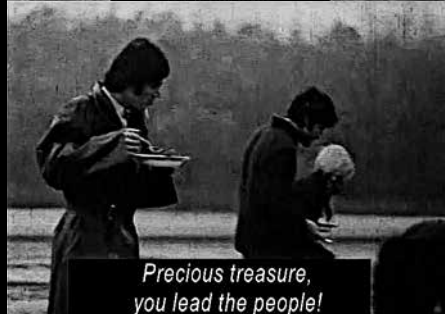
**Communist party,
your hand is holy!**



**Precious treasure,
your hand is holy!**



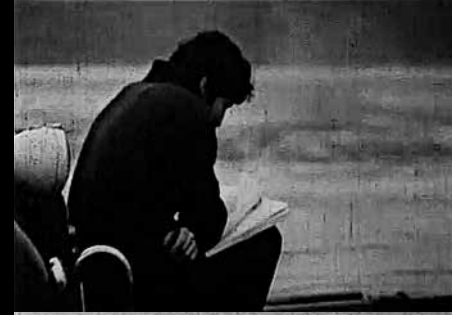
**You lead the people's
movement!**



**Precious treasure,
you lead the people!**



**Precious treasure,
blessed be your arms!**



**Communism, blessed
be your arms.**

Early Works: Lessons on Militant Feminism in State Socialism

La lutte des femmes sera collective ou elle ne sera pas; il ne s'agit pas seulement d'être libre.¹

— Agnès Varda

Željimir Žilnik's *Early Works* begins with a wink to Dziga Vertov's 1924 *Man with a Movie Camera*, which starts with images of a young woman waking up to a Soviet Moscow characterized by progress and modernity in every aspect of daily life; in parallel with the girl's morning activities, we see those of other people from across the city, waking up to the socialist future of modernization and collectivization in the present. Similarly, Žilnik's film starts with images of a young woman, "Jugoslava," performing her morning ablutions, as her face and head appear covered in foam. But instead of finishing her *toilette* to enter the modern future in the present, Jugoslava is stuck with the foam in a visibly poor rural environment, where revolutionary struggle is still needed because "we have a hard life, as did our people in the old Yugoslavia." Jugoslava, accompanied by three male comrades, gives herself the task of exploring the possible conditions for revolutionary militancy in 1968 rural Yugoslavia. Incapable of surmounting the contradictions of their struggle, the group fails. The narrative of the film contains a strong critique of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia a year earlier, when 500,000 troops invaded the country to reinstate the firm rule of the Communist Party. Because Jugoslava is a witness to the failure of the revolution, the film ends with her violent murder and the incineration

1 → "Women's struggle will be collective or it will not be; the struggle is not only about being free."

of her body. Another layer of meaning, however, could be read into Jugoslava's fate: her ordeals as a militant woman, leading to her murder by her male peers, are an eloquent (if not directly denunciative) metaphor for the fundamental contradictions of militant feminism within state socialism. In that sense, Jugoslava's difficulties become an explicit critique of the socialist state's "halfway" endorsement of women's emancipation, its inability to properly address the fundamental heteropatriarchal structures of the "old society" — a prerequisite for a new, emancipated world — and the persistence of misogyny in everyday relationships: even amongst progressive comrades. In the film, Jugoslava will endure the endless markings of gender divisions through violence and hardship, an experience that she shares with militant women across the world in that era.

Žilnik's *Early Works* is comparable to the ten films made by Jean-Luc Godard within the context of the Dziga Vertov Group (DVG), formed in 1968 by Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin. The first film they claimed to have made collectively was the 1970 *Wind from the East* (*Le Vent d'est*), a "spaghetti Western" that sought to lay out a program for revolutionary filmmaking against imperialist film (Hollywood). In *Wind from the East*, Anne Wiazemski is a "revolutionary filmmaker" who takes up the task of investigating both the revolution and film, and how they can be linked together through discussions, inquiries, and readings, seeking to establish a revolutionary film program as well as a program for militant action. The first task given is that revolutionaries do away with party and union delegates and that the proletariat begins to self-represent, just as images should do away with the tyranny of sounds, which impose meanings on them. In general, the DVG's films could

be defined as attempts to shatter the bourgeois idealistic aesthetic as well as political representation as the grounds for revolutionary filmmaking. Most of the DVG's films have female lead characters who explore, experiment with, learn, and face the contradictions of militant struggle. Yet while in these films revolution is always led by women, gender issues are usually swept under the carpet of the universality of revolutionary emancipation. It was not until filmmaker Anne Marie Miéville appeared in Godard's life, that he became sensitive to the feminist cause. From their first collaboration onward (*Here and Elsewhere* (*Ici et ailleurs*) from 1974), the female/feminist voice would lead the discourse of his films: interrogating, critiquing, chastising. But differently than in the DVG's films, in *Early Works*, gender seems to be a central problem throughout. From the beginning, Jugoslava appears as a body that has been violently framed by the structures of objectification: the male gaze and the heteropatriarchal gestures. She is alone and experiences difficulties finding allies in her own personal politics. After the opening shower sequence, she is shown in her working-class home while her drunk and abusive father arrives to insult and beat up his family. In the voiceover, we hear that a chain of oppression is manifested in the home as gender violence generated by exploitative working conditions. "Feudalism rules in this house! This is the last time you'll see me," Jugoslava states, as she leaves her home, but not before giving a bite of her apple to her younger sister, like an Eve who begins to spread seeds of feminist consciousness, at least aspirationally, through her communist militancy.

Jugoslava sets out to fight on all fronts as she joins the three male revolutionaries in their militant journey; they start making Molotov cocktails, are shown singing "The Internationale,"

uttering communist slogans, reading Marx and Engels. Žilnik plays with visual metaphors and allegories throughout the film to signify the contradictions the militants encounter. For instance, when we see the characters arduously walking on a pile of wooden boxes prone to collapse at any second, we hear them speak of the danger they have put themselves in by gathering illegally.

Early on, a first love scene takes place between Jugoslava and one of the comrades, but it becomes evident that all sex — even consensual — is always an event marked by the hierarchies of gender relations. He announces his “male” power by telling her: “Admit it, what is the maximum number of times you’ve cum in one night? ... I could make you cum seven times in a night.” She answers: “You’re so stupid! Tell me something nice.” Scenes of tenderness follow, but when she retorts “How do you think you’ll get to the seventh time?” the threat she poses to his masculinity leads him to point a gun at her.

After reading and discussing, the militants decide to reach out to the people: workers and peasants. Clearly, the task of getting to the people is a difficult one, and this hardship is allegorized in the obstacles they encounter while driving the car through roadless landscapes. They literally become the vanguard reaching out to the peasants and workers. They even push the car up a mountain, and when they finally arrive at the village, they hide the car because they want to arrive “walking on foot” to the people. Then they start examining broken machinery in a farm and manage to make a corn sheller work, next to which they proudly pose for a shot. This scene becomes an allegory for the (failed) modernization of rural Yugoslavia.

In the village, Jugoslava gives a feminist lecture on sex and reproduction to peasant women: she shows them illustrations of a woman in different positions inserting a birth-control diaphragm and what contraceptives look like. The women ask her questions such as: “Is it better to use the pill or douche to not get pregnant? How many abortions can a woman get and stay healthy? What age is best to have a kid? When a married couple isn’t doing it ... does that harm anyone’s health?” As Jugoslava begins lecturing them on reproductive health, she equates the people’s struggle with women’s struggle: “We will not make any significant progress until the man stops behaving like an oppressor, while the woman remains exploited as a proletariat” and “a woman is the stronger sex, and in a decade or two she will rule.”

Once the militants finish the task of “modernizing” the peasants in that village, they return to the car. At their next stop, Jugoslava writes on pieces of paper the names of her comrades, folds them, and makes a raffle to decide who gets to sleep with her. Another girl, Lepa, is fooling around with one of the comrades, who land in prison after throwing a Molotov cocktail at a car that explodes. While the men are in jail, we see Jugoslava riding on a locomotive to the sound of: “Revolutions are the locomotives of history.” Her role as the “leader” of history, however, is soon undermined in another sex scene, where she is showering in the factory baths and starts to fool around naked with one of the comrades, until they are interrupted by the other two. They arrive at their next setting: a dormitory for workers set up in an occupied palace. Her comrades kick her out and tell her to find the women’s dormitory.

Jugoslava's repeated encounters with the oppressive structures of heteropatriarchy, and her ordeals as a militant feminist, are reminiscent of testimonies of two women revolutionaries from Guatemala: Yolanda Colom and Aura Marina Arriola.² Both engaged in armed struggle in the 1960s and 1970s, committing to the revolution in theory and practice, based on an understanding of social reality and the belief in the possibility of transforming it in an organized manner. The two women belong to a generation of Latin American revolutionaries who came of age in a period of state terrorism, the crisis of the political system, and struggles to defend the most basic rights of the population. In their testimonies, however, they regret that revolutionary struggle in Guatemala ended up reproducing the same toxic patterns that were systemic to the very things they wanted to change, like machismo and gendered power relations. Aura Marina Arriola even goes as far as to declare that her status as a woman was an obstacle to her political work and also determined the status of her intellectual work. In her book, Arriola denounces the mechanisms of exclusion and rejection she experienced in the FAR (Revolutionary Armed Forces) by being a woman, the pain and suffering she experienced as a female revolutionary: the fear, insecurity, misogyny, betrayal, exile, fall outs, prosecution. She directly accuses her fellow *guerrilleros* of not taking her seriously enough and of having contributed to her physical and emotional destruction.

2 → Yolanda Colom, *Mujeres en la Alborada: Guerrilla y Participación Femenina en Guatemala 1973–1978* [Women at Dawn: Guerrilla and Female Participation in Guatemala 1973–1978] (Logroño: Pepitas de Calabaza, 2018); Aura Marina Arriola, *Ese obstinado sobrevivir: autoetnografía de una mujer guatemalteca* [This Stubborn Living] (Antigua Guatemala: Ediciones del Pensativo, 2000).

In *Early Works*, when Jugoslava is sent to the nonexistent “women’s dorms,” she explores the palace and accuses the workers of living there like pigs. We then see her walking toward the horizon in the palace’s garden, while we hear a song that idealizes women: “You my darling are my angel follower, and among the flowers the tiny mayflower. I love only her and no other girl, for Darling I live — for her I will my life hurl, I love only her and no other girl, for Darling I live — for her I will my life hurl.” In the following scene, Jugoslava is seen chopping wood in the courtyard. She is interrupted by the three comrades, who take her away and demand that she has sex with all of them. Unthreatened, she declares: “It’s all over! None of you interest me at all!” She walks away but they grab her, tear her clothes away, rape her, and shoot her. Before they burn her body by throwing a Molotov cocktail at her, they cover it with a Communist Party flag: “You fell victim and gave everything, your blood, life, youth, for freedom burying,” we hear.

“Jugoslava” dies a social and physical death representing the structural violence of heteropatriarchy, a product of the violence inscribed in the gender relations that transformed her body: she is raped because she is a woman and she is a woman because she is raped (and killed). French feminist Françoise Héritier argues that man is an animal like any other, yet unique not only because he is able to stand up, anchor consciousness, and dominate nature, but because the human is the only species in which the males kill the females. Héritier concludes that the aggressive behavior of men with regards to women is not an effect of human animal nature — because humans think — but because humans create and disseminate a system that legitimizes violence against and murders of females of the species. The human capacity for reason, therefore, leads

males to irrational behavior and to grant themselves the right to beat or kill the females they think they can dispose of.³

In the film, Jugoslava and (her) feminist struggle remain as a supplement to political and social struggle, and it is the “untameability of women” (as she is so perceived by her comrades) that leads her to be brutally murdered. The fate of Jugoslava, therefore, is an allegory for the fundamental contradiction between state socialism and feminism. This contradiction is grounded in the fact that, although state socialism supported women’s struggle by having instituted legal equality, the political and ideological formation of both men and women actually denied female emancipation. What is also denied — and this is why the feminist struggle is ongoing — is that “woman” is a product of rape and exploitation. Mexican writer and journalist Elena Poniatowska recently recalled in a personal conversation that communist men in Mexico emphasized *cama* (bed) when saying *camarada* (comrade), implying that female comrades were eager to go to bed. As freedom got mixed up with emancipation, in Yugoslavia (as elsewhere) the revolution was only fought halfway because it failed to take into consideration its primary task: to change the toxic patterns that violently inscribe gender and class on the body, maintaining relations of oppression.

3 → Françoise Héritier, “L’Homme est ‘La seule espèce dont les mâles tuent les femelles’” [Man is “The only species whose males kill females”], *Sciences et Avenir*, last modified November 15, 2017, https://www.sciencesetavenir.fr/fondamental/francoise-heritier-l-homme-est-la-seule-espece-dont-les-males-tuent-les-femelles_7660.





Let's see who will be the first!



You always horsed around!



You never finish anything!



You have fallen,



sacrificed all,



sacrificed all,



blood, life, youth, for liberty!



*blood, life, youth,
for liberty!*



You have fallen,



You have fallen,



sacrificed all,



sacrificed all,



sacrificed all,



sacrificed all,



sacrificed all,



sacrificed all,



*blood, life, youth,
for liberty!*



*blood, life, youth,
for liberty!*



*blood, life, youth,
for liberty!*



*blood, life, youth,
for liberty!*



*blood, life, youth,
for liberty!*



*blood, life, youth,
for liberty!*





*By the stealthy hand
of the oppressors' evil,*



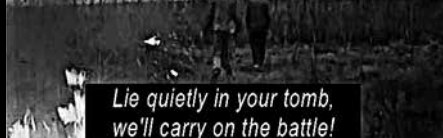
*you fell for the rights
of your people.*

**oni koji revoluciju
izvedu tek, dopola
samo kopaju sebi grob
sen zist**

The makers of halfway revolutions
dig their own grave - Saint Just

**oni koji revoluciju
izvedu tek, dopola
samo kopaju sebi grob
sen zist**

*Lie quietly in your tomb,
we'll carry on the battle!*



*Lie quietly in your tomb,
we'll carry on the battle!*



sacrificed all,



THE END

A Media History of Misogyny

Žilnik's *Early Works*, named after Karl Marx's "Early Works," begins with its four protagonists (three young men and one young woman) setting off on a road trip to politicize the peasantry. The journey is a failure: aggravated by their hipsterish mannerisms, constant sloganeering, and penchant for destroying agricultural produce, the villagers chase them out violently. Frustrated, in turn, by the lack of class consciousness and revolutionary verve, the group devolves into introspection: taking turns having sex with and/or being lectured by their female companion, Jugoslava. The succession of Godardian routines ends rather crudely, however. After Jugoslava returns to her working-class family, whom she began her life journey bemoaning, the male trio follows her home. They manhandle her out of the house and force her into a remote terrain. Once there, they shoot her and then set her body on fire.

The film lends itself to straightforward allegorical interpretation: Jugoslava personifies the revolution, whose work is never done; she prods them into action, berates their lack of urgency, and censures their noncommittal attitude toward revolutionary discipline. Her zeal, once beguiling, begins to feel overwhelming — even emasculating. Hence killing the revolution-as-process allows for the institutionalization of the revolution-as-bureaucracy: with her gone, they can return to their petit bourgeois ways. Fittingly, *Early Works* ends with a quote by Saint-Just: "Those who make revolution halfway only dig their own graves." Yet, allegories aside, there is a violence to the scene that seems to originate from a darker place.

Political theory has little to say about murder, which it either treats — be it from a liberal or Marxist perspective

— as instrumental (a means to an end) or as accidental (an unfortunate collateral). Jugoslava's death is neither. Her murder serves no apparent purpose and it is certainly not accidental. Rather, it has a latent sexual dimension — it is a rapey kind of murder, if you will — which echoes other culturally sanctioned instances of gender-related murder as a literary theme. Yet, perhaps more than anything else, my reading of the film was influenced by another sequence, in which the gang places their car on a raft to navigate downstream. This image, a known film trope, is uncannily reminiscent of an image that opens Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies*, which presents a train's effort to speed away from rising tides. It is an image of imperiled masculinity: the technological, the rational, and the hard (metal), about to be engulfed by the dark and treacherous waters that surround him. Everything murky and watery is a cipher for "woman."

The closing of *Early Works* is also strikingly similar to another murder scene — albeit with rather more salacious details. *The Three Musketeers* details how Milady de Winter is kidnapped, dragged into a secluded woodland, and executed by the novel's heroes (D'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and their aids) in the dead of the night. Their insistence on the legitimacy of the act stands in stark contrast to the pains they take not to be caught. Milady's crimes are legion, they say, but all of her accusers are equally guilty of murder and deceit. When she accuses them of cowardice for ambushing a defenseless woman, they retort that she is no woman but "the devil" incarnate. As soon as Milady is beheaded, all other conflicts seem to be spontaneously settled: D'Artagnan pledges his sword to his arch-nemesis, Cardinal Richelieu, and forgives Rochefort, the man who helped murder his lover.

Ritual murder is a symbolic act, albeit one with a peculiar nature. In all societies, the act of killing is subject to some form of regulation, differentiating legitimate killings (execution, sacrifice) from illegitimate ones. Whereas a sacrifice is an official act, a ritual murder is a clandestine deed, typically carried out in secret in order to avoid criminal punishment. Though not strictly legal, ritual is a performance, which embodies authority. Ritual murder would hence imply the existence of forms of authority which, though socially sanctioned, are not fully juridically accepted or recognized — a male form of authority for whom female autonomy is experienced as a direct assault on male genitalia.¹

Friedrich Kittler once noted that the slaying of Lucy in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was a gang rape stand-in.² The same could be said of the Musketeers' execution scene. Whereas Milady is said to be devilish, Lucy is literally a she-devil, a vampire to be precise. Like Milady she was once a beloved bride, who only later gave in to the powers of darkness. Like Milady, who was branded with a fleur-de-lis, she is a marked woman: her neck punctured by Dracula's teeth. Like Milady, who was the Cardinal's agent, Lucy obeys her master's voice. Like Milady, Lucy is guilty of frustrating her suitors' lust, by expressing a lust of her own.

1 → Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies: Volume 1; Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, trans. Stephen Conway (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 74.

2 → Friedrich Kittler made this remark in an informal conversation with the author. He discusses Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in his book *Draculas Vermächtnis: Technische Schriften* [Dracula's Legacy: Technical Writings] (Leipzig: Reclam, 1993).

In the dead of the night, the men sneak into her crypt, surprising the vampire upon her return. Like Milady, who *in extremis* appeals to D'Artagnan for mercy, Lucy attempts to escape her fate by seducing Arthur, her former fiancé; but Van Helsing intervenes, as Athos did with the Musketeers, negating her pleas. Thereafter, the men drive a stake through her heart, after which, like Milady, Lucy is beheaded. In both instances, murder is portrayed as a form of self-defense: as Klaus Theweleit would put it, when it comes to devilish women, there is no distinguishing their sexuality from the mortal danger they present.³ Thus beheading — a form of symbolic castration — is the punishment of choice: for order to be restored, Milady and Lucy have to die gruesome deaths, and only after all traces of their existence are gone can the world be made “safe,” i.e., “male” again.⁴

Milady's and Lucy's murders share so many similarities because both characters stem from the same matrix of power, as variations on the theme of the witch: promiscuous, overly sexual, cunning, and in the service of dark forces.

Promiscuous women threaten patriarchal land-based accumulation. Milady, by virtue of being at once female and *sansculotte*, is doubly trespassing on the male territory of politics and on the privileged turf of the aristocracy. The fear of female sexuality thus combines an element of truth — demands for social parity threaten to erase the precarious privileges of the lower ranks of the aristocracy, the

3 → Barbara Ehrenreich, foreword to *Male Fantasies*, by Theweleit, xiv.

4 → Ibid.

preservation of which implies the preservation of social and gender hierarchies — with an element of untruth or paranoia, expressed by the unhinged fear of being emasculated and rendered powerless (sexually rather than politically). Tellingly, the male perpetrators from whose viewpoint these stories are told do not rebel against the forces that repress them — the church–monarchy complex personified by the Cardinal, in the case of the Musketeers; Victorian hierarchies and stymieing social codes, in the case of Van Helsing and Harker. Rather, they resort to partially clandestine, partially sanctioned forms of violence; much like the casual brutality of the humiliated working-class male befalls his family rather than his boss.

Unlike class antagonism, which results from economic inequality and exploitation, gender and racial antagonisms have no material origin or *raison d'être*. Instead, they require manufacturing. As Theweleit put it:

A man doesn't have “this” sexuality and a woman “that” one. If it seems possible today to make empirical distinctions between male and female sexuality, that only proves that male–female relations of production in our culture have experienced so little real change for such a long time that structures have arisen whose all-pervasiveness tempts us into regarding them as specific to sex. But if male–female relations of production under patriarchy are relations of oppression, it is appropriate to understand the sexuality created by, and active within, those relations as a sexuality of the oppressor and the oppressed.⁵

5 → Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 221.

The politicization of gender and sexuality, Silvia Federici famously argued, was tied to the privatization of the commons: primitive accumulation was not simply an accumulation of riches and labor power; it was an accumulation of differences and divisions, which would introduce gender and racial hierarchies among the exploited. In *Caliban and the Witch*, Federici details how the rise of capitalism was coeval with a war against women, which set in motion a novel form of persecution. The witch hunts that befell Europe at the dawn of capitalism were not the last throes of a dying dark age, but the birth pangs of the modern era; the first in a long lineage of modern genocidal practices.

