

Censorship and Ingenious Dramatic Strategies in Yugoslav Theatre (1945–1991)

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This paper explores unfamiliar aspects of censorship in post-war Yugoslav theatre. The country had no institutionalized censorship, and what was tolerated at one moment became prohibited the next. Furthermore, the federal structure and increasing rivalry between the party elites in the six republics led to varying standards: a publication banned in one republic could be published in another, and a banned production could be transferred to another republic and even win a prize there. Nevertheless, informal political censorship exerted very powerful restrictions on the intellectual and artistic freedom of Yugoslav theatre artists.

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This study of Yugoslav theatre from 1945 to 1991 grew out of an exploration of the surprises provided by an unlikely assortment of cases: from early resistance to experimentation and avant-garde in the 50s and 60s toward inherent artistic conservatism, which resulted in a certain open confrontation between conservatism and modernism in the theatre in the 70s and 80s; from executions of actors (immediately after the Second World War) because they had performed during the Nazi occupation, to continuous persecution of theatre artists for their aesthetic and political opposition, which strongly encouraged feelings of self-censorship and certain forms of “inner immigration”; from President Tito’s somewhat disinterested attitude toward theatre to the obsession of people working within and around the theatre with Tito’s opinion on the theatre; from the particular ignorance of party members that dealt with the arts and theatre to the extensive importance of the theatre to society, especially in the 80s; from official restriction of nationalism in the 60s to the tolerance of ex-

treme chauvinism in the theatre in the 80s; from an almost ritual bonding between dissident theatre makers and their audiences to populist attacks on and in the theatre (which I would call *theatrocracy*); from aesthetic dissidence and cultural opposition to political struggle. The mode of exegesis may vary, but in each case one reads for a meaning – the meaning inscribed by contemporaries in whatever survives of their vision of the theatre. Sometimes the reports and documents contradict each other, but the undeniable fact remains: the regime in Yugoslavia was *more oppressive* than is remembered and described nowadays, which is a product of nostalgia for its multiculturalism and partial political and social freedom.

Therefore, instead of following the high road of official theatre history, this investigation of censorship in Yugoslavia led to the unmapped territory of *hidden* theatre history. This is still an unknown genre in theatre history, and so it might be simply called a history of censored drama and theatre because it was simultaneously both opposed and complementary to the regular and official drama and theatre. However, instead of tracing the usual filiations of formal theatre from theatre production to spectator, what is most important in the case of censored drama and theatre is the way theatre dissidents made sense of their art, avoiding the usual traps of censorship. Whereas theatre artists in the rest of Eastern Europe were clearly aware of oppression and repression, Yugoslav playwrights and theatre artists thought of themselves as somewhat politically free. This false freedom was reflected in the ability to travel and the right to have more money and political choice than was possible in the rest of the East.

People in Yugoslavia were roughly divided into three major groups: about twenty million apolitical people, “political idiots” in Aristotelian terms, who either consciously or unconsciously avoided politics in everyday life and went about their own business; two million members of the Communist Party, the most privileged caste in the country and the one that held all key positions; and, finally, about ten thousand intellectuals who opposed the regime in one way or another. For many people, it is still hard to accept the fact that lack of freedom and democracy contributed to unresolved political problems and the unrecorded civil war in Yugoslavia. Even the theatre seemed tamed and conformist, an “ally of the state machine” and the majority of people were not aware of the notion of dissident drama and theatre. However, such drama and theatre existed and were persecuted in many ways. In this sense, Yugoslavia could have been considered a country with a very large or, at the same time, a very small number of dissidents, depending on the definition of the word “dissident”. If, for example, anyone that is politically opposed to official ideology is defined as a dissident, then Yugoslavia definitively had a large number of dissidents.

Recently it has come out that a surprisingly large number of people were sentenced to, on average, several years' imprisonment for committing "verbal" political offences, precisely for expressing critical opinions (either publicly or privately) of the Yugoslav regime. This "verbal offence" (*verbalni delikt*) was also unique to the Yugoslav case as a crime within the large range of legal measures used against anyone that tried to loudly express disagreement with the regime.¹ Many people openly expressed their disagreement with the regime but were not always arrested. Other more subtle, but no less efficient, methods of oppression were used: dismissal from work, campaigns of abuse in the press without the chance to defend oneself, censorship of all forms of public activity, and social isolation through threats and blackmail of friends and acquaintances.²

