

FROM HITLER TO HOLLYWOOD: TRANSNATIONAL CINEMA IN WORLD WAR II

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## ABSTRACT

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This is a comparative study between the film industries of Nazi Germany and the United States in World War II. I examine the governmental influence on the cinematic industries and how that affected the people. I also show that the Nazi government had more influence than is generally thought over the United States and the film industry in Hollywood. The émigrés that had to flee the Nazis brought new ideas to Hollywood, creating new genres of film.

The use of Government documents, diaries, memoirs, films as well as secondary sources are the major sources. The government documents were obtained from the Motion Picture Artists Association Archive, and deal specifically with the Office of War Information. The OWI created rules for filmmaking in the war years and oversaw many productions, including Army training films. The diaries are those of Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, and I include an appendix of statements he made regarding films. In looking at certain émigrés and stars in both Hollywood and Germany, I use autobiographies and biographies detailing the lives of the famous in the pertinent years. Many of the secondary sources are previously written works about the creation of cinema, Hollywood history and the German cinematic industry. I use many films to illustrate the ideas that were being expressed to the public, as well as entertaining the people. I specifically use the film *Casablanca* to illustrate the importance of the fleeing émigrés from Europe to the United States, and how so many of these actual émigrés being cast in the film made it stronger.

The results of my study include that both governments were heavily involved in the cinema in the time of war, creating guidelines that must be followed, and heavily censoring everything. The Nazis copied Hollywood films and ideas after Germanizing them, and the

Hollywood took exiled cinematic workers from Europe. The exiled actors, directors and writers brought a new creativity with them that gave birth to Film Noir and many other classic films. The addition of cinema's exiles helped to sustain and magnify the greatness of Hollywood cinema for many years.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **From Hitler to Hollywood: Transnational Cinema in World War II**

Hollywood history is a fascinating topic to many people, which explains why there are so many books written about actors, directors, the studio system and of course the overarching history of the industry. The film industry of Nazi Germany is also compelling with many books written about the propaganda of the Nazis. Most scholars dismiss many of the films made between 1933 and 1945 as merely propaganda with no other merit. There are also many works written about the artists in exile; those of Jewish ancestry that had to flee the Nazis for their own safety that were skilled in all forms of the arts including literature, painting, and all of the different cinematic arts. However, many of these works focus on specific people, such as the cinematic artists who traveled to Hollywood from their native Central European homeland out of fear and hatred for the Nazis in Germany. These studies mostly reflect on the hardships endured by the artists upon their arrival in the United States instead of fully tracing their path from their persecution in Germany to their struggles to make it in the United States. By looking at a few of these émigrés who starred in the film *Casablanca* (1942) –a film focusing on immigrants fleeing the Nazi Occupation—I create a bridge between the two cinematic industries in which the émigrés worked. The similarities and differences between the film industries would have been noticed acutely by those forced out of their homeland to another land with strange customs and laws. A few of the émigrés that I focus on include Billy Wilder, Peter Lorre, Conrad Veidt and Helmut Dantine.

Another surprising factor that has been overlooked in this topic is that much of the secondary literature is focused entirely on either Nazi Germany or Hollywood.<sup>1</sup> In addition to a

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<sup>1</sup> Secondary literature examples: Rentschler, Eric. *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998. Rentschler's main argument is that the cinema of the Third Reich was brought about by a "Ministry of Illusion" rather than the common idea that it was from a "Ministry

lack of a combined study of the two countries, many books are looking at the war, or propaganda in general, and address the studio system and films in only one paragraph or chapter. There are only a few works that address only the film industry of each individual country.<sup>2</sup> The earlier

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of Fear.” Some of the films made are purely propagandistic and along the party lines, such as *Hitler Youth Quex*, and *Jud Suss*. He argues that most of the films created under the Nazi Regime were actually apolitical entertainment pictures, but admits that there is frequently a Nazi approved message within the entertainment package. Herr Goebbels used this illusion to cloak the party messages in the films to entertain the masses instead of making them afraid and have to endure 90 minutes of straight propaganda that they did not want to see. Rentschler uses a specific film per chapter to illustrate their effect within certain parameters in Germany. While his scope is different from mine, he examines certain films made in Nazi Germany within the time frame I have selected. The chapters on Emotional Engineering, Hollywood Made in Germany, Home Sweet Heimat, Astray in the New World, the Elective Other, and the Self-Reflexive Self-Destruction along with his epilogue of the Testament of Dr. Goebbels will be the best that will apply to my work. He also reflects more of a film analysis rather than historical manner, but the application of his analysis to the populace and the effect that these films had on them will be useful to my research. Koepnick, Lutz. 2002. *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema between Hitler and Hollywood*. Los Angeles: University of California Press. This work examines the relationship between Hollywood and Germany from 1930 through 1950. The author also looks at the way that Nazi filmmakers ‘borrowed’ ideas from Hollywood in both films and in their star system. This is partially what I would like to incorporate into my thesis in a transnational sense with the filmmakers fleeing Nazi Germany for Hollywood.

Kremier, Klaus. 1996. *The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company 1918-1945*, Los Angeles: The University of California Press. This is an overview of the history of the major film studio in Germany. It examines the Nazi takeover of the studios and the combining of the major film studios under the UFA umbrella. Kreimeier uses the stars of the films, the directors and the films themselves to tell the story of the Hollywood of the Nazis. This is helpful because it has a clear explanation and overview of how the system worked in Germany before and after the Nazi takeover. This will also help explain the governmental influence from even before the governmental takeover.

Welky, David. 2008. *The Moguls and the Dictators: Hollywood and the Coming of World War II*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. This work looks at four main themes which work to outline the changes Hollywood went through in promoting isolationism, using the dictatorial controlled countries for profit, and then finally anti-isolationism and promoting the war. These themes are the connection between Hollywood's moguls and the United States Government, the war's impact on Hollywood's foreign market relationship, the growing groups of anti-fascists in Hollywood, including those who had escaped from Nazi Germany and finally the fourth theme is the industry's reaction to fascism in Europe and how it is portrayed in the films made in the late 1930s and early 1940s. These themes are exactly what will be useful to me in outlining my own work on the Hollywood Portion of my thesis. These are the four main steps that led Hollywood into propagandizing for the government. It also illustrates the transnational point of view with many of the moguls being immigrants from central Europe, as well as the émigrés who fled the Nazis.

Schatz, Thomas. 1996. *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era*. New York: Pantheon Books. Schatz looks into the studio system of Hollywood, how it differed from studio to studio, owner to owner and so forth. This history of the studio system is also instrumental in showing how things changed in the way things were done as time went by. The Second World War was a major catalyst in the changing of the studio and star systems in the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Hardt, Ursula. 1996. *From Caligari to California: Erich Pommer's Life in the International Film Wars*. Oxford: Berghahn.

Horowitz, Joseph. 2008. *Artist in Exile: How Refugees from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts*. New York: Harper-Collins.

Koepnick, Lutz. 2002. *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema between Hitler and Hollywood*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Morrison, James. 1998. *Passport to Hollywood: Hollywood Films, European Directors*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Palmier, Jean-Michel. 2006. *Weimar in Exile*. London: Verso Publishing.



works on the German film industry focus on the cinema of Weimar, or they focus on the propaganda aspect of the films produced under the Nazi Regime. The more recent works look at the possibility that many of the films were created for purely entertainment value. All of the films created during the reign of Hitler were propagandist in nature, but were completely different than the obvious propaganda that we presume it to be. Not all of the films produced in Nazi Germany were like *Triumph of the Will*, --an outright propaganda film for the Third Reich-- but at the same time films such as *La Habanera* -a romantic comedy- were not as innocent as they might have appeared to be on the surface.

I have also noticed that previous works have largely ignored, the different ways that the government influenced the film industries, and how that government influence impacted the viewing audiences. Also, many of the works tend to focus on major motion pictures, or cartoons, but very few look at the short films and newsreels that were more often the blatant and extreme

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- Phillips, Gene D. 1998. *Exiles in Hollywood: Major European Film Directors in America*. London: Lehigh University Press.
- Rose, Peter I. 2005. *The Dispossessed: An Anatomy of Exile*. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Schnauber, Cornelius. 1997. *Hollywood Haven: Homes and Haunts of the European Émigrés and Exiles in Los Angeles*. Airiadne Press, CA.
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- Dick, Bernhard F. 1996. *Billy Wilder*. New York: DeCapo Press.
- Eyman, Scott. 2003. *Ernst Lubitsch: Laughter in Paradise*. Simon and Schuster, New York.
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- McGilligan, Patrick. 1997. *Fritz Lang: The Nature of the Beast*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Paul Henreid. Interviewed by Ronald L. Davis. May 27, 1985.
- Riva, Maria. 1992. *Marlene Dietrich*. New York: Balentine Books.
- Schnauber, Cornelius, 1986. *Fritz Lang in Hollywood*. Wein: Europaverlag.
- William Wyler. Interviewed by Ronald L. Davis. July 19, 1979.

propaganda shown in the movie-houses. Both countries had governmental influence, with Joseph Goebbels serving as Minister of Propaganda in Germany and the Office of Wartime Information in the United States. While both governments involvement in the film industry have been discussed in the existing literature, there is no comparison between the two, or even differences in the way that these governmental agencies used film to influence the public. In addition to the cinema of the Third Reich not being as overt in its propaganda as the United States may have been, other surprising similarities have appeared between the two countries regarding governmental influence, ideas of how to encourage the public to accept propaganda, and use of film stars to promote a patriotic influence in the public.

This thesis will utilize government documents, diaries, films and personal stories to show that Nazism had a greater effect on the United States than is generally believed and acknowledged. The presence of the Nazis as well as the war changed the United States, however, the émigrés fleeing persecution in Europe brought German styles, ideas and creativity to Hollywood. The new ideas of these émigrés created a new genre of film in the dark, crime-ridden film noir that émigrés such as Fritz Lang and Billy Wilder excelled at. The émigrés brought creativity and skill as well as authenticity to films in the war years with their European accents and backgrounds. Films such as *Casablanca* would not have been as wonderful and still enduring if it were not for the film émigrés that helped to create it.

### **The Dawn of Cinema and Censorship, 1900-1918**

The turn of the century brought about the start of the movie industry. “Moving pictures” were discovered independently by both Thomas Edison and the French Lumière Brothers around 1895. Slowly, the moving pictures grew longer in length, faster in speed, and more complicated

in their creation, and adding music to the pictures made them even more popular with the working classes. The films became slowly more sophisticated in order to increase the middle class audience, bringing about the birth of the film industry. By the beginning of World War I, picture palaces were being built, proving that the movies were here to stay.<sup>3</sup>

Films were new, and the people making them were anxious to find a steady clientele to watch them, and nothing sells better to audiences than sex. Slowly, movies began to be criticized in most countries for depictions of violence and sex. Governments of different countries became involved in censorship as well as safety codes. The British introduced a Cinematographic Act in 1909 to make the theatres safe, but it also included a clause to control the content of the films being shown. The German police in Wilhelmian Germany had the same controls over the cinema that they held over the theatres, placing censorship in the jurisdiction of local instead of national authorities. A national law was proposed, which would have made a uniform code, but it failed to pass due to the events of the First World War.<sup>4</sup> Movies continued to be racy for the time period in which they were developed, showing women scantily clad, and men forcibly taking what they wanted, such as in *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) and *The Unwritten Law* (1907). Various countries went about censoring movies in different ways and the belief of cinematic promiscuity and violence being inappropriate for audiences did not develop until films grew in popularity. With more films being produce, and more movie theatres appearing, objections to the content began to be raised, demanding governmental intervention and censorship.<sup>5</sup>

### **Hollywood and the US Film Industry**

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<sup>3</sup> Tegel, Susan. *Nazis and the Cinema*. New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2007. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 22-24.

<sup>5</sup> Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey ed. 1997. *The Oxford History of World Cinema*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

World War II was a watershed event for many social phenomena, but it was also the beginning of the door slowly closing on the Golden Age of Hollywood Cinema and making way for television. Many scholars believe that the Golden Age peaked in 1939 with the release of such groundbreaking films as *Gone with the Wind*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Stagecoach*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*.<sup>6</sup> This year of magnificent films was bookended by a few years of mediocre film making. This included a stream of propaganda building up before the United States' entry into the Second World War, reaching a pitch within the war years, and slowing down after 1945. The film industry was extremely productive over the war years, and had to scale back afterwards. The unfortunate invention (for the studios) of the television and its rise in the 1950s helped to bring a close to the Golden Age, slowly ushering in the importance of the blockbuster<sup>7</sup> that we have today.<sup>8</sup>

1939 was also the year that some of the studios in Hollywood decided to declare war on fascism, making films that went against the path of isolationism that much of the American public wanted to walk who wanted to leave the European war to be fought out amongst the Europeans. The moguls of the major studios were largely Jews of Eastern European descent, giving them additional motivation to take the more difficult road by fighting the growing Nazi menace. The studio that took the boldest stand against fascism was Warner Brother's Studio. Even before 1939 the studio released films that were anti-fascist, but did not take an outright stand until they released *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*. They took a firm position which went

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<sup>6</sup> 1939: *Hollywood's Greatest Year*. Directed by Constantine Nasr. 2009. New Wave Entertainment, Turner Productions.

Sennett, Ted. *Hollywood's Greatest Year, 1939: A Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration*. New York: St. Martins Press 1989.

Gabler, Neal. 1989. *An Empire of Their Own: how the Jews Invented Hollywood*. New York: Anchor Books.

<sup>7</sup> A motion picture, novel, etc., esp. one lavishly produced that has or is expected to have wide popular appeal or financial success.

<sup>8</sup> This is based on the importance of ticket sales, money earned over the cost of making the film, audience reaction, and reviews of the critics.

against the majority of American public opinion and even that of the world. This mindset and expression thereof resulted in the Nazis banning all films made by Warner Brothers, and closing down the German branch of the studio. The release of these films increased the awareness of fascism in the American public. This set the standard of influence that Hollywood had upon the American public in a political sense. Since the 1920s, the stars and films had influenced fashion, language and behavior in the American public, but only with this firm stand on political beliefs did the studios –especially Warner Brothers-- take another step towards increasing their influence in yet another realm.

Hollywood was progressive in its political stance, even in the 1940s. Wishing to help the refugees and simultaneously fight fascism, the leaders of the community began doing more than just making films. As the situation in Europe worsened, the attacks on fascism from Hollywood also increased. The Nazis were continuing their campaign against the Jews, especially Jews working in their beloved film industry. Many of these talented and unwanted people were fleeing to Hollywood before things worsened in Europe.<sup>9</sup> In Hollywood, they joined with the first wave

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<sup>9</sup> Hardt, Ursula. 1996. *From Caligari to California: Erich Pommer's Life in the International Film Wars*. Oxford: Berghahn.

Horowitz, Joseph. 2008. *Artist in Exile: How Refugees from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts*. New York: Harper-Collins.

Koepnick, Lutz. 2002. *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema between Hitler and Hollywood*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Morrison, James. 1998. *Passport to Hollywood: Hollywood Films, European Directors*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Palmier, Jean-Michel. 2006. *Weimar in Exile*. London: Verso Publishing.

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Wallace, David. 2006. *Exiles in Hollywood*. New Jersey: Limelight Editions.

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Bergman, Ingrid. 1980. *My Story*. New York: Delacorte.

Chandler, Charlotte. 2002. *Nobody's Perfect: Billy Wilder, A Personal Biography*. Applause Theatre and Cinema Books, New York.

of émigrés from the German cinema, forming groups such as the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League (HANL) and the European Film Fund (EFF).

The sympathies of the American people for the Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi executioners were hindered by several factors. The United States was still reeling from the stock market crash of 1929, suffering from the Great Depression, and many Americans were still struggling to make ends meet. Anti-Semitism was also common in the United States, though not as violently as in Germany. Most Americans did not know any Jews or even people directly from Europe, making them removed from their plight by ignorance and prejudice. Prejudice, combined with the American people's desires to stay out of the war in Europe, created the need for strict rules that had to be followed before immigrating to the United States. The rules included fixed quotas from the country of embarkation based on country of birth, proof of being able to support oneself financially, a job or other means of support in the United States, and passing a security exam.<sup>10</sup> These rules were strictly enforced to prove the neutrality of the United States in the war. An Advisory Committee on Political Refugees was created by the President to screen applications for entry and to recommend the most deserving cases for visas, but only 40 out of the 567 they recommended were given visas by the State Department. Some people were sympathetic to the

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Dantine, Helmut. "Notes for Interviews" N.D. Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills CA.

Dick, Bernhard F. 1996. *Billy Wilder*. New York: DeCapo Press.

Eyman, Scott. 2003. *Ernst Lubitsch: Laughter in Paradise*. Simon and Schuster, New York.

Grant, Barry Keith ed. 2003. *Fritz Lang Interviews*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Henreid, Paul. 1984. *Ladies Man*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Kohner, Frederick. 1977. *The Magician of Sunset Boulevard: The Improbable Life of Paul Kohner, Hollywood Agent*. Palos Verdes: Morgan Press.

McGilligan, Patrick. 1997. *Fritz Lang: The Nature of the Beast*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Paul Henreid. Interviewed by Ronald L. Davis. May 27, 1985.

Riva, Maria. 1992. *Marlene Dietrich*. New York: Balentine Books.

Schnauber, Cornelius, 1986. *Fritz Lang in Hollywood*. Wein: Europaverlag.

William Wyler. Interviewed by Ronald L. Davis. July 19, 1979.

<sup>10</sup> Schnauber, Cornelius. *Hollywood Haven: Homes and Haunts of the European Émigrés and Exiles in Los Angeles*. (Airiadne Press, CA 1997). 3.

refugees, but they often had overwhelming fears of subversives and spies, ideas likely given to the public by Hollywood films.<sup>11</sup>

However, after the fall of France to Nazi Germany, Americans began expressing more understanding towards the refugees, led by the example of President Roosevelt.<sup>12</sup> Roosevelt was also conscious of the problem refugees faced when trying to find a place that would accept them, particularly with the Great Depression continuing to affect the world. Many people did not want these foreigners coming in, even if the refugees no longer had jobs or a home to return to in their own countries of origin.

### **The German Cinematic Industry**

The German filmmakers fleeing from the Nazis were not the first of German cinematic artisans to leave Germany for Hollywood. The first wave of migration of German film workers to the United States began in the silent era. At this time of silent cinema, the German film industry was in its own golden age. The groundbreaking films created in the Weimar Cinema were second only to the United States in popularity. Films such as *Nosferatu* and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* put German cinema on the map. The silent pictures were easily transferred to other languages because sound did not have to be dubbed in, and the cards between scenes simply had to be changed to another language for everyone to understand and be entertained. These films were very dark and rather racy for the time period, and there was the feel of the freedom given to artists during the Weimar Republic. The expressionistic style of the German silent films had been envied by many countries, and Hollywood did its best to lure stars and directors away to sunny California with promises of great stardom and money. Those that made up the first wave

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<sup>11</sup> Taylor, John Russell. *Strangers in Paradise: The Hollywood Émigrés 1933-1950*. (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York 1983.) 174.

<sup>12</sup> Palmier, Jean-Michel. *Weimar in Exile*. 454

of German migration to Hollywood gave hope of similar success to the second wave. The acceptance these previous stars had found, led many of the German film refugees to flee for Hollywood after the Nazis took over, making it their place of refuge, influencing the films Hollywood made, and trying to encourage an anti-Nazi viewpoint in Americans.

The anti-fascism films continued due to the increasing number of émigrés arriving in Hollywood. As time passed and the war in Europe intensified and expanded, the creation of propaganda films in the United States also increased, especially after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Films released in early 1942 quickly had scenes added to capitalize on the wave of patriotism sweeping the nation. Films about the home front, the different theatres<sup>13</sup> of war and escapist pictures were the new types of movies being produced. Films that depicted soldiers and sailors going off to war, fighting for the girl back home and mom's apple pie were frequently all that could be seen in the theatres. However, Hollywood was not left to its own creative devices. The government developed a special branch for propaganda known as the Office of Wartime Information, and Hollywood had a file full of documents outlining what could and could not be shown in these important wartime films. This governmental influence lasted through the end of the war, and even continued on after the war with the Red Scare and the House Un-American Activities Council (HUAC) blacklisting people in Hollywood for the possibility of Communist sympathies.

The United States Office of War Information (OWI) was a government agency created during the Second World War to consolidate government information services. It operated from June 1942 until September 1945. The OWI coordinated the release of war news for domestic use

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<sup>13</sup> I am using the British spelling here to differentiate theatres of operation in the war from movie theaters.



and worked to inspire patriotism. It also controlled all information released about the war, and determined what could be shown to the American public through newspapers, radio and films. A major aspect of the film department or the Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) in the OWI was making newsreels that were shown in the United States and overseas. Elmer Davis, the director of the OWI said, “The easiest way to inject a propaganda idea into most people’s minds is to let it go through the medium of an entertainment picture when they do not realize that they are being propagandized”<sup>14</sup> an interesting sentiment that was also shared by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels in Nazi Germany. Using patriotism, and the natural desire of the studios to assist, the government used the film industry as an excellent tool for communicating to the public what they wanted them to know.

### **Nazi Germany, 1933-1943**

Adolf Hitler came to power as the Chancellor in 1933 with his National Socialist Party and their anti-Semitic ideologies. He was soon passing laws that took all liberties and rights away from anyone of Jewish descent. Some laws were passed stating that all people working in specific industries, such as the film industry, were required to join the specific organization for their profession and for the film industry it was the *Reichsfilmkammer* (Film Chamber of the Reich). This began the tumultuous time for the film industry under the Nazi régime. All laws passed regarding ethnicity were equally enforced in the studios, though with a lesser intensity than in other industries. When it came to film, the Nazis were prepared to overlook half- and quarter-Jewish backgrounds if the subject was extremely skilled at his job and his ancestry could be covered up. Inclusion in these groups meant being defined as a healthy Aryan with no Jewish blood, and holding a membership card for the Nazi party. This definition was very successful in

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<sup>14</sup> Black, Gregory D., and Clayton Koppes "What to Show the World: The Office of War Information and Hollywood, 1942-1945." *The Journal of American History* 64.1 (1977): 88.

weeding out the Jewish population working in the German Film Industry, but harsher times lay ahead for those of Jewish ancestry who did not leave quickly. Soon after the formation of the *Reichsfilmkammer*, Minister of Propaganda Dr. Joseph Goebbels took control of the film studios and combined them under one name, UFA (*Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft*), turning them into his own personal propaganda machine for the Third Reich.<sup>15</sup>

By 1938, many Jews who were able to had fled Germany, but many believed that Hitler would not stay in power very long, or they did not possess the funds to leave Germany immediately. Many suffered through the Night of Broken Glass, or *Kristallnacht* on November 9, 1938, an action against Jews. The years 1941-1945 mark the time of the Holocaust when unspeakable actions were carried out upon the Jewish people. Millions of people of Jewish ancestry were killed in an attempt to exterminate their race.<sup>16</sup>

With the Government in control of the newspapers, radio stations and movies, the German people were inundated with propaganda from the Nazis. This continued on until the German surrender in May of 1945.

The Nazi Régime controlled all aspects of information that the German people were legally allowed to obtain and this is looked upon as a gross effrontery that people should be allowed to know all the facts. Yet, the United States committed similar sins, withholding information from the general public and piping propaganda by all means available to the people. This included the film industry in both countries. People flocked to the movie theaters to escape troubles, be entertained, and to get the news. The German cinema system was loosely based on

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<sup>15</sup> Kreimeier, Klaus. 1999. *The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company 1918-1945*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

<sup>16</sup> Department for Jewish Zionist Education, Jewish History Timeline. <http://www.jafi.org.il/education/history/> (accessed March 12, 2010).

the American film system in Hollywood, but with German twists, as was their custom to take a working model but 'improve' it with German techniques. Using the successful elements, and applying them with an iron fist, the Nazis created their own version of Hollywood. While the government of Germany took over the film industry in its entirety, the film industry in Hollywood was only renovated by the US government during the time of war. The Hollywood Studio Moguls accepted their position, and did as the government asked; creating films that would indeed help America to win the war. The major difference in the studio systems in the different countries is that Germany only had one studio (UFA) and one mogul in Goebbels. Hollywood had several studios, and each studio had its own mogul to govern and control the product. The Hollywood studios were also given much more leeway to create films within guidelines given to them by the government. While in Germany, if Goebbels disliked a film or idea it was not made or was banned from public showings. Germany was much more dictatorial, as expected. However, America produced much more blatant propaganda. This leads us to the question; which cinematic industry was the lesser of two evils?

## CHAPTER 1: THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS? NAZI GERMANY AND HOLLYWOOD

### **The Decadence of Weimar Cinema, 1919-1933**

Before the advent of WWI, Germany lagged behind other European countries in film production, but with continued production through the war years, the industry grew in skill and size. After the war, most other European countries continued at a steady pace of film production, while Germany expanded to become the dominant European film producer of that time. While most industries in Europe suffered through the depressions, massive inflation, and political instability that followed the war, the German cinematic industry flourished.<sup>17</sup>

In Germany's thriving film industry, movies were created and exported to other countries, while few movies were imported. As a result, the German government became involved with the film industry and started to restrict imports in 1925. They required that for every imported film, a German film had to be exported. This was a combination of fiscal as well as cultural reasoning. Many of the German films were not being seen, and more foreign films were being shown in Germany. In order to keep the German cinematic industry relevant, these restrictions were necessary. The film restrictions also limited the finances allotted to each film produced. *Universum Film Annum* (UFA) the largest film studio in Germany was nearly sent into bankruptcy with Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1927). In order to remain solvent, UFA was forced to sign a deal with Hollywood studios called the "Paramount Agreement." This deal consisted of exchanging a loan of two million dollars over ten years for distribution rights and first-run access to German cinemas. It also left the German studio vulnerable under the control of Paramount and Metro Goldwyn Mayer, the Hollywood studios that performed the bailout.<sup>18</sup> Not

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid 25.

<sup>18</sup> Reimer, Robert C. and Carol J. Reimer 2008. *Historical Dictionary of German Cinema*. Toronto: Scarecrow Press, Inc. xxvii-xix.

only were the studios required to answer to their own government with regard to censorship, but now they were also under the thumb of Hollywood.

Despite the control of Hollywood in the film industry, the artistic Modern Age in Germany began with the freedom of the Weimar Republic. German artisans developed the movement of “Expressionism” in poetry and painting, which eventually moved into the films as the filmmakers were influenced by the other arts around them. Expressionism is an artistic movement that expressed emotions using symbolism, exaggeration and distortion instead of representing the appearance on the surface. After the end of World War I, the most important films Germans produced were in the genre of dark horror -later called expressionistic- inspired by the art and poetry of the time. Expressionism was a reflection of the time the artists spent in or near the war, creating the inspiration for the dark themes of their work. Films such as *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920), *Nosferatu* (1922) and *Metropolis* (1927) fell into this dark exploration of lawlessness, evil, and tragedy. There was also an onslaught of erotic films which included prostitutes, seductions, murders, suicide, and homosexual situations such as *Pandora's Box* (1929), *The Blue Angel* (1930), and *M* (1931). The films also depicted the Weimar era changes, with the “new woman” and open sexuality that came with the freedoms of alcohol consumption and birth control. Though the artistic world was booming, the Weimar government was extremely unstable, mostly due to the inflation that began to occur in 1923. The hyperinflation was so great that it was better to pay before a meal in a restaurant, as the prices would change before one had finished eating. People would have to take wheelbarrows to work to bring home their pay. The people of Germany were suffering while the artists were thriving in the freedom of expression they had developed. The decadence of the Weimar Republic was an

expression of freedom after the horrors of the Great War. The people wanted to be free and with the new democratic government, these freedoms were allowed, particularly in the arts.

