

BALKAN CINEMA VERSUS CINEMA OF THE BALKAN NATIONS

1. History of Cinema in the Balkans: Common Pioneers and Similarities

When two people have the same idea it does not mean it belongs to neither of them but it belongs to the entire society where they live.

Nicolae Iorga

Ideologies separate us. Dreams and anguish bring us together.

Eugène Ionesco

Of course, we have not intended to write a very history of cinema in the Balkans but a review of the important events in such a history by identifying similitudes and common facts, beyond simple coincidences.

For Dejan Kosanović and other specialists in the beginnings of cinema the first film screenings in Belgrade (24th of May 1896), Bucharest (27th of May 1896), Zagreb (8th of October 1896), Rouse (17th of February 1897) and Sofia (27th of February 1897)¹ seem to a result of the activity of a numerous team of technicians of Lumière Frères Company who were travelling in the Balkans and were sharing the assignment of making first demonstrations in several towns in the region. Anyway, it is known that Georgi Kuzmić made the first screening in Bulgaria, at Rouse, on the 27th of February 1897, two days after a screening in Bucharest. Later on the beginnings of the cinema industry and the first local productions are due to Western firms and technicians, as well as to the instruction secured by them to local filmmakers. French, Austrian and Hungarian technicians like Paul Menu², Georges Ercole, L. Schwedler, J. Janovics, J. Bertok, and Alexander Korda etc. worked in Romania. In Greece besides Italian and Austrian technicians a decisive contribution had the Hungarian Josef Hepp (1897- 1968), author of the first Greek newsreels and later on cameraman and producer between 1917- 1961 of no less than 18 fiction films, from *Annoula's Dowry/ I prika tis Annoulas* to *Tragedy of the Aegean Sea/ I Tragodhia tou Aegeou*. Greek cameraman Gavrilis Longos³ served his apprenticeship with him. The beginnings of cinema in Bulgaria are linked with Franz Escher and Jan Prohaska, both with Austrian origin who after having a pioneering activity in Serbia and Croatia have contributed to the birth of Bulgarian cinema. In the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes an important role had also filmmakers and technicians such as Croatian Iosip Novak (1902-1970) and Serbian Stefan Misković (1907-1977, with apprenticeship at Pathe and UFA) who later on did their parts to attempts of Bulgarian national epics such as *The Song of the Mountains/ Pesenta na Balkana* (1934, i. I. Novak, sound Stefan Misković), *Cairn/ Gramada* (1936, after Ivan Vazov's homonymous historical poem, i. and sound St. Misković), *They Were Victorious/ Te pobediha* (1940, d. I. Novak and Boris Borozanov), *Strahil Voivode/ Strahil Voivoda* (1938, d. I. Novak). Same as Romanians Jean Mihail (1906- 1963), who spent some time as assistant director in Vienna 1920- 1923, and Jean Georgescu (1904- 1994), scriptwriter and director in France between 1929- 1940, the founders of Bulgarian fiction films Vasil Gendov (1891- 1970) and Boris Grezhov (1889- 1968) served their apprenticeship abroad. The former studied acting in Vienna while the latter worked in Vienna and München⁴ studios. Also the prolific Turkish director Muhsin Ertugrul (1892- 1979) worked until 1922 in Germany as actor and director. Baha Belengevi (1907- 1984), another Turkish director who had an important contribution to Turkish cinema until the 50s, had been working for a while as assistant of Abel Gance and Marcel L'Herbier. In Croatia and Slovenia besides the activity of several Serbian pioneers, the activity of some Austrian- Hungarian filmmakers and enterprisers was decisive, as the two Balkan countries have been part of the empire until 1918. Although in the two countries was a powerful trend of national affirmation, inclusively

through supporting local cinema productions, in the 30s the first studio making sound films was Svetlton Film, belonging to Czech Josip Klement. He represents an example of filmmaker adopted by his new residence country as he had settled down in Croatia and took its citizenship. Similarly, Paul Menu, born in Romania in a French family, became a Romanian subject but left the country during WW2.

