Chapter 4

Barrandov's Co-productions

The Clumsy Way to Ideological Control, International Competitiveness and Technological Improvement

Pavel Skopal

As early as the 1920s, film industry representatives in West European countries had made co-production and distribution deals with the intention of maintaining competitiveness with – and protection against – imports from Hollywood.[1] The practice of co-productions also boomed in postwar Europe, particularly after 1946, when a French-Italian co-production agreement was signed. The reasons for such engagements were very similar to those from before the war: to increase competitiveness vis-à-vis the outside threat of Hollywood production. In Western Europe, the co-production model was at its peak from the end of the 1950s to the beginning of the 1960s. In France, a total of sixty-three movies were made in 1957 together with a co-production partner.[2]

The history of Soviet Bloc co-productions offers a very different story indeed in terms of scale, motivation and the dynamic of international cooperation. At the same time, however, we can recognize certain parallels concerning the historical moment when interest in this mode of production emerged, although initial plans to shoot many more movies under co-production treaties in 1948 and in the late 1950s quickly became more restrained. The impetus behind the short-term inclination towards co-productions in the late 1940s was the Soviet Union's geopolitical plotting and its colonizing approach to facilities in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Occupation Zone/ German Democratic Republic (GDR). Very few co-productions had been implemented prior to the mid-1950s, but the period of liberalization following the

Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) had the side effect of intensified interest in both intra- and trans-Bloc co-productions, which coincided with the apex of co-production practice in Western Europe. This chapter aims to explain the role co-productions played in the plans and production practices of the Czech studio Barrandov and its partners, and how these productions were influenced by the strategic goals of Soviet cultural policy. Analysis of the abrupt shifts in the Soviet Bloc countries' attitudes towards co-productions raises questions about what possible role Soviet cultural officials had in coordinating the behaviour of the film industries, particularly in proportion to the role of local political and cultural functionaries. I specifically focus on how the dissemination of cultural, technical and technological values influenced the process of co-producing films. More generally, I also consider the various functions that co-productions performed with regard to both film industry goals and cultural policy plans.

Planning to the Rhythm of a Political Campaign: A Postwar Market for Soviet Cinema

While the first postwar co-production treaties between West European countries were based on shared cultural values and meant to help the respective national film industries compete against Hollywood imports, the Soviet Ministry of the Film Industry's initial intentions for co-productions were expansive, rather than protective. The first steps in the postwar Soviet model of co-production were driven by plans to become the leader of the European film market, and consequently of the market of ideas.[3] By July 1945, the Council of People's Commissars had instructed the Soviet Ministry of the Film Industry to send cameramen to Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Austria and Germany. Two years later, Minister of the Film Industry Ivan G. Bolshakov praised the results of these activities, which had established many points of contact in addition to producing shots for use in newsreels.

In January 1948 Mikhail Kalatozov, the deputy of the Minister of the Film Industry, moved beyond this stage of 'networking' towards a more precise vision of co-productions as a tool for ideological expansion and improvement of film industry productivity:

> For the fight against Anglo-American expansion in the states of new democracy, for the improvement of exhibition conditions for Soviet movies, and for a deepening of our ideological-political influence in these states, it could be effective to increase the stock of our movies by co-producing with film companies in the new democracies and elsewhere. It is realistic to shoot such co-productions in the film studios of Prague and Vienna and to a certain extent in our country. The project of the Ministry of the Film Industry related to this vision was presented at the Central Committee of All-Union Communist Party Bolsheviks… Its implementation would increase our film supply (beyond the production of our own studios) by 10–15 films in the period 1948–1949 and by 20–25 films in subsequent years.
>
> Because co-productions demand the involvement of a wide circle of authors, actors, directors and other strata of the intelligentsia in the states of new democracy, this step would result in a significant strengthening of our ideological-political influence in these countries.[4]

Initially the intent was to develop the extensive co-production plans within the organizational structure of the Ministry of the Film Industry by establishing a specific department for foreign production. The plan was to shoot in studios in Prague, Budapest, Vienna and Berlin, with the Soviet Ministry of the Film Industry assuming a 55 per cent share and the 'right to control the ideological-political orientation of the movies'.[5]

These plans for co-productions were part of Bolshakov's ambitious goals to produce 80 to 100 movies per year and make Mosfilm one of the biggest film studios in Europe. However, all these visions were destroyed by a decision of the Council of Ministers in June 1948, which argued that the Film Ministry was overly attentive to quantity at the expense of quality. In the future, every film should be a 'masterpiece' capable of instilling communist consciousness in the masses.[6] The continuation of Zhdanov's campaign against the influence of 'bourgeois culture' and the policy of cultural isolation terminated the yet-to-be-launched model of extensive co-producing as a means to expand into Europe. Bolshakov's and Kalatozov's plans were now limited to the distribution treaties.