The Weimar Republic's freedom encouraged the artists to create their greatest films that were the envy of the world cinematic industry. The freedom of German cinema was what set it apart from films made in other countries. The Weimar Republic was a time of free expression and open thinking which appealed to artists. The film industry in Germany was closely connected with intellectuals and highly educated men, unlike many of the producers and directors in Hollywood. Hollywood producers and studio heads were often immigrants who had stumbled upon film and decided to turn it into a business, unlike their counterparts in Europe, who were classically trained and brought intellectualism to their films. The intellectual aspect of filmmaking was something the Americans wished to incorporate, so they began pirating people from the German film industry. German film geniuses were cherry-picked for Hollywood to create a more artistic sort of film that required more intellect. By contracting film geniuses they also secured the best people from their competition in Europe. Hollywood's new resolve to bring culture to films resulted in the first major German film personnel exodus to Hollywood in the twentieth century.<sup>19</sup>

Weimar films were not all racy, dark, urban tales. Some films promoted escapism from the dark reality of life. The most popular genre for diversion was the mountain film, which was the German equivalent to Hollywood's western. Showing men and women battling nature. It inspired awe and a sense of nostalgia in people to see the mountains and the beauty of nature, promising a simpler life than was being lived in the larger cities of Germany in the 1920s. These mountain films depicting innocence, nature and beauty were a balance to the darker

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<sup>19</sup> *Cinema's Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood*. Directed by Karen Thomas. 2009. PBS.

expressionistic types of films featuring murder and sex. Hans Feld, a writer for the German paper, *Film-Kurier*, said of Arnold Fanck –the creator of mountain films- that “Fanck films for our weary and distraught contemporaries. For the veterans of war, for warriors who need a rest. Fanck films for everyone.”<sup>20</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, the first scholar to write on German cinema prior to World War II, writes rather derogatory things about the mountain films, referring to them as a dangerous form of escapism that promoted National Socialism with the spirit of self-sacrifice combined with blind enthusiasm. This is especially applied to Leni Riefenstahl’s *The Blue Light* (1932). Other film scholars look at the film as the purity before the storm of Nazism, calling it a film of lasting quality, and a film to never be forgotten. Riefenstahl felt that it was an artistic work celebrating the dominion of a pure and simple life, sharing the intimacy she felt with the world of nature and beauty with the world through film.<sup>21</sup> Mountain films were akin to the American Western, with cowboys living outdoors, surrounded by nature, and generally being involved in heroic escapades. The major difference between the two types of films is really that of setting and geography. Like westerns, these films celebrated a link with the past when ancestors worked hard with nature, in a simpler time to make the world better for later generations. Nostalgia and fascination with the past helped to make these films so popular.

German films during the Weimar era were highly successful. They produced some of the best films outside of Hollywood in the Silent Era, so when Hollywood began offering contracts to German artists, the German actors accepted, beginning the first German migration of film workers. Ernst Lubitsch (director), Emil Jannings (Oscar award winning actor), Conrad Veidt (actor) and many others successfully moved their careers to Hollywood in the silent era.

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<sup>20</sup> Rentschler, Eric. "Mountains and Modernity: Relocating the Bergfilm." *New German Critique* 51: Special Issue on Weimar Mass Culture (Autumn, 1990): 137-161.

<sup>21</sup> Rentschler, Eric. "Fatal Attractions: Leni Riefenstahl's "The Blue Light"." *The MIT Press* 48, no. Sp (1989): 46-68.

Unfortunately with the arrival of sound, language became a problem. Before sound, actors did not have to speak English to star in a Hollywood film. The subtitles were easily changed for whatever language was dominant where the film was shown.

When the movies began to incorporate speech, the former émigrés from Germany began an exodus back to Germany where they continued working. The major problem with sound for Germany was that it was more difficult to export films to other countries. Changing the subtitle cards was easy enough, but having to re-dub the speech was costly and time consuming.<sup>22</sup> Many of the German stars wished to stay in Hollywood, but others like Conrad Veidt looked forward to a return to Germany. He felt creatively and culturally stifled in Hollywood, was offered limited roles, and saw a lack of elegance and grace in the personal lives of the Hollywood stars.<sup>23</sup> The freedom of the Weimar Republic and its artistry made it difficult for some actors to adjust to the more constrictive Hollywood ways.

The actors, who returned to Germany to continue their careers, found that the economy continued to worsen. After the crash of the United States stock market in 1929, money stopped flowing to Germany, placing the people of Germany in even more difficult times. As is well known, deteriorating economic conditions brought hardships and frustrations that played a role in the Nazis' rise to power.

### **The Nazis Conquer the Film Industry**

On January 30, 1933, the Nazis took control of Germany, and systematically began to further their power and to remove the Jews from German society. A major step took place when the President of Germany, Paul von Hindenburg, appointed Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany,

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<sup>22</sup> Tegel, *Nazis and the Cinema*. 28-30.

<sup>23</sup> Allen, J.C. *Conrad Veidt: From Caligari to Casablanca*. Pacific Grove, Cal.: The Boxwood Press, 1987. 91-92.



giving him power over the German Parliament. With the burning of the *Reichstag* Building (Parliament) on February 27, the Nazi party was able to use this as an excuse to pass a law removing basic civil rights, such as the right to free speech, which would greatly affect the artists and people in the film industry. Shortly thereafter, Hitler was able to take control of Germany entirely by passing the Enabling Act, giving himself dictatorial powers. Beginning in April of 1933, Jewish stores were boycotted and Jewish teachers, judges and civil servants were fired from their positions. “Non-Aryans” were officially defined as having one parent or grandparent of Jewish faith or ancestry.

The National Socialists were at work as early as the 1920s, preparing for their takeover by infiltrating many areas of public life, especially film. The art of cinema was very important to both Adolf Hitler and his Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels. They felt it was a tool to be used to subjugate the people while creating nationalistic works of German art. The film industry was easily conquered in the 1930s, and Hitler’s administration set about passing laws to encourage conformity, essentially removing almost everything that made the German film industry and other artistic areas known for their brilliance at this time.<sup>24</sup> In addition to restricting freedom and creativity, the Nazis also set about restricting other artistic and intellectual pursuits. Book burnings began in May, purging the writings of Charles Darwin, Ernest Hemmingway, Erich Maria Remarque, and H.G. Wells, among others, many of whose writings were made into Hollywood films. While films were not burned, many were banned including Fritz Lang’s *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1933). Jews in the film industry were not safe from persecution as the Nazis were systematically removing all non-Aryan personnel from all possible positions of influence.

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<sup>24</sup> David Welch, *Nazi Film Policy: Control, Ideology and Propaganda*, ed. Glenn R. Cuomo (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995) 100.

In order for the National Socialists to remove the undesirable people from working in positions of influence, they created the Law on the Foundation of an Interim Film Chamber. The law was introduced in July 1933, making it obvious that Jewish people were to be entirely excluded from the film industry. Most Jews who had proven their talent and worth in the film industry were now cast aside, unable to work in Germany. Even those married to ‘non-Aryans’ were not excluded, and they had to fight to keep their positions. Those that refused to divorce Jewish spouses were punished with a lack of work and little publicity.<sup>25</sup> Actress Renate Müller was considered to be a great source of Aryan womanhood from her appearances in films such as *Viktor und Viktoria* (1933). Courted by the Nazi party, Müller refused to leave her Jewish lover and was then placed out of the spotlight. Upon her early death in 1937 supposedly from an epileptic seizure (though many people believed she was murdered by the SS) the Nazis reported her death as a suicide resulting in her guilt for abandoning her people and the Nazis.<sup>26</sup>

The lack of work for the ‘non-Aryan’ peoples of the film industry (and those that rebelled against the Nazis) gave them little choice but to flee Germany to pursue their craft in other countries. The migration of these people left a gaping hole in the industry. Famous directors such as Fritz Lang, screen writers like Billy Wilder, actors like Peter Lorre; became Cinema’s Exiles, migrating toward freedom, eventually ending their journey in Hollywood. However, life outside of Germany was difficult. Many of the émigrés found it impossible to find work because of their thick accents and difficulty with the language. Some returned to Germany, having divorced their Jewish spouses, and begged the Nazis to accept them back into their good graces.<sup>27</sup> The artists that were left after the “undesirable” Jews had fled found themselves in an extremely fortunate

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<sup>25</sup> David Welch, *Nazi Film Policy* 38-39.

<sup>26</sup> Romani, Cinzia. *Le Dive del Terzo Reich*. Translated by Robert Connolly. Rome: Gremese, 1992. 119-120.

<sup>27</sup> Tegel, *Nazis and the Cinema*, 40.

situation: as long as they accepted Nazi doctrine, they were well treated, compensated for their work, and were flattered with invitations, public honors, and titles.<sup>28</sup>

Another way the Nazis excluded the Jews from working in the film industry was by creating the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Chamber of Culture, RKK). The RKK was established in September 1933, which excluded ‘non-Aryans’ from participating in the arts. In July of 1933, the *Reichsfilmkammer* (Reich Chamber of Film, RFK) created months before the RKK, shows the importance that the propaganda ministry, specifically Minister Josef Goebbels gave to film. The RKK controlled all areas of culture in German life including film, music, theatre, literature, the press, radio, and fine arts. Goebbels was the president of the RKK, and each chamber was headed by a prominent party member in that field. The eventual head of the RFK was Carl Froelich, a well-known film director. The RFK was broken up into ten sections covering among other things, artists, production, distribution, cinemas, and technical developments. For a person to work in the RFK a questionnaire had to be filled out to determine one’s political and racial identity.<sup>29</sup> As a result, many actors who were not Aryan had their names removed from the opening credits, though they appeared in the film, as were producers, cameramen, and other people who had worked for the studios before Nazi rule who were later classified as ‘undesirables’.

Aside from expelling Jews from the cinema to keep it a pure ethnic German entertainment, the Nazis also instituted laws of censorship to apply to films. The *Reichlichtspielgesetz*, a new law for the film industry, was passed in February 1934 replacing the former censorship laws of the Weimar Republic. All forms of censorship had been abolished in

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<sup>28</sup> Kreimeier, Klaus. *The Ufa Story*, 226.

<sup>29</sup> Tegel, *Nazis and the Cinema*. 37-38.

the first years of the Weimar Republic, but by 1920, new laws had been introduced to censor films. Two offices were established -one in Berlin and one in Munich- to deal with censoring films, and the police had the power to ban films that threatened public order and safety. The Nazi law merged the two offices and placed them under the Propaganda Ministry. The censors were allowed to ban any film “endangering vital state interests, public order or security, German prestige or its relationship with foreign states; or offending National Socialist, religious, moral or artistic sensibilities.” This also applied to foreign films that German actors appeared in.<sup>30</sup>

While Jews were slowly being squeezed out of the film industry –and other places- more rights would be taken away. In September of 1935, Parliament passed the Nuremberg Laws, the National Citizens Law, and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor. These laws were designed to exclude Jews from German life and revoke Jewish emancipation. Marriage was restricted based on these laws after classification of what constituted a Jew was defined, as well as restriction of sexual relations between an Aryan and a non-Aryan. Many members of the film industry were Jewish as defined by the Nuremberg laws, and several of them had married Aryans. The Aryan stars were pressured to divorce their Jewish spouses to keep their jobs and stardom intact. These laws also restricted where Jews could work and live. Jews were not allowed to vote, and Jewish children were not allowed to use the same playground as Aryan children.

When the Nazis annexed Austria (the *Anschluss*) in March of 1938, persecution of Jews followed into that country. All laws previously put into effect in Germany were now applicable to Austria. By July, Jews were required to carry cards identifying them as Jewish, and in September, they were forbidden to attend any public cultural events including the theatre,

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<sup>30</sup>Tegel, *Nazis and the Cinema*. 42.

museums, concerts, and the movies. Unfortunately, some of the Jews already expelled from the German film industry had fled to Austria to find work there, because it was a nearby country where German was spoken. However, the Austrian cinema had been taken over by Germany and put under the same laws. The Nazis felt that Vienna's film industry had to go through a "special cleansing." About half of the movie theaters in that city were owned by Jews, and soon no Jews were allowed to own anything. Goebbels started a foreign office of the RFK in Vienna to keep the good will of the Austrian people, and to "preserve the unique qualities of Austrian art... Viennese charm and élan."<sup>31</sup> The Jews who had fled to Austria were either captured or had to flee yet again.

By the beginning of World War II in 1939, Germany was unrivaled in European cinema because of advanced technical skills, and Germany claimed to rival Hollywood in both capital and capability.<sup>32</sup> Not only did Goebbels want to remove all the Jews from the German film industry, he also wanted to remove all "erotic and immoral" behaviors from the system and the screen.<sup>33</sup> Most of the wartime films were not as high quality as their American counterparts due to the many restrictions that the Nazi party put upon the cinematic industry, such as refusing to allow allusions to sex, refusing to show empowered women, and portraying the decadence they felt was often present in American films. The 'decadence' and empowerment were prohibited based on the fear of promoting a lifestyle and behavior in the German people that ran contrary to Nazi ideology. The avoidance of these topics sadly affected the quality of films. By allowing only those proven to be Aryan to join the film guild of the Nazis, they kept those of supposed

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<sup>31</sup> Kremier, *The Ufa Story*, 274.

<sup>32</sup> Welch, David. *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945*. London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2001. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid 17.

Jewish ancestry from working, which Goebbels believed would keep eroticism out of the cinema.

Censorship was under the direct hands of Minister Goebbels himself in 1935 with the amended Reich Cinema Law. This gave him power to forbid any film without consulting the censorship board. He could also prevent films from being made based on the idea contained in the script. An office was created in the film department for script approval. The films were also given a rating for classification, giving distinction to some films based on artistic or political value. Some of the classifications included “politically especially valuable, artistically especially valuable, a combination of both, politically valuable, artistically valuable, culturally valuable, valuable for youth, nationally valuable and Film of the Nation.”<sup>34</sup>

The censorship laws of Germany also used categories such as "Threatens Public Order and Safety," "Threatens Vital Interests of State," "Offensive to National-Socialist Sensibility, to Moral Sensibility, and to Artistic Sensibility," and having a "Brutalizing Effect" to determine what films should be banned from public viewing. These vague categories allowed the censors to have nearly unlimited power.<sup>35</sup> The Minister of Propaganda, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, took advantage of this power, especially in the film industry, due to his personal predilection for cinema. He frequently refused to allow artists to display their creativity by controlling what films were made and what films were banned, as well as insisting that certain elements be added to or taken out of films.

Minister Goebbels was extremely involved when it came to the cinema. In a speech he made, Goebbels said that he was the “last person who wanted to let German film die,” for the art

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 43.

<sup>35</sup> Film Portal. *Cinema and Filmmakers under the Nazis: Banning Censoring and Rating.*

of film was dear to his heart, and he would do everything he could to promote its well being.”<sup>36</sup>

It being one of his passions, he focused much of his energy on making it into a propaganda machine. His diaries are full of notations about checking scripts, reorganizing movies, and critiques of films and newsreels that he watched, such as his entry for November 2, 1939.

“Newsreel completed. Turned out excellently. The Fuhrer is also very pleased with it. Then new rushes from the Jew-film, which are also very effective. Then a propaganda film from Ufa about air defense, which tries a humorous approach, actually with great success. Script of the Poland film checked, and thoroughly revised and corrected.”<sup>37</sup> Goebbels also frequently said that film was an educational tool as long as it had a national moral driving force that would help educate and facilitate the nation to achieve its goals, and that he would personally order films of national political character. This was to be approximately twenty percent of the films made, while the other eighty percent was to be high quality entertainment, otherwise known as escapist films.<sup>38</sup>

Many Germans looked on film as a form of art, instead of a business like many of the Americans, and Hollywood productions were referred to by the Nazis as the “Hebrewization of the film industry.”<sup>39</sup> Many of the great cinematic geniuses of the Weimar Republic Era were of Jewish ancestry, while others that were not Jewish, disagreed with Nazi ideology such as actor Conrad Veidt. These dissenters fled Germany and Hitler’s Nazi regime, sensing trouble was coming, and made their way to England or America, hoping for sanctuary as well as to encourage the fight against the authoritarian Third Reich.<sup>40</sup> Many of these actors were able to

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid. 222.

<sup>37</sup> *The Goebbels Diaries 1939-1941*. Translated by Fred Taylor. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1983. For more excerpts from Goebbels diaries on film, see appendix.

<sup>38</sup> Kreimeier, *The Ufa Story* 310.

<sup>39</sup> Romani, Cinzia. *Le Dive del Terzo Reich*. Translated by Robert Connolly. Rome: Gremese, 1992. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid 1.

find work based on their previous reputation in the European cinema, while others were forced to accept smaller character roles, or leave the film industry entirely upon their arrival in Hollywood.

Germany was not alone in having the government involved in the filmmaking process in the war years. The United States also had their own propaganda units creating rules, guidelines and changing the way the film industry worked. The idea of widespread media for propaganda use had been implemented in previous wars, but it was fully realized with the growth of the film industry. The American government had to create an office to deal with propaganda, and that is how the Office of War Information was produced.

### **Office of War Information**

The Office of War Information or OWI was created June 13, 1942 by President Roosevelt in Executive Order #9182. This order combined the powers and duties of the Office of Facts and Figures and the Office of Government Reports.<sup>41</sup> The OWI was headed by a director whose duties were to use the press, radio, movies and other media to carry out the plans to inform the public of “the status and progress of the war effort, policies, activities and aims of the government.”<sup>42</sup> The director also coordinated the war information of the federal departments for an accurate and dependable flow of information to the public. The duties also included obtaining, studying and analyzing information on the war effort and advising suitable means of delivery to the public. It was also stipulated in the order that the director of the OWI should collaborate with the director of Censorship, to keep sensitive war information from leaking out into the hands of the enemy.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Cress, David J. *The Office of War Information during World War II*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University, 1952.12.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid 13.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid 13-20.



The way the two countries ran their propaganda machines was similar to the way the countries were run. Goebbels controlled Germany's media with an iron fist in a dictatorial way, forcing all information to go through him before anything could be done. In the United States, many bureaucratic people were at the helm of the OWI. The man in charge changed over the war years, but the policies and ideas stayed the same.

The Director was not the sole power behind the OWI. There was a Committee on War Information Policy that the director was to answer to. The committee included the Director of the OWI, representatives of the Secretary of State, Secretary of War, Secretary of the Navy and Joint Psychological Warfare Committee, Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and any other additional persons the President of the United States might determine necessary. This committee worked to outline policies for the use of the war information as well as what information to use.<sup>44</sup>

The OWI was originally split into three branches, domestic, overseas and policy development. Soon after the creation, the policy development branch was merged into the domestic branch, leaving only two. The domestic branch dealt with preparing, coordinating and disbursing information within the continental limits of the United States. The Overseas branch was essentially the same as the domestic, only its duties were for overseas information distribution.<sup>45</sup>

The domestic branch of the OWI had a section set aside for each area of publicity including newspapers, magazines, radio and motion pictures. The Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) had a threefold plan of operations. This plan was to produce original war films of a

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<sup>44</sup> Cress, David J. *The Office of War Information during World War II* 18-20.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid 20-22.

factual nature, coordinate the motion picture activities of the other government agencies, and to liaison with the motion picture industry itself to achieve the highest distribution of government war films and to assist the industry in making films of its own to assist in the war. Films produced by the OWI were non-dramatic films giving information, most of which were shown as movie shorts before the feature film, or the newsreels. These films were distributed for free by the War Activities Committee, formed by the motion picture industry to aid the war effort. The War Activities Committee was made up of producers, distributors and theater owners. The chief function of the BMP was to review scripts of other agencies and advise if the films were worth making based on the allocation of film stock, as film was rationed. They were also responsible for acquiring accurate information for films dealing with the war, and prepared special footage for newsreels.<sup>46</sup> The BMP used a conglomeration of all the American newsreel companies called United Newsreel Corporation. They combined the footage obtained by the different companies, edited with military footage to make a single print of all American newsreels. Several copies of this weekly news release were made, and were supplied with multiple language commentaries to be distributed amongst the non-English speaking allies.<sup>47</sup>

The OWI opened a branch in Hollywood to be more efficient, and to keep Hollywood informed of governmental policy. Additional duties included helping Hollywood to use motion pictures to win the war, as well as to liaise between the governmental agencies and the BMP. While the OWI had control over what sort of government and war information could be used in film, their power did not allow the OWI any powers of censorship with regard to films, and also does not dictate what subjects should be in films. The motion picture industry was certainly willing to please and to do what they could to assist in the conclusion of the war, and agreed to

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<sup>46</sup> Cress, David J. *The Office of War Information during World War II* 31-33.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid 43.

comply with certain guidelines the OWI prescribed. A major task for Hollywood was to inform the world who the American people really are, instead of playboys, cowboys and gangsters as films of the past had encouraged people to believe. The opinion of America was largely based on the American films that had been sent out, resulting in a rather skewed idea of the country. Hollywood set about to correct the error by creating more pictures showing normal, average American people just trying to get by like everyone else. As *Movieland* magazine quotes the OWI in their article about the OWI in Hollywood, "If the screen reflects American life with integrity and in an entertaining, artistic way it can contribute enormously to a better understanding among world peoples. This is what OWI urges on producers."<sup>48</sup> The first step of informing the world of the true character of the American people was relatively complete with just this request to Hollywood. However, there were several more steps involved in their quest to use films to win the war.

The OWI's extensive use of movies was a brilliant plan. Before television, people had to venture outside of their homes to find entertainment, visiting museums, ballparks, and going to the movies on a regular basis. An estimated eighty million Americans went to the movie theaters weekly in this time period. The eighty million that went out to the movies was a greater number than people that read newspapers, including teenagers and people that did not care to read their news.<sup>49</sup> The ability to reach an extensive portion of the population to inform them appealed to the OWI and to the President. Roosevelt is quoted in a motion picture public relations release as saying "the American motion picture is one of our most effective media in informing and entertaining our citizens...I want no restrictions placed thereon which will impair the usefulness

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<sup>48</sup> "The Movies Go to War!" *Movieland Magazine*, February 1942.

<sup>49</sup> Winkler, Allan M. *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942-1945*. London: Yale University Press, 1978. 57.

of the film other than those very necessary restrictions which the dictates of safety make imperative.”<sup>50</sup>

The film industry in the United States worked very hard to keep their self censorship, and was glad to hear that the government intended to keep it that way. However, they still resented the power that the OWI had over them. The heads of the motion picture industry ignored the requests of the OWI as much as they could, and continued to inform and influence the people in their own tried and true way. While the film industry and the general population seemed to enjoy these films, the OWI was not pleased. The films produced were referred to by workers in the OWI as escapist and elusive, abandoning the original purpose and responsibility to help the nation understand and deal with important issues of war. These critics felt that the Hollywood films created a false sense of war, using it as a mere background or worse still, turning it into a joke. The home-front films made in this time period showed a negative depiction of Americans to unknowing Europeans, creating the belief that America was full of gangsters, criminals, and inept police helped out by private detectives taking the vigilante approach to justice.<sup>51</sup> However, all of these problems involving the American appearance was about to change with the OWI creating more rules for the filmmakers to follow.

In November of 1942 the OWI created an information manual for the motion picture industry to assist the making of films by providing basic government information. The Hollywood office continued to provide more specific information to the studios, and weekly additions were sent to be added to the manual.<sup>52</sup> A list referred to as a “Yardstick for War

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<sup>50</sup> Public Relations Committee of the Motion Picture Industry. *Motion Picture Letter*, 1942. New York City.

<sup>51</sup> Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, 58-59.

<sup>52</sup> *Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry*, Office of War Information. 1942.

Pictures” was contained in this manual. The yardstick was to help determine if a film should be made while the United States was deep in war. The questions from the yardstick included:

Will this picture help win the war, what war information problem does it seek to clarify, dramatize or interpret, if it is an ‘escape’ picture, will it harm the war effort by creating a false picture of America, her allies or the world we live in, does it merely use the war as the basis for a profitable picture, contributing nothing of real significance to the war effort and possibly lessening the effect of other pictures of more importance, does it contribute something new to our understanding of the world conflict and the various forces involved, or has the subject already been adequately covered, when the picture reaches its maximum circulation on the screen, will it reflect conditions as they are and fill a current need at that time, or will it be out-dated, and does the picture tell the truth or will the young people of today have reason to say they were misled by propaganda.<sup>53</sup>

The OWI required that these questions be applied to all pictures being made, at least to specific scenes within the film. More specifically the manual states “these apply not only to entire productions, but also to many scenes within pictures. If casually and naturally introduced into the ordinary dialogue, business and scenes which constitute the bulk of film footage, these details can have a tremendous cumulative effect.”<sup>54</sup> This being said, the information program was founded due to “the overwhelming majority of the people [that] are behind the government in its war program but they do not have adequate knowledge and understanding of this program. In the United States we are not for ‘blind followers.’”<sup>55</sup> To interpret this, the United States government was happy with the people following their propaganda, however they wished to make it seem as though there was a choice to be made with reference to war support. They wished to be seen as the opposite of the Nazi fascist ways. Saying in press releases “Axis propagandists have failed. They have not told the truth, and their peoples are now beginning to see through this sham...we must not resort to any devious information tactics.”<sup>56</sup> While in other memos, they detailed how filmmakers were to handle certain subjects, for example, the treatment of Japanese-Americans.

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<sup>53</sup> United States. Office of War Information Bureau of Motion Pictures. *Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry: Special Bulletin*. 1942.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>55</sup> United States. OWI BMP. *Framework of the Government Information Program*. 1942.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

The government wished for Hollywood to portray the evacuations of the Japanese Americans being put into camps, as cheerful, willing and happy to oblige.<sup>57</sup> While some Japanese-American people were 'happy to oblige' many of these people were scared and worried. Some were ill treated. The government's push for a rather one-sided portrayal of an unfortunate event is very similar to what the Nazis were doing to the Jews in Germany. The government's hypocrisy with this event while touting free will and democracy is disheartening to many who believed the United States to be the embodiment of good in this fight. The idea of allowing the truth to speak for itself, and allowing the people to make the decision of what to believe was not always applied in times of war in the United States.

In addition to the yardstick of questions that should be applied to films, there was also a framework of six basic themes created to generate a better understanding of the war. This included the issues: why we fight, what kind of peace will follow victory, the enemy: whom we fight, the nature of our adversary, the United Nations and peoples: with whom we are allied in fighting, work and production: how each of us can fight, the home front: what we must do and what we must give up to win the fight, and the fighting forces: the job of the fighting man at the front.

### ***The Issues***

Why we fight. This is more than just the title of a documentary series about the war made by Frank Capra; it is also a phrase that many of the people of the United States mulled over. Americans were expected to give up many things for the war effort including food, rubber, metal and the lives of loved ones. Public opinion polls that were taken in this time period show that

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<sup>57</sup> United States. OWI BMP Special Bulletin. *Treatment of Japanese-Americans on the Screen*. 24 Oct 1942.

many Americans were confused about why the war was being fought and their confusion made the average American less likely to contribute to the war effort. The OWI decided that the easiest way to make Americans understand was to show it in the movies. By encouraging the idea of democracy and showing the democratic freedoms that had been taken for granted, the OWI believed that practical-minded Americans could easily connect those freedoms with the war and why carpooling and sugar rationing was important.<sup>58</sup> Fighting for the survival of the nation and for the four freedoms that the United States stands for, making these freedoms come to life, and show how the world would be different if everyone embraced freedom. If the world embraced these freedoms, a New World would be created free from militarism. By promoting the idea of a new world, the OWI could encourage Hollywood to promote American heritage and encourage the people to think like a nation instead of thinking in terms of smaller sects of life. “We must emphasize that this is a people’s war that we must hang together or we shall all hang separately.”<sup>59</sup>

### ***The Enemy***

Who or what are we fighting against? “The OWI wishes for the American people to understand our adversary, knowing his philosophies, objectives and tactics. By understanding the enemy, it prevents Americans from unwittingly allying with them, and will be able to recognize the enemy in disguise.”<sup>60</sup>

The OWI wished to underscore that Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese war lords were not the only enemy. The real enemy was fascism, with a few men dominating the world by force. This was what the Government believed was the backbone to forcing an unconditional surrender,

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<sup>58</sup> United States. OWI BMP. *Framework of the Government Information Program*. 1942.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

so that the people would not be in favor of signing a peace treaty to leave things open for World War III, as the First World War did for the Second. The enemy's objectives, according to the OWI, were to exploit people and monopolize the resources of the earth. Also that the enemy had contempt for the individual, making the individual into a cog in the machine of militarism; the nations that fell to the enemy lost all democratic rights and privileges under the system of fascism.<sup>61</sup>

The tactics of the enemy are equally important to understanding him. According to the OWI, the enemy followed a consistent and deadly pattern using strategies such as divide and conquer, and the use of the fifth column. The OWI felt that the major strategies of the Axis powers were to divide the Allied Powers, turning them against each other, to give false information to American citizens causing them to worry and act foolishly, and to sabotage and attack from within by use of undercover spies in the fifth column.<sup>62</sup>

### ***The United Nations***

Americans have a reputation abroad as being arrogant, even to our allies. The OWI wished to counteract this reputation by stressing the thirty United Nations fighting together, instead of focusing on the powerful effect of America's role. Also to show that lend-lease was to the benefit of American soldiers as well, showing them being fed and sheltered by the allies in Australia, Ireland and England. The OWI also wanted Hollywood to strive to show the allies as people, not as stereotypes. Finally, they wished to show what can happen to a country that is deprived of its democratic rights.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> United States. OWI BMP. *Framework of the Government Information Program*. 1942.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.