According to some recent statistics, it may be assumed that dissidents in Yugoslavia were both numerous and influential, and in larger measure than is usually thought; however, the narrowness of the definition used by Western politicians, press, and media to describe people engaged in a specific type of political activity influenced Yugoslavs' own view of this issue.³

False myths and other obsessions

By the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 60s, Yugoslav playwrights made a switch from poetic Realism towards more contemplative plays, which rewrote Greek myths in order to address the contemporary intellectual, political, and cultural climate. One of the first plays in this new "key" was Oto Bihalji Merin's *Nevidljiva kapija* (The Invisible Gate; 1956), which used devices introduced a decade earlier by Anouilh, Cocteau, Sartre, and Camus, yet still unknown to Yugoslav audiences. Merin's play, somewhat confusing in its attempt to avoid a realistic story development, marked the beginning of a line in Yugoslav drama of the 1960s and 70s that questioned and individualized classical mythology, and presented contemporary problems through ironic interpretations of familiar myths. The mythological or pseudo-historical framework of these plays, used as a device to avoid censorship, offered witty allusions to the present, which were appreciated by a public that was eagerly engaged in an exciting intellectual game of cognition and complicity with the performers.

A Serbian playwright and poet, Jovan Hristić, also wrote three plays based on Greek myth and drama. In *Čiste ruke* (Clean Hands; 1961), he rationalizes the Oedipus myth so that his hero reaches the existential self-realization that only the gods possess in Sophocles's play. Hristić used the

same method in *Orest* (Orestes; 1962), bringing a subjective view and a philosophical perspective to bear on a well-known myth. Another Yugoslav poet and playwright, Velimir Lukić, reinvented mythological environments in order to write political satires replete with allusions and ambiguities. He started with verse paraphrases of the Iphigenia and Philoctetes myths, but he preferred to create his own imaginary kingdoms in which people are turned into paradigms, theses, and antitheses of his political obsessions. The idea is also present in Lukić's *Bertove kočije ili Sibila* (Bert's Coach or Sybil; 1963), *Walpurgijska noć* (Walpurgis Night; 1964), and *Afera nedužne Anabele* (The Affair of Innocent Annabella; 1970), as if he were rewriting the same play about totalitarian power, tyrants, corrupt ministers, and failed revolutionaries whose rebellion proves to be senseless because the regime continues under the guise of eternal harmony. Lukić continued along this line, obsessed with political power and using the ambiance of ancient Rome or some imagined country, but in a less absurd and farcical manner. Paradoxically, Lukić realized his vision while remaining in leading positions at the National Theatre in Belgrade for many years.

Silent censorship

Hristić's "lively" reinterpretation of Greek mythology and Lukić's invented, grim mythology of cyclic state tyranny and terror created a public space for coded commentaries on Yugoslav society. The country had no institutionalized censorship. Because power shifted back and forth between the party's conservative and liberal factions, with frequent changes in the political climate, what was tolerated at one moment became prohibited the next. Furthermore, the federal structure of the country and increasing rivalry between the party elites and their bureaucratic bodies in the six federal republics led to varying standards: a publication banned in one republic could be published in another; a banned production could be transferred to one of the other republics and could even win a prize at a festival there. Finally, alternative theatres would be tolerated as long as they had no countrywide impact and public.

Informal political censorship nonetheless had great power in restricting the intellectual and artistic freedom of Yugoslav theatre artists. According to some recent statistics and research done on dissident theatre, more than seventy theatre productions were banned and censored in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1991, but only two by means of court orders.⁴ Plays and productions were often banned before opening, or in the midst of rehearsals (an intervention always executed silently and invisibly to the

public), but almost *no documents or traces* survive of these cases. Perhaps the regime was aware that sooner or later it would be criticized for censorious interventions, so it preferred to act silently and anonymously, more subtly than by means of public stigmatization. There are hardly any official records of banishment, signed documents, or material traces. In short, nothing tangible survives – only hints, rumours, indirect proofs, and dubious witnesses that prefer to keep silent or “do not remember well”. Most Yugoslav theatre professionals accepted this invisible censorship as a fact of life, even if it made theatre look conformist. There was no hard-core dissidence and no real underground theatre, except for a few distinct dissident voices with considerable influence.

