

Citizen Ivanov versus Comrade Tito: Partisans in Soviet and Yugoslav Cinema of the Second World War (1960-1985)

To articulate what is past does not mean to recognize “how it really was.” It means to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger. ... The only writer of history with the gift of setting alight the sparks of hope in the past, is the one who is convinced of this: that not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.

Walter Benjamin, “Thesis on the Philosophy of History”¹

Written at the onset of WWII, Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” fit quite precisely the memorialization of a conflict that remains a cornerstone of European politics. As Benjamin would have predicted, the historicism of WWII adopted the victor’s narrative, and this narrative was shaped by the dialectic between barbarism and civilization, in Benjamin’s understanding of the interdependence of both concepts.² Although well-suited to different times and places, Benjamin’s affirmation that “not even the dead will be safe from the enemy” is especially relevant to the memorialization of the conflict in Yugoslavia and in the Soviet Union. As is well known, the Stalinist version of The Great Patriotic War (1941-45) went so far as to censor the number of war victims, both during and after the war, stressing victory, (male) heroism and, perhaps unsurprisingly, the leadership of Comrade Stalin. The favouring of heroic victors was, however, questioned in the cultural arena, especially following Nikita Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization in the late 1950s. Around the same time, Yugoslavia developed a peculiar genre, Partizanski Films, which mythologised the unity of the country’s nations under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980). Although these films were partly designed as uncomplicated celebrations, this article will show how they reveal a perceived fragility in the country’s social fabric. Soviet and Yugoslav filmmakers, I will argue, used constellations or “montages” of the lives or, rather, the deaths of ordinary people in order to hasten or slow down the forces that led to the dissolution of both federations in the early 1990s. These partisans, in other words, opposed not only an alien enemy but also the less tangible “enemy within” of the time and place of the films’ production.

The paradigmatic image of the World War II partisan is a French-based, beret-wearing young man who plants bombs on rail tracks. However, during the war, partisans were only strategically and militarily important on the Eastern Front. This was especially the case in the

Western Borderlands of the Soviet Union and in Eastern Mediterranean countries such as Yugoslavia.³ These combatants were mystified in the war's aftermath, with Soviet partisans often shadowing the Red Army in popular memory. This memorialization was expressed in monuments, literature and, above all, in cinematic productions which became part of the foundational narrative of the Belarusian Soviet Republic, raised to the status of a Partisan Republic in the Soviet era. Likewise, in the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, the cult of partisans was consecrated as an idiosyncratic cinematic genre focused on them, *Partizanski Films*.⁴ This article will scrutinise the politics of the construction of these historical and cultural figures, using three films from each country whose legacy remains undisputed, namely, Andrei Tarkovsky's *Ivan's Childhood* (*Ivanovo detstvo*, 1962; also known as *My Name is Ivan*), Larisa Shepitko's *The Ascent* (*Voskhozhdeniye*, 1977), Elem Klimov's *Come and See* (*Idi i smotri*, 1985), Veljko Bulajić's *Battle of Neretva* (*Bitka na Neretvi*, 1969), Hajrudin Krvavac's *Walter Defends Sarajevo* (*Valter brani Sarajevo*, 1972) and Stipe Delić's *Battle of Sutjeska* (*Sujetska*, 1973).

In both the USSR and Yugoslavia, the cinematic productions that dealt with resistance against Nazi Germany provides platforms for notions of national narratives to be both represented and contested. In Yugoslavia, memories of partisans, and the films that mystified them, attest to the downfall of the inter-ethnic concord during Marshal Tito's leadership (1945-80). The violent disintegration of the country in the 1990s reveals the delicate compromise on which this consensus was built, as seen by the films studied here. By contrast, the memorialization of the conflict in the USSR provides a window into processes that were contested the cultural Thaw that followed Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin's "cult of personality" in 1956.⁵ These are views, however, that remain cornerstones of communal identity in today's Belarus and Russian Federation.

Prominent Soviet filmmakers, such as Tarkovsky, Shepitko and Klimov, effectively challenged the official version of the war. They did so by foregrounding civilian victims, as well as the harrowing plight of Soviet Jews, which had been largely deleted through their integration within the Nazi "war of annihilation," or *Vernichtungskrieg*, aimed at all the peoples of the USSR. The films that they directed present complex views of the situation, stressing collaboration and suffering, therefore undercutting the official notions of heroism and unity of the nation under the leadership of Stalin. Although made with estate finance and under the auspices of official production companies, such as Mosfilm or Belarusfilm, these war films inhabit a world that is far removed from Stalinist officialdom. This is not to say that

they do not endorse, sometimes unambiguously, the Soviet defence against the German invasion. However, as this article will illustrate, they challenged explicitly the Stalinist use of the conflict as the country's second "foundational narrative." In other words, in spite of the existing censorship, these films did not subordinate themselves to the delivery of political messages. This applies as much to their content as to their genre, which rejects the aesthetic constraints of social realism or its postwar, "anti-fascist" heir, neo-realism.⁶ These are aspects that make these films unique historical sources for the investigation of social attitudes towards death and mourning, not always limited to the war.⁷

During World War II, Soviet propaganda linked resistance to the Nazis to its foundational paradigm, the October Revolution of 1917. This can be seen in the visual campaign to "defend the motherland" that produced a good number of posters, as well as some prominent films. Soviet war films connected the early 1940s to 1917, very much like Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (*Bronenosets Potemkin*, 1925) had recast 1905 as the onset of the Soviet Revolution. These propaganda films foregrounded the roles, heroism and spontaneous leadership of ordinary civilians, becoming hagiographies of real or imagined resisters. This putative naturalness disappeared in productions made towards the end of the war, when Stalin began to rebuild his image as the country's foremost hero. This "cult of Stalin" as father, as well as an astute military commander, is taken to its logical extreme in Mikheil Chiaureli's *The Fall of Berlin* (*Padeniye Berlina*, 1950). In this celebratory film, the leader himself lands in the conquered capital to be rapturously welcomed by his soldiers and the prisoners that he liberates. Needless to say, Stalin never visited Berlin. Even more unlikely is Stalin's role advising the film's protagonist, Alexei Ivanov (Mikheil Gelovani), how to woo his paramour, Komsomol teacher Natasha (Marina Kovaliova), using poetry. The couple's final reunion in Berlin, where she had been deported as a prisoner of war and he arrives with the Red Army, is blessed by the leader himself, acting as patriarch in every sense of the term. *Fall of Berlin*, however, offers one of the last examples of socialist realism, with cinematic representations changing substantially thereafter.