### ***The Production Front***

The OWI wished to make the American public familiar with all aspects of the war, including that of the factory production. They wished to personalize the worker, make him or her out to be the neighbor next door doing very important work for the war effort, even if they were not in uniform. The Government especially wanted women depicted in factory situations, showing their children well cared for in nurseries and schools while they were working, as well as showing old men, African-Americans, and foreign born workers. The major point that the OWI wanted people to understand was that everyone is free to work for the cause unlike the enemy's system of fear, bondage, and discrimination.<sup>64</sup>

### ***The Home Front***

While all the people of America were familiar with the home front, many were not aware of additional things they could be doing to assist in the war effort. The films emphasizing the home front were also to show the men overseas how their families were coping and helping them in the fight. Ideally the films would show people voluntarily making small sacrifices for the cause such as giving up a seat to a soldier, carpooling and bringing their own sugar when invited over for dinner. In addition, war posters were displayed in public places such as restaurants, stores and movie theatres advertising War Production, War Bonds, the Red Cross and the U.S.O. The OWI also required that homes be shown in films as prepared for air raids. Women were shown going places alone, and working as gas station attendants, chauffeurs, and conductors, and a few women in uniform in crowd scenes, with as few men as possible. Children were shown collecting scrap metal, working with the Red Cross and helping their parents with war work.

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<sup>64</sup> United States. OWI BMP. *Framework of the Government Information Program*. 1942.

People of all ages were to be shown buying war bonds and stamps, happy to do their patriotic duty.<sup>65</sup>

### ***The Fighting Forces***

Most war movies tend to focus on the more exciting aspects of the war such as the Air Force. The OWI wished to cover all branches of the military, showing the vital importance of all of these groups. Films were to show the careful training that the men were receiving, especially the training that would assist soldiers in peace time such as medical training. In crowd scenes wounded soldiers were supposed to be shown to prepare people for the casualties as well as fatalities that come with war. People needed to understand all aspects of the military life, but the government did not wish to give away secrets, so the training and so forth had to be kept to a general level. The OWI also stipulated that combat scenes should not be added for melodramatic effect as it does not help the war effort.<sup>66</sup>

The OWI included all information that Hollywood should address in films to inform the people of America including why they were fighting, information about the enemy, and information about our allies as well as the home front, production and our fighting forces. Hollywood must have a template to use in the propaganda fight, and this template provided by the OWI as outlined covers all major informational points at this time in the war. A major reason for these regulations was to keep Hollywood from producing too many similar films at once. The OWI hoped to spread everything around so that the American people did not tire of films regarding the home front or the Air Force. By having films on all different topics of the war, the

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<sup>65</sup> United States. OWI BMP. *Framework of the Government Information Program*. 1942.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

people became more informed as well as more fully entertained, keeping morale up for not only the home front, but for the troops on the battlefield.

American propaganda films were focused on encouraging the American people to follow certain guidelines as to how to be a good citizen in this time of war. They were created to keep people from talking too much about secret information, conserving materials, and fighting the war of the home front to get the fighting men home more quickly. Propaganda films in Germany took a different approach. They promoted the beliefs of Nazism more than the American coercion tactics for good citizenship in wartime.

For the people in Germany, film was used as a propaganda machine to promote the beliefs of the Nazis. Goebbels believed that film could indoctrinate while entertaining, and this philosophy relied heavily on having movie stars for the people to idolize. To have a star other than Hitler would add a non-political aspect to Nazism. This would only work if the star would promote the Party beliefs. Female movie stars were principally important as symbols for the people to focus their “attention and desires,” to recognize, imitate, and of course, to manipulate their audiences into behaving like a “good” German.<sup>67</sup> “Actresses were encouraged to represent the Germanic ideal of genuine Nazi womanhood as opposed to the painted and perfumed ‘degeneracy’ of Hollywood.”<sup>68</sup> German actresses were encouraged to forgo makeup, couture clothes, drinking, and smoking, among other activities to promote the ideal view of German womanhood. The married actresses were often photographed doing the wifely duties of cooking, cleaning and caring for their husband, as well as motherly activities with their children. The Nazi

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<sup>67</sup> Bruns, Jana F. *Nazi Cinema's New Woman*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema*. 55.

expectation of women centered on being a good wife and mother to usher in the next generation of Germany.

### **The Women of Nazi Cinema**

The top female stars of Germany included Marika Rokk, Lilian Harvey, Zarah Leander and Kristina Söderbaum. Nazi cinema stars were always copies of American counterparts, molded however, to fit the National Socialist ideal of women. The German star of musical revues was Marika Rokk, a former Hungarian circus performer. She became the German answer to the famed American entertainers Eleanor Powell and Ginger Rogers. She tap-danced, performed balletic routines, sang, rode horses, and performed acrobatics that enthralled her audiences and made her the Queen of German Hollywood-style musical revues in the war years.<sup>69</sup> Rokk openly copied the tap dancing of Eleanor Powell that she saw in *Broadway Melody of 1936* and also began singing to round out her talent as a performer. Many critics claim she used her versatility to divert attention from the fact that she could not dance as well as her American counterpart did.<sup>70</sup>

Rokk's popularity grew, especially with the soldiers on the warfront, and she was selected to take part in the musical *Wunschkonzert* (Request Concert, 1940). This new film would be based on a radio program that allowed soldiers to request songs from their positions on the front. The songs Marika Rokk sang were often requested.<sup>71</sup> The request concert was very similar to the American films *Stage Door Canteen*, *Hollywood Canteen*, and *Two Girls and a Sailor* which consist of famous stars performing signature bits from comedy to song and dance as well as famous musicians that band together to entertain the troops and help the war effort.

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<sup>69</sup> Bruns, *Nazi Cinema's New Woman*, 66, 75.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 63.

<sup>71</sup> Romani, *Tainted Goddesses*, 13.

Aside from the talent debate between Rokk and Powell, one major difference between the German revues and American musicals was in the way they ended. American musicals were often searches for love and a successful career, while the German revues were searches for marriage. With the German heroine searching for a husband and children to care for instead of finding love, the ultimate goal at the end of the film was for the women to give up their careers on the stage to get married, take care of their husbands and have lots of babies for the glory of the Third Reich. In American films, the female star falls in love but continues on with her career to become a big success on Broadway, enabling her to have all she wanted, but the film rarely follows through to showing the marriage onscreen. This was one of the subtle ways that the Nazis employed their propaganda emphasizing the role they wanted for German women as dependent housewives and stay-at-home mothers.<sup>72</sup> By taking away the freedom of creativity and choice in the cinema, films in Germany became very predictable and unexciting.

The Nazis disliked the ideas that Hollywood glamorized, calling it a Jewish creation that ran counter to the ideals of National Socialism. However, they still attempted to copy the stars, films and plotlines from the Hollywood studios and change them a little bit to fit into the National Socialist way of thinking, mostly due to the admiration that Goebbels had for some aspects of the films of Hollywood. Goebbels and Hitler loving American movies created yet another item of hypocrisy in the Nazi régime. Women were to be feminine and submissive to men. Their sole purpose was to get married and have children, placing the needs of the husband and children above their own. They had no need for vanity items such as makeup and perfume, they were natural and nurturing. Laws were created to encourage early marriage and to increase the birth rate, rewarding those with more children. The Nazis used female stars to promote their

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<sup>72</sup> Romani, *Tainted Goddesses*. 20.

idea of life for women in the movies. The public looked up to the stars, and wished to be like them, which made it much easier for Nazi propaganda to hold its sway. More stars than Marika Rokk were used for this purpose.

Another musical star from the Weimar years who survived the transition to Nazi controlled cinema was Lilian Harvey. Born in London and slight of stature she was called “a little dancing flea” by Hermann Goering.<sup>73</sup> She achieved fame working in the German cinema as an androgynous ingénue. The day Hitler came to power she was on her way to America, having received a contract from Fox studios in Hollywood. Harvey soon returned to Germany in 1935 after her Hollywood career turned out to be less than exalted, and resumed her stardom in Germany. The people of Germany were delighted to have her back, as were the Nazis, though the Gestapo kept a close watch on her for a while.<sup>74</sup> Her homecoming was publicized by the Nazis as the prodigal daughter returning home after learning of the evils of Hollywood and the virtues of Germany. She also returned with new skills to make her performances and German cinema all the better for her former defection.<sup>75</sup> She remained more of a Hollywood or Weimar Republic type of star as opposed to a National Socialist one, refusing to conform to the Nazi ideal of womanhood after becoming used to the traditional spoils of stardom. Widely circulated stories involving her bathing in champagne, painting her nails in mother of pearl, and attending large parties to hobnob with the elite of the Nazi party combined to give her flavor of stardom an extra amount of flair.<sup>76</sup> Though instead of covering up the stories about her extravagant ways, the propaganda ministry tolerated and encouraged the associations of Hollywood to show the

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<sup>73</sup> Ascheid, Antje. *Hitler's Heroines: Stardom and Womanhood in Nazi Cinema*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003. 98.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 100-101.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 112.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid 102-103.

universalism of the international film industry they felt they represented.<sup>77</sup> As half of the absolute German power couple with Willy Fritsch, her frequent costar, Harvey combined her girl-next door appeal with the glamour of the upper class, wearing mink and driving her custom made Mercedes convertible around Berlin.<sup>78</sup>

Lilian Harvey and Willy Fritsch starred in one of the best films made during the Third Reich, *Gluckskinder* (*Lucky Kids*, 1936), which was a blatant remake of Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* (1934). The actors are dressed in American-style clothing, the film takes place in the United States, the leading woman is believed to be a missing heiress, and the hero is a newspaper man.<sup>79</sup> Though the basic plot is similar to the American film, it has been changed to suit the National Socialist agenda. The original American film, *It Happened One Night*, was entertainment at its best, winning Oscar awards for Best Picture, Best Actor and Best Actress. *It Happened One Night* is the story of a headstrong heiress –played by Claudette Colbert- who runs away from her father, taking a bus to return to the unsavory man she married. On the bus she meets a newspaper man –played by Clark Gable- who recognizes her, but agrees to help her get to her husband in New York. On the journey they fall in love, but she is still married to another man. In the end she gets an annulment, and the two get married and live happily ever after. While this film has everything from drama to comedy, the Germans had problems achieving that level of entertainment, even in duplication. The vivacity, humor, and passion were all missing from the German version making the German film unexciting and drab in comparison.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ascheid, Antje. *Hitler's Heroines* 117.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid 110.

<sup>79</sup> Rentschler, Eric. *Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife*. London: Harvard University Press, 1996. 99.

<sup>80</sup> Romani, *Tainted Goddesses*, 18.

Despite this, the German people loved the film. Reviews were enthusiastic, saying “What the Americans can do, we can do as well.”<sup>81</sup> However, by copying the American film, the Germans more or less proved that if left to their own devices, they could not produce a smart, witty romantic comedy without the help of the “wretched Hollywood Jews.” Hollywood was always the Germans’ main source of inspiration, yet it also caused great embarrassment, as it was still an object of desire for the German people.<sup>82</sup> Goebbels wished for the German film industry to become like Hollywood in its film quality, and even to surpass it, and felt that because they were the “superior” Aryan race that it could be done and should be done. However, they could not achieve the magnitude of resources, stars, ideas, and popularity that the American film industry enjoyed, especially with much of the world fighting against them during the war years. The lack of originality in the Nazi films stunted them only in Goebbels’ goal to surpass Hollywood as the greatest film power in the world. As they conquered other territory, the cinematic industries were taken over, and only German films were allowed to be shown, expanding their audience. That is why it was very helpful that many of their female stars were from other countries, as were Kristina Söderbaum and Zara Leander from Sweden.

The attempt by Goebbels in 1936 to bring Marlene Dietrich, the greatest star of German cinema, back to Germany from Hollywood was extremely unsuccessful, despite his offer of a contract giving her anything she wished.<sup>83</sup> Dietrich was vehemently against the Nazis and worked against them by helping the Allied cause as much as she could, such as traveling with the USO, officially becoming an American citizen and entertaining the allied troops. However, the new Nazi films continued to make reference to Dietrich, in films and newspapers, creating roles

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<sup>81</sup> Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusion*, 103.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid 3.



for actresses to imitate her style, especially the roles created for the actress Zarah Leander, who became famous by parodying of the famous actress' personae.<sup>84</sup>

Zarah Leander was the most popular star of Nazi cinema. She fulfilled the Nazi ideal by having two children, and caring for her family. Photo shoots were occasionally arranged of her with her children, cooking, cleaning and caring for her husband. These photo shoots were not frequent, as it was not entirely in keeping with her image. This image required her to play the unwholesome woman in film who is shown the error of her ways by a good German man. Leander was often called "the Diva" of Nazi cinema, replacing Marlene Dietrich when Goebbels was unable to arrange her return. This is a fairly surprising accomplishment for Leander as she was Swedish and her roles were often vamp-like women with smoldering passions, which were usually not qualities that the Nazis wanted to have portrayed in their films. Leander frequently starred in melodramas that were very closely related to the Hollywood classics of the 1940s.<sup>85</sup> She was generally typecast in roles as the femme fatale, either as a singer or cabaret entertainer, suffering due to her subversive (to the Nazi ideal of womanhood) desires, but her character was generally saved, usually by a man, and ended with Leander's character becoming respectable and proper.<sup>86</sup> The comparisons frequently made between Leander and Greta Garbo were a major reason for the immediate stardom that she found in Germany. Goebbels was enchanted by Garbo, and wished to create a melodramatic star with as many similarities to her on-screen appearance and talent. Melodramas were essential to his ideas of refined entertainment. Leander made ten films before leaving Germany in 1943 due to political reasons.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusion*, 136.

<sup>85</sup> O'Brien, Mary-Elizabeth. *Nazi Cinema as Enchantment: The Politics of Entertainment in the Third Reich*. New York: Camden House, 2004. 164.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid 179.

<sup>87</sup> Bruns, *Nazi Cinema's New Woman*, 126.

While Leander was the most popular star with the public, she was not favored by the leaders of the Nazi régime. The true sweetheart of the Nazi film industry was Kristina Söderbaum. She was known as the *Reichswasserleiche* or the Reich's floating corpse for how often she drowned herself in films to keep the Aryan race pure after she had been defiled by non-Aryan behaviors. Her most prominent film was *Jud Süß* (1940) directed by her husband Veit Harlan. It tells the story of a wicked Jew that tries to take over a Duke's kingdom, and in doing so also violently rapes Söderbaum's character. Süß embodies all of the non-Aryan stereotypes and is a true work of Nazi propaganda. Söderbaum was always shown outside of the films as the perfect German female; a mother, Aryan in looks, a cook, and housekeeper. She personified the German ideal of womanhood, and by starring in some of the most notorious of Nazi propaganda films, she was often singled out as the number one star of the Third Reich. While she always played an ingénue, her characters always had an erotic sensuality to them, which often resulted in her rape or seduction in the film. In the characters' innocence, she playfully flirted with unworthy men, leading to her downfall, but her child-like ways rendered her sexuality as nonthreatening to the Nazis.<sup>88</sup> By being sexy enough to become a star and using her Aryan looks, Kristina Söderbaum became one of the top stars of the Nazi cinema.

The female stars of the cinema of the Third Reich (Marika Rokk, Lilian Harvey, Zarah Leander and Kristina Söderbaum) had to fall under the proper categories of womanhood as it was defined by Hitler's Nazi Party. In order to show what a good German woman should not do, they had to depict illicit action on film, using their popular stars. It was helpful that they were mostly not born in Germany, although they fit the profile of Aryanism. The Nazis used these

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Leander saw what was happening in Germany, and realized they were not going to win the war, so she returned to her homeland of Sweden, and was criticized for her participation in Nazi Cinematic Propaganda.

<sup>88</sup> Ascheid, *Hitler's Heroines*, 44-49.

women to portray bad behavior, thereby showing women what would happen to them if they followed a similar path: sadness, and in the case of Söderbaum films, death. In the case of Leander films, the love of a good man reformed all wicked ways, and encouraged her to become a good and faithful wife. The films had drama, propaganda and beautiful women. What more could the Nazis want?

### **Women of Hollywood Cinema**

Women of Hollywood were stepping up and doing their part, as best as convention allowed them to. Women's roles were relegated to making movies to entertain the troops, touring with the USO, selling war bonds, making propaganda shorts, and distributing sexy pictures to the troops for morale. There were a few outstanding women that defied convention and took a greater role in the war effort than sending out sexy photos and making films. Also, many women of Hollywood did more for the war effort than their Nazi counterparts. Many of the Hollywood stars received negative publicity from the Nazi propaganda machine, making their fight worth all the more to the war effort.

An excellent example of a female star that was noticed in the press by the National Socialists was Betty Grable. Betty Grable was the number one pin-up girl of the 1940s. Soldiers all over the world worshiped the famous picture of Grable in a one-piece bathing suit with her back to the camera, and 20th Century Fox distributed the photos by every means possible, as requests for the photo were around 100,000 a month. Grable, whose legs were insured by Lloyds of London for a million dollars, starred in many feel-good musicals featuring her famous legs. She also began spending her free nights at the Hollywood Canteen, dancing with the servicemen as well as entertaining them with songs and dances on stage. Servicemen stood in line for hours

just to dance with her for a few minutes, and those that did, left with an autographed photograph as a memento to carry with them into battle.<sup>89</sup> Betty also volunteered to visit war-wounded soldiers in hospitals on the West Coast.<sup>90</sup> On trips to New York, Betty also arranged to visit soldiers in Hospitals there. Grable was one of the most popular visitors, giving autographs, kisses, placing her lipstick prints on plaster casts and talking to the wounded men. Before her visit had been announced to the men, they had already created a cardboard life sized model of Grable, emphasizing her famous legs.<sup>91</sup> Betty Grable was not only famous in Hollywood, the Nazis knew of her as well, calling her in radio broadcasts “a creation designed to take the enemy’s mind off what they were fighting for...there was more to life than Pepsi-Cola and Betty Grable.”<sup>92</sup>

Veronica Lake was yet another famous pin-up queen of World War II, starring in four of the biggest films of 1942 as well as selling war bonds on a national tour.<sup>93</sup> Appearing in *Star Spangled Rhythm* with almost every other star from the Paramount studio, she appeared in a scene with Paulette Goddard and Dorothy Lamour singing a song “a Sweater, a Sarong and a Peekaboo bang” which made fun of their trademark film gimmicks.<sup>94</sup> Over the next year, she sold over \$12 million in war bonds, with Paramount studio planning to auction off locks of her hair to raise even more money and publicity.<sup>95</sup> She was able to travel across the country on the war bond rally tours, and christened a battleship before the end of 1943. Lake starred in *So Proudly We Hail*, a film about nurses trapped by the Japanese on Bataan. She was also asked by

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<sup>89</sup> McGee, Tom. *Betty Grable: The Girl with the Million Dollar Legs*. Vestal Press: New York, 1995. 95.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 105.

<sup>91</sup> Kotsilibas-Davis, James and Myrna Loy. *Myrna Loy: Being and Becoming*. Alfred A. Knopf Publishing, New York, 1987. 182-183.

<sup>92</sup> McGee, Tom *Betty Grable*. 108.

<sup>93</sup> Lenburg, Jeff. *Peekaboo: The Story of Veronica Lake*. St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1983. 95.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. 106.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 107.

the War Department to star in a short film displaying the new “victory roll” hairstyle to encourage women to put their hair up when working in factories. Lake’s famous peekaboo hairstyle –with long wavy hair covering one eye-- was copied by so many women, and had become dangerous to those doing war work around machinery.<sup>96</sup> She was also named the biggest female box office draw of 1942, and an Army poll rated her “most popular actress of the year.” Two marines even named an uncharted volcanic island in the South Pacific “Veronica Island” after her.<sup>97</sup> Paramount Studios also had many glamour photos taken of her that were distributed to the troops overseas for a taste of home. Veronica Lake was not only a screen siren, but a patriotic actress that even changed hairstyle fashion for her government.

Myrna Loy was at one time the Queen of Hollywood, and one of the most popular box office draws to the cinema. However, when the war started, she headed east to raise relief for the Navy, and continued to appear in shows for war bonds, Army relief, and other war causes with other film stars. At a joint concert of the Police and Fire Department bands held by Mayor LaGuardia, Loy conducted a mock striptease before the audience, raising \$55,000 on her hat and gloves.<sup>98</sup> While she enjoyed performing at these benefits, Loy wished to contribute in a more meaningful way. The Red Cross asked her to set up entertainment programs for Eastern Military hospitals and rest centers. Loy promptly accepted the position and put her Hollywood film career on hiatus until the end of the war. She also became liaison officer between show business and the agencies that sent units to hospitals, handling transportation, hospitality, guides and schedules for visiting entertainers as well as making personal visits herself.<sup>99</sup> While most female stars were

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<sup>96</sup> Lenburg, Jeff. *Peekaboo: The Story of Veronica Lake* 112-114.

To see the short film regarding the victory roll: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgpvKXLTw8>

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. 121.

<sup>98</sup> Kotsilibas-Davis, James and Myrna Loy. *Myrna Loy*. 181.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. 181-182.

content with performing for the troops, Myrna Loy took it a step farther to do more work for the war effort than most other women in her profession.

### **Famous Names and Faces Fighting for America**

Hollywood had plenty of male heartthrobs starring in the movies, and making teenage girls swoon unlike Nazi Germany who had few male stars of note, leaving Hitler as the only strong leading man. While Goebbels preferred to make women the focus of films, he had multiple reasons for doing so including his predilections for pretty actresses, and the need of young men to fight in the war. They feared that the idea of sending film heroes into war would upset the people. In Hollywood, the male stars felt the push of patriotism to join in the fighting war. Studio heads encouraged them to stay at home, to keep the box office returns high, but many of the stars were stubborn and decided to volunteer before they were drafted. Many of these men could have easily gotten deferments, but elected to join in the fighting in all the different ways that would help their country the best.

Jimmy Stewart is one of Hollywood's most famous actors of its golden age. Even with the glamour of Hollywood life, he allowed himself to be drafted in 1940. When he did not pass the physical examination the first time, due to his height and weight combination, he worked to get his weight up to the required amount so that he could join the Army Air Corps.<sup>100</sup> With his experience as a flyer, Stewart was immediately put to work training to be a pilot, and shortly after Pearl Harbor, was raised to the rank of Lieutenant.<sup>101</sup> He trained for combat pilot status, as well as making training films for Hollywood. Stewart was able to fly missions over Germany all the while gaining in rank. He was awarded many medals for his bravery in service, and even

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<sup>100</sup> Smith, Starr. *Jimmy Stewart Bomber Pilot*. Zenith Press, St. Paul Minnesota, 2005. 30.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 32.

after the end of the war, remained in the Air Force Reserve until retiring at the rank of Brigadier General.

Jimmy Stewart was not the only star to join the military during the war. Clark Gable was also very involved in the war effort. Gable's wife Carole Lombard was an extremely patriotic woman, and encouraged him to get involved, even trying to talk him into enlisting. The studios were not about to lose their most valuable commodity in Gable, saying in an interview to Walter Winchell "Gable is one of the people's daily habits. We don't want to rob them of their steady habits all at once. That's the one thing we've copied from Goebbels' propaganda machine."<sup>102</sup> To compensate for not enlisting, Gable was appointed chairman of the Screen Actors Division of the Hollywood Victory Committee, a group that was to organize all Hollywood activities for the war effort. This committee mostly selected and booked talent for bond rallies, camp shows and hospital tours, and the committee was certainly a star studded cast including Bob Hope, Bette Davis, Gary Cooper, Cary Grant and Ginger Rogers.<sup>103</sup> Chairman Gable decided in the beginning of 1942 to send his wife to a bond rally in Indiana, her home state. She was thrilled to participate and raised a lot of money in bonds.<sup>104</sup> However, this rally was to end in tragedy. Lombard, anxious to return home, was flying on a plane that crashed into the Rocky Mountains near Las Vegas, killing everyone on board. She was awarded a medal by President Roosevelt for being "the first woman to be killed in action in the defense of her country in its war against the axis powers."<sup>105</sup> Gable's distress was great, and he decided to join the Air Force as his wife had wished. He applied for training as an aerial gunner to help boost the popularity of the job.

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<sup>102</sup> Harris, Warren G. *Clark Gable*. Harmony Books, new York, 2002. 242.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 242-242.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 244.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. 251.

Gable's enlistment was cause for much publicity, particularly over the shaving of his trademark moustache and cutting his hair into the army crew cut.<sup>106</sup>

Gable was famous all over the world, including Germany, creating rumors that Gable was a Nazi obsession with Hitler being his biggest fan after viewing *Gone with the Wind*, and Goebbels claiming a distant relation to the star. Air Minister Hermann Goering supposedly posted a cash reward of around five thousand dollars for the pilot that shot down Gable's plane, and if he survived and was captured, the pilot would also receive a free vacation and a promotion. Gable's response to all of the hoopla over his famous German fans was, "If Hitler catches me, the sonofabitch will put me in a cage like a gorilla and send me on a tour of Germany. If a plane that I'm in ever gets hit I'm not bailing out."<sup>107</sup> After Gable flew a few combat missions, he was stationed at Fort Roach in Hollywood, commissioned to make training and recruitment films. He was discharged from active service in 1944.<sup>108</sup>

Gable's commanding officer at Fort Roach was none other than fellow actor and future President, Ronald Reagan. Reagan was in the United States Cavalry Reserve before the war had even started, and he was one of the first to be called up. Unfortunately his poor vision disqualified him from active duty, so he was assigned as a liaison officer.<sup>109</sup> After training, Reagan was commissioned a Lieutenant and was appointed personnel officer serving with the First Motion Picture Unit of the US Army Air forces at Fort Roach. He was put to work making movies and a few training films. His most famous film that he made while stationed at Fort Roach was *This is the Army* (1943), a musical about entertaining troops, whose profits went to

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<sup>106</sup> <sup>106</sup> Harris, Warren G. *Clark Gable*. 260-261.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid 268.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid 275.

<sup>109</sup> McGivern, Cl. And Fred Landesman. *Ronald Reagan: The Hollywood Years*. Sammon Publishing, New York 2005. 61-69.



the Army Emergency Relief Fund.<sup>110</sup> While he was unable to fight overseas, he refused to be classified 4F, and worked with the Army to do what he could for his country.

Eddie Albert is best known for playing Oliver Wendell Douglas on the TV show *Green Acres*, but he was a star in Hollywood long before that. Shortly after Pearl Harbor was attacked, Albert was hired by the government to go on ‘sailing’ trips and reported enemy movements in the Mexican area while he was a member of a circus act and gathered as much information as he could. He joined the United States Navy as a junior officer, and made a hero of himself at the battle of Tarawa in 1943, known as one of the bloodiest battles in World War II. Albert was sent as a salvage officer to try to save equipment, but instead found 70 wounded Marines that had been left behind. He took the men off the beach in a small launch under heavy fire. Albert was awarded the Bronze Star with a combat V for his bravery, and as a true hero, he was sent home to support a War Bond drive. He refused to talk about his war experiences until the 1990s in a History Channel documentary.<sup>111</sup>

These men gave up cushy Hollywood lives to fight for their country. While they were given a great deal of publicity for their participation, they were still setting examples for others. They fought bravely and still managed to maintain their stardom upon their return, as well as gaining reputations as heroes. The men that could not fight due to age, infirmity and other reasons were not idle. Hollywood had many ways for the stars and people of the film industry to help the war effort.

### **Hollywood Victory Committee**

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<sup>110</sup> Cl. And Fred Landesman. *Ronald Reagan: The Hollywood Years*.. 74-75.

<sup>111</sup> Ted Nelson Director. *Eddie Albert: A Passion for Life*. 2001.