The First Soviet Bloc Co-Productions and Their Motivations

Less than a year later, in April 1949, Minister Bolshakov sent a report to Georgy Malenkov, the secretary of the All-Union Communist Party Bolsheviks, about the aid provided to the 'new democracies' for the

development of their cinema industries.[7] This process, however, was not true aid but in fact a tool of Sovietization that spread Soviet aesthetic and production values; moreover, in certain cases it offered the opportunity to survey and become familiar with the technical equipment of these countries. Czechoslovakia was involved in an 'aid' plan, even though the Czech facilities boasted experienced personnel as well as advanced technical equipment and in 1948 the Barrandov studio had produced more movies (19) than all the Soviet studios combined.

The motivation behind the alleged aid to Albania was completely different from technological exploitation. As part of this aid effort, the Soviets promoted the co-production of a movie about the Albanian national hero, *Skanderbeg* (Sergei Yutkevich, 1953). The movie was not completed until 1953, but the Soviet Ministry of the Film Industry had sent the prominent scriptwriter Mikhail Papava to Albania as early as 1949. The cooperation resulted in a spectacular colour movie that fit well with Stalin's plans. The project had been launched shortly after Stalin's intervention against Josip Broz Tito's plans to unite Yugoslavia with Albania and establish a Balkan confederation together with Romania and Bulgaria.[8] It is hardly a coincidence that the second Soviet co-production – *Geroi Shipki/Geroite na Shipka* (The Heroes of Shipka, Sergei Vasilyev, 1954), produced with Bulgaria – was launched in the troubling Balkan region as well. The movie focuses on Russia's Balkan campaign of 1877–1878, emphasizing Russia's messianic role for the Balkan nations in the fight against the Turks and their British allies.[9] Here, one of the Soviets' motivations was to provide a proper allegorical representation of the line between friends and enemies and to stress the difference between good (Soviet) and bad (British and Turkish) alliances for the Balkan countries, in both the past and the present.

The next co-productions involving the Soviet Bloc countries were launched in the GDR in 1954 and 1955, shortly after Stalin's death, as the result of an unusual partnership between the East German industry and a West German producer disguised as a Swedish company.[10] Later, between 1956 and 1960, the East German studio DEFA (Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft) undertook four rather expensive and prestigious co-productions with France.[11] These rather problematic, fragile partnerships provided an unexpected impetus for the first co-production between DEFA and Barrandov. For explicitly identified strategic reasons, in May 1955 the head of the East German Central Film Administration (Hauptverwaltung Film) Anton Ackermann proposed a co-production project to representatives of Czechoslovak State Film (Československý státní film, ČSF). According to Ackermann, although

cooperation with capitalist partners was approved, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) supported only co-productions with socialist countries. A first co-production with the Soviets was not within easy reach, and 'the situation when DEFA makes co-productions with capitalist partners but none with the friendly socialist countries as Czechoslovakia or Poland is no longer acceptable'.[12] Ackermann succeeded in closing an agreement with the ČSF representatives to both initiate and finish the first DEFA-Barrandov co-production during 1956, and the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged ČSF to comply with Ackermann's terms.[13] However, the first film, *Ročník 21/Jahrgang 21* (Those Born in 1921, Václav Gajer, 1957), was in fact completed with a delay of one year. Based on a novel by a Czech writer Karel Ptáčník, the movie presents the love story of a Czech musician doing forced labour in Germany and a German nurse. Despite reports of East German audiences' generally reserved reception, allegedly stemming from the film's depiction of German Nazis and destroyed German cities, GDR functionaries, including First Secretary of the SED Walter Ulbricht, praised the movie.[14]

Co-productions with Western partners became possible in the post-Stalinist era. They were motivated, as I argue below, by the possibility of exchange of knowledge and technical equipment. Yet at the same time, functionaries in both the GDR and Czechoslovakia felt obliged to demonstrate improved cooperation within the Soviet Bloc. The first DEFA-Barrandov co-production used antifascist discourse as a tool for overcoming the obvious resentments between the former war enemies, now destined to be comrades in socialism. Nevertheless, the primary impetus for realizing the project did not derive from an official demand to cultivate this discourse. Instead, the movie served to excuse the two studios' developing relations with partners beyond the Iron Curtain.[15]

Technological Import, Ideological Export: Co-productions with Western Partners

The official bodies' changing attitudes towards co-productions with Western partners closely mirrored the shifts between offensive isolationism and defensive integrationism in foreign policy.[16] The main ideological justification for co-productions was founded on the argument that they provided a chance for ideological expansion into Western markets. However, the unspoken yet more powerful motivation rested

elsewhere, in the technological innovation desired by the film industry and instigated by the party and governmental bodies.