Michael Jon Stoil offers an explanation of the cinema flourishing in Austro- Hungary and its export of expertise and technicians: “In Kolozsvár (now Cluj), Prague, Vienna and Agram (now Zagreb), the motion picture began its existence as a primarily middle-class art form. As a result, early film-making in Danubian Europe reflected the tastes and values of the bourgeoisie. The censorship that had already appeared in Tsarist Russia was absent under the Habsburgs... The First World War brought new life to the failing motion picture industries of Eastern Europe. The Allied blockade prevented new American and French films, formerly the main programs of Eastern European theaters, from reaching the Austro- Hungarian Empire... Alexander Korda shifted his operations from Budapest to Kolozsvár in Transylvania in 1916. For the next two years, the former film critic produced a record of seven features per year for the <Transylvanian Film Company>... Writers, actors, and businessmen; people who had never set foot on a studio lot before the war, suddenly enlisted in the cause of national cinema- and made small fortunes almost overnight... The war-time boom collapsed in 1919, almost as suddenly as it had grown. Intellectuals such as Alexander Korda in Hungary and Miroslav Urban in Czechoslovakia desperately tried to stem the second collapse of their national film industries through continued production and the organization of film-makers’ unions.”⁵ In another work he adds the following: “In 1916, Janovics’ studio merged with that of Sandor Korda to form the <Corvin> studio. Together, the two producers completed a total of 62 films before abandoning Kolozsvár at the end of the war. Afterwards, the studio continued to operate under Hungarian control, despite the annexation of Transylvania by Romania, until finally being abandoned in 1923. During these last four years, the re-named <Transsylvania> studios continued to outproduce their modest, Romanian-owned competitors in Bucharest.”⁶

Until WW2 one has to notice not only the contribution of several foreign technicians or the apprenticeship of some local directors in the West but also a massive export of filmmakers, mainly actors from the Balkan countries (see **VI. 3. Successful Films and Filmmakers in the Balkans**). We do not take into account just filmmakers born in the Balkans but even those educated in their native countries as for instance director Lupu Pick, promoter of Kammerspiel and German Expressionism, emigrated from Romania at the age of 29, actor Iván Petrovich although of Serbian origin had been an Austro- Hungarian subject until the age of 24 as his native Novi Sad (Újvidék) had been part of the empire, while actresses Elvire Popesco and Lisette Vereá had their debuts in Romanian movies. It is also interesting the case of the German director of Bulgarian origin Slatan Dudow. While he was working as an assistant for Fritz Lang at *Metropolis* he kept contact with his native country as a correspondent of a Bulgarian newspaper. It is also significant that in France between 1931- 1941 were made no less than eight films starring at least two actors of Romanian origin and having sometimes producers of the same extract. In *Beethoven’s Great Love/ Un grand amour de Beethoven* (1936, d. Abel Gance) even starred three actors of Romanian origin (Janny Holt, Samson Fainsilber and Lucas Gridoux) while in *Tricoche et Cacolet* (1938, d. Pierre Colombier) Emile Natan was the producer and Elvire Popesco and Alexandre Mihalesco were among the leading actors.

An interesting case is the one of Turkey. The beginnings of the organized cinema in Turkey are due also to Sigmund Weinberg, a Romanian subject who opens in 1908 the first “Pathe” cinema theatre in Turkey, in a beer saloon located in Istanbul’s Galatasaray Square. They consider as the first Turkish documentary film *Demolition of the Yesilkoy Victory Monument at St.Stephen/ Ayastefanos'taki Rus abidesinin yikilisi* (14th of November 1914) by Fuat Uzkinay or Sigmund Weinberg. In 1914 Turkish minister of Defense Enver Pasha (impressed by moving images of the German army) entrusts to Sigmund Weinberg the management of the Army Film Center (MOSD). Therefore, in 1915 Weinberg as manager of the department and main cameraman with the help of

Fuat Uzkinay and of some Austrian and German technicians shot the first films dedicated to the Turkish army and the operations on the front of WW1. Such films represent the first films in Turkey if we do not take into account the activity between 1907- 1912 of the Christian subjects Milton and Ienache Manakia. It is Weinberg again together with Uzkinay who starts filming in 1916 the first Turkish long feature film *Leblebici Horhor Aga* (an adaptation for the screen of the comedy with the same title by Dikran Cuhacyan and Tekfor Nalyan) but he is not able to finish it because one of the leading actors dies. Then he tries an adaptation of another comedy, *The Marriage of Himmet Aga/ Himmet aganin izdivaci* (a local version of Molière's "The Forced Marriage" since 1664) but he has to stop again as some of his actors are recruited and on his turn has to return to Romania as in 1916 the hostilities between Turkey and Romania had started. There is evidence that cameraman Uzkinay finished the film after the war with the help of Reshad Ridvan Bey as director and they showed their work to the public. Unfortunately both films are lost ⁷.