The Hollywood Victory Committee was composed of significant Hollywood stars, screen writers, and directors. It was created just two days after the United States declared war on Japan, December 10, 1941. The official purposes of the HVC was to coordinate the efforts of film personalities in the entertainment of the armed forces, conserve, budget and distribute the use of all talent facilities of the entertainment industry in the utmost possible contribution to the war effort, to cooperate with any organization that promotes the war effort, and performing projects for the general advancement of the war effort.<sup>112</sup> The main duties of the stars belonging to the HVC were to sell war bonds and stamps in the theatres, producing and distributing government films, providing extra prints of films at no cost for the soldiers, helping to give government information in newsreels, entertaining men overseas and in local camps, radio appearances and bond selling tours.<sup>113</sup>

Many members of the HVC were singers, dancers, actors, musicians and writers. These performers made personal appearances for the treasury department, charities and for other agencies of the government such as the Army, Navy, Red Cross, USO, Community Chest, Russian War Relief, China War Relief, Army and navy Relief, Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Office of War Information, War Production Board, Office of Emergency Management, various patriotic rallies and miscellaneous organizations pertaining to the war effort. Writers were also members of the HVC, and were employed in writing radio scripts, writing stage shows, writing speeches and preparing material for the USO shows.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> United States. Industry Service Bureau of Motion Pictures. Hollywood Victory Committee. *First Yearly Report of the Activities of the Hollywood Victory Committee*. Hollywood, 1942. Print.

<sup>113</sup> Schnapper, M B., ed. *American Handbook: Prepared by the Office of War Information*. Washington D.C: Public Affairs Press, 1945.470.

<sup>114</sup> Hollywood Victory Committee 1942 Report

The Hollywood Victory Caravan was a HVC sponsored fundraising effort to raise money for the Army Emergency Relief Fund and Navy Relief Society. A train filled with 41 top movie stars visited thirteen cities across the United States in the month of May, raising nearly seven hundred thousand dollars by giving performances live.<sup>115</sup> A former émigré and current Hollywood star, Paul Henreid rode the Victory Caravan with other stars like Fred Astaire, James Cagney, Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney and Lucille Ball. They traveled by train, arranged a parade, auctioned a signed American flag, made speeches and provided entertainment to raise money for war bond sales. Some stars sang, others read dramatic letters, there was dancing, and of course comedic sketches.<sup>116</sup> The tour ended in Washington D.C. on the lawn of the White House with a reception for the stars by Eleanor Roosevelt. The Caravan raised 800,000 dollars in bonds for the Army and Navy relief funds.<sup>117</sup>

Selling war bonds was an important part of the HVC, it being one of the major goals upon the founding of the HVC. Famous Hollywood stars were by far the most successful group based on number of bonds sold. In the twelve months of 1942, 270 stars made 2,773 personal appearances to sell bonds. The stars boosted sales up to over one billion dollars in September, making that month the highest bond sales month after January (higher sales in January were due to the Pearl Harbor attack and the declaration of war).<sup>118</sup>

United Service Organization (USO) is well known for the star studded shows that toured overseas, headlined by Bob Hope. The HVC contributed to these, arranging for the many stars that traveled on these tours to be available. The overseas entertainment was kept very secret to

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<sup>115</sup> Hollywood Victory Committee 1942 Report

<sup>116</sup> Henreid, Paul. *Ladies Man*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984) 149-151.

<sup>117</sup> Library of Congress. "Entertaining the Troops: Hollywood Victory Caravan."

<http://myloc.gov/Exhibitions/hopeforamerica/causesandcontroversies/entertainingthetroops/ExhibitObjects/HollywoodVictoryCaravan.aspx>

<sup>118</sup> Hollywood Victory Committee Report.

prevent enemy attacks. However the Victory Committee sent stars to Ireland and England, the Panama Canal Zone, Alaska, the Caribbean, and Newfoundland in 1942. Émigré Swedish actress Ingrid Bergman felt that with her continued success in Hollywood making films such as *Intermezzo: A Love Story* (1939), and *Casablanca* (1942) she should do something for the war effort of the Allies. She decided to travel with the USO to Alaska to help entertain the troops stationed there. She would tell stories to the men and even became pen pals with a couple of soldiers. Her second trip with the USO was to Paris in 1945 after the war with Germany was over.<sup>119</sup>

Bergman was not the only female émigré to join the USO. Marlene Dietrich will be well remembered for all of her efforts with the USO. She was just as willing as her fellow stars to entertain troops, sell war bonds, and work in canteens, and eventually tour with the USO. Dietrich went everywhere the Army allowed, and did everything from singing her famous songs from films such as “Falling In Love Again” from *The Blue Angel* (1930), and “See What the Boys in the Back Room Will Have” from *Destry Rides Again* (1939) to more personal ways of keeping the men happy. This included quite a few affairs, most publicly with General George Patton.<sup>120</sup> She was quoted by her daughter as saying “All generals are lonely, the G.I. can disappear in the bushes with a local girl. Not so the generals. They are protected day and night; eyes follow every one of their movements....They are hopelessly alone.”<sup>121</sup> Dietrich went above and beyond the call of duty in the USO, and not all stars took such a personal interest in the servicemen.

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<sup>119</sup> Bergman, Ingrid. *My Story*. (New York: Delacorte, 1980)127-139.

<sup>120</sup> Riva, Maria. *Marlene Dietrich*. (New York: Balentine Books, 1992) 544.

<sup>121</sup> Hoopes, Roy. *When the Stars Went to War: Hollywood and World War II*. (New York: Random House, 1994) 205.

The USO and the HVC also provided “spot” camp shows, which are one time only ensembles that put on a show at one camp. They were mostly put on around the California coastline, but went so far as Arizona and New Mexico where the isolated troops begged for entertainment. The stars putting on these shows would finish up shooting a movie for the day, pile into Red Cross vehicles and drive to a camp. The show would be put on and the stars would trek back home to be at work for shooting in the morning. The spot shows were usually very close to Hollywood in 1942 when they were started. The camps had to be close enough for the stars to drive there and back in an evening so that they could continue to work at the studio. The shows were extended to country wide shows as the war continued on, and the shows lasted longer with the headliners staying up to three days in the camps.<sup>122</sup>

Hollywood’s movie stars involved in the HVC would also be sent to participate in large rallies to encourage the selling of war bonds and support of the war effort. One of these patriotic rallies took place at Soldier Field in Chicago in 1942. The managing editor of the Chicago Herald American paper wrote to the Association of Motion Picture Producers thanking them for sending the stars, and complementing the stars themselves on their spirit, generosity and talent. He expressly mentions Marlene Dietrich and Bob Hope. The editor praises the hardships that the stars went through and still went on the stage to entertain as though nothing untoward had occurred. Hollywood was greatly appreciated for their patriotic spirit.<sup>123</sup>

### **The Nazis’ of Envy Hollywood**

Regardless of the negative spin that the Nazis put on Hollywood films, both Goebbels and Hitler were great admirers of them. Goebbels’ diaries are full of comments regarding

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<sup>122</sup> Hollywood Victory Committee 1942 Report.

<sup>123</sup> Shainmark, Lou. Letter to Mr. Will Hays. 17 June 1942. MS. Chicago Herald American, Chicago, Illinois.

Hollywood and his opinions on the specific films he watched in his private screening room.<sup>124</sup> He critiques them, making note of anything excellent for his use in the future. He believed that the German film industry could learn from the Americans, especially their ability to fascinate large audiences. Goebbels often noted American films in his diaries, for example “I look at and study an American film, *Broadway Melody of 1936*. Fluid, made with great tempo. The Americans are good at this. The content may be utter nonsense, but the way they do things is really something.”<sup>125</sup> Many references are made to Hitler’s private screening room and his love of American musicals. There is a myth that Hitler even offered a reward to anyone that could shoot down Clark Gable, because he had volunteered for the Army Air Corps as an aerial gunner flying five combat missions over Germany, and bring him back unharmed.<sup>126</sup> Goebbels also wrote in his diary on December 20, 1937, “I present the Führer with thirty of the best films from the last four years and eighteen Mickey Mouse films for Christmas. He is very pleased.”(Sic)<sup>127</sup> Goebbels saw himself as the German version of David O. Selznick (producer of *Gone with the Wind* and *Rebecca*), with a dream of creating a world of motion pictures as appealing as Hollywood’s.<sup>128</sup>

Goebbels often remarked that the cultural superiority of the Germans should enable them to make better films than the Americans, and his reasoning was that “we are too weighted down by piety and tradition. We are reluctant to wrap our cultural treasures in modern garb, and the results consequently have a historical quality that smacks of museum films and is well received

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<sup>124</sup> *The Goebbels Diaries 1939-1941*. Translated by Fred Taylor. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1983.

For more excerpts from Goebbels diaries on film, see appendix.

<sup>125</sup> Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusion*, 109.

<sup>126</sup> Internet Movie Data Base “Clark Gable” <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000022/bio>

<sup>127</sup> Rentschler *Ministry of Illusion*, 110.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid 217.

only by party, Hitler Youth, or workforce audiences...”<sup>129</sup> Goebbels failed to realize that it was not only the love of tradition that held the Germans back, but the Nazi’s resolve to remove any sort of eroticism from their films, as well as denying filmmakers the freedom to use their creativity. In the 1930s and 1940s, the best films out of Hollywood had a sense of latent sensuality that brought audiences back again and again. Films such as *King Kong* (1933), *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *Casablanca* (1942), and *Double Indemnity* (1944) all had a sense of sexuality boiling below the surface. Unfortunately, in Nazi films, that sexuality was missing. Even when they tried to copy films, they were poor imitations that kept them from having the success that the American original had. The Nazis believed that this was a ploy used by the Jews to make money and corrupt the non-Jews, so sexuality was banned from the films.

While the Nazis believed that the Jews were corrupting people through sex in Hollywood films, they used a few Hollywood inventions to their own advantage, such as the star system. Some of the Nazi leaders were against using cinematic star power, seeing it as tainted by the Jews that invented it, and these leaders wanted to abolish the star system. However, Goebbels tried to build up his stars in a similar method to that of Hollywood throughout his tenure as Propaganda Minister.<sup>130</sup> He knew that the public backlash against the Nazi film system would be great if all of the well-known stars of the Weimar years were eliminated, and the use of popular stars could be used for indoctrination. When people idolize a movie star, they want to do everything like them down to the kind of cream they use on their face. If a movie star should discuss in an interview how much they admire Hitler and the Nazis, then many of their fans

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<sup>129</sup> Kremier, *The UFA Story*, 242.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid 2.

would admire them as well. Likewise, by following the ideals of German life, (as Hitler saw them) the movie stars encouraged the common people to follow these rules as well.

Not only did the star system encourage the people of Germany to agree with the policies of National Socialism, it also fulfilled many fantasies and desires of the average German woman. They enjoyed being swept away into a story, imagining lives away from their everyday ones and the illusion on the silver screen gave them a sense of fulfillment they saw in the dark. Films worked as both seductive fashion shows and narrative fantasies, giving one the dream of being someone other than who she is and temporarily removing any problems and woes of real life.<sup>131</sup> The women of Germany went to the movies to fantasize about having the life they saw on the screen, dressing like Joan Crawford and singing like Marlene Dietrich.<sup>132</sup> They bought products endorsed by the female stars and tried their publicized recipes for cooking and beauty regimens, in a manner similar to the way that American women did with the stars of Hollywood.<sup>133</sup>

While female stars were being used to encourage a particular behavior in the German populace, it was rather hypocritical. The Nazis extolled the virtues of the natural beauty of German women, yet their stars were every bit as made up as the stars of Hollywood. They were treated to lavish parties, haute couture gowns, makeup and expensive cars, always getting the full 'star treatment.'<sup>134</sup> While women were glamorized, built up and idealized, men were mostly withdrawn from the spotlight. Some men achieved stardom, but not to the extent that the female stars did, and were paid half as much, due to the fact that the men were not allowed to compete with the true star of Germany, Hitler.<sup>135</sup> Also, many of the young and attractive men that might

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<sup>131</sup> Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusion*, 143.

<sup>132</sup> O'Brien, *Nazi Cinema as Enchantment*, 166.

<sup>133</sup> Ascheid, *Hitler's Heroines*, 40.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid 39.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid 38.



have otherwise been in the film industry were serving in the military, being more effective to Hitler fighting in the war, rather than starring in films.

The Nazis considered the power of film to be crucial to their cause, as they believed that effective propaganda hides its intention while it appeals to the emotions of the viewer.<sup>136</sup> Stars were used as political and psychological models that revealed a quality that is equally admired by men and women. The star system was supported because it was recognized for its economic and psychological value, with the audience identifying with the actors.<sup>137</sup> Nazi popular culture replicated that of America's, filling the industry with music, request concerts, fashion, fan magazines, and of course, movies.<sup>138</sup> By providing records of singing movie stars, putting their pictures on the front covers of magazines and having them appear on the radio, they encouraged the public to embrace their idols and copy them, in the proper Nazi way.

The success of the reproduction of the American movie star system was driven by the reality that German people loved American movies and movie stars. Musicals were particularly popular, especially films starring Eleanor Powell or Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. No American films did better at the German box offices than those of Walt Disney, causing Goebbels to lament the lack of German animation at that level of greatness. He marveled at the brilliance of the film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.<sup>139</sup> Goebbels notes in his diary on February 12, 1940, "We see the American Disney film *Snow White*, a magnificent artistic achievement. A fairy tale for grown-ups thought out into the last detail and made with a great love of humanity and nature. An artistic delight!"<sup>140</sup> Although Goebbels lamented the lack of

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<sup>136</sup> O'Brien, *Nazi Cinema as Enchantment*, 1.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid 5.

<sup>138</sup> Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusion*, 22.

<sup>139</sup> Taylor, Fred ed. 1983. *The Goebbels Diaries 1939-1941*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. 110-111.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid 120.

high quality animation, most of his attention was focused on newsreels and live action films instead of developing a more sophisticated animated film industry.

Goebbels wished to replace Hollywood as the prevailing source of cinema, saying in 1940 that, “We must give film a task and a mission in order that we may use it to conquer the world. Only then will we also overcome American film. It will not be easily overcome. But it can be overcome.”<sup>141</sup> In May of 1942, Goebbels wrote “We must take a similar course in our film policy as pursued by the Americans... We must become the dominant film power in Europe. Films produced by other states should be allowed to have only local and limited character.”<sup>142</sup> By becoming the dominant power in European cinema, the Nazis hoped to reach more people with their propaganda and to generate a much larger income from their films, adding to the war effort.

### **Plagiarism: Nazi Style**

In 1939 with the release of the Warner Brothers Studio’s film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, Goebbels banned all American films from Germany.<sup>143</sup> Though American films were now banned, Hans Hinkel, the State Commissioner of the Ministry of Propaganda, wrote to Goebbels that, “Producers must keep abreast of the current American production in order to study the artistic and technical progress of our enemies.”<sup>144</sup> This led the Ministry of Propaganda to draw ideas from American musicals to use in their German revues. According to German film historian Eric Rentschler, Goebbels hoped that by “emulating Hollywood [he] would foster a German popular cinema that could enable the ultimate application of power, a power that worked

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<sup>141</sup> Taylor, Fred ed. 1983. *The Goebbels Diaries 1939-1941* 215.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid 216.

<sup>143</sup> Romani *Tainted Goddesses*, 3.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 4.

discreetly, by signs and representations.”<sup>145</sup> The German musicals from the 1930s often offered a light hearted, idealistic version of history, full of songs and dances, to which the Nazis combined parallels to the present.<sup>146</sup> Once again, the Reich showed its hypocritical nature and modeled their escapist musicals on those of Hollywood, such as *Gold Diggers of 1933* and *Broadway Melody of 1940*, copying the flair and panache of the ultimate entertainers of the time.<sup>147</sup>

Women dominated the musical genre in Germany, as singing and dancing was considered a ‘suitable’ profession for women. The fan magazine, *Filmwelt*, published by the Nazis stated in January of 1940, “Women can show their innate gifts in two forms, which heightened and reached perfection: in acting and in dancing. Only these two forms allow women to always remain totally female.” Goebbels agreed, having written in his diary that “the dance film must show the bodies of beautiful women.”<sup>148</sup> Not only do these films help the people to temporarily escape their problems, they are also supposed to show German/Aryan women what true beauty was in Germany by the example of female dancers (as male dancers were never allowed in German musical revues). This was to encourage women to take care of their bodies, stay attractive to their men to prevent them from looking at non-Aryan women, and showing that German women were truly beautiful despite the frequent appearance of foreign film stars in Nazi cinema. Overwhelmingly, the top female cinema stars of the Third Reich were not German by birth.

Kristina Söderbaum and Zarah Leander were both born in Sweden, but had an Aryan appearance befitting the rules of Nazism. They also spoke German, as many Swedish actresses do. The natural step for actors from that country was to try their hand at the German film

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<sup>145</sup> Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusion*, 121.

<sup>146</sup> O’Brien, *Nazi Cinema as Enchantment*, 17.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid 120.

<sup>148</sup> Fox, Jo. *Filming Women in the Third Reich*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 122.

industry, as it was the leading film industry in Europe. Ingrid Bergman also made a few films for UFA before being contracted in the United States. Ingrid Bergman rose to the top of Swedish cinema; the logical step in the 1930s was to make films in Germany for UFA, the only studio in the world to offer Hollywood any competition in the 1920s. This was also the primary studio churning out propaganda under Goebbels, and required all people working in the film industry to be a member of the Reichsfilmkammer, to be a healthy Aryan, and to support the ideals of the Nazi Party. These actresses were not categorized as non-Aryan and the Nazis had many holes that needed filled after the eradication of the Jews from the film industry. The numbers of qualified actors were greatly reduced after the purge, so the Nazis went outside the borders of Germany to reinforce their star system. Söderbaum married Nazi director Veit Harlan, and Zarah Leander was an established star in Germany. Neither showed any public inclination to flee to Hollywood, and instead remained in Germany to be celebrated Nazi actresses. Additionally, foreign actresses brought a certain cosmopolitanism and sexuality to the screen that a German woman would not be able to under Nazi ideology.<sup>149</sup>

### **Propaganda in Nazi Film**

Nazi cinema is generally thought of as a propaganda powerhouse, pumping out Nazi ideology and always resembling Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. In reality, Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels aspired to create a distraction factory that churned out popular, upbeat, entertaining movies.<sup>150</sup> He longed to rival and then to replace Hollywood as the ultimate dream factory of cinema. The female stars were glamorized, yet in keeping with Nazi ideology, they were shown as simple German girls, longing only for a husband, home, and babies for the

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<sup>149</sup> Koepnick, Lutz. *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema: Between Hitler and Hollywood*. Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 2002. 74.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid 23.

Führer. While the films were to be escapist entertainment, they all carried the Nazi message within them, whether it was Zarah Leander's character realizing that life in Puerto Rico was not as wonderful as her homeland of Germany in *La Habanera* (1937), or Kristina Söderbaum drowning herself in *Die Goldene Stadt* (1942) after being violated and seduced by the men that lurk in the big city.

Occasionally a film would aspire to embody propaganda, entertain and raise the morale of the German people. Films could also encourage proper behavior in people during wartime when "men were to follow orders, put personal desires aside and lay down their lives, while women were to remain faithful, be good wives, fiancées, mothers, and refrain from putting pressure on fighting men."<sup>151</sup> This was especially apparent in *Die Große Liebe* (*The Great Love* 1942) starring Zarah Leander. A cabaret singer (Leander) meets a military officer and falls in love. The war is merely a background in the film, providing the plot twists necessary to move the story along. Leander's character wants to keep her career until he convinces her to get married and become a true German woman by taking care of her husband and having children.<sup>152</sup> This film was to boost morale on the home front while the war was going badly for Germany. The film downplayed the bombing of German cities and showed people working together.<sup>153</sup> This was more subliminal propaganda for the Nazis because Goebbels knew that a steady diet of propaganda would weary the people of Germany, so he was very firm in allowing apolitical entertainment to give some relief to the people.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Tegel, *Nazis and the Cinema*. 172.

<sup>152</sup> *Die Groß Liebe*. Directed by Rolf Hansen. 1942 UFA.

<sup>153</sup> Welch, David. "Nazi Film Policy: Control, Ideology, and Propaganda." In *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, Glenn R. Cuomo, 109-110. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

<sup>154</sup> Kreimeier, Klaus. *The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company 1918-1945*. Translated by Robert Kimber and Rita Kimber. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999. 238.

On the other hand, there were films that were complete propaganda vehicles for the Party such as *Triumph of the Will*, *Jud Süß*, and *The Eternal Jew*. *Triumph of the Will* is well known for the pageantry and showcasing of Hitler's Germany. This film is where most people today get a large amount of the imagery that comes with 'goose-stepping Nazis' and Hitler as a Demi-God.<sup>155</sup> *Jud Süß* and *The Eternal Jew* were both promoting Nazi Anti-Semitism.<sup>156</sup> These three films were the top three propaganda films that came out of the Nazi film industry.

### **What about the Movies?**

The Hollywood movie industry in the 1940s showed a lot more pride and patriotism toward World War II than for any other war or conflict since. Studios made movies relevant to the time, promoting the war with a healthy dose of American propaganda included, partially for profit and partially to fulfill what the OWI wanted to see in the theaters. Hollywood stars not only made films, but also joined the military, sold war bonds, donated paychecks to the war effort, went on USO tours, worked in canteens, and distributed pictures as pin ups to the soldiers. These famous people in Hollywood thought nothing of placing their large paychecks and careers on hold for the greater good of America and the world in general. Due to the increasing popularity of the movies and the actors starring in them, everything that they did held tremendous influence over how the general population reacted.

### ***Warner Brothers Studio***

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<sup>155</sup> *Triumph of the Will*. DVD. Directed by Leni Riefenstahl. 1934. Netflix.

<sup>156</sup> . The former was a fictional story detailing the downfall of a country because of the scheming machinations of a Jew who desired money, power and Aryan women. *The Eternal Jew* is a German 'documentary' about how Nazis perceived Jews to be. It includes names of famous Jews and a very graphic section depicting how Jewish butchers slaughter their animals in very cruel ways.

Jack Warner, the head of the Warner Brothers Studio, was outraged about the anti-Semitic films the Nazis were rumored to be running in Europe, primarily because of his Polish-Jewish heritage. The United States was not involved in any way in the war in 1939, preferring to continue the isolationist tactics to avoid entering another war. The early émigrés fleeing Germany that had ended their journey in Hollywood brought terrible tales of Nazism and terror. In 1939 Warner Brothers released a string of anti-fascist, anti-Nazi films. *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* was the first of these films. With the release of this film, Warner Brothers declared war on Nazi Germany. It was such a blatant attack, even for Warner Brothers, that people everywhere were shocked.<sup>157</sup> *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* showed the audience what was happening in isolationist America behind their backs, with Nazis influencing Americans to join their cause. The film included a Nazi meeting full of saluting, swastikas, goose-stepping and talk of taking over America.<sup>158</sup> Due to the outcry against German-American citizens that seemed to be produced by this film, the production code for Hollywood movies was enforced so that movies could not outwardly portray Germany in a bad light. Warner Brothers continued making patriotic films before the entry of the United States into the war, including *Sergeant York* (1940), *The Fighting 69<sup>th</sup>* (1940), and many short films with patriotic themes. When isolationists reacted against *Sergeant York*, calling it the worst example of studio propaganda yet, Harry Warner responded by saying “If celebrating an American war hero is propaganda, the studio is guilty.”<sup>159</sup> The studio continued to make films that did not explicitly show the Nazis as villains, but implied their evil in placing the Nazi ideals into the mouths of others.

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<sup>157</sup> Stephen Spielberg Narrator, *Warner at War* 2008

<sup>158</sup> Anatole Litvak Director. *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, Warner Brothers 1939.

<sup>159</sup> Stephen Spielberg Narrator, *Warner at War* 2008

Things changed for Warner Brothers after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the entry of the United States into World War II. They were suddenly allowed to make war films showing the Nazis as the scoundrels they were. In 1942 the United States Army Air Corps asked the Warner Brother's studio to make a training film called "Winning Your Wings" starring Jimmy Stewart. The Army agreed to allow the studio to show the film to the nation as part of the Warner Night at the Movies, which resulted in recruiting around 150,000 soldiers into the Army Air Corps alone. In addition to this coup for the Warner studio, Director John Ford was made Chief of the Field Photographic Branch, Office of Strategic Services, ranked as a Lieutenant Commander during WWII, and made the Oscar winning documentaries *The Battle of Midway* and *December 7*. *The Battle of Midway* was filmed by Ford and used actual footage of the battle.<sup>160</sup>

By 1943, the war was in full swing and Warner Brothers produced a picture distributed for the Army Emergency Relief Fund based on Irving Berlin's play *This is the Army*. The cast was made up almost entirely of actors and entertainers in the Army, and starred Lieutenant Ronald Reagan. Sergeant Joe Louis puts in an appearance as well, and black as well as white soldiers appear on the stage together in an integrated film. The highest grossing film of the year was mostly a morale boosting musical and variety show, which featured acrobatics, songs, dances, impersonations and magic tricks from talented soldiers. The credits feature at least nineteen servicemen from a Lieutenant to a Private First Class.

Hollywood stars did what they could for the servicemen and for their country, but a few of them wanted to do even more. When Bette Davis learned that the GIs who came through Hollywood were disappointed at not seeing any real Hollywood stars, she started the ball rolling

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<sup>160</sup> Stephen Spielberg Narrator, *Warner at War* 2008



on the creation of the Hollywood Canteen.<sup>161</sup> It opened October 3, 1942 and closed on November 22, 1945 (Thanksgiving Day). This Canteen offered a chance to meet stars, dance, listen to music, see shows and have some food, surrounded in glamour. Entrance was free of charge for any serviceman of the United States or her Allies wearing his or her uniform. Bette Davis devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to the project and served as its president, with John Garfield backing her up all the way. All employees of the canteen worked as volunteers. Many stars volunteered to wait tables, cook, clean and entertain the soldiers, sailors, flyers and marines. The lucky one-millionth customer received a kiss from Betty Grable. A Hall of Honor was in the Canteen with photos of stars who had joined the military.<sup>162</sup> In 1944, Warner Brothers decided to make a star-studded film about the Hollywood Canteen. The cast included Bette Davis, John Garfield, Jack Benny, Joan Crawford, Janis Paige, Dennis Morgan, Barbara Stanwyck, and Ida Lupino.<sup>163</sup>

Warner Brothers even had their animated division working overtime for the war. Bugs Bunny and the other Looney Tunes were starring in their cartoons, battling the Germans, selling war bonds and admonishing the public for not doing their fair share to win the war. 1942's *Any Bonds Today?* features Bugs Bunny singing a song and doing a dance routine to get people to purchase war bonds. Some other cartoons include *Herr Meets Hare*, *Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips*, and *Stage Door Cartoon*.<sup>164</sup> In addition to Warner's usual lineup of animated stars, the military commissioned them to create a new series of training films entitled "Private SNAFU" about the worst soldier in the Army. SNAFU stood for Situation All Fouled Up, was written by Theodore Geisel, or as he is better known, Dr. Seuss. These training films were very humorous, but

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<sup>161</sup> *Stardust: The Bette Davis Story* 2005 Turner Classic Movies

<sup>162</sup> Official Hollywood Canteen Website <http://www.hollywoodcanteenla.com/history>

<sup>163</sup> Delmer Daves Director. *Hollywood Canteen* Warner Bros. 1944..

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

frequently in a risqué or bawdy way involving voluptuous women in skimpy outfits, or hints at swearing. Whatever it took to entertain the thousands of service men in need of entertainment was done by Warner Brothers Studio.<sup>165</sup>

### ***Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer***

The MGM triumph of the film *Mrs. Miniver* premiered in 1943. This picture is about a middle class British family and how their world is torn apart by the coming of World War II. The film begins with showing the family in their normal lives, but quickly war is declared and men from the town start volunteering for service, including the Miniver's oldest son Vin, who joins the RAF. Mr. Miniver joins the home guard and is sent in his boat to Dunkirk while his son is flying missions there as well. Mrs. Miniver being left alone with her two small children finds a downed German pilot in her garden. He is uncouth and crashes through the garden without any regard for the path, and demands food that he stuffs in his mouth like a savage. He speaks a guttural form of English, and when captured by Mrs. Miniver after he faints, is unforgiving and refers to his joy at killing innocent people and that there will be others like him to follow.<sup>166</sup>

The film has a very positive, upbeat feel to it, showing the 'British stiff upper lip' and how easily they can adjust to hardships, and still keep their spirit up by holding an annual flower show. The son Vin marries a local aristocratic girl, and in a surprising twist she is the one that is killed, instead of the young pilot. The eulogy delivered by the Vicar at the end of the film is full of propaganda applauded by Roosevelt and Churchill.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Stephen Spielberg Narrator, *Warner at War* 2008

<sup>166</sup> William Wyler Director. *Mrs. Miniver* MGM 1942.