The Soviet films looked at in this article deal with destruction, redemption, guilt and punishment during one of the most devastating conflicts in human history: the USSR's Great Patriotic War (1941-45), and are mostly set in the *Belorusskaya Sovetskaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika* (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), known in the west as White Russia and to the Germans as Weißrussland. The religious and socio-political dimensions of this "war of annihilation" is punctuated by the suffocated mourning contained

in the films. By contrast, the Yugoslav films that show the partisan struggle mourn overtly the country's victims. Mostly released during the 1960s and 1970s, these films represent partisans fighting tirelessly against German Nazis, bumbling Italian fascists, Croatian Ustaša, and Serbian Četniks, the former classed as collaborationist villains.⁸ Clearly influenced by Hollywood's Westerns, the films showcase the idiosyncratic Yugoslavian "third-way" that mirrors cinematically the country's non-aligned political position after it split from the USSR's Cominform in 1948.

Widely popular in the countries that emerged from the former nation, Partisan Films are firmly grounded in the search for unity that dominated the war's aftermath and which started to unravel soon after Tito's death. In hindsight, these films allow us to explore the relevance (or lack of relevance) of a view of the past designed to support an extinct "imagined community," in Benedict Anderson's understanding of the concept.⁹ However, at the time in which they were released, these productions offered not only a memorialization tool or an atonement strategy. As will be seen in this article, they attempted to cement the social consensus on which Yugoslavia was rebuilt after the war at a time precisely when that consensus was challenged by the rise of ethnic-based nationalism. These films offer wistful foundational narratives representing a binary, Manichaean view of the Yugoslav struggle against the Axis forces and their local collaborators. By so doing, they overtly mystify the successful resistance led by Tito, which paid dearly for the liberation of the country with a massive cost in human lives and material losses.¹⁰ In 1944, when the Red Army arrived in Belgrade, they were welcomed by partisans who had already expelled the Axis forces from most of the country. The films that project this victorious struggle cast as equals civilians from Yugoslavia's different ethnicities, and include a good number of women.¹¹

From the 1950s and, especially, throughout the 1960s and 70s, Tito's government contributed generously to a good number of productions and blockbusters, including many films about the war. It also sponsored the construction of a "cinematic city," Avala Film, in the country's capital, Belgrade. These lavish films spared no expense, offering generous contracts to well-known actors, as well as providing large numbers of conscripts and armament. In the most famous case, an existing bridge over the river Neretva was blown up in the film of the same name. As seen in Mila Turajlic's documentary *Cinema Komunisto* (2010), the actual bridge over the Neretva River, located in Republika Srpska's Jablanica (Bosnia and Herzegovina's), was blown up during the shooting of the film. This was designed to give the film an aura of reality and to make the site a "lieu de memoire," in Pierre Nora's definition of the term.¹²

Indeed, the site is today as famous for the film as for the battle itself and is now the preferred location for tourist photographs. Tito's phrase, "Ranjenike ne smijeno ostaviti" ("Not without the wounded") is inscribed on a stone in the garden of the museum commemorating the battle, unveiled by Tito when the museum opened, in the thirty-fifth anniversary of the battle, in 1978. As Michael R.D. Foot observes, Tito's words were not a mystification of the actual treatment of the wounded, "experience, in the first offensive, showed them that wounded who were left behind were massacred; thereafter, wounded preferred to be killed by their own side, or carried away by it."¹³

The Yugoslav's People's Army (JNA), normally referred to as Tito's Partisans, started to operate not when the country was occupied, on 6 April 1941, but after the invasion of the USSR, codenamed Operation Barbarossa (22 June 1941). Likewise, the USSR's partisan movement also started at the same time and was, by and large, not a spontaneous uprising, as most units were led by military commanders, political commissars or both. Only one week after the country's invasion, on 29 June, the Council of the People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a directive to all sections of the party, state administration, trade unions and Komsomol (youth movement) to set up partisan detachments.¹⁴ By the end of 1941 there were around 2,000 partisan units with an estimated 90,000 people operating in them. Although, as Alexander Statiev has shown, these initial efforts were largely futile and chaotic, they became more effective from 1942, when they constituted reliable partisan units. From this time, partisans were organized by local authorities, party leaders or officers from the Red Army who had found themselves in the rear of the swift three-pronged advance of German forces towards Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad.¹⁵ Partisan detachments included many trusted party members or people who were personally known to the leaders, among whom were some efficient organisers, such as Panteleimon Ponomarenko.¹⁶

Partisan activities in the USSR were thus controlled by the respective party committees of the republics whose territories were under the occupation and who vetoed membership. The primary objective of this guerrilla warfare was to support the Red Army by holding up as many Germans as possible in the rear. They did this mostly through disruption of road and rail communications, blowing up bridges, roads, telephone lines or warehouses. They also gathered intelligence, helped soldiers or prisoners escape and conducted propaganda and education campaigns, urging the population to resist or to support resisters. The movement included military formations used to conduct reconnaissance missions behind enemy lines.

One of these groups is the focus of one of the most important films to come out of the USSR, Tarkovsky's *Ivan's Childhood*, where the eponymous character, a twelve-year old scout, Ivan (Nikolái Burliáyev), loses his family, innocence and life. As the film's title suggests, Ivan represents the lost infancy and innocence of Soviet children, idealised through Tarkovsky's dream sequences. This remarkably moving story of vulnerability is constructed visually through murky black and white photography, which intensifies the mood created by the film (Figure 1).

Tarkovsky's *Ivan's Childhood* is based on a short story written by Vladimir Bogomolov, which was simply entitled "Ivan" and was published in 1957, one year after Khrushchev's speech. The director co-wrote the script with Mikhail Papava, introducing some changes to the plot, including the end. *Ivan's Childhood* was Tarkovsky's first feature film and made him well-known in cinematic circles when it was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival and the Golden Gate Award at the San Francisco International Film Festival on its release, in 1962. Tarkovsky went on to consecrate himself as a ground-breaking auteur, perhaps one the most famous to come out from the Soviet Union, from which he defected in 1983, three years before his untimely death. Paradoxically, the success of *Ivan's Childhood* did not endear Tarkovsky to some in the European left, who censored especially the "bourgeois" style of his idyllic and symbolic dream sequences. Others, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, defended a genre variously labelled socialist surrealism, somewhere between expressionism and neo-realism, influenced by pioneer film-makers such as Dziga Vertov or Salvador Dalí.¹⁷ Sartre's defence highlights both the film's style and content, singling out the use of camera positions to heighten Ivan's helplessness and provoke empathy. Tarkovsky himself referred to his style as "sculpting in time," offering a challenge to the logic of "linear sequentiality" in cinema.¹⁸ As Dina Iordanova remarks, the director deployed this technique "in favor of heightening feeling through poetic connections." Iordanova emphasises how these "poetic links" are "[reveal] cinema's potential 'as the most truthful and poetic of art forms.'"¹⁹

