

Abstract

This thesis, as its name suggests, deals with the screenplay development of Otakar Vávra's Hussite Trilogy filmed between 1954 and 1956 — *John Huss*, *Jan Zizka* and *Against All*. It analyses the ideological and power influences to which the Trilogy was subjected and places it in the context of the Czech cinematography of the early communist era but also in the wider narrative of the so called Hussite Tradition, a supposedly timeless legacy of the early 15th century's Hussite movement present in the Czech national identity and appropriated by the Communist régime after the 1948 coup d'état.

While literary preparations for the Trilogy began already before the Communist putsch, most of its development already took place under Stalinist totalitarian supervision. In the same time (early 1950s) a new historiographical interpretation of the Hussite movement based on Marxist-Leninist doctrines was conceived by young historians close to the highest levels of power hierarchy. This new interpretation was from its very conception meant to become a historiographical dogma. One of the young historians, Josef Macek, also took part in the development of the Trilogy as a historical consultant. However Vávra's films are by no means a mere cinematic representation of Macek's conclusions.

The Trilogy, as the thesis concludes, is to an even larger extent entangled in much more common and popularly accepted interpretations of the Hussite era and tradition. These are primarily nationalistic and gained widespread popularity thanks to writings of Alois Jirásek, a popular Czech writer of the early 20th century. The Communist régime embraced Jirásek's legacy, but shifted the accent from nationalism to class struggle. Vávra's film project is one of the best (and most attractive) representations of this shift, even though it also includes some of Macek's conclusions which are often in direct contradiction to older interpretations of Hussitism well represented in Jirásek's oeuvre. The thesis also deals with Otakar Vávra's own approach to historical film, which, as it finds, is in itself a Marxist one, regardless of Macek's influence.

The text is subdivided into a historical-theoretical part and one concerned with research of archival materials. The first part introduces the context of the so called Hussite Tradition, its place in the collective mind of modern Czech nation and the relationship of the post-1948 régime towards it. It also describes the functioning of the state-owned Czech film industry in the Stalinist era. Second part of the main text concerns the analysis of each of the versions of the Trilogy's screenplays and interprets it and the final film versions from the point of view of ideology and propaganda.