

Chapter 3

Nazi Film Policy: Local, National and Transnational Contexts

Nazi urban planners imagined their ideal city as an orderly complex that facilitated social organization and political surveillance. Moreover, the city in general would be a symbol of National Socialist political success and cultural rejuvenation. The cinema afforded a unique venue to address both aspirations. As an instrument of political instruction and propaganda, film promised to link the individual *Volksgenossen* to the Reich's leadership. As envisioned by Goebbels, Nazi cinema promised a new kind of culture, artistically refined and with mass appeal. It had near limitless reach and promised profound ideological impact in a frame of centralized deployment. At the same time, movie theaters remained part of the city's fabric, operated by local business women and men, staffed by local workers, controlled and inspected by the local police and visited by the local population. To a considerable degree moviegoing proved to be resistant to being transformed into a tool of orchestrated leisure à la Strength through Joy. Accordingly, it is hardly surprising that cinema figured in national discourse as a *function* rather than a *place*. The object of Nazi reform was not the cultural site of exhibition, but of film per se instead.

For local National Socialists this was not so. Cinema and the discussions around film provided local cineasts with ample opportunities for *placemaking*, for the articulation of Hamburg's specific local, national, and transnational significance as my analysis in the following chapter demonstrates. While the previous chapter has discussed the politics that attempted to turn Hamburg into a certain kind of space – into a National Socialist city – in this chapter I will begin to outline how Hamburg renegotiated its *place*

as Germany's 'gateway to the world' in the context of Nazi film policy and its local and transnational reverberations. Tim Cresswell defines "place" as a location that has been imbued with meaning.¹ For Yi-Fu Tuan "place" presents a sort of closure, a pause in movement, a stability that derives from an intimate relationship of people and the practices that make a certain space their *place*.² However, as Cresswell reminds us, "[p]laces are never finished but always the result of processes and practices."³ Essential to these processes and practices are the daily performances that assert the 'meaning' of a particular place. After the Nazi seizure of power and throughout the Nazi period, the particular 'meaning' of Hamburg required some careful fine-tuning to accommodate local tradition as well as national and transnational developments.

I begin by reviewing some of the basic parameters of Nazi film policy in order to explain the Propaganda Ministry's attempt to elevate film from a mere amusement to the realm of high culture and subject the infra structure for film production and exhibition to a tightly controlled apparatus. The cinema, as a tool of the state, grew increasingly into its functional role. In this process, the cinemascapes in Hamburg were also fundamentally reordered, even though the actual distribution of movie-theaters across the city's geography hardly changed. On one level, the coordination of the film industry and the censorship imposed by the Reich, did in fact elevate film to a new level and local cineasts lobbied for the national recognition of Hamburg's extraordinary cinematic commitments, as my discussion of the Film Consortium suggests. On another level, however, the cultural coordination called Hamburg's identity as Germany's 'gateway to the world' into question as that 'world' mobilized its culture against Nazism. Hollywood's first explicitly anti-Nazi film, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (Litvak, 1939) presented Hamburg's cosmopolitan film elite with a crossroads of sorts.

To understand the significance of Hollywood's first anti-Nazi testimony it is important to examine the role of Hollywood film in Hamburg before the release of

¹ Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 7

² Yi-Fu Tuan. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 138.

³ Cresswell, 37.

Confessions, and juxtaposes the popularity of American films against Hitler's ideological face-off with the world's preeminent economic power. The widespread admiration of Hollywood movies was not seen as a significant challenge to Joseph Goebbels' cultural policy before Hollywood began making anti-Nazi films. In fact, Hamburg's worldliness allowed local cineasts to facilitate cross-cultural exchange *and* foster a popular appreciation for National Socialist film art. Hollywood film had been a consistent point of reference for the advocates of film in Hamburg as my analysis in the second part of this chapter illustrates. In fact, the local patronage of Hollywood film was an important aspect of Hamburg's self-asserted worldliness and underwrote the cultural cosmopolitanism of the city's unusually active film elite. The making of *Confessions*, however, ended all that. Hamburg's cineasts could no longer praise Hollywood film as apolitical film art after the Production Code Administration (Hollywood's self-imposed supervisory body) put its approving signature under its first document of open anti-Nazism.

In the last part of this chapter, I will chart the transformation of the *Selbstverständnis* of Hamburg's film elite in the context of the unfolding cinewar between the United States and Nazi Germany, a phenomenon that in and of itself has received little scholarly attention.⁴ Faced with the prospect of overtly anti-Nazi films, the cultural elites in Hamburg circled the wagons and aligned themselves with the political imperatives of the Reich in a complete and unqualified fashion. Newspapers in Hamburg distinguished themselves from the press in other German cities by openly castigating

⁴ Scholars either focus on the contribution of Hollywood to the United States' war effort such as Thomas Doherty. *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Robert Fyne. *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II*. (Metuchen NJ and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1994) and Clayton Koppes and Gregory Black. *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies*. (London: Free Press, 1987) or on the role of German exiles in Hollywood's coming to terms with Nazism. See in particular Gerd Gemünden. "Brecht in Hollywood: 'Hangman Also Die' and the Anti-Nazi Film." *TDR* 43 4 Special Issue: German Brecht, European Readings (Winter 1999): 65-76; Lutz Koepnick *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema between Hitler and Hollywood*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Lutz Koepnick. "Komik Als Waffe? Charlie Chaplin, Ernst Lubitsch Und Das Dritten Reich." *Mediale Mobilmachung II: Hollywood, Exil und Nachkrieg*. Ed. Segeberg, Harro. (München: Fink, 2006) and Ronny Loewy. "Der Lächerlichkeit preisgegeben. Nazis in den Anti-Nazi Hollywood Filmen." *Lachen über Hitler. Auschwitz-Gelächter*. Eds. Fröhlich, Margrit, Hanno Loewy and Heinz Steinert. (München: Edition Text & Kritik, 2003): 125-32. In contrast scholars have not considered Nazi anti-Semitic films and wartime propaganda in a transnational context.

Hollywood for making *Confessions* and responded to the declaration of a cinewar with a loud and clear renunciation of the pleasures and art Hollywood had so far offered to large audiences in the city. The alignment of the Hamburg's cultural stalwarts with the military imperatives of the regime was not merely a sign of compliance with the directives emanating from Berlin, but the result of wounded pride and thwarted ambition. The transatlantic *Filmkrieg* contributed to the ensuing cultural isolation of Hamburg and it stonewalled the hopes of local cultural experts for a partnership with their Anglo-American counterparts in the realm of art and culture. *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* forced film activists in Hamburg to face the fundamental premise underlying Hitler's foreign policy: The imminence of a showdown between the Reich and the United States.⁵ The cinewar heightened the ideological differences between fascist Germany and democratic America, and introduced a more belligerent language to cultural discourse. In response to injured pride and in the name of national unity the city prepared its transition from peace to war.

My focus on Hamburg should not detract from the fact that the cultural clash between the US and the Reich was a national struggle and that it was perceived as such by local observers. However, a local perspective on the transatlantic cinewar adds texture and depth to Germany's response and demonstrates that even though Berlin certainly had the power to legislate cinema fare, it hardly had to resort to such drastic measures. Hamburg's outspoken cineasts did not wait until they were prompted to announce their equally outspoken commitment to Nazism as it came under attack from Hollywood, the world's most powerful fantasy factory.

Nazi Film Policy in the Service of the State

To guarantee that film was politically viable cultural product, the Reich put in place a complicated apparatus that controlled its production and distribution across the Reich through vertically integrated companies. In an effort to control the industry in its entirety,

⁵ The argument about the pivotal role of America in Hitler's reckless drive towards war has been made convincingly by Adam Tooze. *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*. 2006. (New York: Penguin, 2008). He suggests that to Hitler war with the United States appeared unavoidable.

the Nazi state eventually managed to also bring most movie houses under direct state control. But the reorganization of the movie industry focused on the production of film first. Ufa,⁶ under the control of the anti-Semitic nationalist Alfred Hugenberg since March 1927, had all too willingly served Nazi interests by heavily pushing nationalist themes in feature films, agitating against 'Jewish' Hollywood films and redirecting capital for the production of reactionary and anti-republican newsreels.⁷ Hugenberg openly joined forces with Hitler, the NSDAP, and other rightist and pan-German forces in August 1931. While ultimately eradicating the base of his own political home the DNVP (German National People's Party), he fanned the anti-democratic flames on which Hitler rode to power.⁸

When Hugenberg took over Ufa, the corporation exhibited the same symptoms of decline that affected the entire German film industry. After the specious prosperity following World War I, the monetary crisis that peaked in 1923 and the currency reform in the following year, the film industry plunged into a systemic crisis.⁹ A host of factors exacerbated the vulnerability of film business in this already volatile economic situation.¹⁰ Taxes on amusements were substantial.¹¹ Production costs increased significantly as a result of the transition to sound.¹² Hollywood aggressively pushed its

⁶ For a history of Germany's best known film company see Klaus Kreimeier. *The Ufa-Story. Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* (München: Carl Hanser, 1992)

⁷ Compare Kreimeier, 152, 190-5, 195, 200, 205, 222-3

⁸ Kreimeier, 216

⁹ Axel Schildt, "Auf Expansionskurs: Aus der Inflation in die Krise" *Das Ufa-Buch. Kunst und Krisen. Stars und Regisseure. Wirtschaft und Politik*. Eds. Bock, Hans-Michael and Michael Töteberg. (Frankfurt a.M.: Zweitausendeins, 1992), 170-173

¹⁰ Still one of the best analyses of the crisis gripping Germany after World War I is Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*. (London: Allen Lane, 1991) For the effects of the general economic turmoil on the film industry see Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema*. (London: Routledge, 2002), 47

¹¹ As of 1923 the amusement tax was imposed by municipal governments, which in light of the financial crisis sought to infuse the budget with burgeoning tax increases. In Berlin, for example, a quarter of the ticket price flowed into the treasury. See Schildt, 171. Amusement taxes remained high, in 1930 still 10.5 % of ticket price. See Kreimeier, 228 Jürgen Spiker, *Film und Kapital*, 136

¹² Hake, *German National Cinema*, 49

products into the European film market.¹³ The explosion of movie theaters across Germany from 3,700 in 1920 to approximately 5,000 theaters in 1930 was not paralleled by a comparable increase in patrons. This made for fierce competition between exhibitors.¹⁴ The world economic crisis following the stock market crash of 1929 only exacerbated the competition for economic viability and disposed the giants of the German film industry to seek protection under the state.

Under the direction of Ludwig Klitzsch, Hugenberg's personal choice, Germany's largest production company began to agitate within the SPIO (Spitzenorganisation der Deutschen Filmwirtschaft) for a reorganization of the German film industry.¹⁵ Ufa wanted to reduce annual production, restructure finance and ease the economic burdens on production companies. To do so, Ufa envisioned concentrating the screening of films in large scale theaters operated by the big corporations, and they insisted on reducing the numbers of theaters across the Reich.¹⁶ These goals were written into the SPIO-plan, which was developed by Ufa executives and their allies in the national film lobby in the fall of 1932. This functioned as the initial blue-print for the dramatic changes that Joseph Goebbels institutionalized within the first few months of Nazi rule.¹⁷

When Hitler assumed the chancellorship, he elevated media czar Alfred Hugenberg as the new government's Minister of Economics.¹⁸ The relationship between Hitler and Hugenberg outlived its usefulness a few months after Hitler consolidated his party's power in 1933. But by bringing together disparate economic interest within the

¹³ Kreimeier, 148

¹⁴ See Hake, 51

¹⁵ Increasingly, production was concentrated in a handful of dominating corporations. UFA, Emelka, and Terra were the largest, vertically integrated film companies in the 1920s. Compare Hake, 49, See Julian Petley, *Capital and Culture: German Cinema 1933-45* (London: BFI, 1979), 33. By 1934 the largest producers were Ufa, Tobis, Terra and Bavaria; the transition to sound had reshaped the production landscape as well. See Julian Petley, 40-43.

¹⁶ SPIO was founded in 1923 as a national lobby for the film industry. See Behn, "Gleichschritt in die 'neue Zeit'" *Das Ufa Buch*, edited by Hans Michael-Bock und Michael Töteberg (Frankfurt a.M: Zweitausendeins, 1992), 340.

¹⁷ See Spiker, 97

¹⁸ Spiker, 80

film industry, this particular relationship had greatly facilitated the subsequent restructuring of the industry under the Nazis.¹⁹ Even though Goebbels saw in film a powerful political tool for engineering the consent of the masses, Manfred Behn convincingly illustrates that Goebbels had a rather underdeveloped plan for restructuring the industry in the event of a National Socialist electoral success.²⁰ The SPIO plan, which envisioned the most powerful film companies independently coordinating themselves in exchange for financial support and state protection, served as a blue-print for the newly minted Minister of Propaganda.²¹ Since it was of utmost importance to Goebbels that the film industry remain financially viable and that it would increase its annual production, he was more than willing to offer financial security as a means to bind the film industry to the emerging cultural apparatus of the Reich. The creation of the Film Credit Bank (FKB) was as much a first step in establishing the policies of *Gleichschaltung* as it was a concession to the demands of film companies. This cemented the relationship between the Reich and the film industry.

Advertised as an institution that would ameliorate conditions for medium-sized production companies, the bank primarily benefited the undercapitalized Tobis and Ufa, which was the queen of German film production.²² As already envisioned by the SPIO plan in 1932, this special bank was created and infused with capital from Ufa, the Deutsche Bank, the Reichskreditgesellschaft, and the Commerz Bank. Organized as a limited liability company, the bank would secure and safeguard loans from traditional investors for films that had distribution contracts. The board of the Film Credit Bank reflected the converging interests of the financial community, the film industry and the state. Ufa executive Ludwig Klitzsch and Director Henkel of Tobis, represented the interests of the film industry; Walther Funk, State Secretary of the Ministry of

¹⁹ Petley, 42.

²⁰ Behn, *Das Ufa-Buch*, 340.

²¹ The Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda RMVP) was established on 13 Mar 1933 with Joseph Goebbels at its head. Reichsgesetzblatt I 104 "Erlass ueber die Errichtung des Reichsministeriums fuer Volksaufklaerung und Propaganda" 13 Mar 1933.

²² Behn, 341.

Propaganda, Herr Posse of the Economic Ministry, and Arnold Räther, director of the RMVP's film branch, in turn ensured that board member Johannes Kiehl (representing the Deutsche Bank and Disconto Gesellschaft AG) approved loans for films that did not offend nationalist sensibilities. While the representative for theater owners, Adolf Engl, the agent of the theater owners, was a token concession to the interest of exhibitors, the choice of the chairman clearly indicated the source of the Film Credit Bank's legitimacy and power: Fritz Scheuermann, the future first president of the Reich's Film Chamber.²³

Goebbels, now certain of the industry's cooperation, began to turn film production, distribution and exhibition into a state-mediated and increasingly state-controlled enterprise. The Reich's Film Chamber (RFK), a model for cultural coordination in the Reich, was set up in preliminary form in June 1933. It was the first of seven operative Chambers that comprised the Reich's Culture Chamber, which was founded in September of the same year.²⁴ Membership in the RFK was mandatory for all individuals and corporate bodies of the film and related industries and was restricted to those who possessed "the necessary reliability."²⁵ Lacking precisely the (racial) reliability which the Nazis considered essential, Jews were systematically rejected.²⁶ The RFK, like the specialized chambers for literature, fine arts, music, theater, press and radio that followed, coordinated various disparate interests within the industry, organizing manpower according to the leadership principle, guaranteeing state control, and fostering cultural production. By the end of April 1934, the Film Credit Bank had transferred its shares to the Reich's Film Chamber.

The further articulation of the specific policies of state control is evidence that film policy developed in order to establish control over the medium while at the same time placating and eventually instrumentalizing the financial and industrial interest. Policy makers were not following a plan established by the master propagandist Joseph

²³ Spiker, 94-102. For at times a near verbatim rendition of Spiker's analysis see Petley, 51-55

²⁴ See Petley, 51-55

²⁵ Reichsgesetzblatt 1933 I 82 p.483 "Gesetz über die Errichtung einer vorläufigen Filmkammer 14 Jul 1933

²⁶ Compare Behn, 341.

Goebbels. In essence, the RFK replaced and expanded the SPIO.²⁷ The bureaucracy of cultural control was completed when the Reich's Culture Chamber (RKK) was established in September 1933, rendering the RFK as well as the remaining six specialized chambers subject to the oversight of Goebbels as president of the Reich's Culture Chamber. The Film Chamber moreover reported directly to the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda and therewith to Goebbels again.²⁸ This institutional doubling and the concentration of power in the hands of Joseph Goebbels produced an atmosphere of planned efficiency – which was an illusion – while functioning as the institutional articulation of the Minister's power over the totality of art and culture in the Reich.

The cultural apparatus embodied and rendered visible the Nazis' conviction of the fundamental connection between culture and politics. However, the backbone of the entire colossus was predicated on the initial compromise between industry, finance and State interests. After 1933, ticket sales consistently increased while the regime insisted on a new kind of quality in German film. The Film Credit Bank assured the political acquiescence of an industry increasingly financed by private money. In turn, the bank was essentially guaranteed by a regime that now geared all economic production towards war. The fact that the film industry neither recovered nor met the artistic standards set by Goebbels despite the escalating production costs, provided the impetus for its continuing restructuring.²⁹ Goebbels, emboldened by flattering reports in the international press identifying him as “one of the most energetic men in the Nazi movement” with “considerable organizing ability and forensic talent,” decided to put that talent to work.³⁰ Oswald Lehnich, who succeeded Fritz Scheuermann, as president of the Reich's Film

²⁷ The SPIO (Spitzenorganisation der Deutschen Film Industry e.V.) was founded as a lobby by the film industry in 1923 as an umbrella association for the six greatest interest groups representing film industrialists, film distributors, film exhibitors, producers of education- and advertisement films, film studios, and the association for film export. In 1932 the steering committee, since 1927 under the growing influence of UFA-representatives, began to act independently rather than as a representative body for the film industry in general. Compare Spiker *Film und Kapital*, 71

²⁸ Reichsgesetzblatt 1933 I 105 p. 661 “Reichskulturkammergesetz” 22 Sept 1933

²⁹ Spiker, 140-4.

³⁰ Guido Enderis. “Goebbels Key Man in New Nazi Drive” *NYT* Mar 19, 1933

Chamber, was charged with the task of transforming a languishing industry into a profitable cultural force.³¹ He explained that problems in the film industry were due to excessive competition and personal greed.³² The successive nationalization of Tobis, Ufa, Terra and Bavaria effectively started in 1937. The regime took control of the majority shares in the four major production companies, a process that was not fully completed until 1942. The compromise between private capital and the regime grew into an effective alliance. Ultimately, the interests of the industry and its regulatory overhead converged. Military expansion soon guaranteed markets for even more extravagant and expensive products.³³ The war promised and ultimately delivered, if for a limited time, the long awaited profits to a state-controlled and state-protected industry.³⁴

The Nationalization of increasingly vertically integrated companies cemented the alliance between the Reich's Film Chamber and an industry now committed to the idea that film was a national force and remained the sole prerogative of the Reich. Encouraged by the reorganization envisioned by Max Winkler, the dominant production companies not only artificially exacerbated existing film shortages, but they also ensured

³¹ Oswald Lehnich was born on June 20, 1895 in Rosenberg, Oberschlesien. He finished high-school in 1914. Lehnich promptly volunteered at the age of 19 and served at the rank of private in the German artillery. He studied law and political science at Berlin and Breslau and was awarded his PhD in 1920. After a short tenure as academic assistant, Lehnich accepted a position in the Reich economic ministry. He continued to publish and resigned from his post in the Reich economic ministry in 1927 to focus exclusively on his academic pursuits. Since March 18, 1933 he functioned as director of economic ministry in Württemberg, advanced to state secretary only a few months later and assumed the position of president of the Reich's film chamber from 1935 to 1939. During his tenure as president of the Reich's film chamber, differences between Lehnich and Goebbels increased, since Lehnich, in the eyes of the propaganda minister, did not have any understanding of the art of film. Across the boundaries of the Reich, Lehnich was well respected as a national representative. He resigned on June 30, 1939. After a severe car accident in August 1939, the 44 year old Lehnich entered early retirement. Lehnich was a rather reserved and rational individual who never managed to build lasting relationships with members of the party elite. He joined the NSDAP after a public dispute with Gottfried Feder about economic principles and according to his own explanations, sought to battle the economic dilettantism from within the party's ranks. Yet he was a sponsor of the SS even before he joined the party, became a member of the same and advanced through the ranks to *Oberführer*. Lehnich had further been an active member in various NS organizations. Compare Frank Raberg. "Wirtschaftspolitiker zwische Selbstüberschätzung und Resignation: Oswald Lehnich, Württembergischer Wirtschaftsminister" in *Die Führer der Provinz. NS-Biographien aus Baden und Württemberg* eds. Michael Kießner, Joachim Scholtyseck. (Konstanz: UVK, c1997), 333-359

³² Spiker, 159.

³³ Spiker, 183-7

³⁴ Spiker 199.

that independent movie theaters owned by their local competitors would fail.³⁵ To the Reich, these local side-effects of the economic restructuring were of little consequence. It hardly mattered to them “where” the “general public” saw the films produced under the auspices of Goebbels’ all scrutinizing gaze. It only mattered that they would indeed be seen.³⁶ Since Ufa had its own exhibition outlets in all the major cities across the Reich, it was a uniquely reliable venue for the direct rerouting of revenues back into production. Films remained in short supply and local exhibitors with franchises tended to pool their contracts with Ufa.

Joseph Goebbels ascribed to cinema a central function in the new state and he believed that film would triumph over established arts such as literature, music and theater because of its potential to reach the urban masses and transform them into *Volk*. While the Nazis looked at urban sprawl with a mix of ideological reservation and industrial enthusiasm, it was clear from the outset that urban growth was an immeasurably important to the revolution of popular leisure and mass culture.³⁷ The movie theater occupied a particularly important place in the urban landscape, both in the actual fabric of the city and in Nazi visions of the reconfiguration of that fabric. While the Nazification of the city had a negligible impact on the theater distribution (in fact, the regime put a moratorium on the construction of theaters in order to tighten the sprawling film exhibition outlets across the Reich), it effectively implemented a hierarchical system of moviegoing that redirected revenue from the local institutions to the state-controlled entities.

³⁵ Spiker, 162 ff. Goebbels had been less than impressed with the quality of film production in the Reich and moreover the industry continued to struggle financially. Hence Goebbels instituted Max Winkler, as an independent business expert to function as an intermediary between industry and the leadership of regime and entrusted to implement the ‘realignment’ of film production in the Reich. Winkler, who was a central figure in the successive nationalization of the privately own press, had successfully converted the Intertobis and Tobis into predominantly German companies. As the main shareholder in the Cautio Escrow Company, Winkler had been engaged in buying up German newspaper abroad and, once instituted as the Reichsbeauftragte für die Filmwirtschaft, used the Cautio Treuhand GmbH for the *Verreichlichung* of the German film industry.

³⁶ Paul Besse, “Resumé über die in Gegenwart der Stadträte Pg. Dickens und Pg Puls stattgefundenene Sitzung bei der Reichsfilmkammer Berlin” 23 Sept 1937 in StAHH 371-16 I Behörde für Wirtschaft und Verkehr I 1852

³⁷ *Handbuch des Films*, 136

The reordering of film exhibition in Hamburg involved several steps which reflected the political as well as the economic interests of both the Nazi state and the major production companies in the Reich. The situation for independent exhibitors in Hamburg steadily worsened. The *Verreichlichung* of the film industry disempowered the municipal regulatory agencies (such as the office for price-regulation) and gave franchised exhibitors a free hand with regards to competitors or the local administration. Hamburg's cinemascape was divided into four categories: the first-run theaters or *Erstaufführer*, had the privilege of hosting the national premiere of a film if it was scheduled to take place in Hamburg. In any case, all new films passed through one of these theaters before making their way through other theaters, even if the national premiere had taken place, as usual, in Berlin.³⁸ The remaining theaters were categorized according to price and status in their respective districts. District first-run theaters, or *Bezirkserstauffuehrer* screened a film after its run in the premier or first-run houses. From there the film would make its way through the remaining two categories of neighborhood theaters, or *Nachspieler*.³⁹ Thus the lower down the tier a theater was ranked, the cheaper was the film and the longer it had already been in circulation. Empowered by the nationalization of the film industry, in the fall 1938 representatives for the national distribution companies reconfigured the distribution districts in Hamburg (which did not necessarily coincide with the municipal district) to screen their still scarce wares more effectively.⁴⁰

Over the course of the 1930s movie theater became a barometer of the reach of the state, a measure of modernization and a standard for the cultural revolution.⁴¹ Of the

³⁸ Compare Führer. "Guckfenster in die Welt. Das 'Waterloo' - Kino in Hamburg in den Jahren der NS-Herrschaft" *Zeitgeschichte Hamburg* (Hamburg: FZH, 2005) Waterloo was one of five first-run houses. Lessing Theater, Ufa-Palast, Schauburg St. Pauli and Passage Theater were the remaining four.

³⁹ The minimum prices per theater and seating category were centrally regulated by the RFK since 12 August 1933. Compare Spiker, 126.

⁴⁰ Unfortunately I was unable to establish the exact date for the reorganization from my sources. The closest approximation can be found in Helen Meininger's letter to the office for price regulation in Hamburg 3 Mar 1939 in StAHH 371-16 I Behörde für Wirtschaft und Verkehr I 1852.

⁴¹ "Hamburg- nach Einkommen, Telefon und Kinoplaetzen" *Hamburger Anzeiger* 1 May 1938 in StAHH Gewerbepolzie GN IX F32.

4265 movie theaters controlled by the Reich's Film Chamber in Berlin as of 22 September 1933, only 70 were located in Hamburg. Most of these played daily and all of them were wired for sound.⁴² Berlin, a city of 4.2 million inhabitants, was Germany's uncontested center of film production and exhibition. With 381 sound equipped movie theaters and a total of 189,507 seats, it was the premier city of cinema in the Reich. Berlin prided itself on possessing a denser cinemascap than Europe's foremost cultural center Paris.⁴³

Within Germany, Hamburg was the second most important *Filmstadt*. In 1933 the city's 70 theaters had close to 50,000 seats and the average citizen went to the movies about 10 times a year.⁴⁴ Berliners visited the movie palaces only ever so slightly more often than her Hamburg counterparts.⁴⁵ In the rest of the Reich average attendance was significantly less frequent and rural areas were not even included in the statistics. In 1937 Greater-Hamburg⁴⁶ possessed 104 movie theaters with a total of 66,605 seats after the theaters of Altona, Harburg and Wandsbek counted toward the Hamburg total.⁴⁷ Close to 1.7 million people inhabited the city at that time and ticket sales were an astonishing 21,772,138. Statistically this means everybody went to the movies almost 13 times that year.⁴⁸ Since these statistics include the very young, the very old, the institutionalized, and those who for various reasons never went to the movies, it can safely be assumed that the average patron saw significantly more than 13 films a year. Enthusiasts went to the movies weekly, sometimes even several times a week, as film viewing was an even more

⁴² Compare Töteberg and Reissmann, *Mach dir ein paar schöne Stunden*, see Kinokatalog, 168-293.

⁴³ *Handbuch des Films 1935/36*, (Berlin: Hoppenstedt & Co, 1936), 150

⁴⁴ *Handbuch des Films 1935/36*, 150 and 154.

⁴⁵ *Handbuch des Films 1935/36*, 24, 154-58 Berliners on average went 12 times/year

⁴⁶ On the Gross-Hamburg Gesetz von 1937 consult Uwe Lohalm. "'Model Hamburg' vom Stadtstaat zum Reichsgau" in *Hamuburg im 'Dritten Reich'* ed. Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 131. See also "Begründung für gegebenenfalls Rundschreiben." 15 Dec 1937 in StAAH 331-1 Polizeibehörde I, 108.

⁴⁷ For these and the following figures see *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Hansestadt Hamburg 1937/8* ed. Statistisches Landesamt (Hamburg: Lütcke & Wulff, 1939), 208.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

affordable pastime under Nazi rule than it had been before.⁴⁹ The regular program generally consisted of a documentary (*Kulturfilm*), a newsreel and a feature film, but often included additional shorts or live performances at an average price of less than 1RM. By 1937 cinema should have been a lucrative business and for exhibitors growing audiences indeed spelled the end of the economic uncertainty that marked the industry the early 1930s.⁵⁰

Over the course of the 1930s the Nazis took a number of steps to diffuse, disarm, and ultimately displace concerns of educators and cultural experts regarding the corrosive effects of trash culture and, in particular, sensationalist films. Joseph Goebbels had effectively delegitimized concerns about the *Publikumswirkung* of National Socialist culture when he redefined *Kultur* as the eternal spirit of the *Volk*, inspired by artistic genius and channeled through responsible agencies. The Nazis disbanded morality leagues and put an end to the work of social and cultural reformers who made it their mission to identify smut and trash in German culture and counteract the negative effects of a profligate entertainment industry.⁵¹ Now the war against *Unkultur* and degenerate art was fueled primarily by racial hatred, which provided a new venue for the zeal of cultural conservatives. The politics of Aryanization would “cleanse” the culture industry of its

⁴⁹ On the frequency of visits by individuals, the personal interviews I conducted were particularly useful. Uwe Storjohann. Personal Interview. 18 Sept 2006. Kurt Scheffer. Personal Interview 28 Nov. 2006. Historians have estimated that those who did go to the movies regularly did so at least once every fortnight. In Hamburg, 23 million patrons went to the movies in 1938. In 1942 the city sold 35.2 million tickets, which amounts to 20.7 tickets per inhabitant. Compare Töteberg, *Filmstadt Hamburg*, 18. Gerhard Stahr maintains that in 1935/36 36.4% of the adult population of Berlin went to the movies at least once a month, 13.45% twice a month and 0.6% more than five times a month. Gerhard Stahr. *Volksgemeinschaft vor der Leinwand. Der Nationalsozialistische Film und sein Publikum* (Berlin: Hans Theissen, 2001).

⁵⁰ Patronage of movie-theaters was constantly on the rise since 1937 as Stahr illustrates. The average visits per citizen in the Reich increased from 7.6 visits in 1937/38 to 14.3 visits in 1942. Stahr, *Volksgemeinschaft*, 175

⁵¹ See Detlev Peukert. *Grenzen der Sozialdisziplinierung: Aufstieg und Krise der deutschen Jugendfürsorge von 1878-1932*. (Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1986), 191.

racial undesirables and pave the way for a homogenous *Schaffensgemeinschaft* (creative community).⁵²

In Hamburg the pooling of exhibitor interests cannot be separated from the practices of Aryanization, which were part and parcel of bringing movie theaters and their audiences under State control. Aryanization of Jewish property and private sectors of the economy was not consistently enforced before 1938 on at a national level, yet the local level aryanization practices ‘from below’ long preceded the regulatory intervention by the Reich’s authorities.⁵³ In the film branch, since Jews were excluded from membership in the RFA (and therewith from all film industry related opportunities for employment) Jews often had little choice but to sell or lease their theaters if they did not have ‘Aryan’ relatives who could act as a front. Scholars have come to inconclusive results when reconstructing the processes by which Jewish owners lost control over and ownership of their movie theaters.⁵⁴ Since the film industry and individual exhibitors found themselves in economic turmoil as movie attendance dramatically declined between 1929 and 1933, a whole host of pressures were at work in the disposition of Jewish property. The indemnity trials conducted after the war naturally recorded conflicting view points; yet it is very clear that Jewish exhibitors responded to the increasing pressures of the racist regime and their neighbors who saw opportunities for personal gain and profit. By 1938 all exhibition outlets were controlled by ‘Aryan’ citizens.

