Abstract:

The aim of the thesis is to map political activities of Ladislav Helge, a film director. Due to his social sensitivity and sympathies for the Red army as a liberator of Czechoslovakia, he favored left-wing politics. At the beginning of his career he was not involved in politics and instead immersed himself fully in his profession of a film director. His first initiation to the world of politics came with the shooting of Frona. This film represents a turning point in both his artistic and political activities. Gradual de-Stalinization across the 1950s happened alongside Helge’s first independent film project and his deliberate joining of KSC. The political intervention of the communist party into the liberal functioning of Czechoslovak film during the Banska Bystrica film festival determined his political activism that was to follow. In the mid 1960s Helge, as a leader of a professional film organization FITES, stood up to the attempts of the communist functionaries to curtail the artistic freedom of filmmakers belonging to the New Wave movement. Between 1968 and 1969 he led the Coordinating committee of creative associations and defended the freedoms gained during the Prague Spring. Soon after, his employment at Barrandov studios was terminated. In 1977 he signed the Anti-Charter. The last chapter discusses Helge’s life in light of different memory discourses.