The 1948 Communist putsch in Czechoslovakia brought an end to ČSF's preliminary postwar plans to shoot movies in cooperation with American producers.[17] Five years later, however, the process of liberalization introduced by the New Course[18] resulted in a changed attitude towards collaboration with French filmmakers, and in 1955 a government resolution called upon the Ministry of Culture to strengthen cultural relations with France. The ministry received an assignment to prepare a co-production project with France, and ČSF leaders asked director Alfréd Radok to cast French actors in his movie *Dědeček automobil* (Vintage Car, 1956). Thus the movie featured French actors, including Raymond Bussieres, whose 'progressiveness' had been proved by the fact of his participation in a theatrical group's tour of the USSR in 1934.[19]

Both *Dědeček automobil* and the animated feature *Stvoření světa* (The Creation of the World, Eduard Hofman, 1957) were nonetheless indigenous productions. The first co-production with a French company (Le Trident), the movie *V proudech*/*La Liberté surveillée* (Twisting Currents, Vladimír Vlček, 1957), was realized and distributed under rapidly changing conditions. The movie's fate offers a compelling illustration of both the incentives for co-production and the penetrative impact of the rapidly changing political atmosphere on this mode of production. This movie project was highly important and desired because of its status as the first domestic movie shot in widescreen format – originally there was no intention to shoot it with a foreign partner. But when the filmmakers encountered problems with their freshly bought French Debrie cameras, the director Vlček utilized his contacts in France to draw in the new partner. Despite fundamental changes to the script and the involvement of the French star couple Marina Vlady and Robert Hossein, the project was still officially endorsed, as demonstrated by the presence of then-president Antonín Zápotocký at the shooting. Meanwhile, plans for further co-productions with the West – adaptations of Karel Čapek and Franz Kafka, intended to be shot in Cinemascope – were unanimously supported by representatives of Western governments as well.[20] West European agencies rather properly interpreted the Soviet Bloc countries' activity in this field as the product of a cultural offensive and an attempt to gain access to technical equipment and skills.[21]

By the time the movie *V proudech* reached screens in May 1958, however, the political atmosphere was rapidly changing (in the wake

of the autumn 1956 events in Hungary and the Eleventh Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in June 1958). This film in particular and co-productions with Western partners in general were harshly attacked in the press as introducing the danger of cultural colonization, purveying exploitative exoticism in terms of the Western view of Czechoslovak society, and so on.[22] As outlined below, the Soviets shared and supported this shift in attitude towards co-productions.[23] The Soviet film industry did complete the Mosfilm-Alkan co-production *Normandie-Niémen* (Jean Dréville, 1960), but prior to this many other projects involving Soviet studios on one side, and French, Italian and American companies on the other side, had been suspended.[24]

From a Fairy Tale to a War: Co-productions inside the Soviet Bloc

Prior to 1960, Barrandov had made just seven movies in co-production with foreign partners: two with the USSR, two with Bulgaria and one each with the GDR, Poland, Yugoslavia and France.[25] The foreign policy of the participating countries and shifts in the Cold War atmosphere significantly influenced the conception, development and reception of each resulting film, starting with Barrandov's first two postwar co-productions: *Legenda o lásce/Legenda za ljubovstva* (A Legend about Love, Václav Krška, 1956) and *Labakan* (Václav Krška, 1956). While the latter of these fairy tales was devised as a side project to the first to maximize expenses for the stage setting, the former film was launched at the incentive of Bulgarian Prime Minister Valko Chervenkov and Czechoslovak Minister of Culture Ladislav Štoll.[26] As I discuss below in further detail, the co-production with the French company Le Trident, *Twisting Currents*, was stimulated by political circles on both sides, yet the shaky political situation of the late 1950s led film critics and state officials to harshly criticize both this film and the comedy *Hvězda jede na jih/Zvijezda putuje na jug* (The Star Travels South, Oldřich Lipský, 1958), made together with the Yugoslav studio Lovčenfilm. After a scathing critique at the First Festival of Czechoslovak Cinema in February 1959, the distribution of this Yugoslav co-production was in fact suspended and the film was shelved. Although the official reason for this intervention was the film's 'political weakness and low quality', it was primarily the rising antagonism in Soviet-Yugoslav relations at the time that doomed *Hvězda jede na jih*.[27]