Poetic is not a label that can easily be applied to the action-packed Yugoslav films about the war. As a fully-fledged genre, these films developed twenty years after the conflict, although there are some earlier examples, such as Vjekoslav Afrić's *Slavica* (1947). These films were seen and celebrated by large segments of the Yugoslav population both in cinema and, subsequently, on television, and remain popular in the nations that arose from the former country. The films present "history as homage," to borrow Robert Rosenstone's label,

showcasing the time when what is now a twentieth-century historical concept existed as a “non-aligned” communist country beyond the Stalinist sphere of influence.²⁰ The two most popular productions deal with the most celebrated battles of the war, Neretva and Sutjeska. The first, Bulajić’s *Battle of Neretva*, has the additional honour of being one of the most expensive motion pictures ever made in the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. The film’s budget, personally approved by Tito, is estimated to have been between \$4.5 and \$12 million and its stars included internationally-renowned actors, including Sergei Bondarchuk, Yul Brynner, Franco Nero and Orson Welles.²¹ These actors went to the country attracted by the sums of money paid to them and to endorse Yugoslavia’s position as a friendly communist outpost beyond the reach of the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact.

Battle of Neretva recreates an Axis attack lasting from January until March 1943, codenamed Fall Weiss (Case White) by the Nazis and known in Yugoslavia as the Fourth Offensive.²² Filming it took over sixteen months, substantially longer than the battle, and a combined battalion of 10,000 soldiers were deployed. This meant that two different sets of recruits from the JNA participated as extras. In addition, four villages and a fortress were especially constructed and subsequently destroyed, and many Soviet-made T-34 tanks that were camouflaged to look like German Tiger I tanks were thrown into the river.²³ The film offers an example of “Yugoslavism,” simplifying what was a multi-layered conflict. This can be seen at the very beginning of the film, when a partisan greets people gathered around him as “brothers, Yugoslav nations, Serbs, Macedonians, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins and Muslims.”

Battle of Neretva’s view of the war embodies the historical perspective that dominated Yugoslavia during Marshal Tito’s rule and foregrounds the partisan relationship with the land which is characteristic of the genre, and that can be appreciated in many long shots of the beautiful and rugged mountains and rivers in the country (Figure 2).²⁴ People and the landscape they inhabit are thus “wounded” by the destruction visited on them by the occupiers. As Dragan Batančev notes, “Bulajić managed to create the impression of drilling and “wounding” the land which partisans, as in some sort of a religious fascination, were not willing to surrender. This almost pantheistic relation of partisans towards the land is also visible in ... the demolition of the bridge.”²⁵ Ironically, however, the production of the film, which included blowing up the bridge, as well as a large number of vehicles, was just as “wounding” and destructive towards the local environment.

A similar, quasi-pantheistic embedment of people and landscape informs Soviet films such as *Ivan's Childhood* or Klimov's *Come and See*. It also dominates Shepitko's *The Ascent*, which charts the transformation of a Red Army partisan, Sotnikov (Boris Plotnikov), into an unlikely socialist martyr. Shepitko's film is a breath-taking rendition of a novel written by Belarussian writer Vasily Bykov, *Sotnikov*, which was rendered into English as *The Ordeal* (1972). It was released in 1977, when it won several accolades.²⁶ The action is set in Belarus in 1942 and is shot in black-and-white by cinematographer Vladimir Chuchnov, who died with Ukrainian-born director, Shepitko, in a car accident, in 1979. Chuchnov's cinematography includes striking long shots of blizzards in a snowy landscape that leave a long-lasting imprint on the viewer. The immensity and solitude of the cold landscape is conveyed through the juxtaposition of these wide shots with mid-close-ups of people. The film opens with one such tracking shot of a group running away from Nazis in a scene that sets the mood for the remainder of the film (Figure 3).

The main protagonists of *The Ascent* are two partisans whose destinies are linked but who make different choices when faced with adversity. Sotnikov is an improbable partisan hero, whose stature and self-belief gradually increase following his incarceration and torture. Although Sotnikov appears orthodox in both the Christian and Marxist-Leninist senses of the word, his characterization remains unusual on many counts. A teacher prior to the war, the slightly-built Sotnikov is an unlikely hero, who is not only asthmatic but is soon wounded in the leg, remaining ill and crippled for most of the film. However, Sotnikov gradually acquires a saintly aura that increases as he reaches his final hour in the quasi-Biblical ascent of the film's title. Sotnikov's partner, Rybak (Vladimir Gostyukhin), is initially presented as a courageous partisan who not only volunteers to fetch food for the civilian party that they are escorting but also returns to help the wounded Sotnikov, dragging him through deep snow to reach safety.

Sotnikov has been wounded after they take a sheep from an elderly headman, Pyotr (Sergey Yakovlev), whom they accuse of collaborating. As they try to return to their party, they are located by Germans and *politsai*, and Sotnikov stays behind to cover Rybak, leading to his wounding. At this point, Shepitko places the camera on the snow and tracks their slow slog, as Rybak tries to drag Sotnikov one inch at a time, effectively involving the audience in their struggle. Eventually, they reach a cabin where three children live and when their mother, Demchikha (Lyudmila Polyakova), returns, so do the Germans. Demchikha hides them in the loft, but they are discovered when they hear Sotnikov cough and both are taken into custody

alongside a distraught Demchikha, now a suspect of helping partisans. On reaching their cell, they are joined by a Jewish girl, Basya (Viktoriya Goldentul), who has survived the round ups and has been helped by a woman whose name she refuses to reveal. Also arrested is Pyotr, the headman, on account of not having denounced the theft of the sheep, which makes him guilty of supporting partisans. They are interrogated by another *politsai*, Portnov (Anatoly Solonitsyn), with Sotnikov undergoing torture for his refusal to reveal the whereabouts of his detachment, while Rybak hesitates and offers to collaborate, initially considering that he will be able to run away to fight another day.