Similar institutions to the Turkish MOSD have been founded later, also during WW1 in Serbia and Romania. "Photographic and Film Section"/ "Fotografska i filmska sekcija" of the High Commandment was founded during the retreat of the Serbian army to Corfu Island. Besides technicians from allied countries who took moving pictures for the Serbian army, an important contribution for this institution had Mihailo Mihailović (Mika Afrika, 1893- 1942)⁸. In January 1917, also during the retreat of the Romanian army and government from Bucharest, they founded the "Photo- Cinematographic Department of the Romanian Army"/ "Serviciul foto-cinematografic al armatei române" under the High Commandment and having as manager the French lieutenant of Romanian origin Jean Oliva. On the 2nd of May 1918 the new department screens its first documentary film *The Romanian Front/ Frontul român* at the National Theatre in Jassy. The department shot 20,000 meters of film from which half represented events on the front and the rest official ceremonies. At the same time with it was another department, "The Photo- Aerial Department of the Romanian Aviation"/ "Serviciul Foto- Aerian al Aviației Române" who also made some documentaries. With the "Photo- Cinematographic Department of the Romanian Army" three of the first Romanian cameramen, Constantin Ivanovici, Tudor Posmantir and Nicolae Barbelian have been working, alongside with a French one, Georges Ercole, who arrived at the beginning of 1917. After WW1 this department survived. Its activity concluded with *Our War/ Războiul nostru* (1921), a documentary editing in four series the footage from the war, and *Historical Evocations/ Evocațiuni istorice* (1921), a "reconstructed documentary" about Ecaterina Teodoroiu, made by Nicolae Barbelian for The Society of War Heroes' Graves. Ion Niculescu- Brună later used footage from it in his fiction film *Ecaterina Teodoroiu* (1930). They did the same in the "love drama" *Duty and Sacrifice/ Datorie și sacrificiu* (1925, d. Ion Șahighian, i. Nicolae Barbelian, sc. Captain Al. Dumitrescu) including footage from newsreels on the battles of Mărăști, Mărășești and Oituz. In 1936 "The Cinematographic Department" was moved at the National Office for Tourism.⁹

The first animation films in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria had as producers similar institutions: *The Magicians/ Charobnjaci* (1928, Yugoslavia, Croatia, d. Milan Marjanović) was made for "The Public Health School"/ "Škola narodnog zdravlja" in Zagreb while *Pests. The Fly/ Pakosnitsi. Mukhata* (1937, Bulgaria, d. Dr. Zahari Zahariev, Vasil Bakardjiev, animator Stoyan Venev) for the "Board for Public Health"/ "Direktsiata za narodnoto zdrave"¹⁰.

During inter-war some of the Balkan countries founded the Small Entente and the Balkan Alliance. With the occasion of the third conference of the Balkan Alliance which took place in Bucharest between 22nd- 29th of October 1932 Romanian writer and ethnologist Emanoil Bucuța, as secretary- general of the Ministry of Education, Cults and Arts read the report "Balkan Films" for the commission for intellectual contacts. He was suggesting that several common newsreels to be filmed and translated in all the Balkan languages in order to be understood "from Ankara till Ljubljana" as they could have an important contribution to the founding of the Balkan Alliance because in his opinion "cinema has become the popular theatre of our times"¹¹ Unfortunately, only the third conference of the Balkan Alliance became topic for a common newsreel released in the Balkan countries.

