

The Psychopolitics of Socialism in Central and Eastern Europe (With Notes on *Walter Defends Sarajevo*)

1.

I propose to begin with a set of questions. First, can we understand Central and Eastern Europe without understanding socialism? Secondly, can we access the subject of socialism without engaging a critical theory of trauma, in view of the fact that the history of socialism is being increasingly translated into a history of totalitarianism, which is perceived to be concomitant with trauma?

As for the first question: one cannot properly analyze Central and Eastern Europe in the previous century, even today, without taking socialism into account, the most obvious reason being that the four decades of socialism during the Cold War affected the intellectual constitution of Central and Eastern Europe. It is equally important that the socialist Central and Eastern Europe was definitive to the imaginary of the Cold War, when the Cold War was decisive to thinking the world of the twentieth century modernity, so that the intellectual character of the socialist Central and Eastern Europe was symptomatic in fact of political modernity in the twentieth century.

Equally important is a detail which caught the attention of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*: that socialism in Austria-Hungary at the end of the Second International was taken up more comprehensively than elsewhere, affecting all spheres of life in a capillary fashion.¹ It is doubtful, therefore, whether one can engage with the legacy of Austria-Hungary without taking socialism as its organon. To this I would add an image dear to Danilo Kiš (1991: 263): that Central European revolutionaries were pilgrims to the Soviet Moscow as their Third Rome, where they were then executed, so that socialism in Central and Eastern Europe acquires the structure of near-religious sacrifice.

It is for this reason that one should perhaps entertain the following proposition: that the long nineteenth century in Central and Eastern Europe, with its Austro-Hungarian legacy, shares its intellectual constitution with the Cold War. There are psychopolitical configurations that seem to persist in modern Central and Eastern Europe, with socialism as their common denominator,

¹ See Laclau and Mouffe 2001: ix, 27-28.

suggesting that socialism is definitive to the idea of Central and Eastern Europe from the 1880s to the 1980s and, very likely, beyond.²

2.

This is why my second question (can one think socialism without a theory of trauma?) is laden with unsuspected adjustments. Even so, the answer would be a *no*: one can hardly understand socialism without a theory of trauma.

That, however, is not to be done by reducing socialism to trauma from within an ethnography of sorts, or from within microhistory, or the history of everyday life, which has been done all too frequently in the past decades, especially in postsocialist cultures. As a result, much of the processing of socialism boils down to collecting testimonies (of those who claim to have been its political victims) and organizing these testimonies into an ethnography of sorts or microhistory or a history of everyday life, so that testimony or confession becomes ground zero for assessing or analyzing socialism.

This line of analysis seldom takes into account that socialism itself was traumatized to begin with—that trauma is inherent to the constitution of socialism. In order to argue this point, let me return to socialism in Austria-Hungary and to the Second International: because much of the Second International was about an attempt to invent a socialism which would shed the idea of revolution, suggesting that revolution was the trauma of socialism—that revolution to socialism is what trauma is to subjectivity, even or precisely when it is constituent to it.

On the one hand, this means that socialism is not to be confused with revolution—that revolution is the event which exposes the constitution of socialism to radical critique, also that revolution is a challenge to socialism, just as trauma is a challenge to subjectivity. On the other hand, this means that the constitution of socialism is comparable to the constitution of subjectivity in the position where subjectivity is cultivated around a number of defense mechanisms, as Freud has explained this process, especially in his works in the 1920s and after.

Tellingly, just as Freud uses defense mechanisms in order to introduce a comprehensive psychoanalytic theory of authority, the same is true of socialism: socialism confronts revolution by reenacting the state, indeed, by reclaiming *raison d'État* as the idea of authority necessary for the maintenance of structures (of subjectivity). Indeed, state in socialism is premised on a kind of empty, ideal repetition, and repetition reduced to its ideal form is precisely how Freud explains the concurrence of authority and the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. It is in socialism that the idea of state—or *raison d'État*—is bared to a Freudian understanding of repetition: socialism,

² Psychopolitics is the term I borrow from Peter Sloterdijk (2010).

compared to revolution, enacts the idea of state as repetition in its Freudian function.

3.