Following their last night together in a cell, the group is taken out to be executed, and Sotnikov addresses Portnov in an attempt to exonerate his colleagues, blaming himself for the actions in which the *politsai* had been killed. In the book on which the film is based, Sotnikov wishes to inculcate himself but Portnov ignores him. In the film, however, Shepitko adds a scene after Sotnikov calls Portnov, who is conspicuously standing outside of the circle formed by the Germans, and is framed from Sotnikov's point of view. This is followed by a shot-reverse-shot that shows Sotnikov in a mid-close up as he slowly limps his way towards Portnov, who occupies the camera's position. When Sotnikov defiantly faces up to Portnov, the lightening of his short hair creates a soft aura around his head, confirming his transformation into a martyr (Figure 4). His representation follows the tradition of religious paintings, in which shafts of light would enlighten those cast as saints, occupying the liminal space between the living and the divine. Sotnikov's "passion" is couched as a Christology, and he accepts his fate with fervour.

In the short speech that follows, and which encapsulating the film's message, Sotnikov shows that he has found peace in his destiny after Portnov addresses him as a Russian everyman "Citizen Ivanov." Sotnikov contests this, pausing intently before informing Portnov that he is: "Not Ivanov, Sotnikov," born in 1917, the year of Russia's October Revolution, and is a member of the communist party, as well as a lieutenant of the Red Army. He adds that he has a "father, a mother ...," and, following an emphatic pause, "... a motherland." Sotnikov's hiatus thus emphasises the word Родина (*rodina* or motherland), a concept famously immortalised in the posters of the time or the statue raised in 1967 in Kiev to commemorate the Battle of Stalingrad, "The Motherland Calls You" (Родина мать зовёт! *Rodina-Mat' zovyot!*). In these posters, the concept of *rodina* was deployed in order to widen popular support for the war effort, appealing to Russian nationalism.

Portnov, incisively portrayed by Anatoly Solonitsyn, listens with his head slightly bent sideways and his penetrative gaze fixed on Sotnikov. The last words make him lower his gaze slowly and turn away from Sotnikov. This temporary acknowledgement of his sense of loss is followed by his raised voice informing the Germans that Sotnikov's words amount to "nothing," sealing his dependence on them. Sotnikov, that is, is as much an emblem of his country as an ordinary human being in extraordinary circumstances who sacrifices his life for the "motherland," *Rodina*, which is, then, in many ways the film's main protagonist and a spiritual essence from which Portnov and Rybak will be forever alienated. In other words, Shepitko's form of pantheism expresses some deep-seated religious sentiments which were obviously proscribed by Soviet communism, stressing the inner tragedies of those who, through force, selfishness or fear, alienated themselves from their motherland. Indeed, Rybak's ultimate punishment will be his unassailable sense of guilt. Rybak's inability to live (or die) with his actions, is reminiscent of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and he remains outside Shepitko's parable of redemption.

Death and mourning are central to the experience of the war that these films showcase. In many ways, films give a voice to the suffocated mourning that was often proscribed from the official narrative in communist countries, collating the tragedies of the twentieth-century in the anonymous deaths of "ordinary" people. This is nowhere better summarised than in the final scene of *The Ascent*, where the film's title is made meaningful. In this scene, largely absent from the book, the five people about to be hung make their way up to the hill where a scaffold awaits them. Their ascent is choreographed with a non-diegetic trenchant score by composer Alfred Shnittke, as they make their way past civilians who have been ordered to watch the execution. Here, Sotnikov embraces death like a messiah among his apostles, while the camera pauses to give us a view of each of them. We are offered a microcosmic view of Soviet Belarus and, by implication, the occupied USSR, and the Russian "motherland." Pyotr, the headman that they had robbed and who they had accused of being a traitor, appears dignified, accepting death with stoicism. The same attitude is shared by the Jewish girl, Basya, who looks over the horizon, striving to contain her childish fear. Next to her, Demchikha cries silently, lamenting the fate of her abandoned children. These people exemplify the attitude of many Soviet citizens, defined not so much by the Soviet hierarchy but by the attitude of an occupying army who classed as enemies: the *untermensch*. These four accept their fate, presenting a dignified image of courage to the local onlookers, whose respectful silence conveys their solidarity with the condemned group, obviously shared by the

audience (Figure 5). The last shots of the scene link the group with the silent watchers, as Sotnikov catches sight of a small boy wearing a budenovka who contemplates his execution with a mixture of admiration and sorrow, crying silently. Following a shot-reverse-shot that established a connection between the condemned and the onlooker, Sotnikov smiles to the boy before his final moment, offering a dim vision of future hope (Figure 6).

The religious imagery and music in this scene stress the intricate relationship between partisans, ordinary people and the landscape. This relationship had been established in the opening scenes, when the group made their way through deep snow inch by inch. It is intensified when Rybak helps the wounded Sotnikov through the soft snow that covers their bodies and it culminates in the intercutting of shots between the condemned, the people and their environment. *The Ascent* showcases the telluric embedment of partisans and civilians with the wild and haunting landscape that harbours them. This is a relationship that Rybak loses indelibly, as demonstrated by the final shot-reverse-shot of his anguished face contemplating the environment from which he is now permanently alienated. The film closes with the image of his wounded self forever detached from a snowy landscape framed by a small church which he contemplates (Figures 7 and 8).

Alienation is a concept overtly avoided the Yugoslav films studied here, although a similar religious suffocation can be perceived in the representation of the country's leader, Tito, who is seen to be both human and god-like. The "people's heroes" fight and die for Tito, who had issued explicit orders "not to be seen" in films.²⁷ Tito's absence, however, often marks him as even more prominent, as happens in *Battle of Neretva*. At a crucial point in the film, partisans circulate a piece of paper, which is handled from one person to the next while the camera focuses alternatively on the person or their hand. The object of our curiosity is eventually revealed in a close up of a message with a single sentence and a signature: "Prozor must fall tonight. Tito" (Figure 9). This unquestionable command is to be treated as gospel, showing Tito as "God's surrogate" to borrow Todor Kuljic's expression.²⁸ It is the view preserved in Tito's Mausoleum in Belgrade, which recalls the mummification of Lenin, and shows how Tito filled the vacuum left by the official secularisation of the country and communism as a form of "political religion" in Emilio Gentile's formulation.²⁹

By and large, films like *Battle of Neretva* were designed to sanction the togetherness of the entity that emerged at the end of the First World War as the Kingdom of Croats, Slovenes and Serbs. It was renamed as Yugoslavia (meaning, South Slavs) in 1929 by King Alexander, and was consolidated as a unified nation after World War II. The alliance of the different ethnic

groups was grounded on their memory of a united fight against an enemy that operated from outside and within the country, as well as the collective effort involved in its postwar reconstruction. Marko Attila Hoare outlines this perspective as follows:

The Titoist regime in Yugoslavia encouraged the belief that all Yugoslavs participated in an equal manner and to an equal degree in the Partisan movement and that they did so on a homogenous, all Yugoslav, basis ... The Partisan movement was a genuinely multinational movement but the roles played in it by the various Yugoslav nationalities were not equivalent ... Serbs in Croatia might fight as Partisans to halt the persecution by the Ustashes; Croats in Dalmatia to resist the Italian annexation of their homeland; Muslims out of fear of the Chetniks; townsmen out of leftist sympathies; and peasants according to traditional patterns of rebelliousness.³⁰

This notion was harnessed by the cinematic genre closely associated with the leader overseeing that country's unity, Tito. A film buff, Tito watched a single film most evenings throughout his life, and he effectively promoted and financed the lavish film industry that flourished during the "golden era" of Yugoslav films, from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. Within this industry, Partizanski Films stood out both in terms of quantity and prominence, with Tito personally endorsing or correcting them, as documented by Turajlic.

Tito not only watched endless reels of film but also sponsored the creation of the country's main production company, the aforementioned Avala Film. This cinematic city, now derelict, thrived during the 1960s and 1970s, when it became the site of many co-productions and hosted a good number of international stars. In newsworthy terms, the studio's coup the force was the arrival in in 1971 of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. The famous couple made numerous public appearances, recorded by the international press in photos with Tito and his wife, Jovanka Budisavljević Broz, who had been a Lieutenant General in the JNA during the war. Tito, who admired Burton, wanted the Welsh actor to impersonate him in Delić's *Battle of Sutjetska*, also known as *The Fifth Offensive*, which represents a Nazi attack code named Case Black.

Case Black took place in Nazi-occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina from 15 May to 16 June 1943 and was the greatest engagement of the war in the Balkan nation. Using guerrilla hit-and-run tactics, the Partisans had managed to take the Durmitor area of northern Montenegro when the Nazis, seeking to uproot the movement, deployed nearly 130,000 troops to encircle them.³¹ During this offensive, around 22,000 partisans were surrounded in a joint Axis attack

that included 67,000 Germans, 43,000 Italians, 2,000 Bulgarians, 11,000 Croatians (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska) and 4,000 Četniks. In spite of being outnumbered approximately six to one, Tito's partisans managed to break through enemy lines, which cost them more than 7,000 casualties with Tito wounded in the battle.³² Although suffering heavy losses, the partisans halted the offensive and the outcome of the encirclement boosted their credentials, with the Battle of Sutjeska becoming an integral part of the resistance mythology after the war.

As in *Battle of Neretva*, the protagonists of *Battle of Sutjeska* are ordinary Yugoslavs, with a mixture of peasants, workers and intellectuals from different ethnicities. Emphasis is also placed on the different abilities of people, with disabled and older citizens also contributing to the struggle. The film even figures a "comrade poet" who takes his books with him and reads or exhorts his comrades during the battle. These men and women are seen fighting side-by-side against the foreign occupiers and the "domestic traitors," the Croatian Ustaša and the Serbian Četniks. Among these enemies, the Četniks occupy the unenviable position of being represented as unruly hordes, riding horses sabre in hand or cutting the throats of wounded partisans. By contrast, the Italian occupiers are handled with a certain degree of respect, seen by the casting of Captain Riva (Franco Nero), who changes sides to fight with the partisans because he wishes to see the end of fascism in Italy. Batančev suggests that Riva's belated heroism could be partly due to the fact that "Italian co-producers ... helped the distribution of the film on the international market."³³ Nevertheless, Riva's position reflects the fact that, following the Armistice of Cassibile on 3 September 1943, many Italian soldiers deserted and some joined Tito's Partisans, who were by then supported by the Allies and on course to win the war. Partisans also gained a lot of equipment abandoned by the Italians, which helped them substantially in the last stages of the war.

In *Battle of Sutjeska* and *Battle of Neretva*, partisans are protagonists both as individuals and as part of a collective. The films engage with different personalities from different ethnic groups that interact and fight together, paradigmatic of Yugoslav "narodni heroji" (people's heroes). These ordinary heroes are able to show solidarity across ethnic, class, gender and professional divisions and are willing to sacrifice themselves on behalf of the nation. This is the role of the three siblings who photograph themselves at the beginning of *Battle of Neretva*, and whose deaths punctuate the action (Figure 9). After one brother, Vuko (Radko Polic), dies early in the film, we get to know and identify with the other two siblings, Novak (Ljubisa Samardzic) and Danica (Sylva Koscina). Their deaths, close to the end of the film,

are given added poignancy by a brief romance between Danica and Ivan (Lojze Rozman). Ivan had proposed to Danica half way through the film, and they had agreed to marry at the war's end but Danica dies heroically with Novak, after she volunteers to join a patrol sent to contain the Četniks.

Whereas collaborators are antagonists who are cast as aliens in Yugoslav films, the Soviet films looked at in this article present them as part of a community from which they alienate themselves. As seen above, Portnov and Rybak offer different examples of Belarusian collaboration with the occupying forces in World War II. In fact, the Germans were welcomed as liberators in important segments of the Soviet Borderlands, including Western Ukraine, the Baltic Republics and Western Belarus. People collaborated there either out of sheer necessity, because they rejected Russians or Soviet domination or for ideological reasons, as had happened elsewhere with fascist or pro-fascist parties elsewhere in Europe. Needless to say, the “grey” zones of this conflict, where people might become a “collaborator” or a “resister” in order to survive or to help their families, were largely obliterated in the official memorialization of the war. Curiously, this mystification has been largely reinstated as the main narrative of the heirs of the USSR, the Russian Federation and Belarus.³⁴

Collaboration could be the only means of survival in a destructive war that threatened its existence and the livelihood of a large proportion of its citizens. The outright savagery meted out on civilians caught behind the fast-advancing German lines remains staggering to rehearse. At a conservative estimate, twenty-seven million Soviet citizens died, with the figure reaching forty million in some studies.³⁵ The large majority of the casualties were civilians, although military deaths surpassed ten million, a figure that excludes the more than three million POWs who died in captivity due to forced labour and exposure.³⁶ Probably the place to suffer the most was Belarus, where one in four of its nine million inhabitants were killed, including two thirds of its Jewish population. Alongside with Poland and the Ukraine, with which Belarus shared shifting borders, Belarus is the place where the murderous and genocidal extremes of Nazi Germany culminated, claiming the dubious honour of being at the forefront of destruction. According to Tim Snyder, of

the nine million people who were on the territory of Soviet Belarus in 1941, some 1.6 were killed by the Germans in actions away from battle fields, including about 700,000 prisoners of war, 500,000 Jews, and 320,000 people counted as partisans (the vast

majority of whom were unarmed civilians) ... A rough estimate of two million total mortal losses ... seems reasonable and conservative ... By the end of the war, half the population of Belarus had either been killed or moved.³⁷

In addition to human destruction, over 600 villages were completely obliterated, a number that may easily be multiplied when factoring in partial destruction. Not surprisingly, many Belarusians were left with the choice of either collaborating or contributing substantially to the Soviet war effort, joining the partisans or otherwise supporting them. Needless to say, Belarusian Jews were not given any option.