Hamburg’s smallest cinema franchise the Hirschel corporation was aryanized in the course of 1933, and by 1934 Hirschel’s three theaters, Reichstheater, Theater at Nobistor, and the Waterloo had new operators who had previously been associated with

⁵² Compare Töteberg and Reissmann, 67-70. See also Gerti Keller. "Kino Unterm Hakenkreuz. Das Beispiel Hamburg." Magisterarbeit. Universität Hamburg, 1993, 74-5 For an excellent analysis of the policies of Aryanization in Hamburg see Bajohr, Frank. "*Arisierung*" In *Hamburg: Die Verdrängung Der Jüdischen Unternehmen 1933-1945*. (Hamburg: Christians, 1997).

⁵³ Bajohr. *Arisierung in Hamburg*, 15-7.

⁵⁴ Hamburg’s smallest cinema franchise the Hirschel corporation was aryanized in the course of 1933, and by 1934 the three theaters, Reichstheater, Theater at Nobistor, and the Waterloo had new operators who had previously been associated with the company. The Waterloo Theater, which was bought by the Manfred Hirschel’s landlord, whom Hirschel owed arrears, and retained its prominent position under direction Heinz B. Heisig as the only independently run first run house in the city. Töteberg and Reissmann, *Mach dir ein paar schoene Stunden*, 67-70

the company. The Waterloo Theater, which was bought by Manfred Hirschel's landlord whom Hirschel owed money, retained its prominent position under direction Heinz B. Heisig as the only independently run first run house in the city.

Hamburg's largest exhibition chain, the Schauburgen of the Henschel Corporation, had been in negotiations with Ufa prior to the Nazi take-over since the company found itself in dire straits financially. Yet, the eventual sale of their movie theaters to Paul Rohman (former lawyer of the Henschel Corporation) and Gustav Schühmann (leading executive of the Ufa-subsiary James Henschel GmbH) in 1936, whose Schauburg-Betriebsgesellschaft first leased the theaters from the Henschel KG in 1933, was clearly the result of changing political landscape dictated by the RfK. As Brown shirts blocked viewer access to the Schauburgen in April 1933, (Urich-Sass, Streit and their father-in-law had been Jewish), the Ufa seemed no longer interested in buying the exhibitor chain of its financially struggling competitor. Urich-Sass had died only a few days before the Nazi seizure of power and his partner Streit reincorporated as Henschel KG with the heirs of Urich-Sass. When the law for the establishment of the preliminary film chamber made it unlawful for Jews to become members in the RfK and unlawful for non-members to run or operate movie theaters, Streit leased the Henschel KG to the Rohmann's and Schühmann's Schauburg-Betriebsgesellschaft in the summer of 1933. In 1936 the Henschel KG was forced to sell its theaters to Rohmann and Schühmann, who both had since become members of the Nazi party.

The Aryanization of the Henschel Corporation provided Hamburg's Ufa representatives with the opportunity to dispose of their greatest local competitor in the city. Schühmann's ties to Ufa rendered the subsequent economic alliance between the Schauburg and Ufa theaters a natural one; yet it was not until the process of the nationalization the German film industry was completed that the Reich advanced as the majority shareholder in all major film production companies.⁵⁵ The coordination of exhibition outlets within the Ufa-Schauburg alliance thus entered into direct relationship to the state. Soon others followed. Joining the spokespersons for Ufa and the

⁵⁵ For a detailed overview of these processes see Spiker, 165-182. For the particularities of the Ufa nationalization see Klaus Kreimeier, *Die UFA-Story*, 300 ff.

Schauburgen the representative committee of Northern German film exhibitors, Stuckmeyer for the Emelka group and Jung of the Central-Theater in Eimsbuettel reached an agreement by which they pooled their forces and shared their allotted slice of the national production, thus escaping the struggle for survival that other independent district theaters faced. Without visibly altering the cinemascape of the city, the Reich indirectly assumed control over the exhibitor's complex. At the same time, Goebbels's rhetoric about the German *Volk*'s creativity legitimized the purging of "degenerate" works and questionable artists from German culture. While the new films were still printed on celluloid and even though the army of National Socialist filmmakers, screenwriters and actors had all learned their craft during the despised *Systemzeit*, Nazi cinema had conclusively broken with its Weimar precursors, at least in principle.⁵⁶

To successfully mobilize film as an instrument of the state, the Nazis attempted to permanently extricate it from its association with mass leisure and public amusement. They wanted to redeploy it as a distinctive fusion of high art, political education and *Volksvergnügen*. Goebbels believed that film harbored the potential to dissolve the conflict between art and mass-culture, and offered a National Socialist solution in the form of a self-consciously political *Volksmassenkunst*.⁵⁷ The anxieties regarding film's detrimental effects on audiences dissipated within the first few years of Nazi rule, and the new regime prided itself on having rescued the medium from those who hoped to "obliterate film as a form of art and denigrate it to a mere amusement."⁵⁸ In 1938 the *Film-Kurier* affirmed that "the cinema is not like a tavern; when you pay an admission fee, you're not buying a lottery ticket and there aren't any rowdy encores

⁵⁶ For the exodus of filmmakers and artists see Vincent Brook. *Driven to Darkness: Jewish Émigré Directors and the Rise of Film Noir*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009); David Wallace. *Exiles in Hollywood*. (Pompton Plains, NJ: Limelight Editions, 2006); Lutz Koepnick, ed. *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema between Hitler and Hollywood*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) and Gene D Phillips. *Exiles in Hollywood: Major European Film Directors in America*. (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1998).

⁵⁷ "Die Anpassung and den Publikumsgeschmack: Filmschaffende dürfen Kunst nicht mit künstlichkeit verwechseln" in *Film Kurier* 15 Dec38

⁵⁸ Ansprache des Reichsministers Dr. Goebbels vor den Filmschaffenden in der Krolloper am 10. Februar 1934. in *Der Aufbau des deutschen Führerstaates. Das Jahr 1934*. Dokumente der deutschen Politik. Band 2. Ed. Paul Meier-Benneckenstein (Berlin: Junker und Dünhaupt Verlag, 1936): 258-266.

[*Zugabeunwesen*] like there are in the vaudeville shows.”⁵⁹ Validating the “horror” with which parents “observed the influence of the ‘Kintopp’ on youthful minds [*jugendliche Gemüter*],” the regime bragged that “today, thanks to a deliberate mopping-up operation, film stands at the center of cultural production alongside the stage and the book.”⁶⁰

The implicit reference to the progressive Aryanization of the German *Filmwesen* illustrates that prior to the war the Nazis attributed all sexualizing, youth-corrupting, and morally compromising qualities of film to a Marxist-Jewish conspiracy against German *Kultur*. Only “after the internecine reckoning with and consequent liquidation of all unhealthy foreign influences” the *Hamburger Anzeiger* exclaimed, “did the film worker find a clean and secure platform from which he could undertake his constitutive labor.”⁶¹ The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* added that only a clean, pure and “Jew-free [*unverjudet*]” film that “does not hover over a never-never land” but is true-to-life and “seizes themes with a healthy instinct that is dear to all our hearts” could be a reflection of the nation’s soul.⁶² Already in 1936, Hamburg’s newspapers looked back with pride on the purge of the “undesirable elements” from the German film industry and enthusiastically exclaimed that “our German film is on the best path, to become a cinema of the people [*Volksfilm*] in the most beautiful and truest sense of the term.”⁶³

Hamburg and Hollywood

Throughout the 1930s, Hollywood film had a high cultural cache in Hamburg.⁶⁴ As historian Karl Christian Führer has argued, the notion of a tightly coordinated cultural

⁵⁹ “Eine Gegenüberstellung: So war es gestern - und so ist es heute” in *Film-Kurier* 6 Apr 1938.

⁶⁰ See “Junge Filmziele” in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* 7 Oct 1937.

⁶¹ “Der Weg des Films im neuen Reich” *Hamburger Anzeiger* 28 Mar 1936

⁶² “Junge Filmziele” in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*

⁶³ Compare “Der Weg des Films im neuen Reich” in *Hamburger Anzeiger* 28 Mar 1936

⁶⁴ Compare Karl Christian Führer “Guckfenster in die Welt: Das ‘Waterloo’ -Kino in Hamburg in den Jahren der NS-Herrschaft” (65-73) in *Zeitgeschichte Hamburg Nachrichten aus der Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg, FZH* (Hamburg: FZH, 2005)

public sphere certainly has its place in our understanding of National Socialism. However, in the big cities such as Hamburg the movie-scene tells a more complex story, a story that “does not correspond to the cliché of a desolately isolated German culture.”⁶⁵ The widespread admiration of Hollywood movies was not seen as a significant challenge to Joseph Goebbels’ cultural policy before Hollywood began making anti-Nazi films. In fact, Hamburg’s worldliness allowed local cineasts to facilitate cultural exchange and foster a popular appreciation for National Socialist film art. Hollywood films were a stable part of the film program in all the major German cities until 1940. In Hamburg, the Waterloo Theater developed into a uniquely prestigious venue for this so called supplementary program (*Ergänzungsprogram*) to German A-production.

Located on Dammtorstrasse and facing the State Opera House, the Waterloo had been opened in 1909 with only four hundred seats as one of the first movie theaters to explicitly cater to a respectable bourgeois audience.⁶⁶ As one of only five first-run inner city theaters in Hamburg, the Waterloo cultivated its exclusivity by careful attention to appearances as well as through its selective and reputable program.⁶⁷ By the standards of

⁶⁵ Führer, 65

⁶⁶ StAHH 622-1 2.3 Bestand Heinz Heisig. Protokolle von Rundfunkinterviews zur Währungsreform und zur Geschichte des Waterloo-Filmtheaters, 1949.

⁶⁷ Compare Führer, 66. The remaining four first-run houses were the newly built Ufa Palast (1929) Europe’s largest movie theater, the prestigious Lessingtheater on Gänsemarkt, a venue for more artistic films, the Schauburg St. Pauli on Millerntor in St. Pauli’s entertainment district, and the Passage Theater in the Mönckebergstrasse, which was part of a local theater corporation Hans Stuckmeyer and Wilhelm Behncke. Compare Töteberg and Reissmann. *Mach dir ein paar schöne Stunden*, 223-4.

the 1930s, despite expensive renovations in 1927, the Waterloo still provided a certain intimacy that reminded its patrons of days past in the world of the cinema.⁶⁸

Accommodating a thousand patrons, the Waterloo provided the perfect atmosphere for the art-conscious events organized by Hamburg's Film Consortium.⁶⁹

Over the course of the 1930s, the Waterloo, more by necessity than choice, became a specialty theater. With the revitalization of the film industry and the vertical integration of production, distribution and exhibition under the Nazis, the economic position of the Waterloo became increasingly tenuous. The big production companies like Ufa and Emelka in Hamburg, usually introduced new films through one of their own venues. Accordingly, the German films the Lessingtheater or Ufa Palast, both Ufa venues, or through one of remaining franchised first-run houses like Schauburg St. Pauli and Passage-Theater, which were associated with Ufa as a result of pooling contracts. A new film started in the designated first-run theater before it made its way down the ranks of district theaters and neighborhood theaters. As a result, exclusivity of a given venue depended on its place in the exhibition hierarchy. The theater franchises circulated films through their own venues before making them accessible to the independently owned houses. Exclusivity in turn determined ticket price. Admission was only half at the



Figure 18 *Waterloo Theater. Hamburg*

⁶⁸ Compare Manuskript 'Der Wandel des Publikumsgeschmacks analog zur Entwicklung der Filmkunst' (1949) in StAHH 622-1 Heisig 2.1

⁶⁹ Compare "Neue Pläne der Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film" in *Film-Kurier* 29 Jul 1938 and "Hamburgs Filmclub stellt sich vor" in *Film-Kurier* 22 Jan 1938.

smaller neighborhood theater, but by the time patrons got to see a film at one of these venues it had already shown in the city for weeks.

In Hamburg, as in most other German cities and towns, the movement of films to lower ranking theaters was further protected by a one week grace-period. Lower-tier exhibitors were not permitted to screen a film immediately after the first-run theater took it off the program, but only after following the grace-period. In 1939, local representatives of the Reich Film Chamber in Hamburg, which coincided with the interests of the theater franchises, extended the grace-period to two weeks. This was excessive by the Reich's standards.⁷⁰ Moreover, Ufa did not enforce the grace-period for its own lower-tier theaters or for those of associated corporations. During the Weimar years, independent theater owners could at least partially remedy their market disadvantage by adjustments in price. The reorganization of the film industry under the Nazis changed all this.⁷¹ To further protect the interests of the vertically integrated film companies and funnel revenues back into production, the RFK required that all theaters in the same class be required to charge the same admission price. By the time an

⁷⁰ See Paul Besse's letter to the office for price regulation on 3 Mar 1939 and Helene Meininger's letter to the same instance on 3 March 1939 in StAHH 371-16 I Behörde für Wirtschaft und Verkehr I 1852.

⁷¹ For a concise overview of the coordination of the film industry in the Nazi state see Sabine Hake. *German National Cinema*. (London: Routledge, 2002), 59-85. A more detailed account can be found in David Welch. *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 5-32

independently run house got access to a film, that film had probably already played for a cheaper ticket price in one or more of Ufa's less prestigious venues.⁷²

As the last independently owned first-run house in the city, the Waterloo found its access to top production German films greatly curtailed even before the local branch of the RFK increased the grace-period.⁷³ Under the direction of Heinz B. Heisig, the Waterloo filled a particular niche and catered to audiences interested in sophisticated cultural fare. Soon after 1933, the Waterloo advertised a special program of German and international documentary films and international feature films, in particular American ones. Even though Westerns and slapstick comedies were occasionally featured, the theater cultivated a reputation as a venue for art films. At the Waterloo, foreign films were screened with the original soundtrack – sometimes even without German subtitles – before dubbed copies were shown in Hamburg.⁷⁴

The Waterloo Theater was one of a kind in the Reich. Its success was not only the result of the good business sense of Herr Heisig. Equally important, Hamburg's unusually

⁷² See in particular the correspondence between RFK and Franz Harten and Helene Meininger respectively in early 1939. Franz Harten was the owner of the Hansa-Lichtspiel-Bühne in Bergedorf, a rather rural suburb in the south-east of the city. Before the particularities of the greater-Hamburg Law required municipalities of Hamburg proper and Hamburg Bergedorf, 17 rural districts (Landgemeinden), and the three Prussian city boroughs Altona, Wandsbek and Harburg-Willhelmsburg, as well as 27 Prussian municipalities to surrender their respective administrative independence took effect on 1 April 1938 the borough of Bergedorf had been its own administrative unit and was not bound by the price regulations for the city of Hamburg. Prior to the Greater-Hamburg Law, Harten's theater in Bergedorf qualified as a first-run house; and accordingly he was able play immediately after the Hamburg premiere. The Greater-Hamburg Law effectively demoted Harten's Halibü to a district-theater and Harten had found no need to align his prices with those of theaters in Hamburg's inner city. On 26 January 1939, Harten receives the written approval for a price increase from the office of price regulation in Hamburg in response to a motion he never filed. Harten entered into a prolonged battle, seeking and at first finding the support of local authorities, which were promptly overruled by direct intervention by the RFK and ended in the 10 -20 % price-increase for mid-size theater of 650 seats. Harten's only local competitor was Ochsenwärder Lichtspiele, a tiny theater of 108 seats that played only once a week. Helene Meininger, who operated the Europa Palast in Barmbeck, the Germania Palast in Hamm, and the Rialto in St. Georg, as well as Paul Besse, the owner of Harmonie Lichtspiele in Wandsbek, the Colosseum in Hamm and the Tivoli-Theater in Hammerbrook, and Hugo Steigerwald, who owned the Blumenburg in Eimsbüttel, all complained since early 1939 about difficulties in obtaining top productions while being forced to release the few A-films they did obtain two weeks later than their franchised competitors next door and all the while forced to demand the same prices. See Harten an Preisprüfungstelle, 21 Feb 1939; Preisbildungstelle an Harten 26 Jan 1939; and Schreiben der Fachgruppe der Reichsfilmtheater Bezirk Norddeutschland an die Verwaltung fuer Handel-Schiffahrt und Gewerbe der Hansestadt Hamburg, Abt. fuer Preisbildung und Preisueberwachung 2 Nov 1938. all in StAHH 371-16 I Behörde fuer Wirtschaft und Verkehr I 1852.

⁷³ Protokolle von Runk-Interviews zur Währungsreform und zur geschichte des Waterloo-Filmtheaters (1949) in StAHH 622-1 Heisig 2.3

⁷⁴ Compare Karl-Christian Führer. "Guckfenster in die Welt, 69.

cosmopolitan clientele guaranteed an audience for the Waterloo in the cutthroat world of film exhibition. Uwe Storjohann remembers that films with Loretta Young, Lillian Gish and Greta Garbo were particularly popular with young people, but the audience for Hollywood films was hardly limited to pubescent adolescents whose hunger for



Figure 19 *Waterloo Theater. Hamburg*

adventure had turned to film fare produced on the other side of the Atlantic.⁷⁵ In 1945, Heinz Heisig cited the international program of the Waterloo as evidence for his political distance from Nazism. After the defeat of the Reich, Heisig also claimed that during a time of the complete isolation of German film production from the international artistic world, the Waterloo strategically pursued a policy that would differentiate its programming from the pervasive flight into filmic never-never land.⁷⁶ It was certainly convenient for Heisig to be able to draw attention to the unusual program of the Waterloo after the collapse of the regime. However, during the years of the Third Reich, Heisig's patronage of international art cinema and his National Socialism hardly conflicted. The Waterloo was not only a

⁷⁵ Uwe Storjohann. Personal Interview. Hamburg, Eimsbüttel 18 Sept 2006.

⁷⁶ Compare StAHH 622-1 2.1 Bestand Heinz Heisig. Manuskript 'Der Wandel des Publikumsgeschacks analog zur Entwicklung der Filmkunst.' Herein Heisig explains that "Das gefährlichste aber war die begehlfsmässige vollkommene Isolation deutschen Filmschaffens von den anregenden künstlerischen Kräften des Auslandes oder um beim Jargon jener Zeit zu bleiben, das 'strategische Absetzen in ein Wolkenkuckucksheim', in dem alles, was deutsch war, allein nur auf den ersten Platz gehoerte."

venue for international films, it was also the theater of choice for the local representatives of the Nazi film avant-garde. Heisig's postwar memories conveniently gloss over the rather puzzling convergence of local cosmopolitanism and National Socialist zeal.⁷⁷

At a first glance, the Waterloo's function in the cinematic landscape of Hamburg as a "window into the world" on the one hand and as a local venue for the Nazi film avant-garde on the other suggests an irreconcilable contradiction.⁷⁸ This, however, was not the case. Film connoisseurs in Hamburg were more vocal and better organized than elsewhere in the Reich.⁷⁹ Their artistic zeal was informed by a unique mix of Nazi *Bodenständigkeit* and Hamburger *Weltgeltung*.⁸⁰ However, these qualities were called into question once Hollywood began producing anti-Nazi features, the first of which was *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*. News of this film profoundly upset what had been a sustained attempt to establish a mutual cultural exchange between the US (as the dominant motion picture producer and exporter) and the Reich (as an economic underdog with untapped artistic genius). Hamburg's cineasts were disillusioned with the mass-production mind set of the German film industry. Insisting that there was indisputable evidence that "our audience yearns for liberating cinematic deeds," local exhibitors, film distributors and members of the specialty and daily press founded the Film Consortium in cooperation

⁷⁷ *ibid.* Compare also Töteberg, Michael, and Volker Reissmann. *Mach Dir Ein Paar Schöne Stunden*. (Bremen: Temmen, 2008), 85

⁷⁸ Führer, "Guckfenster in die Welt"

⁷⁹ Compare "Hamburgs Filmclub stellt sich vor" in *Film-Kurier* 22 Jan 1938. Werner Kark "Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft. Eine Bilanz des guten Willens. Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Thema Filmkulturpropaganda im Reich" *Film-Kurier* 2 Juli 1938; Karlheinz Ressing "1. Morgenveranstaltung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft. Erfolgreicher Beginn im Hamburger Waterloo" *Film-Kurier* 17 Oct 1938; "Am Sonntag spricht Liebeneiner vor der Arbeitsgemeinschaft" *Film-Kurier* 2 Nov 1938; Karlheinz Ressing "Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft gibt Rechenschaft" *Film-Kurier* 30 Jun 1939; "In Hamburg: Wieder Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film" *Film-Kurier* 6 Nov 1939; Karlheinz Ressing "Drei Jahre Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film" *Film-Kurier* 9 Jan 1940; "Von Nah und Fern: Murnaus *Vor Sonnenaufgang* vor der Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft" *Film-Kurier* 4 Mar 1940 "Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft im zweiten Kriegswinter: In Hamburg" *Film-Kurier* 15 Oct 1940; "Hamburger Notizbuch Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft brachte Kulturfilm" *Film-Kurier* 22 Oct 1940; "Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film: Erfolgreiche Bemühungen im Dienste des künstlerischen Films" *Film-Kurier* 1 Mar 1941; Hans-Werner Plasberg. "Morgenveranstaltungen der Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film" *Film-Kurier* 5 Mar 1941; Hans-Werner Plasberg "Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft" *Film Kurier* 2 Sep 1941

⁸⁰ "Dr. Eckardt in Hamburg: Die Aufgaben der Avantgarde" *Film-Kurier* 13 Dec 1938

with the Center for Adult Education (*Volkshochschule*) in Hamburg in 1935.⁸¹ The Film Consortium “dedicated itself solely to the wonderful goal of making the great debate over German Film directly and indirectly accessible to a broader public.”⁸² For that purpose its members worked together with the local representatives of the Reich Film Chamber in order to collectively finance and advertise film-specific public events such as exclusive screenings, special matinees and lectures by VIPs from the German Cinema.⁸³ The lectures generally took place in a lecture hall at Hamburg University. For film screenings, the Consortium was able to use the Waterloo, one of Hamburg’s oldest and most prestigious inner city theaters.

The work of Hamburg’s Film Consortium received considerable attention from the *Film-Kurier*, the Reich’s most important trade magazine, which lauded success of Hamburg’s cineasts for their work in educating audiences.

This work has not been done in Berlin. The organization which strives to awaken an interest in exemplary film art in the broad masses is not based in the Reich’s capital but in Hamburg. This laudably virile institution’s home is in the open-minded, always forward looking gateway of Germany.⁸⁴

While praising Hamburg’s initiative, the *Film-Kurier* did not fail to mention the city’s distance from the artistic work of filmmakers in Berlin, a liability that could not be addressed until after the war and even then only in part. Even though exhibitors in Berlin attempted sporadically to educate the public about the cinema, Berlin “lacked the uniting bond” that held Hamburg’s advocates of film art together.

⁸¹ “‘Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film:’ Eine Bilanz des guten Willens - Zugleich ein Betrag zum Thema Filmkulturpropaganda im Reich” *Film-Kurier* Beiblatt 2 Jul 1938

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ “Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film” *Film-Kurier* 1 Mar 1941

⁸⁴ Excerpt from *Film-Kurier* in “Was meint die Berliner Fachpresse” in *Der Film heute und morgen! Die Kriegsspielzeit, 1939-40. Ein Rechenschaftsbericht der Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film der Volkshochschule über die zweite Spielzeit im Waterloo-Theater vom 5.1939 bis zum 28. April 1940.* in StAHH 622-1 Bestand Heinz Heisig

The matinee programs of the Film Consortium included numerous American films well into 1940.⁸⁵ During the 1939/40 season, F.W. Murnau's first Hollywood film, *Sunrise* (1927) and his later independently financed love story *Tabu* (1931) set in Tahiti were screened at the Waterloo as important examples of silent films. Between January 1939 and April 1940 the matinees organized by the Consortium featured Hollywood productions such as *Cavalcade* (Lloyd, 1933), *Peter Ibbetson* (Hathaway, 1935), *The Ghost Goes West [Ein Gespenst auf Reisen]* (Clair, 1935), *Smoky* (Forde, 1933), and a lesser known gangster film by Cecil B. DeMille *This Day and Age [Revolution der Jugend]* (1933) in which small-town youths play dirty to get back at organized crime. In addition, shorts with Oliver Hardy and Stanley Laurel as well as American-made documentaries such as *Baboon* (Johnson/Talley, 1935) graced the program.⁸⁶ Postcards from patrons requested films with Clark Gable or Greta Garbo, like *San Francisco* (Van Dyke, 1936), *It Happened One Night* (Capra, 1934), and *Queen Christina* (Mamoulian, 1933) well into 1940.⁸⁷ However, Waterloo regulars also wanted to see German films from the last production cycles and explicitly requested reruns by famous National Socialist directors. These included *Krach um Jolanthe* (Froelich, 1934), *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* (Ritter, 1937), *Ein Volksfeind* (Steinhoff, 1937), *Der zerbrochene Krug* (Ucicky, 1937) and *Der Herrscher* (Harlan, 1936/7).⁸⁸

At first glance, the Consortium's program appears eclectic and riddled with ideological contradictions. To be sure, the selection of films presented a makeshift solution to the very pressing constraints outside the Consortium's control. The Waterloo could only choose from select foreign films approved for exhibition in Germany by the

⁸⁵ In particular the films by F.W. Murnau, such as *Tabu* (1931), *Sunrise* (1927), and *Faust, eine Deutsche Volkssage* (1926) graced the program of the consortium. See StaHH 622-1 Bestand Heinz Heisig

⁸⁶ *Der Film Heute und morgen! 25 Sonntage für die Filmkunst. Ein Rechenschaftsbericht der Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft 'Film' der Volkshochschule und des Waterloo-Theaters über die erste Spielzeit ihrer Sonntagmorgenveranstaltungen vom 16. Oktober 1938 bis zum 16. April 1939.* and *Der Film heute und morgen! Die Kriegsspielzeit, 1939-40. Ein Rechenschaftsbericht der Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film der Volkshochschule über die zweite Spielzeit im Waterloo-Theater vom 5. 1939 bis zum 28. April 1940.* in StaHH 622-1 Bestand Heinz Heisig

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

Nazi censors. In addition, several American studios had withdrawn from the German market, if not for political reasons then as a protest against prohibitive import provisions imposed by the Reich.⁸⁹ Warner Brothers withdrew from the German market as early as 1934, and soon others followed suit. By early 1940 only three of the Big Five – MGM, Twentieth-Century-Fox and Paramount – still exported their films to Germany.⁹⁰ As indicated above, the Waterloo’s access to prestigious German productions was restricted because of the controls the dominant players had over the German movie industry. Since Ufa controlled most theaters in Hamburg through its alliance with the Schauburg Lichtspielgesellschaft, German top productions generally reached local audiences through one of Ufa’s venues.

The Consortium chose to include American films for their artistic value in addition to their box office potential. Precisely the less typical Hollywood films were paired with German documentaries and select feature films rather than the aesthetically pleasing but politically shallow standard entertainment fare. Films such as DeMilles’ *In this Day and Age* (1933) and more so even King Vidor’s *Our Daily Bread* (1934) were taken as examples of an artistic awakening of Hollywood. The case of *Our Daily Bread*, an independent film and a homage to Roosevelt’s New Deal policies, is illustrative. The prolific local cineast Werner Kark called the film a “miracle” and conveniently reinterpreted Vidor’s drama about the resolve of unemployed workers who build an agricultural commune to cope with the effects of the Depression. Instead of seeing the film for what it was, a critical take on avaricious capitalism, Kark lauded *Our Daily Bread* as an exemplary visualization of the ongoing struggle to realize the ideal of community (in the sense of *Volksgemeinschaft*) united by hard work and rooted in the country’s soil.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Führer, 69.

⁹⁰ Michael Birdwell. *Celluloid Soldiers: The Warner Bros Campaign against Nazism*. New York: New York University Press, 1999), 19. The most important and vertically integrated production companies in the US were Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM), Radio KEith Orpheum (RKO), Paramount, 20th Century-Fox, and Warner Brothers, also known as the Big Five. The “little three” Columbia, Universal, and United Artists were not only smaller and but did not had access to their own exhibition outlets.

⁹¹ Cited in Führer, 71

Generally framed by discussions about film as the twentieth-century's foremost art form, the consortium's patronage of Hollywood art insisted on a fundamental parity between German and American *Filmschaffen*, at least in terms of quality.⁹² The inclusion of two Murnau films in the 1939/40 program is particularly revealing. Murnau was most famous for his films *Nosferatu – Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1921) and *Der Letzte Mann* (1925/6), both of which attained the status of Weimar cinema classics. As of 1926, Murnau worked for Twentieth Century Fox and made his first Hollywood feature that same year. *Sunrise* (1926) received an Oscar for artistic quality but failed to resonate with a broader public. Based on the Hermann Sudermann's novella *A Trip to Tilsit*, Murnau's silent films merged montage techniques with the simplicity and naturalness of a folk tale.⁹³ In contrast, Veit Harlan's adaptation of the same tale, *Die Reise nach Tilsit [A Trip to Tilsit]* (1939) is not an affirmation of the indestructibility of true love regardless of place but of the deterministic power of community and soil. Nonetheless, Murnau's choice to locate sacrificial innocence in a child-woman who feels neither rage nor spite at her husband's betrayal, finds replication in Harlan's choice of Kristina Söderbaum in his 1939 remake.

Murnau's later *Tabu* (1931), a film the Consortium also featured, was a direct rejection of the "studio-imposed romanticism" of Hollywood and instead spelled a return to nature.⁹⁴ A native son, Murnau was redeemable and his success in Hollywood could be cast as a continuation of a particularly German artistic genius. The fact that Murnau was never really at home in the US studio system further provided the Film Consortium with the opportunity to celebrate Hollywood's art as an off-shot of German productivity

⁹² "Film can do miracles. It is the true, visible magic engine of a new times, if his masters only find the courage and strength to utilize it. [Der Film kann Wunder tun. Er ist die wahrhafte, sichtbare Zaubermaschine der neuen Zeit geworden, wenn seine Meister nur den Mut und die Kraft finden, sich ihrer zu bemächtigen]" argued Werner Kark in "Das Reich zwischen Himmel und Erde: Gedanken über den Märchenfilm vor der Aufführung von *Liebe, Tod und Teufel*" in *Der Film Heute und morgen! 25 Sonntage für die Filmkunst. Ein Rechenschaftsbericht der Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft 'Film' der Volkshochschule und des Waterloo-Theaters über die erste Spielzeit ihrer Sonntagmorgenveranstaltungen vom 16. Oktober 1938 bis zum 16. April 1939.* in StaHH 622-1 Bestand Heinz Heisig.

⁹³ Dorothy B. Jones. "'Sunrise': A Murnau Masterpiece" *The Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television* 9:3 (Spring 1955): 238-262.

⁹⁴ Mark Langer. "Tabu: The Making of a Film" *Cinema Journal* 24:3 (Spring, 1985); 41-64 here 44

that could never be completely assimilated.⁹⁵ Since Weimar cinema enjoyed international acclaim and I would argue, was itself rather international in its self-conception and expression, Murnau's aesthetic romanticism (his insistence on making *Tabu* into a silent film to not delude the visual compositions with sound and simultaneously provide some consciously critical distance to industry's transition to sound), provided Nazi cineasts with a rare opportunity to claim artists of a politically discredited and culturally despised time as a source of inspiration for the particularly National Socialist Art they sought to foster.⁹⁶

While it was more difficult (and ultimately impossible) to identify a racially and aesthetically palatable heritage for Nazi cinema, Hollywood's escapism carried no explicit political overtones and hence many films by non-Jewish directors could potentially be accepted as work of a characteristic national style worthy of acknowledgement.⁹⁷ Several journalists in the party organ, *Hamburger Tageblatt*, expressed more than meek admiration for Hollywood's skillfully crafted entertainment films. With their tight narratives and their magnificent photography Hollywood fare offered "pure relaxation" as the "scenes scurry across the screen in colorful alteration" sweeping the viewer along, willingly or not, "with a quivering heart, full of breathless anticipation."⁹⁸ As much as Hamburg film critics were swept of their feet by Henry Ford's *Four Men and a Prayer* (1938), they were all too well aware of and resented the fact that 'Uncle Sam' dominated the international film market and in many ways

⁹⁵ The scholarly debate over Film Noir's German origins is illustrative in this context since it marks the thinking of Hamburg's cineast less idiosyncratic. See Edward Dimendberg "Down These Seen Streets a Man Must go: Siegfried Kracauer, 'Hollywood's Terror Films,' and the Spatial Quality of Film Noir." *New German Critique* 89: Film and Exile (Spring-Summer 2003): 113-143. Dimendberg argues against the school who sees in 1940s Hollywood Film Noir a continuation of German artistic sensibilities as a result of German Exiles expressing their sense of estrangement.