To understand the insecurity, risk and volatility of the field of co-productions in the second half of the 1950s, we must contrast the programmatic statements of both the officials and the film industry representatives with the actual fates of the individual projects, while also taking into account the impulses from the Soviet Union. Until early 1958, party officials still supported Czechoslovak State Film's enthusiasm for co-productions, and in that year the ČSF Central Administration proposed to the Ministry of Education and Culture a plan for thirty-two co-productions. Only one of these was actually realized: the children's film *Přátelé na moři/Poteryannaya fotografiya* (Friends Travelling at Sea, Lev A. Kulidzhanov and Stanislav Strnad, 1959), which was co-produced with the Soviet studio of Maxim Gorky in Moscow.[28] Of all the co-productions of the 1950s, only one managed to slip through without criticism: the ideologically bulletproof Barrandov/Maxim Gorky Studio co-production *Májové hvězdy/Mayskie Zvyozdy* (May Stars, Stanislav Rostotsky, 1959), which relates four loosely connected stories of Red Army soldiers involved in the liberation of Czechoslovakia. The control mechanism over potential international projects was gradually tightening throughout 1958 and 1959. The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Ústřední výbor Komunistické strany Československa, ÚV KSČ) decided in June 1958 to require the Ministry of Education and Culture to receive approval from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ideological department of the ÚV KSČ before authorizing a co-production.[29] The fact that the newly appointed director of ČSF, Alois Poledňák, harshly criticized *Přátelé na moři* – a co-production with a Soviet studio – for violating this control system confirms that the entire practice of co-production had suddenly found itself in disfavour.

International Conferences: Spaces of (Dis)Harmony

These developments in co-production practice within the Soviet Bloc raise the question as to whether the abrupt shifts in attitude towards collaborative projects resulted from local officials' 'translation' of certain events possessing global political reverberation, or whether there was a significant transnational transmitter disseminating signals to encourage a 'proper' attitude towards co-productions. As demonstrated by the case of the Conference of Cinema Industry Workers of Socialist Countries, which took place in 1957, 1958 and 1960 – namely, in the attitudes towards co-productions presented there and the way in

which the Soviets more or less conspiratorially organized this series of events – the authors of Soviet cultural policy strove to control and coordinate the ideological frameworks of the individual film industries. The first incentive to organize international conferences came from Soviet Minister of Culture Nikolai Mikhailov in September 1956, although the Soviets attempted to conceal their role as instigators behind what supposedly were the initiatives of Czech film officials.[30] The way the Soviets initiated and coordinated this first conference from behind the scenes supports the thesis that the Soviet Ministry of Culture saw the conference as a pragmatic tool for constructing a stage upon which rebellious satellite countries could be 'consensually' criticized by the whole socialist camp.

The conferences attempted to establish an institutionalized network for the dissemination of cultural values, ideological rules and aesthetic practices among the film industries. Although the values presented at the conferences typically came from the Soviet side, they were often distributed through other nodes of the network to give the impression that there was no centre to the web. Cultural agreements with individual governments, together with the work of bodies such as the various Societies of Soviet Friendship, were partially able to compensate for the lack of proper coordinating agencies on a bilateral level, but there was no overarching body to coordinate the cinema industries on the transnational level throughout the whole Soviet Bloc – a situation that the institutionalization of these conferences was intended to rectify.

The first of the three conferences was organized in Prague in December 1957. Yugoslavia feared that the resulting resolutions might be constraining and took part only as an observer, but delegates from eleven other countries came to Prague as official participants. In the following year, the Romanian mountain resort Sinaia hosted the event, which maintained its massive dimensions – close to 100 delegates from twelve countries participated, although the Soviets sent only four delegates due to a concurrent visit to Hollywood by several of their prominent filmmakers. The final conference took place in the Bulgarian capital Sofia in November 1960.[31]

The various activities discussed and planned at the first conference included thematic plans of production (aimed at avoiding overlap in the topics implemented by the national film industries), publication of a multilingual theoretical journal, exchanges of personnel and experiences among the national associations of film clubs and cinema workers, and last but not least, cultivation of the practice of co-productions. Alongside the concept of socialist realism and the critique

of schematism, co-productions remained a consistent topic at the conferences. Although the discussion of socialist realism evolved from a re-confirmation of the conservative conception in 1957 to a mildly liberalized approach in 1960, the attitude towards co-productions did not follow this pattern – at least, not in the sense that a general support of co-productions developed in the wake of liberalization. The consideration of co-productions at the conferences began with strong support for films made within the Soviet Bloc as well as in cooperation with Western partners, and ended with a conditional ban on co-productions after the Soviets clearly signalled that it would be preferable to supplant the practice of co-productions with the exchange of individual filmmakers and actors.[32]

Some of the talks at the last conference in Sofia provide insight into the reasons for this shift in attitude: they sent a signal that film production should be more competitive within the international arena and should be inspired by Western art film production (e.g. Soviet director Sergei Gerasimov expressed his respect for the films of Federico Fellini, Alain Resnais and Stanley Kramer in the conference's main presentation).[33] This signal was recognized by creative personnel and in a secret report for the SED central committee where DEFA scriptwriter Wolfgang Kohlhaase enthusiastically summarized the conference's conclusions as moving towards a 'world language of cinema' (*die Weltfilmsprache*), which would make socialist art a part of 'world film art' (*die Weltfilmkunst*) and would help films from the Soviet Bloc achieve a 'world-class standard' (*das Weltniveau*).[34] In effect, at the end of the conservative interlude of the late 1950s, the practice of co-productions was nearly brought to a standstill and then supplanted by a supposedly more effective model that focused on the exchange of individual personnel (both filmmakers and actors). The original reasons for initiating the conferences were quickly vanishing due to processes of 'consolidation' within the Bloc (primarily in Poland and Hungary) and the stronger emphasis on competitiveness in the contest with Western cinema for both festival and regular audiences. The attempt to use conferences to rigidly institutionalize ideologically driven interaction between Soviet Bloc countries gave way to a more flexible and pragmatic mode of cooperation that was established on an ad hoc basis utilizing personal contacts. The Soviets' attempt to control the dissemination of values through co-productions, as practised from 1953 to 1959, was deferred in favour of the proposed exchange of individual practitioners.