This destruction is nowhere better captured than in Klimov's *Come and See*, which presents the war's brutality from the point of view of Florya (Aleksey Kravchenko), a boy of around fourteen, who loses first his childhood, then his family and subsequently his sanity. The long scene that details the village's obliteration culminates the film's charting of Florya's brutal transformation from innocent boy to premature adult. This scene, which is shot with hand-held camera, is chaotic and unsettling, as we witness people being rounded up and burnt in a barn while soldiers run or drive around to the backdrop of noises, shouts and diegetic music from a gramophone placed on a moving motorbike. All of them are then set alight in a barn whose construction is seen through the mist to resemble a church (Figure 10). The sole survivors and witnesses are an old woman who is prostrated in bed, who is spared on account of her inability to procreate, Florya, and a young woman who stands with bloody legs astride after been dragged away by the hair and dumped on a truck to be gang raped. The colourless partisans arrive too late to save people, though they are clearly above Germans in humanitarian or humane terms.

It is worth remembering that, as harrowing as these scenes are, they are not far from the real horrors visited on Belarusians. The callous murderousness of *einsatzkommandos* like the one appearing in the film clearly stand for units such as the infamous Dirlewanger Brigade. They embody the staggering brutality of the war's Eastern Front, and Klimov based the film on his own memory of it.³⁸ Indeed, the "wait and see" option available for Western countries at the beginning of the war was simply not accessible for most Belarusians. It was certainly not a choice for Belarusian Jews, whose genocide was submerged within the general war of extermination in Soviet memory.

In spite of these horrors, Klimov, does not mystify Soviet partisans. This is clear from the beginning of the film, when time two of their number gulp the food they are offered by

Florya's mother, disregarding her poverty and take away the house's only boy, Florya. Partisans are seen to be clothed in neutral colours, shot in long shots or mid-close ups and never cast as figures with whom to empathise (Figure 11). Their leader, Kosach (Liubomiras Laucevičius) is largely silent, and his main actions include abandoning Florya and his "partisan wife," Glasha (Olga Mironova), an act that can be seen as partly contemptuous and partly a desire to spare their lives. Kosach's second, and perhaps more relevant, action is when he silently nods an order to spray Nazis and local *politsai* with gunshots. This summary execution is shown to be only kinder on account of the expressed wish of many in the crowd to torture and burn their prisoners alive in retaliation for the destruction the village, meant to stand for Khatyn, and the murder of all its inhabitants.

Klimov's film is considered one the most important production of the *glasnost* era, and exemplifies the cultural transition from the Stagnation, a label given by Gorbachov to the period dominated by Leonidas Brezhnev, and Gorbachov's own opening up of the country in the second half of the 1980s, normally referred to as *glasnost* and *perestroika*.³⁹ Although it makes oblique reference to the plight of Soviet Jews, the film adheres to the Soviet line of integrating the murder of Jews with that of the rest of the population under the German Generalplan Ost, in which some Slavs would be spared to serve as slaves to the master race. Klimov, however, stresses the absence of options for a population whose sole choices could be to join the Nazis as their subordinate policemen, join the resistance or to be killed otherwise in this war of annihilation.

Post-Thaw's films like Klimov's thus shunned the propagandistic tone of the immediate postwar era, testing the permissiveness of the regime with visions that are far from celebratory in tone. As Youngblood suggests, the skilful use of images meant that filmmakers could circumvent existing censorship, thereby becoming "the historians of their generation": "Working with images rather than words, these directors were able to subvert censorship, thereby functioning as the historians of their generation."⁴⁰ By contrast, the Yugoslav productions studied here negotiate the individualism and unshakable sense of collective duty of "people's heroes." These heroes are efficiently led by Comrade Tito, whose humanity and sense of duty are praised in no uncertain terms. Only unusual in this sense is Hajrudin Krvavac's, *Walter Defends Sarajevo*. For a start, Krvavac's film lacks the familiar tirades about the wonders of communist and the leadership of Marshal Tito that are present in most Partisan Films. Nevertheless, the fight remains unambiguously glorified in a film who was highly popular in the People's Republic of China. Besides this rare accolade, the film

probably holds the record for number of Germans killed by a single partisan, Walter, after whose nom-de-guerre the production is named and who is played by the charismatic Serbian actor, Velimir “Bata” Živojinović. In this instance, and according to an interested viewer who has painstakingly investigated Walter’s body count, the protagonist manages to dispose of forty-two Nazis singlehandedly.⁴¹

Walter Defends Sarajevo follows the conventions of the genre, including the use of historical footage of blitzkrieg war and blanket bombing, as well as the prescribed meetings of Germans discussing partisan resistance on a Yugoslav map. This time, they chat about “Operation Laufer,” to take place in Bosnia’s capital, Sarajevo. Unlike most films about Yugoslav resistance, Krvavac’s film is largely set in a city and not in the country’s mountains where the partisan guerrilla war was largely fought. Sarajevo’s landmarks figure conspicuously in the film providing not only a setting but also adding to the action and the interpretation of the struggle. The city’s skyline is shown when Walter shoots a good number of Germans from a church tower, and the old quarter and mosque also feature prominently when Germans chase the partisans. Like the countryside in partisan films, Sarajevo, is, by and large, united in its rejection of the occupiers. In fact, the city’s labyrinthine roads play their part in the struggle. This can be seen when the protagonists hide in the souk, while local artisans hammer loudly the handcrafted brass works typical of the city to distract the persecutors.

