From 1945 to the end of the 1950s, the media policy in Yugoslavia developed in accordance with the politically and ideologically ambiguous course between the extreme dynamics of the East and the West. Only a few years after Yugoslavia was excluded from the Cominform, Tito and his ideologists adopted the term “third way” as a keyword to designate the Yugoslav politics during the Cold War, which maneuvered between two global powers. Originally, the term had been coined by the Soviets to denigrate the Yugoslav deviation from the Soviet “straight line.” During the 1950s, however, Tito and his ideologists incorporated the term into their political vocabulary and turned it into a positive slogan. Later, after the huge conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1961, diverse ideologies of the “third way,” or even of a “third world,” followed one another in fast succession to underscore Yugoslavia’s distinction from both the East and the West. Diverse artistic canons were adapted to the image of the “new” Yugoslavia and were integrated into it in a syncretistic way.

After World War II the Yugoslav media first adopted the rules of socialist realism of Soviet origin. After the separation from the Soviet Union in 1948,
Part IV · Defining Europe

this concept was replaced by a kind of neo-avant-garde, which was still modeled on Russian examples—this time on Russian constructivism—but it was used to articulate the difference and the leading role of Yugoslavian socialism.¹ In around 1950, a specific Yugoslav form of new primitivism expressed through the art of the naives emerged, which corresponded best with the diverse Yugoslav folk traditions.² In the mid-1950s, advertising photography became the main medium of propaganda.³ At the same time, being an iconic and indexical sign, photographs verified the achievements of Yugoslav socialism. In the late 1950s, it was landscape photography, especially that of Tošo Dabac, that created an image of Yugoslavia as a new continent between the East and the West.

Until the separation of Yugoslavia from the Cominform on 28 June 1948, the reshaping of the country took place according to the Soviet paradigm. Front pages of Yugoslav newspapers were occupied by the Soviet festive and commemoration days as if they were part of the Yugoslav national memory. The front page of the newspaper The Republic on 28 January 1947 was devoted to the commemoration of Lenin’s death, followed by an interview with Stalin, borrowed from the Soviet news agency TASS.⁴ On 28 February 1947, The Republic celebrated the twenty-ninth anniversary of the Red Army, which had conquered the enemy in a joint battle with Tito’s partisans.⁵ The central theme of The Republic on 9 September 1947 was an apotheosis of the eternal city of Moscow, the home of progress, freedom, and humanity.⁶ Journalists reported on exhibitions of Soviet painters (Gerasimov, Deynake, and Plastova) and sculptors (Mukhina, Merkurov, and Shader) and reproduced their masterpieces in Yugoslav newspapers.⁷ Literature and art followed the

⁴ Republika, 28 January 1947, 1.
⁵ Republika, 28 February 1947, 1.
⁶ Republika, 9 September 1947, 1.
⁷ Republika, 21 October 1947, 3, 4.
Figure 36.1.
rules of socialist realism, learned from the Soviet artists. In 1946, Antun Augustinčić, president of the Union of Yugoslav Artists, raised a monument celebrating the achievements of the Red Army in Batina Skela on the Danube. The allegorical personification of the Soviet army with a sword and a torch in her hands combines elements of the antique sculpture of Nike of Samotracia and Vera Mukhina’s *A Worker and a Peasant Woman*, which were exhibited in front of the Soviet pavilion at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937. Similar to Mukhina’s prototype, Augustinčić’s sculpture, too, is placed on a gigantic pedestal. Another Yugoslav counterpart to Mukhina’s sculptor was Slavko Pengov’s monumental fresco in Tito’s villa at Lake Bled, which had won first prize, awarded by the Committee for Culture and Art. The wall paintings show the victorious partisan army leading the poor workers and peasants to liberty.

Until 1948, the Yugoslav Partisan leader Josip Broz Tito had been planning to build up new federations, which would not only include the Federative Communist Republic of Yugoslavia but also the Balkan countries and those of the Danube. The new empire of the “middle” was to incorporate not only the Yugoslav republics as a *summa partiorum*, but also Bulgaria, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and—after the expected victory of the communists led by General Marcos—Greece. Up to 1947, Stalin and the Soviet system supported Tito entirely. On 23 December 1947, a headline of the newspaper *The Republic* was dedicated to the contracts of friendship that had recently been signed in Pest and Bucharest, with Hungary and Romania respectively. The article praises the Yugoslav federation of six republics “in the heart of the Danube and the Balkans as the first community of a new type.” This community had already proven to be organized in a very efficient way. Yugoslavia, according to *The Republic*, serves “as a model and center of gatherings.” It evokes confidence and is predestined to lead the initiative of founding a larger community. The project of a future union is legitimized by a portrait of Stalin beside the article, accompanied by the text of