It seems to follow that revolution could or should be analyzed as trauma, which jerks socialism into being. Yet, even if revolution does unfold as trauma to the constitution of socialism, its own makeup or logic is different. In fact, revolutions would implode were their logic to comply with the logic of trauma.

Trauma generates its subjects by playing to their defense mechanisms; as a result, trauma relates to subjectivity in the position where collectives come second—where subjectivity is gathered around shielding itself from that which it perceives as critical exteriority. (Freud uses “shield” to describe this process. In his presentation of the death drive, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*—which, incidentally, is also where he discusses trauma in relation to shield and defense—Freud imagines authority as a function or an apparatus to which collectives are not a given, even as they feed on it; this in many ways explains Freud’s subsequent ideation of masochism and the superego.)

Revolutionary collectives, on the other hand, depend on a deconstruction equally of subjectivity and of authority, which implies also a dismantling of defense. This is why revolutionary collectives invoke melancholia for their formation, insofar as melancholia entails an extreme libidinal investment, which results in the ego so impoverished that it can no longer sustain itself. Subjectivity is thereby exposed to an irreducible outside, or to an outside that it perceives as irreducible; put otherwise, subjectivity is implicated, wholesale, in the relations of exteriority. This is how revolutionary collectives find their coherence: they cohere around the relations similar to those that Gilles Deleuze attributes to empiricism, when he says that, in empiricism, “the relations are heterogeneous and exterior to their terms, impressions, or ideas” (2004: 163). The empiricist world, says Deleuze, is “a world where thought itself is in a fundamental relation to the Outside... where the conjunction ‘and’ dethrones the interiority of the verb ‘is’” (163). Symptomatically, while Freud insists on describing trauma in relation to a shield (in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*), he insists on describing melancholia in terms of a gaping wound (in “Mourning and Melancholia”).³

It is equally symptomatic that Freud defines both trauma and melancholia in terms of economy. Yet, compared to the radical impoverishment of the ego in melancholia, trauma actually shows as good economy. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* this surfaces in a remark where Freud implies that melan-

3 See Freud 1957: 253, 258 and 1961: 23.

cholia may be too radical an impoverishment to be considered in the context where defense is analyzed.⁴

As a result, socialism, traumatized with revolutions and their melancholy collectives, shows in fact as good libidinal economy compared to revolution, just as it gives grounds to assessing trauma as good economy compared to the melancholia of revolutions. Put crudely: if you think socialism is bad for you, wait till you have experienced a revolution.⁵

4.

In many ways, this reflects political modernity as it was understood by Walter Benjamin, or by Carl Schmitt. Both Benjamin and Schmitt work with the proposition that mourning and melancholia contribute an intellectual interval or an intellectual situation from which to analyze political modernity and the crisis of authorization that it entails. There is a suggestion that the concept of a tragic event is thereby reconfigured, just as tragedy gives way to new literary formats, with literature (not theology or philosophy) as the apparatus critical to negotiating the rationale of authority in modernity.⁶ To Benjamin, the most interesting literary format in this sense is *Trauerspiel*, the mourning play, typical of the German Baroque; to Schmitt, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is exemplary, in the position where Shakespeare translates the terms of the

4 I am alluding to a paragraph in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* where Freud describes the “cathectic energy” which is “summoned from all sides” to localize the “breach in the protective shield against stimuli” and thus reduce the traumatic effect (1961: 24), in contradistinction to his description of melancholia in terms of a wound, where cathectic energy is similarly summoned from all sides, but now failing to regulate or reduce the breach (1957: 253, 257). This may have to do with the fact that, as Freud notes, trauma is a response to the stimuli from the outside, whereas “the excitations coming from within” fail to mobilize a corresponding shield and are “more commensurate with the system’s method of working than the stimuli which stream in from the external world” (1961: 23). While this seems to suggest that melancholia is confined to an imaginary inside, Freud’s description of the melancholy undoing of the ego suggests that the inside in such cases is untenable—that the inside succumbs to the conditions of a gaping wound—to an exteriority perceived as irreducible crisis.