Beyond the 1950s, in Colour and Widescreen

The role of co-productions as a tool for tightening and rationalizing relations between the film industries of the Soviet Bloc was finally doomed in November 1959, when the Soviet film industry, following the 'recommendation' of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to 'strongly reduce international co-productions', strove to halt as many co-productions as possible. Soviet studios suspended twelve features; only five others too far along in their development to shelve were kept on the plan.[35] In accordance with the hints emerging from the last conference and with the general tendency towards opening the cultural sphere to direct competitiveness, the practice of co-production gave way to a more practical, flexible strategy of individual ad hoc networking. After 1960, Soviet co-productions were perceived as inadequate to the goal of achieving accolades at competitive international film festivals.

However, the Czech film studio Barrandov did not entirely give up on co-productions at the start of the 1960s. The main incentives for a partnership with Western producers were essentially the same as before, though now acted upon with a much stronger sense of pragmatism and self-confidence. The 'fifties' lasted a little longer for Barrandov, in practice coming to an end in 1962, when it made four co-productions with partners from the Soviet Bloc and 'developing' countries.[36] The primary factors leading to the halt in co-production practice in Czechoslovakia were the critical attitude of the Central Committee of the KSČ towards weak export results and the fact that no co-productions had achieved significant laurels at international film festivals.[37] After only two years without co-productions, however, Barrandov resumed the practice with Western partners. The first such project was *31 ve stínu* (Ninety Degrees in the Shade, Jiří Weiss, 1965), made with British producer Raymond Stross. The directors of the New Wave generation made four films with Western partners,[38] which secured the otherwise unattainable assets of hard currency and, consequently, technical equipment, precious colour film stock, attractive exteriors, distribution access to Western markets and, not least, much higher pay for directors and scriptwriters. The partnership contributed to increased artistic recognition, more festival awards, and improved creative conditions for the young directors of the Czechoslovak New Wave involved in the productions (Vojtěch Jasný, Miloš Forman, Věra Chytilová and Jiří Menzel). One of the four co-productions directed by the young New Wave generation was shot in widescreen, and all

were shot with precious Eastmancolor material instead of the notoriously unreliable East-German Agfa/Orwo film stock. Reflecting on *Hoří, má panenko!* (The Firemen's Ball, Miloš Forman, 1967), shot on Eastmancolor, Miloš Forman aptly remarked that 'only the oldest and the most prominent directors … got the East-German colour stock Orwo.… Ponti's money gave us the chance to purchase high-quality film stock from the West'.[39]

Conclusion

Some of the above-mentioned instances of co-production emerged as a manifestation of the Soviet cultural policy's tendency to use international projects as a mechanism of control over the cultural sphere and ensure the proper representation of national myths (*Skanderbeg*, *Geroi Shipki*). The strongest, yet strictly negative, impulse on the part of the Soviets came in the late 1950s, when the Ministry of Culture conspired first to control and coordinate co-production, and ultimately to discontinue the practice. Before this, however, Barrandov had managed to shoot a film with a French company, which served as a means for technological improvement and aided the transition towards widescreen production. At the same time, at least one of the co-productions (*Ročník 21*) was clearly intended to send a political message of loyalty to the 'socialist camp' while also acting as an ideological curtain that was supposed to make cooperation with Western partners more acceptable.

As these examples from both the Soviet and Czech viewpoints suggest, the 'local' party and film industry functionaries did not depend on their own interpretations to determine whether an international co-production conformed to the current constellation of international policy: instead, the relevant Soviet officials found ways to signal the proper attitude. After the mid-1950s, though, the signals were not interpreted and executed with the same obedience as before, and film industry functionaries in particular attempted to pursue their own interests more closely. In effect, the Soviet Ministry of Culture attempted to use the Conference of Cinema Industry Workers of Socialist Countries as an institution for the transmission of clear, strong signals instructing the national film industries on how to behave. Yet despite local political and cultural functionaries' decisive support for the ultimate restriction of co-productions, their motives and incentives were mostly indigenous, though they also found agreement with the Soviet strategy.