When it comes to Jugoslava, however, the notion that the gender antagonism is institutionally engineered — as a means to stave off and displace class antagonism — is complicated by the different socio-economic forms we are dealing with: the quartet lives under a socialist regime, not in a proto-capitalist monarchy.

Yet the political rupture does not seem to erase the cultural continuity: the film takes on a voyeuristic relationship toward its lead character — allegedly chosen for her shapely body. Revolution, we are told, “is a beautiful woman — exploited, abused, and finally massacred by cold social facts.”⁶ Jugoslava is murdered because she betrayed her companions by choosing to return home, to her patriarchal family — as symbolized in the last scene, by her wearing a dress for the very first time. Although, one could also read it the other way around: Jugoslava is murdered because she was a witness to male impotence, because she saw them try, and fail, and they cannot bear the burden of the humiliation. Once she has made

herself vulnerable, by shedding her unisex attire, they are able to kill her, as they are *only* killing a woman. After she is shot, her body is set on fire, as if she were a witch.

The revolution — like nature or the motherland — can only be personified as a beautiful woman within a male dominated libidinal economy. Whether she is “beautiful” — as in the erotic reveries of the ‘68 generation — or hideous and repulsive — as in the diaries written by the Freikorps whom Theweleit surveyed — she is a gendered concept, not a political subject. From this perspective, the nonidentity between class consciousness and mass movements hinges on the question of gender: when sexuality is predicated on a matrix of dominance and submission, all demands for inclusion will be perceived as an attack on masculinity — “a direct assault on their genitals.”⁶ Jugoslava, one could argue, is not a female character: she is a male fantasy.

6 → Goran Gocić, “Early and Late Works: The Cinema of Želimir Žilnik in the Period of Transition — From the 1960s to this Day,” in *Želimir Žilnik: Above the Red Dust*, ed. Mirosljub Stojanović (Belgrade: Institut za Film, 2003), 97, quoted in Dino Murtić, *Post-Yugoslav Cinema: Towards a Cosmopolitan Imagining* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 58.6 → Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 74.



Three...two...
one...go!



Mission accomplished!
- Very good. - We serve the people!



Mission accomplished!
- Very good. - We serve the people!



I won't go home anymore.



Cement is all over me.



We never talk.



I don't see much difference between you and me.



You can join me, but no peeking!





Shame on you!
Take that band aid off!



The water is perfect!



Here, take mine!



Let me wash your back.



They look firm! - So are you,
but it's not going to happen.

Countering the Voyeuristic Gaze: Jugoslava, Homos, Fools, and Horses

Set against the global backdrop of the international, national, and personal politics of the late 1960s, *Early Works* tackles issues specific to Yugoslav youth of the time.

The story is basically told through a series of theses and antitheses, driven by the dynamics of three young men and one woman. In resisting consistency and continuity, the narrative structure flattens the psychological depth of the characters. Consequently, it alienates the viewer and forces them to invest some effort in empathizing with the protagonists.

In traditional cinematography, women — whether or not they carry an important symbolic function — remain on the margins of the cinematic narrative. Although generally acknowledged as the most progressive tendency of Yugoslav cinema, the Black Wave did not diverge from the universal pattern of using female characters as empty signifiers, exchanged among men. Yet, unlike official Yugoslav cinematography, wherein female characters are settled in more “neutral” roles as tender caretakers, in Yugoslav New Film they become the objects of more proactive male “treatment”: fetishized, humiliated, punished, abused, raped, killed, or all of the above, and often in that exact order. Without claiming that Žilnik resolved this problem of female representation — in any way — I would like to argue that *Early Works* marks a radical departure from the stated patterns, by subverting these conventional objectifications of women as silenced (sexual) bodies, through the explication of the normalized violence that shapes them.

Even though the filmmaker chose to work with the exceptionally beautiful actress Milja Vujanović (who held the title of Miss Serbia in 1967), her character does not embody the muted ideal

of feminine beauty. From the very first frames in her poor family home, Jugoslava is political and speaks out against the violence of her father, who beats her mother after work. She then moves “from words to deeds,” joining three male youths to form a revolutionary circle, which she quickly takes over. Notably, she is not only the one who propels the narrative, but is also the only character with a backstory, with a “life” outside of the primary plot. By contrast, the viewer doesn’t learn anything about her three comrades’ backgrounds — rendering their motivation for the revolutionary cause simply empty. The only thing we know about them is that they have quite some experience in frying sausages in an open fire. We are introduced to the doctrinaire Dragiša, his slightly more sensible counterpart Kruno, and the simple-minded bystander, Marko. We follow them, but only come closer to them as Jugoslava gets close to them. While their behavior is childish, hers is decisive, active, and powerful. From the very beginning, the male characters are made to perform their masculinity for her evaluation: “You are too little for that!”; “The first time went well. Let’s see how it continues”; etc. Further, she is the one to administer praise for militant action, with expressions such as “well done!” — as in the case when they manage to successfully throw Molotov cocktails. Sometimes she outright bullies them, calling them “stupid” (Dragiša), “mad” (Kruno), or “idiot” (Marko).

Yet, in several scenes of such scrutiny, Jugoslava’s physique takes center stage. It is hard to defend this portrayal of a naked female body as an effort to present the “emancipated woman,” insofar as this demonstration of her sexual emancipation takes place in a sexist society. Nonetheless, I would argue that the way Žilnik uses female nudity is decisively non-

fetishizing. Aware of the effect these images have, he exploits the politics of the gaze and not the image of the woman’s body itself. For instance, after Jugoslava challenges Dragiša to proceed with having sex with her, as he boastfully promised — “seven times in a night” — he jumps and shoots a gun in her direction. Aware of the voyeuristic desire, Žilnik intentionally disrupts the promise of pleasure, subverting the voyeuristic with the critical gaze; a gaze now directed solely at Dragiša’s powerlessness, his ignorance, and his machismo. Pleasure and displeasure continuously counteract each other. The story as such, told through movements of theses and antitheses, necessitates a dialectical viewing, which not only demands our critical questioning of the construction and use of gender and sexuality in society, but also of film as a medium.

Žilnik’s arrangement of characters entirely conforms to this dialectical narrative strategy. The only scene that deceptively diverges from these dynamics is in the factory’s shower room, where we see Jugoslava in an erotic exchange with the worker in the group, Marko. However, we understand that Jugoslava did not spontaneously “find herself” in this exchange when she explains: “If Engels had not said that truly honest sexual love exists only among the proletariat — you would have been tossed aside today.” Why would she feel the need to provide him/us with such an explanation? Or any type of explanation? After all, none of the three guys offer her any justification for their libidinal desires. While one could then interpret this as her weakness, I would argue that by explaining herself in this scene, Jugoslava doesn’t reject her sexual independence, but actually (re)claims it, as well as the control over the materiality of her body. Yet what comes after the thesis, that true sexual love exists only among proletarians, seems at first

like an apology. The only “true” love scene in the entire movie follows, when Jugoslava decides to give herself and Marko a chance. She tries to reach him, but he sends her to sleep “in 7B. The girls stay there.” Even when she manages to find a new location for them, both personally and politically, he doesn’t share her enthusiasm about settling down together in an abandoned, ruined castle, near the factory area. Interestingly, he does not simply say no to her offer, but adds: “What’s wrong with sleeping in the women’s dorms?” His remark resonates as not just an attempt to regulate her life, but to regulate it in a very particular way: in accordance with normative pressures and official gender conventions. His unsuccessful attempt to relocate her, both literally and symbolically, to a terrain where her self-determination would be unreachable, marks another among a sequence of failures by the men in the film. Even when Jugoslava goes back to her parents’ house, Žilnik refuses to deny her subjectivity: one is left unconvinced that she is ready to simply return to the patriarchal order, i.e., her return is important only insofar as it demonstrates the extent of her disappointment with the revolutionary group.

The most commonly accepted interpretation of Jugoslava’s death at the end of the film is that the men decide to eliminate her because she was a witness to the failures of their revolutionary endeavors.¹ Even if this is not an outright misinterpretation, it certainly is a male-centered explanation. Not only does it fail to account for Žilnik’s interventions in habitual formats of

1 → See, for example, “Jugoslava,” in *Surfing the Black: Yugoslav Black Wave Cinema and Its Transgressive Moments*, ed. Gal Kirn, Dubravka Sekulić, and Žiga Testen (Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Academy, 2012), 134.

female representation in film, but it centers on the subjectivity of the male characters, reinforcing a sexist ideology, which constructs women only as witnesses, victims, or both. It builds from a patriarchal reading of the film’s narrative: “men were doing something”; “they failed”; “they were frustrated about their failure”: “she witnessed it”, and then “they killed her.” As previously mentioned, from the very beginning of the film, when male characters are engaged in the performance of masculinity, they are evaluated and challenged not only by Jugoslava but also by each other. Finding themselves in a stalemate, the only potential site left for the affirmation of their masculinity is a barren field. There, however, she doubly denigrates them: firstly, she emasculates them by calling them “homos”; and secondly, she infantilizes them by accusing them of acting like children. She is ultimately punished not for merely witnessing their failure, but for the very act of explicitly standing up to them and denouncing them. Želimir Žilnik is a director who uses cinema as a site of study and of political action. In that sense, *Early Works* vividly demonstrates that, even within the sexual revolutions of the 1960s, the ideology of patriarchy persisted.



My mother would be more liberated by



a washing machine than by a right to vote!



According to you, Fidel Castro should never have come down off the mountain.



Lenin should have stayed in Switzerland and Gorkic should lead the party.

According to you, Stalin should still lie where he was laid...

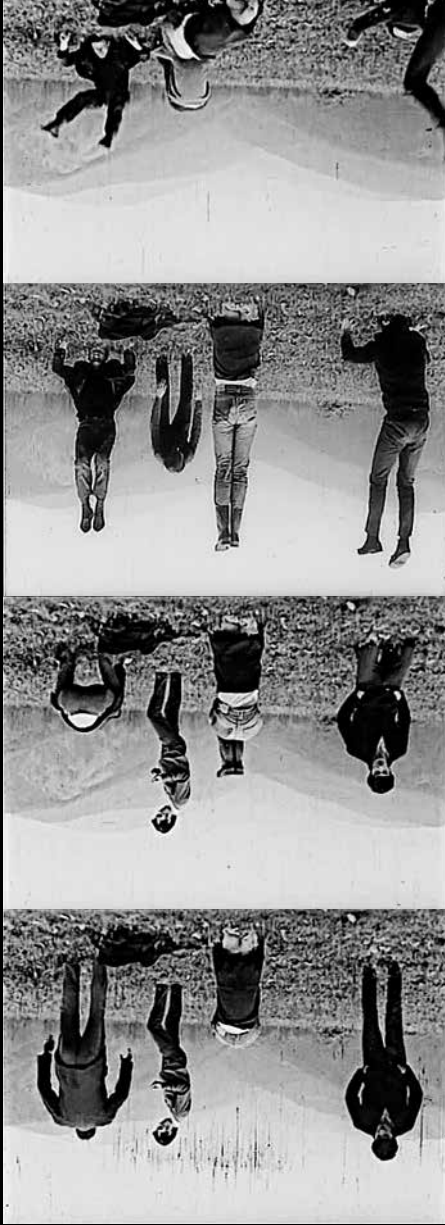
And Trotsky next to him!
According to you, Kamenev, Zinoviev

and Bucharin shouldn't be on the garbage dump of history.



According to you, Imre Nagy should still be alive

According to you, Hegel should be left hanging upside down.



Five, four, three, two, one...
Fire!

Second Shots – or: Shooting a Women / Shooting Women

In 1978, Jean-Luc Godard talked to film students in Montreal about the problem of moving from one scene to the next. An amateur filmmaker, he claims, takes the same shot over and over again, showing his kids or wife at the beach, or celebrating Christmas (it seems that, for Godard, all amateur filmmakers are male). Meanwhile, “commercial films montage around 800 shots together, yet they are all the same, even the films are the same, only the titles change, otherwise people wouldn’t visit the cinema, tired as they are from their work at the university or factory. What is missing is the second shot, the one showing how the kid, who has just blown out the candles of the birthday cake, is slapped in the face. What is missing is the shot depicting the fancy car gliding along the road followed by the shot of the car in pieces, burning; what is missing is the shot showing the passengers in their fine clothes, followed by the shot showing that they are monsters.”¹ For Godard, that nonexistent second shot makes all the difference.

One of the reasons that we celebrate a film like Želimir Žilnik’s *Early Works* is because it is full of second shots. Second shots tell the truth — at least, they tell more of the truth. In the 1970s, there were many people who tried to tell more of the truth. Second wave feminists, for instance, experimented with 360-degree shots, to include what is left out of the conventional picture. What is left out? For one thing, the apparatus, the means of production that enables this mirroring of reality. Films seldom show their means of production — not in the

¹ → Jean-Luc Godard quoted by Klaus Theweleit, *One + One: Rede für Jean-Luc Godard zum Adornopreis*, trans. Ruth Noack (Berlin: Brinkmann und Bose, 1995), 11.

literal sense anyway, which would entail an acknowledgement of the fact that *mise-en-scène* and camera, actors and the film team actually share a space with each other.²

When feminists refer to the apparatus, they also mean patriarchal ideology, which serves to disappear all sorts of things from the field of visibility, such as oppression, reproductive labor, and heteronormativity. Here, Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1979) comes to mind. Other filmmakers approach this problematic through an emphasis on duration, e.g., Chantal Akkerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975) depicts a woman's housework in what seems to be excruciatingly extended time, when in reality, all she does is focus the camera on the tasks at hand until they are finished. How long does it take to make a bed? To clean a plate? To polish a shoe? Even though this film eclipses three days into three hours, it manages to tell a truth that had never before been told by cinema in such radical honesty.

None of these truths add up though — truths hardly ever do. A few decades later, the concept of intersectionality has come to help us be more precise in our descriptions of the moments and places that determine what gets excluded and why. With this perspective in mind, the second shot is valuable not because it adds a true picture to a false one, but because it marks the discrepancy of any kind of narration and allows us to see its seams, its suture. We might not get to see the whole truth, but

2 → Though *La ricotta* (1963), by Pier Paolo Pasolini, at least *represents* this shared space, casting Orson Welles in the role of a film director shooting a crucifixion.

even so, we at least are able to catch a glimpse of something left out.

I privilege the second shot for another reason: it pleasurably reminds me of a certain platitude — that it is only when the second child arrives that a parent realizes that one plus one adds up to more than two. In fact, one plus one can be quite overwhelming. In the case of children, this is just bad luck, but in the case of film, it promises something positive: excess. The second shot might deliver more than just a second image; it may have the potential to blow the whole construction apart.

And thus, when Antonia Majaca asked me to contribute to *Feminist Takes*, my immediate impulse was to provide some second shots. Although I liked Žilnik's film, it irked me that the film presents its main character within a stereotypical female allegory. In the 1980s, art historian Silke Wenk aptly demonstrated the role of female allegory in the construction of the nation; concluding that allegory, couched in female guise and playing on patriarchal ideals of femininity, comes along with a nasty correlate — violence, more or less structural, against actual female bodies.³ Bojana Pejić was the first to extend Wenk's arguments to the Yugoslav public sphere, researching images of women as they appear on billboards and monuments.⁴ Jugoslava — whose very name

3 → Wenk did this already in the 1980s, but most accessibly in Silke Wenk, *Versteinerte Weiblichkeit: Allegorien in der Skulptur der Moderne* [Petrified Femininity: Allegories in Modern Sculpture] (Cologne: Böhlau, 1996).

4 → Bojana Pejić, "Lady Rosa of Luxembourg; or, Is the Age of Female Allegory Really a Bygone Era?" (2002), in *In the Place of the Public Sphere?*, ed. Simon Sheikh (Berlin: b_books, 2005), 68–99.

suggests the Yugoslav socialist state — ties all too well into that *dispositif*, despite Žilnik's critical stance toward the state of his motherland. There is politics — and then there is politics. With the exception of the brilliant scene of Jugoslava providing a bunch of post-menopausal women with advice on birth control, *Early Works* exhibits little female-to-female interaction. Moreover, this particular allegory's attempt at becoming flesh ends with Jugoslava being shot and burned at the end of the film.

Hence, my second shots, offered as a comment on Žilnik's first, are clips from other films. As a curator, I believe that in order to make an argument it is important to give visual images time, space, and attention. And so, I decided, as part of my contribution to the *Feminist Takes* encounter in Prague, to let the film clips do the talking. As a writer (the role I assume here), this leads me to a problem: the absence of moving image material. Stills hardly do the moving image justice, because they cannot represent its semantics. Not just dialogue is missing, but montage, duration, sound. Rather than letting words stand in for the absent body (of material), I would like them to be read here as markers of absence.

Clip No. 1: "A Woman Being Shot"

In: Jean-Luc Godard, *Les Carabiniers* (1963)

≈ 00:42:50–00:47:20

This film, made a few years before *Early Works*, has astonishing similarities with Žilnik's film. It has the same kind of slapstick humor as well as black-and-white graininess, and is set in a forsaken landscape, which we cannot quite decipher as either countryside or wasteland. It features another female heroine who is executed by a group of men in a similar way and

situation. She is also of the communist poetry-reciting mind. Equally pretty. Blonde. And without comrades. What does this West-to-East correspondence generate?

Clip No. 2: "A Woman Being Shot – Shot from a Feminist Perspective"

In: Sanja Iveković, *Practice Makes a Master* (*Übung macht den Meister*, 2009)

This video documents and re-performs Iveković's work from 1982.⁵ It is an allegory about a woman being killed by an invisible execution squad. Set to a soundtrack featuring repeated volleys of shots, interspersed with a Marilyn Monroe song that incrementally loses speed, "Woman" is knocked down repeatedly, only to get up time and again. As she persists, refusing to remain on the ground — refusing to be killed — she slowly changes from "Woman" into "a woman": a woman who rejects what is given as a given.

Clip No. 3: "Two Women, Talking to Each Other About Something Other than Men"

In: Věra Chytilová, *Daisies* (*Sedmikrásky*, 1966)

≈ 00:15:25–00:17:30, ≈ 01:05:40–01:06:20, ≈ 01:09:50–01:12:20

5 → Sanja Iveković, "Übung Macht den Meister" [Practice Makes a Master] (1982), performance, 20 min. First performed at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin. The artist is on the stage for the entire duration of the performance. Wearing a black dress with a white plastic bag over her head, she continually falls down and gets up. The stage is lit by a single spotlight, which is switched on and off in a regular rhythm. The artist's soundtrack consists of a Marilyn Monroe song from the movie *Bus Stop* together with the sound of gambling machines. During the performance, the song is progressively slowed down until Marilyn's voice resembles that of a man.

Daisies is a film about two women who disregard what is given to them by patriarchy with such radicality that it earned its filmmaker more than a decade of censorship. It is also one of the few films that pass the Bechdel test.

Clip No. 4: "More than Two Women of More than Two Colors ..."

In: Lizzie Borden, *Born in Flames* (1983)

≈ 00:54:55–00:57:06, ≈ 01:10:10–01:13:43

In this sci-fi film, a future USA has become a socialist state, yet neither patriarchy nor racism have been abolished. After the state murders the leader of the activist group Women's Army, several women's groups and collectives set aside their differences in order to organize collectively against the state's increasing violence. In what cannot be called anything other than a terrorist act, legitimized by political arguments, the women blow up the World Trade Center's TV antenna and take over a TV studio to put their own statements on air, because this is a war in which the media is the most powerful weapon.





You lack the sense for ideas that change the world!



It stinks!
Evil days are near!



Three tank men...
...jolly pals...



What'll we eat from?



Damn the plates!
We'll all die!



Where were you last night?



Feudalism reigns in this house!



I'm not coming back!



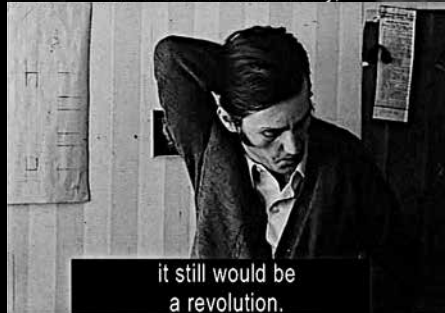
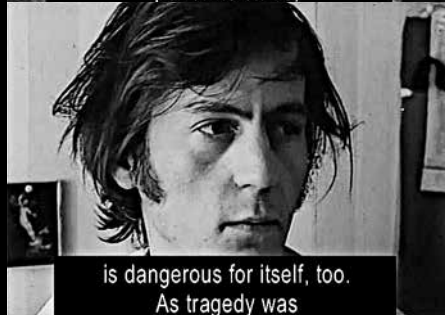
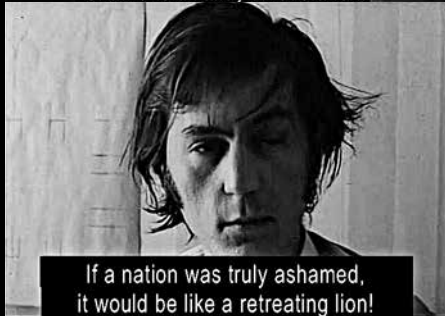
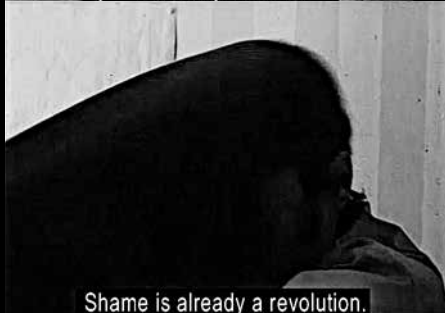
Here!