Intertextual grotesques

The *cause célèbre* of Yugoslav theatre dissidence is the Croatian playwright Ivo Brešan, whose four early plays faced problems with theatre censorship within and outside Croatia because they offered a gloomy view of the post-war conditions and accused the communist ideology of narrow-mindedness and oppression. As in many similar cases, these plays were never officially proscribed. If they were attacked publicly, it was under the guise of an aesthetic norm, and they were then quietly removed from the repertoires, or banned in the midst of rehearsals. The first such case was Brešan's *Predstava 'Hamleta' u selu Mrduša Donja* (The Performance of 'Hamlet' in the Village of Lower Jerkwater); a tragic farce that premiered in 1971 and received major national awards. In 1973, however, when a more conservative communist line prevailed, the production was attacked on Croatian television for being ideologically “unsuitable”, and this provoked a number of unsigned polemics that appeared in the Croatian press. Soon afterwards the play was taken off the repertoires at many theatres, except at Teatar ITD in Zagreb and Kamerni Teatar '55 in Sarajevo, where it played for ten years and more than 300 performances. In 1973, the film director Krsto Papić turned the play into a film that won a number of national and international awards but never had a wide distribution. The campaign against it was part of a more general ideological attack on Yugoslav *film noire*, which allegedly depicted Yugoslav reality in a dark and critical manner.

Brešan's second play, the Faustian parable *Nečastivi na filozofskom fakultetu* (The Devil at the Faculty of Arts), was supposed to be produced at the ITD when his *Hamlet* was attacked in 1973, when political pressures on “ideologically unreliable university professors” were increasing. The

theatre decided that it would be better not to produce the play and the rehearsals were stopped, even though the production was almost ready for its premiere. The publication of the play in the Croatian theatre journal *Prolog* triggered new polemics and prevented its production in Croatia.⁵

Brešan's third play, *Smrt predsjednika kućnog savjeta* (The Death of a Tenants' Association President), also published in *Prolog* in 1978, was supposed to have its premiere at the Belgrade Drama Theatre in 1979, but its manager feared it might be politically controversial and decided to postpone the production for better times – which never arrived. The decision almost swayed the people at Zagreb's Gavella Theatre, who were already rehearsing the production, to follow suit, but they finally decided to go ahead and the play opened in 1979 without apparent political consequences.

Brešan's fourth banned play, *Vidjenje Isusa Hrista u kasarni VP 2507* (The Apparition of Jesus Christ at Military Post 2507), joined *Hamlet* and *Devil* to form a trilogy. Written in 1973, it could not be produced at mainstream theatres. A production by Belgrade amateurs in 1984 was quickly "withdrawn" when it provoked angry reactions from the military and Partisan veterans. Finally it was staged at Belgrade's Boško Buha youth theatre in 1988.

Brešan defines the plays of his trilogy as "grotesque tragedies" forming a meta-discourse on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Goethe's *Faust*, and the medieval passion plays of Christ and Satan, respectively. The three great original myths are "Balkanized" by being reset in banal everyday life, with settings in the earthly realities of a small village, a faculty of arts, and a military barracks. These "anthropological experiments" shed a new light on contemporary characters, which become artistically interesting and take on their true dramatic intensity only when seen via the corresponding characters and relationships in the originals, as for instance when the villagers of "Lower Jerkwater" impersonate Danish courtiers in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The language of the characters, a rough dialect, is contrasted with the literary quotations and ideological, often confusing, party slogans, producing hilarious clashes of parlances and jargons. Brešan shows peasants that turn against artists and intellectuals, and he plays in an ironic way with the communist notion that workers and peasants should never trust educated people, which of course annoyed the party leaders. The tragic and pessimistic endings, defined as "theatrical dynamite", contributed to the decisions to ban them.

In spite of all the problems he had with his early plays, Brešan continued to write in the same vein, playing with theatrical archetypes. His later plays were performed without obstacles because Yugoslavia's po-

litical climate gradually became more tolerant after Tito's death in 1980. However, they did not enjoy the success of Brešan's early plays. By the mid-80s a more direct theatrical discourse made the mask of neo-mythology obsolete.

A dissident communist

The Serbian author Aleksandar Popović could also be seen as a dissident playwright although he never considered himself one, simply because he was never arrested or officially banned. Nevertheless, seven out of Popović's forty plays were banned under various circumstances and at various times. Popović was a staunch leftist all his life, an unorthodox and even maverick communist, but also a populist. As a young man, he spent three years on the prison island of Goli Otok (literally, "Barren Island"), supposedly for pro-Stalinist sympathies. Subsequently he was placed under surveillance, investigated, and often taken to the police station for "informal conversations", in which the police tried to warn, corrupt, and frighten him. Several times he went through what he called a "civic death", deprived of a passport and a place to live, blacklisted, outlawed, excluded from the repertoires, and avoided by friends. However, he never considered leaving the country because he wanted, as he used to say, to share the common fate of his people. Popović was so prolific that he became the most produced playwright in Yugoslavia and he received many prizes for his work. In contrast to Ivo Brešan, whose plays were translated and performed abroad, Popović employed a complicated language of puns and locally relevant surrealist allusions that were unsuited for translation, and so he received no recognition abroad.

