

*Images of Nationalism*

Far from claiming that my analysis of the film, which rounds off the whole discussion, is in any respect exhaustive, I am actually offering a somewhat narrower contextualization of the film because this movie's point can be made visible (including in terms of its aesthetic form) through its place in the controversies of the time in which it was shot. Two contexts are most decisive within the complex historical and aesthetic determinations of the film. One concerns the place of this film in Slovenian culture and Slovenian cinema, and the other determining framework concerns the social space of the Balkans, especially in the period before the ethnic tensions acquired political and military shapes. I start with the contours of Slovenian culture and its cinema, which the film not only came from, but also at the same time reacted against.

Entertainment was a less important factor in film production in Slovenia because films were supposed to contribute to the "culture" of the country. There is a certain nuance in the meaning of the word "culture", strongly related to the notion of art in this context, within which film was invested with a mission. "For the first time in history, a film made in our own country became part of the cultural accomplishments of the Slovenian nation" (Adamič, 1954: p. 35), wrote an enthusiast in 1954, commenting on the first few publicly screened Slovenian films after the Second World War. The dominant cultural discourse throughout the period, preceding Robar-Dorin's movie, demanded that film put literary motifs on screen through its own lens, which would make literature more transparent and "closer to the people" – this last phrase being a contribution of communist jargon. It goes without saying that such a demand implied assertions about the lesser artistic importance of film in general.

These kinds of views founded an artistic canon of sorts for Slovenian cinema. Such statements could be supported by quoting some leading Slovenian writers, who also held strong positions in the academic and political establishment. Above all, these included Josip Vidmar and others such as Boris Zihlerl, Matej Bor, Jože Toporišič, and France Bernik, who more or less saw the importance of film in spreading and reproducing traditional Slovenian culture. Because they mostly did not write anything serious about film and their observations were mainly sporadic – but nonetheless influential within the establishment – I spared the effort of looking for them in the archives. I hope that readers will accept my condensed coverage of this aspect. Hence, before the emergence of the new generation in