As the analysis in this essay demonstrates, co-productions served a wide range of overlapping goals and purposes, and it is difficult to categorize them simply according to a conservative or a liberal tendency of cultural policy – in some cases, even individual projects themselves were labelled in a seemingly contradictory way. Furthermore, the expansion of the practice of co-production did not occur in parallel with a process of liberalization. Of course, cooperation with Western partners was inevitably related to a certain degree of liberalization in the cultural sphere, whereas the 'preferred' cooperation within the Bloc occasionally served the intentions of the Soviets. Nevertheless, the curbing of co-productions at the end of the 1950s by no means signified a final defeat of liberal tendencies,[40] nor did it mark a shift away from direct competition with the West and a return to isolationism. Starting in the early 1960s, co-productions were perceived as a less effective, more expensive, clumsier mode of production that did not conform to the USSR's offensive ambitions in the cultural sphere – ambitions that were manifested, for example, in the Soviet Ministry of Culture's move to force Czechoslovak State Film to organize the festival in Karlovy Vary on a biannual basis in order to 'make a space' for the Moscow International Film Festival in the alternating years.[41] How the individual national film industries of the Soviet Bloc coped with the situation is another question: Barrandov, for example, participated in an alternative strategy of exchange among film practitioners by providing experienced filmmakers for production at DEFA. In the second half of the 1960s, the Czech film studio resumed co-operation with Western partners on projects that served to supplement the efficiency of the talented representatives of the Czechoslovak New Wave.[42]

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Notes

1. The 'Film Europe' project was the first extensive attempt to implement a vision of transnational film cooperation in Europe. See Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby (eds), *'Film Europe' and 'Film America': Cinema, Commerce, and Cultural Exchange 1920–1939* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999).
2. See Anne Jäckel, 'Dual Nationality Film Productions in Europe after 1945', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 23(3) (2003), 213–243.
3. For an analysis of the communist project in Eastern Europe as 'the largest deliberately designed experiment in globalization in modern history', see György Péteri, 'Nylon Curtain: Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe', *Slavonica* 10(2) (2004), 113–123; and for the specific case of the Soviet Film Monopoly's plan for global expansion, see Jindřiška Bláhová, 'A Tough Job for Donald Duck: Hollywood, Czechoslovakia, and Selling Films behind the Iron Curtain, 1944–1951' (Ph.D. thesis, University of East Anglia and Charles University-Prague, 2010), pp. 152–179.
4. Letter from Kalatozov to A. M. Jegolinov and L. S. Baranov, All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (Vsesoyuznaya Kommunisticheskaya Partiya /Bol'shevikov/, VKPb), 19 January 1948. Published in Valerij Fomin, 'Političeskij effekt filma ‚Russkyj vopros' propadajet… Iz opyta sovetizacii poslevoennogo kinoprokata i kinoproizvodstava v Centralnoj i Vostočnoj Evrope', *Kinovedčeskie zapiski* 71 (2005), 219.
5. D. Shepilov and L. Iljitschev to the secretaries of Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (CK VKPb) Andrej A. Zhdanov and Michail A. Suslov, 7 February 1948, in Fomin, 'Političeskij effekt filma', pp. 229–230.
6. See Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), p. 189. During the initial postwar years, the output of Soviet studios dropped from 18 films in 1945 to 12 in 1950.
7. Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), Moscow, fond (f.) 17, opis (op.) 132, edinica khranenija (ed. khr.) 250, report from 4 April 1949; see also a decree by CK VKPb about a measure to aid the cinema industries of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania and North Korea, ibid.
8. See Ivan T. Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944–1993: Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 58; Miroslav Tejchman, 'Jugoslávie. Jugoslávský stalinismus a roztržka se Stalinem (1944–1948)', in Miroslav Tejchman (ed.), *Sovětizace východní Evropy. Země střední a jihovýchodní Evropy v letech 1944–1948* (Prague: Historický ústav, 1995), pp. 136–137. In fact, the anti-Tito allegorical depiction of Skanderbeg was so obvious that even the Soviet reviewer of the script complained about it. Rossiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii (RGALI), Moscow, f. 2453 – CK KPSS, op. 3 (otdel propagandy i agitacii), ed. khr. 228.
9. For an analysis of the movie as an example of a Stalinist monumentalist epic infused with a tone of tragic lyricism, see Sergei Kapterev, 'Post-Stalinist Cinema and the Russian Intelligentsia, 1953–1960: Strategies of Self-Representation, De-Stalinization, and the National Cultural Tradition' (Ph.D. thesis, New York University, 2005), pp. 279–282. For the influence of the Soviet international policy regarding the Balkans on the indigenous Mosfilm project *Admiral Nakhimov,* see Sarah Davies, 'Soviet Cinema and the Early Cold War: Pudovkin's *Admiral Nakhimov* in Context', in Rana

Mitter and Patrick Major (eds), *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 39–55.