<sup>167</sup> Christensen, Jerome. "Studio Identity and Studio Art: MGM, *Mrs. Miniver*, and Planning the Postwar Era" Johns Hopkins University Press 2000. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/elh/v067/67.1christensen.html>

We, in this quiet corner of England, have suffered the loss of friends very dear to us - some close to this church: George West, choir boy; James Ballard, station master and bell ringer [...] and our hearts go out in sympathy to the two families who share the cruel loss of a young girl who was married at this altar only two weeks ago. The homes of many of us have been destroyed, and the lives of young and old have been taken. There is scarcely a household that hasn't been struck to the heart. And why? Surely you must have asked yourself this question. Why in all conscience should these be the ones to suffer? Children, old people, a young girl at the height of her loveliness. Why these? Are these our soldiers? Are these our fighters? Why should they be sacrificed? I shall tell you why. Because this is not only a war of soldiers in uniform. It is a war of the people, of all the people, and it must be fought not only on the battlefield, but in the cities and in the villages, in the factories and on the farms, in the home, and in the heart of every man, woman, and child who loves freedom! Well, we have buried our dead, but we shall not forget them. Instead they will inspire us with an unbreakable determination to free ourselves and those who come after us from the tyranny and terror that threaten to strike us down. This is the people's war! It is our war! We are the fighters! Fight it then! Fight it with all that is in us, and may God defend the right.<sup>168</sup>

### ***United Artists***

The next film to shock the nation was Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* made in 1940. Chaplin felt that Hitler was asking to be mocked and his brilliant imitation correctly captured Hitler's intonation and public speaking personae while speaking gibberish. The most famous scene is Chaplin as Hynkel, der foohey, dancing a ballet with an inflatable globe, as he dreams of world domination.<sup>169</sup>

Also in 1940, Alfred Hitchcock directed *Foreign Correspondent*, which did not mention Germany as the aggressors; he kept them nameless and malevolent. News reporter Johnny Jones, played by Joel McCrea, is a typical American ignorant of foreign affairs, and interested only in what is happening in his own country. His editor decides he will make an excellent foreign correspondent, and sends him to Europe with the name Huntley Haverstock. Jones blunders

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<sup>168</sup> William Wyler Director. *Mrs. Miniver* MGM 1942.

<sup>169</sup> McLaughlin, Robert L. and Sally E. Parry, *We'll Always Have Movies: American Cinema During World War II*. University Press of Kentucky, Lexington 2006. Pg 59.

around, and meets with a few people kind enough to explain to him what is happening around him. Scott Ffolliott, an Englishman is the main educator, who transforms from an unflappable, stiff Brit, to a co-hero of the film. Jones wakes up the hero in Ffolliott and together they save the innocent and break up the conspiracy. England, with her knowledge and America with her courage together can defeat the enemy as demonstrated by Jones and Ffolliott. The film ends with Jones reading a news broadcast to the United States from London when the bombs start falling; his final speech is the most propagandistic part of the film.

I can't read the rest of the speech I had, because the lights have gone out, so I'll just have to talk off the cuff. All that noise you hear isn't static - it's death, coming to London. Yes, they're coming here now. You can hear the bombs falling on the streets and the homes. Don't tune me out, hang on a while - this is a big story, and you're part of it. It's too late to do anything here now except stand in the dark and let them come... as if the lights were all out everywhere, except in America. Keep those lights burning, cover them with steel, ring them with guns, build a canopy of battleships and bombing planes around them. Hello, America, hang on to your lights: they're the only lights left in the world!<sup>170</sup>

### ***Paramount Pictures***

December 7, 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, marking the entry of the United States into the Second World War. The studios, now free to make war pictures, and express anti-Nazi sentiments, did so immediately. The Paramount Pictures film *Holiday Inn* released early in 1942 quickly added an extremely patriotic montage for the Fourth of July segment. It includes shots of planes being built, planes flying, military men going through drills, American motifs, a photo of

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<sup>170</sup> Alfred Hitchcock Director. *Foreign Correspondent* United Artists. 1940.

General Douglas MacArthur, and a photo of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt while Bing Crosby sings Irving Berlin's song "I'm Singing a Song of Freedom".<sup>171</sup>

### **Governmental Control of the Film Industry**

When the German film industry was nationalized, its mission became that of the state, which was to serve the national community. The government developed a strategy to saturate the people with propaganda, promoting the behavior that comes with a nation at war, using technology to stabilize the "national body politic." This not only worked greatly to their advantage in persuading the majority of the populace to agree with their politics, but it also worked well to indoctrinate the people of the lands they conquered, in a heavy handed form of diplomacy. In an interesting example from 1938, the Germany Embassy in Vienna invited the heads of the Austrian government to a screening of *Triumph of the Will* and a few days later, the Austrian government had allowed the country to be occupied by Germany. This was also used in Poland, Romania, Norway, Holland and Belgium before the Nazis attacked them. The Nazis had successfully turned these films into a version of psychological warfare, turning it into a dangerous weapon.<sup>172</sup>

The *Schutzstaffel* (SS) discovered that German film could have "propagandistic and cultural possibilities" in the new Eastern territories. They reported in 1940 that the newsreels of the war were eagerly awaited by the ethnic Germans, but also by the people of Poland. The SS decided that the movies "should have educational value for the ethnic and Baltic Germans and strengthen their ethnic bonds as well as propagandistically encompass the Polish populations."<sup>173</sup> They felt that the ethnic Germans should show their loyalty to Germany and that the Poles

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<sup>171</sup> Mark Sandrich Director. *Holiday Inn*. Paramount 1942.

<sup>172</sup> Kremer, 306.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid 332-335.

should be broken by propaganda so they would do as they were told by the Nazis. This plan worked well in the East, but in Holland it was a complete failure, as the public preferred American films to those of Germany. The German newsreels were not well received, and resulted in pro-British demonstrations. The SS were surprised to notice that the people of Norway reacted with great emotion when they were shown the films of the German destruction in their country. It seems the Germans thought the Norwegians should be happy to have been ‘liberated’ by their destructive invasion. It was also noted that the people of Luxembourg responded with “icy silence” towards the newsreels, and questioned the propaganda extolled in them. The French audiences were a completely different matter being from the West, and already having an established film culture. The French audiences were more demanding, causing an unspoken inferiority complex on the part of the Germans. They were therefore presented with a propaganda strategy that was less drastic than in the other countries.<sup>174</sup>

The state was heavily involved in the film industry, retroactively banning films because there were too many Jewish, undesirable and emigrated artists who appeared, as well as banning all form of political film criticism in 1936. This did not stop Goebbels from criticizing them in his diaries. The rating system was the only sort of criticism allowed, which told if a film was valuable, culturally valuable, and so forth. The films with the highest rating from the Propaganda Ministry had a lower tax, which prompted more of the German people to see them more frequently than the lower rated films with a higher tax.<sup>175</sup>

The “Aryanizing” of the whole film industry was a major goal from the beginning of the Third Reich. With each invasion and added territory, the Nazis gained more cinemas, all of

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<sup>174</sup> Kremier 332-335.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid 256-257.

which were required to begin screening important German films labeled as being of “national political value” such as *Jud Süß*, *Olympia*, *Triumph of the Will*, and *The Great Love*, most of which had been banned by the previous governments.<sup>176</sup> By instantly showing these propaganda films, the Germans hoped to start the indoctrination process. These films showed the people of these conquered lands what to expect from Nazi occupation, and how they were expected to behave. This was also applicable to citizens living in Germany proper, including the old and the young. The young especially were introduced to Nazi ideals by joining the youth groups.

### **The Hitler Youth Film Hour**

Films were used to indoctrinate people in all stages of life. The Nazi government noticed that younger people were more vulnerable to films, sneaking in to films that were banned for juveniles. There were not many films being made that the Nazis felt were appropriate for youths, leaving them without the diversion of films.<sup>177</sup> The Hitler Youth were given an hour long film session weekly in their local theatre to learn about National Socialism, and the Bund Deutscher Mädel (The League of German Girls, or BdM), the girls’ version of the Hitler Youth, were also meeting in the theatres.<sup>178</sup> The indoctrination that the young people experienced at school and Hitler Youth meetings was not enough for the leaders of the Nazi party; they felt that these youths needed a role model on the screen to look up to. They produced films such as *Hitlerjunge Quex* (1933), *SA-Mann Brand* (1933), and *Hans Westmar* (1933). These films showed the Hitler Youth members all the glory they could expect from participating in the Third Reich.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Kremer 336.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid 310.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid 305.

Goebbels, Joseph. *The Goebbels Diaries 1939-1941*. .15-16.

<sup>179</sup> Hoffman, Hilmar. *Film and National Socialism: 1933-1945*. Oxford: Berghen Books, 1996. 100.

However, these films were too expensive to produce on a regular basis, so short films that were already being made were shown in special screenings for Hitler Youth movie afternoons.<sup>180</sup>

The state did not fund the Youth Film Hour because of expense. Instead they expected members of the Hitler Youth to pay for their tickets, making it a self-sustaining enterprise of propaganda. It was more than just an hour of watching films. Singing, poetry reading, and drum rolls (all approved Nazi songs and poetry designed to stir a National Socialist feeling) were added to the program to create a religious atmosphere that was to replace church services for the youth of Germany. The Hitler Youth also marched in formation to the theater while flying the swastika. This was to build community as they sang their traditional anti-Semitic songs. Soon the Hitler Youth and the BdM were not groups that one could voluntarily join. The Youth Service Law passed in December 1936 required that boys and girls between the ages of ten and eighteen join as “the future of the German people depends on its young people.”<sup>181</sup>

The film hours worked very well in largely populated areas, and places that had accessible cinemas, but there were still remote areas of Germany where the technology was not available. In 1942, over one thousand film units traveled around these areas, spreading the ideas of National Socialism. Due to the lack of cultural diversions, these film presentations highlighting the Führer were extremely well received.<sup>182</sup> The films that were shown on these touring cinematic shows were similar to those for the Hitler Youth Film Hour including *Triumph of the Will* (1935), *Hitler's 50th Birthday* (1939), *Campaign in Poland* (1939) and *Victory in the West* (1941), although many feature films of the Third Reich were also shown such as *The Great King* (1942) and *Bismarck* (1940). A point was also made to show the newsreels during the film

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<sup>180</sup>Hoffman, Hilmar. *Film and National Socialism* 101.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid 102.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid 103.



hour, particularly when a member of the Hitler Youth was featured for bravery in battle. The newsreels played a very large part in the propaganda of the Third Reich, as they were the main way that the people could obtain news of the war.

### **Newsreels**

The most outright form of propaganda in the German film industry was contained in the newsreels. Originally, the newsreel was shown after the cartoon and feature film, but before the trailers. Goebbels decided that the newsreels should be shown first, resulting in people deliberately showing up late for the film, taking their seats during the newsreel. The retaliation of the Propaganda Minister was to order the doors to be locked when the newsreel started, so that no one could get in to see the film if they arrived late.<sup>183</sup>

The Newsreel was the method to report the news to the people in Germany and other German occupied countries. They were to deal exclusively with the news about the war. Under Goebbels' direction, they became twenty to forty minute propaganda films that "treated the German moviegoers like prisoners of war, forced to watch with little hope of escape from the 'creative art' of Minister Goebbels."<sup>184</sup> The news was shifted by Goebbels to magnify victories to cover up the reports of any retreats made by the German military machine. As such, the German people were used to hearing only of victories on the battlefield.<sup>185</sup> Images of dead German soldiers were forbidden from being shown in the newsreels, though the 'heroic deaths' of the war correspondents of Germany were often mentioned to create more interest in the newsreels themselves.<sup>186</sup> In 1943, Goebbels was distressed at the problem with the newsreels. At this point

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<sup>183</sup> Kremier, *The Ufa Story* 270.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid 306.

<sup>185</sup> Hoffman, *Film and National Socialism*. 108.

<sup>186</sup> Kremier, *The Ufa Story* 307.

in the war, the German military was not producing victories, and the movie footage obtained at the front lines of the war could not be creatively manipulated to prove German supremacy in battle as it had been under Goebbels' direction in the past. Goebbels was an extremely creative film editor, taking real footage from the battles, and twisting it to prove that the Germans were supermen when it came to war. No matter the real outcome of the battle, to the people of Germany, they were the victors based on the news they were given on the Nazi radio, and in the newsreels. Listening to British radio was punishable to the extremes in Nazi Germany, keeping the German people ignorant of the true facts of the war. When the Nazis began losing, Goebbels creatively downplayed major losses in battle, and brought minor German victories to the front page while inflating their importance.<sup>187</sup> Unfortunately for Goebbels, even that tactic failed when the Nazis stopped having any victories at all to manipulate, causing a major setback in the propaganda machine. Goebbels still managed to convince the German people of German victory for most of the war with his use of blatant and hidden propaganda in newsreels and feature films.

### **Conclusion**

The German film industry was extraordinary in its artistic creativity and freedom during the days of the Weimar Republic. The artists involved were greatly admired all over the world, but with the Nazi rise to power, their opportunities came to an end. The Nazis stifled all creativity, and chased out many of the cinematic geniuses of the time because they were not 'Aryan'. Goebbels kept strong control over the cinematic industry in his position of Propaganda Minister, and only allowed films he deemed worthy and useful towards the cause of the Third Reich to be made. He used movies to form public opinion and twisted facts to his own purpose. The use of propaganda in Germany in this time was extensive, more than had ever been used

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid 341.

before. The films were seen by all ages, and special attention was paid to youth, setting aside time in the theaters for the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls. The newsreels were made even more important by Goebbels, who made watching them mandatory, so that the news of the war was skewed to the Nazi point of view. However, not all films were the complete propaganda vehicle that is generally thought of when Nazi Germany comes to mind. The greater portion of the Nazi films consisted of what were then considered pure entertainment films so long as they did not go against Nazi beliefs. These 'entertainment' films always had the Nazi way of life embedded in them to send their message in a more subliminal manner. This could not be said for the films produced in the United States at this time period, as will be examined in a later chapter. The rise of the Third Reich changed how the German film industry worked and many German artists had to flee the new régime, partly to save their careers, and partly to save their own lives. Many of these artists landed in Hollywood.

## CHAPTER 2: EVERYONE COMES TO RICK'S: EXAMINING CASABLANCA AS A MIGRATION CASE STUDY IN WORLD WAR II

The Nazis had come to power in Germany, taking over almost all aspects of public life including the cinematic industry. Many of the cinematic geniuses of the Weimar era were classified as being “Jewish” by the Nazi government. In the Weimar Republic, many German Jews had flourished in intellectual, artistic, and business arenas. They became fully integrated into German society, even at the highest levels, though mostly in the middle class. Jews especially became ensconced in the film industry as actors, directors and producers. Many of these Jews that had risen to wealth and power through the years became secularized and identified more as Germans than as Jews. Many were so deeply incorporated into the secular German society to the extent that many of them were not even aware that they had any Jewish heritage.<sup>188</sup>

After being unable to work at their craft, due to laws passed by the Nazi régime restricting their lives, many people in the film industry chose to flee Germany. Most of the refugees were Jewish, but there were some who were simply resisting Hitler’s ideas of racial superiority, or still others who were married to Jewish spouses and refused to divorce them. A lucky few had reputations in Europe for genius in their work, be it acting, directing or producing, giving them an added advantage of money and ability to obtain work in another country.

After arrival in Hollywood, most of the émigrés failed to obtain the level of celebrity they had enjoyed in Europe. Often forced into character roles, or portraying the Nazis they had fled, the refugees had to take work where they could get it, and often had to rely on other, more successful émigrés to survive. The movie that not only describes the journey of the refugees, but

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<sup>188</sup> For more information see Vital, David. *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

cast more of them than any other film in World War II was *Casablanca*. A look into the journeys and careers of some of the cast members of the film *Casablanca*, such as Madeline LeBeau, Paul Henreid, Peter Lorre and Conrad Veidt, will illustrate the reasons for migrating, the bravery for doing so, and how they survived in their new home in Hollywood.

As Hitler began his conquest of Europe, many refugees in the German film industry and eventually in other occupied countries (Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, etc) were fleeing from the reach of the Nazis. Some stayed around the periphery of Germany, hoping to be able to return from exile within a short period of time, believing that Hitler's reign would be short lived and that they could soon return. Others vowed to get as far away from the Nazis as they could, making their final destination the United States, while many others drifted along, struggling to make it to some kind of safety. Many of the émigrés did not immediately decide to go to the United States as their place of refuge. This became the trend only after most of the European continent fell under Nazi control. By remaining close to the borders of Germany, they felt safe, speaking European languages and understanding the culture. To them, the United States was a frightening monster of a machine like they had seen in many of the silent films of the Weimar days (e.g. *Metropolis*), it was not a welcoming place of safety. They preferred to stay close to home, to be able to quickly return to Germany when the Nazis were removed from power. They believed that this removal from their homeland was only temporary for them.<sup>189</sup>

Some refugees were in danger from the Nazis because of their political beliefs, some for economic, career related reasons and others because they opposed the régime. Their reasons for leaving were extremely diverse and complex.<sup>190</sup> The most obvious reasons for the Jewish

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<sup>189</sup> Palmier, Jean-Michel. *Weimar in Exile*. London: Verso Publishing, 2006. 453.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. 85.

population to flee their native land were those of racial persecution and economic reasons. The raging anti-Semitism led to the economic issues that the Jews faced, such as being fired from their positions in the government and other places of work, the Nuremberg laws, and an economic boycott from the Gentiles. With a lack of economic stability, their only choice was to leave Germany, though many waited until around 1938, hoping for an improvement in their situation, and many waited too long and were not able to escape Germany. Eventually, all of those considered opponents of National Socialism were forced out of Germany and into exile.<sup>191</sup> The journey of the exiles was difficult, not only because they were leaving their homes behind, and they had to evade the omnipresent Nazis, but also because in order to get to the United States and safety, they had to fulfill many entry qualifications.

There were strict immigration requirements that had to be followed before immigrating to the United States, including fixed quotas from the country of embarkation based on country of birth, proof of being able to support oneself financially in the United States, and passing a security exam.<sup>192</sup> These rules were strictly enforced to prove the neutrality of the United States in the war, before December of 1941. President Roosevelt created an Advisory Committee on Political Refugees which would screen applications for entry and recommend the most deserving cases for visas, but only 40 out of the 567 they recommended were given visas by the State Department. Some people were sympathetic to the refugees, but they had fears of losing their own jobs, or allowing in subversives and spies.<sup>193</sup>

### **American Response to Refugees**

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<sup>191</sup> Palmier, Jean-Michel. *Weimar in Exile* 85.

<sup>192</sup> Schnauber, Cornelius. *Hollywood Haven: Homes and Haunts of the European Émigrés and Exiles in Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Airadne Press, 1997. 3.

<sup>193</sup> Taylor, John Russell. *Strangers in Paradise: The Hollywood Émigrés 1933-1950*. New York City: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983. 174.

The sympathies of the American people were hindered because the United States was reeling from the stock market crash of 1929, and still suffering from the Great Depression. Some worried that jobs would be taken from Americans and given to refugees who would work for lower wages. After the fall of France to Nazi Germany, Americans began expressing understanding towards refugees, led by the example of President Franklin Roosevelt.<sup>194</sup> In a speech Roosevelt made October 17, 1939, he says

...it became clear to the world that a point had been reached where private agencies alone could no longer deal with the masses of unfortunate people who had been driven from their homes. These men, women and children were beating at the gate of any nation which seemed to offer them a haven. Most of these fellow human beings belonged to the Jewish Race, though many thousands of them belonged to other races and other creeds. The flight from their countries of origin meant chaos for them and great difficulties for other nations which for other reasons – chiefly economic – had erected barriers against immigration. Many portions of the world which in earlier years provided areas for immigration had found it necessary to close their doors. [...] I specifically urge that this Intergovernmental Committee redouble its efforts. I realize, of course, that Great Britain and France, engaged as they are in a major war, can be asked by those nations which are neutral to do little more than to give a continuance of their sympathy and interest in these days which are so difficult for them.<sup>195</sup>

Roosevelt was conscious of the problem of refugees having no place that would accept them, particularly with the Great Depression still rampant in the United States. The isolationist thought of most Americans was still prevalent at this point. The Depression was raging on their soil, so they saw no reason to get involved in the problems of other countries. The refugees fleeing to the United States brought those problems to their door, and they were not ready to examine the plight of foreign people, especially when anti-Semitism was common in this period. The only people that the refugees could really depend on helping them were former émigrés that had made successes of themselves in their new country. People like Ernst Lubitsch, Marlene Dietrich, Michael Curtiz, Paul Kohner and others were very instrumental in assisting these new refugees.

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<sup>194</sup> Palmier. *Weimar in Exile*. 454.

<sup>195</sup> Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Roosevelt on Political Refugees." Address to Intergovernmental Committee, Special meeting on Political Refugees, White House, Washington DC. October 17, 1939.

They allowed refugees to stay in their homes, got them work, and started a fund that would assist the people with living expenses for their new lives.

### **Hollywood Anti-Nazi League**

The Hollywood émigré community organized antifascist groups and groups to assist refugees as soon as the early 1930s. The first wave of German migration to Hollywood had occurred in the 1920s, and many people from that first wave were anxious about what was happening in Europe. By 1936, the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League (HANL) had been created, combining American born and foreign-born filmmakers in the struggle “to combat Nazi influence and Nazi propaganda.”<sup>196</sup> This group included representatives of the American Legion, as well as famous Hollywood stars like Eddie Cantor and Paul Muni. It had over 5,000 members with some liberals, radicals, communists and even some conservative members. Their publication *Hollywood NOW* had informative stories on Nazi activities in the United States and about fascism in general. They also arranged the Hollywood boycott of Leni Riefenstahl’s American tour of *Olympia* (1938), a film about the Olympic Games in Nazi Germany in 1936, which was riddled with undertones of Aryan supremacy.<sup>197</sup> This group had power in Hollywood, and many of the émigrés joined; glad to be able to express their anti-Nazi feelings freely after the political oppression in Europe.<sup>198</sup> This was not the only group in Hollywood to assist the group known as “Cinema’s Exiles.” There were other methods of assistance that were also used to help the exiles.

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<sup>196</sup> McLaughlin, Robert L., and Sally E. Parry. *We’ll Always Have the Movies: American Cinema during World War II*. Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 2006. 28.

<sup>197</sup> Palmier. *Weimar in Exile*. 593.

<sup>198</sup> This proved to be an unfortunate choice when the House Un-American Activities Commission (HUAC) decided that because of the Communist members, that HANL was a Communist organization, thereby grey or blacklisting most of the members in the 1950s.



### European Film Fund

Another major group that helped the émigrés to survive while in the United States was the European Film Fund (EFF). The fund was almost entirely financed by established refugees for less fortunate refugees. When an émigré found employment, they were to pay between 1 and 5 percent of their pay into the fund, depending on how much salary they earned. Those who were newly arrived, or who could not find employment, were given a weekly remuneration to live on, to supplement the little income they had. This lasted until they gained sufficient employment to begin paying back into the Fund. Contributions were made to the general fund in addition to the required percentage, and often in the name of a specific émigré.<sup>199</sup>

The EFF was started by agent Paul Kohner and director Ernst Lubitsch, while the committee included many successful émigrés such as director William Dieterle and actor Conrad Veidt. Lubitsch used his fame to garner publicity for the EFF, giving an interview to a reporter from the *New York Times* where he was quoted as saying “There are not very many of us, and not all of us earn enough to give much, but we consider we have been lucky to make a good living in America and ought to do what we can for some of those who haven’t.”<sup>200</sup> Lubitsch served as the official spokesperson of the EFF, while Kohner served as the muscle behind it all, visiting major studios like MGM, Universal, and Warner Brothers, working to get émigrés a six month contract at the minimum salary. He also used the network of émigrés in the EFF that were well established, encouraging them to hire other refugee workers.<sup>201</sup> Paul Kohner was from the first wave of German immigrants to Hollywood. He began as a producer, but found it

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<sup>199</sup> Giovacchini, Saverio. "The Dispossessed: An Anatomy of Exile." Peter I. Rose, Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005. 291.

<sup>200</sup> Daughtery, Frank. "Haven for Refugees: The absorption of Artists from Europe Creates a Problem for Film Unions." *New York Times*, March 2, 1941.

<sup>201</sup> Eyman, Scott. *Ernst Lubitsch: Laughter in Paradise*. New York City: Simon and Schuster, 1993.247-249.

difficult to work in the fashion of Hollywood after the freedom he had enjoyed under the Weimar Republic. He had been employed at every major studio in Hollywood, and had left all of them under a cloud. With no other employment on the horizon, Kohner decided to become an agent. Agents were not well respected at this time, so this was a large step down in Kohner's career. Another problem was that he had no clients, but Kohner had plenty of contacts everywhere and began making the rounds. Soon he had a client and a contract for them at a studio. He became the agent to the film exiles from Hitler's régime. When more and more of these exiles began flooding into Hollywood, Kohner realized that he needed help in assisting these people. He believed it was more than one man could bear both financially and in securing letters of affidavit for the exiles to enter the country. He and Ernst Lubitsch gathered a group of affluent artists together and outlined a plan to help the homeless cinematic workers. A plea and a proposal was submitted to each major studio to obtain work for refugee writers, the writers would contribute ideas while learning English under a short contract at the minimum salary. This would benefit the studios with fresh ideas, potential writers, and it would help the stranded writers get into the country with an assurance of a job. Kohner went to the Warner's studio first, explaining that these were Jewish writers. Jack Warner had reclaimed his Jewish heritage after Hitler's rise to power, prompting him to agree to accept four writers under contract. When Kohner told L.B. Mayer of Metro Goldwyn Mayer that Warner's had accepted four, he agreed to take six, and Harry Cohn of Columbia accepted ten. In a short period of time, Kohner had obtained work for twenty writers.<sup>202</sup>

The work portion of Kohner's plan having been achieved for the short term, he moved on to the donation portion of his plan. He felt that the Europeans who held positions of power in the

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<sup>202</sup> Kohner, Frederick. *The Magician of Sunset Boulevard: the Improbable Life of Paul Kohner*. Palos Verdes, Cal.: Morgan Press, 1977. 109-111.

studios should agree to pay a monthly contribution into a fund to be distributed evenly to those in need. An added bonus was that these contributions would be charitable and could be tax-deductable. The committee began fund raising, writing letters to encourage contributions. This is how the European Film Fund was founded. It was a successful enterprise that continued on even after the conclusion of World War II.<sup>203</sup>

Actors and directors were also in need of work after fleeing the Nazis. Kohner represented many of them including Albert Bassermann, S.Z. Sakall, Marlene Dietrich, and Billy Wilder to name a few. Jobs were easier to find for the actors after the war broke out, with a need for authentic people to play the anti-hero Nazi parts in many of the films.<sup>204</sup>

There is not a lot of information readily available in the United States about the exact workings of the EFF beyond a general overview; a thorough study needs to be made. However, it is a fantastic example of how the émigrés worked to help each other make it through tough times in Hollywood. A movie that gave more refugee actors a job than any other made during the war, and assisted the workings of the EFF was *Casablanca*.

### **Casablanca**

The 1943 film *Casablanca* addresses the plight of refugees fleeing the Nazis and trying to make their way to the freedom of America. The opening statement of the film is both laden with propaganda and drama, outlining the supposed route that refugees were taking to escape.

With the coming of the Second World War, many eyes in imprisoned Europe turned hopefully or desperately toward the freedom of the Americas. Lisbon became the great embarkation point, but not everybody could get to Lisbon directly. And so a tortuous roundabout refugee trail sprang up: Paris to Marseilles, across the Mediterranean to Oran then by train or auto or foot across the rim of

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<sup>203</sup> Kohner, Frederick. *The Magician of Sunset Boulevard*, 112.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 121.

Africa to Casablanca in French Morocco. Here the fortunate ones through money, or influence or luck might obtain exit visas and scurry to Lisbon, and from Lisbon to the New World.<sup>205</sup>

This was not the standard refugee path. In fact, most of the cinema refugees fled using many different routes depending on their resources, the year that they fled the National Socialist Régime, and how quickly they could get work inside and outside of the United States.<sup>206</sup> The path most often used by film refugees involved traveling from Berlin to Vienna, then to Prague, on to Paris, across the channel to England, sailing to New York City, and finally taking a train to Hollywood.<sup>207</sup> It must be taken into account that when most were fleeing, it was before the fall of Paris, making their journey a little less circuitous than the journey outlined in the film.

