

This master thesis deals with evolution of the historical and historical-biographical film genre in the cinematography of the Third Czechoslovak Republic and the subsequent Stalinist dictatorship, that is in the years 1945 to 1956. It examines the role played by motion pictures of this genre within the official cultural policy of the post-war and post-1948 era. The thesis deals with both realized and unrealized film projects of the said period. It suggests that those form a single free cycle connected by its ideology and included in the wider cultural tendency known as Historicism.

The examined films follow up on older Czech cultural traditions, both in terms of artistic treatment and of ideological message. In particular their visual conception reproduces the historical paintings of the 19th century, which were well known to general public at the time of the films' production. Pictures analysed in the main part of this thesis view Czech history in a manner, that is — at least in general terms — consistent with historiography of the 19th Century National Rebirth (e.g. František Palacký) and its later popularizers (e.g. Alois Jirásek).

However that view of Czech history, dominant since the later stages of the National Rebirth, is presented in the examined films with significant changes, most of the time implicit and hardly noticeable when seeing them from a temporal or geographical gap. Main change is constituted by inclusion of a resolutely class-conscious point of view and mitigation of the religious and — to a lesser extent — nationalist dimension of the older interpretation of Czech history.

This thesis aims to determine, to which extent this ideological shift results from the general atmosphere of the era and how much of it was a deliberate consequence of a wider strategy of cultural policy enforced by the post-war and post-1948 régime a mainly by the functionaries of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Eventhough the examined projects form a continuous whole from a point of view of both style and form, they differ in the nuances of their message and even in their very approach towards Czech historical memory. Therefore the thesis deals with each picture and unrealized film project in detail. It describes their genesis, approval process, distribution and the reaction of both critics and representatives of the Party and the State. The thesis aims to put the subject to a wider context of the evolution of historical film genre, mainly with regard to Czech cinematography. It tries to imply a specific relationship of both Czech film industry and entire cultural élite towards the representation of history, not only in the examined era, but also in the interwar years.