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8 Republika: *Mjeseca* u književnosti, umjetnosti i javnim pitanjima 4:3 (1948): 212.
Yugoslav congratulations on his sixty-eighth birthday. However, there is no photograph of Tito. Even without it, the cover of *The Republic* reiterates Stalin’s propaganda presenting the dictator over and over again in good company with Lenin. In 1947, Tito’s Lenin was Stalin.

The larger communist Balkan region that some had dreamed of failed because of the ruthless Soviet policy of dominating the whole of Eastern Europe. At the same time, when Yugoslavia separated from the Cominform, Tito’s ideologist abandoned Lenin’s and Stalin’s interpretation of communism and returned to the origins—the early works of Marx and Engels. Yugoslav propaganda followed the same strategy. An anonymous cover illustration of the booklet *Tito contra Stalin* from 1949, where the secret correspondence of both was published, picked up the central element of a famous revolutionary poster that the constructivist artist El Lissitzky had drawn in order to illustrate the civil war in 1919, *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*.11 Here, we are again confronted with a strategy of borrowing which at the same time claims originality. In Lissitzky’s poster, sharp and round forms stand for a political-ideological opposition between the Whites and the Reds. A red triangle pierces a white circle. On the cover of the booklet, published in 1949, a red wedge has broken away from the five-pointed star when it is about to pierce the map of Yugoslavia. By adopting the symbolic geometry and, indeed, also the typographic style of early Soviet propaganda, the Yugoslav illustration deconstructs the Soviet emblem. It is certainly the neo-avant-garde strategy that distinguishes the Yugoslavian cover from the Russian original. The imitation deconstructs the prototype by using methods of paraphrase or satirical pastiche.

The photography of the industrial landscape in Yugoslavia imitated the Russian constructivist style by Alexander Rodchenko and Gustav Ključis, in particular.12 The photographs taken from extreme angles accompanied the odes to the creation of the Yugoslav system of self-management of the workers.

For a short “interim” period in 1948, Titoists claimed to be the avant-garde of communism. They behaved like a neo-avant-garde coming back to the trauma of early Stalinism in a late Stalinist context. Indeed, pseudo-avant-garde forms appeared only for a short period at the beginning of Tito’s

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11 Anonymous, [Introduction by the Yugoslavian Central Committee], *Tito contra Stalin. Streit der Diktatoren in ihrem Briefwechsel* (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1949), front page.
promotion of his “third way.” Only when Tito wanted to go back to the origins of communism did the design of propaganda posters and photography take inspiration from Russian constructivism. Shortly afterward, the avant-garde forms gradually disappeared from Yugoslav propaganda and Yugoslavia adhered to a new local canon of “folk and naive art”—some kind of new primitivism. In a strange movement of both constructivism and its Stalinist suppression, the avant-garde was first absorbed and then erased.

The avant-garde view from the new angle (from the side, the top, the bottom) was soon replaced by the neoprimitive “virginal” view at the beginning of the socialist Yugoslav age. The first appearance of the autonomous Yugoslav culture projected Tito’s ideologists, especially the Croatian writer Miroslav Krleža, into the medieval heretic sect of the Bogomils. 13 In 1950, Krleža organized a monumental exhibition of Yugoslav medieval art in the Palace of Chaillot in Paris. According to Krleža, the medieval Bosnian sect of the Bogomils developed some kind of “socialism” and abandoned the ideology of the Eastern and the Western Church. 14 Thus, as early as the Middle Ages, Yugoslav sovereignty and the third path between the East and the West had already been anticipated. Before the very eyes of the West European public in Paris, the creation of a new Yugoslav mythology of the third path began. Krleža, vice president of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts and Tito’s intellectual authority, claimed in the preface to the exhibition catalog that the autonomous third way on Yugoslav soil had chosen the Slavic apostles Cyril and Method, as well as the Serbian autonomous Orthodox Church. The Bogomils in particular never followed the Eastern or the Western rules; according to Krleža, this was a political-ideological decision which reached its artistic expression in the Bogomil funeral steles:

The Bogomil sculptors, liberated from every artistic manner of their time, observed things and phenomena in their environment in their own way and were therefore undoubtedly kinds of inventors. . . . This was naive and

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fresh observation in an artistic virginal land ("terra vergine"), which remained unknown until today. It is a special concept of the world and life, a totally Bogomil cosmology.15

Krlježa does not interpret the Bogomil steles as ephemeral and low art, but as the last evidence of an autonomous Yugoslav culture, of a “Yugoslav Atlantis.” The Bogomil art gave rise to a new interest in primitive art—folk art and the art of naive painters and sculptors who had no academic background.16 Another promoter of the “third way,” namely the Serbian writer and art critic Oto Bihalji-Merin, contributed to its popularization in Yugoslavia and abroad. He compared Tito and his partisans to the rebellious Bogomils.17 The famous partisan film by Veljko Bulajić, The Battle on the Neretva from 1969, was a cinematic apotheosis of the partisans as the Bogomils, where a group of partisans fight to the last behind the Bogomil steles.

Through the prism of anticipation, Krlježa turned the old hegemonic cultural transfer from the progressive West to the backward East upside down, and moved the Balkans, the province at the edge of civilization, into the center of Europe. At the Third Congress of Yugoslav Writers in 1952, Krlježa even spoke of an interference of centuries in Yugoslav art.18 He believed that Yugoslav art was constricted to its own circle, in which only the earlier artistic phenomena on Yugoslav soil stimulated the later ones. The art of the neighboring countries beyond the Yugoslav borders was excluded as a possible source of Yugoslav art. Such a patriotic cultural construction was not interested in contingency and connections with other cultures beyond the Yugoslav chronotopos.

Moreover, texts and illustrations were organized according to this presumption. They manipulated the coherence of cultures on Yugoslav soil and fabricated new connections. An example of this is the photograph of the antique Diocletian palace and of a relief entitled Work and Youth from 1950 by

16 Zimmermann, ”Jugoslawien als neuer Kontinent.”
Zdenko Kalin and Karel Putrih, which are put together in such a way that only an expert can see the difference. The sculpture of socialist realism is no longer perceived in the framework of Soviet socialist realism, but as a fragment or a heritage of antique sculpture. The mausoleum and the relief are linked by a sense of anticipation. Through a retrospective view on its own antique beginnings in art on Yugoslavian soil the cultural connections beyond the Yugoslav borders to both East and West were veiled. The relief by Kalin and Putrih was no longer perceived as a product of Soviet influence, but rather as inspired by the antique sculptors of the Diocletian palace. The new Yugoslav patriotism was founded on a confidence that the Yugoslavs live in a country that not only is beautiful, but also has a rich cultural tradition.

From 1949 to 1959, Bihalji-Merin published a splendid twice-yearly illustrated magazine *Yugoslavia*—to begin with in three, but later in as many as five languages: Serbo-Croatian, English, German, French, and Russian. A mixture of propaganda, guidebook, and art magazine, illustrated with art and advertising photographs, the magazine promoted Yugoslavia as a new “continent.” The first issue gives an outline of the country under Tito’s leadership, in which it appears as a world of its own—a mosaic of nations, landscapes, and traditions: “Yugoslavia is, from the national point of view, a mosaic country. In its territory of only 256,879 square kilometers live five free nations, closely linked but each with its own past, culture, and traditions. Nature herself, like a sculptor moulding a relief, has formed the diversity of this country.”

Nationalities merged with the geographic diversity as the Yugoslav territory was subjected to semiotic processes. Beautiful nature and its resources, hard-working people and industrialization under Tito’s leadership seemed to guarantee the prosperity of the economy, welfare, and the arts. The diversity of the landscape (the mountains and the lowlands, the industrial surroundings and national parks) and the folklore (costumes, ornaments, dances, and songs) sublimated the religious and national antagonism. Mountains correspond with the Adriatic Sea, factories with antique architecture; the tra-

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ditional professions of fisherman, shepherd, and peasant with the new professions of construction worker, welder, and telephone operator; and the costumes, dances, and physiognomies of the northern republics with those from the southern ones. The socialist idyll first provided shelter for the peoples of Yugoslavia, and later, since the foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement, also for the peoples from other continents, Africa and Asia. In her essay “The Culture of Lies” (1991–95) Dubravka Ugrešić remarks that the new ideology implied some kind of “internationalism” and “collective cultural space”—“even if only he, namely Tito, traveled, and we could merely admire photographs from foreign countries in the press.”