Three...two...
one...go!



Three...two...
one...go!



Mission accomplished!
- Very good. - We serve the people!

Mission accomplished!
- Very good. - We serve the people!

I won't go home anymore.

Shall I read aloud
to calm you down?

Shame is already a revolution.

If a nation was truly ashamed,
it would be like a retreating lion!

The comedy that despotism
performs on us,

is dangerous for itself, too.
As tragedy was

Even if we didn't
understand this comedy,

it still would be
a revolution.

Early Works and the Problem of Mimetic Exacerbation of Gender Violence in Young CommunoFeminism

The unfree patriarch was transformed into the “free” wage earner, and upon the contradictory experience of the sexes and the generations was built a more profound estrangement and therefore a more subversive relation.

— Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *Women and the Subversion of the Community*¹

Early Works presents state socialism’s historical problem with women, or, more specifically, with women as the bearers of sexualities that have the capacity of being both reproductive and nonreproductive. Here I point you to a scene in which the progressive sexual education offered by the state clashes with the sexual autonomy of women. As the leader of the revolutionary youth group, Jugoslava delivers a lecture on IUDs — part informative, part spoof on the didacticism of the enlightenment project. It becomes clear that not only birth control but also abortions are available. One woman asks how many an individual might safely undergo. The message conveyed is that science, progress, and enlightenment rationality have trumped the traditional patriarchal law of the church — thanks to socialism.

No sooner does this scene close than the real trouble begins. The trouble concerns Jugoslava’s sexuality; its relative autonomy and/or transparency, as a mythological expression of communist sexuality and as a concrete practice within her group. The scene ends with two enraged peasants dragging Jugoslava through the mud and raping her. The camera does

1 → Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *Women and the Subversion of the Community* (New York: Pétroleuse Press, 1971).

not show the rape, but lingers on Jugoslava's body, struggling like that of a muscular animal attempting to wriggle free.

Jugoslava is desired by all three of the men who form her cohort. This is, thematically, where the reproductive/nonreproductive binary that structures ideology begins to unravel, and with it the social relations structured along its axis. It prompts the question: what is socialism's problem with sex as rationalized in the productive and unproductive? It becomes quickly and painfully clear that disjoining sex from reproduction and entrenched atavistic interpretations of what is understood to be "natural" does not abolish the social relations that reify sexual power; it only renaturalizes the order that revolution was to overturn, through the action of rape and coerced/enforced sexual service. Yet the film does not rehearse the history of failure. Instead, it inhabits and dilates those situations and instances where both the dialectic of enlightenment and the dialectic of sex fall painfully short of any social resolution in the face of excess and enchantment.

This "problem" does not pertain to this or that woman, nor to woman's historical determination by social reproduction, but to a constellation of contradictions and questions, which bear both concrete and abstract social ramifications. For instance, both in Jugoslava's family relations and in her new "family" among comrades, her body is depicted as renaturalized property. Notably, the film itself explicitly invokes Engels' book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (*Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats*)² as a

2 → Friedrich Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (1884), trans. Alick West, *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed

retort, voiced by Jugoslava, to being assigned such a status. The reference appears in a steamy sex scene — "steamy" literally, because in a shower. In Engels' treatise, the form of the monogamous couple form is traced to late antiquity through a two-pronged analysis, whereby gender is theorized through the development of property relations. Using this method, Engels denaturalizes the family and state sovereignty by exposing their historical foundations in capitalist modernity.

In *Early Works*, the tragic gap between the idea of communism and state socialism is epitomized by the events of June 1968 in Yugoslavia and the sexual revolution. Communism and the state come into conflict against each other over Jugoslava, whose body becomes a site of territorial reclamation. The textual references in the film — to Engels in particular — create a horizon of intelligibility, signaling the film's anti-state standpoint and Jugoslava's allegorical role in this political narrative. Numerous scenes, with and without the anchor afforded by the proper name "Engels," signal the way in which any attempt at transforming a given sexual economy brings one into war with the state.³ The position opened by this antagonism is nested in a larger point about the ultra-left student uprisings against state socialism. The film's turn of the screw — the dynamism and tension

November 21, 2019, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/>.

3 → See Louis Althusser's discussion of the family as not only a necessary unit of the state, in relation to which it is mimetically organized, but also a necessary function of the market as "a unit of consumption." Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*

motivating its diegetic drive — rests on an understanding of the conjuncture at which Jugoslava arrives, and on recognition of its structural and systemic incapacity — as mobilized by the masculine subject position — to account for and much less *include* that which might be contained within the excessive, unformalizable, and ineffable “feminine,” whose burden the female subject is assigned to bear.

The film is pierced with this excess, as a problem for communism. There’s a lot of heaving and hauling and dragging in the film: cars are dragged uphill, bodies are dragged in numerous scenes — the burden of the body’s weight comes to operate as a social symbol for the burden of sexed bodies. Notably, this problem is not addressed in Alexandra Kollontai’s enlightenment vision of bringing medical science and modern values (through education) to the masses; a project which included modernized sexual education and birth control.

A brief scene that echoes Kollontai begins with a close up of Jugoslava holding an IUD. Her flashing blondness contrasts with the village women’s headscarves and their faces, which appear hardened and creased by the toils of social reproduction and agrarian production. It’s clear that the demands of productivity have not been kind to them, but in terms of dealing with the basics, the film leaving it at that.

(New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001). Finally, the cornerstone text on the relationship between state and family, in which women are clearly mandatory, is Selma James and Mariarosa Dalla Costa, “The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community,” *libcom.org*, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://libcom.org/library/power-women-subversion-community-della-costa-selma-james>.

The narrative quickly turns to the messier excesses of sex, to the way in which desire can unmake the social project that the hegemonic ideology attempts to enforce. Jugoslava will be killed not because she isn’t a revolutionary, but because of her unassimilable beauty and the socially unobservable desire it seems to generate. It is not only a problem that sex is literally nonreproductive here — a pleasure, as Kollontai would have had it, which women are just as entitled to as men — but that it is *deproductive*, a force that threatens the social order and productivity as such.

Jugoslava does her best to repress her own desire. This is made clear in her declaration of contempt for what had happened in the barn, when the group was joined by another woman. Because bourgeois mores do not apply, the group drew lots to decide who would sleep with whom. The third man, or non-coupled person, was asked to leave. The remaining four coupled off based on the arbitrary dictates of the draw. Jugoslava was wounded and upset that her lover ended up with the other woman, and, even worse, that he seemed oblivious to her distress. There, as he was busy flirting, Jugoslava interrupted him and called the other woman, in a clear act of disobedience to the random order dictated. In the absence of a form through which to articulate her drives, she becomes increasingly provocative, offensive, and insulting. Here it becomes obvious that Jugoslava’s desire is a problem. In this moment, when she asserts her sexual capacity too openly and too aggressively, she is rejected — the two men finally throw her out of the barn.

Toward the ending, Jugoslava walks through an orchard, to a song of love and longing for her absent beloved. Her slight and energetic body moving through the fruit trees, her blonde hair a halo of light in the visual field, underscore the lyrics that talk

about the adored one's "red lips, plentiful hips, well-laid hair," etc. Up to this point, only party songs and anti-party songs, overcoded with ideological content, flood the film. This sudden shift in sonic register functions as a classic form of Brechtian estrangement. Situated in the narrative, this modern iteration of romantic "feeling" in kitschy local pop — a vehicle for the capitalist myth of the individual — suddenly transforms into a convincing site of interiority and emotion, both collective and intimate. This is the only instance of Jugoslava's solitude. It's as though the song marks a brief interlude between violent encounters involving sex on the one hand and ruptures from the social field on the other.

When we see Jugoslava next, she is no longer in her militant gear, but dressed in the international mid-century modern uniform of the petite bourgeoisie: a mod mini-skirt, sheer stockings, and flats. This generic femininity replaces the jeans, boots, and gender-neutral wear of her past. Yet her new identity is undercut by her activity: cutting firewood with an axe. Clearly she is still "herself," this gesture would suggest, despite the change of appearance. The other constant, besides this denotation of her strength of conviction in her own autonomy, is Jugoslava's striking blondness that visually pops against the gray homogeneity of almost every scene. This formal constant, that "blondeur," darts across bleak landscapes, setting Jugoslava apart from the interchangeable men.

Jugoslava is sought out and removed by the men, who walk her out to a field and demand sex. She declines. They shoot her and burn her body. Yet this moment was portended from the start, lending the film a temporality that is neither linear nor cyclical, but suggestive of the impasse between structural

conditions predicated on a paradigm of entrenched sexual difference and a temporal dynamic driven by the dialectic of "progress." The end returns to the start, to the moment when a gun first went off in the film, when Jugoslava became provocative and daring for the first time. That was the scene when her lover claimed that he could do it seven times in a night." She responded by "challenging" him to a seventh round of sex, a seventh orgasm. He then assured her he'll get an erection — she doubts or rejects his claim (it is not clear). Then the gun goes off. Jugoslava's bitter tone from that scene is echoed again in the very last scene before her death. Punishment and desire interlace, forming a network of antagonisms and contradictions. However, this interlacing affects only Jugoslava. It does not hinder Jugoslava's comrades' capacities to satisfy their sexual needs. They have sex like they eat, unpunished for the gratification of a basic drive.



Good morning.



Good morning.



Good morning.



Good morning.



Have you jerked off?



Have you jerked off?



Good morning.



I want a better life for all of us.



I want a better life for all of us.



Our life is no better than in old Yugoslavia.



Daddy lived like this before the war.



We are taught
in school



what to eat,
to be content at work.



what to eat,
to be content at work.



We don't buy that.
I sleep with my sister



but that's not unhygienic
as she rarely sleeps at home.



We must see
how we stand.



If only we were successful in
other things like we are in this,



we'd be in government
by now.



I get why my father
beats my mom.



He's all beaten up
after work.



A fiery salute
to the socialist camp!



Throw the butt away,
asshole!



A spark will burst
into a flame.



"Capital" published by Kultura in 1947,
translated by Pijade and Colakovic.



Because of that, treasure-hunters
sacrifice carnal pleasures



to the golden fetish."



Our international obligation is
to sing the "Internationale".



"Away with all
superstitions,



Servile masses,
arise, arise.



From now on we'll change
the old conditions!"



From words to deeds!



The village is left
to itself,



yet it carries everything
on its back.



Let's start from the bottom.

The Vanishing of the Family in Plumes of Smoke

A face, distorted by a white creamy substance, partially fills the screen. A round orifice that belongs to this face, a mouth, begins to speak. Firmly, a woman says, “good morning!” The image cuts to a man who uses a spade to push a ball around an unkempt area of land. The camera pans from the man to the door of a small outdoor building and then to the woman inside the house. With only the lower part of her face visible in the frame, she repeats her line with more severity: “good morning!” The man pushes his spade into the ground, removing a mound of earth, opening up a hole. He says, “Have you already masturbated today?” He continues digging this orifice in the ground, where eventually the shit of his family will go. A horse idles behind him. The woman’s face once again glides onto the screen. She says, “As if I do not want a better life for all of us!?” and smiles coyly. With all his might, the man pushes over the small wooden shed-cum-toilet. The image of its fall reverberates. The woman repeats, “good morning!” The white, viscous liquid, textured like thick soap verging on cum, drips down her face and into her open mouth as she hums the words again and again. Her name is Jugoslava and she is sexualized. These are the opening sequences of Željimir Žilnik’s film *Early Works*.

In what follows, I consider how Jugoslava points to the riddle at the heart of women’s oppression through her relation to bodily autonomy, the patriarchal family, and the state. I am interested in how the staging of this “question” relates to the revolutionary horizons at stake in the film. Žilnik’s exploration of the battle between the burden of tradition and any potential transition to communism begins with the family, the social formation that — for thinkers from Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx to Clara Zetkin and later Shulamith Firestone —

functions as the kernel of women's oppression, since within it she represents a kind of reproductive property. Indeed, for Marx, the family holds within itself, in embryonic form, the antagonistic and contradictory relations that play out on a magnified scale in society and the state.

The woman who was washing herself, dries herself with a towel. A young girl who appears to be her sister says: "We have a hard life, as did our people in the old Yugoslavia." Speaking in a matter-of-fact style, directly to the camera, she describes being taught how to withstand this way of life: what to eat, how to be content at work or school. The family into which Jugoslava and her sister were born is characterized by direct domination and violence. Violence begets violence: Jugoslava explains that her father beats her mother because he loses the will to live from work. It is a family whose reality is conditioned by work. After a fight with her drunk father and battered mother, Jugoslava departs from the feudal relations that plague her family, declaring that she will never return. She gives her life to the revolution.

Upon leaving what Shulamith Firestone would, in 1970, call the "biological family," Jugoslava enters a new group of her own choosing. We first encounter this small group eating bread and meat cooked in a fire on the roof of a factory, behind which the city's skyline looms into view. Then, in a room filled with tools, glass bottles, and sandbags, which we can assume is part of this factory, they read Marx aloud and hum "The Internationale." Just as Jugoslava left her family to live with her comrades, the group also commits to a transition in their movement from words to deeds. It is a village, a small association of families settled on a stretch of land, a village that holds the world on its back, where the deeds take place.²

In their quest to commit deeds and to reach "the people," they leave the factory and the city behind. Using a raft, the group of four maneuver their car across water. They light a fire on their floating raft and eat together. Arriving on dry land in a place with no road, they resort to using a horse in their attempt to maneuver their car over a mountain. Yugoslav communist songs surge into earshot.

As Jugoslava stands atop this desolate mountain, the lone car, their sign of futurity, weaves through the patchwork of fields below her. Inflecting Marx and Engels, she tells us:

2 → With regards to this notion of "deeds," it is interesting to consider further how the film articulates revolution, and how the emotions it engenders are performed in relation to both gender and nation, as well as the ambiguous relation to revolutionary violence. Throughout *Early Works*, Jugoslava discusses "revolution." In a scene where she sits with one comrade, he begins to undress as she reads aloud to him. Citing Marx, who tells us that shame, an anger turned inward, is a revolutionary sentiment, she says: "Shame is a revolution in itself." He looks at the camera while undressing, as if Žilnik performs Marx's notion of national shame through the question of gender: "And if a whole nation were to feel ashamed it would be like a lion recoiling in order to spring. ... The comedy of despotism in which we are being forced to act is as dangerous for him as tragedy was once for the Stuarts and the Bourbons." The shot is repeated from different angles seven times, until he has finally taken his shirt off. "This doom is the approaching revolution. ... What they wish is to live and to procreate And this they have in common with animals." The man is naked, hunched over his knees, like a weeping lion. "Man's self-esteem, his sense of freedom, must be reawakened in the breast of these people. ... The philistine world is the animal kingdom of politics." The man holds a revolver. He points it toward a book and uses it to turn the pages as the woman reads: "In the eyes of the despot, men are always debased. They drown before his eyes and on his behalf in the mire of common life from which, like toads, they always rise up again. ... The herd is silent, docile, and obeys its stomach." Jugoslava, now also naked, stands on the man's chest. He says: "Have you ever shagged so intensely that your teeth went numb?" The camera slides up her body as

A specter is haunting Europe — the specter of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter. ... The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution! The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

What would the overthrow of all existing social conditions look like? The clue is given in the family. Already in the morphology of the group, existing power relations are reproduced: a battle unfolds between the group of young men who, although nominally revolutionaries, quickly assume the position of authority, while the “forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions” comes to be embodied by the woman.

In the context of her family, Jugoslava was sexualized. While her face was covered in white liquid, she announced the beginning of the day: the words “good morning” floated out of

she bounces her weight on his chest. She says: “You are too little for that!” He answers: “Admit it, what is the maximum number of times you’ve cum in one night?” She retorts: “You’re so stupid! Tell me something nice.” The camera pans across their bodies. Jugoslava reads the lines on his hands, and when she gets to the life line she says: “Well, you don’t live at all! Mount of Venus. It has crumbled completely! And you call yourself a quickly and frequently aroused man!” This scene shifts. Once again, he picks up the revolver, this time he points it in her direction. See Karl Marx, “Letters from the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher: M. to R.; Marx to Ruge; On the canal-boat going to D.; March 1843,” *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed November 19, 2019, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/letters/43_03.htm.

her mouth on repeat. In a new scene, set in the village, making an announcement of a different order, she introduces a crowd of women to contraception. Unwrapping an IUD, she holds it up for all to view. This contraceptive has a two hundred year history of permutations in material, shape, and safety, with the serpentine coil seeing a huge rise in popularity across the world during the 1960s.

Recalling the opening scene, Jugoslava squirts a white, sticky, cum-like fluid through the syringe into the air, alluding to the image of ejaculation. Yet from the position of the sexualized woman with white liquid dripping down her face, she transitions to a teacher figure. She controls the ejaculation. She shows the village women how, with the aid of contraception, they can take control of their means of reproduction. Quoting the socialist feminist Clara Zetkin, Jugoslava critiques direct domination — the feudal relationship that takes place within the family — as it had manifested in her own estranged family, where the man behaves like a lord, aristocrat, and owner, while women are exploited, like the proletariat. Because of its not-yet-bourgeois “feudal relations,” Jugoslava abandoned her family. Her father, whom she recognized as already at the mercy of his boss and beaten down by work, in turn beats his wife and children into submission. Jugoslava’s intervention in the village — as a personally driven investment in women’s freedom from the cruel bind of the reproductive family — does not take place in the remit of a state-sanctioned organizing meeting; it is ungoverned, like guerrilla warfare or a terrorist act.

In her newfound pedagogical role, she tells the room: “A woman can be liberated from her oppression only by an altered

employment structure and dismantling of the monogamous family.” In considering the “monogamous family” and the call for its disintegration, Marx’s observation, that this form of social relationship is based on landed property or the home, is illuminating. In the context of his early writings (1843), critiquing Hegel’s philosophy of law, in particular the politics of primogeniture (the inheritance of property by the firstborn son), Marx takes aim at Hegel’s conception of the family glued together with love, wherein this “love” is named as its “spirit.” In the bourgeois family, Marx finds love only as a negative quality: *lacking* — the family, contra Hegel, is “spiritless.” Hegel’s description of love is “illusionary,” founded on and belonging to the principle of property, which in turn fundamentally contradicts his principle of “family life.” It is the property relation that corrupts love, rendering it ideology, and it is the mediations between property, marriage, and family that cement this ideology.³ For Marx, it is capitalism that leads to the inversion of all human relations so that they become relations between things, destroying genuine familial relations, just as the division of labor and private property begins in the family. When Dragiša shouts “down with being romantic” into a landscape of desolate waterlogged bog, “romance” also appears to mean this ideological form of love, determined in form by monogamy, heterosexuality, and the family.

Just a few years after Marx’s critiques of Hegel’s concept of familial love, in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx and Engels amplify their vision of the vanishing of the family:

3 → Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), 3:99.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution. The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.⁴

For Marx and Engels, the family is historical; it is located in relations of production. While they polemically blame the bourgeoisie and capitalist social relations for the absence of a family among the proletariat, they advance an argument for the abolition of the family as a legal property structure. Here, this “vanishing” of the family is understood to take place coterminously with the revolution. Later, when Engels penned *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), which is quoted extensively in *Early Works*, he drew from Marx’s early observations and highlighted patriarchy and monogamy as social forms to be studied alongside political economy.

In *Early Works*, the family is said to maintain both feudal relations and relations premised on private property. Where, as we saw in the opening scenes, the father as lord does not own his means of production at work, at home he is free to dominate his property and means of reproduction: his wife and children. Further, for Engels, the family/home is the site

4 → Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm>.

of a division of labor, wherein women's activity is confined to domestic tasks. Historicizing the family, he describes a transition in social organization with the rise of bourgeois society, wherein women's domestic labor was maligned in comparison to the man's waged ability to acquire "life's necessities" with currency.⁵ In another scene, Jugoslava walks with her hands up, as if admitting defeat: "My Mom would be more liberated by a washing machine, than by voting rights!" In this instance, Žilnik critiques the heritage of liberal feminism for merely investing in representational democracy, rather than attacking the gendered division of labour in the home. For Engels, and socialist feminists thereafter such as Zetkin and including Žilnik, as long as women are excluded from social or productive labor, their emancipation is an impossibility.

Žilnik goes a step further. Set in a society moving toward the horizon of socialism, which is still governed by a "red bourgeoisie" and a mode of production that is not yet fully restructured, Jugoslava claims that the *necessary* dismantling of the monogamous family will not simply coincide with the destruction of the bourgeois state. In other words, the film conjures a scenario where political transformations have not influenced familial social relations: the monogamous family remained unchanged. Further, Jugoslava's attempt to overcome this contradiction is also thwarted: within her group of comrades, she finds herself confronted by a similar gender hierarchy. Here we find Žilnik's implicit critique of Marx and

5 → Friedrich Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (1884), trans. Alick West, *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/index.htm>.