In the eve and during WW2 a fashion of co-productions began in the Balkans. In the 30s they were due, of course, to the necessity of surpassing the technical difficulties in making the first sound films. The first Greek films entirely with sound were in fact co-productions with Turkey: *The Beggar of Istanbul/ Istanbul Sokaklarında/ O Zitianos tis Stamboul* (1931, Turkey- Greece- Egypt, d. Muhsin Ertugrul) and *The Wrong Road/ Kakos dromos/ Fena yol* (1933, d. Ertugrul Muhsin, sc. Nazim Hikmet, after Grigorios Xenopoulos' novel). A technical necessity and an American initiative lead to this Greek- Turkish collaboration that would have been impossible otherwise anytime. Only in the last years such co-production was possible again. It is interesting also that most such co-productions had "national" topics screening local literary works, showing picturesque images of the Balkan countries or stories on WW2. If the previous co-productions had been private initiatives, the ones on the eve of WW2 were supported by institutions such as the Romanian ONC and reflected even the new European political alliances in the 40s. The alliances lead on cinematographic level to exchange of experience between more advanced cinemas (German, Italian or the Hungarian one) and the more modest ones (Romanian, respectively Bulgarian or the Albanian one). The Germans gained for instance attractive topics (the Danube Delta, pelicans, bears' and mountain cocks' hunting, the lacustrine village Vâlcov, gold digging etc.) while the Romanians technical support for making sound and color films. Thus in the 30s and the 40s besides a French- Romanian co- production, *Romania, Land of Love/ Roumanie, terre d'amour* (1931, d. Camille de Morlhon), they made Romanian- German co- productions such as newsreels and documentaries, inclusively the color ones, made by ONC and UFA, *Echo of A Dream/ Ciuleandra/ Verklungene Träume* (1930, d. Martin Berger), the first Romanian sound film from which a fragment has been recently found, *A Mill Was Floating on the Siret/ Sturmflut der Liebe/ Venea o moară pe Siret* (1929, d. Martin Berger), after M. Sadoveanu' novel, and *Tănase's Dream/ Visul lui Tănase* (1932, d. Bernd Aldor-Calmanovici and C. Tănase). We have to add to them three Romanian- Italian co- productions: *A Winter Night's Dream/ Visul unei nopți de iarnă* (1946, d. Jean Georgescu), a screening of Tudor Mușatescu's play with the same title, *Odessa in Flames/ Cătușe roșii/ Odessa in fiamme* (1932, R. Carmine Gallone), where province Bessarabia lost and recovered during WW2 becomes an impressive background for a personal drama, and *The White Squadron/ Escadrila albă/ Squadriglia bianca* (1943, d. Ion Sava), a love story on the Eastern front. There were also Croatian- German documentaries that try to render Croatia's features after not being part of Yugoslavia as well as three Bulgarian- Hungarian fiction films: *Time of Trial/ Izpitanie/ Alkalom* (1942, d. Hrisan Tzankov and Endre Rodriguez), *Iva the Nymph/ Iva samodiva/ A tenger bosyorkanya* (1943, d. Kiril Petrov) and *Bulgarian- Hungarian Rhapsody/ Bulgaro-ungarska rapsodia/ Tengerparti randevú*¹² (1943, d. Frygyes Ban and Boris Borozanov). The plot of *Time of Trial*, based on the plot of Hungarian Janos Zalabery, resembles with the one of *Odessa in Flames* (based on the script by N. Kirițescu and Gerardo Gerardi) mainly due to the character of a woman who sings in restaurants after leaving her husband, which offers to operetta singer Nadia Nozharova to show her talent, same as the famous opera singer Maria Cebotari (1910-1949) in her only film shot in Romania. This time the reasons for breaking up are fidelity and jealousy in a meridional- Balkan version as the film is pleading for ancient virtues such as domestic fidelity in a Bulgaria still archaic for Hungarians. In spite of its obvious moralizing intentions the film is regarded as among the best in Bulgaria until WW2. *Bulgarian- Hungarian Rhapsody* is the story of two Bulgarian girls studying at the conservatory in Budapest and whose love affairs with Hungarians solve in the middle of some idyllic Bulgarian landscapes and whose heroes come back to Budapest in order to play the Bulgarian- Hungarian rhapsody. In a way the film praises specialization in Central Europe and it is also a pretext for showing some picturesque Bulgarian locations. *Iva the Nymph* (unfinished film) is again a history of jealousy where the protagonists tend to reconstruct the legend of Lorelei on the Black Sea shore, again a pretext for shooting picturesque landscapes.

In Romania between 1940- 1944 even a Romanian- Italian motion pictures company called Cineromit existed. Similarly, Albania signed a protocol for collaboration in cinema with Italy and in 1942 they founded the Albanian- Italian Company Tomorri Film¹³.

The Balkan films obtained the first international awards in the same period and place (Venice). In 1933 *Leblebici Horhor Aga* (Turkey, d. Muhsin Ertugrul) received a honorary diploma, in 1936 *Nocturno* (Austria, d. Gustav Machatý, i. Croatian Oktavijan Miletić) received an award for short film, while in 1939 *The Country of Motzi/ Țara Moșilor* (Romania, d. Paul Călinescu) and *A Village Wedding/ Svadba na selo* (1946, Bulgaria, d. Stoian Hristov) received awards for documentary films in 1939, respectively in 1947. On his turn, Albanian director Mihalag Mone received an award in Florence in 1943 for his documentary *Sons of Albania and Skanderbeg/ Bijtë e shqipës së Skenderbeut* (1941, Albania)¹⁴.

After WW2 an interesting phenomenon happened. Theoretically the difference of political system between the Balkan countries should have been most important. In fact, in their relations the difference of regime between the communist countries was counting more while between Greece and Turkey the cold relations persisted, inclusively due to the Cyprus conflict. And such a thing was valid even in their cultural relations and cinema. Yugoslavia's moving away from the USSR after 1948 lead to its isolation from other communist countries and its approaching the West with early consequences such as a great number of Yugoslav co- productions with countries belonging to the Western block, inclusively by collaborations of Greek filmmakers. We can only mention the participation of some Yugoslav actors such as Rade Marković in the Bulgarian film *The Peach Thief/ Kradetsat na praskovi* (1964, d. Vullo Radev), where screening Emilian Stanev's story about WW1 and the love between a Serbian prisoner and the wife of the town's provost marshal somehow imposed to choose a Serbian actor as well as in order to suggest that the Yugoslav- Bulgarian relations changed. Djoko Rosić in *The Judge/ Sadijata* (1986, d. Plamen Maslarov) is another case. Although born in Serbia he has become a Bulgarian actor.