5 I argue elsewhere that masochism—as discussed by Gilles Deleuze in *Coldness and Cruelty* and then replayed against Freud’s perspective on masochism—may be the script which explains how the logic of revolution is ultimately couched in the socialism of the postrevolutionary state. See Jukić 2015.

6 My reference here is to Benjamin’s *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (*Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*) and Schmitt’s *Hamlet or Hecuba: The Irruption of Time into Play* (*Hamlet oder Hekuba: Der Einbruch der Zeit in das Spiel*). Benjamin and Schmitt associate the birth of modern Europe with the spirit of Protestantism, when the uniform theological platform was compromised and, with it, the legitimizing procedures; Schmitt especially insists that revolution constitutes a response to this crisis.

Trauerspiel into “the first stage of the English revolution” (2006: 54), the implication being that revolution depends, for its rationale, on literature.⁷

While literature is thus promoted into a critical instrument essential to understanding revolutions, the above argument entails that film could easily form an assemblage with literature and prove to be equally instrumental to understanding political modernity. Moreover, film appears to have ousted literature from its privileged position, assuming in the twentieth century many of the critical functions that used be the domain of literature before the invention of cinema.

The twentieth century may be explained around this particular coming together of film and literature, especially those assemblages that came to profile its singular political logic. One such assemblage is the alignment of world war, revolution and socialism, the three converging in the imaginary of the Cold War. This is how Central and Eastern Europe is again targeted, in the position where Central and Eastern Europe was decisive to the imaginary of the Cold War and, by extension, to the vision of the world for the twentieth century. After all, it was in Central and Eastern Europe that both world wars broke out, to then mobilize the rest of the world as battleground, just as it was in Central and Eastern Europe that the event of revolution and the making of socialist states first aligned, to then metonymize across the world.

5.

Walter Defends Sarajevo (*Valter brani Sarajevo*), a film directed by Hajrudin Krvavac in 1972, brings these different concerns together and invites their further elaboration.

Walter is a so called partisan film, the genre prominent in the cinema of socialist Yugoslavia, if not definitive to it. The partisan films processed and refined the narrative logic implicit to the history of the partisan movement in Yugoslavia in the Second World War, when the country was carved up between the Axis states and their puppet regimes, while its statehood was acutely compromised. Because the antifascist resistance in Yugoslavia coincided with the socialist revolution, both finding their hub in the partisan movement, the Second World War and the revolution are presented in the partisan films as metonyms, demanding to be addressed together. Put otherwise, what determines the partisan films is the concept of world war brought into line with revolution *cum* socialism—an alignment essential to an operative

7 Schmitt finds it important that during the revolution, which “lasted a hundred years, from 1588 to 1688,” England did not “set up a state police, justice, finance or standing army in the way Continental Europe did”; he also points out that England is “the country of origin of the industrial revolution, *without having to pass through the straits of Continental statehood*” (2006: 55-56, emphasis added).

understanding of the world in the twentieth century, especially in the Cold War. That this alignment was significant far beyond Yugoslavia is corroborated by the fact still advertised by the popular press: *Walter Defends Sarajevo* was among the most popular films in China just after the Cultural Revolution, claiming a truly massive audience and informing Chinese cultural memory.⁸

Krvavac's Sarajevo is decisive to this particular configuration of world war, revolution and socialism. The story revolves around Walter (Velimir Bata Živojinović), a brave underground agent of the partisan movement, whose mission is to defend the city equally from the Nazis and from the elusive members of the resistance turned traitors. It turns out, however, that Walter depends on Sarajevo more than Sarajevo depends on him, so that Sarajevo, not Walter, claims the function of defense—a reversal most conspicuous in one of the climactic episodes, when Sead (Rade Marković), a respected local watchmaker, sacrifices his life to save Walter's, very publicly, in view of the city's most impressive mosque. That this indeed is the moral of the story can be evinced from the emphatic, much quoted ending: the Nazi commander, now facing defeat, asserts that for a year he strove in vain to identify and capture Walter, only to realize that Walter is none other than Sarajevo itself. "This is Walter," he says, pointing at Sarajevo, as the camera shifts to a panoramic shot of the city.⁹

While Sarajevo is thereby promoted into a revolutionary collective, defense is presented as a logical error or an autoimmune disorder, as if to suggest that revolutionary collectives cannot aspire to functional defense mechanisms. To be sure, defense here entails also Freudian defense: revolutionary collectives in Krvavac's film rely on deconstructing the functional ego, with a suggestion that the functional ego is at odds with the logic of a revolutionary collective.