⁹⁶ On Murnau's decision to make *Tabu* as a silent film see Langer, 44

⁹⁷ In a confidential dispatch to the press in January 1939 the Propaganda Ministry insisted that "it would be pointless to print reviews of American films or feature reports on individual actors about which the requisite institutions later express their horror since a number of Jews appear therein." Compare Zgs. 102/14/27 (1) vom 9.1.1939 Leiter der Abteilung Film im Propagandaministerium, *NS-Pressenanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 6/II 1938. bearbeitet von Karen Peter (München: Saur, 1999), 27

⁹⁸ Robert Lehmann, "Von Kontinent zu Kontinent" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 18 Feb 1939.

remained the benchmark for national film industries in Europe and thus also for the future development of German film.⁹⁹ Although German audiences only made up a small fraction of the 140 million people world wide watching Hollywood films every week, still about 18% of films shown in Germany were American-made before Goebbels placed an outright ban on American productions.¹⁰⁰

The Propaganda Ministry's attitude towards Hollywood film was ambivalent. Joseph Goebbels personally admired many American films and regularly had new films screened for his personal pleasure.¹⁰¹ The official position, however, was somewhat less enthusiastic than Goebbels personal taste.¹⁰² American revues were widely popular throughout the Reich and for the most part the regime did not object to Hollywood features per se. In certain instances, as regarding revues and trick-films, the NS censor publicly acknowledged the superiority of American productions. However, this superiority was not cast in terms of the films' artistic value but described as a function of capital available for their production.¹⁰³ As in other areas of the national economy, Hitler was far from realizing his ambitions for self-reliance in the realm of cinema and the Reich remained "immersed in the commodity world of Hollywood" for most of the 1930s.¹⁰⁴ Since Germany's defeat in the Great War, Hitler had been acutely aware of the threat the rapid rise of the United States to a dominant player in world economics and world politics spelled for Europe and its place in the international dynamics of power.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ "Onkel Sam 'befilmt' die Welt" in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 18 Feb 1939. Note the pun on words that communicates the fear that who projects into ultimately controls the world.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.* See Birdwell, 12.

¹⁰¹ Heide Feherenbach. *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler*. (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 44. Further see Moeller, Felix. *The Film Minister: Goebbels and the Cinema in The "Third Reich"*. (Stuttgart and London: Axel Menges, 2000), 32-35.

¹⁰² Zgs. 102/14/27 (1) vom 9.1.1939 Leiter der Abteilung Film im Propagandaministerium, Leichtenstern, zur vertraulichen Information. *NS-Pressenanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 7/ I 1939. bearbeitet von Karen Peter (München: Saur, 2001), 27

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Adam Tooze. *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*. 2006. (New York: Penguin, 2008), xxiv.

¹⁰⁵ Tooze, xxiv

The regime's hostility towards the United States was more than mere rivalry and it was not simply a result of the Reich's economic inferiority.¹⁰⁶ It stemmed from Hitler's conviction that the threat the United States posed to Germany was of an existential nature and "bound up with Hitler's abiding fear of the world Jewish conspiracy, manifested in the shape of 'Wall Street Jewry' and the 'Jewish media' of the United States."¹⁰⁷

When news about Hollywood anti-Nazi films reached the Reich in January 1939, Hitler's fears and predictions found confirmation. In Hamburg, in contrast, the news about the making of *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* produced surprise, disbelief, and outrage among the outspoken advocates of film art. The making of anti-Nazi films hardly changed Berlin's attitude towards United States. It only heightened the urgency for retaliation. This was not the case in Hamburg. The admiration of Hollywood products by local cineasts had been genuine. Moreover, local film experts considered the majority of American films available in Germany as compatible with their ideas about film as a powerful, predominantly national, and quintessentially modern art form. News about *Confessions* was seen as a deliberate act of aggression and local cineasts felt compelled to take a stand that reflected their political convictions.

Caught in the Transatlantic Cinewar

In February a spy ring had been discovered in New York with ties to high officials in the German Ministry of War. Former US soldier Gerald Rummrich supported by the leader of the German American Bund, Dr. Greibl worked as a low level spy for the Nazis in the US and was described by the *New York Times* as "probably the most active secret agent here

¹⁰⁶ Tooze fundamentally challenged the assessment of Germany as an economic superpower and instead compares early 20th Century Germany to the position of Iran or South Africa in today's world economy. The standard of living in Germany was lower than in its western European neighbors, even if German economy performed on par. Rationalizing the superiority of the United States and Great Britain as a function of their imperial status and their access to resources and markets, Hitler believed that only eastward expansion would provide Germany with the necessary basis to mount a successful challenge to the world economic order. See Tooze, xxv.

¹⁰⁷ Tooze, xxv-xxvi

since the World War, if activity rather than results are considered.”¹⁰⁸ By April, air force codes and defense plans had been sold by a leavening network of intriguers. On April 6, the FBI arrested four individuals soon to be tried.¹⁰⁹ German diplomats in the United States were outraged when they learned of Warner Brothers’ decision to turn Leon Turrou’s fact-based book *Nazi Spies in America* into a movie and unsuccessfully agitated against the release of the first openly anti-Nazi feature produced by a Hollywood studio.¹¹⁰ Apart from changing the names of individuals involved and outfitting them with dramatically motivated personal lives, *Confessions* remained remarkably true to the actual events. The Reich’s censor had ensured that the press did not report about the spy trials being conducted in New York since 1 May 1938 and was certainly not prepared to draw further attention to Nazi espionage efforts abroad simply because Hollywood made a movie about it.¹¹¹

Werner Kark, utterly unaware of Nazi espionage activities in the United States, responded to what appeared – and not to his mind alone – to be declaration of war. The *New York Times* correspondent Frank Nugent caustically observed in an early review of *Confessions* that “Hitler’s pledge of non-aggression toward the Americas reached the

¹⁰⁸ “Spy Hunt here was Begun by Clue from Abroad to Woman in the Plot” by A. H. Leviero. *New York Times* 21 Jun 1938.

¹⁰⁹ “Nazis Seized Here In Spy Ring Case” *New York Times* 7 Apr 1938.

¹¹⁰ Apparently, the German consul general in Los Angeles tried to pressure Production Code Administration chief, Joseph Breen, to quash the picture by threatening sanctions against the entire motion picture industry if this hostile propaganda film were to be released. See Michael E. Birdwell. *Celluloid Soldiers. The Warner Bros. Campaign against Nazism*. (New York, London: New York University Press, 1999), 58. In June, the Germans protested to the US State Department, denouncing the picture as “pernicious propaganda” that was “‘poisoning’ German-American relations.” See “Germans Protest Nazi Spy Film to State Department” *The Washington Post* 6 Jun 1939

¹¹¹ The highest military command in Germany insisted that “nothing should be reported about an American espionage trial, in which active German officers are named.” 1734 ZSg. 102/10/202/ (2) 21 Juni 1938. *NS-Pressenanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 6/II 1938. bearbeitet von Karen Peter (München: Saur, 1999), 583. See further *NS-Pressenanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 6/III 1938. bearbeitet von Karen Peter (München: Saur, 1999), 814. 2435 ZSg 102/12/158/36 (3) 6 Sep 1938 “In the USA a certain judge Turru [sic] has been called up who used official material of a spy trial and now writes about it in newspapers. This case should not be mentioned.[In USA sei jetzt der Richter Turru [sic] abberufen worden, der aus einer Spionageaffaire amtliches Material gegen Deutschland verwandte und darüber in Zeitungen schrieb. Dieser Fall möge nichterwähnt werden.]” Also 2941 ZSg. 102/12/319/52 (3) 19 Oct 1938 “The German press must not report on the spy trial in USA. [Über den Spionageprozeß in USA darf in der deutschen Presse nichts erscheinen.]”

Warners too late yesterday.”¹¹² *The New York Times* came to the same conclusion as the *Hamburger Tageblatt* when insisting that Warner Bros. “had formally declared war on the Nazis 8:15 A.M. with the first showing of their ‘Confessions of a Nazi Spy.’”¹¹³

While the Nazi state interceded behind the scenes and Hitler’s official address to the German *Reichstag* insisted that

the assertions which have been circulated in any way concerning an intended German attack or invasion on or in American territory are rank frauds and gross untruths, quite apart from the fact that such assertions, as far as the military possibilities are concerned, could have their origin only in a stupid imagination,¹¹⁴

the news of the Hollywood feature vilifying Hitler’s regime, did not provoke a public outrage of high-ranking party officials in Berlin.¹¹⁵ In fact, it seems as if Berlin was determined not to acknowledge Warner Bros.’ public stance against Nazism. Instead, Hitler responded as if President Roosevelt had personally accused Nazi Germany of plans to invade the United States and announced that “our relationship with North America is suffering from a smear campaign, insinuating that Germany threatened American independence or freedom, which attempts to incite an entire continent in the service of transparent political or financial interests against the people-governed states in Europe.”¹¹⁶ In his address to the first Greater-German *Reichstag* on 30 January 1939, Hitler insisted that “Germany seeks peace with all countries, thus also with America” and ridiculed “the allegation that National Socialist Germany will attack and partition North or South America, Australia, China, or even the Netherlands because different systems of

¹¹² Frank S. Nugent. “The Screen” *The New York Times* 29 Apr 1939

¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ “Text of Chancellor Hitler’s Address Before the Reichstag on Germany’s Foreign Relations” *The New York Times* 29 Apr 1939. See also the original speech Adolf Hitler *Der Führer vor dem ersten Reichstag Großdeutschlands. Reichstagsrede vom 30. January 1939* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1939).

¹¹⁵ Apparently, the German consul general in Los Angeles tried to pressure Production Code Administration chief, Joseph Breen, to quash the picture by threatening sanctions against the entire motion picture industry if this hostile propaganda film were to be released. See Michael E. Birdwell. *Celluloid Soldiers. The Warner Bros. Campaign against Nazism*. (New York, London: New York University Press, 1999), 58.

¹¹⁶ Adolf Hitler *Der Führer vor dem ersten Reichstag Großdeutschlands. Reichstagsrede vom 30. January 1939* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1939), 58. See also “Excerpts from the Official Translation of Hitler’s Speech Before the Reichstag” *The New York Times* 31 January 1939.

government dominate there” with the suggestion that such charges “could only be amended by the divination that we subsequently intend to immediately occupy the full moon.”¹¹⁷

The making of *Confessions* was not greeted with unflinching enthusiasm in the United States either.¹¹⁸ The film built on existing fears about the Nazi menace in America and sought to raise general awareness about the implications of the United States in the evens transpiring in Europe. However, *Confessions* rested uneasily with isolationists who upheld the official position of US neutrality.¹¹⁹ In addition to its quasi-documentary style, the film’s heavy dose of anti-Nazism, its ideological message, and the sense of urgency it communicated proved unsettling to a host of individuals in the government, the media, and the general public.¹²⁰ Described as an “excellent blend of detective story, thriller, and current events with chilling and memorable scenes” the film was criticized as “heavy-handed and preachy” and some critics labeled *Confessions* a hate-breeder.¹²¹

However, the film succeeded in presenting the threat Nazism posed to democracy and the world order at large with a new sense of purpose. *Confessions* addressed and simultaneously resolved perturbations regarding the imminent and internal weakness of

¹¹⁷ Adolf Hitler *Der Führer vor dem ersten Reichstag Großdeutschlands. Reichstagsrede vom 30. January 1939* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1939), 59, 24. “Die Behauptung, daß das nationalsozialistische Deutschland demnächst Nord- oder Südamerika, Australien, China oder gar die Niederlande angreifen und aufteilen wird, und zwar weil dort andere Regierungssysteme herrschen, könnte nur noch ergänzt werden durch die Weissagung, daß wir im Anschluß daran die Absicht hätten, sofort den Vollmond zu besetzen.”

¹¹⁸ “New York Critics Divided in ‘Nazi Spy’ Opinions” *Los Angeles Times* 15 May 1939. Also compare Birdwell, 77

¹¹⁹ On US neutrality see Robert E. Jenner. *FDR’s Republicans: Domestic Political Realignment* (Lanham, Md :Lexington Books, 2010); Hanna Marczevska, “Controversies around the American Policy of Neutrality, 1935-1939” *American Studies* 9 (1990) and Justus D. Doenecke and John E. Wilz, *From Isolation to War, 1931-1941* 2nd ed. (Arlington Heights, Ill: Harlan Davidson, 1991). See also *Neutrality*. Washington: U.S. Govt. print .off. 1939.

¹²⁰ “New York Critics Divided in ‘Nazi Spy’ Opinions” *Los Angeles Times* 15 May 1939. Also compare Birdwell, 77

¹²¹ Birdwell, 77.

democracy.¹²² Far from subtle, and without instrumentalizing the glamour of Hollywood, *Confessions* mobilized Nazi cruelty and oppression as evidence for an imminent threat to the American way of life.¹²³ As such, the film was a response to the politics of appeasement, with the goal to persuade, in fact, overwhelm isolationists in the United States who still insisted that Nazism was an exclusively European affair. As the reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* observed: “This is not a picture for pacifists and quietists, but is aimed to provoke thought and alertness regarding a situation that is set forth as potentially very dangerous.”¹²⁴

The film articulates its message within the first few frames: Nazism spells a direct threat to the American way of life. Members of a Fifth Column spread propaganda material and sow fear in the hearts and minds of regular Americans struggling with the prolonged effects of the Depression. The protagonists demeanor and agitation not only deliberately invoke Adolf Hitler but illustrate the very process by which the emotions of the masses are roused in response to emphatically delivered propaganda, thus exposing the inherent vulnerability of the United States.¹²⁵ Invoking the power of propaganda, the

¹²² Benjamin Alpers has argued that European Fascism posed a qualitatively different threat to the United States than Japanese Imperialism in the Pacific. A thoroughly militarized Germany incited fear and admiration. While nobody was ready to consider that the United States might become like Japan, many feared that the detrimental effects of the Depression and later the exigencies of war could in fact turn America fascist. Japan’s otherness was beyond question but the fear that “German Kultur (as American propaganda often called it) could threaten the United States either on the battlefield in Europe or through unassimilated elements in the United States” turned Germany into the central reference for Hollywood’s contribution to the war effort. In both documentary and feature films, Americans could counter their fears of becoming undemocratic. Benjamin Alpers, “This is the Army: Imagining a Democratic Military in World War II,” in *The Journal of American History* 85: 1 (June 1998): 129-163

¹²³ Compare “Confessions of a Nazi Spy,’ Earle Exposes Work of Espionage Ring” *The Washington Post* 27 May 1939

¹²⁴ Edwin Schallert. “Vigorous Film Document of Nazi-ism in America Shown” in *Los Angeles Times* 28 Apr 1939

¹²⁵ The *Hamburger Tageblatt* reported that Warner Bros. attempted to find an actor to represent Hitler in such a way as the demons in Hollywood saw fit, but had to help themselves with extracts from newsreels instead. Werner Kark “Warners made it: Confessions of a Nazi Spy: Eine Abrechnung mit den Göttern und Dämonen in Hollywood” in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 25 Mar 1939.

film directly addresses the ideological conundrum that characterized American official responses to Nazi propaganda.¹²⁶

For the past six years observers in the US had viewed the development of the Nazi propaganda machine with growing unease. They nonetheless marveled at the Reich's capacity to coordinate public opinion without any visible opposition.¹²⁷ The *Washington Post* reported that "[n]o single measure more forcefully illustrates the extreme to which dictatorship has been carried in Germany than the Hitler censorship decree," explaining matter-of-factly that "the freedom of the press died when the Nazis came to power."¹²⁸ In contrast, the motion picture industry in the US explicitly rejected any form of political instrumentalization of film, insisting that the pictures are supposed to entertain and elate the public but not disseminate propaganda, even if "it is propaganda for only one thing: American democracy."¹²⁹ Precisely because propaganda, and film propaganda in particular, was considered to be such a decisive weapon in the clash of ideologies, the filmmakers in the US were highly ambivalent about deliberately employing it.

In the eyes of US liberals, propaganda violated the basic tenets upon which democracy rested. However, faced with the fact that "Germans are making one pro-Fascist film after another, designed to show that Fascism is superior to liberal democracy" at the same time that "the Russians are making films to show that communism is superior to everything else," intellectuals in the US experienced a fundamental ideological dilemma. For once, the dilemma was one of terminology. There simply was no adequate (democratic) terminological differentiation between "Goebbels-

¹²⁶ On the rift between the leftist-intellectuals, isolationists, and advocates for a strong ideological stance by the United States compare Clayton D. Laurie. *The Propaganda Warriors. America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996)

¹²⁷ See Lynn Heinzerling. "Propaganda Mill of Nazis Grinds Finely" *Washington Post* 27 Feb 1941. "A foreigner, and especially an American in Berlin, marvels at the organization of this tremendous campaign without the slightest apparent opposition."

¹²⁸ "Nazi Censorship" *Washington Post* 13 Oct 1933. See also "Hitler Strikes Death Blow At Press Freedom" *Chicago Daily Tribune* 6 Oct 1933

¹²⁹ "Lewis Says Hays Bans Film of Book" *New York Times* 16 Feb 1936.

type deception propaganda” and information about the superiority of democracy.¹³⁰ The United States press, while insisting on the value of the latter and deriding the former, referred to the propagation of any ideology as “propaganda.”¹³¹

Many left-leaning intellectuals subscribed to a ‘philosophy of truth’ and rejected heavy handed demagoguery of any kind. In contrast, interventionists with ties to the military argued for the use of mass propaganda as a necessary tool that must be perfected in order to beat the Nazis at their own game.¹³² In the war of ideologies, propaganda

¹³⁰ Laurie, 94.

¹³¹ Frank Nugent. “Hollywood Adopts a Point of View” *New York Times* 30 Apr 1939.

¹³² Kurt L. London. “Lag Seen in Hollywood. Movie Industry Called lacking in Defense Efforts” *New York Times* 24 Aug 1941

whether based on facts or lies seemed almost unavoidable.¹³³ While Goebbels argued against the negative connotations of the term ‘propaganda’ and considered it to be an art comparable to the classical rhetoric employed of Aristotle, Cicero, and Augustine, the dominant position in the US insisted that propaganda was appalling and politically inappropriate. However, this did not keep the United States government from

¹³³ Insisting on the paramount responsibility to speak out against Nazism, *Confessions* addressed the moral dilemma that would come to characterize official US policy on propaganda during the war. Even though there remained little doubt that Nazi propaganda begged for a response in kind, the first official US agency charged with the coordination of information was founded only after Hitler invaded Poland. In early September 1939, Roosevelt created the Office of Government Reports. By November 1940, partly in response to the espionage efforts of German agents in the US, the Ickes’ Committee explicitly considered the creation of a propaganda agency. The proliferation of various agencies to gather information and educate the public were short lived and ill-defined precisely because Roosevelt hesitated to create a direct link between the media and the government. The office of Coordinator of Information (COI), directed by William Donovan was founded in July 1941; however, it became essentially paralyzed by infighting. Robert E. Sherwood, a playwright and White House speechwriter, was named director of the COI’s Foreign Information Service (FIS) and, in contrast to the more militant Donovan, remained committed to fact-based propaganda. When the United States joined their Chiefs of Staffs with the British in January 1942, psychological warfare became a military objective, which escalated the ideological tensions within the COI. President Roosevelt eventually split moral and military authorities and created the Office of War Information (OWI) in June 1942 with Elmer Davis, a journalist, as director. While the FIS effectively moved into the newly created OWI, a civilian controlled agency responsible for disseminating official government information, the more militant remainder of the COI was swallowed up by the military and became part of the newly created Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Ultimately, not the US government but the military leadership came to oversee the implementation of psychological warfare and successfully employed propaganda as a weapon of war, circumventing the government’s intervention into the delicate realm of the freedom of the press. With the US entry into the war, Hollywood willingly placed the dream factory at the service of the president. Already in months prior, the movie industry had collaborated with the military, producing training films for the military. But war made for “still closer cooperation between the motion picture industry and the government.” By April 1942, Hollywood was producing informational shorts based on government scripts. Disney geared eighty percent of its cartoons towards the war effort, illustrating that even “Donald doesn’t Duck the Issue.” In December 1942, the government had caught up with Hollywood’s initiative and the freshly minted OWI requested that studios “submit screen treatments and completed scenarios of all pictures to the Office of War Information before production begins,” extending rights of motion picture censorship to an arm of the Government. While nobody doubted the commitment of Hollywood to the war effort, the OWI reserved judgment as to what would or would not cause detriment to America’s ability to win the war. Nonetheless, Nelson Poynter, the head of the OWI Hollywood office, denied that censorship was taking place and presented the matter as being “merely an extension of current practice” – a practice that thus far entailed the submission of scripts which “had a direct bearing on the war effort.” Lowell Mellett, the chief of the motion picture bureau of the OWI joined his local representative Poynter and stressed the “purely advisory” function of the OWI when addressing objections voiced by studio heads. Military necessity and democratic principles did not always easily merge. Protest by Hollywood studios against what the imposition of censorship, however, raised eyebrows now that the nation was at war. Warner Brothers and Twentieth Century Fox were the only two studios initially to answer the request for script submissions in the affirmative, breaking away from the emerging front against Mellett in which ideology was obviously not the only issue. See “O.W.I. Decree Tightens Film Censorship.” *Los Angeles Times* 19 Dec 1942; Thomas F. Brady. “Hollywood Vs. OWI” *The New York Times* 3 Jan 1943; Bosely Crowther. “Matter for Advisement” *The New York Times* 10 Jan 1943; See Laurie, 86-7. “Hollywood Pledges Aid to All-Out War Effort” *Los Angeles Times* 31 Dec 1941; Thomas M. Pryor. “Of Films and the War” *New York Times* 14 Dec 1941; “Movie Shorts to Spur War Drive” *The New York Times* 12 Apr 1942; Thomas F. Brady “Shooting Scripts by Uncle Sam” *New York Times* 19 Apr 1942; Thomas F. Brady “Donald Doesn’t Duck the Issue.” *New York Times* 21 Jun 1942.

systematically flooding “the nation with positive information about government policies and projects.”¹³⁴ Roosevelt monitored public opinion carefully and observers at the time did not hesitate to call the government’s strategies to garner the public’s support “propaganda.”¹³⁵ This is not to suggest that observers were likening Roosevelt’s fireside chats transmitted on national radio to Hitler’s or Goebbels’ fanatical outbursts at Nazi party rallies. But they perceived a clear shift in Roosevelt’s use of media to reinforce a populist consensus.¹³⁶

The stock market crash of 1929 and the Depression that followed in its footsteps significantly challenged US supremacy and pushed democracy further into a defensive position.¹³⁷ The Depression itself deepened due to the dramatic alteration of the economic equilibrium and the deflationary policies of most Western nations and thus called one of liberalism’s basic contentions into question.¹³⁸ Left to its own devices the economy did not continue to grow and neither did it provide the basis for a general increase in the standard of living. Instead the planned economies of the Soviet Union, Fascist Italy and

¹³⁴ Schivelbusch, 77.

¹³⁵ Elisha Hanson. “Official Propaganda and the New Deal” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 179 Pressure Groups and Propaganda (May, 1935): 176-186.

¹³⁶ After Roosevelt was inaugurated as President of the United States in January 1933, it was clear to the president and his supporters that faced with his turn towards state-capitalism the public required careful explanation, enthusiastic endorsements, and reassuring information about the respective progress of new radical policies. Contemporary analysts insisted that “for the first time in their history, the American people have seen their government turning to propaganda in myriad forms to win their favor and their support. Despite the fact that the United States never created an institution comparable to Goebbels’ Ministry of Propaganda and the press remained free, Roosevelt’s aggressive advertisement campaign for New Deal policies and the aggressive use of symbols struck with a new kind of intensity. The NRA (National Recovery Act) campaign starting in July 1933 is particular revealing. Devised as a campaign against unemployment, Roosevelt sought to bind individual employers to his new policies and solicited their promises that “We do our part.” Blue Eagle posters, pins, stickers were sent to supporters for display in shop windows and offices and supporters were listed in the “Honorable Mention” Display at a post office near by. A loud and tightly organized advertisement campaign, the Blue Eagle campaigned did not rely repression or intimidation techniques but operated on the basis of persuasion and education. See Elisha Hanson. “Official Propaganda and the New Deal” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 179 Pressure Groups and Propaganda (May, 1935): 176-186 here 176. For an excellent and more detailed analysis of the NRA campaign see Schivelbusch, 86-94.

¹³⁷ Wolfgang Schivelbusch. *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939*. 2006. New York: Picador, 2007), 11.

¹³⁸ Mazower, 113.

soon Nazi Germany appeared “as rational *national* alternatives to international capitalism.”¹³⁹

By 1936 Nazi Germany had returned to full employment on a program of massive military spending.¹⁴⁰ In Stalinist Russia the urban labor force more than tripled between 1927 and 1939, turning a peasant society into a modern, electrified, and mechanized industrial one that can hardly be described as anything less than a social revolution.¹⁴¹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch convincingly argues that “in the wake of global economic disaster, there was no particular reason to prefer the political system most closely associated with capitalism – liberal democracy – to new systems that promised a brighter future.”¹⁴² Roosevelt’s New Deal was a direct response to the threatening European models and earned the President alternative reputations as a fascist and a communist.¹⁴³ National Socialists in Germany and Italian Fascists similarly found confirmation of their ideologies in Roosevelt’s turn to post-liberal economic measures, even though the President never endorsed either dictatorship.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Mark Mazower. *Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 116. Mazower identifies Communism and in particular Lenin’s new economic policy as a pioneering national approach to the economy that eventually led to the abandonment of the World Revolution for Stalin’s vision of Socialism in One Country. Stalin’s economic policy of nationalization, forced labor, and coercion was certainly ruthless and brutal but in terms of producing jobs, it was immensely successful despite the fact that it never reached its astronomical goals. 120-127.

¹⁴⁰ Compare Tooze, 254-5. Even though economic output expanded by 8 per cent annually, German steel production achieving new records in 1938 and military expenditure dwarfed those of any other peacetime capitalist nation, the standard of living in Germany stagnated.

¹⁴¹ Mazower, 121-122.

¹⁴² Wolfgang Schivelbusch. *Three New Deals*, 11.

¹⁴³ See “Roosevelt New Deal ‘Fascism,’ League Is Told” *Chicago Daily Tribune* 18 Jun 1933; Norman Thomas. “Is the New Deal ‘Socialism?’ A Socialist Leader Answers” 18 Jun 1933; “Peers See Rule Here As Fascist” *New York Times* 13 Dec 1933; “Neither Fascist Nor Bolshevik” *New York Times* 18 Feb 1934; “Fascism of Roosevelt Predicted” *Los Angeles Times* 3 Mar 1934; “NRA ‘The American Way.’ Program Not Communist or Fascist, Roosevelt Tells Code Leaders.” *New York Times* 6 March 1934; Raymond Clapper. “‘New Deal,’ He Says, Is Neither Communism Nor Fascism, but the Maturing of a Constitutional Democracy” *The Washington Post* 15 Apr 1934; “Fascists of the United States” *The Manchester Guardian* 30 Jun 1934; “Roosevelt Called ‘Communist’” *New York Times* 3 Aug 1936; “Is Roosevelt A Socialist?” *Chicago Daily Tribune* 2 Oct 1936; David B. Rosenberg “In Praise of the New Deal.” Letters to the Editor. *New York Times* 21 Sept 1935.

¹⁴⁴ This argument has been forcefully advanced by Wolfgang Schivelbusch, 21-25. See further “Italian Papers See Roosevelt in Duce’s Role” *Chicago Daily Tribune* 6 Mar 1933; “Fascist Press Sees Ally in Roosevelt” *New York Times* 7 Mar 1933; “Mussolini Sees World Driven Towards Fascism” *Chicago Daily Tribune* 5 Jun 1933.

After 1933 Fascism appeared to be a global force. Roosevelt's political enemies likened New Deal policies to developments taking shape in Europe and drew attention to convergences between the New Deal, Fascism and Nazism. Such convergences notwithstanding, the ideological differences between Italy, Germany and the US were much more dramatic and a desire to reiterate them more forcefully paralleled these polemic comparisons. *Confessions of A Nazi Spy* was not only the first public stance against Nazism by a major studio in the US, the film was also an intervention in the national political debates as it insisted on the fundamental differences between Fascism and democracy.

When *Confessions* first ran in New York on 25 April 1939, the film still violated the principles of appeasement. Its pseudo-documentary format confronted the viewer with an omniscient commentator whose explanations were undergirded by footage from Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, newsreel footage of German aggression and a potpourri of propaganda pamphlets superimposed over newspaper headlines. The Neutrality Act signed in 1935 and its many revisions until 1939 significantly stretched the universe of moral obligation to include the various political sensibilities of foreign leaders.¹⁴⁵ The production code, administered by Joseph I. Breen of the Hays Office and adopted by the Association of Motion Picture Producers and Distributors, rendered experiences of national and international marketability concrete.¹⁴⁶ A response to pressures from various church activists, women's clubs, and reform organizations in the US, the code was not only to anticipate and eliminate potential for criticism of the pictures on moral grounds, but also to transform the experience of the past into a financial security blanket for the future.¹⁴⁷ Producers, fearing government regulations rather than

¹⁴⁵ Robert E. Jenner. *FDR's Republicans: Domestic Political Realignment* (Lanham, Md :Lexington Books, 2010); Hanna Marczewska, "Controversies around the American Policy of Neutrality, 1935-1939" *American Studies* 9 (1990) and Justus D. Doenecke and John E. Wilz, *From Isolation to War, 1931-1941* 2nd ed. (Arlington Heights, Ill: Harlan Davidson, 1991). See also *Neutrality*. Washington: U.S. Govt. print.off.1939.

¹⁴⁶ Douglas W. Churchill. "Hollywood's censor is all the World" *The New York Times* 29 Mar 1936.

¹⁴⁷ "Wave of Criticism Stirs Hollywood" *The New York Times* 11 Jun 1934; "Asks Indecent Films Ban." *The New York Times* 7 May 1934; "Catholics to Push Clean Movie Fight" *The New York Times* 22 Jun 1934; "Lutheran Report Hits Film Morals" *The New York Times* 7 Oct 1934; "Lutherans Back Clean-Film Drive" *The New York Times* 18 Jan 1935.

threats of boycotts and protests staged by religious leaders (which were rather unsuccessful in keeping patrons out of the movie theater), acquiesced and cleaned up their pictures.¹⁴⁸ When the Production Code was first established in 1934, it not only legislated when and how delicate matters such as divorce, alcohol use, crime, and adultery could be featured in film but further maintained that the “history, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of other nations shall be presented fairly,” which, the *New York Times* insisted “should be translated as ‘in favorable light.’”¹⁴⁹ Hence, even films that did not explicitly invoke National Socialism, but rather stressed the superiority of democracy to other ideologies of governance, were in danger of running into problems with the PCA (Production Code Administration), depending on their level of ‘tact.’

