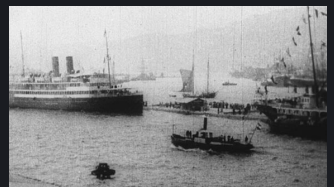
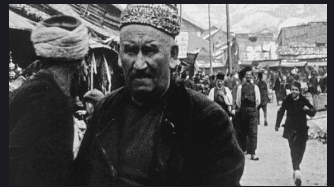


New World

A Travelogue by Paul Rosdy

*A journey through
Central Europe, from
the old world into the new*

A Rosdy Film Production · www.rosdyfilm.com





***New World* is a richly photographed journey through old and new worlds across much of Central Europe, once part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with lands known as Bohemia, Transylvania, Dalmatia, Galicia, and Bukowina, among others.**

The film travels from the old world into the new, from Sarajevo to Vienna to Romania, from Trieste to the Bay of Kotor, from the Hungarian Puszta to the Ukraine.

Through music and stories, anecdotes and legends, turn-of-the-century guidebooks and newspaper clippings, scenes from today, and films and photographs from the early 1900s a collage emerges of real people struggling, surviving, and living their lives between the worlds of tradition, change and upheaval.

A coppersmith in Bosnia practices an ancient art, but now uses bombshell casings to make elaborate works that pay tribute to the victims of war in the former Yugoslavia. A newspaper article from 1897 in Trieste describes the antics of Herman Zeitung, who travelled as a stowaway in a box and performed at a local cafe. Students at an oil technicians school in Ukraine sing a Soviet-era ballad that expresses the pride of the oil industry, once known as "Galician Hell", a robber baron's paradise of big money and cheap labor.

***New World* is colorful and poignant, looking past the grand narratives of history into ordinary lives** - forest workers in the Carpathian Mountains of Romania, Gypsy musicians in Hungary, a rabbi in the last surviving Jewish synagogue of Stanislav, Galicia (now Ivano Frankivsk, Ukraine), an opera singer in Sarajevo, who returns from exile to a city where Bosnian Muslims, Catholic Croats, and Serb Orthodox

all work together just like before the war in the Balkans. The former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was actually called The Kingdoms and Lands Represented in the Imperial Council and the Lands of the Hungarian Crown, a convoluted name that better describes its immense and diverse character of overlapping cultures, languages, and histories.

Filmmaker Paul Rosdy spent several years researching and making *New World*. Fascinated by 100-year-old newspaper articles and travel guides that were written for a new era of railroads and sightseeing, he set out to rediscover a region that was shattered just as it entered the modern age. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy crumbled with World War I. Poverty, political calamity, and the rise of Fascism followed. The unfathomable destruction of World War II cleared the way for the spread of Soviet communism, which swept over much of the region.



But the film doesn't focus on big historical events. It is concerned with common people, ordinary places, and small incidents in the cracks of history. The official program of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand's visit to Bosnia & Herzegovina in 1914 sets the tone. It was this fated journey that culminated in his assassination in Sarajevo, which is said to have incited World War I. Yet the film never mentions this cataclysmic event, instead it shows us only the place itself, across streets and bridges, past churches, mosques, the railroad station, and the electric plant. The unremarkable simplicity of the place is revealed in the shadow of its tumultuous history, one that extends to the recent war that left Mostar devastated.



In *New World* it is history's big events that lay in the shadows of commonplace life, daily work, people getting by, and the simple pleasures of eating and singing. The film is full of singing and music as part of daily life. It opens with the muezzin of a mosque in Mostar, singing the call to prayer. The film continues with a journey by train with Romanian forest workers who sing about lost love as they head to work along snowy ravines. The workers sing again as they sit around the dinner table in a cabin deep in the woods without electricity. And as the train returns from the forest, a tightly crammed brass band plays another mournful tune. Down the Dalmatian Coast to Montenegro's Bay of Kotor, members of the 1200-year-old Marine of the Bay, the world's oldest club, sing, play music, and dance the *Kolo* through the streets of this ancient port city that celebrates the sea. From opera to folk songs, the people in *New World* live with music.

In the Ukraine, in Czernowitz, once the most eastern provincial capital of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Johann Schlamp reminisces as he sings a popular song by Joseph Schmidt, a local singer who became world



famous in the 1930s. "*When you're young, the world is yours,*" he croons. In Hungary, a gypsy band plays in the hot sun as the bandleader, Mihály Samu, describes how he and his family survived deportation in World War II and the hard times afterwards.