After Yugoslavia, *terra vergine*, was located in the new continent between East and West, a new kind of self-representation dominated the press, which at the same time also responded to the different perception of Yugoslavia abroad, namely in the East and the West. In a clever media strategy, Yugoslavia presented itself as an *ambiguous image*—an image that can be read in two different ideological ways—in the East as a socialistic idyll of workers who can enjoy the fruits of their work, and in the West as a paradise for tourists and consumers. The American economic expert John Kenneth Galbraith, who in 1958 visited Poland and Yugoslavia, perceived the country from the Western point of view:

The Yugoslavs are not as Calvinist as the Poles. They are committed to supplying consumer goods, including those that must be imported, in the present. This is in line with a pronouncement of Tito, who said that those who won socialism should enjoy at least some of its fruits.

After the austerity of Poland, I still find myself revelling in the luxury of life here—excellent food or wine, good service and people who seem to be enjoying themselves. I suspect that I am too much of a hedonist to make a good modern socialist. The same might be true of the Yugoslavs.

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23 Ibid., 81.
Galbraith therefore characterizes the Yugoslav third way as “capitalism with social mistakes,” or rather “socialism with capitalist mistakes.”

Contrary to the above, Bihalji-Merin in his propaganda travel report *Yugoslavia: A Small Country between the Worlds* (1955) interprets the same phenomena of welfare as a result of highly developed socialist production and distribution. In the near future he sees the workers surrounded by entertainment media, living in comfortable apartments, and spending their free time in modern sports facilities and glamorous vacation paradises:

> We would like to establish our industry not only on machines, but also in the consciousness of our people. We would like the workers one day to say: “We do not need only blast furnaces and street mills, but also showers and bathrooms! We cannot get along without a radio set! We need recreation areas with tennis courts!” Until the workers do not ask for that, they will not protect our achievements. Then they will understand machines and handle them better. . . . Some workers have already settled in modern accommodation. Last year some of them had already been at the seaside for the first time.

In around 1960, just before the congress of the Non-Aligned Countries in Belgrade, virtuous photography, especially that of Tošo Dabac and his pupils, managed to draw the Yugoslavia of the new continent closer to the West. Their photographs of Yugoslav national parks apply abstract techniques of early American photography of the frontier from the time of expeditions to Arizona and Colorado in 1870 and 1880. Similarly, like Timothy O’Sullivan, William Henry Jackson, and Carleton E. Watkins, Yugoslav photographers chose their motifs and arranged them in light/dark contrasts. Yugoslavia, at the top of the Non-Aligned Movement, presents itself as a new space and serves as the scenery for numerous East and West German Westers. The chiefs of Indian tribes from the East and the West, the Frenchman

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24 Ibid., 85.
36. The Visualization of the Third Way in Tito’s Yugoslavia

Figure 36.2.
Pierre Brice and his counterpart, the Serbian Gojko Mitić, a well-known star of the East German films about Indians,28 fight in the Yugoslav Wild West—the Yugoslav national parks. But the free and proud tribe of Indians in the West differs from the one in the East. The former fights together with Old Shatterhand against non-Christian villains and dies at the end as a Christian. In the death scene in Winnetou III (1964–65) by the German filmmaker Harald Reinl, the sound of the church bells announces Winnetou’s approach to heaven. The latter, the Eastern one, Tokei-ihto, fights together with his tribe against Western imperialism and capitalism. At the beginning of the film The Sons of the Great Bear (1966), an adaptation of the novel cycle by the East German ethnologist and writer Liselotte Welskopf-Heinrich, money is presented as a bad thing which spoils characters and provokes murders. The Yugoslav territory, a reservation camp of the East and of the West, thus now becomes a new frontier. Yugoslavia is a place of encounter for different competing ideologies. Propaganda, and with it advertising, unified the Yugoslav peoples and republics in the aesthetics of national geography. In those days, it was impossible to imagine that Yugoslavia could collapse, but rather that it could go where no man has gone before.

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28 Frank-Burkhard Habel, Gojko Mitić, Mustangs, Markenfahle: Die DEFA-Indianerfilme: Das große Buch für Fans (Berlin: Schwarzkopf, 1997); Friedrich von Borries and Jens-Uwe Fischer, Sozialistische Cowboys: Der Wilde Westen Ostdeutschlands (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008).