The visual and the narrative profile of Sarajevo serves to emphasize this point. As noted, the film ends with the epiphany that Walter is none other than Sarajevo itself. This relates to the beginning, when Sarajevo is introduced as the city crucial to pulling out German troops from the Balkans in 1944

8 Rada Šešić reports that "*Walter Defends Sarajevo* was sold to sixty countries and seen (according to the statistics of Yugoslavia Film) by hundreds of millions of people across the world. Today, three decades after Krvavac's films were made, they are still fanatically adored in China, and are so popular that, reportedly, children were named after their characters, songs from the films were sung by common folk and in the city of Szechuan, some streets were named after actors from Krvavac's movies. Together with *Bridge*, it is one of the most popular films of all time" (2006: 115). Šešić points out that Velimir Bata Živojinović, the actor cast in the role of Walter, was "according to some Chinese newspapers, ... the second most popular person in the country after Mao Zedong" (115).

9 Peter Stanković quotes this scene as the most famous example of there always being a moment in the partisan films "when one of the German commanders explicitly expresses his admiration for the Partisan heroism, determination and fighting skills" (2015: 261).

and to thus changing the course of the war on a global scale—a proposition consistent with Sarajevo having changed the course of modern history before, as the place where the First World war broke out, in 1914. The implication is that Sarajevo is essential to grasping the logic of world wars, now as the place where the logic of world wars meets the intellectual situation of the socialist revolution. The implication is also that world wars relate to defense similarly as do revolutions: they entail a vision of the world where war affects all the available positions, so that defense, while necessary, is untenable.

6.

There are two narrative hubs in *Walter*. One is structured around the Germans attempting to secure the transport of fuel through Bosnia as the only means of their regrouping across the continent; this demands that the resistance groups in Sarajevo be distracted and eventually destroyed by an undercover Nazi agent assuming the identity of the famously elusive Walter. The other is structured around the efforts of the true Walter to identify the cunning impostor, as well as the traitor who made the infiltration possible—a task premised on Walter scrupulously safeguarding the information that he is Walter. It is only after the impostor and the traitor have been identified and eliminated that Walter can attend to the task of blowing up the Nazi fuel; it is only after blowing up the fuel that he discloses his identity as that of Walter, only to be replaced as Walter by Sarajevo.

The two narrative clusters work with two distinct regimes of representation. The first cluster, about the German fuel and the German Walter, relies on intensifying the identity shifts to such an extent that identity is finally reduced to a frantic exchange, based in an unstoppable repetition and an obsessive *fort-da*, in what amounts to an open appeal to psychoanalysis. The Nazis keep assuming the identities of the members of the resistance, over and over, in order to disrupt their ranks, while the members of the resistance keep cross-dressing as German soldiers, to do the same to the Nazis. The circulation culminates with the Nazi Walter assuming the identity of the eponymous communist guerilla fighter, while the true Walter assumes repeatedly the identity of German officers (or German soldiers, or German machinists...). Nobody is who they say they are and, by extension, nobody can say who they are without provoking doubt, interrogation, even elimination. Krvavac cleverly cast Živojinović as Walter and Dragomir Bojanić Gidra as the impostor, because the two actors are remarkably similar and thus keep feeding the cinematic effect tantamount to the Freudian uncanny.¹⁰

10 Krvavac's strategy compares in many ways to the visual and the narrative strategy of Martin Scorsese in *The Departed* (2006): the two Walters foreshadow, almost to the letter, the narrative and the visual likeness of Scorsese's good Leonardo DiCaprio and

This ultimately affects the overall semiotic character of the film. Just as nobody is who they say they are, hardly anything is said in the film that does not entail a busy exchange of secret codes and passwords; passwords are circulated so obsessively that no message is left unaffected. What finally emerges is a language in which all words are passwords and, by extension, in which no words are truly passwords, so that a maze is being created which is semiotic as much as it is psychoanalytical. Of course, the world in which all/no words are passwords is the world without functional defense.