Popović's poetic plays, sometimes written in verse, deal with the fate of unimportant people at the periphery of cities and the margins of society, mixing everyday humour with the grotesque, farce, and poetry. As a communist and anti-Titoist, Popović could not, however, avoid being politically critical. This is particularly true of his seven banned plays, in which various political metaphors are inscribed. *Razvojni put Bore šnajdera* (The Development of Bora the Tailor), Popović's most popular farce about a dictator, was removed from the repertory of Atelier 212 after three performances in 1967, presumably because the main characters resembled Tito and his wife Jovanka in many ways. A small scandal occurred at the opening because the female protagonist, actress Maja Čučković, wore Jovanka's hairstyle. The production was promptly terminated, without public reaction, after a phone call from a politician.

Two years later, Ljubomir Draškić rehearsed Popović's *Druga vrata levo* (Second Door on the Left), a play that deals with the 1968 student revolt. The external members of the Atelier 212 Program Board thought that the play opposed the official interpretation of the student revolt and asked the "inside" members to vote against it. They prevailed and there was no premiere, but the play was also staged in Zagreb and was entered in Sterijino Pozorje (an important theatre festival of national drama in Novi Sad), in a single, late-night performance of the alternative program.

The history of Yugoslav drama and theatre is full of such cases. Even when no one was arrested, officially persecuted, or fired, the theatre suffered considerable damage. How many ideas, initiatives, and experiments were thwarted this way? It is impossible to determine. We do know about the humiliations of "self-censorship", of the tongue-tied inability to defend oneself, of apathy, of reluctance to become engaged. "This is not an opportune time" and other similar phrases were often used to justify the conformism, cowardice, and self-censorship that affected authors, theatre artists, managers, and critics. Much energy was wasted on avoiding obstacles and adjusting to new circumstances, on exerting one's survival skills. The experience certainly discouraged future Yugoslav theatre makers and left visible traces.⁶

Theatre as a metaphor for society

After 1980, theatre in Yugoslavia became a forum for public self-examination, political critique, and oppositional attitudes, despite occasional censorial interventions. As mentioned above, theatre contributed to a climate of collective soul-searching and greater political tolerance. The stage became the place to raise sensitive issues before they could be tackled in the media or by political and governmental organizations. Theatre broke ideological and political taboos and initiated open discussions (that had been previously shunned), thus becoming a force in democratizing public life.

Yugoslav playwrights and directors often tended to saturate their work with intertextual allusions, engaging in adaptations and parodist paraphrases of classical plays. This implicit dialogue with the traditional dramatic repertory included discussions on the question of how the theatre as an artistic and public institution was affected by often traumatic political and social upheavals. Several plays chose the theatre milieu as the setting for social action, thus confirming that the stage was a mirror and metaphor for society. Thus, Brešan's *Hamlet* degrades the cultural icon

of Shakespeare by placing it in the context of the god-forsaken village of “Lower Jerkwater”, driven by ideological dogmas and the primitivism of the amateur performers. Brešan presents the staging of *Hamlet* in a satirical light, as an emancipatory cultural endeavour that cannot be sustained intellectually, artistically, or ethically but nevertheless helps reveal the power relations in the village and the atmosphere of suspicion, fear, and power manipulation behind the communist sloganeering.

In *Igrajte tumor v glavi in onesnaženje zraka* (Act a Head Tumour and Air Pollution; 1971), Dušan Jovanović, a Slovenian playwright and director, paraphrased and deconstructed Pirandellian experiments with madness, illusion, power, and the kaleidoscopic nature of theatre itself. Here Jovanović further elaborated his notion of *ludicism*, a multi-level game that erases the border between theatre and life, illusion and reality. For Jovanović *ludicism* was an attempt to affirm theatre as an autonomous performing art (between “pre-planned” improvisation, physical theatre, and modern-day ritual), in which the dramatic text would be used only as a pre-text for the production, allowing the actors and the audience to take unexpected liberties with it. Introduced as a manifesto, incorporated in *Predstave ne bo* (There Will Be No Performance; 1963) and *Norvi* (Madmen; 1968) and, as developed in practice with his performance group Pupilija Ferkeverk, *ludicism* helped Jovanović enter an implicit polemic with ideological and aesthetic conventions, and the dogmas of the Yugoslav (more specifically, Slovenian) literary and theatrical tradition after World War II.