Even before the outbreak of war in Europe, Hollywood was hardly favorably disposed towards Nazism. Yet Hollywood was slow in naming the enemy in its films, keeping the sensibilities of its international audiences in mind. Even though a number of studios contemplated making more explicitly anti-Nazi films, the industry as a whole remained complicit with the politics of appeasement, since these politics that served its financial interests.¹⁵⁰ When Will Hays cautioned MGM against the production of *It Can't Happen Here*, a story “of so inflammatory a nature and so filled with dangerous material that only the greatest possible care will save it from being rejected on all sides,” he was determined to ward off potential repercussions for the entire industry and ensure financial viability. Films such as *Gabriel over the White House* and *The President Vanishes*, which

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Frank S. Nugent. “New Censorial Swords” *The New York Times* 9 May 1937.

¹⁵⁰ For careful treatment of the varied aspects of appeasement see Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Lothar Kettenacker. *The Fascist Challenge and the Policy of Appeasement* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983) In this context the literature on exiled film makers and their anti-Nazism is revealing as well. See in particular Asper, Helmut G. “*Etwas Besseres als den Tod ...*” *Filmexil in Hollywood. Porträts, Filme, Dokumente.* (Marburg: Schüren, 2002.); Lutz Koepnick. *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema between Hitler and Hollywood.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Lutz Koepnick. “Komik als Waffe? Charlie Chaplin, Ernst Lubitsch und das Dritten Reich.” *Mediale Mobilmachung II: Hollywood, Exil und Nachkrieg.* Ed. Segeberg, Harro. (München: Fink, 2006); Gene D. Phillips. *Exiles in Hollywood: Major European Film Directors in America.* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1998) and Gerd Gemünden. “Brecht in Hollywood: ‘Hangman Also Die’ and the Anti-Nazi Film.” *TDR* 43 4 Special Issue: German Brecht, European Readings (Winter 1999): 65-76.

“dabbled in the field of dictatorship” had served his case in point.¹⁵¹ That Hays’ decision played directly into the hands of the German Propaganda Minister concerned him less.¹⁵²

On the eve of World War Two, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* developed into a test for world loyalties over the summer of 1939.¹⁵³ The film was banned in most Latin American countries¹⁵⁴ and reviewers in Europe expressed their puzzlement over Hollywood’s decision to trade in propaganda.¹⁵⁵ As Germany prepared for war, the Reich’s agents agitated against anti-Nazi films in Latin America trying to saturate Hollywood’s recently discovered markets with German propaganda.¹⁵⁶ In more than one way, *Confessions* was a mere prelude to the war that would unfold on movie screens and compete for patrons in and outside the US and the Reich.¹⁵⁷

However, it was due to a particular coincidence that *Confessions* functioned as a trigger for the transatlantic cinewar. The Nazi government clearly had no interest in alerting its own population to the pathetic blunders and petty activities of Nazi fifth columnists in the United States by openly attacking *Confessions*. Most troubling to the

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

¹⁵² Douglas W. Churchill. “Hollywood’s Censor Is All the World” *The New York Times* 29 Mar 1936.

¹⁵³ “American Spy Film Banned” *The New York Times* 14 Jul 1939; “South Africa Bans U.S. Film” *The New York Times* 17 Aug 1939; “A Genial Censor” *The Washington Post* 30 Aug 1939; “Peru Sees Nazi Hand in British Film Ban” *The New York Times* 23 Mar 1940; “Cuba Ends Ban on Spy Film” *The New York Times* 22 Jun 1939

¹⁵⁴ “Tempestuous Career of ‘Nazi Spy’” *The New York Times* 2 Jun 1940. *Confessions* was banned in Norway, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Hungary, Switzerland, Argentina, Brazil, Java, Santo Domingo Eire, San Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, South Africa and Iraq.

¹⁵⁵ “Films of the Week: ‘Confessions of a Nazi Spy’” *The Observer* 18 Jun 1939.

¹⁵⁶ “Studio and Screen: Hollywood Seeks Markets - Some Odd Casting” *The Manchester Guardian* 6 Jan 1939; “U.S. Movies Held Poor ‘Propaganda’” *The New York Times* 29 Jan 1939; David Ward Howe “The Observation-Post: The European War May Help Race Crash Films” *The Chicago Defender* 28 Oct 1939. For Hollywood’s attempts to make inroads into and ultimately conquer the Latin American film market see Catherine Benamou. *It’s all true: Orson Welles’s Pan-American Odyssey*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). Further compare Douglas W. Churchill. “Hollywood snags the Good Neighbor Policy” *The New York Times* 10 Nov 1940.

¹⁵⁷ Edwin Schallert. “Dictators Block American Films” *Los Angeles Times* 22 Jan 1939; “Cuba Ends Ban on Nazi Spy Film” *New York Times* 22 Jun 1939; “Peru Sees Nazi Hand in British Film Ban” *New York Times* 23 Mar 1940; Russell B. Porter. “Nazis’ Propaganda Fails to Win Peru” *The New York Times* 4 Aug 1940; “Chaplin Film Forbidden: Buenos Aires Bans ‘Great Dictator’ at Italian Envoy’s Request” *New York Times* 28 Dec 1940; Bosley Crowther. “The War on the Screen” *New York Times* 27 Oct 1940; “Axis Films Fought by Britain and US: Germans Seen Penetrating Latin American Countries with Movie Propaganda” *New York Times* 14 Aug 1941

Nazis in Berlin was Charlie Chaplin's intention to make a film ridiculing Hitler and Nazi party leadership. News about Chaplin's burlesque of Adolf Hitler, which, though in the pipes since the fall of 1938, only premiered in New York City on 15 October 1940, reached the Reich in early January 1939 at precisely the moment that Warner's decided to go through with the production of *Confession*. Chaplin's plans for *The Great Dictator* (1940) presented a more volatile target for polemic attack than Warners' fact-based tribute to democracy that primarily disparaged Nazi methods rather than Nazi ideology.

It seems that the Nazi Propaganda Ministry at times confused these two films (whether deliberately or out of ignorance cannot be established).¹⁵⁸ However, the Reich chose to channel its indignation over Hollywood's belated political consciences through attacks against Chaplin's film as official responses to American condemnation of Nazi persecution illustrate.¹⁵⁹ Clearly outraged, Hitler refused to mention either one of the film proposals being presently discussed in the US press, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* and Charlie Chaplin's *The Dictator*, but instead directed his incoherent outbursts against the American profiteers and World Jewry.¹⁶⁰ Promising a response in kind, Hitler threatened that the "announcement by American film companies to produce anti-Nazi, i.e. anti-

¹⁵⁸ Compare *NS-Presseanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 6/III 1938. bearbeitet von Karen Peter (München: Saur, 1999) 1214. 3680 Glossenkonferenz ZSg. 102/13/155/38 (9) 21 Dez. 1938 and ZSg. 110/10/241 v.21 Dec 1938.

¹⁵⁹ Since Jack and Harry Warner were Jewish, Chaplin's alleged Jewish heritage by the Nazis can hardly account for the attention the film received but must instead seen as a result of the film's direct attack on the person of Adolf Hitler and the German leadership cult more generally. (Chaplin is depicted in *Der Ewige Jude* as an example of American Jews who "almost look like genuine Americans")

¹⁶⁰ "Reich Press Attacks Ickes's Sunday Talk" *The New York Times* 22 Dec 1938. An outraged German Press, most notably the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* criticized United States Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, who apparently endorsed Chaplin's projected film *The Dictator*. Also see "Warners Ban Role Of Hitler in Film" *The New York Times* 6 Jan 1939; "Screen News here and in Hollywood" *The New York Times* 13 Jan 1939 in which a number of anti-Nazi projects among the *Confessions* are introduced. See further "Screen News Here and in Hollywood" *The New York Times* 20 Jan 1939 which reports that Sidney Chaplin will join his brother Charlie Chaplin as co-director on *The Dictator*. In response Hitler ranted: "The peoples will realize shortly that National Socialist Germany does not want enmity with other peoples, that all the allegations regarding intentions of aggression of our people against foreign people are born either out of pathological hysteria or are lies that originate from the personal drive for self-preservation of certain politicians; that those lies however serve to salvage the finances of unscrupulous profiteers in certain states, that especially the international Jewry therewith hopes to attain satisfaction of its vindictiveness and greed, that they are the most outrageous aspersions to be laid onto a great and peace-loving people." See Adolf Hitler *Der Führer vor dem ersten Reichstag Großdeutschlands. Reichstagsrede vom 30. January 1939* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1939), 42-3

German films, can only move us to make anti-Semitic films as part of our German production.”¹⁶¹ Hitler, for once, kept his word.

Starting in September 1939, Fritz Hippler began working on Germany’s cinematic response to Hollywood anti-Nazi films. At the end of the film, Hippler inserted footage of Adolf Hitler addressing the first *Reichstag* of Greater Germany on 30 January 1939, thus rearticulating a promise first made in response to the news about American anti-Nazi films:

If the international financial Jewry in and outside of Europe should succeed in embroiling the nations once more in a world war, then the result will not be bolshevizing of the earth and therewith the victory of Jewry, but the extermination of the Jewish race in Europe.¹⁶²

The fact the Reich formulated its response to Hollywood’s political awakening in the aftermath of Warner’s docu-drama is all the more surprising because *Confessions* deliberately avoided any reference to Nazi anti-Semitism. Neither the US-bashing SS-weekly *Das Schwarze Korps* nor the party organ *Der Stürmer* were outraged by *Confessions*, a film that made critics in Britain and America question the integrity of Hollywood.¹⁶³ In a satirical article, *Das Schwarze Korps* insisted Goebbels must not deny Germans the opportunity to experience some healthy laughter at the world’s first anti-Nazi film.¹⁶⁴ The paper applauded Warner’s efforts by identifying *Confessions* as

a film for democracy! Most formidable anti-Nazi propaganda to date. A victory for fortified democracy. And in addition a thriller ... ! A thriller is a sensational

¹⁶¹ Adolf Hitler *Der Führer vor dem ersten Reichstag Großdeutschlands. Reichstagsrede vom 30. January 1939* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1939), 56

¹⁶² Hitler, *Der Führer vor dem ersten Reichstag Großdeutschlands. Reichstagsrede vom 30. January 1939* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1939), 46 The original read: “Wenn es dem internationalen Finanzjudentum in-und ausserhalb Europas gelingen sollte, die Völker noch einmal in einen Weltkrieg zu stürzen, dann wird das Ergebnis nicht die Bolschewisierung der Erde und damit der Sieg des Judentums sein, sondern die Vernichtung der jüdischen Rasse in Europa.”

¹⁶³ The SS Schwarzes Korps regularly printed articles ridiculing and deriding the USA. See for example “Unverschämt, Schamlos, Albern” *SS Schwarze Korps* 5 Jan 1939.

¹⁶⁴ “Gestapo aus Hollywood” in *SS Schwarzes Korps* 18 May 1939.

horror film in Jewish film jargon, which moreover is so crudely made that even the last nigger catches on.¹⁶⁵

Berlin did not ban American film as was feared by the American producers and seriously contemplated by Hitler.¹⁶⁶ Instead the Reich insisted that the press begin to slowly prepare German audiences for the subsequent fading out of American films and that until adequate alternatives to US movies could be produced or obtained, Hollywood features should be pushed into smaller movie theaters across the Reich.¹⁶⁷

By the end of March, Berlin sharpened the directive regarding the treatment of American film and insisted that papers only print “cursory critiques, that are depreciative and negative and portend in particular to the tastelessness of the American film standards.”¹⁶⁸ Further, the Reich’s press leader announced a general prohibition for preliminary announcements for American films and banned screen-caps from the classified section. While Hollywood’s PCA considered the implications of anti-Nazi or anti-Fascist films in light of their compatibility with US neutrality, despite the fact that

¹⁶⁵ “Gestapo aus Hollywood” in *SS Schwarzes Korps* 18 May 1939. The original read: “Ein Film für die Demokratie. Stärkste Antinazipropaganda, die bis jetzt da war. Ein Sieg wehrhafter Demokratie. Und obendrein ein Thriller ...! Ein Thriller ist im jüdischen Filmjargon ein sensationeller Gruselfilm, worin ‘obendrein’ so dick wie möglich aufgetragen wird, damit auch beim letzten Nigger der Groschen fällt.”

¹⁶⁶ “In der nächsten Zeit wird auf Anordnung des Führers die Affuehrung von amerikanischen Filmen in Deutschland gestoppt werden” the censorship office informed the press on 9 January 1939. 83 ZSg 101/12/10 Nr. 30 *NS-Presseanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 7/I 1939. bearbeitet von Karen Peter (München: Saur, 2001), 27

¹⁶⁷ 83 ZSg 101/12/10 Nr. 30 and Zgs. 102/14/27 (1) vom 9.1.1939 *NS-Presseanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 7/I 1939, 27-28

¹⁶⁸ *NS-Presseanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 7/I 1939, 301. 904 ZSg 101/12/91 Nr. 238. 23 Mar 1939

the policy was coming increasingly under revision within the United States,¹⁶⁹ Berlin did not delude itself about “US-neutrality humbug.”¹⁷⁰

Once released German diplomatic representatives labored for suppression of *Confessions* behind the scenes, “denouncing the picture as an example of pernicious propaganda which had been ‘poisoning’ German-American relations.”¹⁷¹ This, however, seemed to be more a matter of standard protocol rather than an indication of actual outrage. Joseph Goebbels was hardly worried about *Confessions* and even screened it in front of representatives of the German press.¹⁷² Several months after the film had been released in the US, the master-propagandist noted in his diary:

Film ‘Nazi Spy.’ An American gibe, not maladroit, I myself am playing a main part in it and not even a disagreeable one. Otherwise, I don’t think the picture is dangerous. It inspires in our enemies fear rather than hatred and rage.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ The debates over US policy and the eventual changes in the Neutrality Act produced heated debates in the US and ultimately split the house along party lines in April. When the ‘cash and carry-plan’ of the Neutrality Act expired on May 1, a plan which would leave it to the President’s discretion to forbid the export of war materials in the event of war unless paid for in cash and transported on foreign vessels, intensified debates in the US even further. Roosevelt brought the matter before Congress several, but by mid August he had still remained unable to obtain a revision. “Experts Propose Neutrality Shift” *The New York Times* 28 January 1939; “Propose to Name Aggressor Nation” *The New York Times* 14 Feb 1939; “Barkley Outlines The Foreign Policy of Administration” *The New York Times* 8 Mar 1939; “Neutrality Slits House Party Lines” *The New York Times* 8 Apr 1939; “The Neutrality Act” *The New York Times* 2 May 1939; “Roosevelt Defeat Hailed in Germany” *The New York Times* 14 Aug 1939

¹⁷⁰ *NS-Pressenanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 7/I 1939, 228. 733 ZSg. 101/12/68/3 9 Mar 1939

¹⁷¹ “Germans Protest Nazi Spy Film to the State Department” *The New York Times* 6 Jun 1939 and “Objects to ‘Spy’ Film” in *New York Times* Jun 7, 1939. See also *NS-Pressenanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 7/II 1939, 462. “In the United States numerous anti-German films are produced, the most notable of which is *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*. The German Consulate protested officially, but was notified that there is no law under which the film could be forbidden. Some southern states were able and did pronounce bans. The film is also to be shown in England and South America. We also protested [its exhibition] there. [In USA werden zahlreiche antideutsche Filme gedreht, deren beachtlichster offenbar ‘Geständnisse eines Nazispions’ zu sein scheint. Die deutsche Botschaft habe offiziell protestiert, aber den Bescheid erhalten, es gäbe kein Gesetz, diese Filme zu verbieten. Einige Südstaaten in USA haben Verbote aussprechen können und ausgesprochen. Der Film soll auch nach England und Südamerika. Auch dort hätten wir protestiert.]” 1813 Glossenkonferenz Zsg 102/17/160 (4) 12.6.1939.

¹⁷² “‘Confessions of Nazi Spy’ Shown Reich Press” *The Washington Post* 5 Nov 1939.

¹⁷³ Joseph Goebbels. Sept. 30, 1939 *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil I Band 6 ed Elke Froehlich (Munich: Saur, 1996) The original reads: “Film ‘Nazi Spy’. Eine amerikanische Mache, nicht ungeschickt, ich selbst spiele darin eine Hauptrolle und nicht einmal eine besonders unangenehme. Sonst aber halte ich den Film nicht für gefährlich. Er erweckt bei unseren Gegnern eher Angst als Wut und Haß.”

But what Goebbels did not say and what must have been on his mind nonetheless, was the fact that Hollywood and by extension America was no longer longer a hostage of capitalism and instead prepared to commit to a war of ideology.¹⁷⁴ Within a year, capitalism proved triumphant and anti-Nazism went commercial, which provided further confirmation to Hitler for his ludicrous theory of a world Jewish conspiracy. Marking a watershed for Hollywood, *Confessions* also inaugurated a new phase in transatlantic relations and developed into a test for world loyalties over the summer of 1939.¹⁷⁵ And over the next years, more American studios mobilized their pictures against the dictators of Europe.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Edwin Schallert "Dictators Block American Films" *Los Angeles Times* 22 Jun 1939. Schallert reports that "more and more people are wondering how far the producers of pictures will be urged along new courses" and considers it likely that "because of the cutting of European markets more vital political issues will be dealt with on the screen and there will be less squeamishness about treading on foreign countries toes."

¹⁷⁵ "American Spy Film Banned" *The New York Times* 14 Jul 1939; "South Africa Bans U.S. Film" *The New York Times* 17 Aug 1939; "A Genial Censor" *The Washington Post* 30 Aug 1939; "Peru Sees Nazi Hand in British Film Ban" *The New York Times* 23 Mar 1940; "Cuba Ends Ban on Spy Film" *The New York Times* 22 Jun 1939. In a speech before congress on 4 January 1939, President Roosevelt insisted that the US "need to be increasingly on guard against the pervasive doctrine that dictatorships alone know how to get things done, how to put men to work, how to make use of idle capital, how to avoid waste and inertia in the management of public business, how to act decisively in a time of crisis." *The New York Times* observed that the president's speech marked a turning point in foreign affairs either requiring "an outright repeal or fundamental amendment of the Neutrality Act". Compare "The President's Message" *The New York Times* 5 Jan 1939. Moreover, Britain and France clearly interpreted president Roosevelt's speech as a "veiled threat of economic sanctions against aggressors," while German and Italian press referred to the "President's 'ruthless assault on dictators.'" Compare "Makes Stir Abroad" *The New York Times* 5 Jan 1939. The tension heightened towards the end of the months as British and French papers proclaimed that "U.S.A Frontier Is in France" Berlin expressed its "amazement over what is termed a deliberate attempt to 'sabotage' the quieting effects of Chancellor Hitler's Reichstag speech on world opinion," given on January 30. See "Berlin is Amazed" *The New York Times* 2 February 1939.

¹⁷⁶ Some of the more important anti-Nazi Hollywood films after *Confessions* and *The Great Dictator* (1940) include *The Mortal Storm*, (1940); *The Man I Married* (1940); *Sergeant York* (1941); *Man Hunt* (1941); *Hitler's Children* (1942), *Casablanca* (1942) *Divide and Conquer* (1942), *Mrs Miniver* (1942); *To Be or Not To Be* (1942); *Mission to Moscow* (1943), *We've Never Been Licked* (1943); *This Land is Mine* (1943); *Behind the Rising Sun* (1943). Compare Doherty, 36-59, 300-307

Similarly, the war against Poland promised more receptive national audiences for anti-Semitic films within Germany.¹⁷⁷ Half a year later, Veit Harlan began shooting the anti-semitic feature, *Jud Süß*, which was released as the first explicitly anti-Semitic hate film in September of the same year.¹⁷⁸ *Jud Süß* proved immensely popular with audiences in the Reich.¹⁷⁹ But the film's political success, (i.e. its anti-Semitic education) was quite controversial at the time. Ferdinand Marian, who played the Jewish villain, almost drowned in fan-mail even though people reported their disgust "man möchte sich die Hände waschen [one wants to wash one's hands]" upon leaving the theater.¹⁸⁰ The effectiveness of Harlan in communicating his hateful message becomes more clearly recognizable in postwar recollections of the film that merged the star's identities with his screen persona.¹⁸¹

At the same time, Hamburg's cineasts were exerting ever more energy to cast the city as the Reich's predominant proponent of film art – a status that war came to

¹⁷⁷ For Hippler's work on *Der Ewig Jude* see See Kay Hoffmann, 624. It should be noted at this point that the pogroms perpetrated against Jews in German towns and cities on November 10/11, 1938 send shock waves through the German population as well, leading Nazi leadership to the conclusion that German anti-Semitism remains limited to theory but fails to hold in the face of anti-Semitic practices. *NS-Pressenanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 6/II 1938. bearbeitet von Karen Peter (München: Saur, 1999), 1117-8. See in particular 3377 ZSg. 102/113/57/45 (9) 24 Nov 1938; ZSg. 110/10/157 v.24.Nov 1938: "It is known that anti-Semitism is still limited predominantly to the party and its echelons in Germany today, and that still a certain class of the population exists that has not the least bit of understanding [for anti-Semitism]... This is in large part due to the fact that we are an anti-Semitic people and a anti-Semitic state but that nonetheless the anti-Semitism is absent from most expressions of life in state and people. ... For this reason, a enlightenment wave is to pushed through this winter with all the propagandistic tools at our disposal."

¹⁷⁸ Linda Schulte-Sasse. "The Jew as Other under National Socialism: Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß*" *The German Quarterly* 61:1 (Winter 1988), 22-49. and Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996)

¹⁷⁹ Compare *Hamburger Tageblatt* classified ads from September 1940 through February 1941. Daniel Knopp reminds us that *Jud Süß* belonged to the ten most successful films of 1940-41 and drew audiences of more than 20 million. With 6.2 million in profits it was also financially one of the greatest successes of Nazi Cinema, it more than tripled its cost of 1.9 million. Daniel Knopp. *NS-Film Propaganda: Wunschbild und Feindbild in Leni Riefenstahls 'Triumph des Willens' und Veit Harlans 'Jud Süß'* (Marburg: Tectum, 2004), 56. Also Compare Stephen Lowry, *Pathos und Politik. Ideologie in Spielfilmen des Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen, 1991)

¹⁸⁰ Daniel Knopp. *NS-Film Propaganda: Wunschbild und Feindbild in Leni Riefenstahls 'Triumph des Willens' und Veit Harlans 'Jud Süß'* (Marburg: Tectum, 2004), 79. On fan-mail see also Rolf Giessen. *Nazi Propaganda Films*, 133.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Frau Edith S. Hamburg, 6 Mar 2007. When I mentioned Ferdiand Marian she could not recall the film but remembered "das war doch ein Jude [but he was a Jew]?"

consistently undermine as I illustrate in Chapter 5.¹⁸² Cineasts in Hamburg did not take *Confessions* lightly. These local reactions to Warners' *Confessions* were remarkable in more than one way and served the complicated purposes of realigning the city's self image with international developments. Since Hamburg had continued to nurture its cultural connections with the Anglo-American West, the cineasts of the city clearly experienced a more urgent need to publicize their indignation in response to Hollywood's anti-Nazism as if to therewith affirm their unqualified support of Hitler's government.¹⁸³

But aside from paying tribute to the masters in Berlin, the vociferous condemnation of the American Dream Factory served the vanity of Hamburg's cinephiles. In the eyes its most vocal representative, Werner Kark, the leader of the Hamburger Film Consortium, "long since a household name in expert circles in Berlin and the Reich" could not stand idly by when "excellent actors and directors of the Californian film metropolis place[d] their doubtful signature under a document of hate against Germany."¹⁸⁴ The *Tageblatt* sought to publicly correct its own mistake of having accepted "as virtuoso and exemplary the cinematic accomplishments of Hollywood ... for the good spirit of film art."¹⁸⁵

The paper pointed to the long-standing support that Hollywood films had received in the Reich and admitted that Germans "did not without wistfulness look up to the gods in California's everlasting sun, who gained fame and honor, success and applause all over the world in recompense of painstaking and diligent work."¹⁸⁶ Since Hollywood had

¹⁸² Compare "Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft gibt Rechenschaft" *Film-Kurier* 30 Jun 1939

¹⁸³ "Das kontinentale Deutschland und das maritime England ergänzen sich" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 16 Feb 1939. "Sprünge von Kontinent zu Kontinent" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 18 Feb 1939 in which the paper expresses admiration and a grain of jealousy with regards to the wonderful entertainment the US produces. But also as a general center for international tourism Hamburg looks primarily to the West. See "Das erfolgreich Hamburg wirbt weiter: Reiseverkehr über dem Reichsdurchschnitt - 'Hamburger Tage der Werbung' haben heute begonnen" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 1 Mar 1939 and "Jährlich 30 Mio RM durch Fremdenverkehr: Bürgermeister Krogmann über Hamburgs Fremdenverkehrswerbung - Jeder Fremde ist unser aller Kunde" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 3 Mar 1939.

¹⁸⁴ "Warners made it: Confessions of a Nazi Spy: Eine Abrechnung mit den Göttern und Dämonen in Hollywood" von Werner Kark. *Hamburger Tageblatt* 25 Mar 1939.

¹⁸⁵ "ibid.

¹⁸⁶ ibid.

chosen to now “employ the entire art, the whole force, the total fame, and the mighty money in the production of lies and hate, to run a hate-film at the expense of the Reich through the cinemas of the agitated earth,” Werner Kark proclaimed that the *Tageblatt* would no longer dignify any American film with commentary in its columns. Yet his rebuff was incomplete. Kark made it clear that Hamburg’s stance might change, if the US reconsidered its policy of “lies and defamation, hate and agitation” that faced Germany in the form of the Warner Bros. film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, described as “brutal weapon of direct attack against *Volk* and State.”¹⁸⁷

Hamburg, a city whose commitment to National Socialism had not always been beyond question, no longer publicized the local support for the apolitical films that still constituted the majority features produced by American producers. The outrage of a major newspaper in Germany’s second largest city was so unusual that even the *New York Times* reacted to the allegations of the *Hamburger Tageblatt*, “the Nazi party’s official organ here.”¹⁸⁸ Quoting the paper at length, the *New York Times* recapped the allegation according to which “the state supervised American film companies have joined in a chorus of never-ending insult and abuse of Germany” and interpreted the *Tageblatt*’s position as a “first step in what may become a nationwide ban on American films.”¹⁸⁹ A mere week after the original outburst the *Tageblatt* moved to explain the exceptional ardor with which it condemned the American motion picture industry as European newspapers begin to raise questions about a cinewar between Germany and the United States.¹⁹⁰ However, *Confessions* had merely stirred up dust in Hamburg, in Great Britain and in certain American circles.

The film introduced local cineasts in Hamburg to a frame that long contained the regime’s relation to the United States. The impending and unavoidable “superpower competition with the United States” was no longer a mere figment of Hitler’s racist

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ “Nazi Paper to Ignore Movies Made in U.S.” Mar 28, 1939.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ “Führen wir einen Filmkrieg mit USA? *Hamburger Tageblatt* April 1, 1939

imagination but gained traction locally as a response of American anti-German aggression.¹⁹¹ During the first winter of war the Film Consortium in Hamburg screened six American-made features and documentaries among which the Stan and Ollie short *Ritter ohne Furcht und Tadel* was to be the last on 18 February 1940.¹⁹² Occasional Hollywood films continued to play in the city until Goebbels banned American film in the late fall of 1940. The city's cineasts continued to celebrate themselves as open minded worldly art connoisseurs, but their focus reflected the military realities of the day.¹⁹³ The German film industry experienced a dramatic boost due to the expansion of export markets with military victory in Europe and Hamburg's celebration of German film-art was as much an ideological alignment as it reflected increasingly limited alternatives.

The disappointment, the sense of loss and inferiority of Hamburg's most vocal cineast mixed with frustration once the object of admiration returned a defeating blow to the faint hopes that America and Germany might find themselves on equal footing joined in mutual respect, at least in the realm of film. But in response to *Confessions*, the "gateway to the world" closed fronts with the regime and prepared for war, by announcing the war 'declared' by Hollywood.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Tooze, xxiv

¹⁹² Other American films of the 1939/40 matinee series included *Manuel [Captain Courageous]* (1937), *Smoky* (1933) and *Revolution der Jugend [This Day and Age]* (1933). See *Der Film heute und morgen. Sonntag-Morgen-Veranstaltungen der Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film* (Volkshochschule) und des Waterloo-Theaters. in StAHH 322 Heisig.

¹⁹³ *ibid.* The *Film-Kurier* praised the spirit with which "in Hamburg, dem aufgeschlossenen, schon immer Zukunft denkenden tor Deutschlands" the consortium advertises the good film as "die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts"

¹⁹⁴ "Hollywood erklärt Filmkrieg der Hetze gegen Deutschland. Remarque schreibt Drehbuch - Spenser Tracy und Robert Taylor machen mit" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 13 May 1939 which casts Hollywood as an amalgamation of Jewish *Brunnenvergifter* [well-poisoners].

Chapter 4

Celluloid History and the Glamour of *Heimat*

If we take seriously the disillusionment displayed by the people of Hamburg and in Germany after the collapse of Hitler's regime, if we take seriously the pervasive memories of the Nazi "good times" that found articulation in the first months after the war and were reiterated ever since, we should investigate the particular promise that Nazism held as well as the many ways in which this promise retained credibility throughout the war and following the collapse of the Reich.¹ This chapter does not argue that film insinuated Nazism into the daily lives of the citizens of Hamburg by feeding them palatable bits of Nazi ideology.² Neither do I argue that film provided sufficiently attractive possibilities of escape from the drudgery of war and thus bought the regime a necessary measure of popular acquiescence.³

While film certainly helped to both circulate Nazi ideas and provided respite to the population, cinema constituted a political space which, contrary to previous assumptions, enlisted local institutions, cultural critics, and audiences in the making of

¹ Ulrich Herbert's periodization divided the Third Reich in "good" and "bad" times based on his careful interpretation of personal interviews with *Zeitzeugen*. See Ulrich Herbert. "Die guten und die schlechten Zeiten": Überlegungen zur diachronen Analyse lebensgeschichtlicher Interviews" in "*Die Jahre die weiss man nicht, wo man die heute hinsetzen soll*": *Faschismuserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet* ed. Lutz Niethammer et al. (Berlin: Dietz, 1983) A shorter version of the article was published as "Good Times, Bad Times." *History Today* 36 2 (February 1986): 42-48.

² This argument is most convincingly made by David Welch, who in numerous articles has explored the relationship between Nazi propaganda, and film propaganda in particular, and the creation of community in the Third Reich. See in particular "Nazi Propaganda and the *Volksgemeinschaft*: Constructing a People's Community" in *Journal of Contemporary History* 39:2 Special Issue: Understanding Nazi Germany (Apr 2004): 213-238

³ A most recent and sophisticated analysis suggesting that the Nazi state used films' and in particular "actresses' measured deviance to pacify a population that was yearning for stability and order, as well as cultural diversity, modern mass goods, a sense that one could, even in wartime, live a risqué life" has been advanced by Jana F. Bruns *Nazi Cinema's New Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9.

National Socialist Hamburg. Film was more than just a medium through which the Nazi promise for material prosperity and national cohesion could be locally received and consumed. It was also an important site at which that promise could be conceived and enunciated as a local and indeed as a communal achievement. To delineate this political space and describe this site for local intervention in prewar Hamburg is the purpose of this chapter.