After 1966 the political Romanian- Yugoslav relations resumed but although Ceaușescu and Tito agreed on "national communism", the latter could not accept "market communism". Thus, the only co- productions were occasioned by the inauguration of a common economic objective- the Iron Gates hydro power station on the Danube. At that time they made the documentaries *The Iron Gates. Symbol of Technique and Friendship/ Porțile de Fier- simbol al tehnicii și prieteniei/ Gvozdena vrata- simbol tehnike i prijateljstva* (1968, p. Filmske Novosti Belgrad and Alexandru Sahia Studios, d. Mircea Popescu and Branko Segović), *The Iron Gates of the Danube Have Opened/ S-au deschis Porțile de Fier ale Dunării/ Otvorena su gvozdena vrata Dunava* (1968, sc. Mircea D. Popescu, Traian Mihăilă, Aleksandar Novaković, i. Victor Popescu, Constantin Teodorescu, Branko Kosić, Emil Stojanović, Vlada Prisić, m. Eugen Popescu and Vera Bundjerov, d. Mircea D. Popescu and Vladimir Tsarin, which includes animation, maps, old photographs and footage) and *The Iron Gates' Navigation System/ Sistemul de navigație de la Porțile de Fier/ Navigacija* (1972, sc. and d. Vladimir Tsarin and Mircea Popescu, that uses images of the hydromechanics and navigation improvements shot along the time by cameramen from both countries edited by Natalija Cvijić and Slobodan Mladenović, respectively by Antoaneta Faust. Of course, Romanian films showed up again in Yugoslavia and the reverse but in Romania they chose the "calmer" ones. Romanian actors Iurie Darie and Silvia Bădescu starring in *The Price of a Town/ Cenata na gradot* (1970, Yugoslavia, d. Ljubisa Georgijevski) were a fortuitous chance. The actor could be watched in a main role together with Gojko Mitić in the SF German- Polish co- production *Signals: A Space Adventure/ Signale- Ein Weltraumabenteuer* (1970, d. Gottfried Kolditz) and the director, of Vlach extract same as the scriptwriter, considered that he could speak without interpreter to Romanian actors. For his role Iurie Darie received an award at Pula Film Festival. Lucian Pintilie directed in Yugoslavia a TV film *Pavilion No. 6/ Pavilijon broj VI* (1973), then *Pavilion No. 6/ Pavilijon VI* (1978), adapting for screen A.P.Tchekhov's story "Pavilion No. 6"/"Palata no.6" (1892). The second film received the CIDALC award at Pula; the award of the catholic jury in Cannes at the special section "Un certain regard", while actor Slobodan Perović

received an award at Niš for his role. Gradually the Yugoslavia's relations with Bulgaria also reached to a level of normality, inclusively in cinema. However, almost the only forms of cooperation were the participations to festivals or West or East German co- productions of westerns shot in Yugoslavia of some Romanian or Bulgarian actors. Bulgaria and Romania even attempted to compete with Yugoslavia as location for international productions of westerns and adventure films. In this respect we can mention two Bulgarian co- productions. It is about a screening after Karl May, *Legacy of the Incas/ Das Vermächtnis des Inka/ Zavetut na inkata* (1966, Spain- Italy- West Germany- Bulgaria, d. Georg Marischka) shot in Bulgaria and starring Lyubomir Dimitrov and Bogomil Simeonov. Later on was the western *Osceola* (1971, East Germany- Cuba- Bulgaria, d. Konrad Petzold), starring German, Yugoslav actors such Gojko Mitić and Predrag Milinković, a Romanian- Iurie Darie while the Bulgarian participation represented besides actors Daniel Michev, Pepa Nikolova and Iskra Radeva, a team that shot exteriors in Bulgaria and Cuba. In Romania it is about a West German- French series conceived in the beginning for TV- *The Leatherstocking Tales/ La legende du Bas de cuir/ Die Lederstrupferzanlungen* (1969) from which they made the episodes: *The Deerslayer/ Le chasseur des daimés, The Last of the Mohicans/ Ultimul mohican/ Le dernier des Mohicans* (1968, d. Sergiu Nicolaescu and Jacques Dreville) and *Adventures in Ontario/ Aventuri în Ontario/ Aventure en Ontario* (1968, d. Jacques Dreville and Sergiu Nicolaescu), as well as the films *The Prairie/ Preeria/ La Prairie* (1968, Germany- France, d. Pierre Gaspard- Huit, Jacques Dreville and Sergiu Nicolaescu) and *Burning Daylight/ Omul de aur/ Chemarea aurului/ L'Appel de l'or* (1976, Germany- Austria- France- Romania, d. Wolfgang Staudte, Sergiu Nicolaescu and Alecu Croitoru, after Jack London). For these films besides Romanian directors and actors they used locations in Romania. However, Victor Rebengiuc featured an English prisoner in the Bulgarian film *The Longest Night/ Nay- dalgata nosht* (1967, d. Vulo Radev) while at the end of the 80s Gheorghe Zamfir's music score was used in two Bulgarian films: *Margarit and Margarita/ Margarit i Margarita* (1989, d. Nikolai Volev) and *Pieces of Love/ Parcheta lyubov* (1989, d. Ivan Tscherkelov). Romania's collaboration with Turkey consisted only in exchange of films. Sergiu Nicolaescu shot for *The Last Crusade/ Mihai Viteazul* in Istanbul, inclusively in Topkapi Museum with an authorization¹⁵ as he had for his scenes shot in Prague. In fact, his filming abroad for a fiction film has represented a premiere for a Romanian director during communism.