Jovanović's *Igrajte tumor* provoked a small-scale revolution when it was published (1971), and especially when Ristić staged it in Celje (1975). Jovanović addressed questions of manipulation, power, and repression, turning the public space of the theatre into a secret laboratory of avant-garde conspirators, in which the clash between conservatives and innovators could be replayed with dead seriousness. During the course of the play, the “game-playing” slowly takes over, the aesthetic and personal differences become blurred, and everyone becomes an actor, even an undercover policeman and a journalist, who sneak into the theatre to investigate what is happening there. In an ultimate “total theatre” turn, all visible and invisible boundaries are trespassed and no one can distinguish “reality” from theatrical illusion. In the end, the actresses appear with buckets of glue, and, as if in a ritual, all the characters spill glue over themselves, smearing it on their bodies, helping each other, laughing, playing, and singing. As they start to be glued to each other, they enter a final game, which, according to Jovanović, has to be an endless source of joy and pleasure, a triumph of ludic energy over ideologies, aesthetic concepts, and theatre dogmas.

Images of theatre subordination

Slobodan Šnajder's *Hrvatski Faust* (A Croatian Faust; 1982) combines historical facts and literary paraphrase, placing itself in a meta-dialogue with Goethe's original and with ideological interpretations of the "Faustian prototype". The play dramatizes a historic moment in World War II, when three actors that had just performed in the premiere of Goethe's *Faust* in Zagreb's Croatian National Theatre ran off to join Tito's Partisans. The 1942 production of *Faust* was staged as a symbolic gesture of the newly formed Independent State of Croatia (set up under Nazi patronage in 1941) and was supposed to symbolize its entry into the "new European culture" of the Nazis. The action of Šnajder's play alternates between rehearsals of Goethe's play and the backstage tensions of a theatre ensemble that is being purged, notified, and forced to support an atrocious regime.

Šnajder noted in his preface that the *Croatian Faust* shows that theatre can operate well even when driven by some "state reason". He asserted that the social context of the 1942 *Faust* portrayed the link between theatre and state power, the often indirect connection of great art to political violence. His *Faust* concerned itself with the genocide carried out by the Croatian far-right nationalists, the Ustasha. While the production of *Faust* creates the theatrical illusion of complete Ustasha control, scenes from the play turn into a terrifying parody, a sort of *danse macabre*, not only of Goethe's work, but also of its appropriation by the regime. The theatre and the crimes perpetrated in its environment (the murders of the actors playing Mephistopheles and Margaret; the Walpurgis Night of the execution scene in the Jasenovac concentration camp) are played out against each other, mutually contradicting but also magnifying each other.

In the finale, after the liberation and the communists' triumphant attainment of power, a new Faust is brought to stage. The commissar expects him to serve under new circumstances, to submit himself to an ideological purpose, and to make his art and the repertory subservient to a political program and its rhetoric. The actor that interpreted Faust but then joined the partisans appears at the end of the war on the winning side, but is revealed as a "Faustian" loser that is once again unable to shake off political control.

Although the play was resented by many Croatian nationalists, it was successfully staged in the Croatian cities of Split and Varaždin, as well as in Belgrade, Germany, Austria, and some other countries – but never in its *locus originalis*, the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, where the Ustasha *Faust* had premiered in March 1942. In the newly independent Croatia

after 1991, the play became a political taboo and Šnajder a non-stageable author, at least until the end of the Tuđman regime (1999).

As mentioned above, after Tito died, it seemed in the early 1980s that political theatre and drama flourished in Yugoslavia and that censorship eased. This impression was quite false. Two things contribute to the argument that censorship remained strong. First was the creation of the “White Paper” (*Bijela knjiga*) subtitled: “On certain ideological and political tendencies in artistic creation and literary, theatre, and film criticism, as well as on public statements of a certain number of state-subsidized artists in which politically unacceptable messages are contained”. This paper, created by the President of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia (CK SKH) Stipe Šušvar and his collaborators, was made public in 1984 and serves as one of the most shameful documents on Yugoslav censorship and, at the same time, yet another proof of how artistic freedom was constantly controlled, manipulated, and castigated. For example, a whole range of literary and theatrical works dealing with the 1948 break with Soviet politics and its consequences was extensively discussed and analyzed. A large part of the paper was reserved for a scandal that occurred in the 1982/83 theatre season.