Film and film discourse provided a suitable venue to affirm Hamburg's initially questionable commitment to Nazism and simultaneously made it possible to promote 'Hanseatic traditions' as local *Eigenart*.⁴ Since the seizure of power in 1933, the regime had intentionally disempowered local administrations and reduced regional cultural centers to mere tributaries.⁵ The politics of *Gleichschaltung*, or coordination, stripped Hamburg of its historic status as an independent, free city-state and threatened to delegitimize the basis for the city's historic identity as Germany's 'gateway to the world.' The Senate was reduced to a personal support staff for Gauleiter and Governor Karl Kaufmann; the local economy was retooled to process war-related imports and rearmaments; and cultural institutions were streamlined along the parameters set by Joseph Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry. As the administration was restructured in accordance with the *Führerprinzip*, the venues for local politics grew increasingly

⁴ This untranslatable term suggests a mixture of self-reliance, inadvertent obstinacy, and inborn, immutable, and unique qualities of a person, thing, or place. For an original application of *Eigenart* as a theoretical category in an empirical study see Kathleen Canning *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in Germany 1850-1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

⁵ For a detailed study on municipal administration in the Third Reich see Bernhard Gotto. *Nationalsozialistische Kommunalpolitik. Administrative Normalität und Systemstabilisierung durch die Augsburger Stadtverwaltung 1933-1945* (München: R Oldenburg Verlag, 2006). For the standard work in this context see Horst Matzerath. *Nationalsozialismus und kommunale Selbstverwaltung* (Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1970). Also see Dieter Rebentisch, *Führerstaat und Verwaltung im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Verfassungsentwicklung und Verwaltungspolitik 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1989). For the dissolution of municipal political competencies and an atomization of the administrative apparatus see in particular Jeremy Noakes, "Oberbürgermeister und Gauleiter. City Government between Party and State" (194-227); Elke Fröhlich, "Die Partei auf lokaler Ebene. Zwischen gesellschaftlicher Assimilation und Veränderungsdynamik" (255-269); and Peter Hüttenberger "Interessenvertretung und Lobbyismus im Dritten Reich" (429-457) all in *Der "Führerstaat": Mythos und Realität. Studien zur Struktur und Politik des Dritten Reichs* edited by Gerhard Hirschfeld und Lothar Kettenacker (Stuttgart: Klett, 1981).

narrow.⁶ However, in the realm of culture the Reich not only insisted on the loyalty of local functionaries. The Reich also depended on and invited local participation, creative input and initiative in the production, dissemination and reception of National Socialist *Volkskultur*.⁷ It should come as no surprise that the fragmentation, splintering, and doubling of institutions and competencies within the Nazi state were replicated not only within given administrative hierarchies but also between different administrative levels of the state (at least when it came to cultural politics).⁸ This polycratic character of cultural politics reflected the push and pull of national and local agents in coming to grips with one of the central tenets of National ideology: the valency of *Volk*. It was in the name of the *Volk* and in its own particular interests that the city of Hamburg continued to fashion itself as an important contender in matters of culture on the stage of national politics.⁹

Film discourse, in particular, constituted an arena in which Hamburg's administration, the city's cineasts and cultural experts, local audiences, national production companies and party-political elite in Berlin's Propaganda Ministry negotiated an ideological compromise between local particularity, *Heimatverbundenheit*, and

⁶ For the politics of *Gleichschaltung* in Hamburg see in particular Lohalm, Uwe. "'Modell Hamburg.' Vom Stadtstaat zum Reichsgau." *Hamburg Im 'Dritten Reich'*. Ed. FZH. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 122-153.

⁷ In his speech at the occasion of the inauguration of the Reich Culture Chamber (RKK) Goebbels described the National Socialist revolution as one from below, as a process of the genesis of *Volk* out of the German Nation and emphasized the role of art and culture in this particular process as food for the soul of the folk. Compare "Die deutsche Kultur vor Neuen Aufgaben" Rede anlässlich der Eröffnung der Reichskulturkammer. Berlin 15 Nov 1933. Printed in Helmut Heiber. *Goebbels-Reden* Band 1 1932-1939 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1971), 131-141.

⁸ The concept of "Polykratie" was first developed as an interpretive tool by Peter Hüttenberger in response to interpretations of the Hitler State as the penultimate realization of Totalitarianism, with total concentration of power in the hands of the Führer. Peter Hüttenberger, "Nationalsozialistische Polykratie" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft: Zeitschrift für historische Sozialwissenschaft* 2 (1976): 417-42. Instead Hüttenberger argued that "the chaos of competences in the Third Reich cannot solely be explained with the hyper-Machiavellian politics of Hitler, but must be seen as the result of the constant penetration attempts, differentiations, and compromises between individual hegemonic agents." (442) Historians have generally accepted that competing institutions and individuals constituted fluctuating power centers within the Reich that competed with each other over Hitler's favor rather than with Hitler himself. Kershaw's analysis of the Hitler Myth in which the lofty leader remains untainted by the dirty business of day-to-day politics is particularly useful in this respect as it combines ideological and structural explanations for Hitler's personal popularity and the party's growing disfavor with large segments of the population. See Kershaw, Ian. *The "Hitler Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

⁹ While the concept of Polykratie seems ill-suited to describe different levels of access to political power, I nonetheless extend some of the basic premises of a polycratic structure of government to regional and municipal levels of state administration and also to institutions and interest-formations lying outside the formal structures of the state.

national cohesion in the name of National Socialist cultural superiority.¹⁰ I reconstruct the processes of finding common ground among these interests in Hamburg based on careful evaluation of inner administrative correspondence and protocols as well as through contextual readings of three Hamburg-specific films: The “Greater-Hamburg Film,” a documentary that was ultimately never produced;¹¹ *Ein Mädchen geht an Land* [*Landward-bound: The Journey of a Northern German Maiden*] (Hochbaum, 1938) as a first attempt at National Socialist film art; and the prestigious wartime melodrama, *Große Freiheit Nr. 7* [*Great Freedom No. 7*] (Käutner, 1943/44) a film that delivered the happy end to Hamburg’s search for cinematic representation – in prototypical melodramatic fashion.¹²

As Steve Neale argues convincingly, *agnition* (a retraction of perspective) has a moving effect when it comes too late. To apply his ideas to the melodrama of finding adequate cinematic representation for Hamburg suggests that the happy end (the recognition of what the Hamburg-film should be like) comes precisely when the moment for its articulation has passed. The irreversible collapse of the Reich precedes the reception of a successful Nazi vision for Hamburg. *Große Freiheit* premiered in Hamburg under the auspices of British military government.¹³

The vibrant debates surrounding each of these three films locally and at the level of the Reich illustrate how different institutions and agents conceived of the cinema as a tribute to the city’s people and their history. These cinematic treatments of Hamburg were also seen as affirmations of the city’s relevance to Hitler’s Thousand Year Reich, and finally as the future buried beneath the rubble left in the wake of the Reich.

¹⁰ It should be noted here that even though the film politics in Hamburg did not primarily unfold in relation to the racial policies of the regime, the insistence on cultural superiority was clearly undergirded by Nazi race-theory.

¹¹ Since the film failed to go into production it lacked a firm title. Proposals by film production companies suggested “Hamburg: Deutschland’s Tor zur Welt”, “Hamburg von Gestern, Hamburg von Heute, Hamburg von Morgen,” and “Wandlungen einer Stadt” but the final manuscript remained without a title. To underline the self-aggrandizing ambitions of the administration, I am referring to the manuscript discussed as “the Greater-Hamburg Film”. For these discussions as well as individual film proposals see StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074.

¹² Compare Steve Neale. “Melodrama and Tears” *Screen* 27:6 (Nov/ Dec 1986): 6-21.

¹³ Neale, 8.

This chapter is divided into three parts, each of which focuses on one film and its fervent advocates. First, I turn to the administration's efforts to document Hamburg's successful Nazification and celebrate the city's economic revival as a testimony to itself. The debates surrounding the "Greater-Hamburg Film" offer important insights into the attempts by local political functionaries to perform their conversion to Nazism in front of local and national audiences, even though the film project was abandoned while still in the planning stages. The administration's attempt to rewrite Hamburg's history as a teleology naturally culminating in the triumph of National Socialism should be seen in the context of the real and striking social and economic predicaments facing its political elites. I demonstrate that the discussions of a film project about Hamburg's singular achievements redirected attention from its severe economic problems and enlisted civil servants, bureaucrats, and administrators in documenting a reality that had yet to materialize. Aiming to construct the city's history based on the promise for prosperity to come, the film project diverted potential critics and coaxed functionaries into performing Hamburg's conversion to National Socialism. The sort of navel-gazing that accompanied the lively discussions in Hamburg's administration temporarily blinded the participants to the fact that the rest of the Reich was happily riding along on the waves of the newly engineered Nazi economic boom. With the return to full employment, the urgency that had characterized the debates about the "Greater-Hamburg Film" in 1937 quickly subsided until the administration finally abandoned the project in the spring of 1939.

Local papers and cultural experts offered a convenient substitute to the city image promised by Hamburg's political elite in the Ufa-feature *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*. Nationally advertised as a woman's film and locally welcomed as an artistic exploration of *Heimat*, Hochbaum's film portrays the bereavement and subsequent struggle of a young woman and is situated in the austere landscape of northern Germany and the urban jungle of the modern city, Hamburg.¹⁴ This first attempt at National Socialist art film, advertised as an example of Nazi avant-garde filmmaking by the local press, reveals the

¹⁴ For the general place of the *Heimat*-film genre in the context of Nazi cinema see Johannes von Moltke *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) in particular his chapter entitled "Roots."

Nazis' ability to engage the interests of cineasts and film experts in the name of a local variant of the loudly promulgated ideals of National Socialist art.¹⁵ My analysis of this film and its local reception concentrates on the successful struggle by local cultural experts to reframe the attempts of the administration to give the city a cinematic facelift in explicitly artistic terms. Despite the impressive advertisement campaign put together by Hamburg's Film Consortium and the local film club, the tropes of Nazi film art – verisimilitude and rootedness in the soil [*Wirklichkeitsnähe* and *Bodenständigkeit*] – met with ambiguous responses by local and national audiences. The austerity reflected in the film's location as well as its narrative may have succeeded in portraying “authentic Germanness,” but held little promise for a cinema that increasingly conceived of itself not merely as National Socialist, but also as a European alternative to Hollywood.

As a National Socialist film, *Ein Mädchen* suffered from a certain immaturity that expressed itself in a style unable to resolve the friction of *Art* and *Volk*. It was not able to break down the tensions between verisimilitude and visual pleasure. In contrast, by the early 1940s, directors consciously fused visual excess, Hollywood-style glamour and tropes of authentic Germanness in large scale entertainment films. The self-confidence of filmmakers was clearly fueled by military expansion that had substantially increased access to audiences and catapulted Nazi cinema into the dominant position in Europe.¹⁶ *Große Freiheit Nr. 7* is a case in point. The film exemplifies the successful resolution of the primary conflicts characteristic of earlier attempts at National Socialist film art. It is a tribute to Hamburg that renders visible the allure and repulsion of its most controversial district, St. Pauli.

¹⁵ It should be noted that usage of the term ‘avant-garde’ in the context of Nazi Film reflects the self-understanding of what film ideologues identified as the New German Film. Conceived in direct opposition to Weimar avant-garde filmmaking, a National Socialist avant-garde, Goebbels hoped, would lead cultural production to ideologically compatible and artistically compelling heights. National Socialist avant-garde was thought to be at the forefront of expressing the nature of the *Volk* by the use of modern technologies for the great masses in an elating, instructive, and artistically pleasing fashion. It remains doubtful that Goebbels himself had any clear expectations of what this avant-garde culture would *look like* and hence the term was infused with the various interpretation by the respective user of the term. Barry A. Fulks. *Film Culture and Kulturfilm: Walter Ruttmann, The Avant-Guard, and the Kulturfilm in Weimar Germany and the Third Reich*. Diss. (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1982).

¹⁶ Compare Spiker, Jürgen. *Film Und Kapital: Der Weg Der Deutschen Filmwirtschaft Zum Nationalsozialistischen Einheitskonzern*. (Berlin: Verlag Volker Spiess, 1975), 183-7, 199

The three films discussed in this chapter illustrate the trajectory of Nazi cinema from the perspective of local politics. While my decision to track the development of Nazi cinema across three dramatically different filmic genres – the documentary, the art film and the popular melodrama – may seem counterintuitive at first, it allows me to examine the ability of National Socialism to involve various interest from Hamburg’s administration and cultural experts to audiences in making their own history.

I shift my focus from political functionaries to cultural experts and finally to the moviegoing public in order to illustrate that the search for a suitable Hamburg-film mirrors in important ways the general development of Nazi cinema. From a medium that insisted on ideological instruction and clearly articulated messages in its earliest stages (*Hitlerjunge Quex*, *SA Mann Brandt*, and *Hans Westmar* are the best known examples), Nazi film was characterized until the late 1930s by great disparity as it searched for an artistic language compatible with the basic tenet of folksy authenticity *and* popular appeal. Such heterogeneous products as *Yvette*, *La Habanera*, and *Glückskinder* should be seen as part of a process of cinematic maturation rather than as reflective of Nazi cinema’s inconsistency. The visual strategies first employed in such popular films as *Mustergatte*, *Heimat* and *Hallo Janine*, were later refined in wartime box-office hits such as *Die Goldene Stadt*, *Münchhausen*, *Die Feuerzangenbowle* and *Große Freiheit Nr. 7*. It was the visually enticing melodrama – not a documentary or an art film – that captured Hamburg’s uniqueness in a populist fashion for audiences within and beyond the city’s bounds and attested to the maturity of a cinema that self-identified as National Socialist.

Visions for Hamburg: Rewriting the Future as History

During the municipal assembly of 7 June 1937, Gauleiter and Governor Karl Kaufmann entrusted Senator Wilhelm von Allwörden¹⁷ with the task of ensuring that the necessary preparations were taken for the production of a film that was to illustrate the revolutionary transformation of the city since the party’s ascent to power.¹⁸ Over the

¹⁷ For a biographical sketch of Senator Wilhelm Johannes von Allwörden see Appendix A

¹⁸ Auszug aus der Niederschrift der Verwaltungsberatung, 9 Jun 1937. StAHH, 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle, I-IV 2074.

course of the summer, Otto Hermann, the director of the municipal film archive, worked out a first draft of a manuscript for what was supposed to be the Greater-Hamburg Film. The unification of Hamburg with its neighboring Prussian cities, Wandsbek, Harburg, and Altona under the Greater-Hamburg Law of January 1937 provided the key rationale for the planning of a feature-length documentary.¹⁹ However, the realization of a Greater Hamburg was merely a convenient impetus for setting the bureaucratic wheels in motion. Kaufmann's motivation to oversee the making of a tribute to Hamburg (and by implication to himself) ran deeper.

Gauleiter Kaufmann, had been toying with the idea of a Hamburg film at least since January 1936.²⁰ He corresponded with various independent studios, reviewed manuscripts, and rejected most of the proposals. Production companies were vying for projects financed by the public sector, hoping to reduce at least part of the financial responsibility by asking the city to contribute to production costs (rather than hope to cover costs solely based on box office returns).²¹ Instead of saddling a studio with the responsibility for producing a script for the Hamburg-film, Kaufmann enlisted the city's administration and its institutions in the process of rethinking Hamburg in explicitly National Socialist terms.

The film proposal envisioned by Kaufmann and the planning committee was heavily influenced by the earlier manuscripts filed away in Kaufmann's office. The camera was to zoom in on hopeless faces, long lines in front of labor offices, loitering citizens and scenes of social disorder in order to document the grip of moral decay and economical standstill that represented the Weimar system. Then, labor strikes and agitation by Communists were to dissolve into orderly marches of Storm Troopers and

¹⁹ Uwe Lohalm. "'Model Hamburg' vom Stadtstaat zum Reichsgau" in *Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich'* ed. Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 131.

²⁰ On February 2, 1936 the Hamburg based Kosmos-Film approached Kaufmann and offered its services, invoking discussion concerning the making of a large-scale Hamburg film that had been "going on for a fairly long time." See letter from Kosmos-Film to Kaufmann, 2 Feb 1936 in StA HH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074.

²¹ See for example letter to Mayor Krogmann from Skalden Film, 28 Apr 1936 asking the city to contribute between 20,000 to 25,000 Reichsmark in the event that Skalden Film would be entrusted with the production of the Hamburg Film. StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074

Hitler Youth, while the hoisting of the National Socialist Flag at city hall and the celebration of the first Labor Day on May 1, 1933 would signal the inauguration of a new era. Subsequent scenes would document the improvement of working conditions and economic stabilization by focusing mainly on infrastructure, improved living conditions, healthy work places, the boom of tourism, and of course the harbor as Hamburg's economic center. Laughing faces of gainfully employed and educated workers were to replace frowns of desperation, which the films was to clearly link with what National Socialists derogatorily referred to as the *Systemzeit*. Bikes, street cars, railroads, planes and ships would connect Hamburg with the world and the world market as if to demonstrate and reinforce the city's cosmopolitanism. Overseas traffic in the form of foreign cruise ships with happily smiling tourists on board supported by a trick-insert of tourism statistics and images from the Congress of Leisure, implicitly signaled the transformation of Hamburg's trade economy to one of industry and service.²² This was meant to illustrate the new social model that linked productivity with recreation and pleasure.²³

The manuscript then asks its audience to visualize the circle of economic achievements starting with the turnover of goods in the harbor (clearly failing to note the dramatic change from *Kolonialwaren* to industrial raw-materials), followed by improvements due to NS-welfare organizations, increased discipline and comradeship in schools during lunch and, indeed, air-raid drills, and the availability of world-class leisure and international travel to the National Socialist everyman by way of the NS leisure organization, Strength through Joy. The administration intended to come back full circle to the massive construction and improvements which were currently under way in Hamburg's harbor, thus preserving the image of Hamburg's economic motor and the

²² The world congress for leisure and recreation took place in Hamburg in 1937. See *Bericht. Weltkongress für Freizeit und Erholung* (Berlin: Verlag Freude und Arbeit, 1937)

²³ NS Institutions such as the official leisure organization *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy) continuously linked productivity and recreation. For a detailed history of the organization see Shelly Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, c.2004).

center for the particular *Lebensgeist* and worldliness the citizens of Hamburg were clearly not ready to renounce.²⁴

Gauleiter Kaufmann's interest in showcasing his own achievements in the name of the Führer were hardly unique.²⁵ By the end of 1936, with a documentary celebrating its 700th birthday under production, Berlin could already pride itself on being represented in three different, if short, documentaries since 1933. Bremen, Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Düsseldorf, and Cologne had either already realized or were in the process of bringing their hopes of documenting their respective transformations to fruition and disseminating their celluloid history throughout the Reich.²⁶ Hence, it comes as no surprise that Kaufmann, a zealous National Socialist and an even more ambitious politician, was intent on not losing this particular inter-city competition by standing idly by.²⁷

Since the 1920s, film had been used both by cities and local institutions interested in promoting tourism. Urban portraits of Cologne, Munich, Berlin, Dresden, Frankfurt, Vienna, and many others had been produced and widely disseminated.²⁸ In fact, the attempts to mobilize film in the making of local histories, to comment on and capture the

²⁴ See Anlage der Einladung zur Besprechung über den geplanten Film zur Veranschaulichung der Entwicklung Hamburg seit der Machtübernahme von Senator von Allwörden im Auftrag von Governor Kaufmann an diverse behördlichen Stellen, 25 October 1937. StA HH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074

²⁵ Film companies vying for business did not hesitate to point out that they were already preparing cinematic treatments for other cities. The Berlin-based Infra-Film for example pointed out to Otto Hermann that they were currently working on a project entitled "München - gestern, heute, morgen." See Schreiben an die Bildstelle Hansa 12 Feb 1938. StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074

²⁶ See Jeanpaul Goergen. "Städtebilder zwischen Heimattümelei und Urbanität" (320-332) in *Die Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland* Band 3 'Drittes Reich', 1933-1945. Peter Zimmermann und Kay Hoffmann, eds. (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2005), 324-5. Compare also www.filmportal.de

²⁷ For a detailed study on the person and responsibilities of governor Karl Kaufmann see Frank Bajohr "Gauleiter in Hamburg. Zur Person und Tätigkeit Karl Kaufmanns" *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 43 (1995) 267-295.

²⁸ Walther Günthers listed over 500 films specifically focused on cities or towns in his 1926 catalogue of educational and cultural documentaries. But of those 526 city-films, only 25 were recognized as educational films and hence, so Jeanpaul Goergen suggests, most of these films did not circulate widely. See Jeanpaul Goergen. "Urbanität und Idylle. Städtefilme zwischen Kommerz und Kulturpropaganda" (151-172) in *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland*. Band 2. Weimarer Republik, 1918-1933 Klaus Kreimeier, Antje Ehmann und Jeanpaul Goergen, eds. (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2005), 152.

unique characteristics of individual cities, and to tell their stories cinematically was, if anything, *more* strongly developed in the Weimar Republic than was the case under National Socialist rule. The best known example is clearly Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927). Even though scholars do not discuss this film as an example of a city-film,²⁹ it is an exceptional contribution to this particular genre in that it casts Berlin as the quintessential modern city. It is its essential *urban* character, rather than the recognizable features of Berlin, that distinguishes a film as it takes the viewer through a day in the big city.³⁰

Films such as *Hamburg, die arbeitenden Hafenstadt* (1927), *Bilder aus Hamburg* (1929), *Hamburg, die schöne Stadt an der Alster* (1929) and *Hamburg, Welthandels- und Hafenstadt* (1929) – only an arbitrary selection of an increasingly specialized filmic treatment of the city and its *Eigenart* (characteristics) – provide a frame against which National Socialist ambitions to rewrite this particular urban history must be understood. By the early 1930s, the city-portrait had become a recognizable genre that provided a venue for local patriotism and pride and also articulated a visual language for conceptualizing the nation within the contested republican frame.³¹ As an occasional variant of the obligatory *Kulturfilm* [cultural documentary], cinematic treatments of individual cities and typical German landscapes rarely exceeded the quality of a short

²⁹ Compare Antje Ehmann “Wie Wirklichkeit erzählen? Methoden des Querschnittfilms” (576-600) in *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland*. Band 2. Weimarer Republik, 1918-1933 Klaus Kreimeier, Antje Ehmann und Jeanpaul Goergen, eds. (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2005), 578. In contrast Barry A. Fuls. *Film Culture and Kulturfilm: Walter Ruttmann, The Avant-Guard, and the Kulturfilm in Weimar Germany and the Third Reich*. Diss. (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1982) identifies the film as a prototypical *Industriefilm* rather than a city-portrait (202).

³⁰ Compare Sabine Hake “Urban Spectacle in Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, Symphony of the Big City*” in *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic*. eds Thomas W. Kniesche and Stephen Brockmann. (Columbia SC: Camden House, 1994): 127-142.

³¹ Compare Jeanpaul Goergen. “Urbanität und Idylle. Städtefilme zwischen Kommerz und Kulturpropaganda” (151-172). Goergen argues that films depicting city or landscapes were meant to foster knowledge of and love for the homeland and its idiosyncrasies. 151. Between 1933 and 1945 the cultural film production of Ufa delivered only 21 city-portrait films, almost all of which were made between 1934 and 1939. Furthermore see Jeanpaul Goergen. “Städtebilder zwischen Heimattümelei und Urbanität” (320-332) in *Die Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland* Band 3 ‘Drittes Reich’, 1933-1945. Peter Zimmermann und Kay Hoffmann, eds. (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2005), 324-5

advertisement.³² Commissioned by the city's tourist office, these films continuously insinuated that national and international travel was a stable feature of everyday life.³³ Unlike *Berlin*, these latter day films were usually short and produced as aesthetically pleasing and politically palatable versions of an as of yet unattained prosperity.³⁴

Hamburg's administration was not merely concerned with boosting tourism when it invested in creating feature-length documentaries. In fact, the city's greatest tourist attraction, the pulsating district of St. Pauli at the harbor's fringe, provided Hamburg's administrators with more economic and representational problems than any spin advertisement for this particular district could solve. Traditionally it was one of Hamburg's poorest districts, infamous for a particular mix of sex, pleasure, and urban entertainment. In addition, St. Pauli was rather sluggish in responding to the growing National Socialist euphoria and occupied a precarious position within the Nazified city.

In St. Pauli extreme poverty provided an uneasy contrast to the patrons sauntering the famous amusement mile, the Reeperbahn. Since neither the housing shortage nor the by now chronic unemployment could be addressed within the frame of the Four-Year-Plan, tourism promised to bring economic relief by distributing revenue directly to the district's bar and restaurant owners, artists, performers, and service personnel. But the "Greater-Hamburg Film" was clearly not a suitable venue to remake St. Pauli into a more

³² Since 1934, the Reichsfilmkammer made it mandatory for all its members who publicly screened feature films to include a *Kulturfilm* with a length of at least 250 meters. In addition it was required that the respective *Kulturfilm* received either one of the following four commendations: artistically, educationally (volksbildend), culturally, or state-politically valuable. Compare Peter Zimmermann "Der Propaganda-, Kontroll- und Lenkungsapparat" (75-81) in *Die Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland* Band 3 'Drittes Reich', 1933-1945. Peter Zimmermann und Kay Hoffmann, Eds. (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2005), 77

³³ Goergen also illustrates that many city portrait films were films produced on commission of the German *Fremdenverkehrsvereins* and where expected to serve its advancement. See Goergen."Urbanität und Idylle," 151. Even Ruttmann continued to produce city-portrait films during the Third Reich in "cinematic tributes to Düsseldorf (1935), Stuttgart (1935), and Hamburg (1938)," but these later compositions never attained the quality of *Berlin*. Fulks, 218-19

³⁴ Fulks claims that the genre of the *Kulturfilm* functioned as a "vessel for that aestheticization of reality constitutive of National Socialism and the repository of what can only be termed a Nazi avant-garde." See Fulk, 2. However, National Socialist ideologues would not contend themselves with reflections of reality but aspired to utilize the potential of the medium in ways to create visual alternative that was then to be taken for the reality it supposedly represented.

reputable place. Thus far, film had exploited rather than avoided the particular mix of pleasure, vice, sensationalism and crime that characterized St. Pauli.

The world renowned anchor of “*Hamburger Lebensfreude*,” was deliberately excluded from the plans to showcase the city’s transformation into a National Socialist metropolis.³⁵ The absence of St. Pauli from the “Greater-Hamburg Film” cannot be explained by asserting that “the district with its bad reputation did not fit the image of a prim Nazi-Germany.”³⁶ It was simply impossible to present St. Pauli visually according to the fiction that was invented by the Nazi press – a clean, yet pulsating cultural center that provided entertainment for every man’s taste and wallet in an atmosphere of pirate-romanticism [*Räuberromantik*].³⁷ At the same time, Hamburg’s administration wanted recognition for political conviction rather than the lure of St. Pauli. As a substitute for real improvements in the quality of life, the authors of the manuscript would offer images of smiling tourists availing themselves of Nazi leisure opportunities. The film carefully circumvented the historically problematic conflation of Hamburg with one of its poorest, politically most unreliable, but famous district – St. Pauli. As if to make up for the unnamed absence of St. Pauli’s historic conviviality, other districts contributed materials and suggestions for the conceptualization of this film that was to attest to Hamburg’s earthbound grandeur and capacity for joy.³⁸

With St. Pauli excised, the film presented the administration with a perfect opportunity to address the immediate and very realistic concerns regarding the legitimacy

³⁵ *Lebensfreude* translates as ‘groove’ or ‘zest for life’

³⁶ Töteberg, *Filmstadt Hamburg*, 17

³⁷ See “... Auf der Reeperbahn nachts um halb eins” in *Norddeutsche Nachrichten* July 18, 1939” The paper reports on mayor Krogmann’s personal investment in returning St. Pauli to some *Urstatus* by restoring the lost romantic that presumably resulted from the particular mix of “Sehnsucht der Fremden nach fernen Ländern und Meeren” and beautiful establishments that each without any uniformity “artistically beautiful and snug [künstlerisch schön und anheimelnd]”

³⁸ For example, the mayor of the city of Wandsbek, Friedrich Ziegler, suggested the inclusion of visual materials from “‘the-world-renowned,’ the most significant carnival event in Greater Hamburg” as well as the images from the Sonnabendmarkt [saturday night-market] with its “life and ado between 11 and 12 o’clock”. Schreiben von Oberbürgermeister Ziegler an die Landsbildstelle Hansa. 23. November, 1937. StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074. It should be noted, however, that the predominantly protestant Hamburg, unlike Cologne or Mainz, was hardly known for partaking in the catholic tradition of celebrating Carnival.

of the Nazi state.³⁹ Until well into 1938, Karl Kaufmann's determination to turn Hamburg into a model National Socialist city had to contend with the reality of an extremely sluggish economy as Hamburg continued to trudge along under a state of economic emergency in the face of general national recovery.⁴⁰ When the Nazis took over in Hamburg, unemployment had reached an astronomical 30% and only slowly declined in the first few years of the new regime. At the same time the cost of living progressively increased while actual income of those who were employed gradually declined.⁴¹ Even though by the end of 1934 the city's economy showed modest signs of recovery, it would be years until one could speak of economic revitalization, much less celebrate the promised economic boom. The statistical full employment of which the German citizens occasionally still boast today when explaining popular support for the Nazi regime, was not reached in Hamburg until March 1939.⁴²

The Nazis' determination to turn the German economy towards armament and subsistence was not a particularly good match for Hamburg, a city that had depended on specialized international trade for most of its history. As a result of the new economic policy, it lost its international position as western Europe's dominant export and trading hub.⁴³ Hamburg's economy had been particularly hard hit by the Depression and then reduced to primarily import-related functions by Berlin's economic policy.⁴⁴ The only viable solution was to effectively split the city's economic activity. As the trade sector

³⁹ Bajohr. *Zustimmungsdiktatur*, 94-95

⁴⁰ While national unemployment had been reduced by 57% in Hamburg's reductions remained not only far below the national average but also well below that of other port cities, such as Bremen and Kiel. Compare, Birgit Wulff, *Arbeitslosigkeit und Arbeitsbeschaffungsmassnahmen in Hamburg 1933 - 1939* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1987), 96, 145. By the end of 1934, regional statistics still listed 111,872 individuals as unemployment according to the National Socialist publication *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 1934/35* hrsg. Statistisches Landesamt (Hamburg: Kommissionsverlag von Lütcke & Wulff, 1935), 166-7.

⁴¹ Compare Wulff, 158. See also *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 1934/35* hrsg. Statistisches Landesamt (Hamburg: Kommissionsverlag von Luetcke & Wulff, 1935), 156-8,

⁴² See Klaus Weinbauer, "Handelskriese und Rüstungsboom: Die Wirtschaft" in *Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich'* ed, ed. Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (HH: Wallenstein Verlag, 2005), 203.

⁴³ See Ursula Büttner "Der Aufstieg der NSDAP" in *Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich,'* ed. Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (HH: Wallenstein Verlag, 2005), 28

⁴⁴ Weinbauer, 203ff

plunged into permanent crisis, the Greater-Hamburg Law of January 1937 merged the industrial neighboring cities of Altona, Wandsbek, and Harburg with Hamburg proper. This effectively transformed Hamburg into an industrial city that could, in fact, be stimulated by the state-induced armaments industry. The great dockyards came to occupy a central role in the new economy, and industrial branches such as chemicals, rubber, asbestos, electronics, and steel works helped turn Hamburg into an industrial center. Traditional trading and shipping industries continued to decline.⁴⁵

The former ‘gateway to the world,’ Hamburg’s harbor, now was the most important site for the movement of raw materials *into* the Reich. The privately owned small and medium size port operating companies all but vanished following their centralization in a port operating cooperative in May 1934. Instead of a hallmark of Hamburg’s mercantile independence and vitality, the harbor was transfigured into a centrally administrated complex of national (read military) significance with dwindling economic sway.⁴⁶ Moreover, trade of consumer and luxury goods, of *Kolonialwaren*, such as coffee, tea and spices no longer figured prominently in either the economy or in public discourse. Hamburg’s international importance decreased as a result of Nazi economic strategy and a world economic crisis that reduced the international demand for foreign imports. The city’s identity as *Deutschland’s Tor zur Welt* faced a crisis of credibility.