Engels. For even when the bourgeois state is partially defeated, there is found to remain another necessary step for the disintegration, abolition, or vanishing of the family: "the third technological revolution." Such a revolution will overcome and denaturalize naturalized procreation and reproductive labor, contributing to the withering away of the family itself. In 1970, Shulamith Firestone, renowned for her attacks on the "sex distinction" — which in her view is used to justify the gender hierarchy — went beyond Marx and Engels to say that capitalism is not the only enemy. She aligns with Žilnik in diagnosing the family and gender as a limit to revolutionary politics and, like Žilnik, she calls for a full-scale technological revolution in reproduction. Firestone sees pregnancy itself as barbaric and, in turn, argues that the freeing of women from the sexual division of labor, from procreation, threatens the family, the very social unit that "subjects women to their biological destiny."⁶ In this vein, reproduction should be entirely technologized in the name of a new value system, where male supremacy and the family are eliminated and women's sexuality is liberated.⁷

Yet, in *Early Works*, love for the revolution eventually turns to disappointment and resentment. In a dormitory, the men lie on beds, fully clothed. Jugoslava walks through the building. The camera pans across stained glass windows, then scans a rubble courtyard. With vitriol, Jugoslava declares: "In a prince's castle you live like pigs. As if the revolution is workers

6 → Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 185.

7 → *Ibid.*, 180.

clogging the sewer and choking in their own stink?!" The workers, her comrades, now live in this abode. The dream of a life of deeds is reduced to an inability to overcome the limits posed by gender. One man tells her she can sleep in the girl's dormitory. She is the only woman.

What was once a palatial building, full of luxuries, is now riddled with weeds and smashed glass, disintegrated. The camera pans across tiles painted with bucolic scenes of village life: watermills, tall houses, trees, and rivers, only to drop suddenly to a pile of trash. Jugoslava explores the building with her comrade. They climb through a smashed window. Weeds grow inside. While Jugoslava seeks to renovate, repair, restore, refurbish the house, the man tells her once again that she may stay in the women's dormitory. A devotional song plays, describing love and the suffering caused by a beautiful woman. The camera follows Jugoslava as she leaves the castle. The woman and the revolution appear entangled. The song echoes, "For Darling I live — for her I will my life hurl."

Returned to her familial home, Jugoslava cuts logs with an axe. Suddenly appearing, marching towards her as military and executioner, her comrades order her to follow them. Downtrodden, with blackened eyes, they punish her as she described her father beating her mother, as her father beat her. She resists, mocking them, defiantly saying: "Let's see who'll be the first." She spits on them. "You never follow through to the end," she accuses them. With three bullets, her comrade shoots her. One man drapes her corpse with the communist flag, and then the men firebomb her body so that she erupts into the sky in furls of black smoke. A song bursts into earshot: "You fell victim and gave everything, your blood,

life, youth, for freedom burying." The song is directed at the revolutionaries, who became the oppressors, the executioners. Freedom and liberation were not won.

We observe in Jugoslava an allegorical figure who yokes together woman, state, and revolution. She transitions from her self-emancipation from the feudal relations of her family; her realization of the necessity of abolishing the family; her terroristic pedagogy, educating women in contraception and reproductive freedom, as freedom from biological destiny; to her self-sacrifice to the destiny of the masses; and, finally, to her return to her feudal family. At times, instead of being the mediating figure between man and society, instead of mediating one man's desire, she pursues her own, as the proletariat in the revolution. Instead of repressing her desire, she pursues the revolution. Her identification with the revolution means that she becomes neither mother nor state, but rather the carrier of the revolution. Yet her inability to overcome her contradictions lead her comrades to identify her as woman, village, and state, as part of the old society that obstinately refuses change, and to violently destroy her. In Jugoslava, they see their lack of ability to transform themselves, a lack which they can only face through its eradication.



Destroy self-proclaimed and incomprehensible art



that is sustained by the mutilated bodies of hard workers!



We should stop the creation and disable the existence



of the new middle class! All culture to the hammer and the sickle!



Hammer and sickle above culture!



On with the cultural revolution!



Mirko, come to lunch. I can't daddy. I had dinner!

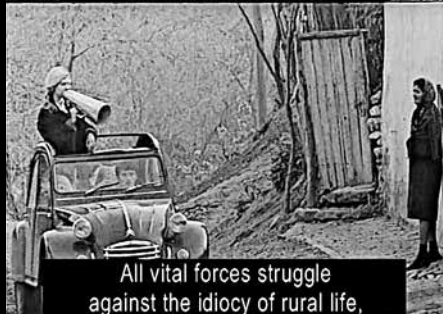




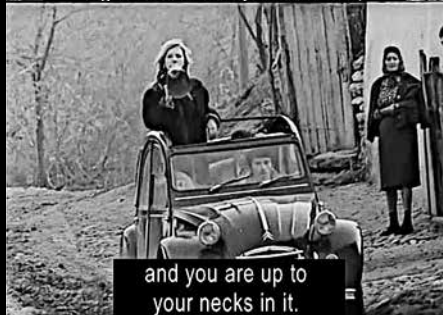
Peasants! Being aware of your resistance, we feel obliged to inform you



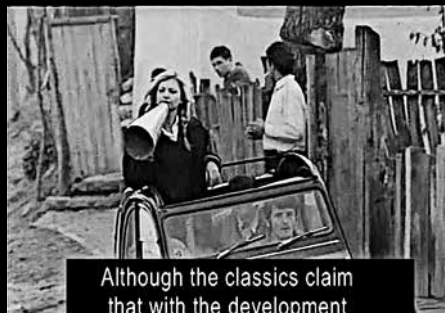
that you will fall to pieces!
And that is inevitable!



All vital forces struggle
against the idiocy of rural life,



and you are up to
your necks in it.



Although the classics claim
that with the development



of manufacturing forces
you will disappear,



although your tiny individual
estate is not profitable,



in this transitional period we are the
union of workers and poor peasants!



in this transitional period we are the
union of workers and poor peasants!



We are with you –
stand with us!!!



Revolution, Playing Itself: A Mannerism

What is to be done when the avant-gardist effort to overcome art's bourgeois role in modern society becomes itself a negative icon of society's self-perception?

Within capitalist societies, artistic avant-gardism historically played on cultural nodes, which were tested for their capacities to set off cultural revolutions. For example, Surrealist mimetisms, in the first decades of the twentieth century attempted to transform the historical figure of the artist — a bearer of individuated creative consciousness — into the bearer of a socially debilitated unconscious. Here, I think to the likes of Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore, or Georges Bataille, who all devised tactics aimed at counteracting this bourgeois artistic autonomy. In its stead, they tried out more heteronomous artistic and aesthetic practices that reconstructed their individuations from the shoals of its brutal and crisis-ridden socialization; from the mannerisms of its heteronomy. However, within revolutionary socialist phases, artistic avant-gardisms often prefigured political vanguardism, aiming at a progressive dissolution of the artistic production of *some* into the artistic production of *all*. For example, the Russian *Proletkult*, in the late 1910s and early 1920s, placed artist studios in factories so as to redevelop labor as art and art as labor. While the capitalist avant-gardes could ultimately escape the cult of “autonomous” subjective creation through self-abolitions — like Bataille's wartime diary *Guilty (Le coupable, 1944)* — the socialist avant-gardes could not resist the theater of heteronomous collective representation. Take the turn of the *Proletkult* theorist Alexander Bogdanov from receptive “Empiriomonism” to proto-cybernetic “Tectology.” These aesthetically bound modes of politicization all too often remained tied to their status as the counter strategies

of two artistic realisms: the first aiming to dissolve artistic forms into (human) *life*; and the second attempting to dissolve the work of art into forms of (human) *labor*. In both cases, artistic production remained increasingly caught up in the speculative: conjuring fictional lives and fictional labors — both trapped within *merely* fictional realities.

In *Early Works*, these divisions are at a loss, because neither forms-of-life nor forms-of-labor seem to offer a future sublation. Further, their very own fictional character seems inescapable, and art (in this case, film) turns into a peculiar medium of documentation. Documentation not as the naturalist attempt to mimic a dysfunctional idealism, but documentation as a realism of the fictional forms that human lives take within a flawed mimetic maneuver. Artistic fiction here is not pushed toward becoming real, but, rather, reality is itself artistically documented as fictional. Žilnik shot this film within a historical period where the Yugoslav state — despite its anti-Stalinist foundation — had more and more petrified into an unthinking bureaucracy. Under this regime, the forms of cultural life that had historically been encouraged, came to be regarded as deviations from an unrealized political future. Žilnik mentions that, after 1969, his films took a major turn from active engagement with everyday life, toward addressing the historical failures of state socialism. His *Early Works*, released that year, seems to be caught in the split-second before this noted change of path. In the film, everyday life ceases to exist — falling into a series of dead-end mannerisms. Labor, agitation, sex, sociality, are all captured by social processes that make their actuality an impossibility. All actions taken inevitably tip into fiction: they go off into figures of games, of war, of death; objects are frequently introduced as props for

play; sexual violence stands as a latent possibility in all erotic pursuits. This violence regularly features as the resolution to a scene, with the female protagonist being shot dead by her male comrades again and again throughout the film. For Jugoslava, it seems that anything other than a fictional appearance is unacceptable in principle: acts of individuation are reasoned to justify her elimination.

All this, however, does not implicate the peasants' lives as it does the film's young, student-like protagonists. The former seem to be shielded, fenced off from the medium's aesthetic power of disfiguration. Peasant life appears only at the film's fringes, mostly quite literally: one sees people standing in the background, eyeing the protagonists and their staged actions. When the peasants take center stage, it is usually to rid themselves of the protagonists, to refuse engagement in their war and their death. Their games are unattached to those of the protagonists: whereas the latter toy with food, transportation, and machinery, the peasants don't toy, but instead present their individuations in the form of tricks. Their games are not transgressive, they do not disobey conventions; they are mannerist, in the sense that they display dislocated ornamental actions — a form of autonomy that refuses to fetishize the life of labor.

The only feeble connection between the protagonists and the peasants seems to lie in another “*Early Works*,” which the film was named after. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' early writings are distinct from Marx's later studies in *Capital*, because they champion an ontological understanding of labor: one in which labor is as much a general anthropological potential as it is an industrial form of discipline and alienation. Challenging

labor's humanizing effects, the peasants' actions show a larger variety of possible, and impossible, forms of human life than the students' — even though the students remain the film's protagonists. The peasants are disidentified from the sinister status of their labor; while the students desire to identify with that very labor. Halfway through the film, the protagonists decide that it is, in fact, their lack of laboring that alienates them; and so they regroup as laborers around a defunct machine, albeit unsuccessfully. They fail to understand that labor is, by definition, a non-transgressive action: the humanist projections they attach to labor is, in the final instance, a mere mannerism, an idealized performance. As they build a dysfunctional machine out of the parts of broken farm equipment and play house in the workers' shanties, they fail to perform their actions as labor. Thus, in contrast to the peasants, they equally fail to perform their actions as life. They are impossible in every sense of *their* word.

In a recent talk on “The Consequences of Art,” Alenka Zupančič argued that art today problematically appears as a permanent site of transgression. It tests the limits offered by a society that thereby — even if negatively — becomes the sole measure of its radicality. Against this situation, Zupančič contended that only an art that competes itself with society's composition — and thus, in her view, rather with philosophy than with politics — can be deemed consequential. One might add that, while modern notions of artistic avant-gardism assume the perpetual desire for self-transgression, Žilnik's film demonstrates the 1960s' return of avant-gardism as an ongoing transgression of *others*: art cannot threaten to become labor when its socialization has left the peasantry immiserated; and it can just as much not threaten to become

life, when the youth is condemned to fetishize the very labor that is the source of life's immiseration. Notably, Žilnik's film does not itself take refuge in these aesthetic transgressions. *Early Works* presents life in a state of mannerism: life unfolds as a series of dislocated ornamental actions; in a state of habitual deadlocks; in a state of alienated mimicry; in a state of primitivized socializations. In his 1964 book, *Mannerism: The Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art (Der Manierismus. Die Krise der Renaissance und der Ursprung der modernen Kunst)*, Arnold Hauser proposes that we understand mannerism as a series of attempts to act out against what he calls art's “*Veranstaltung*.”¹ In Žilnik's case, one might argue that this is why the film generatively figures as “art.” Because while Hauser's formulation literally translates into English as “institutionalization,” the institution he refers to is not art but psychiatry. Hauser quotes Émile Durkheim, who conceives of modern institutions as “safety devices which [...] shield the objectivity of social actions from individual motivations.”² It is these “individual motivations” that Žilnik demonstrates to be disastrously suppressed in the late 1960s: the students are fully committed to the socially objective cause — considering themselves as its superior executors — while the peasants appear lost in their detachment from any sense of this higher objective goal. By contrast, we find them subject to an “unmotivated” individuality. In the end, Žilnik's *Early Works* appears not so much to demonstrate art's manneristic politics, as rather to point to a sphere of modern human life

1 → Arnold Hauser, *Mannerism: The Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 104.

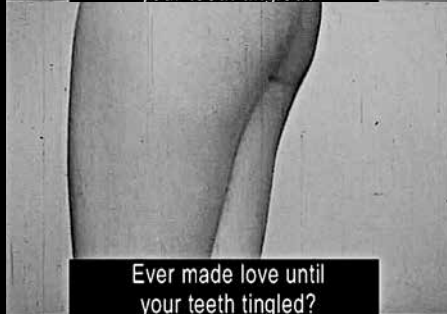
2 → *Ibid.*, 105.

that is systemically divested from (re)productive labor: the political. Far from being nihilistic, Žilnik may filmically ask for a revolutionary sociality beyond the “social objectivity” of the modern political.





Ever made love until
your teeth tingled?



Ever made love until
your teeth tingled?



You're not up to it!



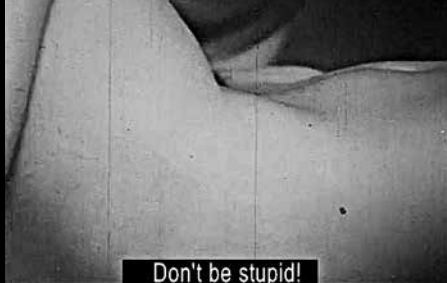
You're not up to it!



Don't be stupid!



Say something nice to me.



How many times a night
is your record?



Tirke and Milja!



Tirke and Milja!



That's them.
A banner with a star!



That's them.
A banner with a star!



That's them.
A banner with a star!



Down with the red bourgeoisie!



They'll arrest us
for forming a group.



It is not registered.



I'm the people –
you lead me!



Each proletariat should
liquidate its bourgeoisie.



Come on!



Come on, hold there!



Hold it!
- I need help!



Carefully! Push the break!



To Berlin!!!



East or West?

Burn Baby Burn: The Problems of Allegory as Artistic Strategy

Želimir Žilnik's film *Early Works* excited me in my youth, both in the erotic and revolutionary sense — which is anyway the main function of this “affectionate-leftist”¹ film, packed with a montage of attractions. No wonder this film has generated so much debate and written analysis, both in the 1960s and nowadays. Hundreds of pages on “big politics” and “great art,” which grapple with the “big social issues”; yet hardly a single page of feminist critique, or consideration of the extraordinary film destinies of the female characters in Yugoslav New Film. Immediately after the release of *Early Works* in 1969, the magazine *Rok* published an issue entirely dedicated to the temporary censorship of the film and the social debate in which *Early Works* emerged victorious. This unparalleled interpretative document was edited by the film's co-scriptwriter Branko Vučićević and Bora Ćosić, a Yugoslav writer, neo-avant-garde artist, and author of the seminal novel *The Role of My Family in the World Revolution (Uloga moje porodice u svetskoj revoluciji)*, published that same year (1969). In retrospect — and especially from today's perspective — *Rok* is a document of an impressive public sphere, featuring intellectual and political arguments both well-founded and meaningful. Those arguments underline the importance

1 → The designation “affectionate-leftist” (*bolećivo-levičarski*) is taken from the text by Bogdan Tirnanić, published in the magazine *Rok*: “Želimir Žilnik's *Early Works* is a product of an ‘affectionate leftist.’ This film resembles the nature of its author, and that means that we have a moral movie in front of us. Or, as Robert Breer says: a moral movie, a movie that resembles its author.” Bogdan Tirnanić, “Rani Radovi, godinu dana posle” [*Early Works, A Year Later*], in “Rani Radovi,” ed. Bora Ćosić et al., special issue, *Rok — Časopis za književnost, umetnost i estatičko ispitivanje stvarnost* [*Rok — Journal for Literature, Art and Aesthetic Investigation of Reality*], no. 3 (December 1969): 78.

of the film and make today's readers feel with even greater intensity the pain of cultural production investments, because that world of intellect has collapsed in the meantime, turning toward glorification of the "better past," with nostalgia and admiration. Political film — party censorship — director's struggle — public interest in the debate — the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival ... In our times of mass production of art, we are almost blackmailed by this kind of past, by the country we had, its cultural sphere, and the meaning its art created. What has remained is to admire the history and do nothing. Yet isn't the admiration for the glorious past and lamenting over its ruins the position of a new Classicism? The edition of *Rok* magazine features forty men (judges, party bureaucrats, film directors, film critics, public intellectuals, journalists) and a single woman, Eleonora Pavšić. Her review of the film, published in the Sarajevo's weekly *Svijet*, "maternally" laments the fact that the child of a communist woman killed in a concentration camp, a child raised and saved from death by two other communist women, could have made such a brutal and dark film.²

As viewers of the film, we have gathered within the *Feminist Takes* project around a single event — the killing of a woman. This is not a big event in Badiou's sense, and it cannot be one, given that women in the patriarchal social paradigm are not the subject of History. Or, as Carla Lonzi suggests, women have

2 → Pavšić's tiny review is based on a conservative, socialist realist, sentimental, and pastoral understanding of art, summarized in her point: "The easiest thing is to shock; the hardest to delight the human mind and make his heart weep." From a review in *Sarajevo Svijet* by Eleonora Pavšić, reprinted in *ibid.*, 6.

been excluded from the Hegelian dialectics of history.³ The project *Feminist Takes* is making the killing of a woman on film into an event. We deal with the universality of cinematographic femicide. The final scene of *Early Works*, in which the body of young Jugoslava is burned, acts as a hastily shot, blurry, low-resolution frame, in which everything is dissolved into an indistinct grayness.

"*Early Works* could be re-edited in whichever way one sees fit, without causing the film any damage," Bogdan Tirnanić, film critic and one of the characters in the film, wrote in the aforementioned issue of *Rok* magazine. "By choosing the situational point A and situational point Z, we automatically make a choice for a developmental path from feeling A to feeling Z."⁴ Film editing and re-editing, fast-forwarding and rewinding, stopping for particular sequences and frames, has become the method of the *Feminist Takes* project. I suggest this is not only because the film critic pointed at that possibility already, in the spirit of the "liberated spectator" of the 1960s; but, more so, because such a method emerged from the internal necessity of a suppressed narrative, which has had to be reconstructed, sequence by sequence, frame by frame.

My interface in this dialogical viewing of the film, a long *durée* viewing, was the final scene of the burning of the young Jugoslava's body. Jugoslava on fire — the final scene of the 1969 film — resembles in many ways the television images of

3 → See Carla Lonzi, "Let's Spit on Hegel" [Sputiamo su Hegel], trans. Veronica Newman (New York: Secunda, 2010).

4 → Tirnanić, "Rani Radovi, godinu dana posle," 79.

massacres, which fuelled the wars in this region in the 1990s. Could an image be a “cinematic omen” of what we would see in life in the wake of its projection? During the post-Yugoslav wars, our generation of young women — secondary school and university students — was exposed on a daily basis to scenes of burning and destruction that left only grayness behind. Television remained the center of the “new hearth” that started to disintegrate in the 1990s, in the direction of today’s personalized content. The entire process of dealing with Yugoslavia for our post-Yugoslav generation stems from that scene of illogical burning, in its extended and metaphorical meaning, the scene that will be seen again.

The “blurred” final scene of Žilnik’s film invoked for us those same scenes of fire that we have witnessed so many times. In a way, the burning of Jugoslava-Yugoslavia in that scene comes across as a cinematic catharsis. The allegory of Jugoslava’s name here is obvious. In order to be set ablaze at the end of the film, Jugoslava had to go through several circles of hell beforehand: she had been betrayed, disappointed, mistreated, raped, and killed. All the actions were performed literally on the body of a young woman. This is the problem with (such an) allegory, and with allegory as an artistic strategy as a whole. What was also burnt in the scene of the burning of Jugoslava’s body, in that scene of burning at the stake, was the New Yugoslav Woman who had emerged as a result of an emancipation project initiated by the Women’s Antifascist Front (AFŽ) and postwar socialist modernization.⁵ Undoing

5 → As a result of the political work of education, literacy teaching, secularization, and universalization of women, the Yugoslav New Woman, as AFŽ leaders Mitra Mitrović and Vida Tomšić wrote, evolved from a

this project in the 1990s assumed a retraditionalization and neofeudal immiseration, within which our generation was supposed to return to a previous order of life: to churches, cathedrals, mosques; to homes, housework, and children.