Albania's isolation with the other communist countries had a partial exception, Romania. Five Albanian directors Kujtim Çashku, Spartak Pecani, Vladimir Balla, Vladimir Kasaj and Gjovalin Hajati and an actor, Jorgaq Tusha, studied between 1970- 1975 in Bucharest at the National Academy for Theatre and Cinema (UNATC)¹⁶. It is also interesting that a film with partisans shot in the 80s, *Mission over the Sea/ Misioni pëtrej detit* (1988, d. Lisenko Malaj), uses Mikis Theodorakis' music score.

We can conclude that during communism there were no co- productions for fiction films between Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece. As I have shown before Irene Papas, Brioni Farrell and Mikis Theodorakis participated at some Yugoslav films with partisans but it was not about some co- production with Greece. A film like *A Legend of Love/ Legenda o lásce/ Legenda za liubovta* (1957, d. Vaclav Krska) although based on a play by Turkish writer Nazim Hikmet (1902 Thessalonica- 1963 Moscow), is not a Bulgarian- Turkish co- production but a Bulgarian- Czechoslovakian one. Especially beginning with the 70s another phenomenon occurred, that strengthened the Balkan films at least at production level. It is not about the use of Balkan or of Balkan extract stars as in Yugoslavia, but of well-known actors such as Orson Welles in *The Secret of Nikola Tesla/ Tajna Nikole Tesle* (1980, Yugoslavia, d. Krsto Papić) and *The Battle of Neretva/ Bitka na Neretvi* (1969, Yugoslavia- USA- Italy- WGermany, d. Veljko Bulajić) or Richard Burton in *The Battle of Sutjeska/ Sutjeska* (1973, Yugoslavia, d. Stipe Delić). We have to mention that in the last two films they feature locals, a chetnik senator, respectively Iosip Broz Tito and that *The Battle of Sutjeska* and *The Secret of Nikola Tesla* are exclusively Yugoslav productions. Similarly, Angelopoulos' films for instance benefited of the participation of actors like Marcelo Mastroianni, featuring Spyros in din *The Beekeeper/ O Melissokomos* (1986,

France- Greece- Italy) or the missing politician in *The Suspended Step of the Stork/ To Meteo vima tou pelargou* (1991, France- Greece- Italy- Switzerland), Harvey Keitel as A and Erland Josephson as the curator of a Balkan film archive in *Ulysses' Gaze/ To Vlemma tou Odyssea* (1995, Greece- France- Italy), Bruno Ganz as Alexander in *Eternity and a Day/ Mia aioniotita kai mia mera* (1998, Greece- France- Italy) etc. Romania made as early as the 60s co- productions where great directors such as Henri Colpi and Henri Verneuil or stars like Jean Marais, Sydney Chaplin, Marie- José Nat, Pierre Brice, Antonella Lualdi and Amedeo Nazzari participated but in the next decades besides some adventure film in co- productions starring less known foreign actors, well-known foreign actors began to star only after 1990. In this respect we can mention Charlotte Rampling in *Asphalt tango/ Asfalt tango* (1993, France- Romania, d. Nae Caranfil), Kristin Scott Thomas in *An Unforgettable Summer/ O vară de neuitat/ Une été inoubliable* (1994, France- Romania, d. Lucian Pintilie), Rutger Hauer in *Never Enough/ Camera ascunsă* (2004, Romania, d. Bogdan Dumitrescu) or Armand Assante in *California Dreamin`* (2006, Romania, d. Cristian Nemescu).

The Romanian, Yugoslav, Bulgarian, Greek and Albanian co- productions with other countries after WW2 brought to the former the first prestigious international awards in the 50s and the 60s. They were the first such awards for Bulgaria and Albania. *Skanderbeg/ Velikii vojn Albanii Skanderbeg/ Skenderbeu* (1953, USSR- Albania, d. Sergei Yutkevich) received an award for directing at Cannes in 1954 *Heroes of Shipka/ Geroite na Shipka* (1954, USSR- Bulgaria, d. Sergei Vasilyev) received the same award in Cannes in 1955 for the Russian director, *Stars/ Sterne/ Zvezdi* (1959, EGermany- Bulgaria, d. Konrad Wolf) the great award of the jury at Cannes in 1959, *Codin/ Codine* (1962, Romania- France, d. Henri Colpi) an award for screening at Cannes in 1962 while *La Strada lunga un anno/ Chesta duga godinu dana* (Italy- Yugoslavia, d. Giuseppe De Santis) and *The Battle of Neretva* were Oscar nominated for the best foreign film in 1959, respectively in 1970. Also Jules Dassin and Michael Cacoyannis received several prestigious awards for film made in co- production. We can conclude that these co- productions somehow prepared for the great awards received by local directors and local films in the following decade.

