Shelter
by Dragomir Sholev
Bulgaria - 2010 - 88 min

> Shelter is part of a collection of European films: the CinEd collection, a film education programme for young people.

> This student sheet allows me to rediscover the film, to go through it in words and images, to know more about where the characters live and their time, to create and invent, to go further by discovering other works: films, books, music, photographs, paintings...

By participating in CinEd, I share the discovery of films with young people from other countries, all over Europe!

A The film
B In Europe and elsewhere
C The film and me
D To go further
The two of them return to the house in a very gloomy mood. They talk and it is raining. They return to the house.

A bus is travelling on the road in a gloomy rainy day. The father is talking on the phone and he realizes his son is missing. He goes back home and together with his wife report the child missing in the police station.

They realize that their son Rado has returned home, but he has brought a girl in the house. The mother thinks that she is his girlfriend. The father is very perplexed by what he is seeing.

The doorbell rings and another very important character enters the room – the punk Tenx. Rado invited him also to the house. The parents are stunned by his appearance.

They sit on the table and have their dinner. The parents, Rado and the guests. Slowly the tension is building up. They discuss many subjects from politics to vegetarianism.

The parents are worried that they have smoked marijuana and even worse, their son might have smoked, so Tenx and the father get into an argument and the situation escalates to a point where the father slaps Tenx on the face. Courtney and Tenx go away and Rado follows them.
**The film**

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<th>Seen in the film</th>
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<td>(7) The three teenagers go on top of Tenx’s house (an old garage) to watch the sunset and escape the other world.</td>
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<th>Heard in the film</th>
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<td>Tenx: “As if you get paid for your work! Work’s only for fools and men, who want to escape from their wives.”</td>
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| Father: Little asshole! You know where we were? At the police station to report your missing. They are searching for you. |
| Father: Who’s that girl in the bathroom? |
| Rado: She is a friend. |

| Tenx: I’m an anarchist. I hate politicians, elections, the state… and everything connected to them. If elections could change anything, they would’ve been banned. |
| Father: Not all young people, thank God, think like you. That would be hell. |
| Courtney: As if it’s heaven now. |
| Tenx: In my opinion, the system sucks. As long as we are governed… we will be used and suppressed by invented laws. |
| Courtney: That’s right! |
| Rado: Anarchy! |
| Mother: What anarchy, dear? |

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<th>Said about the film</th>
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<td>The director Dragomir Sholev’s thoughts about cinema in general and its role:</td>
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<td>«For me cinema has always been a channel that could express nostalgia. And the more we feel it – the better it is. »</td>
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The Bulgarian Critics about the film
Yanko Terziev:

"Life is always in a way tangible. Even the highest truths are a result of earthly experiences – human interactions, everyday life in general. In his mature debut “Shelter” the director Dragomir Sholev (remember this name) shows that he knows the value of tangibility and concreteness. On the outside “Shelter” is an observation about life, but presented as a chamber play with enumerated prologue, main act and epilogue. It is suggested that every detail of the life presented is staged and each movement of the camera is of utmost importance and is not by chance, and everything that is entering the shot is intentional."
In Europe and elsewhere

The film and its era

Context:

Shelter was released in 2010, 3 years after Bulgaria became a member of the European Union and 21 years after the collapse of the communist regime. It is an era of serious changes within society, both on an economic and on a cultural level. Many young people left the country to study or to work abroad.

Many anti-governmental manifestations were held in Sofia and many citizens were showing their discontent with Bulgarian's political class and corruption.

A new generation of cinema directors began exploring reality, the social changes and life amongst young people.

The film and me

1. I learn and I imagine

- Could I give an alternative ending to the film?

- What do I know about this historical period (the 90s and 2000s) in the other countries in Eastern Europe? How does it differ from my country?

- We see the parents and the teenagers arguing in a couple of scenes. Could I rewrite the scene of conflict and change the way it finishes?

Dear Dragomir...

I write a letter to the filmmaker Dragomir Sholev, to tell him what I thought about his film, what touched me, what I understand or not about his choices.
The film and me

I make my own poster of the film. (It may be a drawing, a collage, a photograph).

The following images make me think of ...

I find images similar to the two photograms (paintings, comics, photos, video clips, adverts, other films, etc.)

Two photos of the neighborhood. I can take your phone or a camera and take some photographs of your neighborhood. What are the similarities and the differences?

I choose images from the film (using the Young Spectator Space).

In the Young Spectator Space, I choose my top ten favorite images that struck me, moved me, shocked me… I can also select images from the following themes: on the table, conflict, architecture. I compose a series of images from the ones I chose. I can propose a visual poem photograms and words.

I can also create my own shots.

I can shoot alone or with my friends a short movies inspired by Shelter. For example a scene that is set on a table, on the bus or outside the house.