There is another symptomatic aspect to repetition and *fort-da* in *Walter*: the effortless circulation of codes and identities is premised on the assumption that everybody in Krvavac's Sarajevo is fluent, if not bilingual, in German and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. The languages circulate freely in the film; indeed, the film is framed by the sequences delivered entirely in German, as if echoing the fact that Walter is originally a German name. The sweeping German aspect, however, should not be attributed only to the fact that Sarajevo was occupied by the Germans in the Second World War. Rather, it signals that Sarajevo of 1944, as imagined by Krvavac, was still very much an Austro-Hungarian city, and that the Austro-Hungarian cultural and political legacy, including the legacy of Austro-Marxism, impacted the city's response to Nazism. Significantly, the production was designed around the Austro-Hungarian architecture of the city, and relied heavily on the visual and the intellectual profile shaped by the City Museum, the City Hospital and, above all, by the network of railways traversing the city and the film.

7.

The second narrative cluster explores the psychopolitical profile of the resistance in Sarajevo. It takes for its point of departure the Nazi ploys whereby the resistance is tested; what the test brings to light is the peculiar logic of the resistance's coherence.

The coherence does not depend on Walter: Walter enters the Sarajevo guerrilla groups from the outside, in order to explore their different nooks and crannies, similarly to a detective or a psychoanalyst. What his investigation reveals is, first, that the resistance is not reducible to tight, well-organized groups, but entails a collectivity which is metonymic to these groups and, second, that the functional ego is toxic to the resistance, which is why not even Walter can aspire to a self.

bad Matt Damon. While this may be a coincidence, another fact is far more symptomatic: *The Departed* is a remake of *Infernal Affairs* (2002), a Hong Kong film directed by Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, which brings into play the fascination of modern Chinese culture with the structure of Krvavac's partisan film.

The two insights are based in two psychoanalyses as it were. The first involves the case of Sead the watchmaker, and the second Mirna (Neda Spasojević), a seamstress; like Sead, Mirna too is a member of a resistance group.

Sead's story climaxes when he sacrifices his life to save Walter's. Crucial to understanding his death is the fact that he participates in the resistance without knowing with certainty that his daughter, Azra, is also involved. When Azra is killed by the Germans, his grief leads him to exchange his life for Walter's. Yet, Sead's *de facto* suicide is not consistent with the raison of sacrifice, because he fails to advertise the symbolic profit to be made from dying or from the psychic economy associated with masochism; instead, his death is consistent with consummate melancholia. In turn, melancholia is shown to involve a collectivity disruptive equally to symbolic profit and to the ego: in an earlier scene, when Sead, along with other grieving parents, comes to claim Azra's body in one of the city squares (which the Germans plan to exploit for further elimination, of the victims' families), he is joined by a swarming mass of the anonymous citizens of Sarajevo—there are so many people that the Germans, in the event, cannot kill them all. For all the melodramatic appeal of the sequence, this is how the script of sacrifice is in fact discontinued and delimited, just as Sead's melancholia is dismantled from an Oedipal affair into a political one. The film registers this shift when Sead's grieved close-up gives way to a crane shot capturing the swarming mass and the city beyond.¹¹

Sead's melancholia is thereby presented as an intellectual situation from which to understand the revolutionary conditions and the peculiar coherence of revolutionary collectives—a coherence that relies on metonymic ties, like the ones established between the grieving parents and the swarming mass in the city square. There is a count to this coherence which is always “a false count, a double count, or a miscount,” to use the words of Jacques Rancière, who identifies this miscount of “community ‘parts’” as the place from which “politics arises” (1999: 6). This implies that a tie which is established around paternity, law, metaphor and *raison d'État* fails to capture the logic of revo-

11 There is a Deleuzian aspect to Sead's melancholia, insofar as Sead's paternity, to borrow Deleuze's words, shifts from “an individual or particular affair” into “a collective one, the affair of a people, or rather, of all peoples”—from “an Oedipal phantasm” into “a political program” (1998: 85). Mladen Dolar argues that already in Freud paternity means precisely that: “It was not that any father or ruler or god could no longer measure up to his function, but rather the symbolic function itself lost the power of measure. There are many ways and vocabularies to describe the ascent of modernity, and this could be one economical proposal: the dead father, the reference point of symbolic authority, has met his demise” (2008: 24).

