



Osteuropäischer Partisanenfilm – Widerstand im Rückblick

Vorlesungsreihe zur Viennale Retrospektive 2019
O partigiano! Pan-Europäischer Partisanenfilm

4.12.2019, 18:30–20:00 Uhr

Uni Wien Campus, Institut für Slawistik, Hof 3, Seminarraum 1

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Resistance in Slovak Fiction Film 1945 – 1989

The lecture “Resistance in Slovak Fiction Film 1945 - 1989” will provide an overview of the history of Slovak cinema of the given period, focusing on films dealing with World War II and resistance movement in Slovakia during the war. In 1945, a pioneering documentary film *For Freedom (Za slobodu)* by Paľo Bielik was released. The film later became a „blueprint“ for subsequent films (including fiction) on the subject of the war and resistance. In 1989, the socialist regime and centrally directed cinema in Czechoslovakia collapsed. The lecture will focus on Slovak films dealing with the war and resistance and a socio-political context of their creation, which influenced ideological tone of the films produced. The period immediately following the end of World War II was a period of spontaneous joy of victory, a period of so called heroic art. Tone of the films was dominated by moral and physical superiority of the victor and national pride. In the 1950s, after the Communist Party raised to power, nationalized and centrally (and politically) directed Slovak cinema was established. Production of films dealing with the war and resistance was virtually non-existent, mostly due to political cleansing within the Communist Party and Monster Trials with bourgeois nationalists (including partisans who fought for the liberation of Czechoslovakia). In the 1960s, especially in its second half, came relativizing, revisionist and existentialist approach to the topic of the war and its portrayal on film. Filmmakers sought the essence of war and humanness, no matter the side on which people fought, searched for the true meaning of war casualties, investigated whether the victory was worth enormous human and moral sacrifices. At the beginning of the 1970s, as a direct consequence of the invasion by the Warsaw Pact armies into Czechoslovakia in August 1968, the period of normalization began (in Slovak cinema as well). At the same time a generational exchange of filmmakers happened: the war was no longer an immediate experience, filmmakers were approaching the topic from more than twenty years of historical distance. The war and resistance became merely a theme (a „genre vessel“ often filled with nonsense, kitsch and empty pathos). Such films served as propaganda to strengthen awareness of the heroism of the Communist Party and victorious Red Army. Finally, in the 1980s only a few films on the subject of the war and resistance were made.