Within Sarajevo, the underground cells of which Walter is part often operate at night, filmed with cinematography and camera work characteristic of thrillers or spy films. The characters, at times indistinguishable, appear and disappear from corners, casting long shadows and creating a degree of suspense reminiscent of the aforementioned genres during Hollywood’s Classic era. In *Walter*, however, this sombre tone is literally lightened up by the intermittent shooting and fighting sprees. The film’s climatic scene, reminiscent of Western films, is played on top of a moving train. Here, Walter and his two sidekicks, one of whom, Zus, played by another actor famous for his partisan roles, Ljubisa Samardzic, duly cheat their Nazi prosecutors and blow them up with their much-needed petrol. The three of them first dressed as Nazi soldiers and then as railway engineers first infiltrate the German camp and subsequently replace the machinists. When the plot is discovered, a fair number Germans on the train try to reach the engine only to be shot on the roofs of the coaches and roll down the mountain. Walter then unleashes all the coaches where the Germans and the petrol travel. We watch the ensuing explosion from the safety reached by the three protagonists who had

jumped out prior to the crash. Their return to occupied Sarajevo closes an action-packed film that, although devoid of the pro-Tito manifesto, offers a highly positive evaluation of Yugoslavia's "imagined community." This myth of ethnic harmonization helped sustain a regime that was built on entrenched antagonisms, which came to the fore after Tito's death. As Hoare proposes, the legacy of the Partisan struggle contains the foundation on which mutual understanding can be built: "The Partisan movement forms part of the national heritage of both Serbs and Croats, as well as of Muslims and other former Yugoslav peoples. It represents at the same time a shared tradition of multinational cooperation that may one day help to reestablish friendly relations between the former Yugoslav states."⁴² In this sense, films offer not only entertainment, but also a form of social consensus that can help foster a sense of community in a deeply divided land.

Watched by millions of people in theatres and thereafter on television, VHS, DVD or Netflix, partisan films stand out through their lasting impact on collective memory. They highlight the role played by cinematic memories of the war in the foundational narratives upon which these countries constituted or "imagined" themselves. The films that deal with the Yugoslav partisan struggle showcase ethnic harmony at a time in which that harmony started to be challenged. The 1960s witnessed a halt to the economic prosperity of the previous two decades, which had been facilitated by the Marshall Plan, remittances from migrants and tourism, as Yugoslavia was the only communist country open to both. In this climate, 1963 saw the Yugoslav Third Constitution, which fostered political decentralization, thereby enhancing devolution and the role of the different republics. This constitution, moreover, "enshrined the right of republics to leave the Yugoslav federation."⁴³ At this time, Tito endorsed the concept of "organic Yugoslavism," which allowed the expression of nationalism within the federation. This contrasted with the "integral Yugoslavism" endorsed by the likes of Serbian leader Aleksandar Ranković, who subsequently fell from grace and was expelled from the party. The films studied here adhere to the vision of "organic Yugoslavism," where solidarity provides the social cement for a country that is never mentioned as a unity. This implicit acknowledgment corroborates the fraught environment in which they were released, revealing the tenuous links that would begin to unravel from the 1980s.

As with Yugoslav films, Soviet productions shaped and adhered to the social frameworks of collective memory, as delineated by Maurice Halbwachs.⁴⁴ If Soviet monuments, such as Volgograd's statue of the "Motherland," offer a mixture of grandiose classicism and social realism, Soviet films about the Great Patriotic War challenge expectations of simplistic

patriotism and pro-Soviet militancy. In spite of censorship, these war films encapsulate the contradictions of the socio-political environment of the time in which they were produced, offering no paeans to the Party's policies or to its leaders, past or present. Instead, they portray morally ambiguous, deeply moving human stories that eschew the virile posturing of the paradigmatic "people's hero" as a version of his leader, Stalin. Under directors like Klimov, Shepitko and Tarkovsky, these films also subvert the techniques borrowed from socialist realism, effectively linking the spiritual, metaphysical and emotional destruction of the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union.

The films studied in this article offer paradigmatic examples of the power of cinema not only to (mis)represent or contest the representation historical events, but to contribute effectively to their "invention," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's use of the term.⁴⁵ These films validate the historical capital on which communal consensus was built in the war's aftermath. The shared past of these societies, and the films that embody that past, display contingent points of union during or after a war where social or ethnic divisions were willfully erased. These cinematic representations are, at the same time, historical documents and, to borrow Nora's famous formulation, "sites of memory," which offer an outlet for emotions and for mourning. They showcase (or imagine) people's "finest hours," dignifying the trail of death that the Nazi invasion left behind. They also showcase and subvert the "messianic" or redemptive perspective of history outlined by Benjamin's victor's paradigm, creating history through constellations that challenge historicism's teleological assumptions. The memorialization of the war in these films effectively link the physical, spiritual, metaphysical and emotional destruction of the Second World War in the former Yugoslavia and the USSR.

¹ Walter Benjamin. *On the Concept of History*. Gesammelten Schriften I:2. Suhrkamp Verlag. Frankfurt am Main, 1974 (<http://members.efn.org/~dredmond/ThesesonHistory.html>).

² Benjamin's famous statement in the V Thesis is: "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism."

³ Polish, Greek and Albanian partisans were also militarily important during the war.

⁴ This study has benefited from Jurica Pavicic's knowledge of Partisan Films.

⁵ Khrushchev delivered his famous speech on Stalin, entitled "On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences," to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 25 February 1956.

⁶ Marion Hurley's study of Roberto Rossellini's *Rome* (1946) demonstrates how neo-realism became the hallmark of post-fascism, and is intimately linked with the mystification of Italy as an anti-fascist country. See "Working-Class Communities and the New Nation: Italian Resistance Film and the Remaking of Italy," in *The Essence and the Margin: National Identities and Collective Memories in Contemporary European Culture*, ed. Anna Saunders and Laura Rorato (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 71-86.

⁷ Catherine Merridale offers an incisive analysis of the way people, mostly women, would use official celebrations to channel mourning for unrelated deaths in "War, Death, and Remembrance in Soviet Russia," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 61-83.

⁸ Simon Trew questions the supposed collaboration of Četniks with Germans in *Britain, Mihailovic, and the Chetniks, 1941-42* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

⁹ See Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 1991).

¹⁰ Of a total population of around 15m people, deaths are estimated to have been between 1 and 1.7m, more than half of whom were civilians. On Yugoslav partisans, see Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1940-1945. Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

¹¹ More than 100,000 women were members of Tito's National Liberation Army (AVNOJ), with one in four dying, 40,000 wounded and 3,000 becoming incapacitated. Of the 100,000 women, 2,000 served as officers and ninety-one became "people's hero."