One of the more remarkable facts with respect to the film *Casablanca* was the number of actual refugees that were playing refugees in the film. Of the major roles, only Humphrey Bogart and Dooley Wilson were Americans. The cast of refugees in some of the larger roles included Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Peter Lorre, Marcel Dalio, Madeline Le Beau, Helmut Dantine, and S.Z. Sakall. The use of European extras and bit players increased the believability of the film, making it seem more original, adding to the many reasons why the film is still so popular today. Many of the people that had one small scene (extras pictured in the Café) were important actors in Europe, stars of cabarets, actors on the stage and in the theatre. Many were never able to reclaim their stardom in the United States, but they did get work playing small roles in films while the war was on.

Of the seventy-five actors in the smaller roles, all were immigrants from Europe, and of the fourteen actors that got screen credit, eleven were émigrés. The great irony is that people

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<sup>205</sup> *Casablanca*. DVD. Directed by Michael Curtiz. 1943. US: Warner Brother, 2003.

<sup>206</sup> Palmier. *Weimar in Exile*. 85.

<sup>207</sup> Harmetz, Aljean. *The Making of Casablanca: Bogart, Bergman and World War II*. New York City: Hyperion, 2002. 208.

fleeing the Nazis were often offered no other roles in films than playing Nazis.<sup>208</sup> Paul Henreid, as an actor in the film, recalled the cast of *Casablanca* as “Conrad Veidt, [...] I mean he was the biggest star in London. There were people like S.Z. Sakall, superb, the bartender, the Hungarian: Curt [Bois], the thief. These were stars. These were top, top, top stars.”<sup>209</sup> These top stars were unfortunately cast in small supporting roles in the United States; while back home they had been headliners. This did not affect the performance of the players at all, making the movie much stronger and bursting with talent and all the more realistic. People lost their careers because they had to flee Nazi rule, and then they were forced to take jobs that were beneath them in order to survive, yet they did these jobs proudly. S.Z. Sakall was one of those actors, having been a famed Hungarian actor who just happened to be Jewish. When the Nazis began exercising their policy of ‘living space’ and taking up territory all over Europe, Sakall was forced to flee to the United States.<sup>210</sup> Once in Hollywood, he engaged Paul Kohner as his agent who began getting him small comic parts in mostly musical films. In a memo from Irvin Kumin of Warner Brothers studio to producer Hal Wallis, he says “Curtiz [the director] is extremely anxious to have him [Sakall], feeling he is important for comedy relief.”<sup>211</sup>

A poignant scene occurs in a flashback, taking place in Paris when the Germans march in. The people in the café are happy and enjoying life until a voice comes over the loud speaker in French explaining that the Germans are at the gates of Paris. Off camera, an extra begins crying uncontrollably, causing the director to stop filming. He wanted to portray defiant bravery, not sobbing. A small man walked up to Curtiz and says “I am very sorry sir, but that is my wife.

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<sup>208</sup> Harmetz, Aljean. *The Making of Casablanca*. 211-212.

<sup>209</sup> Paul Henreid. Interviewed by Ronald L. Davis. May 27, 1985.

<sup>210</sup> *Cinema's Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood*. Directed by Karen Thomas. 2009. PBS.

<sup>211</sup> Kumin, Irving, R, “Inter-Office Communication: Part of ‘Carl’ in ‘Casablanca’ to Hal Wallis, Producer” Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California. June 1942. Box 1, Folder 18813.

Please pardon her. You see, our home was Paris. And we went through that awful day.”<sup>212</sup> This story was released to the press to stir interest in the film, but it also served to express what these émigrés were going through, and what had happened to them in the past. The exiles from German cinema lived through these events, and in order to encourage American assistance in saving Europe, had to live through it again on the screens.

The most powerful scene involving the émigrés in the film is undoubtedly the scene with the “Marseillaise.” This scene pulls together refugees of all nationalities being oppressed by the Nazis under one roof including French, Czechs, Russians, Norwegians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Belgians and Austrians, making the Café a mini United Nations, before there was such a thing. The Nazis began playing “Watch on the Rhine,” a classic German nationalistic song and the refugees responded under the leadership of Victor Lazlo (Henreid) by singing “La Marseillaise,” the French national anthem, louder than the Germans were singing. The power behind this scene rests with the feeling that the refugees put behind the song, ending with real tears and shouts of “Vive le France!”<sup>213</sup>

Dan Seymour, the man who played the Arab guard to the casino room in Rick’s Café remembered that while filming this scene, he looked up and noticed that most of the actors were crying while singing, “I suddenly realized that they were all real refugees.”<sup>214</sup> This scene would not have worked if they had just selected Americans from central casting. The use of real European refugees made the film more realistic and added some weight and truth to what could have been just an average romantic fluff movie with a war background. This was also showing

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<sup>212</sup> Evelove, Alex. “Press Release- ‘Refugees Re-Live Invasion: French Extras Weep While Working in Pictured Version of Nazi Occupation.” Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California. December 1942. Box 1, Folder 683.

<sup>213</sup> *Casablanca* 1943.

<sup>214</sup> Harmetz. *The Making of Casablanca*. 212.

the role that the United States would be taking, as protectors of the refugees, encouraging leaders to step forward and lead the people to victory against the Nazis. Rick (Bogart) represents the United States, first with his isolationist standing, and then by his protection of refugees and work for the anti-Nazi cause.

Actors were not the only émigrés that were involved in making *Casablanca*. Director Michael Curtiz was Hungarian by birth, migrating to Hollywood with the first film wave of migration from Central Europe. He felt sympathy for the second wave of refugees, participating in the EFF and working with Paul Kohner to obtain employment for talented ex-European film makers in Hollywood. In a memo to Hal Wallis, producer of *Casablanca*, Curtiz requests that he use an émigré named Robert Aisner as his technical man in filming. Aisner had Paul Kohner as an agent, and received the job “going over it [the script] and taking out anything that might be wrong, telling Mike [Curtiz] what the different nationalities in *Casablanca* did or did not do.”<sup>215</sup>

### **Madeline Le Beau**

The girl who begins as Bogart’s love interest before Ingrid Bergman’s appearance in the film is played by French drama student, Madeline Le Beau. She traveled with other friends, pooling resources to flee Paris before the German takeover of the city. Two years later, she made her debut in Hollywood in the film *Casablanca*. In a publicity story about her, the story of her escape is outlined through Europe to Lisbon and to the United States through Chile and Canada. This journey was very unique much like the other actors in *Casablanca*, and widely publicized to garner attention and sympathy from the American public. While she did not become a colossal American star, neither was she a star in France before fleeing, removing the hardship that many

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<sup>215</sup> Wright, T.C. “Inter-Office Communication: ‘Casablanca’ Staff to Hal Wallis” Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California. April 1942. Box 1, Folder 18813.

of her fellow actors had to face with their emigration. They had to give up their stardom to save their lives.<sup>216</sup>

### **Helmut Dantine**

An actor that experienced exile from his homeland because of the Nazis was Helmut Dantine. An avid anti-Nazi, he made a film career by portraying members of the Nazi Party. Apparently he did not plan on becoming an actor because, after Dantine graduated from school, he began working with the Austrian consul in London, training to become a diplomat. Only 19 years old in March 1938, he became one of the leaders of an anti-Nazi youth movement, when he was recalled to join his artillery unit stationed on the German border. Unfortunately, the Nazis had superior forces and the Austrian chancellor ordered them not to engage the enemy and lay down their arms. Many of the officers of these resistance regiments were placed into *Rosserlaende*, a political concentration camp located outside of Vienna for three months. Dantine recalled that the Nazis “actually seemed to feel they were freeing us from something.”<sup>217</sup> Political prisoners were not protected by the Geneva convention, and Dantine witnessed much torture and cruelty with the goal of breaking the mind and spirit of the prisoners. All contact with the outside world was stopped, no books, letters, or games were allowed. Dantine used this experience in some of his acting jobs, basing his portrayal of Captain Koenig from the film *Edge of Darkness* on the commandant of Rosserlaende, Colonel Hufnagel.<sup>218</sup>

Dantine’s wealthy family used what money and power they had left, and arranged for a doctor to insist the young man be released from the camp for medical reasons. They arranged for his release in June of 1938 and sent him to Los Angeles on the condition that he never return to

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<sup>216</sup> Casablanca Publicity Folder 683 “Stories about the Supporting Players: Drama Student Fled Europe for Film Career.” Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California.

<sup>217</sup> Settle, Georgia Lee. "Heel For Hire." *Look Magazine*, August 24, 1943.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.



Austria. Dantine immediately decided to wake America up to the threat of Nazism. He began acting as a way to spread the word and soon became one of the most sought after actors to play Nazis.<sup>219</sup>

Appearing in small roles in *Casablanca* (1942) as the husband of an emigrating couple from Bulgaria, *To Be or Not To Be* (1942), *Watch on the Rhine* (1943), *Passage to Marseilles* (1944), and most famously as the downed German pilot portraying the absolute barbarism of Nazis in *Mrs. Miniver* (1942), Dantine worked to show the United States what menace was awaiting in Europe. He disliked the way the screenwriters were portraying the Nazis in films. Dantine felt that he “knew the enemy. [The] more people disliked me on the screen, [the] more I felt I did a good job.”<sup>220</sup>

Dantine was lucky to have parents with political connections, money, and relatives living in the United States to help him in his emigration. While he did not leave Europe as an established member of the film industry, he was unable to pursue his original career of diplomacy after his flight. Dantine’s acting career brought the Nazis to life for many Americans, and if he had chosen a different career, many films would not be as great as they are. He was also a client of Paul Kohner and participated in the EFF as a working actor. His emigration was caused by more unusual circumstances than most of the emigres, making his a very unique case as it applies to the film industry migration.

### Conrad Veidt

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<sup>219</sup> Hoopes, Roy. *When the Stars Went to War*, 9.

<sup>220</sup> Dantine, Helmut. “Notes for Interviews” N.D. Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills CA.

In the film *Casablanca*, Major Strasser of the Third Reich, was played by Conrad Veidt, a German actor who opposed the Nazi party and began working against them before and after he left Germany for England. He was one of the actors of the silent screen plucked from Germany working in Hollywood already in the 1920s. His success in the German film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) cemented his international stardom, and he began working in Hollywood until sound pictures came in vogue around 1927, when he returned to Germany. Veidt said “When I went back to Germany from Hollywood in 1929, I felt a strangeness [sic] in the air. It felt like the agitation just before a terrible storm.”<sup>221</sup> Veidt was an ardent anti-Nazi. He refused to take roles in Third Reich propaganda films vilifying the Jewish people. Often speaking against the National Socialist party, Veidt was disparaging the policies concerning the nationalization of the cinema and stage arts. He felt this was encouraging prejudice, and counter-productive to the German arts, and that it would cause the deterioration of the German Cinema.<sup>222</sup>

His candor in expressing his anti-Nazi opinions extended farther than the politics of German cinema, for he disagreed with the Nazi vilification of the Jews. Many sources will say that Veidt was of Jewish descent, but he was only branded as such by the Third Reich because of his lack of cooperation with them. Though Veidt was not actually Jewish, his third wife Lily was, adding to the urgency of his flight from Germany. When Hitler rose to power, they knew they had to leave, escaping to England in April of 1933. Instead of complying with the Nazis, Veidt chose to be exiled from Germany as a small, but meaningful act of defiance.<sup>223</sup>

Having become a British citizen before England declared war on Germany, Veidt had no issues with divided loyalties and worked hard raising money for and donating most of the

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<sup>221</sup> Allen, J.C. *Conrad Veidt: From Caligari to Casablanca*. Pacific Grove, Cal.: The Boxwood Press, 1987.120-1.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. 126-8.

salaries from his films to the British War Relief. Also making personal appearances and working at benefits, he donated much of his free time as well as money to the war effort. Veidt appreciated his new country and the personal and artistic freedom the people had, compared to what his former home of Germany had become. He showed his great support and his thanks to his newly adopted country by giving his time, work and money.<sup>224</sup>

After his success in British films, it was inevitable that Hollywood should call yet again, but this time with a part in an anti-Nazi film, which Veidt had agreed to do in 1940. He was then offered many more roles in films as Nazi officials, including *All Through the Night* (1941), *Nazi Agent* (1942) and *Casablanca* (1942). *Casablanca* appealed to Veidt because of the storyline involving the flood of refugees and the promotion of anti-Nazism. He also appreciated the suave, malignant intelligence of the character of Major Strasser, instead of the standard stereotypical screaming Nazi following all orders given without question. The international appeal and quality of the cast, including extras gave the film extra flavor, especially with a real German cast in the role of the Nazi villain.<sup>225</sup>

Conrad Veidt loved his fatherland of Germany, but despised the destruction of freedoms and hatred that the Nazi party represented. He chose exile, resistance and, defiance toward the leaders of the Third Reich as part of his resistance to the horrors that were happening in his native Germany. He also chose to donate funds for the allies and appear in British and American anti-Nazi films to defy the Third Reich. His fight against the Nazis was cut short by his death shortly after *Casablanca* was released in 1943.

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<sup>224</sup> Allen, J.C. *Conrad Veidt*. 182-3.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid. 187, 197, 201.

Because of his stardom in Europe and America in silent films, Veidt did not have the difficulties that many others had in their flight. He had plenty of money, and he had a name that was recognized, making it easier for him to find work. His success in British films greatly helped his reputation in Hollywood, proving that he could not only play Nazis, but romantic leads as well.

### **Paul Henreid**

The resistance fighter Victor Lazlo is played by Paul Henreid in the film *Casablanca*. Paul von Hernreid<sup>226</sup> grew up in Austria, the son of an impoverished aristocratic family that was scandalized by his decision to become an actor. Having become a prominent stage actor in Austria by the early 1930s, he naturally drew the attention of UFA in Germany. Lured in by the reputation of the studio, Henreid agreed to go to Berlin to see the studio before signing the contract. Being an actor, and not at all interested in politics, Henreid had not realized that “...when Hitler came to power, he found in UFA a ready-built propaganda machine with a distributing system that encompassed all of Europe.”<sup>227</sup>

During Henreid’s visit in 1934, the famous silent film actor Paul Wegener, who appeared in many propaganda films for the Nazis, approached Henreid in the commissary and upon hearing Henreid’s plans to join UFA, he said in a voice for all to hear “Opportunity for you? Ridiculous. It’s just another spoke in their Nazi propaganda wheel. If you sign, you’re a fool. Hitler and these Nazis are a curse. Be sensible, boy. Stay in Vienna and don’t come here!”<sup>228</sup> This odd encounter got Henreid thinking, but UFA was willing to give him all the clauses in his contract that he asked for, so he signed. He was then handed another paper to sign, which was

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<sup>226</sup> Original spelling before it was “Americanized” by Hollywood

<sup>227</sup> Henreid, Paul. *Ladies Man*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984. 39.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid. 40.

membership to the National Socialist Actors' Guild of Germany, a group requiring large dues to the organization and stating that he would uphold the ideals of the Nazi party. Henreid refused to sign it as it was not in their agreement, nor would he consider becoming a propagandist or upholding the ideals of National Socialism. Upon being informed that without joining the Guild, he would have no contract, Henreid replied "I will not become a Nazi. I have nothing to do with politics. I am an actor, not a propagandist!"<sup>229</sup>

Henreid was blacklisted in Germany, which also effected his career in Austria, as Goebbels refused to allow him in German films, or in films that were distributed by Germany. A film that had been made previously for Germany was shown with Henreid in it, as it was too expensive to replace him, but his name was removed from the credits, as if to deny his participation in the film.<sup>230</sup> This encouraged Henreid's decision to go to London, believing that his career was finished so long as the Nazis were in power, while the fall of Austria in the Anschluss strengthened his resolve to stay in England. Hitler had reiterated the superiority of the Aryan race, films instantaneously stereotyped slim, tall, blond, Europeans as Nazis in England and America. This description included Henreid, formerly cast in Austrian films as a suave lover, now he was transformed into a suave villainous Nazi for a few British films.<sup>231</sup>

After Hitler invaded Austria, Henreid was considered a German citizen, and therefore an enemy alien. Classified as the least dangerous, he was not sent away to be interned in a camp immediately, like those in lower classifications being picked up in open trucks, as the Jews had been in Germany.<sup>232</sup> Before his time came to be deported, Henreid decided to go to America, having a job already lined up for a play on Broadway. He was informed that he was not allowed

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<sup>229</sup> Henreid, Paul. *Ladies Man*. 41.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid. 44.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid. 72.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. 76-77.

a visa due to the full quota of Austrians to the United States. The immigration officer examined Henreid's passport more closely, and determined that the place where he had been born was now part of Italy, allowing him to obtain a visa to the United States in a somewhat legal fashion.<sup>233</sup>

As with most good actors of the time, after his arrival in America, Henreid was offered a contract in Hollywood, which he gladly accepted, temporarily forgetting his stage career. He was happy to once again be cast as the suave lover, in *Now Voyager* (1942), and often waging war against the Nazis, as he did as Victor Lazlo in *Casablanca*.<sup>234</sup>

Though he classified himself as an artist, and an actor, Henreid still refused to take the route many others in Germany did. He stood up for what he believed in, and left his promising career and a country he loved behind. His fame in Europe also helped him to succeed in the United States, though not to the level that he might have achieved in Europe. Henreid was much better off than many of his fellow émigré actors and because of his leading man status, he was able to get more work. He also feared falling into the typecasting trap, and required a clause in his contract that said he was not required to make any films where he had to play a German.<sup>235</sup> Many of his fellow refugees had been shoved into the Nazi spy roles and had not been able to emerge from that rut making their careers very difficult to salvage after the Nazi spy film trend had run its course.

### **Peter Lorre**

Peter Lorre rose to celebrity status with the German Fritz Lang film *M* about a child murderer in 1931, but is well remembered in Hollywood cinema for his role as Ugarte in *Casablanca*. He began appearing in more German films after his breakthrough, but being

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<sup>233</sup> Henreid, Paul. *Ladies Man*. 79-80.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid 149-151.

<sup>235</sup> Paul Henreid. Interviewed by Ronald L. Davis. May 27, 1985.

Jewish, his success was short-lived, and he had to flee Nazi Germany in February of 1933 for Vienna. Lorre enjoyed telling stories about his escape from the Nazi Regime, often embellishing them to favor himself. One such story involves Goebbels touring UFA and asking about “that little man who did so many marvelous pictures” that Hitler wished to meet. When he was informed that the actor was Jewish Peter Lorre, Goebbels immediately clammed up and refused to mention the actor again. His favorite tale takes place after Lorre’s arrival in Vienna after leaving Germany. A telegram arrived for him from Goebbels, requesting him to come back; he was important to the Führer and the Reich. Lorre claims to have sent back a reply referencing his famous breakthrough role, to the head of UFA saying “There is no room in Germany for two murderers like Hitler and I.”<sup>236</sup>

One of the first people to flee Germany for Austria, Lorre soon had to flee Austria for France, and he then fled France for England, always trying to stay one step ahead of Nazi expansion. In England he found work, making a few films for Alfred Hitchcock, playing a villain, but the films had an anti-Nazi sentiment behind them. This led Hollywood to come calling, placing him in many different films, many of which he was cast in as the villain. Some of his films included *The Maltese Falcon*, *All Through the Night*, and *Passage to Marseilles*. The stories Peter Lorre would tell about his flight from Germany became an invaluable asset to the publicity campaign of *Casablanca*. Most of them were apocryphal, including telling off Hitler, being on a Nazi hit list, having Goebbels being such a fan that he warned the Jewish actor to get out of Germany before the purge, and so forth. Lorre also participated in the film, *The Hollywood Canteen*, with a short cameo with his frequent costar and partner in crime, Sidney Greenstreet, cashing in on their sinister reputations garnered from films such as *The Maltese*

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<sup>236</sup> Youngkin, Stephen D. *The Lost One: A Life of Peter Lorre*. Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 2005.84.

*Falcon* (1941). They also contributed to the entertainment of the troops by appearing at the canteen.<sup>237</sup>

Although famous in Germany and the surrounding area for his work in Fritz Lang's film *M*, Lorre spoke only German at the time of his flight, making it difficult to get work outside of German speaking countries. While he was in Paris, he was unable to get work, and was not hired as an actor until Alfred Hitchcock met him in London, learning his lines in English before he could understand what he was saying. He had fairly mastered the language by the time he made his exodus for Hollywood. He also had a tough time getting work in Hollywood until he began being typecast as the villainous foreigner.

Of the émigrés that were not actors in *Casablanca*, the most prominent were directors, or they became directors later on in their careers. These were some of the more high profile refugees, and they had some extremely interesting stories about their migration. One such director was Fritz Lang.

### **Fritz Lang**

Fritz Lang was one of the great directors of German cinema in both the silent Weimar years and with the introduction of sound. He continued to make some of the most iconic movies of German cinema. However, Lang was of Jewish ancestry, though raised a Catholic, nevertheless, this posed a problem to his continued success in German film. Lang was also very much against the National Socialist Party, and used one of his films to speak out against their ideology. *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* was officially banned by the Nazis in March of 1933,

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<sup>237</sup>Youngkin, Stephen D. *The Lost One: A Life of Peter Lorre*. 203, 221.



due to the insane villain of the film communicating policies and slogans of the Nazi Party.<sup>238</sup>

Lang said he agreed to make this film when “I realized that there was the possibility of a commentary on Nazism in the subject of an asylum director hypnotized by his own sickness.”<sup>239</sup>

Lang was worried about the Nazi reaction to his film, and according to stories he told, he received an order to report to Goebbels’ office, worrying him more than ever. His story continues, “the Führer had said, ‘This man is the man who will give us the Nazi film.’ My only thought was ‘how do I get out of here?’ I left and told him that I was very honored. Then I went home and decided the same evening that I would leave Berlin that I love very much.”<sup>240</sup> His wife at the time, Thea von Harbou, also his scriptwriter and collaborator decided to remain in Germany, to become a member of the Nazi party, writing scripts for Nazi propaganda films, and helping to finalize their divorce in 1934.<sup>241</sup>

Lang headed straight to Paris on the train, making one film there before being offered work in Hollywood in 1934. With his solid reputation in the European market Lang would automatically import culture into the barren land of Hollywood. He became an American citizen in February of 1935, only a year after having immigrated to the United States. After making a few films for the studios in the late 1930s, he was able to begin making films he wished to make, of the anti-Nazi variety, including *Man Hunt* (1941), *Hangmen Also Die* (1943), and *Ministry of Fear* (1944). *Man Hunt* is a film version of a novel about a big game hunter who decides to see if he would be able to shoot Hitler, but without actually shooting him. He is discovered, tortured and chased by the Gestapo back to London, where the reality of the evil that the Nazis represent

<sup>238</sup> Phillips, Gene D. *Exiles in Hollywood: Major European Film Directors in America*. London: Lehigh University Press, 1998.33.

<sup>239</sup> Lang, Fritz. Interview. *The Viennese Night: A Fritz Lang Confession*, 1965. *Fritz Lang Interviews*, (Ed. Barry Keith Grant, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson 2003) 55.

<sup>240</sup> Lang, Fritz. Interview. Interview with Fritz Lang. Alexander Walker, BBC Radio, 1967. *Fritz Lang Interviews*, (Ed. Barry Keith Grant, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson 2003)78.

<sup>241</sup> Phillips. *Exiles in Hollywood*. 37.

is made clear to the hero of the film in the end.<sup>242</sup> *Hangmen Also Die* is a dramatization about the assassination of “the Hangman” Reinhard Heydrich, the *Reichsprotector* of Czechoslovakia, and how the poor people of Prague are oppressed by the Nazis.<sup>243</sup>

Lang used his skills as a director to make his way to the safety of the United States. He was a member of the HANL, and donated to the EFF. His transnational move was not as hard as it was on others, but Lang did face hardships.

### Billy Wilder

The arguably most successful German émigré to come to the United States is definitely Billy Wilder. No other transplanted member of the film community excelled as greatly as he did writing and directing some of the best classic films of all time. In 1933, Wilder was just getting his start at UFA in Berlin. This was the primary studio churning out propaganda under Goebbels, and required all people working in the film industry to be a member of the *Reichsfilmkammer* (Film Chamber of the Reich), to be a healthy Aryan, and to support the ideals of the Nazi Party. Wilder was employed writing movie scripts when Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933. As a Jew, he knew he would have to leave Germany soon. He knew he would not fit the expectations of the Nazi régime to make the cinematic industry *Judenfrei* (free of Jews). Convinced that the Nazis would not be as easily vanquished as many others thought, he sold all of his belongings and left Berlin the day after the *Reichstag* fire,

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<sup>242</sup> *Man Hunt*. DVD. Directed by Fritz Lang. 1941; Los Angeles, CA: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 2009.

<sup>243</sup> *Hangmen Also Die*. DVD. Directed by Fritz Lang. 1943; Los Angeles, CA: United Artists, 2000.

February 27, 1933.<sup>244</sup> Wilder's last picture made in Germany premiered in Berlin, April 20, 1933, and his name was not listed in the credits, as a Jew he had no rights in Nazi Germany.<sup>245</sup>

He headed for Paris, rooming in the Hotel Ansonia with many other famous refugees including Peter Lorre, and composer Franz Waxman.<sup>246</sup> After much starvation and suffering, Wilder wrote a script and sent it to Joe May, an émigré producer at Columbia pictures in Hollywood. This led to his being offered a job in Hollywood in December of 1933. He elected to travel on a British liner in order to practice his English, so he would be ready to make his mark on Hollywood pictures.<sup>247</sup>

Wilder slowly worked his way up through the ranks of screen writers, learning English as he went, working several times with fellow émigré Ernst Lubitsch, of the first German cinematic migration. Eventually, Wilder decided he wanted to direct his own films, and in 1943, he made *Five Graves to Cairo*, a war movie about Field Marshall Erwin Rommel waging war against the British in North Africa. While this film is very obviously pro-British, and anti-Nazi, what makes this film stand out is the characterization of Rommel by Erich von Stroheim, treating him with dignity, respect and admiration instead of as a stereotypical screaming "hun".<sup>248</sup>

## Conclusion

Many of the people that completed the journey of migration to Hollywood from areas under German occupation were given the choice of life in exile, or death at the hands of the Nazis. This incentive may have made the decision to migrate easier, but it certainly did not

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<sup>244</sup> Zolotow, Maurice. *Billy Wilder in Hollywood*. New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1977. 50.

<sup>245</sup> Chandler, Charlotte. *Nobody's Perfect: Billy Wilder, A Personal Biography*. New York: Applause Theatre and Cinema Books, 2002. 60.

<sup>246</sup> Zolotow. *Billy Wilder in Hollywood*. 51.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid. 52.

<sup>248</sup> Phillips. *Exiles in Hollywood*. 182-183.

make the journey itself effortless. After the refugees finally made it to safety in the United States, they were in a land whose language and culture was foreign to them. Some were able to get jobs in Hollywood, but not always the level of roles that they were used to getting in Europe, often feeling degraded from leading parts to character roles and comic relief.

The lucky few that were able to achieve fame in Hollywood worked to assist those less fortunate, setting up anti-fascist groups and financial assistance. The film *Casablanca* employed more émigrés at once than any other film made in Hollywood while World War II raged on, and many writers that could not speak English were given short term contracts at the major studios for the purpose of fulfilling the immigration qualifications. Many people that were members of the European cinema and theater were forced to get work as maids, waiters, or as other unskilled laborers to survive. Some of the exiles returned to Germany after the war, feeling it was their duty to return to their homeland, but many assimilated and began to enjoy their lives in Hollywood.

## CONCLUSION

All countries at war take drastic measures at home and on the battlefield to win whatever battle is being fought. Each country has their own way of working through these problems and reassigning civilian entities to military uses, including entertainment such as the movies. Both Nazi Germany and the United States used their film industries to entertain, propagandize, and educate the people of their countries. Most people would argue that the Nazis used more propaganda, but I would disagree. The propaganda used by the Germans in the Second World War was by far better known because of their evil tendencies as I would call them. The use of film to encourage the people of Germany to follow Hitler and adhere to the Nazi way of life as

well as teaching people to hate those of the Jewish race makes their propaganda more dangerous as can be proven by the staggering number of Jews that were killed in the Holocaust.

The Nazis refused to have a male star in the films as that would detract from Hitler as the true star of Germany, so they placed all the emphasis on female stars. The stars as well as the film industry were subject to the rules of the Nazi party, making all jobs more difficult and devoid of creativity. Male stars were not publicized for fighting in the war, as it was a duty for all German men to fight and it would take publicity away from Hitler. The restrictions the Nazis placed on filmmaking made the films less enjoyable than they could have been, and greatly affected their quality.

