

ABSTRACT

The study analyzes the largely understudied cinematic cooperation between Czechoslovakia and Cuba in the first decade following the Cuban Revolution. It is based mostly on archival documents from the former Central Directorship of Czechoslovak State Film, the ministry of education and culture and the ministry of foreign affairs. Several chapters also draw from oral history, data collected from series of interviews with Cuban technicians and artists who have worked in Cuban cinema since the 1960s as well as Czechoslovak experts who worked at the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Arts and Industries in the 1960s.

The Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (CICAI), founded in March 1959 shortly after the triumph of the Revolution, faced a shortage of human and material resources since its inception. The film industry, which had been mostly in the hands of the Americans before 1959, lost much personnel due to mass emigration. Later on, due to the American blockade and embargo, it also lost its most important provider of films, material and equipment. The majority of CICAI's technician and artists were just starting and were lacking in technical knowledge required to make films.

Czechoslovak State Film (CSF) offered extensive help to Cuban cinema, especially in the area of developing the skills of Cuban filmmakers and technicians. They sent many Czechoslovak experts for diverse time periods as consultants and professors for CICAI's film school and received a large number of Cuban trainees in diverse CSF departments. Czechoslovakia also awarded a number of scholarships to CICAI's current and potential employees to study in Czechoslovak universities and specialized technical film schools. In addition, CSF also facilitated training to emerging Cuban filmmakers as well as CICAI's technicians through the Czechoslovak-Cuban coproduction *For Whom Havana Dances* (Vladimír Čech, 1962).

The assistance CSF to the development of Cuban cinema in the 1960s was extensive. The training Czechoslovak technicians and artists provided had a big impact in Cuba but also indirectly on other cinemas of the Third World. Many Cuban technicians and filmmakers who trained and studied with the Czechoslovaks later traveled to countries like Brazil, Nicaragua and Mozambique, where they shared their knowledge and expertise with their colleagues.

Key Words: International Relations, Cold War, Czechoslovakia – Cuba, Czechoslovak foreign affairs, Czechoslovak Experts in Cuba, Cuban students in Czechoslovakia, Cuban technicians in Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovak-Cuban cultural cooperation, Cuban Film, Czechoslovak Film, Czechoslovak State Film, Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Arts and Industries, co-production, Film Studios Barrandov