Following the (appropriated) guiding principle of reediting the film *Early Works* in the *Feminist Takes* project — or what I would call our method — meant for me, that the final burning scene should be placed at the beginning, before the opening sequence of the film. Hence, our treatment of the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia in flames, of that “additional” historical sequence that unfolds from 1968 to 1990 and does not belong to the intra-diegetic narrative of the film, stems from the theoretical strategy originating in Benjamin’s proposition to think history through actualization. The material practice of (de)collaging and (re)editing that we started with this project derives from the feminist approach to re-reading the image and its extraction from the deceptively undivided narrative space. Like the photo collage *The Beautiful Girl (Das schöne Mädchen)*

partisan, guerrilla-fighter figure to a “colorful” subject, a modern woman in non-dogmatic socialism: colorfulness of women’s clothes should stand in contrast to Stalinist uniformity, which otherwise makes womanhood appear as gray and sad. Yugoslav feminists were the first to rise up against the post-Yugoslav wars, and here we can safely use the attribute “Yugoslav” as these movements have developed organically ever since the all-Yugoslav and international conference “Drug-ca Žena” [Comrade(ss) Woman] in Belgrade in 1978. Organized by the Student Cultural Center as the first “second wave” feminism conference in the non-Western world, it was a clear refusal of the official version of history, according to which the “women question” had been resolved in the Yugoslavian egalitarian socialist society. “Drug-ca Žena” definitely represented a break from the principle of equality and turn to the position of autonomy, leading to what Italian feminists of the 1960s called “double militancy.”

by the once marginalized member of Berlin's Dada movement, Hannah Hoch, we used the "art of cutting and reassembling," denying the originality and creativity of the masterful male artist vis-à-vis his female subject. And also denying the production of images of women as transcendent objects of art.

Early Works begins with a montage of images of a woman's face drowned in a bath-foam-semen, whose counterpoint is a man burying feces in an outside toilet. "Good morning! [...]" As if I do not want a better life for all of us," Jugoslava tells us when we see her for the first time — an unnamed girl whose beautiful face we can discern under a layer of foam. *As if I do not want a better life for all of us* — this is the moment of a woman's revolutionary awakening, a moment in which she apologizes to us in advance. Is it because she is late and behind the man in her delayed revolution; or because she interrupts bigger political processes, even though she was told nicely that the women's issue will come second on the agenda? And yet, her awakening is a celebration of beauty, "the birth of Venus" moment, which has always had some entanglement with foam. In Sandro Botticelli's famous painting, Venus emerges in a shell from the sea foam. In Žilnik's film, her face emerges from a mixture of soap and semen, two substances that have strongly determined the women's position within patriarchy: washing / cleaning / housework and reproduction.

Our Venus will never be seen cooking or cleaning. She is not sitting behind a sewing machine in a textile factory, or behind a desk in a large socialist organisation of united labor as a secretary of a male leader of the socialist company. She covers the roles of daughter, sister, political activist, lover, performer, educator, heroine, but not the role of mother. But

there is no woman who is not a mother. Jugoslava is a mother to her childish companions. Although we repeatedly see her washing things, which implies care work, her maternal role is primarily instructional, pedagogical, and manifested in her rephrasing tone: *You, horses! Shame on you!* Jugoslava is more mature, she knows better. She is the leader of the group. She is the militant with a seemingly inexhaustible revolutionary zeal. Jugoslava comes to the stage vis-à-vis the real, as an aberration of the existing models of women in the Yugoslav socialist context. She is the specter that haunts the Yugoslav revolutionary project atrophied in the the state form and its basic unit, the nuclear family; the specter of partisan female guerilla fighters in WWII, who the fascist press of the time described with the term "monster." Jugoslava is exactly that monster, enclosed in an appealing woman's body, shaped by the cinematographic ideals of female beauty of the 1960s.

The revolutionary "gang of four" — the student, the worker, the unemployed, and the woman — the carriers of the 1968 rebellion, are, in turn, the "paper dolls" in the hands of the film director, flattened by the narrative of the auteur film. They loan their bodies to extreme body-art performances: they are dragged, whipped, stroked, rolled in mud, beaten, raped, murdered, and burned. The body stands here for the figure of individual liberation within the universally liberated collective,⁶ and perhaps also for submission to an *obviously* aestheticized regime. In the *Rok* magazine discussions of the

6 → The references in *Early Works* to early Marx and ideas propagated by the *Praxis* journal are clear — the notion that the revolution is possible only as an activity through which the individual simultaneously changes her/himself and the society in which s/he lives.

film, the socialist cultural establishment made sure to morally denounce this fact:

The protagonists are portrayed “extremely naturalistically,” in obnoxious, vulgar, and naked scenes, as deprived of “personality, emotionality, and youth,” “similar to coiled automatons,” and as “vulgar and dehumanized beings” who movingly and “inefficiently” perform the REVOLUTION AND LOVE game. Who, also, opposing the external and their own personal inappropriate reality make us laugh at the scenes of our common misery in a quixotical and Chaplinesque way.⁷

Jugoslava’s body is central to such representations of the body — she is the body of pleasure and passion, the carrier and the object of desire. The boundaries between Jugoslava’s sexuality and the sexualization of Jugoslava on film are blurred, in line with the material reality of the “sweet sixties” and the iconic Venuses of alternative film, such as Brigitte Bardot, who played sexually emancipated personae with hedonistic lifestyles. In Godard’s *Contempt* (*Le Mépris*), Bardot was chosen because of the producer’s insistence that the profits might be increased by displaying her famously sensual body. The opening scene of the film, showing her nude, was shot after Godard considered the film finished. In a similar manner, certainly without the same commercial pressures but not untouched by the spirit of the same wave, *Early Works* was advertised in Berlin through a blatantly voyeuristic call to the (male-coded) international/ist

7 → From a review in *GDJE* by Nikola Visković, reprinted in “Rani Radovi,” *Rok*, 16.

audience: *Come to see the most beautiful body of Yugoslavia!* Milja Vujanović, the actor who played Jugoslava, won the Miss Serbia competition two years before the film was made. Her body is examined by the lens with a particular “visual pleasure”; the erotic gymnastics of the camera follows her continuous undressing. Jugoslava’s body is cut up to be framed, fragment by fragment — her breasts, her buttocks, her well-shaped legs, or her whole (headless) body figure. A massacre is precipitated by cinematic conventions before the final execution ... The universalizing historical conclusions of feminist theory suggest the same, both in the field of representation as well as in everyday life. The essential power of the artist, as Nochlin famously wrote,⁸ assumes that being an artist has to do with men’s free access to naked women. Behind the “aesthetic curtain” of the multitude of paintings of female nudity in art history, including the images of Venus, stands the reality of oppression — the artist-model relationship often assumed male fulfilment of his professional but also his sexual needs.

At the same time, however, Jugoslava is the subject of her own sexual desires, a decisively dominant player and pro-active promoter of “free love,” who also explicitly challenges the sexual capacity of her comrades and partners. It is hard to reduce her to the mere object of male sexual desire. But her position remains unequal. She incarnates, albeit within the limiting parameters of Žilnik’s directorial plan, the attempt to bring the body and sexuality into the proximity of the revolution, politics, and the economy. But here is the difference: unlike

8 → Linda Nochlin, “Women, Art, and Power” (1988), in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (London: Routledge, 2018).

her male comrades, Jugoslava alone has to justify her sexual desire by resorting to ideological revolutionary rhetoric, party sloganeering, political explanations.⁹ In other words, Jugoslava performs sex as an educator, a militant revolutionary leader, a provoking persona. Her sexuality is not one but many roles, even jobs; it contains numerous contradictions of socialism, but also the contradictions of the very film. Even though her sexuality remains elevated — paired with revolution — the profane moments seep through: as in the moment of jealousy (when the “gang of four” is temporarily joined by another woman with the symbolic name Lepa/Beauty), or true/honest desire (in the factory shower with the worker Marko) or petit bourgeois desire to settle down after the failed revolution and realize her life as any other woman. Unlike Jugoslava, Lepa is just another instance of the manifestation of men’s sexual aggression toward women, an aggression over unspoiled sexual territory. Jugoslava hides her jealousy in the protection of Lepa, but also the encounter of the two women in the field of erotic play remains restrained by heterosexual normativity, which everyone adheres to unquestionably, regardless of their proclaimed sexual freedoms otherwise. Jugoslava does not enter into a sexual relationship with Lepa, but maternally protects her from violent men. Her protection is just a transposed scene of the standard scenario in which

9 → It seems that Jugoslava’s sexuality is modeled after Wilhelm Reich’s ideas on patriarchal sexual repression as the source of political authoritarianism and economic exploitation in class society — the model that underpinned the cultural revolution of the 1968 protests. It is known that the students in Paris and Berlin were throwing at the police copies of Reich’s book *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (*Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus*).

the male protects the female from another male. The problem in the end remains the heteronormative framework of “liberated sexuality” within which Jugoslava tests the possible and the impossible — she is a militant, an educator; she is a provocative and sexually prolific woman; she is a human being with impulses of jealousy, of spontaneous pleasure; she wants to settle down.

When Jugoslava delivers a motivational lecture on contraception to peasant women, as part of her revolutionary activity à la Kollontai’s project of sexual enlightenment, we actually witness the scene where a young enlightened teacher educates old women with headscarves, in the typical classroom setting. The historical subtext — the educational activity of the protagonists of the AFŽ — surfaces here in a schematized scene, and Jugoslava remains in her role of “automaton,” as directed by the script. She displays limited compassion for the peasant women, which is very different from the historical substance with which such activities were conducted by AFŽ members, precisely through strong emotional ties and compassion. For the same reason, after the dissolution of the AFŽ in 1953, many women, and especially peasant women, suffered the loss of context and the infrastructure used for getting together and talking about their everyday political problems. In this scene, instead, Jugoslava speaks more with the cold and distanced, bureaucratic voice of the state-party organ of the Conference for the Social Activity of Women, to which women’s issues were delegated after “The Women Question” was officially declared to be solved within the legal framework (voting rights, equal employment, free kindergartens, right to free education, abortion rights, etc.).

Many analyses in this book explain the final scene of Jugoslava's execution, murder, or sacrifice with the idea that she was caught in a trap as a traitor of the revolution, because of her return home after the unsuccessful cultural-political (and no less importantly, sexual-economic) performance of her partners in the "gang of four." Yet I believe that the (ab)solution of the film lies in two key issues: one is the director's political dedication to the communist project; the other is the scene of the political speech on art under communism. I will argue that the scene of Jugoslava's speech on art is the source of the director's decision to kill his famous heroine, the scene which allegedly gives him the moral legitimacy to do so. Within the classicist portal — an architectural symbol of a forum or agora — in a "high art" framework that artificially stands out from the Pannonian mud and its primitive inhabitants, who did not like the "revolutionary theater" of young urban hipster-revolutionaries, Jugoslava fierily addresses the empty, roofless hall, as if standing in front of the masses. The director puts in her mouth a few dogmatic, Zhdanovist phrases on the political function of art. Jugoslava speaks against avant-garde art, calling it "self-centered and frivolous [...] sustained by oppression of the workers" — a critique by which the toughest party bureaucrats dismissed Yugoslav New Film, including *Early Works*. She exclaims: "Culture — to the hammer and sickle! Hammer and sickle above culture!" Thus, the framed (in the double sense) heroine of the film allegedly clashes with her creator; more precisely, the director himself puts her in the position of his own antagonist, so that the film can bring out the dynamics of a struggle to the very end. Jugoslava becomes a ventriloquist of party politics that had been hitting the heads of directors themselves, and which was the reason why a group of representatives of Yugoslav New Film in *Rok*

magazine published a statement entitled "Greetings to the forces that embrace our cinematography so strongly that it is increasingly hard to breathe."¹⁰

Let us consider these two contemporary takes on the role of Jugoslava from *Rok*:

As was the case with Nana S. from Godard's film *My Life to Live* (*Vivre sa vie*, 1962), the soul of Žilniks "heroine" remains only seemingly pure and chaste, for the simple reason that the belief that a hedonistic enjoyment can be separated from the position of consciousness is equal to an absolute illusion.¹¹

Three men communicate exclusively through a woman. The woman becomes the embodiment of the integrative Law — the Ruler (Mother) Hero. A woman who in the ruling order represents the anti-norm (sensuality, consumption, leisure) becomes the norm here: the group becomes the anti-group, it separates itself from the revolutionary potential, workers and peasants are only

10 → The statement *Pozdrav snagama koje grle našu kinematografiju tako snažno da sve teže diše* was signed by: Nikola Stojanović, Jovan Jovanović, Živojin Pavlović, Toni Tršar, Vladimir Roksandić, Branko Šomen, Hrvoje Turkorvić, Milovan Vitezović, Želimir Žilnik, Karpo Godina Aćimović, Bogdan Tirnanić, Dušan Makarvejev, Dušan Stojanović.

11 → Tirnanić, "Rani Radovi, godinu dana posle," 84. In Tirnanić's take, Jugoslava, who is made for hedonistic enjoyment, is convicted precisely because of that function. He also calls her the Danton-Girl who is executed by the three young revolutionaries, evoking Robespierre's critique of Danton for his hedonism, especially overeating in public, that was also used in Saint-Just's final speech against Danton, preceding his conviction and execution.

a marginal group [...] Group frustration is transferred to the ruler following the representational norms. The ruler retreated, but what the group needed was a hero. [...] The sacrificial ritual is the end of deviation — and in parallel — the end of the film is cathartic.¹²

These two interpretations, which exemplify the polemical commentary in the special issue of *Rok*, hint at the problems of allegory as artistic strategy — which, in the case of *Early Works*, assumes displacement or projection of the narrative of political failures and contradictions onto the woman's body. Who, then, is Jugoslava — the Venus of 1968 or the allegory of Yugoslavia, the state? A Girl or a Mother? A beauty or the beast? This dilemma captures the director's indecisiveness to make his allegorization explicit in the cinematic and political narrative. The ambitious director cleverly maintains this ambiguity, which helps him to conduct the film toward its illogical and historically banal ending — and to make it logical, of course, in the patriarchal world of courageous male authors.

What Jugoslava utters is the program — for that, she is killed. The director overidentifies with the failures of the prior partisan generation, now the red bourgeoisie, who “turned revolution into business.”¹³ He also overidentifies with the failures of the student protests of his own generation. He finds himself in a political void, but at the same time discovers an exit, which is

12 → Statement by Rastko Močnik in “Tri pogleda na koketovanje s revolucijom,” *Rok*, 89–90.

13 → A reference to the ending scene of Žilnik's documentary *June Turmoil (Lipanjka gibanja, 1968)*, which shows the spontaneous performance

the “free territory of art.” He cancels himself as an “affectionate leftist” and becomes a “political director.”¹⁴ In this new rearrangement, Jugoslava, who utters the program, becomes the allegory of the state “that embraces our cinematography so strongly that it is increasingly hard to breathe.” Now, Jugoslava is the ghost of the state and its apparatchiks who criticized and censored Yugoslav New Film. While she delivers the strict party line program, the critical director has to struggle against it. She is no longer the revolutionary, but his manipulative aesthetic oppressor — the keeper of false ideals, the glorifier of socialist deeds, who hides from view all the dark paths, corners, and alleyways; who cancels the possibility of critical representation. The only artistic solution is to kill Jugoslava and open the path to artistic freedom.

Every allegory is a “meat market” — this thesis I would like to support by the image of *The Death of Sardanapalus (La Mort de*

during the 1968 protests in which the actor Stevo Žigon enacts Robespierre's monologue from Georg Büchner's play *Danton's Death (Dantons Tod, 1835)* in front of a mass of Belgrade students.

14 → Ivana Bago, one of the authors in this book, in her recent text in *Mezosfera* offers the political argument for such a state of affairs: Yugoslav 1968 was the inaugural manifestation of the post-Yugoslav, post-historical structure, which mobilized the history of the Yugoslav revolution as a device for exposing the gap between the emancipatory political program of the Yugoslav state and its failed execution. Diagnoses of the failed elimination of that gap, together with the failure of the student movement, are concomitant with diagnoses of the gradual a(na)estheticization of both the Yugoslav revolution and its 1968 reactivation. Ivana Bago, “First as Yugoslav Revolution, then as Post-Yugoslav Art: History and A(na)estheticization around 1968 and Now” (2020), *Mezosfera*, accessed December 1, 2020, <http://mezosfera.org/first-as-yugoslav-revolution-then-as-post-yugoslav-art-history-and-anaestheticization-around-1968-and-now>.

Sardanapale) by Eugène Delacroix, usually celebrated for its rich colors and the romanticist emotionalism of its characters, but also symbolic for the artist's strategy (and the destiny of the model). In this story, the king of Assyria, who hears about his inevitable defeat, pathetically orders the destruction of all his treasures — gold, pearls, slaves, horses, and women — to be burned in the palace together with himself before the enemy arrives. The painting includes the aestheticized massacre of women who, all semi-naked, sublimely consent to their violent death, decorated by jewellery, perfect hairstyles and makeup. The scene is performed on a large bed covered by a red drape, with Sardanapalus in a comfortable reclining position, directing the event of destruction. This system of sexual power, warily suppressed in patriarchal discourses of art, invokes De Sade's identification of murder and sexual possession as the confirmation of absolute enjoyment (*jouissance*). De Sade's story of Justine is entirely based on this premise. Žilnik's story of Jugoslava is too.¹⁵

15 → I would like to thank my friends Ivana Bago, Jelena Čalić, and Svetlana Rakočević for alleviating my writer's block with a "soft massage" of the longer version of this text, and also my dear Vlidi for translating the quotes of the two smart men from the magazine *Rok*.





rani rad dov
rani rad dov
rani rad dov

EARLY WORKS

Early Works: Description of the Final Version¹

A.

OPENING CREDITS. WHITE LETTERS ON A BLACK BACKGROUND

MILJA VUJANOVIĆ
BOGDAN TIRNANIĆ
ČEDOMIR RADOVIĆ
MARKO NIKOLIĆ
IN THE FILM
EARLY WORKS
COMEDY

DIRECTED BY:
ŽELIMIR ŽILNIK

WRITTEN BY:
ŽELIMIR ŽILNIK AND BRANKO VUČIČEVIĆ

ADDITIONAL DIALOGUES:
KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS

CAMERA AND EDITING:
KARPO GODINA AČIMOVIĆ

CAST:
MILJA VUJANOVIĆ, BOGDAN TIRNANIĆ, ČEDOMIR RADOVIĆ,
MARKO NIKOLIĆ, SLOBODAN ALIGRUDIĆ

PRODUCER:
SVETOZAR UDOVIČKI

ASSISTANTS:
PETKO VOJNIĆ PURČAR, VLADIMIR DODIG, MIODRAG PETROVIĆ
ŠARLO, BRANKO VUČIČEVIĆ, NADA NEDELJKOVIĆ, DUŠAN NINKOV,
SLOBODAN MILETIĆ, ANDREJ POPOVIĆ, NIKOLA NEŠKOVIĆ, ILIJA
BAŠIĆ, SRĐAN ILIĆ, IGNJAT DEDIĆ, MILAN ČEKIĆ, PETAR ŽIVKOVIĆ,
RADMILA IVATOVIĆ, DRAGAN GROZDANOVIĆ, DANA POPOVIĆ,
SLOBODAN MAŠIĆ

CFL BEOGRAD WESTREX
AVALA FILM BEOGRAD
NEOPLANTA FILM NOVI SAD

Opening credits follow the rhythm of the song "East and West Awake."

Choir:

*Awakening are East and West,
Awakening South and North,
Marching feet in a storming quest,
Comrades, shoulder to shoulder forth!
Marching feet in a storming quest,
Comrades, shoulder to shoulder forth!*

*Forward, closer and closer
Hear our strong feet roar.
The voices of millions rising over
Down with fascism and war!
The voices of millions rising over
Down with fascism and war!*

*Trembling from our fierce parade
Fascism, bloody and blind.
Freedom's awaiting us, comrade
Ours is the whole mankind
Freedom's awaiting us, comrade
Ours is the whole mankind.*

*Let's tear the iron heel apart,
Send hunger and misery to the dark.
The new life's about to start:
Freedom, friendship, and work!
The new life's about to start:
Freedom, friendship, and work!*

1.

Close-up. The face of a girl, covered with foam, appears in the frame.
Girl: *Good morning!*

2.

Medium shot. A courtyard. The father kicks a pumpkin and throws the other one with a shovel into the bushes. Camera pans onto the outhouse.

3.

Close-up. Girl's mouth.
Girl: *Good morning!*

4.

Close-up. The father pushes the shovel with his foot into the ground.
Father: *Have you already masturbated today?*

5.

Like 3.
Girl: *Good morning!*

6.

Medium shot. Father in a hole. Digging out the soil with the shovel.

7.

Close-up. Girl's face, on which the soap is already drying up.
Girl: *As if I do not want a better life for all of us!?*

8.

Wide shot. The courtyard. The outhouse and the father behind it.
Father pushes the outhouse. It starts to fall.

9.

Wide shot from another angle. The outhouse is falling.

10.

Wide shot. The little toilet is falling. Father is observing his own work.

11.

Close-up. Girl with her back turned. Drying her washed hair.

Sister (off): *We have a hard life, as did our people in the old Yugoslavia.*

Before the war, our dad lived this way too. In our personal and social education classes, we learn about what we need to eat to be happy for ...

12.

Medium close-up. The sister speaks into the camera.

Sister: *... work, but we don't eat that. I share my bed with my sister, but it's not unhygienic because she rarely sleeps at home.*

13.

Wide shot. Brick factory.

14.

Full shot. From below. The roof of the brick factory, on which Marko appears.

A chimney in the background.

Whistling can be heard.

Marko: *I'm firing the kiln today.*

Dragiša (off): *We can go up.*

Marko: *Come on!*

He sets off. Camera tilts down. Dragiša and Girl enter through the factory's arch-shaped entrance. Camera follows them.

15.

Darkness. Roaring of the fire.

16.

Medium shot. Brick factory's roof. The wind is blowing.

Leaning forward, in a raincoat, Marko pours coal into the kiln holes. Camera panning to the left reveals Girl and Dragiša. Girl carries bread and sausages in her arms. She lifts the flap of the coal feeder hole with her foot. Marko leaves the frame.