The United States was able to be a bit more obvious in their propaganda in films as the people were not being blasted with it from every arena. The films were to entertain and encourage people to survive the struggles they had to endure in the war years, and also to show people what a good citizen would do and how they could act in a patriotic manner for their country at war. Hollywood sent men to war, encouraged women to participate in rationing and war work, made films, and worked with the government to do whatever possible to put an end to the war.

Hollywood was exceptionally eager to assist in the war due to the great number of émigrés that had taken refuge there. Many stars of German cinema were forced to flee the scourge of the Nazis because of their beliefs and Jewish heritage. These intelligent, talented film workers knew that very few people were safe from the spread of Nazism. They encouraged Hollywood to take its stand and persuade the American people to get involved in the war. The immigration of the “cinema’s exiles” helped to make the American film industry much stronger

by bringing more talent, culture and creativity to Hollywood. Without them, Hollywood never would have been able to make such classic films as *Casablanca*, *Some Like it Hot*, and *Now Voyager*. Films make up a great deal of our culture from history to fashion and tradition. As much of a part of our lives as movies are today, they were much more before the days of television when one looked forward to a night out at the movies.

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## APPENDIX A: GOEBBELS DIARIES

January 3, 1939

“I give Demandowski and Waldegg a long lecture on the cinema, etc. They are deeply impressed. Then we watch a few films. Nothing very special among them.

Late in the evening I draft an outline for a new film about the press. The *Seventh Great Power*. I think it will be really something.

In the afternoon a little cinema with Ritter, Hadamovsky, d’Alquen, Fandere, etc. We discuss the film on the press, which begins to take some shape. It is a good idea. It will see the light of day.”

January 4, 1939

“In the evening, to the *Merry Widow*. A magnificent production, but the splendor a little cold. Otherwise, very good to look at and colorful. Wait and see.”

January 19, 1939

Yesterday: A lot of work. Discuss personnel questions with Hanke. Arent’s *Merry Widow* comes in for a great deal of criticism, even from the Fuhrer.”

January 24, 1939

“In the evening, check films. *New year’s Night on the Alexanderplatz* not quite successful, somewhat slow and confused and too vulgar in its handling of the language and the milieu. *Immortal Heart* by Harlan a little overdone in parts, but quite good in others. *In the Name of the People*, a bad crime film immediately recognizable as official in its inspiration.”

January 26, 1939

“In the evening, check films. *Humans, Animals, Sensations*, a typical Harry Piel film. Also *Between the River and the Steppe*, a mediocre Hungarian film.”

January 27, 1939

“In the afternoon, watch the film *Hotel Sacher*. Superbly made, but not quite politically watertight. I shall have it re-edited and a few scenes reshot.”

February 5, 1939

“In the evening, Leni Riefenstahl reports to me on her trip to America. She gives me an exhaustive description, and one that is far from encouraging. We shall get nowhere there. The Jews rule by terror and bribery. But for how much longer?

February 6, 1939

Watch a film, *An Old Heart Goes Travelling*. Tedious and incomprehensible. Also *Secret*, a very old, nauseating Jewish film. How far we have come from that kind of thing.”

May 27, 1939

“Films in the evening. An art film from Munich, gloriously botched. *Border Power*, a quite nice and exciting film from the Bavaria studio. *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*. Marvelous stuff from America, with Gary Cooper. Wonderfully made, excellent ideas, beautifully acted. I am delighted.”

May 29, 1939

“In the evening, films: *All Quiet on the Western Front*. A very clever propaganda vehicle. At the time we had to sabotage it. *Eight Girls In One Boat*. A film made in 1933, but skillful and modern. Still a pleasure to see today.”

October 10, 1939

“I discuss the work of the BdM in Berlin with Fraulein Mundel. It is difficult to get the girls together for regular meetings. I intend if necessary, to put the cinemas at their disposal on Sunday mornings.

Old film, *The Threepenny Opera*. Typical Jewish humbug. This is the kind of thing that they were allowed to set before the German people with impunity. To our credit that we have got rid of all this rubbish.”

October 11, 1939

“In the evening, check films to see if they will be of any use for the war effort. *The Journey to Tilsit*, a Harlan Production with Soderbaum, Dammann, van Dongen. A well made, artistic film. But an excessively torment, tragic view of marriage. Harlan is letting his own experiences show, and not even tastefully.”

October 17, 1939

“Hippler back from Poland with a lot of material for the Ghetto film.

Film material: the latest newsreel. Good, but no longer as interesting as while the fighting was still in progress. Film of Warsaw. Magnificent. Historical documents of priceless worth. And then footage for the Ghetto film. Never seen anything like it. Scenes so horrific and brutal in their explicitness that one’s blood runs cold. One shudders at such barbarism. This Jewry must be eliminated.

October 25, 1939

“I mull over some thoughts on radio, film and theatre. I issue new directives ordering that work be intensified on all these fronts. The people have need of them, now more than ever. Apart from anything else, they must have something to spend their money on at a time when there is not much else to buy with it...”

October 26, 1939

“Discuss questions concerning the Reich Chamber of Culture with Schmidt. The division goes into regions, with authority concentrated in the provincial cultural administrators, will remain. Otherwise we shall introduce a few changes. The whole organization must be simplified considerably...”

October 28, 1939

“In the evening, look at films. Rushes for our Jew-film. Shocking. This film will be our biggest hit. New version of the Poland film. Now much better than the first...”

October 29, 1939

“In the evening, watch films with the entire family. *Alarm At Station 3*. A quite good entertainment movie.”

November, 2 1939

“Newsreel completed. Turned out excellently. The Fuhrer is also very pleased with it. Then new rushes from the Jew-film, which are also very effective. Then a propaganda film from Ufa about air defense, which tries a humorous approach, actually with great success. Script of the Poland film checked, and thoroughly revised and corrected.”

November 4, 1939

“Watch a French newsreel. Cinematically good, psychologically poor. *Little Night-Music* a glorious Tobias film with glorious music. *Hitler Youth in the War*, a useful propaganda film. Film against venereal disease not psychologically good. Must be discussed again.”

November 6, 1939

“Yesterday: Out early. To the Ufapalast [Ufapalast am Zoo (UFA palace by the zoo) one of Berlin’s largest and most prestigious cinemas, used as a premier theatre for major films.] with Schirach. Hitler Youth film festival throughout the Reich. I make a short speech. The Tobis film *O III 88* is a roaring success with the young people. One must see films in public now and then, since otherwise one becomes too one-sided in one’s judgments. The film *Hours* will now be staged twice monthly for the Hitler Youth, to cement their political direction.”

November 7, 1939

“I restrict the import of foreign, particularly American films. The public does not want to see this stuff anymore. In broadcasting, I place further limits on the activities of the smaller outlet stations. We must get round to the 5<sup>th</sup> network. At the moment we are wasting too much equipment and personnel.

An enormous amount to work on at home. Film questions with Hippler: we agree on 100 German films per year. Fewer, but of higher quality. This means we shall be ending the old-style, purely commercial film industry. Newsreel: a lack of material. But otherwise good...”

November 11, 1939

“Gregory reports on the situation in the Protectorate. A tough struggle racial identity. I recommend treatment through penalties that inconvenience the entire population, thus alienating it from the small clique of diehard agitators. Closing-down of cinemas and trams, for instance, when the Czechs make the slightest attempt to strike. This will soon cure them of their urge to strike.

I work on the Jew-film. The script still needs considerable revision. Discussion with Hippler on the film’s future form. I believe it will be very good.”

November 14, 1939

“Among other things, I study scripts for propaganda films, and reports on morale in France and England...Films checked: the newsreel, which is good but still needs a lot of work. Then a few amusing little fairy-tale films for our children, who are delighted.”

November 16, 1939

“Film work in the evening. *Polish Campaign* has turned out very well, fluent, with striking effects. We can now do the final editing. The latest newsreel: another masterpiece. *Slope Arms*: a bad propaganda film produced by the Wehrmacht. Comes close to being banned.”

November 21, 1939

“Yesterday: Annual accounts of Cinema industry. My prognoses confirmed. On the whole, all the companies have done excellent business. But also big losses because of projects abandoned. “

November 29, 1939

“Jannings outlines new film projects to me. A very good *Ohm Kruger*, about the Boer War, and a *Fridericus*, with Krauss. Also not bad...”

December 5, 1939

“Discuss the *Jud Suss* film with Harlan and Moller Harlan, who is to direct, has a host of new ideas. He is re-working the script yet again.”

December 10, 1939

“In the evening, Leichtenstern, Demandowski and Hippler. The Poland film. Turned out quite excellent. A bull’s-eye! I am very happy about it.

December 12, 1939

“The Fuhrer makes some extremely harsh criticisms of the film industry, particularly the weekly newsreel. I do not think this entirely justified. He does all this in front of the officers and adjutants. But he has a right to. He is a genius.

Check the weekly newsreel. In my opinion, turned out magnificently. We shall see what the Fuhrer says about it. Plus a few little propaganda films.”

December 13, 1939

“Watch a number of war-propaganda films; only good in parts. The Poland film is being reworked again. We shall put some new life into the newsreel. I see some French newsreels, which are very poor.”

December 15, 1939

“Study scripts for the press film and the *Jud Suss* film. Turned out well. The *Jud Suss* film, especially, has been rewritten marvelously well by Harlan. This will be *the* anti-Semitic film.”

December 18, 1939

“Jew-film. Much better, but not yet ready. Another series of changes. We work on it for a long time. *Your Aunt – My Aunt*, a harmless Roberts film. *Criminal Commissar Eyk*. The usual old crime rubbish. I shall put a stop to this sort of thing.”

December 20, 1939

“Propaganda films for the home front. They are not especially good. I shall have to replace the entire production team.”

December 22, 1939

The Box-office receipts of the cinemas and theaters are good beyond our expectations. We are investigating the idea of a wartime tax on theatres and cinemas. We must find some outlet for the money in circulation in the country with nothing for it to buy. Check films. New newsreel turned out well, if somewhat risky in overall conception. *Sumer, Sun Erika*, a nice, popular film, which in these hard times will do well, if only because of its totally innocuous quality.”

December 27, 1939

“Looked at films. *Mother-Love* again. A real masterpiece. A really big hit from Ucicky with Kathe Dorsch. Receives the highest recommendations. *Two Worlds* by Grundgens. A film set in the present and about helping with the harvest – or at least supposedly so. It has totally missed the point. Too intellectual and almost entirely cerebral in its demands on the audience. Grundgens cannot get out of his own skin. In the evening, another film *Twilight*. A smuggler film. But well made.”

December 30, 1939

“A number of cinema problems with Reichmeister. The Grundgens film can hardly be saved. The *Jud Suss* film is going ahead. Francois Rosay is abusing us in the most vulgar fashion on the French radio. The old Brute! Our films are improving. We have won the First Prize at Venice for *Robert Koch* and Special Distinctions for *Rauschende Ballnacht* and cultural films. Way ahead of other nations. This makes me proud and happy. Magda arrives. We are able to talk for a while, and then we drive to the premiere of the film *Mother-Love*. A spectacular affair, and as expected, sensational success for the film. Ucicky and Dorsch are very happy. And stark as well. The public is deeply moved. I am delighted at this victory for German cinema.”

December 31, 1939

“The film *Mother-Love* has been greeted with the sincerest enthusiasm in the press.”

January 5, 1940

“Speak with Marian about the *Jud Suss* material. He is still not entirely sure whether he wants to play the Jew. But, with a little help, I manage to persuade him. Demandowski outlines the *Ohm Kruger* material to me. This has possibilities. Jannings in the main role, direction by Steinhoff. I also have a serious talk with Demandowski and Leichtenstern about Tobis’ and Ufa’s failures, particularly in production of entertainment films. They have too much on their plates. Perhaps I shall divide Ufa, Tobis and Terra into two main sections each: one for serious, the other for lighter productions. I shall install new productions chiefs to handle the light material. In any case something must be done in this area to counter the lack of good material. Check a film. *Red Mill* a nice entertainment film. A typical Russian-Bolshevik hate-film directed against us, vulgar and contemptible but not without skill. Seems very primitive to the likes of us.”

January 12 1940

“Magnificent report on Ufa. The film industry is booming. I shall have to rework the Jew film again. Check the film *White Lilacs*. Unfortunately a failure from Rabenalt. I am a little depressed by the way our directors start with a few successes and then always go off the rails and become intellectual. But I shall do something about it.”

January 18, 1940



“Film check for *Casanova*, directed by Kowa. Still somewhat over played but much better than his first film. Last two newsreels. Both turned out very well in the end. Screen test for Marian in *Jud Suss*. Excellent.”

January 19, 1940

“Study the film companies’ new production schedules. This time, they include a whole series of the best national political material.”

January 23, 1940

“In the evening, check films: new newsreel. This time back to the previous standard of excellence. The only problem is that in this cold weather and with so many transportation problems, we lack up-to-date material.”

January 24, 1940

“Winkler reports on the state of film production. Ufa in a very good position, Terra the same, good at Bavaria and Wien-Film, still bad at Tobis. Leichtenstern will probably have to be dismissed. The number of productions at Ufa, Tobis and Terra will be halved. I am looking for a few experienced, able men to handle entertainment film production. Apart from this, we intend to establish a Society for Electro-Acoustic Research to improve the technical aspect of our films. The money for the Party’s mobile talking-picture shows will come from Winkler. Better, in any case, than letting the Finance Minister swallow it. Check through the Ufa schedule again. It is not particularly outstanding. Leichtenstern has no perspective and no initiative. He seems to be rather at a loss when it comes to big problems. Check films: bad, run of the mill products. We have only good films and bad films. We lack the serviceable middle range.”

January 28, 1940

“In the evening, check films: *Sheer Love*, by Ruhmann with Hertha Feiler. A little thin, but cleanly made and atmospheric. And then yet another really bad entertainment film.”

February 1, 1940

“Discuss new material with the writer Rehberg. I suggest he writes a script on the theme of the Opium War.”

February 2, 1940

“Klitsch delivers a report on Ufa. Situation very good. But Leichtenstern is not mastering the problems. There must be a change. Otherwise the whole thing will fall apart. Klitsch understands his job. Unfortunately, he knows nothing about art. Discuss film matters with Goring afterwards. He promises me his support for the *Jud Suss* film.”

February 4, 1940

“Checked films in the evening. *Passion*, a mediocre entertainment film. *From a First Marriage*, good entertainment. Director Verhoeven. These days one must check all films oneself since so much depends on whether they are psychologically correct.”

February 6, 1940

“Discuss film questions with Hippler. The film archive must be brought up to date. Receive the Danish actress, Birgel Ipsen, and the singer Friess in my office. Together with Heinrich George. We discuss aspects of cultural exchanges. Check the newsreel. Magnificent shots of the attack on English convoys. Hippler is very sick. We must try to find a replacement for him. He has managed to complete a reorganization plan for the entire German film industry, which looks very tempting. I shall check through it again.”

February 8, 1940

“Yesterday: Frost, rain, sheet-ice, increasing coal shortages. Some theatres closed, and all the Ufa studios. Check films: Newsreel, this time magnificent, glorious film of bombed-out English ships. Liebeneiner’s *The Good Seven*. Witty and nice. Somewhat overdone and a little snobbish. But on the whole a good achievement. Bolshevik film. *Peter the Great*. Very Russian, Pan-Slavic and not at all Bolshevist. A little too much ecstasy but highly interesting as an experiment.”

February 9, 1940

“In the evening, premiere of the Poland film at the Ufapalast. Many representatives from government and the Wehrmacht. The film is a huge success. So my work finds some reward in the outside world. I am very satisfied.”

February 11, 1940

“Film *Woman to Measure*. Nice entertainment, but somewhat too obscene.”

February 12, 1940

“Frau ... visits me this afternoon. We see the American Disney film *Snow White*, a magnificent artistic achievement. A fairy tale for grown-ups thought out into the last detail and made with a great love of humanity and nature. An artistic delight! All sorts of gossip.”

October 3, 1940

“More excellent reactions to my speech in Prague. They want to establish a Czech Chamber of Culture, and especially a chamber of Films I am opposed to this. A simple administrative organ would be better. It is quite sufficient and not so risky.”

October 4, 1940

“Check films: very good newsreel. Re-edited version of *The Girl from Barnhelm* now good and unobjectionable. And *A Life Long*, with Ucicky, Menzel, Wessely, a really big hit from Wienfilm. Gripping and heart rending...”

October 5, 1940

“*Forger*, a new film produced by the Gestapo. Bad, because too didactic.”

October 8, 1940

“Visitors: Professor Froelich, Frau Leander, Frau Ondra and Ello. Put the finishing touches to the newsreel. Despite the present stagnation, turned out magnificently. And talk and discuss a great deal.”

October 10, 1940

“A few cultural films. And Ritter’s *Above All in the World*. Absolutely naïve and primitive, but could well be a big hit with the public. Ritter says patriotic things with a lack of inhibition that would have anyone else blushing. A few things still have to be changed.”

October 11, 1940

“Check films in the evening. *The Eternal Jew* now ready, at last. Now it can be released. We have worked on it for long enough. A quite nice Gili film. Insofar as one places any value on light opera films.”

October 14, 1940

“Check the newsreel, which contains all sorts. But no war, and in the middle of a war! Unfortunately, we cannot wage it purely for the convenience of the newsreel.”

October 21, 1940

“Newsreel in the evening. Again, they have made the best of things. What there was to make. And some fine footage despite everything. Discuss the matter of French film production with Hippler, who is now to take the problem in hand. In this area we must secure ourselves as much influence as possible, for the present and for the future. We consider the best method to rely this aim. We intend to build a camouflaged system, so that the average Frenchman scarcely notices who is really calling the tune. This is the way the English have always done things. One thing is certain: I shall not relax until the entire European film industry belongs to us.”

October 23, 1940

“Discuss the new Ritter film *Stukas* with Hippler. This is going to be quite good.”

October 24, 1940

“A few people at home in the evening. After newsreel, showing of the Leander film, *Heart of the King*, now re-worked and very serviceable. Now it can be released. Discuss a series of film problems with Professor Froelich. As always he is amiable and fatherly.”

October 27, 1940

“Visit Wienfilm. There they are hard at work. I am very satisfied. Hartl and Hirth are doing their work well. Watch clips from new films, which especially please me. Shooting at the *Theater an der Wien* for Forst’s film *Operette*. The theatre has to be renovated from the foundations up.”

October 30, 1940

“We watch the film that Heinz Ruhmann made with the children; brings on laughter and tears, it is so beautiful.”

November 1, 1940

“A host of film problems with Hippler. Our dramatists’ work has not enough sureness of touch. Too many wrong decisions. Must be sorted out. Check over some problems with cultural films.”

November 2, 1940

“Discuss newsreel problems with Hippler. After the war, we intend to produce three different newsreels again. And bring all state owned film theatres together in one holding company. This will take some work.”

November 3, 1940

“Film people visiting, to whom I show the American epic, *Gone with the Wind*, which arouses general admiration. Rightly so, because it deserves it. But some doubtful opinions too.”

November 14, 1940

“Discuss the reorganization of the newsreels with Hippler. We have established a new company including Ufa, Tobis and Bavaria. I intend to keep personal control of it. After the war there will be three different newsreels again. Now, in the middle of a war, this is not a practical proposition. In the evening check films. First German color film, *Women are Better Diplomats*. Bad script, but the color effects good. We have made a lot of progress in this field. Newsreel also very good.”

November 16, 1940

“Hippler delivers a new work statute for the state owned film companies. This is necessary particularly in the face of the Bavaria Company’s willfulness.”

November 17, 1940

"I sign Hippler's new film statute. This should bring order into the state owned film companies. Wagner in Munich is interfering too much."

November 18, 1940

"Newsreel. This time tuned out very well. A rare poor film from the Bavaria studios, *Heart Weighs Anchor*, which I should really like to ban."

November 20, 1940

"To the Bavaria studios in the afternoon. Inspect building plans and hear the latest news. Uncertain whether Schweikart can handle running the entire operation in the long term. Perhaps it would be better if he did some directing. We see some of the shooting of the film *Philine*. Dorsch and Krahle. Pabst directing. He has it well in hand. Rushes from *Philine* and *Girl from Fano*, which I find exceptionally pleasing. Discuss plans for the reorganization of Bavaria with ... and Schweikart. Bavaria is now falling into line with our regulations in fact, it has no choice."

November 22, 1940

"I busy myself with checking films. *Roses from Tyrol*, good entertainment. Two good cultural films and a brilliant newsreel."

November 23, 1940

"Schmidt-Cracow wants Frank to have full powers over his film and radio work. I reject this. The Reich must keep control when it comes to the chief machinery of intellectual leadership of the nation. There can be no compromise on this issue. It is precisely in this area that we must keep a tight hold and a clearly dominant role for the Reich. Frank feels himself to be not so much the representative of the Reich as King of Poland. But that will not get him very far. Check on the war film about the campaign in the West, put together from newsreels. Turned out well. One has to be filled with admiration even now: what a Triumph!

November 24, 1940

"A number of film and theatre problems. Small tea party for the people who worked on *Heart of the Queen*. Very interesting. And good for me to see some different faces for ones. Froelich, Leander, Birgel, Mackeben, Lotte Koch, Koppenhoefer, etc. Much exchanging of ideas and stimulating talk. Print of the new film *Request Concert*. Well produced. Spun out for rather too long, otherwise, however, very effective. A real film for the people."

November 25, 1940

“Check films. Newsreel particularly good. An entertainment film, *Head High, Johannes!* Very bad and completely ruined under Kowa’s direction. Scarcely salvageable.”

December 2, 1940

“Newsreel. Somewhat thin. I perk it up a little. Discuss a number of important film problems with Hippler. Once again, all sorts of things have piled up during my absence.”

December 3, 1940

“Our newsreel work is somewhat in a rut. I order a few cameramen from the propaganda companies to be placed at my disposal. I shall use them for special tasks. Check the newsreel in the evening. Now it is much better. One has to be constantly prodding them. New Ufa film *Wedding Night*. A typical Ufa production: mediocre and characterless. Just like Leichtenstern.”

December 4, 1940

“Watch the newsreel with the Fuhrer who is very pleased with it. The shots of London burning make a particularly profound impression on him. He also takes careful note of the pessimistic opinions from the USA.”

December 6, 1940

“Talk over a host of film problems with Hippler. They seem to pile up all the time. But we can point to plenty of successes. I help Frau Meyerhofer in her search for a good part. Leni Riefenstahl reports on her work on the film *Lowlands* which is very ambitious and expensive. On the other hand, she shows me some glorious sample footage. She has something and if she is used properly, then she can produce results. Check films in the evening: both the most recent newsreels, which are magnificently successful. Some rushes from films in progress. Also very promising.”

December 7, 1940

“Winkler reports on personnel questions in the cinema industry. Films are becoming too expensive. I set maximum budgetary limits. In Paris we are aiming at controlling interest in the French film industry. We are putting new life into the entire technical side of film production. The theatre Park is to be taken away from Ufa and largely deactivated. Hippler is given a dressing down; work on the newsreels is behind schedule again. He has too much on his plate and so does not take sufficient trouble with projects. Winkler has big new financial plans. We shall realize them little by little. Otherwise things in the cinema industry are in good shape. Except that money is being spent too generously. But I shall put a stop to that. In the afternoon, premiere of the Bismark film at the Ufapalast. Great crowds. The film’s success is absolutely sensational. Another hit. I am very glad. Our film work has real class now. It has cost a lot of

trouble and labor, not to mention worry and disappointment. But now we are being repaid with success.”

December 10, 1940

“Film problems with Hippler. Newsreel already checked by the Fuhrer. Question of film script policy in the ministry. We must be very careful in this area. The gentleman concerned have too little contact with me. Several of the most recent films have been bad. But we must release films, or otherwise we shall have a general shortage. Set the newsreel to music; it works very well. Especially impressive footage of the Request Concert and the battleship Bismark. Rough cut of Axel’s film *Irish Tragedy*. Overall effect somewhat banal and cold. No great achievement. Axel must put in a lot more work on it. Then again, we have quite enough of these Irish films. The theme is not conclusive enough.”

December 11, 1940

“I have a thousand things to deal with. Wagner is resisting the new charter of the Bavaria Company. But I cannot help him. We must have order and clarity. Only one person can give the orders and in this case it must be me. Check the sample excerpts from films in the evening. A Bavaria film *In the Shadow of the Mountains*, a melancholy dreary piece of froth.”

December 12, 1940

“Newsreel very good. New Jugo film *Our Fraulein Doktor*. Pleasant, but not as good as the previous Jugo films. Somewhat carelessly made.”

December 14, 1940

“Watch a Russian film about Lenin. Completely void of talent and ideas. Bolshevism is death to the soul. A German entertainment film provides a refreshing contrast.”

December 15, 1940

“Check films: an idiotic production from the Bavaria studios, which I cannot watch for long. Schweikart has come up with several failures lately. Great Pity!”

December 16, 1940

“Newsreel in the evening: has not turned out quite so well. Will need some work. Forst’s film *Operetta*. A huge hit. Lively and tuneful. But a pity that Forst plays the main role himself. He is not the type for today’s tastes.”

December 17, 1940

“Discussion with Jannings. He is working on his Boer film like a man possessed. I see some rushes. By the looks of it, it will be a big success. The latest newsreel is good *Request concert* film. Now it is more relaxed, good to look at and gripping. Another big success.”

December 18, 1940

“To the Capitol to watch the final part of the Schiller film. A runaway success. Particularly for Caspar, whom I meet and get to know. A nice, modest young man.”

December 19, 1940

“In the evening, check the new Christmas edition of the newsreel. Good, but not overwhelming. Then a few excerpts from productions in progress.”

December 20, 1940

“Check cultural films. We are far ahead of the rest of the world in this field. Our productions are nothing short of models of their kind. Latest newsreel, although it has taken a while, very good. Schweikart’s *Girl from Fano*. A hugely complicated story about fisher folk with a psychological background. Just the way I had picture North Sea fishermen, I must say! These dreadful literary types! The Bavaria studios, and Schweikart, will have to look very smart from now on. Otherwise things will not go well for them.”

December 24, 1940

“Film returns: box-office situation good, almost all films returning good profits. Except for the Bavaria studios, who have had a number of depressing failures. I shall have to put things right there at some stage.”

December 28, 1940

“To Lutze’s fifty-sixth birthday. He has earned the honor. We have a long, cordial talk. I give him a film projector, which we try out straight away with the latest newsreel. Not exactly overwhelming. But it is Christmas and a slack period. One has to be content with what one can get.”

December 30, 1940

“Newsreel in the evening. Turned out well, after all. Give Hippler a number of tips, particularly re. the Berlin milieu in our film dramas.”

December 31, 1940

“Premiere of *Request Concert* at the Ufapalast am Zoo. A big crowd invited. The film meets with a magnificent reception. I am all the more pleased because the idea for it came from me. Another



job well done. The most pleasing thing is the extraordinary common touch which the film shows. It will kindle a spark throughout the German people.”

February 10, 1941

“Newsreel: this time rather mediocre. Clips from *Ohm Kruger* by Jannings. Very good. This will be a hit. An American film, *Public Opinion*. Excellent. They can do this sort of thing over there, without thinking twice about it.”

February 11, 1941

“Evening: newsreel with music. Not good, not bad. I complain again. Two marvelous German cultural films. We are world leaders in this field. Demandowski show further samples from *Ohm Kruger*. Quite outstanding.”

February 14, 1941

“Check films in the evening. A whole series of visitors in the meantime. Froelich’s *Gas-Man*. Very witty and comical. Excellently made, but for smiles rather than belly laughs. I am very satisfied with it. Bertram’s *Battle Squadron Lutzow*. An ambitious look at the Luftwaffe’s war service. With monumental scenes. Unique accuracy in background descriptions. I am gripped.” Some more film problems to discuss with Hippler. His report on Italy is rather more positive.”

February 16, 1941

“Straight to the Schiller Theatre for the War Congress of the German Film Chamber. I speak on the subject of the present film situation. Its difficulties, but also its successes. A comprehensive report that is greeted with general applause. The big new film projects deserve every praise. They prove that one can combined artistic merit with profitability. A fine and certainly very useful meeting. In the evening, premiere of the *Gas Man* at the Ufapalast am Zoo. In the presence of the members of the Reich Film Chamber. Everyone who is anyone is there. The film is a great success. The public screams with laughter. Acting and direction, however, very low key. Unfortunately drags a little in part. But otherwise a great artistic achievement. Then afterwards a reception held by Professor Froelich at the KddK. A little conversation.”

February 17, 1941

“Newsreel in the evening. Turned out well again. Things are gradually improving in that quarter as well. Then discuss a number of film matters with Hippler.”