10. For more details on this partnership, see the chapter by Mariana Ivanova in this volume.
11. See Marc Silberman, 'Learning from the Enemy: DEFA-French Co-Productions of the 1950s', *Film History* 18(1) (2006), 21–45.
12. Quoted in a report from the Czechoslovak embassy in Berlin to the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12 May 1955. Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí (AMZV), Prague, TO obyčejné, 1945–1959, NDR, karton (k.) 27 – osvěta.
13. A letter from 10 November 1955, ibid.
14. A report from the Czechoslovak embassy in the GDR, 17 March 1958, ibid.
15. Seven years later, DEFA's attitude toward Barrandov transformed into sincere interest: the Czech studio achieved such impressive results in genre production that the DEFA studio began to actively lure Czech filmmakers for cooperation (rather than pursuing problematic relations with Western partners). See Pavel Skopal, 'Reisende in Sachen Genre: von Barrandov nach Babelsberg und zurück. Zur Bedeutung von tschechischen Regisseuren für die Genrefilmproduktion der DEFA in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren', in Michael Wedel, Barton Byg, Andy Räder, Skyler Arndt-Briggs and Evan Torner (eds), *DEFA International: Grenzüberschreitende Filmbeziehungen vor und nach dem Mauerbau* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2013), pp. 249–266.
16. According to György Péteri, offensive isolationism was particularly manifest in the Soviet attitude toward the United States and Western Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when discourses of Soviet superiority were combined with attacks on foreign influences. Péteri links the strategy of defensive integrationism – manifested in the effort to import and domesticate Western knowledge – mainly with the 1960s. The case of co-productions discussed here implicates that this pattern had been pervasive in the film industry since the mid-1950s. See Péteri, 'Nylon Curtain', pp. 113–123.
17. Národní archiv (NA), Prague, f. 861 – Ministerstvo informací, inventární číslo 559, k. 233.
18. Initiated on the 'recommendation' of Soviet leadership during Czechoslovak President Zápotocký's visit to Moscow in July 1953.
19. NA, f. 867 – Ministerstvo kultury 1953–1956, k. 351, Státy – Francie – Film.
20. As we know from secret reports on their talks, officials from the U.S., French and British embassies welcomed any cooperation in the sphere of film production as an opportunity to support the liberalization of the sphere of artistic creativity. In 1958, the counter-intelligence police department wiretapped the embassies and compiled a report 'on the infiltration of hostile ideology into artistic and intellectual circles in Czechoslovakia, organized by the embassies of the U.S., England, France, and, in recent months, by Yugoslavia as well'. Archiv Ministerstva vnitra, Prague, odbor bezpečnostních složek MV, f. A 34 – II. správa SNB, 1948–1974, arch. j. 1779, p. 18.
21. See the analysis of Radio Free Europe's Office of the Political Advisor from August 1958, as quoted and interpreted within the context of Soviet-American co-productions in Marsha Siefert, 'Co-Producing Cold War Culture: East-West Filmmaking and Cultural Diplomacy', in Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith and Joes Segal (eds), *Divided Dreamworlds? The Cultural Cold War East and West* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), p. 79; see also the report on the 'reorganization of the communist film industry: research for new appeal in communist films', Office of

research and intelligence, United States Information Agency, p. 6. Open Society Archives, Budapest, Records of Radio Free Europe, subfond 7 – Soviet Union, Series 6, box 5.