The film production reached its highest level at the beginning of the 80s. In Turkey they made at a rough guess 350 de long features per year, in Yugoslavia 40, in Romania between 15 and 29¹⁷; even Albania produced in 1982 and 1984 no less than 14¹⁸. The Balkan countries belonging to the communist block had also an impressive production of documentaries and animation. After the 80s the production drastically diminished in the communist countries as well as in Turkey, only in Greece the lowering was felt less. Thus, in 2002¹⁹ Turkey and Greece appeared among the countries with a medium production (between 20 and 199 film per year) and they ranked on the 17th place in the world with 63 films, respectively on the 25th with 25 films. Among the countries with a small production (between 1 and 19 films per year) were registered Albania and Bulgaria and Albania with 11, Romania with 9, Yugoslavia with 8, Croatia with 6, R.Macedonia and Slovenia with 2 and Cyprus with 1 film per year. The Romanian production lowered so dramatically that in 1999 did not produce any long feature but later on registered a growth up to 11 films in 2004.

After 1990 almost all Balkan countries started to make co- productions between themselves. Of course, Serbian- Croatian or Serbian- Bosnian co- productions shoed up later due to the conflicts in ex- Yugoslavia. From the perspective of improving the political relations between the Balkan countries are significant co- productions such as: *Broken Youth/ Tinerețe frântă/ Slomljena mladost* (1990, Romania- Yugoslavia, d. Marija Marić), *The Night/ Nata* (1996, Albania- R. Macedonia, d. Esat Mysliu), *Where the Souls Rest/ Kadeto dushite pochivat* (1997, Bulgaria- Greece- R. Macedonia, d. Boyan Papazov, documentary), *Big Man, Little Love/ Büyük adam küçük ask* (2001, Turkey- Greece- Hungary, d. Handan Ipekçi), *Stolen Eyes/ Otkradnati ochi* (2005, Bulgaria- Turkey, d. Radoslav Spassov) and *Borrowed Bride/ Eğreti gelin* (2005, Turkey- Greece, d. Atif Yılmaz)²⁰. The most important films, at least from the perspective of an international acknowledgement remain those where the co- productions included other than the Balkan countries: *Cabaret Balkan/ Bure baruta* (1998, Yugoslavia- R. Macedonia- France- Greece- Turkey, d. Goran

Paskaljević), *No Man's Land* (2001, Bosnia and Herzegovina- Slovenia- Italy- France- UK- Belgium, d. Danis Tanović), *Fuse/ Gori vatra/ Au feu!* (2003, Bosnia and Herzegovina- Austria- Turkey- France, d. Pjer Jalica) and *Grbavica* (2006, Austria- Bosnia and Herzegovina- Germany- Croatia, d. Jasmila Zbanić). Practically the initial impulse for making such films was represented by obtaining some Western funds. Romania somehow remained isolated because except the co-productions with Yugoslavia România²¹ did not make other co-productions with the other Balkan countries. In 2006 after the normalization of the relations between the ex- Yugoslav countries was released *The Border Post/ Karaula* directed by Croatian Rajko Grlić, the first co-production engaging all the ex- Yugoslav states, supported by Euroimage funds and where participated even a Kosovar producer. Significantly it is about a black comedy with a tragic ending and a parody on the hostilities that started in Yugoslavia through a commander that unleashes the war psychosis by secretly treating his syphilis and pretending that an Albanian attack had taken place in order to justify his absence home to his wife (See **IV. 9. Inter- Ethnical Conflicts**).