February 18, 1941

“Hess rings up: he has a number of objections to *Gas Man*. Quite humorless. The best thing we could do would be to tie ourselves up in straightjackets and stick ourselves in jail. Discuss his

new film, *Battle Squadron Lutzow*, with Bertram. We still have a minor disagreement about the ending, but this will soon be sorted out. A few people visiting in the evening. Albert Hehn and Brennecke from the film world. Put the finishing touches on the newsreel and music. Not outstanding, but what else can one do in these quiet times.”

February 21, 1941

“I come to an agreement with Goring about the Propaganda Companies. He is willing to put camera operators at my disposal, but not at the High Command’s. He is completely dismissive about Brauchitsch’s film on the Western Campaign. He laughed himself sick at the *Gas Man*. He is a frank, open man. Discuss a few matters with Amann. Dr. Muller reports to me on Munich. Everything is going well these days, even at the Bavaria Studios. All they have to do is make better films.”

February 22, 1941

“I have a lot to do. Reorganizational work on the Reich Culture Chamber. Likewise on the Request Concert, where there has been too much interference by other departments recently. I shall free Goedecke of his overlords. Too many cooks spoil the broth. Film and theatre matters. We get our way with the *Gas Man*.”

February 24, 1941

“Newsreel: very rich in content and varied. They have made good use of their material. Film, *Rides for Germany*. With Birgel, direction by Rebenalt. A little clichéd and the dialogue is too wooden. At the end, very good and gripping.”

February 25, 1941

“Magnificent box office returns for our cinema industry. Fifty-six million in profits last year. This year it is looking even better. And all the films originated by me have notched up record audiences. I reorganize the film export effort. From now on it will be based on political rather than financial criteria. This is a propaganda question rather than a money matter. Particularly where friendly powers are concerned. But Italy must make some concessions to us. Better dubbing of German films. I take more steps to hold down spiraling film salaries.”

February 26, 1941

“Discuss a tighter control of the Reich Culture Chamber with Gutterer. Main object a unified management which confines itself exclusively to organizational matters. I have Hinkel in mind for this. A lot of film and theatre problems. Tours abroad. We are forced to restrict them somewhat because of transport difficulties. Film: *Swedish Nightingale*. With Ilse Werner, Gottschalk and Diehl. The film is not a success. The dramatic conflict creaks; the entire thing has

no atmosphere and is often quite banal. I am very disappointed. Direction by Brauer. Another achievement of this nature, and things could become rather bad for him.”

February 27, 1941

“I agree to substantial financial grants for theatre and propaganda purposes. Particularly for work among the ethnic Germans. Film matters with Hippler. Independent production facilities in Warsaw refused. Sharp criticism of the *Swedish Nightingale*.”

February 28, 1941

“Check films for the rest of the evening. The film was good: *Men's Business*. An engaging film aimed at farmers and common folk. Something decent from Ufa at last.”

March 1, 1941

“Fraulein Riefenstahl is causing me a deal of worry with her *Lowlands* film. A hysterical person, who has a new project every day. Hesse is now demanding the highest certificate of approval of his *Victory in the West*, the same honor awarded to *Battle Squadron Lutzow*. I refuse. The High Command is furious about it, but I can do no other. In the afternoon, premiere of *Battle Squadron Lutzow* at the Ufapalast. Big attendance. The film is an enormous success. And it is well made; clear, realistic, with a wonderful plot and great scenes. A genuine war film for the people.”

March 2, 1941

“Work on the newsreel. This time there is a certain lack of good, gripping material. Another area in which it was time the war began again. Work on this problem in the evening, writing and revising. But I cannot make much of nothing. A new Ufa film, *Boys*. Not a masterpiece, but it will do. A long discussion with Hippler on film matters in the evening.”

March 3, 1941

“Newsreel in the evening. A host of new and very impressive pictures from Bulgaria included. By dint of single-minded work, we are able to get it ready for this week. Hard going, when there is such a dearth of material.”

March 5, 1941

“Forster wants aid for his theatres. He shall have it. He tells me about a bizarre case of a leak involving the SD. He will have to be on the alert in that quarter. This snooping is nauseating. Denunciation turned into an industry. Let them just cross my path. Forster is very depressed. I cheer him up a little. Johst gives me a report on the literary situation. Somewhat confused. He has written a good film script, *Thomas Paine*. In the afternoon I drive out to inspect the film studios and films in progress. First to Johannisthal. Things look very bleak there. The studios are

quite inadequate and will have to disappear after the war. Neither do the staff make a very good impression. All so lax and lifeless. I shall sort this place out. At the Grunewald studios to see Jannings, who is filming *Ohm Kruger*. The big studio is one enormous camp. Jannings is working on a wonderful scene. Then we see rushes from the film, which put all previous material in the shade. We spend a long time deliberating whether we should bring the film out in one part or two. I think one part, because this will make for greater impact.”

March 7, 1941

“Discuss reform of the Reich Culture Chamber with Gutterer. We must do something in that quarter. Hinkel is to carry out the operation. Reich Culture Chamber and KdF matters with Ley. He comes back to his Seventh Chamber. I remain non-committal.”

March 8, 1941

“I immediately open discussions with Bertram for a new war film dealing with the army: *The Road to Abbefille*. I explain the basic approach and direction to him. Bertram is delighted and sets to work straightaway. The war film *Assault Group Hallgarten* has been something of a failure, as I predicted. Another glorious achievement of Hesse's. I now intend to get rid of all this amateurism. Discuss reorganization of the Reich Culture Chamber with Gutterer. It will be totally separated from the ministry, for it must be a movement rather than an administrative machine. Hinkel will become chief manager and, if need be, Under-Secretary of State. I shall give him wide powers. He is to build the entire thing anew. Deal with the most important matters at the centre, but for the rest, decentralize. Discuss new film material with Hippler. He is doing an outstanding job. Winkler reports. The Film industry's earnings are magnificent. Sixty million in one year. We shall raise the hire charges. With this money I shall build new film theatres in the East and the West. Winkler wants to release *Ohm Kruger* in two parts. I shall have to see it first. The new Riefenstahl film is causing us worry. Crazy sums of money are being poured into it. Winkler brings reports of the reception given to *Jud Suss* abroad. Quite magnificent. It caused street demonstrations in Hungary. This film is as good as a new political programme. Proof that films can exert influence and provide inspiration completely in line with our ideals.”

March 9, 1941

“Showing of an American film, *Romeo and Juliet*. Theatre transferred to the big screen, but well done. Shearer and Howard thrilling.”

March 11, 1941

“Ufa film, *U-Boats Westwards*. Good in parts, but without much real pace or much atmosphere. Will need a lot of changes.”

March 13, 1941

“Check the statute of the International Film Chamber. Well drafted. We must concentrate the whole thing in Berlin, even if the Italians protest. We are the great power in the European cinema.”

March 15, 1941

“Watch the Bavaria Studios’ *Carl Peters* film. With Albers. The film is not outstanding. Too much editorializing and too little action. The message is too crudely expressed, and the parts attacking the government of the time do not hit their target. I am very dissatisfied with it.”

March 16, 1941

“In the afternoon, watch *Ohm Kruger* with Jannings and Demandowski. A really great, thrilling work of art. The supreme achievement of the entire war. This is a film to go crazy about. Jannings is very happy. The film can only be released in one part.”

March 18, 1941

“Hinkel will now assume the central management of the Reich Culture Chamber. I have granted him wide plenipotentiary powers to this end. I hope that he will restore order to this pretty chaotic outfit. It is high time. A whole series of new film problems. There are new ones every day. But they work they cause is worthwhile. The German film industry is currently at a level higher than ever before. Newsreel in the evening. Excellent. Plus a mass of film matters.”

March 21, 1941

“Discuss film matters with Rosenberg and Hess. Neither of them understands much about the subject. But the Fuhrer judges all film problems with instinctive correctness. I tell him about Jannings’ *Ohm Kruger*, which he is very interested in and would like to see. A cheerful Ruhmann film, *Main Thing: Happy* not exactly a brilliant achievement! I am planning a new certificate for big films like *Ohm Kruger*. Something along the lines of “National Film”. Combined with the award of a ring of honor to its creator. This will act as a further incentive to our film makers in the pursuit of excellence. Our film industry is on the march.”

March 25, 1941

“Newsreel. Marvelous new film of Africa. Those are our boys! Very good new color film shots. We have now caught up with the American sin this field, thank God. Filmically we are on the march.”

March 26, 1941

“Check films in the evening. With Demandowski, look at three possible endings for *Ohm Kruger*. The one put together by me is the best and is accepted. Edit the *gas Man*. It can be released now.”

April 2, 1941

“Discuss personnel, salary and organizational questions with Gutterer. Debate about the reorganization of the Reich Culture Chamber with him and Hinkel. Hinkel wants to do everything himself. I reject this. He is not to take over the administration, but is only to give instructions and guidelines. Otherwise the central office will rule, the organization will become top-heavy, and the presidents of the individual chambers will lose their work satisfaction. Hinkel is to be given the title, General Secretary of the Reich Culture Chamber. In the evening, first showing of the completed *Ohm Kruger* in front of a quite large gathering at my home. Great excitement. The film is unique. A really big hit. Everyone is thrilled by it. Jannings has excelled himself. An anti-England film beyond one’s wildest dreams. Gauleiter Eigruber is also present and very enthusiastic.”

April 4, 1941

“Sign an agreement with Vichy regarding the French newsreel. We gain 40 percent of it and great influence on production. I would have liked 60 percent, but the foreign office gave in too easily. Discuss Narvik film with Harlan. He intends to start shooting in the autumn. The film must be a real blockbuster. Harlan’s involvement is a certain assurance in that respect. Check new Leander film, *Way to the Open*. A good effort. Effective and tastefully made.”

April 5, 1941

“Divided opinions regarding *Ohm Kruger*. Some find it too horrific. But that is what it must be to work effectively on the public. And that is its purpose. In the afternoon, big premiere for *Ohm Kruger* at the Ufapalast. A very imposing cinematic event. Everyone who is anyone is there. Glorious music conducted by Knappertsbuch, *les Preludes*. Then the film is shown, to the breathless excitement of the public. Devastating effect. It is a success without equal. The audience reacts magnificently. This is not the usual premiere audience, because I have invited party people and now in this large auditorium, it is possible to see exactly how good the film is. I sit for an hour afterwards, talking to the artistes. Jannings is proud and happy. He has every reason to be.”

April 6, 1941

“*Ohm Kruger* has set feelings ablaze. The critics’ comments in the press are fantastic. A few ossified bureaucrats at the foreign ministry have taken offense. Otherwise the enthusiasm is universal. I award Jannings the newly created “Film Ring of Honor”. For his great services to our German film making art. He is overjoyed. A few film and theatre problems. These must still be dealt with, even in these tense times. But one’s work must go on even if one is only half concentrating on it. Newsreel in the evening. Rather vague and confused at first viewing, as always. But we shall make something of it. Plus a few test shots for new films. I drink tea with the Fuhrer and we chat about other things. I tell him about *Ohm Kruger*, which he values highly.

He tells me of the deep impression which the Boer War made on him as a boy. The characters in the film please him enormously. He has some very flattering things to say about our theatre and film work. He is particularly impressed by the films. He wants the profits from films and radio to be used exclusively for the good of the rest of the arts. My old demand. He would like some film studios in Linz. It is to challenge the cultural dominance of Vienna. Graz is too cut off for that. And Vienna must not be the Mecca for Austrian provincials. The Hapsburgs systematically encouraged this. Rightly, from their point of view. We intend to have Berlin as the political centre, and a series of other cities as cultural centers. I shall do my best to aid cultural expansion in Linz.”

April 15, 1941

“Films shown abroad make for one of our most effective propaganda weapons. They do not need to make money, and they may even cost money. Newsreel in the evening from the theatre of operations. Will really hit home. These pictures will go out to the entire world. Settle a few film problems with Hippler. I want fewer, but good films, and not a lot of mediocre productions.”

April 17, 1941

“A number of film and theatre matters. Hinkel reports on the great successes of his entertainment projects for the troops. Everything is running smoothly.”

April 18, 1941

“Discuss film treatments with Hippler. I want to see fewer conflicts about illegitimate children in our films. The legitimate child must remain at least the norm. And then we need new material for the big stars like Leander. We are building new studios in Linz according to the Fuhrer’s wish. A special productions studio is to be completed there with a huge outdoor sound stage.”

April 19, 1941

“Technical problems with Hippler. Particularly regarding films for young people, which must be urgently encouraged. Axel is off to Stockholm to persuade Frau Leander to star in his next film. The Fuhrer is absolutely thrilled by the latest newsreel. And it is a real work on art in terms of film content, composition, editing and music. When we have the material, our achievements in this field are unsurpassable.”

April 24, 1941

“New figures for box office receipts. Another 30 million in profits. We are awash with money; every film is a box office hit.”

April 26, 1941

“Hippler reports from Munich. The people down there now seem to be more satisfied with our film leadership in Berlin. *Ohm Kruger* has been a huge success. The Bavaria studios now intend to pull themselves together. Their record is the worst of any of our companies. Deal with the question of centralization of cinema/theatre management. This must not be affected through Ufa but through a state owned neutral firm.”

April 28, 1941

“Discuss her new film with Frau Leander. She tells me about Sweden. Opinion has swung in our favor there. This is the result of our great victories, which are being greeted with the most enormous admiration all over the world. I read a series of essays by Dr. Hippler on dramatic technique in the cinema. Very wittily and intelligently written. He has a good brain, but he is a little overbearing.”

May 4, 1941

“Discuss the ‘Scharnhorst’ material with Hippler. It is still not ready, and so I forbid filming to start for the moment. The film must be a classic.”

May 6, 1941

“*Ohm Kruger* finds nothing but approval from the Gauleiters. I am very glad, since I had placed such high hopes in the project.”

May 9, 1941

“Treatments and casting questions with Hippler. Winkler wants more films. I am also in favor of this, but not at the expense of quality. I will not have more junk. We decide that the time has come to buy out all the private production companies. They no longer act as a stimulus, but simply rake in money as a result of our work and our successes. They will all disappear by 1 September. Otherwise, I am buying up cinemas in all the countries where it is possible. We must dominate the European cinema industry completely after the war. The Fuhrer has great praise for the latest newsreel. He considers it to be the best yet from the technical point of view. Check films in the evening. Change all sorts of details. But in this field everything is flourishing.”

May 10, 1941

“Premiere of *U-Boats Westwards* at the Ufapalast. A naval affair. The film tends towards simple minded heroics, but it contains some glorious sea footage and wonderful technical props and is a great success. The latest newsreel is gripping, and is given an enthusiastic reception by the public. The navy is a queer outfit.”

May 11, 1941



“Tal over improvements in the management of the Reich Culture Chamber with Hinkel. He is setting to with a will. Very necessary too. Visitors in the evening. A few people from the film world. We watch a recent English newsreel: very bad and in no way comparable with ours. Then a German and an American color film. We are almost level with the Americans. But we must overtake them. I shall do everything I can. Talk for a long time about film problems.”

May 12, 1941

“I study a treatment for a Jannings film, *The Red Stripes*. A film about the General Staff. The opening has turned out very well. We can build on that. Check the newsreel. Not quite as good as the last three, but something can be made of it. English and Russian newsreels that we seized in Belgrade. Absolutely no competition for us. Incomparably poor and amateurish. I am downright proud of our work in this field. We have nothing to fear, either militarily or in the propaganda field, particularly from the Russians. The English films are indescribably naïve. But I think that they are good enough for the English, who are themselves, enormously stupid, unenlightened and primitive. We should take this more into account in our propaganda aimed at England.”

May 13, 1941

“Put the finishing touches to the newsreel in the evening. It has turned out well after all, after being complemented by a snappy musical score. Look at a few more English and Russian newsreels for comparison purposes. Absolutely no competition for us. It is now that one notices how far ahead of the others we really are.”

May 18, 1941

“Film *Friedemann Bach*, with Grundgens. Good from a cultural historical point of view, musically excellent, but as with all Grundgens films, the acting is rather stilted.”

May 19, 1941

“Newsreel. Quite good, but not yet a wartime newsreel. We shall not have to wait too long for that, however. Discuss a few film problems with Hippler.”

May 20, 1941

“Film problems with Hippler. Central management of film theatres. They must be removed from Ufa. But not at the price of raising taxes. Gutterer is to deal with the problem. Newsreel with music in the evening. Now better. Order a few changes. Discuss film and script problems with Hippler. General questions of popular education. Check an anti-cancer film. Strong attack against miracle cures.”

May 22, 1941

“Film statistics: our financial success is enormous. Top of the league are *Request Concert* and *Ohm Kruger*. A total of thirty-six millions in profits again.”

June 1, 1941

“Newsreel in the evening. Very good again. Crete, North Africa. Real war. *The Great King*, by Harlan. Fails completely. Lacks any atmosphere. Exactly the opposite of what I wanted and expected. A Frederick the Great straight from the streets. I am very disappointed.”

June 2, 1941

“Study discussion paper on stepping up of German film production by Hippler. An extremely complicated problem. We need more films especially for export. On the other hand, I would like better, though perhaps fewer films. This however, is probably not feasible. I shall have to give a great deal of careful thought to this problem, which is of decisive importance. Newsreel with music in the evening: magnificent. New Ritter film, *Stukas*. Quite good, with some wonderful air footage, but a typical Ritter production, he cannot lead people. Rather too noisy.”

June 5, 1941

“German films are top in the popularity stakes. Newsreel completed in the evening. Magnificent!”

June 6, 1941

“A mass of film and theatre problems. Discuss the reworking of *The Great King* with Hippler. Harlan is incorrigible, as I expected. If necessary I shall give the job to a new director. The Chamber of the German Cinema is showing foreign films, with the result that every troublemaker in Berlin is turning up to watch them. I put a stop to it.”

June 8, 1941

“Color film with special effects, *Gulliver*. An American production. Very good, very witty, very well made. I intend for us to equal this kind of production, and shall make every effort in this field, despite the war. People who can do this are available here. All one has to do is to find them.”

June 13, 1941

“Discuss the budget with Gutterer. We have had our way in most areas. Film questions with Gutterer. New problems are constantly arising in the field, mostly due to the war. Knothe reports on his film marketing work in the Balkans. We are busily buying up cinemas and trying to ensure ourselves as much influence as possible. Knothe is doing an excellent job. Hungary is very difficult, and the Italians are getting in our way all over the area. But we shall win though. All we must do now is to produce more films. With Hippler, receive the Italian film actress P...? They

all want to make films in Germany, because they can see no more room for development in Italy. And we shall have to broaden our range of types and characters, since after the war we shall have to provide many more nations with films. We could make good use of this type.”

June 15, 1941

“Jannings, Demandowski and Hippler visit. Jannings talks about his trip to Rome, where his *Ohm Kruger* was shown with sensational success. The Duce received him and was also delighted by the film. Mussolini wants more German-Italian cooperation in the cinema. I also intend to exercise some more pressure in this direction. *Alcazar* is now being released with great publicity in Berlin; The Duce however, is trying to force us to include the church scenes. I am very skeptical on this issue and shall ask the Fuhrer again. Otherwise the mood in Rome was very favorable from our point of view. Particularly among the general public. All the people who know what is going on, even those from the film world, have inferiority complexes. Jannings talks to me about his new film treatment: *The Decision*, Bismarck from 1885 until his dismissal. A good project and one that I shall give every support. Jannings will do some reworking of Harlan’s *Great King*. He also finds it impossible in its present form.”

June 16, 1941

“I inform the Fuhrer of Jannings’ success in Rome. He intends to give some more thought to whether we ought to release the *Alcazar* film in an uncut version. The most recent newsreels have given the Fuhrer particular pleasure. He describes them as the best means of popular education and leadership. And indeed they are.”

June 21, 1941

“New Liebeneiner film, *I Accuse*. In favor of euthanasia. A film that will really arouse discussion. Magnificently made and absolutely National Socialist. It will stir up tremendous controversy. And that is its purpose. Hippler and Demandowski are very proud of their achievement.”

June 22, 1941

“Brief discussion with Frau Leander about her new war film. Pavolini is here. From the personal point of view, he seems extraordinarily pleasant. At his request, the guests watch the American film, *Gone with the Wind*, which they all find very impressive. The guests watch the film to its conclusion.”

June 24, 1941

“The latest film figures have been issued. Very good Estimated profits of 40 million. Pass new propaganda film against tobacco abuse. To the Ufa studios with Pavolini. Look at 500 meters of Newsreel film of the beginning of our Russian campaign. Some of our new weapons are shown.

Juggernauts that simply destroy everything in their path. Russian prisoners clamber out of their dugouts and trenches, shaking with terror. God's high court of history is now passing judgment on the soviet state. Atrocity has been heaped on atrocity, and now the reckoning has come. Pavolini is totally thunderstruck at the monumental quality of our film material. Newsreel in the evening. Simply magnificent. A masterly achievement of organization, technique and visual effectiveness."

June 26, 1941

"Then the newsreel, late in the evening. War material has turned out magnificently. Then some film problems with Hippler."

June 29, 1941

"Give approval to a new propaganda film by Fischer and Wachter."

June 30, 1941

"Newsreel in the evening. Magnificent film from the East. A breathtaking collection of impressions. There is still a lot of correcting and cutting for me to do. But afterwards it is gripping."

July 1, 1941

"Newsreel in the evening. A lot of work still to be done on it, mainly the editing and the music. But afterwards it flows beautifully, a cinematic masterpiece."

July 3, 1941

"Discuss plans for the newsreel with Hippler. Boese is too stupid for artistic work and so will have to be put on ice. He is good at slave driving, but he cannot take decisions."

July 5, 1941

"A few disagreements over the newsreel. The Fuhrer wants more polemical material in the script. I would rather have the pictures speak for themselves and confine the script to explaining what the audience would not otherwise understand. I consider this to be more effective, because then the viewer does not see the art in it. But the Fuhrer was very pleased with the last newsreel."

July 6, 1941

"Our newsreel has been greeted with great approval. It is indeed a work of art. The Fuehrer is quite delighted with it."

July 8, 1941

“Give some thought to the question of television. The Post Office has too much power in this field. Will have to give it up. All the decisions regarding programming belong with my ministry. Television has a very great future after the war. Perhaps it will completely replace the cinema. Work on the newsreel in the evening. Contains harrowing shots of the Bolshevik atrocities in Lvov. A real shocker! The Fuhrer rings me up to as that it is the best newsreel we have ever made. I am very pleased.”

January 22, 1942

“I saw the new American propaganda movie, *The Foreign Correspondent*. It is a first-class production, a criminological bang-up hit, which no doubt will make a certain impression upon the broad masses of the people in enemy countries. Significantly enough in this film with its absolutely anti-German tendency was allowed to run for months in Sweden. The Swedes and the Swiss are playing with fire. Let us hope they will burn their fingers before this war is over.”

March 27, 1942

“A much more clever form of propaganda against the Reich has been proposed in the United States. The idea is not to go against the German people but against Nazism. I sense a certain danger. Fortunately the enemy propaganda is not so unified and consistent as to be able to stick to such a propaganda slogan for a period of years. If this were the case we would face great difficulties every time we were under a new, heavy strain.”

April 18, 1942

“I received a report written by the former United States Ambassador in Moscow Davies, entitled, “what we did not know about Russia.” This report is extraordinarily favorable to the Soviet Union. Davies has a very high opinion of the ability of the Bolsheviks to resist. The Bolshevik leaders, headed by Stalin, are described as true friends of the people.”

May 13, 1942

“I took a look at another French movie, *Annette et la Dame Blonde*. It is of the same levity and elegance as the Darrieux movie, *Caprices*. We shall have to be careful about the French so that they won't build up a new moving-picture art under our leadership that will give us too serious competition in the European market. I shall see to it that especially talented French film actors are gradually engaged for the German movie.

May 15, 1942

“In the evening we viewed a new motion picture produced by our Continental-Gesellschaft in Paris after a scenario written around the life and activity of Hector Berlioz. The film is of excellent quality and amounts to a first-class national fanfare. I shall unfortunately not be able to release it for public showing.

I am very angry to think that our own offices in Paris are teaching the French how to represent nationalism in pictures. This lack of political instinct can hardly be beaten. But that's the way we Germans are. Whenever we go into another country, be it ever so strange to us or even an enemy, our first task seems to consist in getting order into that country regardless of the fact that perhaps in several years or decades it may go to war against us. The lack of political instinct among the German s is the result of their passion for work and of their idealistic enthusiasm. You have to put on the brakes constantly so that evil and damaging consequences may not result.

I ordered Greven to come to Berlin from Paris, to give him absolutely clear and unmistakable directives to the effect that for the moment, so far as the French are concerned, only light, frothy, and, if possible, corny pictures are desired. No doubt the French people will be satisfied with that too. There is no reason why we should cultivate their nationalism.

All actors of more than average talent in the French movies should, so far as possible be hired by us for German film production. I see no other possibility of achieving a satisfactory result in this matter. We might well worry about the consequences that might result if we did not take a hand."

May 19, 1942

"In the afternoon I had a long argument with Hippler and with Greven about the aims to be pursued in our French film production. Greven has an entirely wrong technique in that he has regarded it as his task to raise the level of the French movie. That is wrong. It isn't our job to supply the Frenchmen with good pictures and it is especially not our task to give them movies that are beyond reproach in their nationalistic tendency.

If the French people on the whole are satisfied with light, corny stuff, we ought to make it our business to produce such cheap trash. It would be a case of lunacy for us to promote competition against ourselves. We must proceed in our movie policies as the Americans do in their policies toward the North and South American continents. We must become the dominating movie power on the European continent. In so far as pictures are produced in other countries they must be only of a local or limited character. It must be our aim to prevent so far as possible the founding of any new national film industry, and if necessary to hire for Berlin, Vienna, or Munich such stars and technicians as might be in a position to help in this. After I talked to him for a long time Greven realized the wisdom of this course and will pursue it in future."

May 23, 1942

"I had a telephone conversation with the Reich Marshal who complained about the OKW because it protested against the new Leander motion picture. This picture shows an aviator spending a night with a famous singer. The OKW considers itself insulted morally and insists that an aviation lieutenant wouldn't act that way. Opposed to this is the correct view of Goering that if an aviation lieutenant didn't make use of such an opportunity, he simply wouldn't be an aviation lieutenant. Goering pokes great fun at the sensitiveness of the OKW. That's fine grist

for my mill, since the OKW creates a lot of difficulties for me anyway in my movie work. In this case we can depend on Goering as the better expert on the Luftwaffe and won't have to fear any jurisdictional difficulties."

December 16, 1942

"Leni Riefenstahl reported to me about her motion picture, *Tiefland*. It has become involved in innumerable complications. Already more than 5,000,000 marks have been wasted on this film and it will take another whole year before it is finished. Frau Riefenstahl has become very ill from overwork and worry, and I urged her earnestly to go on leave before taking up further work. I am glad I have nothing to do with the unfortunate case, and hence bear no responsibility."

March 5, 1943

In the afternoon the twenty-fifth anniversary of UFA was celebrated. Klitzsch delivered a long but interesting speech about the history of UFA. He showed how exceedingly hard a few patriots had to fight against Jewish-American efforts at control of the German motion picture during System Time. I was able to announce a number of honors conferred by the Fuehrer. Hugenberg received the Eagle Shield, Klitzsch and Winkler the Goethe Medal, and Liebeneiner and Harlan appointments as professors. As these honors had been kept secret they made the men thus distinguished very happy. Hugenberg was simply flabbergasted at the public tribute paid him. I treated him with special friendliness and courtesy and made a deep impression on him."<sup>249</sup>

"Late at night I went for a short visit to Professor Froelich<sup>250</sup>. All the big shots of the UFA were assembled there. They were very happy that I sat down with them for an hour.... People, on the whole, are of good will. That applies even to the intelligentsia. All you have to do is to handle them right and give them support in these difficult times. After all, they have a right to this. One would sometimes like to split oneself into a million parts to take a hand wherever necessary. But unfortunately one is always only a single person."

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<sup>249</sup> UFA was Germany's largest motion picture concern. Its executive director was Dr. Ludwig Klitzsch; its principal stockholder Dr. Alfred Hugenberg. Winkler was a go between for Goebbels with the motion picture industry and negotiator of contracts with foreign countries. Wolfgang Liebeneiner and Veit Harlan were two popular movie stars. The title of professor was a coveted one in Germany, and did not necessarily signify that its holder was engaged in academic activity. The Nazis always referred to the period of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) as System Time.

<sup>250</sup> Professor Carl Froelich was president of the Reich Film Chamber