Girl: *We need to review where we stand!*

17.

Wide shot. With his back turned, Marko urinates over the smoldering coal and ashes. The wind disperses the smoke and steam.

18.

Medium close-up. Hands over the hole. Girl grills a sausage on a wire skewer. Tilt upwards. Marko's back. Girl's hair is fluttering in the wind. They are taking off grilled sausages.

Dragiša (off): *If everything was as easy as grilling these sausages, we would be in power by now.*

Girl smells a grilled sausage. Pan. Close-up on Dragiša, who smokes a cigarette.

19.

Close-up. Girl is chewing.

Girl: *I totally understand why my old man beats my mum — after work, he just loses the will to live.*

Pan to the left — Dragiša smokes.

20.

Wide shot. Dusk. The wind has stopped. The rows of steel plates used to cover the bricks are on the ground. In the distance, city lights. Marko flattens the plates. Pan left-right. Marko pauses and taps on a plate.

21.

Intertitle. White letters on a black background.
POLITICAL THEATRE

22.

Warehouse. Machines. Scattered boxes, bales of herbs.
Kruno is filling bottles for Molotov cocktails. He is pouring the petrol. Tilt upwards: Marko and Girl are entering through the door in the background of the frame.

Marko: *Warmest greetings to all brotherly nations!*
Girl is quietly singing "The Internationale." Extending to a wide shot. Dragiša comes in behind them, lighting a cigarette.

Kruno: *Drop the cigarette, you idiot!*

Dragiša throws a match right into a puddle of petrol spilled over the concrete floor. A flame flares up.

Girl: *A spark will start a fire.*

23.

Medium close-up. Marko is squatting and reading.
Marko: *The desire after hoarding is in its very nature insatiable. The hoarder, therefore, makes a sacrifice of the lusts of the flesh to his gold fetish.¹*

The rest (outside of the frame) are beginning to sing "The Internationale." Tilt downwards. Marko tears the pages of *Das Kapital*. In the background, Kruno and Girl appear. Tilt upwards. Medium shot. Kruno is wrapping chains around himself, Girl is helping him.

They are still singing.

In the foreground, Marko stands up, takes a knife, and cuts out a piece of bacon rind hanging on the rope.

Kruno: *Our international debt obliges us to sing "The Internationale."*

Dragiša is coming to the foreground, gesturing and reciting theatrically.

Dragiša: *No more tradition's chains shall bind us ...²*
Pan to the right following Dragiša, who is approaching the schematic representation of how to throw a hand grenade.

Dragiša: *Arise, ye slaves, no more in thrall!*

The earth shall rise on new foundations:

We have been nought, we shall be all!³

24.

American shot. Girl and Kruno are in chains.

Girl: *From words to deeds!*

Girl is sitting down. The frame is widening up — Marko is eating while squatting, Dragiša is entering from the left.

Girl: *Farmers are left to themselves, and they are the ones who carry all the burden in the time of crisis and wars. We should start our action from the base!*

Dragiša sits down. In the background, Kruno is wrapped in chains. Dragiša is peeling off bottle labels.
Marko: *People have to know where they are heading.*

25.

Intertitle. White letters on a black background.

DEMOCRACY — YES

COLLAPSE — NO

REVOLUTIONARY

What then is our conception of the role of the revolutionary? To begin with, we are convinced that the revolutionary cannot and must not be a leader. Revolutionaries are a militant minority drawn from various social strata, people who band together because they share an ideology, and who pledge themselves to struggle against oppression, to dispel the mystification of the ruling classes and the bureaucrats, to proclaim that the workers can only defend themselves and build a socialist society by taking their fate into their own hands, believing that political maturity comes only from revolutionary struggle and direct action.

By their action, militant minorities can do no more than support, encourage, and clarify the struggle. They must always guard against any tendency to become a pressure group outside the revolutionary movement of the masses. When they act, it must always be with the masses, and not as a faction.

For some time, the 22nd March Movement was

remarkable only for its radical political line, for its methods of attack — often spontaneous — and for its non-bureaucratic structure. Its objectives and the role it could play became clear only during the events of May and June, when it attracted the support of the working class. These militant students whose dynamic theories emerged from their practice were imitated by others who developed new forms of action appropriate to their own situation. The result was a mass movement unencumbered by the usual chains of command. By challenging the repressive nature of their own institution — the university — the revolutionary students forced the state to show its hand, and the brutality with which it did so caused a general revulsion and led to the occupation of the factories and the general strike. The mass intervention of the working class was the greatest achievement of our struggle; it was the first step on the path to a better society, a path that, alas, was not followed to the end. The militant minorities failed to get the masses to follow their example: to take collective charge of the running of society. We do not believe for a single moment that the workers are incapable of taking the next logical step beyond occupying the factories, which is to run them on their own. We are sure that they can do what we ourselves have done in the universities.

The militant minorities must continue to wage their revolutionary struggle, to show the workers what their trade unions try to make them forget: their own gigantic strength. The distribution of petrol by the workers in the refineries and the local strike committees shows clearly what the working class is capable of doing once it puts its mind to it.⁴

Daniel Cohn-Bendit

26.

Wide shot. A courtyard filled with a bunch of crates. A warehouse in the background. Marko is dragging Kruno on the chain. They're pushing and pulling each other on the crates.

Kruno: *I am the people and you should lead me!*

Boards break.

Marko: *Every proletariat should finish off with its own bourgeoisie.*

Kruno stretches his chained arms.

Kruno: *Down with the red bourgeoisie!*

They are climbing a pile of wooden boards. It is starting to rain. Behind them, Girl (who puts her coat over her head) and Dragiša are climbing too.

Girl: *They'll arrest us like rats for gathering in groups, and our group hasn't been registered. Your sense for ideas that change the world is really weak.*

27.

Medium shot. With his legs apart over a hole, Father is taking out the feces. Father falls into the hole and drops his hat. Tilt upwards — Father is wriggling out of the hole, straightening up, and leaning on the knocked down privy.

Father: *It stinks! We're doomed.*

He takes a bottle of brandy from the knocked down outhouse and drinks it.

28.

Wide shot. Courtyard of Girl's house. Coming from the dark entrance, Father is staggering to his feet.

Father (singing): *Three tank crewmen ... three jolly fellows ... three tank crewmen ... three jolly fellows ...*

There is a wood-burning stove in front of the house door. Father falls on the hot plate, knocking down the flue.

Father: *Uh ... Ouch!*

29.

Medium shot. In the doorway, Girl with a washtub in her hands and Mother. Behind them, in the kitchen, stands Sister. Girl spills water over her father and the stove. A cloud of steam. Mother and Girl drag Father into the house.

30.

Medium close-up. In the kitchen. Father throws a pile of plates on the floor.

Mother: *Iljja, what are we going to eat from?!*

31.

Wide shot. In front of the house, Sister is sitting in front of a flowering shrub and observing intently what is happening. Girl is sitting next to her.

On the doorstep — Father is breaking the plates.

Father: *Fuck the plates! We're all gonna die!*

Scuffle. Girl rushes to defend Mother, falling on the debris of the plates.

Father: *Where were you last night?*

He pushes her into the house.

32.

Medium shot. The kitchen. Cupboard. Girl sets off toward the door, bends over to pick something up.

Girl: *Feudalism rules in this house!*

She stands up, turns, and defiantly remarks.

Girl: *This is the last time you'll see me.*

33.

Wide shot. In front of the house. Sister is standing by the flue. Girl gives her an apple to bite.

Girl: *There you go, eat!*

She kisses her and leaves.

34.

Wide shot. A field with craters scattered over it. In one hole, Dragiša with a bottle in flames and Girl.

Girl: *Three ... two ... one ... now!*

Dragiša rushes out of the hole — pan to the right — he runs and throws the bottle. Explosion. A mushroom cloud of smoke.

Dragiša: *Mission accomplished!*

Girl: *Well done!*

Choir of male voices (off): *We serve the People!*

Girl and Dragiša are examining the effects of the explosion.

Girl: *I'm not going back home!*

35-42.

Dragiša's apartment. Dragiša takes off his jumper.

Girl: *Shall I read aloud so you relax a bit?*

" ... shame is a revolution in itself. ... And if a whole nation were to feel ashamed it would be like a lion recoiling in order to spring. ... The comedy of despotism in which we are being forced to act is as dangerous for him as tragedy was once for the Stuarts and the Bourbons. And even if the comedy will not be seen in its true light for a long time yet, it will still be a revolution. The state is too serious a business to be subjected to such buffoonery. A ship of fools can perhaps be allowed to drift before the wind for a good while; but it will still drift to its doom precisely because the fools refuse to believe it possible. This doom is the approaching revolution. This doom is the approaching revolution."⁵

43.

Close-up. Dragiša's profile. Tilt down to Dragiša's hand, and to a gun which he uses to flick through Marx and Engels' *Early Works*.⁶

Girl (off): *"What they⁷ wish is to live and to procreate And this they have in common with animals. ... Man's self-esteem, his sense of freedom, must be re-awakened in the breast of these people. ... The philistine world is the animal kingdom of politics In the eyes of the despot, men are always debased. They drown before his eyes and on his behalf in the mire of common life ..."*

44.

Dragiša's profile. His face is covered with his hair. Girl's hands enter the frame and push back his hair.

Girl (off): *" ... from which, like toads, they always rise up again. ... Muta pecora, prona et ventri obedientia."⁸*

45.

Close-up. Dragiša's head on the floor. His eyes are closed. From the right, Girl's legs enter the frame — pan to the left — Girl stands on Dragiša's chest.

Dragiša (off): *Have you ever shagged so intensely that your teeth went numb?*

Tilt up over Girl's naked body.

Girl (off): *You are too little for that!* (She giggles.)

46.

Close-up. Dragiša's face. Girl is pushing him away. Tilt down — Girl's head on the floor.

Dragiša (off): *Admit it, what is the maximum number of times you've cum in one night?*

Pan left over Girl's naked body.

Girl (off): *You're so stupid!*

Dragiša.

Girl (off): *Tell me something nice.*

47.

Wide shot. An overgrown slope of a hill. The sky. Dragiša in a long raincoat, strolling romantically from the right to the left side of the frame. The wind's howling.

Dragiša: *I could make you cum seven times in a night.*

48.

Close-up. Dragiša looks upwards. Shot panning up over the naked girl.

49.

Detail. The palm of Dragiša's hand. Girl's finger follows the palm lines.

Girl (off): *This is your art line ... next to the ring finger ... Let me see, what is this? Aha! ... This should be the life line. Well, you don't live at all! Mount of Venus. It has crumbled completely! And you call yourself a quickly and frequently aroused man!*

50.

Detail. A pair of hands cutting the bread, spreading lard over it.

51.

Medium close-up. In the foreground, a table with bread, lard, a knife, and *Early Works* on it. Girl with wet hair, in a sweater, is sitting leaning against the wall.

Girl: *The first time went well. Let's see how it continues ...*

Pan to the left. Through the table legs — Dragiša, half naked, is sitting on the floor and eating. He looks worried.

Dragiša: *It's going to be up again in a wink.*

Girl: *A wink's gone! ... You are lying.*

Dragiša: *Kiss me and you'll see.*

Girl (off): *Come on, what are you waiting for? How do you think you'll get to the seventh time?*

Dragiša leaves the bread, takes the gun from the table, rises, and points it at Girl (outside the frame).

52.

Detail. Dragiša's forehead and eyes. A shot. Pan over a hand.

Girl (off): *Are you kidding?*

A shot. Close-up — a gun.

53.

Close-up. Dragiša. A shot.

54.

Detail. Dragiša's shoulder. A shot.

55.

Detail. The finger pulls the trigger. A shot.

56.

Pan over a hand. A shot. Close-up of a gun.

57.

Wide shot. In front of the white-tiled wall — a frontal view of a Citroën 2CV car, number plate NS 320-74. Through the open roof, Dragiša is bending over the windscreen, Girl is sitting behind the wheel.

The presenter (off): *Tirke and Milja!*

58.

Wide shot. Dragiša moves the windscreen wipers.
Animation.

59.

As in 58. Second phase.

60.

As in 59. Third phase.

61.

Wide shot. The car is set laterally, Engine facing right. Girl, Dragiša, Marko, and Kruno, as if they are dead, are bending over one side of the car.

62.

Wide shot. The opposite side. Dragiša stands face-to-face with the camera, Kruno turns his back to the camera.

63.

Wide shot. The opposite side. The door's been taken off the car. At the front seat, Branko Vučićević; at the back, Želimir Žilnik. They're looking at the camera.

The presenter (off): *That's them!*

64.

Wide shot. Engine facing right. Everyone is sitting in the car, Girl is standing with a swaying flag.

The presenter (off): *The flag, with the star!*

65.

Wide shot. The opposite side of the car.

66.

Wide shot. The car is positioned frontally, the headlamps are on.

67.

Wide shot. A raft floating on a wide river. On the raft — a car. All rowing and panting.
Dragiša: *I have a guilty conscience for us driving in the car. We should encounter the masses walking on foot. One can hear a ship siren.*

68.

Wide shot. A long island in the middle of the river. Dragiša (in a waterproof coat) strolls through the shallow water. Trucking from right to left. Suddenly music can be heard. The raft enters the frame.

Reflections of the sun on water.

Dragiša: *Down with being romantic!*

69.

Wide shot. Closer. They are building a fire, and the fire blazes up.

In this, and in all subsequent frames of this scene, the camera constantly circles the raft. One can hear a song.*

--

**Choir: Communist Party, oh my blooming flower,
Oh Communist Party, my precious, my flower that's
blooming,*

*The whole nation after you are following,
The whole nation, my precious, after you are following.*

*Oh Communist Party, your deeds are sacred,
Oh Communist Party, my precious, your deeds are
sacred,*

*Following you the people's movement has awoken,
Following you, my precious, the people's movement has
awaken.*

*Oh Communists, long may you be remembered in
history*

Oh Communists, my precious, long may you be

*remembered in history,
You have rescued the nation from its misery,
You, my precious, have rescued the nation from its
misery!*

--

70.

Wide shot. The raft is spinning. From the distance, a barge and a motorboat are approaching.

71.

Wide shot. Twilight. They are all eating fish soup from white enamel plates.

72.

Medium shot. They are eating the soup. Tilt upwards — a barge is passing by.

73.

Wide shot. They are eating.

74.

American shot. Kruno and Girl with plates in their hands. Pan on Marko and Dragiša.

75.

American shot. Marko is looking at the camera. Dragiša and Marko are eating. The frame extends to the whole group.

76.

American shot. Marko is getting up.

77.

American shot. The four of them on the raft.

78.

Medium close-up. Girl is passing.

79.

Medium shot. Dragiša is breaking a branch over his knee. Pan onto the fire.

80.

Medium shot. Kruno is reading the shot list.

81.

Medium shot. Girl is hanging washed socks on the car.

82.

American shot. Kruno is looking at her.

83.

Medium shot. In the foreground, Marko is sleeping, leaning on the car. Girl and Dragiša are in the background.

84.

American shot. Kruno and Dragiša are entering the car. The fire is burning.

85.

Wide shot. They are all in the car and are asleep. The fire burns. The raft is floating, carried by the river's current.

86.

Wide shot. Flat land. Camera pans jerkily to the right, on a hill with long grass. The car enters the frame.

87.

Wide shot. Everyone is pushing the car up the slope. Everyone: *C'mon, c'mon!*

88.

Wide shot. A frontal view. The car is sliding down the slope. Girl and Marko are trying to push it back. Girl: *Hey, watch out ...*

89.

Similar to 88.

90.

Wide shot from below. The car slides towards the camera.

Everyone: *Stop! Hold it! Pull the brake!*

Marko: *Hold it, good heavens!*

Girl: *I cannot do it by myself! What now, just me ... I can't!*

In the foreground — Girl and Dragiša.

91.

Medium shot. The front of the car. Marko, Dragiša, and Girl are pushing, with their hands on the sides of the car. The car is sliding down the slope.

Dragiša: *Let me see!*

He opens the bonnet. Headlights are on. The car is sliding.

Everyone: *Watch out! It's gone, gone! Pull the brake!*

Girl: *You are completely mad.*

The wind is blowing.

92.

Wide shot. Closer. The car is sliding, Dragiša falls down.

Everyone: *Hold on, hold it now!*

93.

Wide shot. The steep side of the hill. Horses are pulling the car. Girl and her friends are pushing.

Everyone: *To Berlin!*

The camera turns.

Girl: *Which one?*

The bonnet falls.

94.

American shot. Dragiša, fuming with rage, spits into the engine. The bonnet falls. They all come up to the top of the hill, whipped by the wind. Pan to the right

— they are approaching a cabbage field; they pick the cabbages and throw them at each other. Dragiša knocks Girl down. Kruno jumps on a cabbage pile and rolls over it. Kruno smashes a cabbage into Dragiša's head.

95.

Medium shot. Pan to the right — Kruno is sitting on a cabbage. Dragiša stuffs Girl's mouth with cabbage leaves and then lies on her.

Dragiša: *Come on, lunchtime!*

96.

Wide shot. Closer. Kruno protects Girl from the wind with his coat. She walks half-naked, wiping herself with a blouse.

Dragiša (off): *All real revolutionaries get daily allowances when they go to do the field work. What would they demand if they slaved away like this?!*

97.

Medium shot. Kruno with a coat in his hands. Marko approaches, carrying a cabbage.

Marko: *What an idiotic situation ...*

Pan upwards — Marko is bashing a cabbage into his knee.

Marko: *... who do we charge for this?*

Girl enters the frame. She sits down.

Girl: *That's why nobody takes us seriously.*

Wind. Girl puts on her coat. They sit and eat cabbage.

98.

Wide shot from the top of the hill. Fields. Girl is turned with her back to the camera. In the distance, a car is meandering in the fields.

Girl: *A specter is haunting Europe — the specter of communism.⁹*

She turns and looks at the camera. Pan to the right — the car is going around through the harvested

cornfields.

Girl (off): *All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter. ... The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.*¹⁰

99.

Wide shot. Four figures against a sky background. They go through the grass towards the camera. Everyone carries a cabbage.

Dragiša: *Lenin was right. Revolution is performed only by the paid revolutionaries. We are dilettanti — we'd better dance folk dances.*

He throws the cabbage in front of himself. And kicks it.

100.

Wide shot. In the distance, the slope of the hill. They are dancing in a circle.

Everyone: *Kolo, kolo, goes around,¹¹
winding, bursting,
shimmering and glowing,
twisting and twirling ...*

Pan to the left — they are coming down the hill dancing. Everyone: *Faster, brothers, let's all gather,
So that we can play together.*

*Hey, Serbian Boy, all in red hue
Everyone must envy you.*

*You Montenegrins, mighty lords,
Who everyone praises and applauds.
Faster, brothers, let's all gather,
So that we can play together ...*

Marko stops dancing, he leaves the circle. Everyone stops.

Marko: *Are you aware of the fact that there are no*

*Shqiptars here?*¹²

Girl: *They are not Shqiptars, you idiot, they are Albanians. (Pause.) The fact is, these pre-war songs do not contribute to forging brotherhood and unity at all.*
She walks down the hill.

101.

Wide shot. Village street. Mulberry trees. Mud. Geese. A car with Girl and comrades appears. Tilt down right reveals a pond. The car enters the water and cannot go any further.

102.

Medium shot. Bent over the windshield, Dragiša measures the depth of the pond with a corn stalk. Pan to the right, onto the wheel.

103.

Wide shot. Closer. Pan to the right. Kruno tramps through the water, Marko pulls after him a trolley with a load of corn sheaves. The engine is rattling. Pan to the right reveals a car stuck in the pond. Girl stands in the car. Kruno and Marko enter the frame with the trolley again. They throw the sheaves on the car.

104.

Detail. Corn straw. Underneath the straw, the headlights. Hands. Pan on the wheel — Marko and Dragiša — Girl in the water at the back end of the car — Kruno behind the wheel — Girl again.

105.

Wide shot. A porch of a rural house. Old Solomon and his son come out of the house. They approach Girl standing next to the pillar, to the right. Solomon shakes hands.

Solomon: *Hello!*

Girl: *My friend Solomon, how was it in Siberia?*

Son: *Kumo foste in Sibirija.*

A slow zoom to the medium shot. The son leaves the frame.

Solomon: *It was good ... Yes ... People there are like people from here ... Yes ... But I lived well there ... And I did it during the harvest ... It was okay ... Yes ... Yes ...*

The son enters the frame.

Son: *Baj, povestašče mai šalče kumo fos, pra kum, kumo fos kum bataja, kum...*

The son exits the frame.

Solomon: *There to Siberia ... From Galicia to Siberia, twenty-three days. Day and night ... Yes ... Until I arrive there ... Yes ... Well then, it was good, way too good there ... In Siberia ... Yes ...*

Geese are squawking. Solomon looks around, as if asking if he still needs to say something.

106.

Wide shot. Huge barn door. Kruno, Dragiša, and Girl are bashing on the door. Girl is kicking it. Kruno starts breaking the padlock with an axe.

107.

Close-up. The axe bashes the padlock and the chain.

108.

Wide shot. The door opens. The left wing of the door falls off and smashes to the ground. Kruno and Dragiša are dragging metal barrels from the barn.

109.

Wide shot. A group of peasants in front of the barn. They're looking at the camera. Behind their backs, the doors of the barn open again. Backing away, they disperse to the left. Kruno and Dragiša are coming out, pulling the roller of the harrow.