Notes

1. Kosanović, Dejan- Filmot od 1896 godina kako del od kulturnoto nasledstvo na Jugoslavia (Serbia i Crna Gora), Grozev, Aleksandar- Bugarskoto kino vo kontekstot na balkanskata kulturna traditsia, Ivo Škrbalo- 101 godina film vo hrvatska: 1896- 1997 in Razvojt i proniknuvaneto na balkanskite natsionalni kinematografii vo periodot od 1895 do 1945 godina, Kinoteka na Makedonija, Skopje, 2003, p. 73- 74, respectively p. 46-47, p.135. See also Rîpeanu, Bujor T., Corciovescu, Cristina- Cinema... un secol și ceva, Ed. Curtea Veche, Bucharest, 2002, p. 10- 11.
2. Paul Menu was born in Bucharest of French parents, was a Romanian subject until WW2 when he left for France.
3. Mitropoulos, Aglae- Decouverte du cinema grec, Ed. Seghers, Paris, 1968, p. 8- 10.
4. Aleksandar Grozev- Op. cit., p. 55.
5. Stoil, Michael Jon- Cinema Beyond the Danube: The Camera and Politics, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen, New Jersey, p. 40- 43.
6. Stoil, Michael Jon- Mass Media in Mobilization Regimes: The Case of Balkan Cinema, p. 21.
7. Shekeroglu, Sami- Turskiot film- od pouchetotsite do Vtorata svetska vojna in Razvojt i proniknuvaneto na balkanskite kinematografii, p. 174- 176. See also www.byegm.gov.tr/REFERENCES/TURKISH-CINEMA.2001.htm.
8. Volk, Petar- 20. vek srpskog filma, Institut za film, Belgrade, 2001, p. 560. Kosanovic, Dejan- Op. cit., p. 92- 93.
9. Cernat- Gheorghiu, Manuela- Filmul și armele. Tema păcii și a războiului în filmul european, Ed. Meridiane, Bucharest, 1976, p. 225- 227.
10. Marinchevska, Nadejda- Balgarsko animatsionno kino 1915- 1995, Ed. Kolibri, Sofia, 2001, p. 13- 14.
11. Bucuța, Emanoil- Les films balkaniques. Rapport. Documents de la III-ème conférence balkanique. No.10, Bucharest, 1932, p.3.
12. Jean Mihail also shot two films whose titles include the word „rhapsody”: *First Love/ Chemarea dragostei/ Rapsodia română* (1930), a lost melodrama, shot at Hunia Studios in Budapest, and the documentary *Rustic Rhapsody/ Rapsodia rustică* (1945).
13. Lako, Natasha- The First Game of Albanian Film Image 1895- 1898, www.aqshf.gov.al/?fq=mesi&mt=shfaqart&aid=44&gj=en.
14. Ibidem.
15. Sergiu Nicolaescu told me that he resorted to a trick in order to be permitted to shoot at Topkapi. He sent Gheorghe Pîrîu to the Turkish minister of Culture and asked him to call him by phone from the latter's waiting room while he was in the office of the manager of the museum. Nicolaescu pretended that he was speaking with the minister in French, the manager believed him so that he accepted three thousand marks as fee. However, in the last day when he was shooting

very early exteriors and had raised a red Ottoman flag on Topkapi he drew the attention of the Turkish police who asked him his written authorization for shooting. So he stormy left Turkey with the negative and actors. The Turkish customs detained the trucks with props and lights and searched in vain for the footage. Later on the Turkish ambassador lodged a protest but he withdrew it after watching the scenes shot in Istanbul.

16. Eqrem Beci, Zhani Canco - Rumania. Studentët shqiptarë në vite, ASD - Studio, Tirana, 2009.

17. In Romania were made 25 fiction films in 1989 while the most, 30, had been made in 1980. See Voiculescu Elefterie- Buftea jubileu. Adevăruri dintr-un semicentenar de vise, Ed. Arvin Press, Bucharest, 2005, p. 78.

18. See Filmografi e filmit shqiptar 1953/ 2003. Vellimi I. Filmi artsitik, Ed. Botimet Toena, Tirana, 2004, p. 65- 80.

19. See www.unesco.org/culture/industries/cinema/html_engl/prod.shtml.

20. Although it is not a co- production we can mention the comedy *Business in the Balkans/ Biznes sta Valkania* (1996, Greece, d. Vassilis Boudouris) where Romanian actresses Daniela Nane and Rodica Horobeț are starring. They feature two Romanian waitresses brought to Greece in order to attract clients but they end by marrying the owner's son and friend of the latter. Also Ovidiu Iuliu Moldovan had a secondary role in *Crystal Nights/ Krystallines Nyhtes* (1991, Greece- France- Switzerland, d. Tonia Marketaki).

21. Besides the Romanian-Yugoslav co-production *Broken Youth/ Tinerete frântă/ Slomjena mladost* (1990) there is a project of a Romanian co- production with Serbia and Montenegro: *If the Seed Doesn't Die/ Dacă bobul nu moare/ Ako zrno ne umre* (d. Sinisa Dragin, Romania- Serbia and Montenegro- Austria). Sinisa Dragin was also co- scriptwriter of the Slovenian film *Tuning/ Uglasevanje* (2005, d. Igor Sterk). We can add the omnibus film *Lost and Found* (2005), a co- production between Bosnia and Herzegovina- Serbia and Montenegro- Bulgaria- Estonia- Germany- Hungary- Romania, which gathers under the pretext of generations such directors as Stefan Arsenijević, Nadejda Koseva, Mait Laas, Kornél Mundruczó, Cristian Mungiu and Jasmila Zbanić.