lutionary collectives, what is more, that revolutionary collectives depend on the metonymic imperative.¹²

By contrast, Mirna is a threat to the revolutionary collective. Walter's investigation reveals that she is the traitor who eased the infiltration of the Nazi agent; it is also revealed that she succumbed to betraying her comrades after her arrest by the Nazis, when she could no longer endure the torture to which she was exposed. There is an emphasis on the fact that she betrayed the collective in order to save herself, which is how defense is again profiled as counter-revolutionary. This is also how trauma is revealed to be counter-revolutionary, in the very position where it invokes defense, with Mirna's trauma counteracting Sead's revolutionary melancholia.

That Mirna and Sead make sense together, as a syndrome against which revolution can be analyzed, is suggested also by the fact that everything they do is eventually symptomatic of their respective psychopolitics. Sead is emphatically profiled as a watchmaker, with a massive collection of wall clocks in his shop, all of them ticking away together, so that the time which he brings into the narrative is the time in folds, time never at one with itself, in what amounts to a Nietzschean con-temporaneity. While this dovetails with the time out of joint of revolutions, it is also the time of the melancholy impasse. Sead's last words leave no place for doubt: "As long as there are people," he says, "time will be measured"—suggesting that time cannot be measured, at least not to any lasting satisfaction, so that dissatisfaction is exposed as the measure of his trade.¹³

8.

Mirna is profiled with the same precision and emphasis. Just as her participation in the resistance serves to conceal her betrayal, her job as a seamstress is, literally, a cover: she communicates with the Germans by the radio hidden inside her sewing mannequin—the mannequin as hollow as is Mirna's own traumatized interior. (Symptomatically, Sead is hiding a gun behind one of his wall clocks.)¹⁴

12 Šešić rightly points out that the memorable score composed by Bojan Adamič contributes to the preeminence of this scene (2006: 113). I would like to add that the same musical phrase is used repeatedly in the film, which is how different narrative sequences are assembled into a metonymic collective, as if to recreate the structure of a revolutionary collective.

13 I am alluding again to Schmitt (2006), who argues that melancholia attributable to the world in the wake of the Reformation cannot be divorced from modern revolutions. When Jacques Derrida describes the time implicit to Marx's writings (also the time implicit to Marx's understanding of revolution), he calls it the time out of joint, using a quote from *Hamlet*—the text crucial to Schmitt. See Derrida 1994: 20.

14 The syndrome configured around Sead and Mirna could be labeled *melancholia cum trauma*, in analogy with *melancholia cum paranoia*, the term proposed by Viktor Tausk

Tellingly, Mirna is the only female lead in *Walter*. She comes close to claiming the narrative function of a femme fatale, only to reveal that she is fatal to her men through political betrayal. In fact, her Oedipal eroticism is redirected into politics before the fact as it were—again, similarly to the de-Oedipalization of Sead. Krvavac cleverly uses Mirna's exclusive and secretive femininity, even her slight resemblance to Alida Valli, to promote a subtle parallel with the visual and the cinematic properties of Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949). Mirna's vacillation between the true Walter and the false one resembles the vacillation of Valli, as Anna Schmidt, between the upright Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten) and his devious double, Harry Lime (Orson Welles), in the Vienna scarred by the Second World War—the Vienna whose Austro-Hungarian architecture is as important to Reed as the Austro-Hungarian architecture of Sarajevo is important to Krvavac. One scene in particular serves to advance the correspondence with *The Third Man*: framed in a tracking shot, Mirna is taking a pensive stroll in the city cemetery with Walter, about to betray him, as she is about to be betrayed by the false Walter—similarly to Anna Schmidt, who is caught in an impressive tracking shot while leaving the city cemetery, and Holly, having realized that she had been cruelly betrayed by Harry. In both cases, the woman turns out to be the third man, who serves to accentuate the relation of doubling, as well as the betrayal inherent to this relation.¹⁵