The “Greater-Hamburg Film” was supposed to address and remedy this crisis of identity. In the early 1930s Hamburg’s cosmopolitanism became a faint memory of the past. In addition, local National Socialists were painfully aware of the connection between the particular demographics that characterized the poorest districts of the city and the potential for political tensions. The election results of 19 August 1934 reminded Hamburg’s National Socialists that they needed to demonstrate to Hamburg’s population, to Berlin, and the rest of the Reich that Hamburg had successfully completed its transformation into a National Socialist *Führerstadt*. In the staged elections of 1934, Hamburg registered the worst results in the nation. In certain districts up to one third of

⁴⁵ *ibid.* 202.

⁴⁶ Weinbauer, 200.

the population either voted against the consolidation of the offices of Reich's Chancellor and President or invalidated their votes.⁴⁷ Accordingly, the city demanded and promised itself a cinematic facelift that would embellish the meager social and economic achievements of local authorities and would allow Hamburg to feel like an active participant in the national self-celebration.

At the request of Governor Kaufmann, the representatives of Hamburg's administration came together in the Phoenix Chamber of City Hall on 11 November 1938 to discuss the proposal for the "Greater-Hamburg Film." The politicians insisted on making the harbor the dominant visual and narrative center of the film.⁴⁸ Senior civil servant Lindemann exhorted the planning committee to place Hamburg's uniqueness at center stage. Hamburg's particular achievements should take precedence and under no circumstances was the film to offer yet another locally inflected celebration of the national movement.⁴⁹ Since the meager fruits of modest economic recovery neither sufficed to markedly improve the lives of working poor or to adequately address the immense housing shortage and overcrowding in Hamburg's inner city districts, the administration resorted to rebuilding the city's official image in ways that would validate the sacrifices made by the population, obscure the limited availability of consumer products, glorify the National Socialist transformation, and celebrate historical 'traditions' and the Hanseatic way of life.

In part, the National Socialist interventions in this film's genre should be seen as a drive to conquer and revise the history of the nation. Joseph Goebbels had boasted of the importance of film in the New Germany and constantly called for transforming the German film industry in the early 1930s. Furthering German film production, aspiring to high artistic standards and guiding the masses in matters of value and taste, the

⁴⁷ See Bajohr, "Zustimmungsdiktatur," 94-99

⁴⁸ See Einladung zur Besprechung über den geplanten Film zur Veranschaulichung der Entwicklung Hamburg seit der Machtübernahme von Senator von Allwörden im Auftrag von Governor Kaufmann an diversen behördlichen Stellen, 25 Oct 1937. StA HH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074.

⁴⁹ Niederschrift über eine 1. Besprechung mit den Behörden und gemischten wirtschaftlichen Betrieben, betreffend einen Film über die Entwicklung Hamburgs seit der Machtübernahme, am 11. November im Pönix-Saal des Rathauses unter Vorsitz von Senator von Allwörden, 16 Nov 1937. StA HH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074.

authorities in Berlin hoped to sell the National Socialist idea through the careful deployment of a new kind of German culture, thereby binding individuals to the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*. Functionaries and film enthusiasts in Hamburg, who already recognized the extraordinary powers of film, listened carefully to Goebbels and deliberately pursued their local visions and interests as ardent National Socialists. Yet the particular venue chosen by the Hamburg administration did not reflect the goals of the Propaganda Minister in the slightest.

In August 1936, Joseph Goebbels deliberately curtailed the ability of cities and towns to use public finances for individual film projects.⁵⁰ Goebbels maintained that many of these films turned out to be “disastrous failures” and could not be released for public viewing. He decreed that every such film projected needed to first seek his personal approval prior to production.⁵¹ The Minister was particularly interested in preventing *Lokaltümelei*.⁵² The regime sought to implement clear directives as regards what kinds of film could be produced and by whom.⁵³

Fearing that cities would squander public funds on self-aggrandizing projects, Goebbels stipulated that city-films produced with public finances had to demonstrate

⁵⁰ Rundschreiben V 5572 des Reichsministers für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, 28 Aug 1936. StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV, 2074. It is especially interesting that the it was only deemed necessary to inform the bigger cities of the stipulations contained in the circular. See letter of the Reichs minister for internal affairs to all governors, regional administrations, the Reich commissioner for the Saarland and the government presidents (Oberpräsident und Regierungspräsidenten) in Prussia. 11 Oct 1936 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV, 2074.

⁵¹ Rundschreiben V 5572 des Reichsministers fuer Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, 28 Aug 1936. StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV, 2074

⁵² Instead of providing a venue for individual cities to articulate their own version of history by way of visual commentary, Goebbels reserved that right for national organs even though *Kulturfilm*, unlike feature film, did not have to go through the process of obtaining prior approval for film projects, the city film, few of which were produced during the Nazi period, apparently was an altogether different matter. Peter Zimmermann “Sukzessive Verstaatlichung der Filmindustrie und Entwicklung der Kulturfilm-Produktion (93-101), in *Die Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland* Band 3 ‘Drittes Reich’, 1933-1945. Peter Zimmermann und Kay Hoffmann, eds. (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2005), 98. See Also Hans-Michael Bock and Michael Töteberg, *Das Ufa Buch: Das Ufa Buch: Kunst und Krisen, Stars und Regisseure, Wirtschaft und Politik: die internationale Geschichte von Deutschlands grösstem Film-Konzern*. 2nd edition (Frankfurt a.M: Zweitausendeins, 1994)

⁵³ FZH. 360. “Reichsfilmkammer unter Carl Froelich” *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* 1 Jul 1939. The article illustrates the shift from an economic focus to artistic considerations as tied to the personalities and their role as president of the Reichsfilmkammer once Lehnich resigned and Carl Froelich replaced him. For biographical information on Oswald Lehnich see Appendix A

prospect of profitability prior to their production. As debates over the importance, and value of the *Kulturfilm* reveal, it was already acknowledged that a city documentary would probably not be a box-office hit.⁵⁴ It was even less likely that a film about Hamburg, which deliberately refused to meet the sensationalist expectations raised by feature films such *Ein Mädel von der Reeperbahn* (1930) or *Razzia in St. Pauli* (1932) would draw large audience beyond the boundaries of the city.⁵⁵ Even as an advertisement for tourists, the cinematic opus of the city did not hold out much promise.⁵⁶

Kaufmann, however, did not care about the imposition of national authority. Even the earliest discussions of the “Greater-Hamburg Film” took place in direct violation of Goebbels’ directive requiring his personal approval before using public funds in the production of a *Stadtfilm*. Kaufmann believed that his personal relationship with Goebbels, which dated back to the early years of the National Socialist struggle, would lead the Minister to turn a blind eye to Hamburg’s violation of the new edict.⁵⁷

Furthermore, Kaufmann’s system of personal patronage had expanded to such an extent

⁵⁴ Dr. Johannes Eckart explained that “the cultural documentary had the explicit intend to bring valuable instruction and education to the viewer, a tendency which quite naturally contributed to its unpopularity with audiences. Only the filmmaking of the Third Reich succeeded in distancing the cultural documentary from all explicit instruction and strictly separated it from educational film” See “Weltumspannende Kulturfilmarbeit” in *Hamburger Nachrichten* 7 Oct 1937. in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 5002.

⁵⁵ *Ein Mädel von der Reeperbahn* illustrates the presumed danger emanating from St Pauli women. Stranded after a shipwreck and saved by the lighthouse keeper, the sexy lass from the Reeperbahn soon represents a formidable threat to the marriage of the lighthouse keeper, who cannot resist her charms. Hochbaum’s *Razzia in St Pauli* centers around the life of a St. Pauli prostitute who falls for the criminal fugitive who promises her a better life. She plans to leave her friend, a local musician, but comes to her senses after the police arrests fugitive.

⁵⁶ While the city administration discussed the production of a large-scale, feature-length testimony to the Nazi transformation, three advertisement films about Hamburg had been made and circulated. On November 12, 1936 *Hamburg und seine Nachbarstadt Altona*, a production of the *Fremdenverkehrsverein Hamburg e.V* premiered in the Passage Theater. *Das Schöne Hamburg* and *Das schaffende Hamburg* which were allegedly screened 8000-times were credited with increasing tourism significantly. See “Hebung des Verkehrs in St. Pauli” *Hamburger Tageblatt* 12 Oct, 1937. In addition, the Consortium St.Pauli-Freiheit planned the production of a specific advertisement film about St. Pauli and its pulsating night life. Compare “St. Pauli voran” in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* 12 Oct 1937. in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2077. See also correspondence between the Hamburg administration and the production company Bundes Film based in Berlin. On April 25, 1938 Bundes Film contacted civil servant Lindemann with the proposal to produce the advertisement film *Hamburg bei Nacht*. In a second letter, May 5, 1938, the company explains that the film will present in an hitherto unseen dialogues and images the life [Eigenleben] of world-port city Hamburg with its international tourism whose pulsating life is bound neither to time nor light of day. StA HH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2077.

⁵⁷ Compare Bajohr. “Karl Kaufmann. Gauleiter in Hamburg,” 273

that he could have single-handedly financed the film from various speciality funds amassed from commercial gambling, the auctioning of ‘subversive capital’ (i.e. the proceeds from Aryanization), voluntary and compulsory donations and so forth. Even the threat of having to return public funds in the event of the film’s failure did not move Kaufmann to abandon the project.⁵⁸

The Hamburg administration had clearly bought into Goebbels’ definition of film as the National Socialist *Wunderwaffe* [magic weapon], and they decided to mobilize the local film elite to embrace this vision. Over the course of the 1930s, Hamburg’s administrators grew to agree with the national rhetoric that redefined film as an educational implement of the state.⁵⁹ They discovered in film a political space through which the convergences of local and national identities could be articulated. Even though film policy remained the sole prerogative of Joseph Goebbels and the Reich Film Chamber, within the frame set from above regional film apostles projected *their* mission to a national audience.⁶⁰ Thus, when the president of the Reich Film Chamber affirmed

⁵⁸ See Letter to Kaufmann from the Finanzverwaltung, 16 Nov 1934. StAHH 131-4 Senatskanzlei Präsidialabteilung 1934 A90. The letter identifies the film fund of the office of the state (425RM), the beautification fund (39,549RM) and the specialty fund (14,669.21RM) as irreproachable since derived from the sale of *staatsfeindlichen Vermögens* [property of those hostile to the state]. Kaufmann was adamant to coordinate the numerous specialty funds of individual senators and bring them under his personal control to enlarge his patronage system. With the foundation of the Hamburger Stiftung 1937, Kaufmann established a fiscal system that was completely independent from the municipal and national budgets. The Hamburger Stiftung of 1937 constituted a financial system that was entirely independent of the city’s budget and fiscal system and single-handedly controlled by Kaufmann. Through the Stiftung Kaufmann cultivated a system of centralized protectionism which insured Kaufmann of loyal supporters within the administration and beyond. By the end of the war the *Hamburger Stiftung* still recorded an account balance of close to 3.2 Million Reichsmark. See balance of ‘Hamburger Stiftung von 1937’ end of March, 1945. 23 Apr 1945. StAHH 614-2-13 Hamburger Stiftung 1937 7. Compare Frank Bajohr. “Karl Kaufmann: Gauleiter in Hamburg”, 279.

⁵⁹ See “Der Präsident der Reichsfilmkammer über die Aufgaben des Deutschen Films” in *Völkischer Beobachter* Berlin, 27 Oct 1935 and “Weiter aufwärts mit dem Film” in *Film Kurier* 4 Mar 1938. Reichminister Goebbels is quoted on establishing ‘the primacy of art’ as the transforming factor in the film industry since 1933.

⁶⁰ Scholars stressing the power of the Propaganda Ministry, the RFK, and Joseph Goebbels in determining the course of film in the Reich include Gerd Albrecht. *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik. Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reichs*. (Stuttgart: F. Enke, 1969); Rolf Giessen. *Nazi Propaganda Films: A History and Filmography* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, c2003); Hilmar Hoffmann. *The Triumph of Propaganda; Film and National Socialism, 1933-1945* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996-); David Steward Hull, *Film in the Third Reich* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Erwin Leiser. *Deutschland Erwache! Propaganda im Film des Dritten Reichs* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968); Richard Taylor. *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (London: Croom Helm, 1979) and David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1993)

the function of film to grow into its role “as an intermediary of the *Volksgemeinschaft*,”⁶¹ Kaufmann seemed ready to take him at face value and view film as an arena to publicize his political zeal and commitment to the national project.⁶²

Between the *Machtergreifung* and the German attack on Poland on 1 September 1939, local and national interpretations of the political and cultural impact of film were remarkably compatible. Film became an instrument to imagine and articulate the racial community and a venue for asserting local significance on a national stage. The imposition of tight control and supervision by the RFK and the Ministry of Propaganda (RMVP) notwithstanding, officials in Hamburg seem to have been *almost* able to forge a compromise between the aggrandizing aspirations of Goebbels’ ministry and their own determination to promote the city, write its history, and celebrate the achievements of local party functionaries.

Despite the near seamless convergence of local ambition with Goebbels’ visions of film’s prominent role in forging the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the “Greater-Hamburg Film” failed to go into production. The urgency for the project clearly subsided once the reality the film was supposed to depict was no longer in danger of being publicly threatened. As elsewhere in the Reich, people in Hamburg had to contend with rationing, travel was not within reach of the average *Volksgenossen*, the housing crisis had not been resolved and Hamburg’s harbor had lost its international importance, but the goal of full employment, which was the result of the economic retooling of the city for war production, put to rest the fears of the administration and its subjects alike. Making National Socialist achievements visible became less essential once the economic crisis had been resolved and prospects of war loomed on the horizon.

Kaufmann finally lost interest in the film project that had spelled the opportunity for functionaries to demonstrate their respective zeal. Various administrative units such as the district of Bergedorf, the city of Wandsbek, the *Landherrenschaft* [regional

⁶¹ FZH. 360. “Der Präsident der Reichsfilmkammer über die Aufgaben des deutschen Films” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Berlin. 27 October 35.

⁶² Lehnich demanded that “bei voller Wahrung der Filmwirtschaftlichen Belange eine neue artgemäße Form des Films gefunden werden muss, die unserem Wesen und unserer Geisteshaltung entspricht.” in *ibid*.

representatives], the Departments of Youth and Sport, the Building Control Department and the Fire department continued to hand in minutely detailed suggestions. Manuscripts from film companies continued to pass across Kaufmann's and Senator von Allwörden's desks.⁶³ Most probably they disappeared into a file cabinet or ended up in the governor's trash can.⁶⁴ Kaufmann was increasingly occupied with his own political standing within the Nazi party as he sought to increase the city administration's financial independence from Berlin. Moreover, as his area of personal responsibility widened, Kaufmann nonetheless insisted on dealing with even the smallest administrative details himself.⁶⁵ He was overwhelmed, and his leadership style threatened to paralyze the administration. The last proposal that survived in the records dates to April 12, 1939. The film company, Epoche, informed Kaufmann regarding the short-takes currently being produced for Berlin and offered to do the same for Hamburg, thus archiving the transformation of the city for future generations. The handwritten pencil marks on the document read: *Ablagern* (file away).⁶⁶

The Nazi 'Avant-Garde': A Local Perspective

The desire to produce cinematic homage to the Depression-ravaged city clearly extended beyond the close circle of Karl Kaufmann's chosen administrators. As the ruling elites

⁶³ Letter to Mayor Krogmann by Hermann Grieving, Ufa. 7 Jan 1938. and Letter to Kaufmann from C.M Köhn, Goebbels liaison to Ufa. 21 May 1938. in StA HH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV, 2074.

⁶⁴ Bajohr. "Karl Kaufmann. Gauleiter in Hamburg," 281. Here Bajohr demonstrates that Kaufmann was so overwhelmed that he tended to through out letters, correspondence and other written materials that extended beyond 2 pages without reading them at all.

⁶⁵ Compare Bajohr, "Karl Kaufmann. Gauleiter in Hamburg," 281.

⁶⁶ Letter from Epoche Gasparcolor Film to Kaufmann. 12 Apr 1939 StA HH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074.



Figure 20 Advertisement for EIN MÄDCHEN GEHT AN LAND

fixed their hopes on Hitler’s grandiose architectural plans to shape the harbor regions into Hamburg’s self-professed identity as Germany’s “gateway to the world,” the city’s well-organized cineasts’ hopes for a cinematic facelift rose and found avid supporters in the local press.⁶⁷ Even before the administration had abandoned the “Greater-Hamburg Film,” the local press picked up the issue and offered Hamburg audiences an unlikely surrogate. In March 1938 the *Hamburger Tageblatt* first discussed Werner Hochbaum’s *Ein Mädchen geht an Land* and welcomed it as the solution to the vibrant debate surrounding the Hamburg-film, which had been under discussion ever since Jam Borgstädt first raised the issue in 1936.⁶⁸ In September 1938 the *Hamburger Tageblatt* proclaimed that the Ufa-feature was the answer to the call for a large-scale, feature-length Hamburg-film. “Hamburg – Your Film Has Arrived” claimed the headline of the article that described

⁶⁷ Bose, Michael, et al. ‘... Ein Neues Hamburg Entsteht.’ *Planen Und Bauen Von 1933-1945*. (Hamburg: VSA, 1986), 20-29. In July 1939 Hitler chose Konstanty Gutschow after fierce competition as the official architect for the reconstruction of the Elbe river front and surrounding quarters in St. Pauli.

⁶⁸ Werner Kark. “Zum ersten Mal: Hamburg im Spielfilm” *Hamburger Tageblatt* 10 Mar 1938. For the original proposal for a Hamburg-Film by Jam Borgstädt which set Gauleiter Kaufmann and the mills of the Hamburg administration in motion see letter concerning Hamburg-Film 2 February 1936 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2074.

Werner Hochbaum's idiosyncratic career and argued for *Ein Mädchen* as an example of National Socialist avant-garde filmmaking.⁶⁹

Werner Hochbaum was hardly a National Socialist model-director.⁷⁰ In the 1920s he had worked briefly as a journalist for the Social-Democratic daily *Hamburger Echo*; his first successful film *Brüder [Brothers]* (1929) was a leftist exploration of the dockworkers' strike in Hamburg's harbor in the winter 1896-7; and he spent some time in prison after attempting to reconstruct scenes from the 1918 Revolution for the Social-Democratic *Wille und Werk*. Born the son of a professional soldier in Kiel in 1899, Hochbaum was committed to his *Heimat*, a commitment that is reflected in his career as a director. Having spent his young adulthood in Hamburg, Hochbaum developed a

⁶⁹ "Hamburg - Dein Film ist da. Hochbaum kehrt zum Experiment zurück" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 24 Sep 1938. in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 5012

⁷⁰ For Biographical information on Hochbaum see "Werner Hochbaum" in *CineGraph. Lexikon des deutschsprachigen Films* (Edition Text und Kritik), B1-B5. Herbert Holba "The Enigma of Werner Hochbaum" in *Sight and Sound* 45:2 (Spring 1976), 99 and Klaus Kreimeier, *Die UFA-Story. Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1992), 336 Other Hochbaum films include *Razzia in St. Pauli* (1932); *Morgen beginnt das Leben* (1933); *Die Ewige Makse* (1934) , *Vorstadtvarieté* (1934), *Schatten der Vergangenheit* (1936) and *Drei Unteroffiziere* (1938/9).

fascination with the city and in particular with St. Pauli. After the Nazi seizure of power, Hochbaum was repeatedly arrested and questioned by the authorities for his social-democratic sympathies. *Morgen beginnt das Leben* [Life Begins Tomorrow] (1933) was the first film he finished under the new regime. His most successful film *Die Ewige Maske* [The Eternal Mask] (1934) brought him international attention and fame.⁷¹ Hochbaum was



Figure 21 *Werner Hochbaum*

subsequently hired by Ufa to direct Marika Röck's debut *Leichte Kavallerie* [Light Cavalry] (1935).

Nonetheless, his interests returned to the Hamburg harbor milieu and finally the popular novel by Eva Leidmann *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*, first printed in installments in daily newspapers, captured the director's interest. Turning the Leidmann's novel into a film, Hochbaum attempted to "represent the landscape and atmosphere of the lowland-German [mentality] in a true and recognizable fashion."⁷² After the release of *Ein Mädchen* in the

⁷¹ Frank S. Nugent "'The Eternal Mask,' a Drama of Psychoanalysis Opens at the Filmarte – 'Hideaway Girl' at the Rialto" in *New York Times* 13 Jan 1937. The reviewer lauded the film as an 'uncommon and an uncommonly fine picture' and exclaimed "it is so seldom that the cinema casts aside its romantic clichés for its proper mantle as an individual art form that this Swiss picture catches us with our guard down and our critical vocabulary rusted. Ordinary superlatives would be ridiculous, comparisons are impossible and that invidious epithet 'unique' would not do justice to the occasion."

⁷² "Werner Hochbaum sprach über den Film" *Hamburger Nachrichten* 30 Sep 1938

fall of 1938, Hochbaum continued to work for Ufa until his expulsion from the RFA in June 1939. His last feature, *Die Drei Unteroffiziere* [The Three Non-Coms] (1938/9), apparently lacked the necessary deference to the German military. The official reason for his expulsion from the RFA was that he had been tried for espionage in 1923 even though acquitted. Unable to work, Hochbaum volunteered to serve in the military and was drafted to the infantry in November 1939. During the war, he contributed to wartime newsreels. Hochbaum survived the war and began to immediately advocate for a new German cinema. Together with Count Treuberg, Peter Pewas, and Wolfgang Staude, he was appointed to coordinate cinema planning under the allied occupation.⁷³ He produced two more films before he died after a long illness on 15 April 1946.

Ein Mädchen geht an Land was a deliberate return to “Hamburg, das Erlebnis einer Welthafenstadt,” Hochbaum’s first film project. The intention then had been to create a Ruttman-like documentary. It failed to go into production for financial reasons. *Ein Mädchen geht an Land* allowed Hochbaum to explore his fascination with Hamburg and its harbor milieu while at the same time engaging with a subject that was sure to receive the support of Nazi ideologues. A simplistic morality tale, *Ein Mädchen* attempted to bring life into the world of the shipper’s daughter, Erna Quandt (Elizabeth Flickenschildt). After losing her fiancé to a storm at sea, Erna decides to make a new life for herself on land. Trapped in a world that lacked the clear lines of authority that characterized her life on board ship, the plain but steadfast maiden transforms the lives of the people around her. Trying to adjust to her new life, she nearly falls prey to a marriage swindler, but eventually, she finds purpose and peace as a wife and mother.

The film’s popular reception, which was complicated and ambiguous, should be seen in the context of the broad ranging discussion among German film experts on the relationship between art and film in the Nazi state. I will offer short history of the Hamburg Film Consortium, a unique local institution that attempted to educate the moviegoers in matters of film art and taste and conceived of itself as an important part of the National Socialist film avant-garde. This will shed further light on the importance of

⁷³ Gladwin Hill. “Wither Go German Films” *New York Times* 3 Feb 1946.

Ein Mädchen in the local attempts to present Hamburg as a National Socialist city. The visual strategies deployed in *Ein Mädchen*, the film's mobilization of *Heimat* tropes and its near biblical portrayal of lives scarred by the hardships of a preordained social order connects very neatly with the political motivations of the city's administration to valorize the economical sacrifices of the population in the name of promised but as of yet unattained prosperity.

The endorsement Hochbaum and his film received in Hamburg prior to the film's release was highly unusual and its initial success must be seen in light of the concerted efforts to promote the film by local Ufa executives and the patrons of northern German art of the Film Consortium.⁷⁴ For weeks before the release, Hamburg's Film Consortium had been plastering posters on advertisement pillars and projected announcements in movie houses across the city.⁷⁵ Speaking to a packed auditorium – more than 800 citizens attended – at Hanesche University, Hochbaum inadvertently provided an explanation for all the attention and extensive coverage his film received prior to its opening in the prestigious Hamburg Lessing-Theater.⁷⁶ Hochbaum affirmed his intention to “make legible the lowland-German man to the all-German space [den niederdeutschen Menschen für den gesamtdeutschen Raum verständlich zu machen].”⁷⁷ His film, so the director told his audience, promised to give outsiders an opportunity to gain accurate knowledge “of the essence [*Wesen*] of our eternal homeland [*Heimat*].”⁷⁸ Following the film's release, the local Ufa invited representatives of the Hamburg daily and trade press, a number of the local actresses and actors appearing in the film, the director himself, and

⁷⁴ While Ufa, Terra, Tobis, and Bavaria productions were generally featured in generous advertisement placements in local newspapers and the *Film-Kurier*, the local efforts to promote *Ein Mädchen* went far beyond such standard efforts. In fact Ufa's advertisement placement was not unusually aggressive and in contrast to films featuring popular stars the national campaign for *Ein Mädchen* appears rather timid.

⁷⁵ “Glanzvoller Start in Hamburg: ‘Ein Mädchen geht an Land’” *Film-Kurier* 1 Oct 1938

⁷⁶ The Lessing Theater was one of the older bourgeois theaters in the inner city on Gänsemarkt and generally the Ufa-theater of choice for *Prädikatsfilme* and more explicitly artistic fare, whereas the Ufa flagship, the Ufa-Palast with more than 2000 seats generally hosted the premieres of more consumerist and sensationalist films that promised to draw large audiences. Compare Töteberg and Reissmann, *Mach dir ein paar Schöne Stunden*, 223

⁷⁷ Compare “Ein glanzvoller Start in Hamburg”

⁷⁸ See “Werner Hochbaum sprach über den Film” *Hamburger Nachrichten* 30 Sep 1938

local patrons of film to the club *Blauer Peter*, the home of Hamburg's film club.⁷⁹ They came together to celebrate Hamburg's uniqueness as "pioneers of the German film for the land of tomorrow."⁸⁰

One of the guiding principles of film in "the land of tomorrow" was to connect with the everyday lives of individual *Volksgenossen*, to engage real German subject matter and thus to produce an unadulterated, [unverkitscht] film experience.⁸¹ The National Socialist notion of '*lebensecht*,' or authentic, was meant to reveal the perennial kinship between unadorned humanity and its primordial place. It was itself an idealized version of *Alltag*. Hochbaum's fascination with the landscape of northern Germany and the racial characteristics of the lowland-Germans found expression in a narrative that centered around the essential conflict between the elements of water and land versus people. This resonated not only with the fantasies of local patrons of the arts in Hamburg, but also with the Propaganda Ministry's calls for cinematic treatments of contemporary serious material.

Initially Hamburg was eager to welcome its film, less because of its gripping story but because it promised identity to *Heimat*. The first three performances in the Lessing Theater on 30 September 1938 were well attended, the latter two were even sold out.⁸² Over the next several days, the film continued to play to well-attended houses.⁸³ However, the success of *Ein Mädchen* was relatively short-lived and far from universal – even in Hamburg. Praised by the *Hamburger Tageblatt* for the choice of "hamburgische Stoff" [Hamburg-related subject matter], the use of local talent instead of popular Ufa-stars and the film's atmospheric visuals rather than its plot, the film was defined in the local public's eye as an art-film. For that reason it ultimately proved less successful with

⁷⁹ See "Ein glanzvoller Start in Hamburg"

⁸⁰ See "Der Film von Morgen" *Film-Kurier* 22 Feb 1938

⁸¹ Compare "Was will das Publikum auf der Leinwand sehen?" in *Film-Kurier* 24 September 1938

⁸² "Erster Vorstoß": ein Mädchen geht an Land" in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 1 Oct 1938; "Glanzvoller Start in Hamburg: 'Ein Mädchen geht an Land'" *Film-Kurier* 1 Oct 1938.

⁸³ "Die vier Gesellen: festlicher start in Hamburg" in *Film-Kurier* 3 Oct 1938.

broad-based audiences.⁸⁴ Looking back at the month of October, the *Film-Kurier* again emphasized the exceptional success of Carl Froelich's *Heimat* and estimated that "in certain towns and cities approximately 60% of the population has seen the film" in contrast to the usual 10-12% a regular A-film is able to draw. Pointing to the positive box-office results of *Vier Gesellen*, *Frau Sixta*, *der Fall Deruga*, and *Was tun, Sibylle*, the *Film-Kurier* contended that "the Hochbaum film 'Ein Mädchen geht an Land' had mixed results in various parts" of the city and like *Gastspiel im Paradies*, did not yield the expected returns.⁸⁵ Even though *Ein Mädchen* played for a second week at the Lessing Theater and was simultaneously introduced at the Passage Theater on Mönckebergstrasse, the success of Hochbaum's treatment of the lowland German *Heimat* paled in comparison to the season's star-stocked features.⁸⁶ Zarah Leander in *Heimat* and Heinz Rühmann in *13 Stühle* exerted a much greater audience pull than Elisabeth Flickenschildt in her first and only role as the female lead in *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*. The dowdy protagonist did not produce enthusiastic responses from local or national audiences, even though critics applauded her talent as an actress.⁸⁷ The first notice of *Ein Mädchen* in *Hamburger Tageblatt*, which drew explicit connections between Hochbaum's film and Hamburg's general search for cinematic representation, raised the issue of the female lead and praising the directors choice for a protagonist "who certainly did not possess the features of a star."⁸⁸ Elisabeth Flickenschildt, herself the daughter of a Captain from Blankenese, was a respected and beloved actress and was welcomed as one of Hamburg's very own.

⁸⁴ See "Hamburg - Dein Film ist da."

⁸⁵ "In Hamburg: Ausgezeichneter Oktober" *Film-Kurier* 14 Nov 1938. While *Vier Gesellen* and *Frau Sixta* started in October, *Was tun, Sybille?* had been on Hamburg's screens since its premiere there in August, where it ran at the Lessing Theater for two consecutive weeks despite the unbearable heat and humidity. See "Der August in Hamburg" *Film-Kurier* 16 Sep 1938.

⁸⁶ See advertisement in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 6 Oct 1938. Moreover it should be noted that the Luis Trenker Film *Liebesbriefe aus dem Engadin [Love letters from Engadin]* (1938) started in Hamburg in the Lessing and Passage theaters simultaneously on 14 Oct 1938. See classified *Hamburger Tageblatt* 13 Oct 1938.

⁸⁷ "Der August in Hamburg" *Film-Kurier* 16 Sept 1938.

⁸⁸ Werner Kark. "Zum ersten Mal: Hamburg im Spielfilm" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 10 Mar 1938.

However, as a vehicle for popular identification she was far from a success.⁸⁹ Flickenschildt was type-cast for the part, but Hochbaum's decision to place "for the first time, the ugly girl at the center of a film [erstmalig das häßliche Mädchen in den Mittelpunkt des Films zu stellen]" was bound to run counter to popular expectations and prompted the *Tageblatt* to revel in Hochbaum's courage to place artistic considerations above box office returns guaranteed by star-stocked features.⁹⁰

The Ufa trailer nonetheless advertised *Ein Mädchen* as a woman's film with a heroine who was simultaneously plain and heroic. Like the pre-release report of the *Hamburger Tageblatt* Ufa advertisements anticipated the somewhat limited audience for the film and prepared the audience for a protagonist "who must not be beautiful for her role, who must grow out of the image of city and harbor, whose moral and spiritual background rests in the stream, the ships, and the sea alone."⁹¹ Nonetheless, female audiences may have found it difficult to accept "a protagonist who is far from the normative beauty of usual female appearances at the center our films" as the quintessential embodiment of Hamburg and the uniqueness of its people.⁹² Indeed Hochbaum's film received an even less enthusiastic reception in the Reich.⁹³

The absence of enthusiastic post-release reviews in local newspapers further suggests that a wider audiences for the film did not exist in Hamburg. The "warmherzige" reception was a politically palatable word-choice to describe the film's reception in the city. *Ein Mädchen* ran down the tiers of local cinemas rather quickly and in many of the smaller neighborhood theaters it was never shown at all. They opted to screen reprises

⁸⁹ For biographical information on Elisabeth Flickenschildt see Appendix A.