¹² See "Between Memory and History: Les *Lieux de Mémoire*". *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-24.

¹³ See *Resistance: An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism 1940-1945* (London: Methuen, 1976), 193.

¹⁴ One day after the general order was delivered, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Republic of Belarus issued directive No.1 entitled "On passing of the party organizations in the areas temporarily occupied by the enemy to the underground activities." This directive ordered the provincial, municipal and local party sections to create partisan groups in preparation for the arrival of the Nazi troops.

¹⁵ On Soviet partisans, see Kenneth Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas: Soviet Partisans in World War I* (St Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); Alexander Hill, *The War behind the Eastern Front: the Soviet Partisan Movement in North-West Russia, 1941-1944* (London: Frank Cass, 2005); Leonid D. Grenkevich, *The Soviet Partisan Movement, 1941-1944: a Critical Historiographical Analysis* (London: Frank Cass, 1999) and Alexander Statiev, "The Soviet Union," in *Hitler's Europe Ablaze, Occupation, Resistance and Rebellion During World War Two*, ed. Philip Cooke and Ben H. Shephard (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013), 188-212.

¹⁶ Ponomarenko had been general of the Red Army before becoming First Secretary of the Communist Party of Belarus (1938-47).

¹⁷ Jean Paul Sartre, "Discussion on the criticism of Ivan's Childhood." (Letter to Alicata, editor of *L'Unita*). *The French Letters*, no 1009, trans. Madan Gopal Singh. *Nostalghia*, 1963. (www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/Sartre.html).

¹⁸ *Sculpting in Time: Tarkovsky The Great Russian Filmmaker Discusses His Art*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).

¹⁹ See the essay that Iordanova wrote on the release of the film by Criterion. "Ivan's Childhood: Dream Come True." (<https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/589-ivan-s-childhood-dream-come-true>).

²⁰ Rosenstone uses this label to refer to a 1980s documentary about the US members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, who fought in the Spanish Civil War. See *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 111.

- ²¹ The actual budget was not made public but the estimate given by *Variety* puts the official figure at US\$4.5m and the actual expenses at US\$12.5m. See Bagancev, "A Cinematic Battle: Three Yugoslav War Films from the 1960s" (MA Dissertation, Central European University, 2012), 54, n. 96.
- ²² Although a strategic victory, the battle could also be seen as a partisan defeat, as they lost 11,915 in battle, while 2,506 were captured by the Germans and a further 606 executed. See Hoare, *Genocide and Resistance in Hitler's Bosnia: The Partisans and the Chetniks, 1941-1943* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 333.
- ²³ Batančev uses the specific numbers for a section of his chapter on this film, "10,000 soldiers, 75 armed vehicles, 22 airplanes" ("A Cinematic Battle," 52).
- ²⁴ Miranda Jakiša analyses the symbiotic relationship of partisans with the land in these films, arguing that these "telluric" and "earth-bound" features help construct the partisan's "imagined community." See "Down to Earth Partisans: Fashioning of YU-Space in Partisan Films." *Kino!* 10 (2010): 54-61.
- ²⁵ Batančev, "A Cinematic Battle," 64.
- ²⁶ Bykov's novel, *Sotnikov*, was published in the USSR in 1970.
- ²⁷ His written order refusing his cinematic representation is shown in *Cinema Komunisto*.
- ²⁸ Kulijc, *Tito* (Belgrade: Institut za politicke studije, 1998), 292.
- ²⁹ Gentile, *Politics as Religion*. Trans. George Staunton (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).
- ³⁰ Hoare, "Whose is the Partisan Movement? Serbs, Croats and the Legacy of a Shared Resistance." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 15.4 (2002): 24-5
- ³¹ Air support was provided by the Luftwaffe, Italian Air Force and the Croatian Air Force
- ³² Estimated Partisan casualties were close to 9,000 (6,500 combatants and 2,500 civilians killed in reprisals), while Axis forces had around 583 killed and 400 wounded.
- ³³ Batančev, "A Cinematic Battle," 56.
- ³⁴ Twenty-first century Belarus offers a unique example of continuity from the Soviet version of the Great Patriotic War. See Alexandra Goujon. "Memorial Narratives of WWII Partisans and Genocide in Belarus." *East European Politics and Societies* 24. 1 (2012): 6-25.
- ³⁵ The widely-used figure of 26-27 million resulted from an investigation commissioned by Gorbachev and carried out by the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1993. Among those estimating forty million are Boris Sokolov and Viktor Korol. See Viktor E. Korol, "The Price of Victory: Myths and Reality," trans. David M. Glantz. *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 9. 2 (1996): 417-426. Boris Sokolov suggests a figure of 43.4 million in "The Cost of War: Human Losses for the USSR and Germany, 1939-1945." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 9.1 (1996): 152-193 and "How to Calculate Human Losses during the Second World War". *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 22 (2009): 437-58.
- ³⁶ This estimate comes from a figure of 5.9 million prisoners. Whether this includes or excludes partisans remains contentious as they are difficult to identify, given the German policy of classing those they murdered as partisans.
- ³⁷ *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (London: Vintage, 2011), 250-51.
- ³⁸ The notorious 36th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS, also known as the *SS-Sturmbrigade Dirlewanger*, enlisted convicted criminals in its ranks, including Oskar Dirlewanger himself. They became famous for murdering and raping civilians behind the Eastern Front throughout the war, and operated in Poland, Belarus and Slovakia.
- ³⁹ The film "drew 28.9 million viewers, ranking sixth at the box office in 1986." See Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 197. These years were marked by the decline of the long-lasting leadership of Leonidas Brézhnev (1964-82), who was followed by Yuri Andropov (1982-84), Konstantín Chernenko (1984-85) and Gorbachov (1985-91).
- ⁴⁰ Youngblood, "A War Remembered: Soviet Films of the Great Patriotic War." *The American Historical Review*, 106, no.3 (2001): 855.
- ⁴¹ H83tr3d's channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igT9BCbeHgQ>) has a webpage dedicated to body counts by films or actors. See www.allouttabubblegum.com (Accessed 1 November 2016).
- ⁴² Hoare, "Whose is the Partisan Movement?," 40.
- ⁴³ See Sabrina P. Ramet, *Three Yugoslavias: State Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 208.
- ⁴⁴ For Halbwachs, although individuals have the ability to remember, they do so through parameters that are socially demarcated: "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember ... Every collective memory ... requires the support of a group delimited in space and time." See *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 22.
- ⁴⁵ *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).