Reed's film is important here for yet another reason: it mobilizes the narrative logic of the spy thriller and film noir around Vienna perceived to be a synecdoche of the world caught between the Second World War and the Cold War. Carved up by the Allies into occupation zones, or sectors, Reed's Vienna is exemplary of the world of the twentieth century, which is how its Austro-Hungarian profile is once again brought into play, especially the role that Austria-Hungary played in the ideation of world war. There is another striking aspect to Reed's Vienna: the Allied Armies in charge of Vienna are the armies of the post-revolutionary nations (the British, the French, the American, the Soviet), as if to suggest that revolution in modernity is essential to the ideation of world war and, vice versa, that the concept of world war is possible only in the world familiar with revolutions.

With its overload of secret agents, spy plots and action-packed sequences, Krvavac's *Walter* invites also a comparison with the James Bond films. One

(1991) in his discussion of the psychopolitical response to the First World War among the soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian Army.

15 The parallels abound. Cotten is a new arrival in Vienna, to then assume the role of an investigator, in order to chase out his elusive criminal double; Walter is a new arrival in Sarajevo, to then assume the role of an investigator, in order to chase out his elusive criminal double. In Reed's film, Welles is killed off in the city sewer system after a spectacular chase scene; in Krvavac's film, the false Walter is killed off among the heaps of debris, after a spectacular chase scene.

detail in particular is evocative of the James Bond series: the future of the world war and, consequently, the future of the world, depends on how oil is managed—a biopolitical concern typical of the James Bond films and of the Cold War imaginary. (The final sequences, which focus on how the Nazi fuel is redirected away from a secret underground storage and then destroyed, could have been copied from any number of the James Bond films.)¹⁶

On the other hand, the partisan films have been insistently compared to the Westerns, so much so that they have been labeled the red Westerns; *red* implies that American ideology has been replaced with socialism while the narrative structure of the Westerns has been retained.¹⁷ Again, *Walter* could be described as a red Western, with its hero and his criminal double engaged in a conflict whose stake is the survival of the community and, by extension, the meaning of the world. According to Rada Šešić, “*Walter Defends Sarajevo*’s success is due, to a large extent, to the director’s skill in creating a formulaic dramaturgy which mimics American westerns while remaining faithful to many socialist creeds” (2006: 112). While this may be true, I contend that no substantial ideological replacement has taken place, insofar as both the American Westerns and the red ones focus on negotiating the terms of a post-revolutionary culture. Indeed, the generic logic of the American Westerns relies largely on reconciling a metonymic, Jeffersonian idea of America with the demands of *raison d’État*, just as the generic logic of the partisan films relies on reconciling the memory of the revolution with the demands of socialist statehood.¹⁸ As a result, no discontinuity can be posited between their respective ideologies and their narrative structure.

In fact, *Walter* brings together the psychopolitics structural to the James Bond films and the psychopolitics structural to the Westerns. While the James Bond template is essential in the sequences where an understanding of world war is articulated (with the Bondian Cold War and the Second World War perceived in terms of an overdetermined continuum), the Western intervenes in the sequences crucial to negotiating the memory of the revolution for socialist statehood. If that is how *Walter* canvasses the rationale of socialism in Yugoslavia, against the complicated profile of socialism in Central and Eastern

16 “Walter is comparable to the invincible James Bond,” says Šešić (2006: 112). Drawing on Umberto Eco, Peter Stanković argues that the partisan films in general dovetail with the narrative structure of the James Bond films. In both cases, an “opposition between planning and improvisation” is cultivated: the bad guys stick to “a detailed master plan,” while James Bond/the partisans counter them consistently “with a series of improvisations” (2015: 260).

17 See Stanković 2015 and Jovanović 2015: 293. See also Šešić 2006: 110, with references to essays by Hrvoje Turković and Nevena Daković.

18 According to Hannah Arendt (1963), the American Revolution was an unequalled blueprint for subsequent revolutions; Arendt hails Jefferson’s idea of America as crucial to understanding the American Revolution.

Europe in the twentieth century, that is also how it contributes an important insight into film as (post)revolutionary art.¹⁹

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¹⁹ The research for this essay was supported by funding from the Croatian Science Foundation (project no. 1543).