⁹⁰ Kark. "Zum ersten Mal: Hamburg im Spielfilm"

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² "Erster Vorstoß": ein Mädchen geht an Land" in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 1 Oct 1938; "Glanzvoller Start in Hamburg: 'Ein Mädchen geht an Land'" *Film-Kurier* 1 Oct 1938.

⁹³ Compare Johannes Roschlau, "Ein Mädchen geht an Land," 109-114. in *Fredy Bockbein trifft Mr. Dynamit: Filme auf den zweiten Blick* eds. Christoph Fuchs and Michael Toeteberg (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 2007):113

instead.⁹⁴ On 10 November 1938, the film was listed in the classified ads for the last time. The local press, which had been so important to the initial reception of the film, did not print any more stunningly positive endorsements after its release. In fact, Werner Kark, the editor of the *Hamburger Tageblatt* who had previously written an unqualified recommendation of the film, described Eva Leidmann's novel as "very shallow" and remarked that obviously such a story "could not have been the last, valid foundation for a real [echten] Hamburg-film."⁹⁵

At this point it is important to take a closer look at the film elite of the city. Over the course of the 1930s, Hamburg developed an extensive patronage system for film art that served and furthered the particular local interests. In 1935 local exhibitors, film distributors and film critics had founded the Film Consortium in cooperation with the Center for Adult Education [*Volkhochschule*] in Hamburg under the guidance of local cineast Werner Kark.⁹⁶ Proud of its pioneer status in the Reich, the members of Hamburg's Film Consortium felt emboldened to present themselves as authoritative spokespersons for the New German Film. The initiative by cineasts in Hamburg to create a local institution for the promotion of film art was unique in the Reich and the *Film-Kurier* regularly reported on the Consortium's lecture series and other activities.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Compare the classified ads in *Hamburger Tagblatt* for October and November 1938. For example in the Schauburg Ham and Schauburg City, the film played for an entire three days, and nowhere was it prolonged beyond a first week since it was discontinued in the Lessing Theater. In contrast, *Liebe* was prolonged for another week in the Atrium theater and since hundreds could not be admitted, the Münzburg theater added 3. and 4. special screenings.

⁹⁵ See "Erster Vorstoß": ein Mädchen geht an Land" in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 1 Oct 1938; "Glanzvoller Start in Hamburg: 'Ein Mädchen geht an Land'" *Film-Kurier* 1 Oct 1938.

⁹⁶ "'Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film: Eine Bilanz des guten Willens - Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Thema Filmkulturpropaganda im Reich'" *Film-Kurier* Beiblatt 2 Jul 1938. See also "Neuaufbau des deutschen Film" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 26 Mar 1936. As part of the economic recovery of the German film industry the *Hamburger Tageblatt* notes the founding of a new organization – the Film Consortium (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film). Werner Kark was the editor of the party organ *Hamburger Tageblatt*, which since January 1931 was the official party newspaper in the city. Compare Karl Christian Führer, *Medienmetropole Hamburg: Mediale Öffentlichkeit 1930-1960* (Hamburg: Döllig und Galitz Verlag, 2008). For more, but nonetheless fragmentary biographical information see Appendix A.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

Consortia were a stable feature of local and national politics. The Nazi regime maintained the illusion of political participation through these caucuses. They benefited from collaboration and exchange, while retaining absolute control and decision-making authority.⁹⁸ What functioned as a space for local politics, was also a primary site for the production of consent to a repressive regime. Even though the Hamburg Film Consortium was very active, its members went on to found the Hamburg Film-Club in 1937 a private association that focused on promoting regional and local art in addition to film. Since the completion of the club-house in March 1938, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* increasingly promoted itself publicly through the film club's venues. The club was founded by Werner Kark and conceived of itself as an institution committed to furthering the work of the Film Consortium. In effect, the club's foundation created a sort of institutional double of the consortium.

Historians have long since recognized such institutional proliferation [Ämter Darwinismus] as characteristic of National Socialist politics.⁹⁹ But their studies generally focus on the power differential within important ministries and between high level party functionaries – the ultimate separation of Alfred Rosenberg (Hitler's chief ideologue) in the Rosenberg Office for Ideological Education from Joseph Goebbels in the RMVP is just one prominent example.¹⁰⁰ In contrast to the Consortium which had been associated with the regional propaganda office, the university, and the adult education center of the

⁹⁸ At the national level such consortia include the Reich's *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Raumplanung* or the *Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendbetreuung* at the national level. In Hamburg, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft St. Pauli-Freiheit*, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft 'Film'* and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege* were very different from one another both in terms of purpose and composition. The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft 'Film'* seems to have been relatively independent of official government structures. However, the fact that the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft St. Pauli-Freiheit* was connected to the party structures in the district St. Pauli and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege* a collection of experts from within the city administration, seemed to have no effect on their respective political authority. Unfortunately, these bodies have not yet received sustained attention from historians.

⁹⁹ On internal competition and institutional doubling within the Nazi State see Martin Broszat *The Hitler State: The Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich*. trans John W. Hiden. (London: Longman, 1981) and Hans Mommsen. *Beamtenum im Dritten Reich. Mit ausgewählten Quellen zur Nationalsozialistischen Beamtenpolitik* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1966). Further Johannes Houwink ten Cate and Gerhard Otto. *Das organisierte Chaos: Ämterdarwinismus' und 'Gesinnungsethik'. Determinanten nationalsozialistischer Besatzungsherrschaft* (Berlin: Metropol, 1999).

¹⁰⁰ Compare Erwin Barth. *Joseph Goebbels Und Die Formierung Des Führer-Mythos 1917-1934*. Erlangen: Palm & Enke, 1999) and Ernst Piper. *Alfred Rosenberg: Hitlers Chefideologe*. (München: Karl Blessing Verlag, 2005)

city, the Film Club served the purpose of practically uncoupling local interests from a nationally controlled machine.

The club organized weekly matinees which brought film-connoisseurs together in Hamburg's last independently owned first run theater (*Uraufführungstheater*), the Waterloo Kino on Dammtorstrasse.¹⁰¹ Those matinees screened valuable [wertvolle] documentaries and feature films, which provided the basis for discussions between audiences and prominent individuals from the Reich's film elite.¹⁰² The Waterloo-Theater, which had made a virtue of necessity by specializing in foreign films (many of which were imports from Hollywood until well into 1940), promised to be a viable local counterweight to the Ufa-dominated machine. In turn, the Waterloo, benefited from the club's patronage. It could simultaneously demonstrate its support for the regime and sustain itself financially. However, the Film Club by no means harbored or pursued resistant political tendencies or conceived of itself in opposition to the film-political authorities in Hamburg or to the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. The members in both bodies largely overlapped, yet this institutional split allowed for more variegated and localized events to take place in the club rooms that retained the aura of the private gatherings of like-minded art enthusiasts.

Like other local aggregations of National Socialist zealots, the Film Consortium (and even more so the film club) provided a political playing field far removed from the city administration's reach and focus. In January 1938, the Film Club 'Blauer Peter' received a home of the same name. Members and friends moved up a white-washed stairway with scarlet red carpet and black banisters into the clubrooms. The dining hall featured blue curtains and table cloths and the adjacent bar area was decorated with red and green navigation lights on the walls. These Hanseatic details were all references to the club's name. The 'Blue Peter' is the official pennant hoisted in the harbor twenty-four hours prior to the departure of a ship. In these rooms, the Film Club hosted its favorite

¹⁰¹ For the history on the Waterloo see Karl Christian Führer, "Guckfenster in die Welt," 65-73

¹⁰² *ibid.*

film directors and actors.¹⁰³ This unique institution soon became the local patron of a particular kind of northern art [*nordische Kunst*] and devoted its attention to promoting and furthering local painters, musicians, and actors as ambassadors of Hanseatic pride. At the same time, the glamour and fame of the national stars frequenting the club was transferred to other club events. As a space to cultivate local alliances and cement various hierarchies imposed by the restructuring of the film industry since 1933, the Consortium and the Film Club provided local experts and enthusiasts with the opportunity to celebrate their collective contribution to the National Socialist revolution. In these pseudo-political organizations, local patriotism and pride easily assimilated and were reinforced by Nazi doctrine.

It is important to locate the Film Consortium in the larger debates about film as art in the Reich. The members of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Film* took Goebbels very seriously when he proclaimed the “primacy of art.”¹⁰⁴ In fact, the consortium conceived of itself as a local sponsor of a the new National Socialist avant-garde. Members of the Nazi avant-garde saw themselves as standing in direct opposition to its Weimar precursors and in fact re-signified the term, stripping it of its previous meaning and connotations. First of all, the Nazi avant-garde would espouse quintessential Germanness and as Wolfgang Liebeneiner said in Hamburg “to be German, is to be lucid [*Deutsch sein, heißt klar sein!*]¹⁰⁵ The Nazis rejected precisely the qualities that had marked innovative filmmaking in the past. They insisted that “one must not be a slave to technology” because this “leads to the principle of art for art’s sake, which uses technical manipulations such as dissolves, crane-takes, cuts, montage, etc. as ends in themselves” rather than as “tools of an artisan.”¹⁰⁶

On December 11, Dr. Eckardt, director of Degeto (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ton und Film*) explained the new National Socialist avant-garde vision in the realm of film to

¹⁰³ Compare “Hamburgs Filmclub stellt sich vor” in *Film-Kurier* 22 Jan 1938.

¹⁰⁴ Compare, “Weiter aufwärts mit dem Film” in *Film-Kurier* 4 Mar 1938

¹⁰⁵ “Liebeneiner sprach in Hamburg; Durchdringung der Materie und Klarheit des Ziels” *Film-Kurier* 7 Nov 1938

¹⁰⁶ “Grau, Freund, ist alle Film-Theorie” *Film-Kurier* 19 Aug 1938

the patrons of the Hamburger *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. He insisted that the new avant-garde “mustn’t ever lose its connection to the larger group.” It should “push forward while looking back [zurückschauend vorwärts treiben]”¹⁰⁷ Eckardt insisted that a National Socialist avant-garde is revolutionary only “when it does not fade into and distort itself in a vacuum of abstract, formal constructions.”¹⁰⁸ It must assimilate “the breath of the tilled earth” that the National Socialist revolution has liberated as a result of “ploughing up the life of an entire nation.” The “buried forces that for centuries had been hidden” have finally been set free.¹⁰⁹

The Nazi avant-garde was primarily described in the terms of *Gesinnungskunst*, as an art that reflected the Nazis’ commitment to develop a “new face, a new form, and a new ethos [Gesinnung].”¹¹⁰ Grounded in a rigid adherence to the concept of verisimilitude [Wirklichkeitsnähe], Nazi avant-garde cinema nonetheless relied on the suggestive effects of film. Rather than merely depicting reality objectively, the Nazis wanted film to articulate its own claims of objectivity [Wirklichkeitsanspruch]. Eckardt explained, the “illusionary effect of film can be so strong that it creates the impression not just of reflecting reality, but of being reality.”¹¹¹ Sabine Hake has shown that Nazi cinema’s thrust for *Wirklichkeitsnähe* was politically as well as aesthetically motivated. She argues for “a momentous shift from text-based to reception-based definitions of filmic realism” that had the “elevation of the motion-picture audience to a model of the racial community, the *Volksgemeinschaft*” as its main goal.¹¹² Hake convincingly illustrates that “[b]eing true to life meant making political tendentiousness an integral part of cinema.”¹¹³ However there was no clear consensus on regarding what that

¹⁰⁷ “Dr. Eckardt in Hamburg: Die Aufgaben der Avantgarde” *Film-Kurier* 13.Dec 1938

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

¹¹² Hake. *Popular Cinema of the Third Reich*, 173

¹¹³ Hake, 184-5

tendentiousness was to entail precisely. Initial experiments, such as *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*, still displayed elements characteristic of an earlier period— and hence criticized for its supposed expressionism.¹¹⁴ Still we can follow the visual production of mood and atmosphere Hake identifies as so central to the cinematic realism espoused by the Nazis, which was actually a “code for illusionism.”¹¹⁵ Instead, National Socialist film attempted to articulate an authenticity that transcends the real. And while ideas of authenticity and verisimilitude were at first connected almost literally to an ideology of blood and soil (as appears to be the case in *Ein Mädchen*), these concepts were broadened with the maturation of Nazi film production to include more extravagant cinematic treatments such as *Große Freiheit Nr 7*.

The interests of the nationalized film industry did not naturally connect with local patriotism since the great production companies generally had national and increasingly international audiences in mind. Yet in the case of *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*, Ufa’s economic interests, service to Nazi film art, and local ambition beautifully coalesced. The film promised to present Hamburg’s film enthusiasts with a near perfect product. It placed Hamburg in the center of the film, without visually exploiting “that which has been painted countless times in song, film and word.”¹¹⁶ It also offered the “naturalism” that the director of the censorship office, Dr. Heinrich Zimmermann, had called for earlier in 1938. He demanded that “the entertainment film must become incomparably more realistic [lebensechter].”¹¹⁷ Locally, Hochbaum was celebrated as a leading figure of the new avant-garde—an avant-garde that utilized lucid optical means to “show people in their relationship to objects and to the landscape, both of which are suddenly imbued with great spirit and strength [Beseelung].”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Two dream sequences as well as vivid depiction of St. Pauli night life were cut before the film was released in the rest of the Reich. Compare Johannes Roschlau.

¹¹⁵ Hake, 182.

¹¹⁶ “‘Der grosse Tag von Hamburg:’ Mit Malbrans Filmleuten beim Schmelingskampf” in *Film-Kurier* 19 Apr 1938.

¹¹⁷ “Der Film von Morgen” in *Film-Kurier* 22 Feb 1938.

¹¹⁸ “Hamburg - Dein Film ist da!” in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 24 Sep 1938.

Ultimately, the film's rigid adherence to the ideal of verisimilitude, which reflected the Nazi call for *Bodenständigkeit* (rootedness in the soil), may have been the main reason for the initial enthusiasm of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*. The ambiguity that characterized the popular reception of *Ein Mädchen* was also the result of its commitment to this kind of 'realism.' The call for *Bodenständigkeit* reflected the contradictions inherent in the use of filmic techniques associated on the one hand with lofty art and on the other with folk-bound ordinariness. Hochbaum's commitment to these two fundamental concepts of Nazi film art did not produce a vision of Hamburg that nurtured the spirit of self-celebration audiences expected of a grand Hamburg film. The film was simply too *bodenständig* and *wirklichkeitsnah*.

It is almost impossible to reconstruct how *Ein Mädchen geht an Land* (or any other films for that matter) was received by regular filmgoing audiences. Only film critics and National Socialist authorities left written traces. Both the daily and specialty press followed the regime's instruction and discussed films in a descriptive and generally affirmative language. Caustic remarks and accusations of failure were generally reserved for international films.¹¹⁹ SD-reports give some insight as to what viewers thought or said about a given film but even these usually singular references must be seen as snapshots. They do not invite historical generalizations.¹²⁰ We may never know whether audiences in Hamburg *liked* and *enjoyed* Hochbaum's exploration of the city in his stylized tale about feminine virtue. However, a careful contextual reading of the place of visual pleasure in the *Ein Mädchen* will allow us to make educated guesses about the emotive resonances and their relation to the official purpose this film was to serve.

Since *Ein Mädchen geht an Land* was meant to capture the essence of the northern German *Heimat*, any analysis of the film should begin by situating it in the

¹¹⁹ See for example Günther Schivark "Mädchen von Schanghai im Marmorhaus" in *Film-Kurier* 17 Sept 1938. The author explains for example that Loretta Young "as pretty and shapely she may be, lacks the spiritual depth [geistiges Format] to infuse the problematic of the here - if a bit haplessly so - motivated conflict with a deeper meaning."

¹²⁰ Careful exceptions can be made for films such as *Jud Süß* and *Der Ewige Jude* since audiences were observed more systematically and repeatedly in order to evaluate the success or failure of such important pieces of racist propaganda.

context of the emerging film genre of the *Heimatfilm*.¹²¹ With variations as to the location of the fundamental conflict between tradition and modernity dwarfing the individual and invoking the sublime, the *Heimatfilm* affirms rural communities as a bullwark against the encroachment of the outside world (generally the urban world) into the primordial idyl.¹²² As a contribution to this genre, Hochbaum's feature was truly extraordinary. Not only did he highlight his lowland German homeland, but he also located his exploration in the *Heimat*'s quintessential other – the modern metropolis.¹²³

Both on a formal and narrative level, *Ein Mädchen* fails to dissolve the tensions between the bourgeois home, the harbor as the city's economic motor, St. Pauli as the city's pleasure colony, and a landscape defined by the eternal comings and goings of the tides. Neither offering wholeness nor a brighter version of everyday reality, *Ein Mädchen* consistently conflates Hamburg with one of its poorest districts. It is in and around the harbor and St. Pauli that Hochbaum searches for Hamburg's essence. As a counterweight to the conflicts characteristic of a modern city, *Ein Mädchen* locates the potential for reform in Erna, the female protagonist. Yet, instead of dissolving the tension between city and nature, Erna remains irreconcilably foreign in her new surroundings. She chooses to sleep in a little cove in the kitchen rather than in a room of her own since it reminds her of the bunk on her father's ship. Her sailor's almanac, the anchor of her moral compass, is never far from reach. Erna is neither welcome nor does she belong. As *Heimat* the city cannot be recognized.

The visual strategies associated with the emerging genre of the *Heimatfilm* were translated into a northern German context a few years later by Veit Harlan in *Opfergang*

¹²¹ For an excellent history of the genre of the *Heimat*-film see Johannes von Moltke. *No Place Like Home*, 36ff

¹²² Compare Moltke. *No Place Like Home*, 49. A prominent sub-genre of the *Heimatfilm* is the *Bergfilm* or Mountainfilm. For a useful placement of the *Bergfilm* as part of Nazi Cinema's contribution to the *Heimat*-film genre see Rentschler's exploration of Luis Trenker in *Ministry of Illusion*, 73-96. See further Moltke detailed discussion of Ganghoffer's "*Bergheimat*" and its "paradigmatic role in the genrification of the *Heimatfilm* in *No Place Like Home*, 37ff.

¹²³ Rentschler defines *Heimat* as "a place, a feeling; a physical space, a province of the psyche; at once something inordinately rich and something irretrievably lost" and suggests that "[t]o contemplate *Heimat* means to imagine an uncontaminated space, a realm of innocence and immediacy" to which the city can only be conceptualized as 'other.' See Rentschler, *Ministry of Illusion*, 74.

(1942-4). Unlike *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*, Harlan's *Opfergang* integrates the protagonist, a child-woman named Adele (Kristina Söderbaum), into the landscape in a way that suggests an elemental form of belonging and identity. In a particularly compelling scene, Söderbaum is depicted riding on a horse along the beach of the Elbe river. As a daughter of *Heimat*, she is not confined by the essentialized boundaries separating water and land. Yet wholeness in *Opfergang* is bittersweet. Adele's *Fernweh* [longing for faraway places] is the flip side of her youthful and melancholic vitality. Her illness and subsequent death, the inevitable consequences of her drifting, unmake her eternal homelessness or *Heimatlosigkeit*, reclaim her body as part of the natural landscape and assimilate the contradictions between land and sea.

In contrast, Hochbaum's panoramas attempt to dissolve the boundary that separates the city from the sea. Trying to capture the port-city as *Heimat*, Hochbaum only manages to produce a *Heimatgefühl* [sense of belonging] in wide-angle shots of the natural landscape and its vastness rather than in the densely populated urban spaces. Hochbaum's visual exploration of the Hamburg-*Heimat* attempted to merge the natural landscape with man-made iconography of docks, chimneys, and ships. Juxtaposing the tropes of industrial modernity to the natural landscape dominated by water, Hochbaum in fact reifies the fundamental incompatibility of city and landscape, of man and nature, of status and character.





Figures 22-25 *Hamburg Iconography EIN MÄDCHEN GEHT AN LAND*

The film's narrative further unmasks the panoramas of Hochbaum's *Stadtlandschaft* [urban landscape] as fundamentally flawed. Like the return of the repressed, St. Pauli emanates from the city's very fabric as an organic threat to the unadorned humanity of the German north.¹²⁴ Loading cranes, steeples, and even the ships' bows point upward into the eternal sublime but hardly achieve the humbling effect of monumental mountain ranges in the *Bergfilm*.¹²⁵ In contrast the urban spectacle of the city, the colorful bustle of St. Pauli is short-changed. Seen through Erna's eyes, the pretty girls, the dancing couples, and the telephones on every table in the ritzy establishment appear inauthentic and fake. The real St. Pauli, the few takes suggest, is populated by geezers, drunks, and whores, none of which seem to enjoy themselves. The place thus visualized foregoes the naturalness of the landscape. St. Pauli, robbed of its allure, becomes an emblem of Hamburg's urbanism.

A slightly more colorful portrayal of St. Pauli is presented in two montage-like dream sequences in which Erna and Jonny work through their uneasiness and regret.¹²⁶ These scenes, though lauded by the *Hamburger Tageblatt* as "a brilliant visual display"

¹²⁴ I owe the metaphor of St. Pauli as a return of the repressed to a conversation with Johannes von Moltke.

¹²⁵ For a useful placement of the *Bergfilm* as part of Nazi Cinema's contribution to the Heimat-film genre see Rentschler's exploration of Luis Trenker in *Ministry of Illusion*, 73-96. See further Moltke detailed discussion of Ganghofer's "*Bergheimat*" and its "paradigmatic role in the genrification of the *Heimatfilm* in *No Place Like Home*, 37ff.

¹²⁶ Georg Herzberg. "Ein Mädchen geht an Land." *Film-Kurier*, 14 Oct 1938.

met with sharp disapproval in Berlin and were subsequently cut.¹²⁷ A tamer exploration of St. Pauli's nightlife remained. The prestigious dancehall on the Reeperbahn where Erna and Jonny meet is juxtaposed with a shady dive-bar in which patrons dance with abandon, a 'no dancing' sign visible in the background, as if to forewarn viewers of the inevitable downward spiral of urban amusements. Hochbaum is unable to restore the naturalness of the landscape to the city and displaces the conflict into the life of Erna Quandt.

Hochbaum stylizes Erna into a symbol of the simple and unadorned humanity of



Figure 26 *Erna at the helm of her fathers ship*

the German north. However, these same qualities appear coarse and plebeian to the representatives of the Hamburg upper class. Erna's sense of direction, her insistence on keeping "the ship on course" helps to sort out the social conflicts in the Stühmer residence, but never resolve the incompatibility of Erna's essence and her place.

Eventually city life bends even the upright Erna. Immune to the extravagant life-style of her Viennese mistress and

¹²⁷ Compare "Hamburg - Dein Film ist da." See further Roschlau, 111. Goebbels was displeased with Hochbaum's expressionist symbolism, most explicit in the dream sequences that were subsequently cut. He also found fault with the overblown staging of milieu in the film. Compare Joseph Goebbels, 30 Sep 1938. *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil I Band 6 ed Elke Froehlich (Munich: Saur, 1996) 120.

vices of St. Pauli, her moral compass is nonetheless temporarily dislodged and her integrity called into question. Her selfless friendship with the marriage swindler Jonny Hasebein (Carl Kuhlmann) has sullied her good name. Erna attempts suicide – the only logical step following female (sexual) transgression in *Die*



Figure 27 Erna on land

Goldene Stadt or *Jud Süß*.¹²⁸ Instead the children of the widower Semmler, clad in white nightgowns to resemble providence's angels, save the disoriented Erna. "I must have lost the solid path [Da bin ich wohl vom rechten Wege abgekommen]" Erna explains. She surrenders to her inevitable fate, which the narrative hinted at earlier in a sequence involving Erna's relations with her neighbor, the widower Semmler. At the end of the film, Erna sits outside Semmler's petty bourgeois home, cradling his youngest in her lap, while the inarticulate bachelor scrambles for words. The child's preemptive exclamation of "Mutti" seals Erna's fate as a mother who

¹²⁸ Kristina Söderbaum, also known as the *Reichswasserleiche* [Reich's water corpse] drowned herself in the Neckar river (*Jud Süß*, 1940) and followed her mother into the moor in the Harlan film *Die Goldene Stadt* (1941/42). In each case the loss of virginity would be atoned by the ultimate sacrifice on the altar of racial purity. For a discussion on Söderbaum see Stephen Lowry, "Ideology and Excess in Nazi Melodrama" in *New German Critique* 74 Special Issue on Nazi Cinema (Spring-Summer 1998): 125-149.



Figure 28 *Erna as mother and wife*

will know neither love nor sensuality.¹²⁹

By conflating the city with its pleasure colony, Hochbaum argues that Hamburg is no place for virtue. Even though Erna stays on land, she returns to the city's fringe, to a petty bourgeois milieu that functions as an intermediate space safe from both the compromising

bustle of the metropolis and the elements raging out at sea. In the house of the portly, middle-aged widower Semmler and his three Germanic children, Erna finds a home at the price of forever forsaking *Heimat*.

Hamburg cannot be the *Heimat* Zarah Leander finds in Carl Froelich's immensely successful film of the same title (*Heimat*, 1938). In *Heimat*, Magda (Leander), an unwed mother and artist, returns to her home after a flourishing career in the United States, finds love with an old friend and forgiveness in her father's heart.¹³⁰ While Magda reclaims her *Heimat*, Erna exchanges *Heimat* for *Zuhause* and fulfills her destiny in not so very glamorous motherhood.¹³¹ Home is not where the heart is in Hochbaum's film.¹³² In the

¹²⁹ Roschlau convincingly reasons that Erna's suicide would have presented an ending much more to Hochbaum's liking but did not find the support of Ufa dramatic advisors.

¹³⁰ Florentine Strelczyk. "Far Away, So Close: Carl Froelich's *Heimat*" in *Cultural History through a National Socialist Lens: Essays on the Cinema of the Third Reich* ed. Robert C. Reimer (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000): 109-132

¹³¹ Both terms are generally translated as "home." *Heimat*, however is an idealized state of being in the world whereas *Zuhause* implies a concrete place. One can find a *Zuhause* anywhere but everybody only has one (original) *Heimat*. On 'Heimat' as a concept see Celia Applegate *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990)

¹³² *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and The Woman's Film*. ed Christine Gledhill (London: BFI, 1990)

spirit of National Socialist *Schaffensgemeinschaft* (community of work) home is created with one's hands and feet.¹³³

The films' emphasis on the virtue of work conveyed by an almost caricatured version of the National Socialist ideal of the companionate marriage, is consistent with its explicit rejection of romance. Down in the ship's galley, Erna and her husband-to-be discuss their impending marriage with few words and even fewer exchanges of physical contact, exposing Erna as unsuitable for courtship. She is big boned and tall, her hands are steadily at work, and she has little use for sentimentality even when attempting to defuse her fiancé's self-doubts of being too short for a woman of Erna's character and build. "A good skipper makes a good husband," she insists. Erna reassures Groterjahn



Figure 29 Advertisement Still, *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*

that marriage "does not always have to be the great love like in the papers."

However, fate turns Erna's words of encouragement to the scrawny Groterjahn into a prophetic reversal. An inadequate skipper makes no husband.

The atmosphere of austerity that marks Erna's personal relationship is underscored by the dim-light shots of the harbor, the constricted spaces on board her father's ship, and the storm that claims the life of Groterjahn. The personal tragedy that the narrative renders in fact confirms social ideas about "*das hässliche Mädchen*." Unlike in the protagonist in the 1933 film entitled *Das*

¹³³ On the idea of 'Sozialismus der Tat [Socialism of the Deed]' see Gerhard Starcke. *Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (1940); Eric Bockenmühl. *Volksgemeinschaft der Tat: Geschichten vom Hilfswerk 'Mutter und Kind', vom 'Winterhilfswerk' und von 'Kraft durch Freude'* ed. Franz Lichtenberger. (Halle: Carl Marhold Verlag) and Robert Ley. *Soldaten der Arbeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1942)

hässliche Mädchen, Erna does not attempt to change her appearance.¹³⁴ Her resistance to the forces of change is like the austere landscape of which she remains a part.

Hochbaum attempted to *show* Hamburg rather than *tell* its story. Despite the “finest, atmospheric paintings of light [*Lichtmalerei*]” Hochbaum’s film paints a bleak picture and he refuses to follow the conventions of the popular melodrama.¹³⁵ The conclusion of the film is an affirmation of duty and not of happiness. *Ein Mädchen* may have been “a first discussable attempt in German filmmaking to fashion the face of the Hanseatic city and its people in a large scale feature,” but it was hardly an opportunity for self-celebration and pride, much less a showcase of local glamour.

In contrast, *Schatten über St. Pauli* (Kirchhoff, 1938), a not very original mystery set in Hamburg’s harbor milieu, established a certain allure by instrumentalizing the



Figure 30 Marieluise Claudius in *SCHATTEN ÜBER ST. PAULI*

atmosphere of the entertainment district.¹³⁶

Hochbaum does not present St. Pauli for visual consumption. Instead, the director produced a different and less voyeuristic morality tale that affirms individual duty to the *Volksgemeinschaft* (racial community) while cynically calling into question the pursuit of happiness. Where *Ein Mädchen* visually stylizes the elemental and natural characteristics of both the northern sea and the modern urban jungle, *Schatten über St.*

Pauli is an action packed crime drama. A beautiful maiden is kidnapped by an

unscrupulous industrialist. But she is ultimately rescued by her fiancé along with his

¹³⁴ Compare Hake’s analysis of the 1933 film *Das hässliche Mädchen* [*The Ugly Girl*] (1933) in *Popular Cinema of the Third Reich*, 31-38.

¹³⁵ Stills and a short plot summary, were printed in the *Illustrated Film Kurier*; Courtesy of the Film- und Fernsehmuseum, Hamburg. The *Illustrated Film Kurier*, is a program printed for important films and sold in theaters. Undated.

¹³⁶ “Im Schatten über St. Pauli” in *Film-Kurier* 24.9.38

fellow harbor-skipper, who capture the scoundrel and turn him over to the police. In Hochbaum's exploration, the cityscape accentuates the 'otherness' of the wholesome Erna, thus making visual the ambiguity and anxiety of a land-bound character caught between the primordial force of the sea and urban, man-made modernity. What makes Hamburg Hamburg is never clear.

Ein Mädchen was credited as having grown out of folk-bound *Bodenständigkeit* rather than being the expression of individual genius. It was celebrated as the realization of a National Socialist avant-garde and the film was reasonably successful in Hamburg.¹³⁷ Yet as the long awaited Hamburg-film, Hochbaum's art failed to deliver. The day after *Ein Mädchen* left the prestigious inner-city screen, *Fracht von Baltimore* (Hinrich 1938) started in the Schauburg St. Pauli. On October 14, Max Baumann asked whether Hans Hinrich's film was finally "the Hamburg film." He answered: "No certainly not! Hamburg remains mostly in the background and one begins to wonder whether it is at all possible to present this conflicted city of rich and poor, of harbor dive-bars and exquisite restaurants, of work and evermore work by day and night, this city on Germany's fringe to the wide world in a mere film."¹³⁸ The search for the ultimate Hamburg-film would have to continue.

Rather than a testament to Hochbaum's nonconformity,¹³⁹ *Ein Mädchen geht an Land* really enacts its own conversion to a *new* kind of National Socialist art. That Hochbaum was ultimately unsuccessful in placing his art in the service of National Socialism should not detract from his repeated attempts to do so. Ultimately, it was Hochbaum's emotional investment in the promotion of unadorned localism that proved unpalatable to local patrons.¹⁴⁰ They longed for a more glamorous testimony.

¹³⁷ In contrast, films such as *Biberpelz*, *Mustergatte*, *Was tun*, *Sybille?*, *Eine Nacht im Mai*, *Geheimzeichen*, *LB 17*, *Rote Orchideen*, *Maja zwischen zwei Ehen*, and, of course, *Heimat* received continuous testimonies to their national success in the form of visibly placed advertisements in the *Film-Kurier*; frequently detailing the number of patrons reached and the number of consecutive weeks the respective film ran in a particular locale. There are no such recurrent Ufa advertisements for *Ein Mädchen*.