22. See Ludvík Veselý, 'Kde nic není, ani smrt nebere', *Film a doba* 4(7) (1958), 486–487; Jiří Plachetka, 'V stojatých proudech', *Rudé právo* 38(134) (1958), 3; František Vrba, 'Široké plátno pro široké svědomí?', *Literární noviny* 22 (1958), 4.
23. For insight into the practice of co-productions as a tool of cultural diplomacy between the USSR and Western countries, see Marsha Siefert, 'Co-Producing Cold War Culture'; and Siefert, 'Russische Leben, Sowjetische Filme: Die Filmbiographie, Tchaikovsky und der Kalte Krieg', in Lars Karl (ed.), *Leinwand zwischen Tauwetter und Frost: Der osteuropäische Spiel- und Dokumentarfilm im Kalten Krieg* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007), pp. 133–170.
24. The first project with a French company was under consideration as early as March 1954, and various negotiations were underway after that. The main points of disagreement between the potential partners were the topics preferred by the respective sides: while the French and American potential partners were interested in an adaptation of classic Russian literature (e.g. Michael Todd proposed an adaptation of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*), the Soviets refused to entrust their national themes to foreigners and instead proposed adapting American novels or topics that would require shooting in the United States. See RGALI, f. 2329 – Ministerstvo kuľtury, op. 12, ed. khr. 4010; RGALI, f. 2329, op. 12, ed. khr. 4017; Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii, Moscow, f. 5 – Apparat CK KPSS, 1952–1984, op. 36, ed. khr. 30.
25. In addition, the Slovak studio Koliba produced two other features: *Dáždnik svätého Petra*/*Szent Péter esernyöje* (St. Peter's Umbrella, Vladislav Pavlovič, Frigyes Bán, 1958) with Hungary, and *Prerušená pieseň*/*Prervannaya pesnya* (Interrupted Song, Nikoloz Sanishvili and František Žáček, 1960) with the USSR.
26. Report on a discussion of the film's working group in Bulgaria. Barrandov Studio a. s., archiv, Prague, sbírka Scénáře a produkční dokumenty – *Labakan*; a report from the Central Administration of Czechoslovak Film for a session of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 15 May 1958. NA, f. 994 – Ministerstvo školství a kultury, kolegium ministra č. 9, 1958, p. 2.
27. See Ivan Klimeš (ed.), 'Banská Bystrica 1959. Dokumenty ke kontextům I. festivalu československého filmu', *Iluminace* 16(4) (2004), p. 152; and a report on the situation of the relations between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, AMZV, TO tajné 1955–59, Jugoslávie, k. 2.
28. A report from ČSF to the committee meeting of the Minister of Education and Culture, 15 March 1958. NA, f. 994 – Ministerstvo školství a kultury, kolegium ministra č. 9, 1958.
29. NA, Archiv ÚV KSČ, f. 1261/0/11 – Politické byro 1954–1962, svazek (sv.) 181, archivní jednotka (a. j.) 247, bod (b.) 8, pp. 1–22.
30. After Minister Mikhailov's initial impulse to organize the conferences in September 1956, the Soviets almost immediately transferred the official 'initiative' for organizing the first conference to the Czechoslovak film industry and monitored the planning from behind the scenes. See the correspondence in RGALI, f. 2329, op. 12, ed. khr. 4021.
31. RGALI, f. 2329, op. 12, ed. khr. 4113; NA, f. 994 – Ministerstvo školství a kultury, kolegium ministra č. 4, 1958, č. 2, 1959, and č. 47, 1960.

32. Instructions for the conference in Sofia received by Sergei Gerasimov and Igor Ratchuk from the Ministry of Culture contain unequivocally formulated recommendations: instead of new co-productions, it was necessary to study the results of the already finished projects and to support the wishes of actors, directors or cameramen to take part in movies shot in other countries of the 'socialist camp'. RGALI, f. 2329, op. 12, ed. khr. 4321.
33. See the texts of the conference papers at Filmarchiv Potsdam, f. Frank Beyer, 9/2003/N024.
34. Ibid.
35. A report from the head of the Central Administration of the Soviet Cinema Igor Ratchuk to Minister of Culture Michailov from 17 November 1959. RGALI, f. 2329, op. 12, ed. khr. 4208.
36. *Praha nultá hodina/Koffer mit Dynamit* (Prague at Zero Hour, Václav Gajer, 1962), *Neděle ve všední den/Pirosbetüs hétköznapok* (A Work Day Which Is a Sunday, Félix Máriássy, 1962), *Komu tančí Havana/Para quién baila La Habana* (For Whom Havana Dances, Vladimír Čech, 1963), *Akce Kalimantan/Aksi Kalimantán* (Operation Kalimantan, Vladimír Sís, 1962).
37. NA, f. 02/4 – Sekretariát ÚV KSČ, a. j. 378, sv. 224, bod 4.
38. *Dýmky* (Pipes, Vojtěch Jasný, 1966), *Hoří, má panenko!* (Firemen's Ball, Miloš Forman, 1967); *Ovoce stromů rajských jíme* (Fruit of Paradise, Věra Chytilová, 1969), *Skřivánci na niti* (Larks on a String, Jiří Menzel, 1966).
39. Miloš Forman and Jan Novák, *Co já vím? Autobiografie Miloše Formana* (Brno: Atlantis, 1994), p. 210.
40. For background on the conflict between liberals and conservatives in the Soviet cultural policy of the late 1950s and early 1960s, see Josephine Woll, *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2000), pp. 57–160.
41. For the history of the Karlovy Vary film festival from a transnational perspective, see Jindřiška Bláhová's essay in this volume. For the Moscow festival in the context of the Thaw, see Lars Karl, 'Zwischen politischem Ritual und kulturellem Dialog. Die Moskauer Internationalen Filmfestspiele im Kalten Krieg 1959–1971', in Lars Karl (ed.), *Leinwand zwischen Tauwetter und Frost. Der osteuropäische Spiel- ind Dokumentarfilm im Kalten Krieg* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007), pp. 279–298.
42. For Barrandov co-productions in the 1960s, see Skopal, 'Reisende in Sachen Genre' and Francesco Di Chiara and Pavel Skopal, 'Příliš kruté pro Američany. Carlo Ponti, česká nová vlna a barrandovské koprodukce se západní Evropou', in Anna Batistová (ed.), *Hoří, má panenko* (Prague: Národní filmový archiv, 2012), pp. 56–79.

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