Photos of the set – look and comment.

Seeing the film, would you imagine that all the interior of the film is actually a film set?

I make my own poster of the film. (It may be a drawing, a collage, a photograph).

To go further

In the Young Spectator Space, some extracts of Shelter are available in the educational films: "At the table", "In the car", "Conflicts".

If I liked Shelter, I might also like:

The Happiest Girl in the World (2008, Romania) by Radu Jude

Delia 18, won a car in a competition, to get it she has to appear in the advert. But nothing goes right: Delia is an awful actress, the film crew is not kind… And her parents get involved. In the two movies, one may notice that there is an obvious intergenerational conflict. In addition, the aesthetic of the two films is similar.
To go further

**Uma pedra no bolso** (1987, Portugal) by Joaquim Pinto
(Film in the CinEd Collection)
12-year-old Miguel is punished because he has not done his homework properly: he must stay at his aunt’s inn for the holidays. He makes some new friends there and is faced with some disappointments on the way. Miguel like Rado is inaugurated into manhood also, but in a very different manner. The two of them learn some very valuable life lessons.

These characters:

- **Alex** from *Clockwork Orange* by Stanley Kubrick (1971, United States)
  Alex is the leader of a band of misfits and scoundrels. After a robbery goes wrong, he is caught and sent to a special facility, where they use a new technique to “cure” his violent inclinations. Both Alex and Rado are in a different way outsiders, both of them life with their parents, although Alex is much older, but what makes them similar is the fact they are pressed by family and society to change and follow the rules. Of course, the situation with Alex from *Clockwork Orange* is much more different, as he really commits a serious crime, for which he is given the experimental treatment.

- **Antoine Doinel** from *The 400 Blows*, (1959, France) by François Truffaut
  14 year-old Antoine Doinel is a boy who is struggling with a hard life at home and incomprehension in school. He spirals into a chain of lies and is finally taken into a juvenile detention facility, where he manages to escapes from. Antoine in this sense is similar to Alex and Rado, all of them want to break free from what everybody else’s expectations about them. This is to become an individual with your own will.

Other films that explore the urban environment, the punk music and the youth:

- **Eastern Plays** (2009, Bulgaria) by Kamen Kalev
  George (17) is in constant conflict with his parents. His bigger brother Itso (38) is a sculptor and a heroin addict. Itso meets a Turkish girl, and George joins a skinhead group. The two of them get closer, while realizing truths about themselves.
To go further

Metropolis (1927, Germany) by Fritz Lang

Metropolis is a cult German expressionist science-fiction film by the director Fritz Lang. The film is set in a futuristic urban dystopia and explores the love of Freder and Maria – two people of two different worlds, of two different classes.

La Haine (1995, France) by Mathieu Kassovitz

24 hours in the lives of three young men in the French suburbs and more precisely in Seine-Saint-Denis, the day after a violent riot.

Rock'n'roll High School (1979, United States) by Allan Arkush

Is a musical comedy set in high school, where the students are constantly destroying the school’s reputation by their excessive love of the rock ‘n’ roll and their lack of attention to the school work. The tension escalates, when the famous band Ramones is playing nearby.
To go further

These photographers:

- Nikola Mihov, Monument to Bulgarian-Soviet friendship, Varna, from the series Forget Your Past, 2008 - 2012
  The Bulgarian photographer Nikola Mihov and his project Forget your past, tracing the fate of the most important communist-era monuments in Bulgaria.

- Laurent Kronental, The French photographer Laurent Kronental and his project Souvenir d’un futur documenting the life of senior citizens living in the “Grands Ensembles” (large housing projects) around Paris.

- Glen E. Friedman, The American photographer Glen E. Friedman, who films the rebels, punks and skaters on concerts and on the street.

- Anton Corbijn, The Dutch photographer and director Anton Corbijn, whose work is connected to the music scene.
To go further

These books:

- **The Catcher in the Rye** (1951), J. D. Salinger
  The book describes the rebellion of sixteen years old boy from New York, who tries to discover the world by escaping from his life for three days. It's a book that often was banned from the school's curriculum, due to some of its more graphic portrayals of sexuality. It is a book about adolescent rebellion against the rules imposed by parents and society, the connection with the movie lays here.

- **Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945** (2010), Tony Judt
  A book that covers Postwar European history from the west to the east. It gives a very interesting and detailed context of the events and is a good way to get familiarized with the history of the Balkans. It will shed some light on the behavior and manner of life in Bulgaria nowadays.

To go further on the conflict between generations:

- **Death of a Salesman**, a play written by American playwright Arthur Miller, 1949
  The play is a critique of the American dream and it does so by juxtaposing two generations. The father who is a representative of the values and beliefs of the old US and his son who has a different point of view.

The authors of this student sheet are Vassilena Badzharova and Ralitsa Assenova.