***New World* travels between countries, across cities, and through time, from the old world into the new.** In a newspaper article from 1910, a writer tries to prophesize what Vienna will be like in the year 2000 based on the unusual will of a countess who has left part of her fortune to the paupers of the future. The article wonders if Vienna will become a utopia as foreseen by the turn-of-century writer, Edward Bellamy. "*But will there really be any poor people, in the epoch that Bellamy imagined?*" the article asks. "*Here and now, in 1910, the question is difficult to answer; nonetheless we are curious to know how this story will end, and we shall not fail to inquire in the year 2000.*"



New World shows us that people still struggle, wars still happen, time passes, and yet the world remains familiar.

Aljona Kozubovskaja, a bus driver in Czernowitz, now Ukraine, describes her life as a series of ups and downs, partly personal, partly historical. Her family problems overlap with the economic struggles of a country trying to recuperate after the fall of communism. "*Before, so to say, people had money, but the shops were empty,*" she says. "*And today? It seems to be the other way around. There are plenty of goods in the shops, the shelves are sagging with products, but people don't have money.*" Alyona drives her bus, comes home, feeds the children, and life goes on.

Interview with Paul Rosdy:

What was the reason to look at the time around 1900 and compare it to the present time?

PR: The turn of the century is for someone like me, who comes from Vienna and lives here, an epoch in which decisive things have happened. I wanted to get to know this time better, and for this I needed first-hand sources. You can't interview someone from this period, you can read the literature, but I wanted to get a sense for "everyday life" and get a feeling for the language of the time through what was written in the newspapers. And then I wanted to look at this region as it is in the present time. But not only look and compare, but get to know people and their daily routines, their traditions, worries, stories and joys. About a 100 years ago this area was all one big country. Vienna was the capital. And I realized that I hardly knew anything about it.

What does New World mean for you?

PR: New World is always a region where people are drawn to start a new life. That happened very much in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. For me "New World" is a mind opener. The old films and old texts were for me a new world, the people, the languages, all opened a new horizon for me.

Big theme in the film is the music.

PR: I love music and always wanted it as a strong theme in the film. I don't know all these languages, but one can communicate through music very well. It touches all the people, whether or not you understand the text. You think about your own life and the life of others and you ask yourself: What is this life, this life I'm in? So beautiful and terrible at the same time... so sad and hopeful at the same time. I wanted to make a film that carries these feelings, feelings that we all carry in us.

The episode in Stanislau goes beyond regular capturing of everyday life, here it goes about the more recent history and the destiny of the Jewish people in this town.

PR: You look at 1900 and today and try to find an explanation, and the answers are meeting in the middle. From a political and historical perspective the middle was the Holocaust, followed by Communism. These decisive historical events were not the subject of the film, but they are very much to be felt in everyday life – today.

Biography and Filmography:

Born and raised in Vienna, Paul Rosdy's first career was as a travel agent and tour guide. Since 1990 he has worked in film and video. After graduating from film school in Vancouver, Canada, he produced short documentaries and educational programs in Austria, Canada and the United States. In 1994 he founded Pinball Films with Joan Grossman.

Together they made the film *The Port of Last Resort* about the Jewish emigration to Shanghai during World War II. The film won several awards at film festivals and has been shown in more than 20 countries in theatrical, television and educational distribution.

Filmography (selection):

1992 – Release Day
1994 – Matzo Balls
1998 – The Port of Last Resort – Zuflucht in Shanghai
2005 – Neue Welt

Neue Welt

Austria 2005, 100 minutes, 35 mm,
colour & b/w, 1:1.66, Dolby SRD

Languages: German, Bosnian, Romanian,
Serbian, English, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Russian
Subtitles: English

Writer, Director,

Producer & Editor: Paul Rosdy

Cinematography: Robert Winkler

with Wolfgang Thaler, Attila Boa, Peter Roehsler

Sound: Michal Pajdiak

with Hrvoje Durašek, Joan Grossman

Voice: Rudolf Melichar

Editorial Advisor: Reinhard Jud

with

Denisa Avdibegović

Rabbi Moishe-Leib Koleshnik

Aljona Kozubovskaja

Miloš Milošević

Jabučar H. Nasir

Mihály Samu

Johann Schlamp

Anastassija Strembizka

Coordinating Producers:

Bosnia & Hercegovina: Hrvoje Durašek,

Maida Korjenić

Romania: Björn Reinhardt

Trieste: Alessandro Coleschi

Montenegro: Boro Muck, Ilija Radović

Hungary: László Bakos

Ukraine: Sergij Osatschuk, Ihor Sydor

Production Company:

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