110.

Close-up. Girl's hand is opening a lid on the harrow and pulling compacted straw out of it.

111.

Medium shot. Dragiša is climbing onto a threshers, removing the lid.

112.

Close-up. Girl's hand is entering the frame, opening the lid of the oilcan, pulling the cap, and closing it again.

113.

Close-up. Wheel. Girl is bashing the wheel-hub with a hammer. One part of it falls off.

114.

Detail. Girl's hand is cleaning the metal plate with cotton rags. She is sanding it. The inscription appears:
ACHTUNG! ACHTUNG!

TÄGLICH ZWEIMAL BIS ZUR MARKIERUNG AM GLASE
MIT GUTEM MASCHINEN-OEL FÜLLEN!
WÖCHENTLICH ENTLLEEREN, MIT PETROLEUM
REINIGEN UND MIT NEUEM OEL FÜLLEN!¹³

115.

Close-up. Marko's hand applies a wedge to the corn-thresher's upper lid. Pan to the right — Girl's face. A song starts.*

--

*The song can be heard in all the remaining frames of this scene.

*A song of comrades everywhere rings,
A song that celebrates work
And our heart loudly sings
Celebrate, celebrate work!
And our heart loudly sings
Celebrate, celebrate work!*

*Lift the foreheads high
We the slaves of our work
The entire country will be ours to
Celebrate, celebrate work!*

*The entire country will be ours to
Celebrate, celebrate work!
The savages had arrows and bows.
Railways, villages, and cities,
They are creations of ours, so
Celebrate, celebrate work!
They are creations of ours, so
Celebrate, celebrate work!*

*From the Adriatic to China,
The sunshine of freedom spreads
The whole earth will be inspired to
Celebrate, celebrate work!
The whole earth will be inspired to
Celebrate, celebrate work!*

--

116.

Detail. A hammer hits the wedge.

117.

Medium shot. Two cogwheels of the corn thresher.
Marko is fixing the handle.

118.

Medium shot. He is turning and cleaning it.

119.

Medium close-up. It starts to turn.

120.

Detail. The inside of the corn thresher. A cogwheel
rotates.

121.

Close-up. The upper opening of the corn thresher, from
which the corncob pops out.

122.

Close-up. Girl's face covered with hair. Pan downward
— cob outlet of the thresher. The cob pops out. Girl
puts the corn back in. The camera is panning upwards
— Girl is laughing, touching her face.

123.

Detail. Cobs with no kernels on. Kernels flying around.
The camera is panning upwards — Girl is stuffing the
thresher with corn ears. Marko is turning the handle.
Zoom out — trees in the background. Pan and zoom
onto the corncobs.

124.

Wide shot. The group positioned around the thresher,
as if to be photographed. Dragiša is lying in front of the
thresher. Zoom out.

125.

Wide shot. Closer. The same. Dragiša puts a corncob
between his legs. Girl is laughing and bending down.

126.

Medium close-up. Ruins of the local farmers'
cooperative building. Girl in a squatting position with
her trousers pulled down.
*Girl: It's sad, comrades, that these walls are put to no
use when so much sweat and voluntary work went into
building them.*

127.

Wide shot. Girl. At the other end, Marko is performing
the same act.
*Marko: Cooperatives are one of many disillusion of the
politics of collectivization.*

128.

Wide shot. To the left, Kruno is holding onto a wall,
squatting about a meter above the ground.
Kruno: The issue for discussion is whether ...

129.

Wide shot. Expanded. In the hole — Dragiša is thinking and smoking.

Kruno: ... *they match the collective psychology in our villages at all.*

Dragiša: *Give us a break and stop bullshitting. Pass me the newspapers.*

Girl is getting up, pulling up her trousers. She throws him the papers. She goes back and continues.

Dragiša: *Oho! An excellent article by Dž. Husić!*

He wipes his butt and passes the paper to Kruno.

Marko: *Had we been smart, we wouldn't have come to the countryside.*

Dragiša: *You can't change it now! We'd put that in our program.*

130.

Close-up. In the car. From the back. Kruno is driving. Pan to Girl.

131.

Wide shot. Camera is tilting. A frontal view of a moving car. Girl is wiping the windscreen, standing next to the car.

Kruno: *We can't continue!*

Girl: *I know how to do it ... You're mad! Of all the men I know, you are the only one who masturbates.*

Kruno: *You have no idea – everyone does it.*

Girl: *Shut up! This is why you all have crooked spines.*

132.

Wide shot. Darkness. The car is approaching the camera from the background. Headlights are on.

133.

Wide shot. Daylight. The car is parked on the road. Bushes form a background behind it. Drizzling rain. Through the open car door, Girl is seen, naked, on the front seat. Kruno circles the car, stark naked. He wrings

out his underwear.

Girl: *You're a bad friend for letting me freeze!*

Kruno: *Let's not spoil our relationship.*

134.

Medium close-up. Kruno gets in the car. He slams the door shut. Pan to the left — he is wrapping Girl in a shelter half.

Kruno: *Still, we've stayed friends. You're not angry, are you?*

Girl climbs into the back seat.

Girl: *You liar! We're going to be late. Drive!*

The engine starts.

135.

Full shot. A set of cartoon illustrations showing how to insert a birth-control diaphragm. The camera tracks Girl's hand, which points to the various stages of positioning.

136.

Close-up. An intrauterine device.

137.

Close-up. Girl's hands with spermicidal foam. Pan to the left — only a pump dripping foam is left in the frame. The faces of peasant women can be made out in the darkened background.

138.

Close-up. First peasant woman.

First peasant woman: *I wanna ask you, is it better to use the pill or douche to not get pregnant?*

139.

Close-up. Second peasant woman.

Second peasant woman: *How many abortions can a woman get and stay healthy?*

140.

Close-up. Third peasant woman.

Third peasant woman: *What age is best? ... How old should a girl be to get pregnant, what age is best to have a kid?*

141.

Close-up. Fourth peasant woman.

Fourth peasant woman: *I would like to ask you one question: when a married couple isn't doing it, let's say, I mean normal sex, when they practice that, doing things so the woman doesn't get pregnant, does that harm anyone's health?*

142.

American shot. Girl from the back. She strolls left and right in front of a group of peasant women. She holds some papers in her hand. The camera tracks her.

Girl: *There are two effective methods to avoid conception. First — to refrain from intercourse with anyone — which we, who are not married, practice — and second — for you who live with men — to use various devices. This issue has been raised by leftist movements since Clara Zetkin and we will not make any significant progress until the man stops behaving like an oppressor, while the woman remains exploited as a proletariat. A woman can be liberated from her oppression only by an altered ...*

143.

Wide shot. From behind. Dark outlines of peasant women. Occasionally, the head of Girl who, while lecturing, strolls among the women, can be made out in the background, starkly lit. In the upper left-hand corner, a wardrobe with mirrors can be seen.

Girl: *... employment structure and dismantling of the monogamous family, which not even destruction of the bourgeois state was able to accomplish, but to which the third technological revolution — toward which we progress — will certainly lead. After all, biologically, a*

woman is the stronger sex, and in a decade or two she will rule.

144.

Wide shot. The side of a stable. An imitation of a Russian nobleman's nest. In a niche between the pillars, wearing the coat of a Russian nobleman, posing as a tribune, Girl.

Male voices (off): *Long live!*

Pan upwards. Tilt forwards.

Male voice: *Long live the 8th of March — International Women's Day!*

Girl: *To destroy the self-centered and frivolous art sustained by oppression of the workers! To stop the emergence and prevent the existence of a new bourgeois class! Culture — to the hammer and sickle! Hammer and sickle above culture! We effect a cultural revolution!*

145.

Wide shot. In the stable. A village idiot.

Idiot: *Woof! Woof! Cock-a-doodle-doo! Mirko, let's-eat, I-can't-dad, cuz-I-already-ate-dinner!*

146.

Wide shot. Peasants. Some sitting, some standing.
Peasants: *That's right! That's right!*

147.

American shot. In the stable, in front of an improvised stage. The wardrobe with mirrors is placed in the rear of the set. Two peasants and a giant, whose hands are positioned to lift a burden and covered with a horse blanket. Pan to the right — another two peasants. Pan to the left — the giant alone.

148.

Dolly shot, closer. Peasants are lifting a log and putting it in the giant's hands. He holds it, easily turning in place, and puts it on the ground.

Peasants (off): *Oooh!*
He stands upright.
Peasants: *That's right!*

149.

Close-up. A peasant with a fur hat. He smiles. Faces of onlookers in the background. Drumming of feet is heard.

150.

Wide shot. On an improvised stage, a boy wearing a billed cap performs a Cossack dance.

151.

Zoom shot. Down a village street, a car. Girl stands in it. She speaks through a megaphone. In front of the houses, groups of peasants watch and listen to the goings-on. The frame begins with a wide shot but ends with a close-up of the megaphone's mouth.

Girl: *Comrades, men and women farmers, we are aware that we will encounter resistance, we feel it our duty to convey to you that you are doomed to fail and that this failure is impossible to prevent! All vital forces fight against the idiocy of rural life, and you are mired in it up to your necks. Even though the classics claim that you are the class that will wither away with the development of productive forces, and even though your petty individual farm is unprofitable, in this transition period we espouse an alliance of workers and poor farmers! We are with you — be with us!*

152.

Wide shot. A muddy village street. The sun is shining. The farmers are attacking Girl and comrades. Dragiša bolts, the camera pans on him to the left. Two older women are placidly watching in the background.

153.

Wide shot. Pan to the left and zoom shot. Dragiša runs through farmyards and past manure piles, jumps

over fences, dashes in front of a gate, rushes past a whitewashed house wall, and disappears around the corner.

154.

Medium close-up. Farmers are pushing Kruno down into the mud.

155.

Medium close-up. They are plunging Girl into the mud and dragging her. Pan to the right — Kruno — Marko.

156.

American shot. They throw Marko on the ground and stomp on him. Pan to the left — Kruno writhes in the mud.

157.

American shot. The giant, with his sleeves and trouser legs rolled up, stomps on Marko. Pan to the left — two men are pulling Girl — Kruno is being kicked, he rolls in the mud.

158.

Medium close-up. Two peasants are carrying Girl. She struggles, wriggles, bites one man's hand.

159.

Medium close-up. They throw Girl into a manure pile. She desperately scrambles. They rip off her clothes and rape her.

160.

Wide shot. Darkness. In the upper right corner, car headlights. In the distance, towards the top, a fire burns.

161.

Medium close-up. Fire in the foreground. Flames rise up. Girl can be seen through the flames.

Girl: *I am happy there will be no peasants in communism.*

She raises up a stick.

Girl: *The source of our weakness is that we recoil from violence.*

She feeds the stick into the flames. Pan to the left — Kruno smoking — Marko. Sparks fly in the air.

162.

Wide shot. A plowed field. Stumbling over clods of black soil, Girl and comrades approach.

Girl: *Let's review!*

Dragiša: *We have managed barely two days.*

Girl: *Let's admit, we approached the countryside as a humanist abstraction.*

Dragiša: *I don't think it's that bad.*

Marko: *You shut up, you ran like a bitch!*

Pushes him.

Dragiša: *As if you achieved something?!*

Pan to the left — at the edge of the plot, their car can be seen, all covered in mud. Girl and Dragiša enter the frame. She enters the car, throws his rubberized raincoat away.

Girl: *I don't count on you anymore!*

Dragiša gives the raincoat a flying kick and catches it.

163.

Wide shot. Dragiša (in a raincoat) sits in the middle of a muddy road. His leg is chained. The sound of an engine.

164.

Wide shot. The car in the background of the frame.

Dragiša lays in the mud, dragged by the car.

Narrator: *VCs bunched possibly about half a mile from where we are now ...*

Gun fire. Vietnamese voices.

165.

Wide shot. Dragiša lies as if dead. Gunfire. The car jerks him along. He stands up.

166.

Wide shot. Dragiša lies prostrate on the ground, his face in the mud. Gunfire. His leg twitches.

167.

Close-up. The camera pans to the right, over Dragiša and the chain attached to the back bumper of the car, and pans back. Dragiša signals with his hand, as if asking to stop.

168.

Close-up. Dragiša's face. The scene takes place in a warehouse. Nighttime. Marko fits a rope around Dragiša's forehead, twists it with a piece of a stick. Pan to the left — Marko. Pan to the right — Dragiša.

Dragiša: *It still fits.*

Marko twists tighter. Pan to the right — Dragiša.

Tightening. Creaking of bone is heard. Marko untwists and removes the rope. Pan to the left — Marko, back to Dragiša.

Girl (off): *That enough?*

Dragiša smiles.

169.

Wide shot. The warehouse. Dragiša sits on an herb chopper, his side to the camera. Girl stands next to him. On the background wall, instructional pictures for throwing grenades can be seen. Dragiša finds wadded pieces of paper between the toes of his bare right foot.

Dragiša: *Give me a cigarette!*

Girl pulls out a pack, places a cigarette, lights up.

Girl: *This is your last!*

She mangles the crumpled pack in his toes. Lights up pieces of paper. The paper burns. Girl flicks ashes off the cigarette.

Marko (off): *Let the engine start! Turn on the machine!*
The chopper begins to shake Dragiša.
Dragiša: *One ... two ... three ... four ...*
Girl laughs.
Dragiša: *Ah! ... it burns ...*
He rips pieces of paper from his toes as fast as he can.
Girl laughs.

170.

Close-up. A meal laid out on spread newspapers.
Hands. Girl breaks the bread in halves, Kruno opens a can. Tilt upwards — Girl and Dragiša. Dragiša bends over and takes the bread. Pan to the left — Kruno — Marko.
Marko: *Three kilos of potatoes and five of us. Who can get it up tonight?!*
Girl (off): *You're so vulgar!*
Lepa¹⁴: *Do you only eat potatoes?*
The camera is panning to the right — Kruno — Girl — Dragiša eat. The camera is panning on Kruno, who cuts a potato wedge, holds it on his knife, and places it in his mouth.

171.

Close-up. Food on the sheets of newspaper. Girl's hand writes the names of the young men on pieces of paper.
To the left — Kruno's hand with the knife.

172.

American shot. Lepa and Girl stand beside sacks of medicinal plants. They draw lots. Girl sees whom she has gotten.

173.

American shot. Girl by the door.
Girl: *Marko, come out into the morning!*
Marko appears in the frame to the right. He exits into the night. City noise. Girl shuts the door.

174.

Close-up. Girl sits by the wooden crate that served as a dinner table. She wipes her hands on her trousers. Lepa's hands tidy up dinner leftovers. Girl holds her fists clenched. With her finger, Lepa points to the one she has chosen.

175.

Wide shot. Girl makes a bed on a pile of sacks.
Girl: *Kruno, we'll be here!*

176.

Wide shot. Dragiša in the foreground, up to his waist in a sack of mint. He pulls himself out, shakes the herbs over a giggling Lepa. He lies on her.
Dragiša (off): *Dragiša, Dragiša ...*
Lepa laughs. Dragiša turns, gets up. Pan to the right — Dragiša and Kruno. They speak furtively.
Kruno: *... You know what ... Off you go ... I can't.*
Dragiša: *I can't help you! Perhaps you should call Marko?*

He goes back — the camera tracks him. He continues to sprinkle herbs over a giggling Lepa. He lies on top of her.

177.

Wide shot. Girl, on the sacks.
Girl: *I don't have to beg anyone! Lepa, come here!*
Pan to the right — Lepa enters the frame, climbs onto the sacks. Girl and Lepa.

178.

Wide shot. Girl and Lepa sit on the sacks.
Girl: *What are you waiting for, you homos!*
Pan to the left — Dragiša and Kruno. They toss away their cigarettes, pass by. The camera tracks them. They pull Girl off the sacks. Lepa watches calmly. They pull Girl out of the frame.

179.

Wide shot. Machines in the background. On the wall, to the right, pictorial instructions for throwing grenades.

They carry Girl, who struggles furiously.

Girl: *Lepa, don't do them both! Please!*

Kruno opens the door and they hurl her out. Loud city noise. They turn and close the door.

180.

Wide shot. The slope of a ravine. Trees. Girl and comrades try to walk down.

Girl: *After what happened with Lepa — the sight of you makes me sick.*

Marko: *What? They tossed you out as well?*

In their sliding descent, they grasp onto trees for balance. Rotten branches snap. The rustle of dry leaves. Pan to the left. They tumble to the bottom of the ravine.

Dragiša: *For a pig farmer, it's the revolution when he gets a desk job.*

181.

Similar to 180. They scramble down the slope again.

Dragiša: *It's hard to expect more ambition; for him, it's all good when he leaves the pigs.*

182.

Wide shot. Closer. Dragiša, Marko, Kruno, and Girl emerge from the brush, from the right. The young men engage in horseplay. Girl runs in front of them, raises her hands, stops them.

Girl: *Have they achieved communism in Russia because they all get shchi and kvass?*

Dragiša and Marko wrestle in the grass.

183.

Closer. They knock down Girl. Girl lies in the grass, laughs. Pan to the right. Dragiša tumbles down the grade. Kruno jumps on him.

Kruno: *Let's limit sovereignty!*

Tilt upward — Kruno spreads his hands. Pan to the left — Girl with a gun. Pan to the right — Dragiša lies down.

Girl puts the gun barrel to Dragiša's forehead.

Girl: *Let's be friends!*

A gunshot. Dragiša crumples.

184.

Wide shot. A natural embankment. Shrubs and trees toward the top. Tree roots protrude in tangles. Girl and comrades jump down. The ground's surface slides away. Marko finds a cache of rifles in a heap of dry leaves. The roar of battle. They begin to fire the rifles into the air.

185.

American shot. Pan to the right — Girl, holding a rifle, prods the young men ahead of her. Marko keeps his hands in his pockets, the other two have their hands up. Girl stumbles.

186.

American shot. Dragiša with a revolver. He fires once, the revolver misfires. He tries again — gunshot.

187.

American shot. Dragiša swings a rifle around, knocking down weeds.

Dragiša: *Once communism is established, there will be no freedom for enemies of freedom!*

188.

Wide shot. A forest. From under a heap of leaves, Girl and comrades rise up. They shoot their rifles.

189.

Wide shot. Taking cover behind a tree, Dragiša fires a rifle to the left. He opens the bolt. He inspects the chamber and barrel.

190.

Wide shot. Abandoned mining pit. Girl appears with her hands up. Marko with a gun behind her.

Girl: *My Mom would be more liberated by a washing machine than by voting rights!*

Marko fires a couple of shots. Girl falls down. He approaches her, scratching his head. He grasps her hand and helps her up.

Girl: *Ow!*

191.

Wide shot. Kruno and Marko, cradling rifles, crawl from a defilade into the open. They fire. Pan to the right — Girl and Dragiša stand like captives. Dragiša unbuttons his raincoat, when he's done he falls down. Pan to the left — Marko and Kruno. A gunshot. Pan to the right — Girl lies down.

192.

Wide shot. Closer. Girl and comrades sit to the right, on sloped ground.

Marko: *According to you, Fidel Castro shouldn't have bothered to descend from his mountain. According to you, Lenin should have stayed in Switzerland and Gorkić should have remained at the Party helm.*

Kruno: *According to you, Stalin should still be where he'd been laid ...*

Girl: *And Trotsky beside him!*

Kruno: *According to you, Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Bukharin would not be relegated to the dustbin of history.*

Dragiša: *According to you, Imre Nady would still be alive.*

One gunshot. Kruno is startled.

Dragiša: *According to you, Hegel should have been left to stand on his head!*

193.

Wide shot. The frame is upside down. The ground is up — the sky is down. A field. Next, all stand on their

heads, only Dragiša stands upright. They get to their feet.

194.

Wide shot. A meadow on the outskirts of a village. Poplars. Haze. Dragiša stands in the right-hand corner and counts down, gesturing.

Dragiša: *Five ... four ... three ... two ... one ... zero ... Fire!*

Pan to the left — Girl and Marko — to the right — Marko runs with a lit Molotov cocktail, throws it into a car marked with a white cross. Explosion. Music and a Russian song are heard.

Old woman (off): *Kids, have our Russian brothers finally come?*

An alley in the background. Marko and Girl enter the frame from the left. Marko warms his hands on the burning vehicle. Dragiša appears too. They go around the car. The camera pans on them.

The armies of multiple Warsaw Pact countries entered Czechoslovakia last night. This was first reported by Radio Prague this morning at 2:00 a.m. Central European Time. Radio Prague has condemned this move as an infringement of international law and has said that Czechoslovakian armed forces had been ordered not to resist.

In its first morning show, the radio reported that army troops of the Soviet Union, Poland, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, and Bulgaria had entered Czechoslovakia. Without the knowledge or approval of the Czechoslovakian state leadership, the troops of these countries — the Radio Prague show has said — trespassed on the territory of Czechoslovakia last night at 23:00 hours Central European Time.

Early this morning, the Presidency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia issued a statement concerning the entry of troops of Warsaw Pact member states into Czechoslovakia,

emphasizing that it "happened without the knowledge of the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, or the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia."
(POLITIKA, August 22, 1968)

The First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Gustáv Husák, today fully justified last year's military intervention by five nations, saying that it had helped Czechoslovakia. "The entry of troops, the action to which our allied and brother states had resorted, has been motivated by a concern for the development of socialism in Czechoslovakia, the concern for jeopardizing the entire Socialist camp and, it should be clearly stated — at least it is my opinion — that it in no way constituted a hostile act toward Czechoslovakian people and Czechoslovakian state, but that it was motivated by desire to help the Czechoslovakian people, our workers."
As regards the Soviet army that is now stationed on Czechoslovakian territory, Husák has said that they are there as allies, brothers, for the sake of protection of the country.
(BORBA, August 30, 1969)

195.