As soon as Tito died, various forms of nationalism that had always been repressed and persecuted re-emerged and expanded in all republics. *Golubnjača* (Pigeon Cave), a play by a Serbian playwright from Croatia, Jovan Radulović, in which he depicted the bloody consequences of national intolerance and hatred in a small village, was banned from the repertory of the Serbian National Theatre in Novi Sad as soon as it came out. When it opened in fall of 1982, the majority of critics welcomed it with favourable reviews, but after several performances and enormous political pressure by various communist bodies the play was taken off the repertory and brought to Belgrade’s Student Cultural Centre. However, the polemics expanded and went on for several months in the press. Even the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party had this play on its agenda, while intellectuals, artists, and critics from all over Yugoslavia defended it openly, not because of its open nationalism but as an example of artistic freedom. The more the production was attacked, the more it was performed around the whole country as form of resistance to official opinion. It seemed that Yugoslav artists and intellectuals had won their first battle against censorship together.

If there had been more opportunities to discuss, examine, and resolve other political problems on the stage, Yugoslavia could have succeeded as a democratic country. Perhaps this argument sounds utopian, but I am persuaded that, had it not been for the fear of repression, many political problems that existed in Yugoslavia could have been solved in a different manner. This is also true of nationalism. A truly free society simultaneously allows and undermines such sentiments and ways of thinking. Recent history has taught us that Yugoslavia went from one sort of repression to many smaller models of repression, sometimes even more violent and intolerant than the first.

NOTES

¹ The notorious Article 133, section 1, of the *Criminal Law of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* (*Službeni list SFRJ*, no. 40/77), stated that: “Whosoever by means of writing, leaflet, drawing, spoken word, or in some other way calls for or incites the abolition of the rule of the working class and working people, unconstitutional changes to the socialist self-management system, the breakdown of brotherhood and unity and equality of nations and nationalities, the abolition of self-management organs or their executive bodies, resistance against the decisions of the appropriate organs of government and self-management relations, the security or defence of the country, or with ill intent and false representation of social and political circumstances in the country, will be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of one to ten years.”

² Similar “methods” were later used in Serbia during Milošević’s regime. Although never arrested, many pacifist activists, intellectuals, and artists were ignored, isolated, or stigmatized as traitors, depending on their political involvement, influence, and power.

³ Yugoslavia did not have a rich record of supporting activities that the West deemed a necessary component of “serious” dissident activity: samizdats, free universities, and “theatres” in private apartments; committees for helping unjustly dismissed workers; groups that aided political prisoners and their families; systematic cooperation with the democratic press in the West – all these were scarcely practiced.

⁴ Censorship in Yugoslav film was institutionalized immediately after the war with the 1945 Decree on Censoring Cinema Films (*Službeni list*, no. 57/45 and 16/46). It introduced censorship of all domestic and foreign films, and the censoring body was the Federal Ministry for Education and Culture in Belgrade. This regulation remained in power, with minor changes, until 1965, after which some Yugoslav republics had their own Commissions for Examination of Films, while others extended these duties to councils and self-management bodies of film companies involved in film production and distribution.

⁵ The play was eventually produced for the first time in Ljubljana (1981), then in Belgrade (1985), and finally in several cities throughout Yugoslavia, although its Zagreb premiere came only in 1989.

⁶ Such is the case with the Slovenian theatre group Oder 57. Their conception of the aesthetic and political struggle tended to be narcissistic, uncompromising, vindictive, and guerrilla-like, but also romantic. They considered artistic and intellectual freedom the only condition for a free, prosperous, and civilized life. Some claim that it occurred too early in Yugoslav society (Kermauner) to achieve long-lasting and significant social changes. The general opinion was that the destruction of Oder 57 had a profoundly damaging effect on

Slovenian theatre and drama, in spite of the fact that all its members and affiliates continued to work individually. After the destruction of Oder 57, a whole generation in Slovenia experienced feelings of defeat, betrayal, guilt, and moral uneasiness. However, their most important legacy is the creation of new experimental groups that flourished at least in the 60s and 70s (Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre, Pekarna, Glej Experimental Theatre, etc.) and the development of authors such as Rudi Šeligo, Dušan Jovanović, Mile Korun, and others.

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