Wide shot. A prison courtyard. Walls. Pounding noise can be heard behind the door in the background. Policemen rush out, hustle prisoners, namely Kruno, Dragiša, and Marko, forcing them to sit on stools.

196.

Medium close-up. Marko. In the foreground, a policeman passes by. Pan to the left — Dragiša — Kruno. Barbers drape them in white capes. Pan to the right — Dragiša. A policeman passes by.

197.

Close-up. Dragiša. A hand holding clippers enters

the frame. The clippers begin to remove Dragiša's sideburns.

198.

Close-up. Frontal. Men sitting, wrapped in the capes. A policeman stands between Dragiša and Marko. Dragiša struggles, runs out of the frame. Policemen gang up on him, forcing him back onto the stool. Dragiša grapples with them.

199.

Close-up. Dragiša. The barber's hands with the hair clippers. The camera pans on Dragiša's struggles. Dragiša: *I swam naked in the Morača river in December, when I shouldn't have done!*

200.

Close-up. Kruno. Hair clippers take off his sideburns. Kruno: *If we continue like this, there won't be a living soul left in communism.*

201.

Intertitle. White letters on a black background.
RETURN AMONG THE PEOPLE

202.

Wide shot. Rubble of a factory. Piles of boards and bricks. The sun is shining. Girl, with a bottle in her hand, Kruno, Marko, and Dragiša emerge from bushes. Dragiša is wrapped in a linen banner inscribed LONG LIVE FIRST OF MAY. Pan to the left.

Dragiša: *It's better to give it to the beggars.*

Walking down a slatted board, they go to a table standing in a pool with water. Girl leaves the bottle. A mild zoom out.

203.

Wide shot. The group is squatting in a stagnant pool, among the factory rubble.

Girl: The only thing the proletariat owns is his labor. The proletariat is without property. They have nothing of their own to secure. Their mission is to destroy all previous securities.¹⁵ We have so far always had a place to return to. We did not have to work eight hours a day. We failed in helping them because we were spectators. Kruno: It's not up to us to help anyone, but to share the destiny of the masses since we cannot alter the status of the masses.

204.

Wide shot. From another angle. They get up. Dragiša throws away the banner, sets off to the left.

205.

Close-up. A fire. Tilt upwards — Marko and Girl. Marko pours fuel from a bottle onto a suitcoat. Tilt down — the fire flares.

206.

Close-up. Girl tears up photographs. Fire in the back of frame. Pan to the left — Marko pours fuel over the photographs.

207.

Close-up. Marko's hands. Tilt down — fire.

208.

Wide shot. A cylinder of a mill for crushing grain. Tilt down — Kruno scoops cement with a shovel. Tilt upwards — the mill cylinder rotates.

209.

Similar to 208. Tilt down — the young men agitatedly discuss something. Deafening noise. Tilt upwards — the cylinder.

210.

Wide shot. The roof of a cement plant covered with

cement dust, like snow. Three cylindrical silos. Tilt downwards — roof domes.

211.

Close-up. A mass of fused metallic spheres. A kicking shoe breaks them up. The camera pans upwards — a hand is sorting the spheres.

212.

Wide shot. Heaps of spheres. Dragiša squats, Kruno in the background. Pan to the left — Dragiša alone.

213.

Wide shot. Machines, cogwheels, metal rods. All layered with a coating of cement. Marko walks by, carrying a sack of cement. The camera follows him, with a pan to the right.

214.

American shot. A conveyor ramp. Dragiša and Girl lift a sack of cement onto Kruno's back. Pan to the left following Kruno — pan back — Dragiša hefts a sack on his shoulder.

215.

Wide shot. In front of the kiln. A worker wearing a fur hat picks at a heap of slag with a long shovel. Pan to the right — Girl.

216.

Wide shot. Entrance of a coal plant. The inscription LONG LIVE 1ST OF MAY above the door. Dragiša comes out, carrying a metal pry bar.

217.

Medium close-up. Dragiša and Marko drag Girl, unconscious, out of the plant. They carry her away. The camera follows them by panning to the right.

218.

Wide shot. The kiln. Darkness. A door opens in the background of the frame. The young men carry Girl inside and lay her on a heap of coal. Tilt to the right — Marko opens the door of the kiln. Reflections of the flame. Pan to the right — Girl on the coal.

219.

Medium shot. Marko squeezes juice from a lemon wedge into Girl's mouth. Dragiša holds her wrist. Girl sits up. Marko gives her the lemon, and she greedily sucks on it.

Marko: *Who placidly tolerates this — deserves everything that happens to him.*

Pan to the right — Girl and Dragiša.

Dragiša: *Why are you fooling around, when you know how many are out there just itching for one of us to leave an opening.*

Tilt forwards to Girl. Pan to the right — Marko.

220.

Wide shot. A locomotive, pushing backwards, enters the frame. Girl, in a cloud of steam, sits on the running board. Clouds of steam and smoke. An inscription, in double exposure, appears:

REVOLUTIONS ARE THE LOCOMOTIVES OF HISTORY.

Two workers pass by in the right-hand corner of the frame. A whistle of the locomotive.

221.

Wide shot. The locomotive rolls towards the camera. Girl stands on the running board, gesturing as if leading an attack.

222.

Wide shot. The gate of the factory. The workers emerge. Girl and others are among them. Kruno tries to accost the workers, to rouse them to action.

Kruno: *People, wait, stop and let me tell you! Workers,*

who do we toil here like slaves for? Wait, let me tell you! People, look at the sight of us! We have nothing, and yet we work?!

A car rolls into the frame from the right.

Kruno: *For whom?! Look, they drive around in private cars, we can't afford that! People, let me ask you, why?!*

The workers mostly ignore him, some pause, then move on. They look into the camera and laugh.

Kruno: *Nobody listens to us, goddammit!*

BELGRADE STUDENTS' ACTION PROGRAM, 1968

It should be made possible to arrive at solutions to central problems of our Socialist society as a self-managed community of free and equal nations and nationalities more speedily and efficiently.

We find that it is urgently necessary:

- 1. To enact measures that will rapidly reduce huge social differences in our community. Relatedly, we demand: that the socialist principle of distribution according to labor be consistently applied; to define clear and accurate criteria for setting salaries; to set limits on the lowest and highest personal income and abolish any differences in personal income that are based on monopolistic and other privileged non-socialist positions; to engage in energetic action against accrual of property in a non-socialist way and to nationalize unjustly acquired property. Privileges in our society have to be abolished. Measures are needed in line with which income above the highest ceiling would be subjected to progressive taxation.*

- 2. In order to address the issue of unemployment in a quicker and more efficient way, a strategy of a long-term development of our economy should be devised and, as one of the fundamental points, the right to work should be guaranteed to all working people in our country. In order to accomplish that, it is necessary to*

enact an appropriate investment policy program that will enable the employment policy (program) to be carried out for the incessant creation of better material and cultural living conditions for our working men.

Measures for the employment of young experts should also be enacted. There is thus a pressing need to solve the problem of internships and introduce obligatory employment of all young experts, as well as to solve the problem of freelance work that should be reduced to a minimum or utterly abolished.

The employment policy should consistently reflect the principle that jobs requiring appropriate qualifications can only be assumed by people possessing such qualifications.

3. Measures for expediting the establishment of self-managed relations in our society and for eliminating bureaucratic forces that stymie the development of our community are necessary.

A system of self-managed relations should be consistently developed not only in basic organizations of associated labor, but also at all other levels of our society, from municipality to federation, so that in all those self-managed bodies the majority will consist of direct producers. The starting point for the real development of direct self-management is in the autonomous decision-making of the producers about all essential conditions of work, particularly about surplus labor.

All self-managed bodies should be accountable for performing tasks that fall under their area of jurisdiction and assume social responsibility in the case that they fail to perform these tasks.

It is necessary to raise the issue of personal responsibility.

4. The democratization of all social and political organizations, especially the Alliance of Communists, should be faster and deeper, in accordance with the

development of self-managed relations. It should especially encompass all public information outlets. Finally, democratization should enable the exercise of all rights and freedoms enshrined under the Constitution.

5. All attempts to dismantle socially-owned property or dilute it into shareholder property should be energetically prevented.

Tendencies to capitalize on the personal labor of individuals and groups should be prevented and such tendencies should strictly be brought back within the confines of the Constitution and positive legal regulations.

6. To amend as soon as possible the Law on Housing Relations in order to prevent housing speculation on socially-owned or private property.

7. Relations in the field of culture should be such that they prevent commercialization and conditions should be created in which cultural goods and creativity would be accessible to all.

||

1. The reform of the education system should be undertaken immediately, in order to bring it into line with the needs of the development of our economy, culture, and self-managed relations.

2. To enable full exercise of all constitutionally enshrined rights concerning equal conditions for schooling of all young people.

223.

Medium shot. A factory locker room. Marko and Girl are sitting on a bench to the left, in front of the lockers. The roar of machines.

Girl: *I'm all covered in cement.*

Marko gets up. Girl stands, begins to undress. Marko stands in the background by the window.

Marko: *We never talk.*

Tilt backwards. Topless, Girl bends over and removes her socks.

Marko: *I don't really see that there are so many differences between you and me.*

Girl straightens up, throws her socks on the bench, removes her underwear.

Marko: *We could get to know each other better, sometime.*

224.

Medium close-up. Bathroom. Windows in the background. Girl (shot from the back) approaches the showers. Tilt to the left — Girl under torrents of water.

225.

Wide shot. Dressing room. Marko sits.

Girl (off): *You can come in too, but don't look!*

226.

Medium shot. Girl under the showers.

227.

Wide shot. Marko appears at the door of the bathroom in his underwear. Tilt forward. Marko turns his back, undresses, has a Band-Aid on his butt — pan on him — he prances, hangs his underpants on a pipe. Pan to the left — in the background, in a cloud of steam — Girl. Marko scrubs himself.

228.

Medium shot. Girl scrubs herself. Pan to the right — Marko. Pan on Marko.

229.

Medium shot. Girl lathers herself with soap, bends down.

Girl: *Shame on you! Take off that Band-Aid!*

230.

Medium shot. Marko hunts around on the floor. He is looking for his soap.

Marko: *I dropped my soap!*

Tilt upwards — Girl in half-light.

Girl: *I told you not to look!*

Pan on her.

231.

Medium shot. Marko.

Girl (off): *Here's my soap! The water's terrific!*

The camera tracks in parallel with Marko, who approaches Girl with his back turned. She rubs his body. Marko turns.

Marko: *Shall I lather you up?*

Takes the soap.

Girl: *Yeah!*

Marko rubs her back with the soap. She turns to him.

Marko: *They really fit you!*

Girl: *And it fits you too, but — in vain!*

Marko embraces her.

232.

American shot. They chase each other and laugh.

Marko slaps Girl on her butt. His penis waggles around.

233.

Medium shot. Girl with her hands raised and Marko. She approaches, they embrace. Marko kisses all over her body.

234.

Medium shot. In counter-light. Marko from the back, Girl approaches him.

Girl: *If Engels had not said that truly honest sexual love exists only among the proletariat — you would have been tossed aside today.*

Marko kisses her, she wraps herself around him.

235.

Similar to 234. They lie on boards.

236.

American shot. Clouds of steam. Kruno and Dragiša appear in the doorway. The camera tracking forwards.

237.

Medium shot. Marko and Girl are startled. Marko exits from the frame. Girl gets up. Tilt upwards — Marko and Girl.

238.

American shot. Disgusted, Kruno and Dragiša leave.

239.

Close-up. The camera pans to the left, onto a worker who lies on a bed.

240.

Similar to 239. A second worker.

241.

Close-up. Pan to the right. Marko lies on the bed, with his hands under his head.

Marko: *After what happened — you'd be better off not coming at all.*

242.

Wide shot. Sleeping room. Girl sits on a bench in front of a wardrobe. Tilt forwards.

Girl: *Yeah, right, as if I'm weeping for you.*

Looks to the right.

Girl: *You live in this place like livestock, you barnyard animals!*

243.

Medium shot. A worker sleeps. He is startled, looks

around him.

The worker: *Sleep!*

Pan to the left — Girl and Marko sit on the bed. Marko arranges his socks.

Marko: *What can I do, when I'm not ... a nobleman!*

He leans back, morose.

244.

Close-up. Marko. Tilt backwards. Girl gets up, walks between two lines of beds on which workers lie. She bites her finger.

Second worker (off): *You got off pretty quick today?!*

Girl in the foreground exits the frame. The workers watch her leaving.

Third worker: *Sweetheart, come over to your brother, I've got something you should see!*

245.

Wide shot. Tilt through the corridor of a decaying castle converted to workers' barracks. Darkness. Stained glass windows. Explosions are heard. Pan to the left and tilt upwards — through a big window overlooking the hallway, Marko can be seen in the sleeping room.

246.

Wide shot. The sunlit facade of the castle. Tilt forwards. Explosions. Whenever an explosion rings out, the camera shakes. Girl walks on the terrace.

Girl: *In a prince's castle you live like pigs. As if the revolution is workers clogging the sewer and choking in their own stink?!*

247.

American shot. Marko on the bed, scratches his head.

Girl enters the frame from the right.

Girl: *Come see. There is one empty bedroom.*

Marko: *You can sleep in 7B. The girls stay there.*

Girl leaves.

248.

Detail. Ceramic tiles with idyllic scenes of Dutch landscapes. Tilt downwards — crumpled paper, feces.

249.

Wide shot. The toilet entryway. Marko exits the toilet, adjusts his pants. Girl watches.

Girl: *It's not enough to only survive. One should live honestly and with purpose.*

Marko buckles his belt.

250.

Wide shot. Dark hallway. Huge windows of a greenhouse in the background. Some are smashed. Marko and Girl approach, jump into the garden. Pan on the windows. The two of them walk in the overgrown greenhouse.

Girl: *We can fix it up, we can live here.*

Marko: *What's wrong with sleeping in the women's dorms?*

Pan to the left — Girl — to the right — they are together again.

Tilt upwards and to the left, and then on them again. They tour the greenhouse. Marko jumps into an empty fountain. Pan upward to the walls and the dome.

Music.*

--

* The song lasts to the end of this scene.

Singer: *Her lips — like roses are red,*

Her hips plentiful, her hair well laid.

That's why I love her, because she has no stain,

And her eyes give me pain.

That's why I love her, because she has no stain,

And her eyes give me pain.

*You, my darling, are my angel follower,
And among the flowers the tiny mayflower.*

*I love only her and no other girl,
For Darling I live — for her I will my life hurl,*

*I love only her and no other girl,
For Darling I live — for her I will my life hurl.*

--

251.

Wide shot. The greenhouse from outside. Girl hops out through a window.

252.

Closer. From another angle. Girl jumps down. Pan to the left — she climbs through a wire fence, across a muddy path, and opens a wooden gate in another fence.

253.

Wide shot. Girl strides through tall grass and scrub trees.

254.

Wide shot. Girl departs. It begins to rain. Girl lifts her coat over her head. Tilt upwards — she climbs up an embankment — turns right.

255.

Wide shot. Girl's home. Girl sits on the front doorstep. Eats. Looks into the camera.

Girl: *The one who brings forth fruits will thrive, those who don't, they'll perish!*

Mother (off): *Everything will fall into place ...*

256.

Medium shot. Girl is standing on the threshold. She is eating. She looks into the camera.

Girl: *Who dares wins, who doesn't dies.*

Mother: *It'll all sort itself out.*

257.

Close-up. Girl.

Mother (off): *... as long as there is health.*

Girl: *What matters is that a man is healthy and honest, riches will seek him out somehow.*
She gets up and goes into the house.

258.

Close-up. Girl sleeps.

259.

Medium close-up. The doorway of a woodshed. Girl enters the frame. She splits wood with an axe.

260.

Wide shot. The dark corridor of a courtyard entrance. The gate noisily opens. Dragiša, Marko, and Kruno enter.

261.

Wide shot. Girl continues splitting wood.

262.

Wide shot. The young men stride into the courtyard.

263.

Medium close-up. Logs. Girl's legs. Her hand sets the firewood.

264.

Wide shot. The courtyard. The three young men enter and halt.

265.

Close-up. Dragiša — tosses his head, beckoning.
Dragiša: *Come!*

266.

Medium close-up. An axe chops. Girl enters the frame from below. She straightens up.
Girl: *Gone with the wind, boys!*

267.

Medium shot. They approach and circle around her. Girl sets up the wood, straightens herself, chops with the axe.

Kruno: *You weren't scared until now!*

Girl: *I'm not scared now either.*

Girl drops the axe. They all set off.

268.

Wide shot. A field on the outskirts of the village. A white house in the background. Girl and the young men move towards the camera. Dragiša pushes Girl. A "Cock-a-doodle-doo." The sound of an airplane.

Girl: *What did you want?!*

Dragiša: *To see whether you could do three men at once?!*

Girl: *I told you — it's all over! None of you interest me at all!*

Pan to the left, tracking Girl hurrying away. The young men chase after her.

269.

Medium shot. The young men. They run after Girl, catch her, and drag her down.

Girl: *Bastards!*

They come in front of the camera, push Girl, who remains alone in the frame.

Girl: *Let's see who'll be the first!*

Pan to the left — the young men — to the right — Girl.

Girl: *You've always just fooled around, you punks! You never follow through to the end!*

She spits on them.

270.

Medium shot. Dragiša holds a Molotov cocktail, Kruno tries to light the cloth fuse. Marko draws a revolver and fires.

271.

Wide shot. Marko shoots. Girl drops dead.

272.

Medium shot. Marko, gun in hand, with Dragiša. Pan to the left — Marko exits the frame to the right. Music starts up.*

--

* "Lenin's funeral march" lasts until the end of the movie.

*Choir: You fell victim and gave everything,
Your blood, life, youth, for freedom burying.
You fell victim and gave everything,
Your blood, life, youth, for freedom burying.*

*Under punches of heavy oppression evil deepens
You fell for the rights of your peoples.
Rest in peace in your graves humble
Under freedom's flag we shall all march into struggle.
Rest in peace in your graves humble
Under freedom's flag we shall all march into struggle.*

*All partisans this song will sing,
They will finish the work that you did begin.
Rest in peace in your graves humble
Under freedom's flag we shall all march into struggle.
Rest in peace in your graves humble
Under freedom's flag we shall all march into struggle.*

--

273.

Kruno drapes Girl's body with the flag. He leaves to the left.

274.

American shot. They mutely stand witness. Dragiša lights the fuse of the Molotov cocktail. Kruno reaches to it. They all withdraw a couple of steps. Dragiša throws the bomb at the flag-covered body of Girl. Pan

to the left — explosion — tilt upward — a mushroom cloud of flame — tilt downward — consuming fire. The young men approach, circle around the fire.

275.

Intertitle. White letters on black background.
THOSE WHO MAKE REVOLUTION HALFWAY
ONLY DIG THEIR OWN GRAVES
SAINT-JUST

276.

Continuation of 274. They depart.

277.

Black blank.

EDITORS' NOTE:

1 → This is a translation of “Rani radovi: Opis konačne verzije” [Early Works: Description of the Final Version], in “Rani Radovi,” ed. Bora Ćosić et al., special issue, *Rok — Časopis za književnost, umetnost i estatičko ispitivanje stvarnosti* [Rok — Journal for Literature, Art and Aesthetic Investigation of Reality], no. 3 (December 1969): 16-47.

TRANSLATORS' NOTES:

1 → Marko is citing Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (New York: International Publishers, 1967).

2 → Quote from the American version of “The Internationale.”

3 → Ibid.

4 → Quote from, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1968).

5 → The quote is taken from Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (London: Penguin Books, 1985).

6 → This first translation from German into Serbo-Croatian of the selection of Marx and Engels’ early writings appeared in Zagreb in 1953. The collection was titled *Rani radovi* [Early Works]. Although the quotes here are taken from Marx’s *Early Writings* (ibid.), the reference to the Yugoslav edition titled *Early Works* is kept in this translation. The quotes in Žilnik’s shot list appear as continuous text, which is not the case in the original text.

7 → Philistines.

8 → *The herd is silent, docile, and obeys its stomach.*

9 → This quote is taken from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed December 7, 2020, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#007>.

10 → Ibid.

11 → The *kolo* is a collective folk dance common in various South Slavic regions, named after the circle formed by the dancers.

12 → *Shqiptar* is an Albanian language ethnonym by which Albanians call themselves. It was used as a derogatory term for Albanians in Yugoslavia and is still frequently used as a derogatory term for Albanians in Yugoslav successor states.

13 → WARNING! WARNING! TWICE DAILY, FILL WITH GOOD MACHINE OIL TO THE MARK ON THE GLASS. WEEKLY, EMPTY, CLEAN WITH PETROLEUM, AND FILL WITH NEW OIL.

14 → Lepa is not a proper name but an adjective, meaning “beautiful.”

15 → Girl paraphrases “The Communist Manifesto”; this quote is taken from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed December 7, 2020, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#007>.

oni koji revoluciju
izvedu tek. dopola
samo kopaju sebi gro
saint zist

The makers of halfway revolutions
dig their own grave - Saint Just



Feminist Takes: *Early Works* by Želimir Žilnik

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