¹³⁸ Max Baumann "Hamburg - Liebe und Seefahrt" in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 15 Oct 1938.

¹³⁹ Compare Kreimeier, 336 and Holba 102.

¹⁴⁰ This localism is most noticeable in Hochbaum's decision to choose actors from Hamburg's stages rather than employ national movie stars. Compare Roschlau, 113

Hochbaum's refusal to embellish his visual exposé of northern Germanness exposed the aesthetic limits of a rhetoric of authenticity to film experts in Berlin.¹⁴¹

The Melodrama of History and the Glamour of *Heimat*

The controversy over Hamburg's place within the cinematic geography of Nazi Germany was resolved by the reactions of local audiences to Helmut Käutner's *Große Freiheit Nr. 7* in October 1945.¹⁴² Mobilizing the conflict between land and sea that was so essential to *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*, Käutner's film offers an enthralling exploration of Hamburg's harbor milieu as a former sailor reinvents himself twice over. This story of two overlapping love triangles places the moral strictures of small town morality into an urban setting where hard work, male honor, and feminine virtue prevail in the face of depravity and carefree entertainment. The main character is a former sailor, Hannes Kröger (Hans Albers) is the lead-attraction in the Hippodrom on Grosse Freiheit Street in St. Pauli's amusement quarters. He rescues his late brother's sweetheart from her stunted life in a small town.¹⁴³ The beautiful and independent Gisa (Ilse Werner) is contrasted with the lasciviousness of the women on Große Freiheit Street. Hannes, weary of his lover Anita, (Hilde Körber) and his life in her cathouse, falls for *das anständige Mädchen*. However, Gisa chooses Willem (Hans Söhnker), a saucy dockhand, instead and after a few painful misunderstandings and in spite of the escalating rivalry between the two men, Gisa is able to convince Willem of her virtue and they find love and happiness together. Hannes, encouraged by his friends returns to his true love - the sea.

¹⁴¹ Compare "Die Arbeitsparole für alle Filmschaffenden" in *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 5 Mar 1938.

¹⁴² Töteberg, *Filmstadt*, 89.

¹⁴³ Große Freiheit is a street in St. Pauli, crossing the Reeperbahn. The Hamburg Hippodrom was a famous night club at the time.

Enthusiasts and scholars have since focused on the film's nonconformity.¹⁴⁴ Journalists generally cite the film's representation of gender and sexuality as incompatible with Nazi ideology when explaining Goebbels decision to ban the film for German audiences.¹⁴⁵ Karsten Witte juxtaposes Helmut Käutner with the prototypical Nazi filmmaker Veit Harlan, and argues that *Große Freiheit Nr 7*'s aesthetic reflected the impending defeat of the Reich. Witte suggests that Käutner realistically illustrates the disintegration of social relations, whereas Harlan mystifies vanquishmaient as a death wish.¹⁴⁶ While Witte confines the presumed nonconformity of the film to the realm of the aesthetic, Töteberg, who admits that *Große Freiheit* was indeed a "prestigious project", argues that the film highlighted the disintegration of morality and the destruction of bourgeois society.¹⁴⁷ But *Große Freiheit* was far from an example of subversive defeatism.¹⁴⁸ Instead, Käutner's colorful melodrama survives as the most convincing National Socialist tribute to the city of Hamburg and possibly remains the most successful Hamburg film in the popular imagination.

I read *Große Freiheit* as a fulfillment of the promised Hamburg film and as celebration of Hanseatic *Eigenart* that simultaneously presents a compelling testament to Nazi cultural grandeur. No longer concerned with performing its own conversion to National Socialism, *Große Freiheit* nurtured a nostalgia for those promised but unattainable realities in Hamburg audiences and continues to visually anchor the memory

¹⁴⁴ See Klaus Kreimeier, *The Ufa-Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company, 1918-1945*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996.) 408-9; Karsten Witte. "Film Im Nationalsozialismus: Blendung Und Überblendung." *Die Geschichte Des Deutschen Films*. Eds. Jacobson, Wolfgang, Anton Kaes and Hans Helmut Prinzler. (Stuttgart and Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 1993.) 119-170; Töteberg, *Filmstadt*, 88-91; Kraft Wetzel and Peter Hagemann. *Zensur: Verbotene Deutsche Filme 1933-1945*. (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1978),71-74.

¹⁴⁵ See in particular Witte,142, 164, 168. Rentschler, 218, and Töteberg, *Filmstadt* 88-91

¹⁴⁶ See Witte, 165.

¹⁴⁷ Töteberg, *Filmstadt*, 90.

¹⁴⁸ Among subversive filmmakers Rentschler lists Helmut Käutner in first place, followed by Reinhold Schünzel, and Wolfgang Staudte, but also argues that "aesthetic resistance was part of the system; it provided a crucial function in a larger gestalt." Rentschler, 12, 144..

of Nazi “good times” by the grace of its belated release.¹⁴⁹ After reviewing the complicated production history of *Große Freiheit* and contextualizing Goebbels’ decision to ban the film for German audiences in March 1945, I situate Käutner’s “declaration of love” in the context of other popular wartime productions. It was this anti-heroic tale that was able to bring local sensitivity and national ambitions together in a glamorous testament to both the city of Hamburg and National Socialist cinema.¹⁵⁰

After the screenplay had been approved by Goebbels, Werner Krien, who had previously photographed *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*, started shooting *Große Freiheit*. This took place on expensive stage-sets in the Ufa studios at Neubabelsberg and Tempelhof in March 1943. With the destruction of Berlin studios in the summer of 1943, production continued in the Barrandvo-studio in Prague.¹⁵¹ Helmut Käutner returned to Hamburg to film the harbor and various scenes in a Blankeneser coffee-house in September 1943, only weeks after massive air strikes had nearly flattened the city. In August 1944, the film was completed and subsequently approved by Goebbels for domestic and international release.¹⁵² It should be noted that by 1944, the international venues for Nazi film was limited to German occupied territories, the Axis powers and the

¹⁴⁹ The above formulation is a pun on the phrase “Die Gnade der späten Geburt” or “the grace of the belated birth” used by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the Israeli Knesset on 25 January 1984 to assert his personal innocence and that an entire generation of German politicians. The phrase was originally used by journalist Günter Gaus, who later accused Chancellor Kohl of plagiarism. In Gaus’s use the phrase was not meant provide an excuse but instead raise questions about how his generations had acted when forced into a decision by National Socialism. Only because of “the grace of the late birth” did Gaus (and Kohl’s) generation, so Gaus implied, never have to experience the limits of their moral compass. See “Verschwiegene Entscheidung” *Der Spiegel* 38 (1986), 47. electronic version available at <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13519977.html> retrieved on 21 Jul 2010. See Günter Gaus. *Die Welt der Westdeutschen* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1986). For a more recent mentioning of the phrase in English literature, see Atina Grossmann, “The ‘Goldhagen Effect’: Memory, Repetition, and Responsibility in the New Germany” (89-129) in *The ‘Goldhagen Effect’: History, Memory, Nazism – Facing the German Past* edited by Geoff Eley (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2003), 103

¹⁵⁰ Rudolf Mast defines *Große Freiheit Nr. 7* as a declaration of love. See “Im Lagerhaus der Emotion” *nachtkritik.de* (23 Apr 2010) retrieved 28 Jul 2010 http://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?view=article&catid=37&id=4264%3Agrosse-freiheit-nr-7-luk-perceval-findet-bei-seiner-film-adaption-eine-form-fuer-die-sehnsucht&tmpl=component&print=1&layout=default&page=&option=com_content

¹⁵¹ Compare Kreimeier, 408. Töteberg, 88.

¹⁵² Wetzel and Hagemann, 73

few neutral European countries such as Switzerland and Sweden.¹⁵³ Immense shortages of raw materials rather than the often cited agitation of Great Admiral Karl Dönitz, further protracted the release of *Große Freiheit*.¹⁵⁴ Supposedly Dönitz took offense at the anti-heroic depiction of sailors in the film. Yet, the only verifiable objections came from Gauleiter Karl Kaufmann but their content is unknown.¹⁵⁵ It is unlikely that Kaufmann subscribed to a kind of sailor's romanticism that Gisa's rejection of Hannes might have upset. Instead his personal patronage of dock workers would have found confirmation in Gisa's choice of the dockhand.¹⁵⁶ It is even less probable that Kaufmann angrily complained that the film was too ideologically unorthodox, as Töteberg implies.¹⁵⁷ The citizens of Hamburg and its administration alike wanted to see the film. Film Intendant Hans Hinkel explained that the film "has to premiere in Hamburg. If a prestigious theater isn't available as a result of the terror bombing, it will have to start in five or ten emergency theaters [Nottheater], so that the Hamburg population, which has been hit so hard by enemy terror, will be the first to see its film."¹⁵⁸

Kaufmann's objections mostly likely concerned the particular conditions in Hamburg in the aftermath of the bombing raids. He worried that the support of the war-weary population could be further undermined by images of places and pleasures that recently had fallen victim to British bombs. Moreover, since the beginning of the war the

¹⁵³ Ufa had subsidiaries in the following countries during the war years: Switzerland, France, Netherlands, Protectorate (former Czechoslovakia), Hungary, USA (but exhibitors) largely boycotted German films), Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Croatia, Norway, Portugal, Rumania, Sweden, and Serbia. But films also circulated in Spain, Japan, Croatia, Argentina, and Slovakia if in the face of mounting pressures. See "Unsere Auslandsbeteiligungen, ihre Lizenserträge im Jahre 43/44, ihre voraussichtliche Entwicklung in 44/45." BArch R 109 II 5.

¹⁵⁴ Peter Hagemann "Grosse Freiheit Nr. 7" in *Zensur: Verbotene deutsche Film, 1933-45*, 71-74

¹⁵⁵ Hagemann reviews the unsubstantiated rumors concerning Admiral Dönitz. (71) The only verifiable objection came from Karl Kaufmann, yet the nature of his concerns are not recorded. See Hagemann, 73.

¹⁵⁶ The *Urlaubstrupp Hafen*, possibly the most prominent example, was a voluntary organization, called to life by Kaufmann, that exemplified the Nazi ideal of solidarity and community: Lower level white collar workers (Angestellte) and civil servants filled a harbor workers shoes during their own vacation time and thus providing the possibility for harbor workers to participate in KdF-trips. See Frank Bajohr. "Die Zustimmungsdiktatur," 99. On "Gefühlssozialismus" see Bajohr, "Karl Kaufmann", 274, 286

¹⁵⁷ Compare Töteberg, *Filmstadt Hamburg*, 85-90

¹⁵⁸ Cited in Hagemann, 73.

administration had opposed what it considered unsuitable entertainments. Kaufmann, faced with complaints from within his own ranks about lechery in the Ufa film *Münchhausen*, considered *Große Freiheit* untimely.¹⁵⁹ Due to Kaufmann's intervention, Goebbels ordered additional cuts in the domestic version but nevertheless remained committed to the film.¹⁶⁰ Raw-film shortages continued to prolong the release of a number of films, including *Opfergang* (Harlan 1942-1944) and *Große Freiheit Nr. 7* (Käutner 1943/44), two prestigious color-films of the last production cycle.¹⁶¹ Irrespective of the fact that Goebbels found the script for *Opfergang* "slightly exaggerated," it was shot in color and was ready to go.¹⁶² *Opfergang*, rather than *Große Freiheit* premiered in Hamburg on December 8, 1944.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ The Consortium for Youth Protection in Wartime in Hamburg remarked that *Münchhausen* demonstrated the possibility of being an excellent film had it not been for the inclusion of a number of lewd scenes. See Geschäftsbericht der Gauarbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendbetreuung in Hamburg. 1940-1943. in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehoerde I VT 38.11 *Münchhausen* one of the few fantastic films made during the Nazi period follows the adventures of the liar-duke on his travels through time and space. Riding on a canon ball, tasting eternal youth and achieving victory over his rival, baron Münchhausen's voyage leads through the bed of Katherine the Great, the sultan's harem, and a short stop on the moon where the dislocated head of a woman vies for his attention. Compare Rentschler, 193-213.

¹⁶⁰ Since the catastrophe of the summer 1943, Kaufmann had earned deep respect from the Propaganda Minister, for mastering the situation in Hamburg, after overcoming his initial "shock of reality." Even though Goebbels first thought that Kaufmann's distress after the first and most severe terror attack on the city in 'Operation Gomorrha' was exaggerated and a sign that he was breaking down, Goebbels quickly learned that he himself had misjudged the situation. Subsequently, he notes in his diary how Kaufmann seems to manage to deal with the constant and destructive attacks on the city without further assistance from the Reich. In December 1944 he even charged Kaufmann to oversee the *Luftschutzbereitschaft* in the Reichsgau Sachsen. Compare Joseph Goebbels, 29.7.43, 3.8.43, 26.10.1944, and 31.12.44 in *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil II Band 14 ed. Elke Froehlich (Munich: Saur, 1996), See Bajohr. also "Kaufmann", 292.

¹⁶¹ BArch R 109 II 15 Letter from Reichsfilmintendant Hans Hinkel to Reichspropagandaminister, Goebbels, 18.12.44 Hinkel, informed the minister of propaganda of the dramatic decline in movie patrons (in August and September 1944 there were already 6% fewer visits than during the same months the previous years). Aside from destruction of movie theaters and their insufficient replacement by way of converting stage theaters Hinkel cited blackouts in territories under enemy occupation, an increase in air-raid alarms, and longer work hours in the Reich as reasons for the systematic decline. Yet more important even Hinkel suggested was "the considerably longer run-time of new films, which results from increasing difficulties concerning raw materials and the connected reduction in circulation copies."

¹⁶² Goebbels noted in his diary that "Harlan works too much with mysterious choirs and also his dialogue is a bit too sentimental and superficially constructed. I will have to, betimes, take Harlan to task. He currently moves on a path which does not promise especially great chances of success. He has to be brought back down to earth" Joseph Goebbels, July 24, 1943. *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil II Band 9 ed. Elke Froehlich (Munich: Saur, 1996) 156.

¹⁶³ See BArch R 109 II 15.

Nonetheless, Goebbels remained committed to Käutner, whom he described as “the lead avant-gardist among our German film directors,” after previewing *Unter den Brücken*, another Käutner film that did not reach German audiences until after the war.¹⁶⁴ Whereas he derided Werner Hochbaum as a traitor in his diary, Goebbels’ references to Käutner are almost always positive.¹⁶⁵ *Große Freiheit* premiered in Prague in December 1944, and copies of the edited version were supposedly ready for distribution in January 1945. Yet on March 19, the Film Office [*Film Intendanz*] reported that Goebbels had decided to shelve the film. Because of this decision, the film acquired a reputation for political resistance, despite the fact that scholars such as Peter Hagemann and later Michael Töteberg have stressed that *Große Freiheit* was a pet-project of the Propaganda Minister.

In addition to Goebbels’ decision to shelve the film, there were two more reasons for *Große Freiheit*’s political reputation. Despite the fact that the actor, Hans Albers, did not accompany his Jewish life-partner who emigrated to Great Britain, and instead continued on as one of National Socialism’s greatest stars, he was clearly not a fanatic

¹⁶⁴ Joseph Goebbels. 28.12.1944 in *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil II Band 14 ed Elke Froehlich (Munich: Saur, 1996) 476.

¹⁶⁵ However, Goebbels notes that he spoke to Käutner about slightly problematic stuff for a new film project on 16. December 1942. Käutner and the minister most likely discussed *Grosse Freiheit Nr 7* which went into production in March 1943, presumably after Käutner made the necessary changes in the manuscript. *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil II Band 9, 196, 209 and Teil II Band 14, 501

follower of the regime.¹⁶⁶

A second reason for the persistent myth of the film's nonconformity lies in Käutner's

cinematography and the aesthetics of the film.

Specialists often marvel at Käutner's ability to recreate the familiar feel of Hamburg's harbor district given the extraordinary

circumstances so late in the

war. Close-ups of ships and dockhands with deck cranes in the background were cleverly substituted for sweeping takes of the harbor. The director skillfully manipulated color and lighting to capture a sense of wistfulness and *Fernweh* within the rather proletarian panoramas of chimneys and docks. Dim-lit shallow focus shots of the harbor highlighted designated objects, while blurring the background to obscure the massive destruction amidst which the crew worked. Shots of waves and water reflecting the golden light of the evening sun in addition to cross fades of street signs and carefree amusements



Figure 31 *Hamburg Iconography GROSSE FREIHEIT NR 7*

¹⁶⁶ For a biographical note on Hans Albers see Appendix A.



Figure 32 *St. Pauli Street Names*

recreated the particular flair associated with St. Pauli, the harbor, and Hamburg in an iconic sort of way. A cinematography of short takes, aggressive close-ups and oddly composed panoramas provided a composite, a makeshift collage of all things ‘Hamburg.’

It is hardly surprising that the film is famous given the conditions under which it was produced. The skills of the director and cinematographer in resurrecting the port-city out of the rubble was extraordinary.¹⁶⁷ To this day the film continues to resonate as a reflection of the indestructible Hanseatic spirit and inspires endless unsubstantiated assertions that identify the film as a affront to the NS-ideal of femininity and Nazi sexual modesty.¹⁶⁸ In light of the wide-spread misapprehensions about National Socialism’s general hostility towards pleasure and sexuality in Germany which Dagmar Herzog has convincingly unveiled, the

¹⁶⁷ In April 2010 one of Hamburg’s most prestigious stage-theaters, the Thalia Theater, premiered a modern stage adaptation of Käutner’s classic. After its initial success in Hamburg in October 1945, *Große Freiheit Nr. 7* quickly attained the status of a cult-film. It continues to play on Hamburg’s screens together with other ‘classics’ and Hans Albers, the “blond Hans” as he is lovingly remembered, remains the city’s penultimate star, a native son. At the precise address that gave the film its title, a dance-club opened in April 1993, entertains patrons in a ‘Hippodrom’-fashion, and repeats night after night the famous song “Auf der Reeperbahn nachts um halb eins” in front of an audience of *Erlebnistouristen*. See “Es war einmal die Romantik der Matrosen; Luk Perceval konfrontiert im Thalia Käutners ‘Große Freiheit Nr. 7’ mit der Realität” *Hamburger Abendblatt* 6 Jul 2010 “Viermal Kino open air: Das Wunder von Bern, Große Freiheit Nr. 7, African Queen, Soul of A Man” *Hamburger Abendblatt* 13 Aug 2004. Matthias Gretzschel “Der Mythos vom blonden Hans” *Hamburger Abendblatt* 17 Dec 2005. See self-description of the *Grosse Freiheit Nr. 7. Ihr Tanzlokal in Hamburg* at <http://www.grossefreiheit-nr7.de/ueber-uns.html> retrieved 28 Jul 2010.

¹⁶⁸ For claims regarding the film’s provocative depiction of women see “Grosse Freiheit Nr. 7” *Filmzentrale - gesammelte filmkritiken* <http://www.filmzentrale.com/rezis/grossefreiheitnr7ub.htm> retrieved 28 Jul 2010.

interpretation of Käutner's Hamburg film reflects an honest sense of surprise about the direct treatment of such subject matter under the auspices of Goebbels' ministry.¹⁶⁹ Far from subversive, *Große Freiheit* should be seen as part of the wartime color film productions that exemplify the inflated sense of political purpose and cultural hubris of National Socialist culture. Films such as *Münchhausen*, *Es war eine rauschende Ballnacht*, *Opfergang*, *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* and *Die Große Liebe* placed the Third Reich's most stunning female stars in the spotlight and emphasized their sexual allure.¹⁷⁰

It is precisely because of the film's mobilization of gender conflicts *Große Freiheit* was able to provide such compelling and lasting testimony to the city of Hamburg. Even though Töteberg is right to assert that Ufa propagated the Nazi ideology of family,¹⁷¹ it did so in more variable terms than resolutely plastering celluloid strips with families in which "faithful husbands" reign supreme and "the seducer was always a scoundrel."¹⁷² In fact, there are countless examples of films in which the husband is neither faithful nor particularly admirable. In the immensely popular 1938 Rühmann film, *Der Mustergatte* (produced by Imagoton and not Ufa), a husband is not expected to be faithful, since faithfulness is comical, boring and ultimately dissatisfying to a young wife.¹⁷³ As for seductive males, Nazi cinema offers a number of examples that elevate the seductive admirer to the hero of any women's deepest wish. Ferdinand Marian in

¹⁶⁹ It has by now been widely accepted that National Socialism was neither anti-sex nor anti-pleasure per se, not least because of the pathbreaking contributions by Dagmar Herzog, Elizabeth Heinemann, Julia Roos and others. See in particular the *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11:1/2 Special issue: Sexuality and German Fascism (January - April 2002). This newer literature explicitly positions itself against the work of Udo Pini *Leibeskult und Liebeskitsch: Erotik im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1992) and Hans Peter Bleuel. *Das Saubere Reich. Theorie und Praxis des sittlichen Lebens im Dritten Reich* (Bern, Munich, Wien: Scherz, 1972)

¹⁷⁰ Antje Ascheid. *Hitler's Heroines: Stardom and Womanhood in Nazi Cinema*. (Philadelphia Temple University Press, 2003) takes seriously the role of a female star culture in Nazi Germany and contrasts popular female stars with Nazi ideals of femininity. Unfortunately, Ascheid's analysis of the Nazi ideal of womanhood remains rather one-dimensional as she does not take into account the pathbreaking recent work by historians of sexuality.

¹⁷¹ Töteberg, *Filmstadt*, 90

¹⁷² *ibid.*

¹⁷³ Witte, "Film im Nationalsozialismus" 138 and Karsten Witte "The Indivisible Legacy of Nazi Cinema" in *New German Critique* 74 Special Issue on Nazi Cinema (Spring-Summer 1998): 23-30.

Romanze in Moll (Käutner, 1942/43), Paul Klinger in *Die Goldene Stadt* (Harlan, 1941/42), Hans Söhnker in *Nanette* (Engel, 1939/40) and Karl Martel in *La Habanera* (Sierck, 1937) are not portrayed as despicable characters despite their more or less explicit intentions to seduce either married women or virgin girls.¹⁷⁴ This trend pinnacles in Veit Harlan's color drama *Opfergang*, when the transgressions of Albrecht (Carl Raddatz) are endured by his wife and then validated again by her sacrificial daily visits to his sick mistress after he becomes ill. The wife attempts to spare the other woman (Kristina Söderbaum) the pain of loss of her husband's company.

Unlike *Die Große Liebe* (Hansen, 1941/42) and *Das Wunschkonzert* (Borsody, 1940), which "turned war into revue," Käutner's nostalgic exploration of Hanseatic masculinity, with its seafaring freedom and comfortable strictures of marriage, sidesteps the problem of war and reiterates instead the pertinent responsibility of German men and women to accept their place and take charge of their own fate. They must not surrender to their fears of inadequacy.¹⁷⁵ Hannes (Hans Albers), well advanced in years and very much aware that he is wasting his talent and time as a singing sailor in a shady establishment owned by his lover, wakes from his slumber because of an unreciprocated love. In the end Hannes remains true to himself in spite of his broken heart. He was never

¹⁷⁴ Even though Eric Rentschler identifies *Romanze in Moll* as an example of rare aesthetic resistance, the film found the explicit approval of Goebbels "as an extremely effective, avant-gardist work [Avantgardistenarbeit]. Joseph Goebbels 10.1.1943 *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil II Band 7 ed Elke Froehlich (Munich: Saur, 1996) 90. See Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife*, 218

¹⁷⁵ Witte, 146.



Figure 33 *Hilde Körber as Anita*

always dreamed of attending tillerman school, at the helm of a sailboat. Hannes finds purpose and wholeness at the end of his life and while Willem abandons his brazen ways along with his bachelorhood to liberate

at home on land, and less even in Anita's *Bums* (cathouse). Gisa is merely a catalyst for Hannes' realization of the logic the film has revealed many times through. The echo of his own voice singing countless times "meine Braut is die See / und nur ihr kan ich treu sein [My bride is the sea/ only to her can I be true]" still rings in the closing frame, and we see a smiling Hannes, who



Figure 34 *Hans Albers as Hannes at the helm of a sailboat*



Figure 35 Love Scene Ilse Werner (Gisa) and Hans Söhnker (Willem)

Gisa from a life of provincial parochialism. Kätner's *Grosse Freiheit Nr. 7* suggests that pain is a positive transformative force for the betterment of the individual and the German *Volksgemeinschaft* when it leads to self-avowal. Although in many respects anti-heroic, *Große Freiheit* also offers a moral vision: The happiness of the

young is built on the sacrifices of an older generation.

Instead of visually belaboring feminine virtue, Kätner reclaims St. Pauli – and a color-shot version of it, too – as a repository for the romantic notions of a potent and unrestrained masculinity. In his representation of St. Pauli, Kätner reaffirms the community of men in the face of an inevitable erosion of feminine virtue. Hamburg's administration had condemned this loss with draconian resolve as I illustrate in Chapter 5. Where Hochbaum contrasts stylized virtue with guileless criminality, *Große Freiheit* dissolves the conflict between respectability and vice as function of male self-reliance and the immutability of gender characteristics.



Figure 36 *The New Girl*

Both in Hochbaum's *Ein Mädchen geht an Land* and in *Große Freiheit*, pleasure spells the ruin of a girl, but Käutner's film affirms that men remain unaffected by a little lasciviousness. After all, the film does not invite the viewer to question the respectability of Willem, who coincidentally walks into the Hippodrom at precisely the moment when Gisa, for the

first and only time, comes to see Hannes perform. When Willem, who came to settle his differences with Hannes, stumbles over Gisa, he immediately assumes she is a girl of the streets. He mistakes her for a hussy of the *Große Freiheit* as Hannes later tells her.¹⁷⁶ All men make the same mistake, despite the striking difference in Anita's and Gisa's attire.

The film resurrected the gate that used to separate Hamburg proper from its pleasure-colony. The gate, however, is permeable to men of true hanseatic character. Sailors and workers remain untainted by the bustle of St. Pauli, and maintain their connections with the respectability on the other side. Hamburg's working men, good-humored, decent and sexually forward, can freely move across the city's divide, policing and reinforcing the boundary that is so essential to the whole. Women, in contrast, are confined to either side of the imaginary boundary. The social world defines them, as Anita's character illustrates and Hannes' assertions affirm. The amusement district of St. Pauli is no place for virtue.

Emphasizing the bond between men, *Große Freiheit* validates the identity of a city that is neither whole nor broken. The film does not attempt to deny the contrast that historically separated St. Pauli from Hamburg proper, but instead reclaims the district in

¹⁷⁶ "Für eine von der Strasse hat er dich gehalten, für ein Flittchen von die [sic] Große Freiheit" Hannes recapitulates for Gisa.

all of its originality (and despite its depravity) as a colorful playground for the city's men. Not only does the film affirm the particular hardships of Hamburg's most controversial quarter, but it also celebrates past pleasures and lost amusements. *Große Freiheit* views these pleasures as part of an urban way of life that coexists with hard work, love and respectability, and it promises they will be there in a better future. The film portrays men from very different backgrounds who survive in spite of their individual vulnerabilities to ordinary life without the parochialism that characterizes Hochbaum's film. *Große Freiheit* offers heroism and glamour and a different kind of realism than *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*. It celebrates Hamburg's uniqueness in ways recognizable to its citizens and effectively negotiates urban identity within the larger National Socialist frame. *Große Freiheit* did exactly what it was supposed to do. It was a bridge between war and a better future. That this future was post-fascist, was neither anticipated by the film nor necessary for its success.

The prestigious melodrama set in the Hamburg's harbor milieu became a box office hit. For Hamburg's audiences, *Große Freiheit* was a corrective to the subdued depiction of Hamburg in *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*. Käutner's choice of stars like Hans Albers and Ilse Werner added glamour during rather bleak times. And for the first time the city appeared in color. Unlike *Ein Mädchen geht an Land's* obsession with translating the austerity of the German north to an urban streetscape, *Große Freiheit* celebrates the city in itself. It employed the tenets of Nazi film art in fundamentally different ways than Hochbaum was able (or willing) to do: No longer suggesting that *bodenständig* describes the plain, the austere, and the unadorned, Käutner rewrites down-to-earthness as down-to-folk-ness. Thus *Bodenständigkeit* becomes a category of popular accessibility rather than a particular visual style. In turn, he uses *Wirklichkeitsnähe* as the emotive quality produced by the suggestive effects of film. Even though *Große Freiheit* does not attempt to represent objective reality, it presents the life-worlds of St. Pauli so compellingly that its authenticity is *felt* rather than *seen*. Part of a cinema that unapologetically offered sensationalist and popular fare, *Große Freiheit Nr. 7* was a tribute to local *Eigenart* as an assertion of *Weltgeltung*.

Even though the film was never explicitly linked to the administration's attempt to provide Hamburg with a celluloid history, *Große Freiheit* remains a cinematic testimony to the city's historic uniqueness as it captures Hamburg's idiosyncrasies and flaws, promising reconciliation. Hamburg's identity as a borderland between land and sea was inscribed in the very geography of the city. St. Pauli functioned as an embodiment of Hamburg's transience. It came to epitomize the popular descriptor of Hamburg as Germany's gateway to the world. The imaginary boundary that separated St. Pauli from Hamburg proper made it possible for the city to locate itself on either side of the imagined gate. Instead of monumental images of National Socialist achievement as would have been in the case with the "Greater-Hamburg Film," instead of a stylization of an evanescent *Heimat* as was the case in *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*, Käutner's *Große Freiheit* masks the city's National Socialism in a tribute to its most controversial district. Even if *Große Freiheit* does not turn Hamburg into Paris and St. Pauli into a German Montmartre, it reinvented and translated the analogy first invoked by the St. Pauli-Freiheit Consortium in exclusively Hanseatic terms.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ "...auf der Reeperbahn, nachts um halb eins" in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* 18 July 1939. StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle I-IV 2007. The article promises that St. Pauli as Hamburg's Montemartre, just more authentic and more beautiful.

Chapter 5

The Lure of the City and the Dread of War

War not only undermined Hamburg's cosmopolitanism. War also awakened fears about film and its corrosive effects on young minds that had been successfully suppressed by the Propaganda Minister's celebration of film as mediator of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Since the late nineteenth century, the modern city and its various amusements have inspired an army of social and cultural reformers who invented new categories of people - most notably the adolescent - and worked to counteract the presumed negative effects of mass culture and in particular its visual aspects.¹ Welfare workers, cultural pessimists, educators, and religious representatives discovered at least marginally common ground in a protracted struggle against smut and trash in literature and film. The expressed goal was to protect youth from the lure of the modern city.² With the establishment of the Nazi state, the debates and fears about the dangers to youth and the corrupting influences of

¹ There exists a sizable literature on the presumed negative effects of visual culture in Germany and beyond. See in particular Andrew Lees. *Cities, Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002). Moreover see Margaret F Stieg. "The 1926 German Law to Protect Youth against Trash and Dirt: Moral Protectionism in a Democracy." *Central European History* 23 1 (Mar 1990); For dangers posed by visual culture in a broader European context see Ben Singer. "Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism." *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*. Eds. Charney, Leo and Vanessa Schwartz. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): 72-99; Vanessa R. Schwartz. *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-De-Siecle Paris*. 1998. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and Lisa Z. Sigel. "Filth in the Wrong People's Hands: Postcards and the Expansion of Pornography in Britain and the Atlantic World, 1880-1914." *Journal of Social History* 33 4 (Summer 2000): 859-85.

² For the dangers posed to youth by cities during and beyond the Weimar Republic see in particular Detlev Peukert. *Grenzen Der Sozialisziplinierung: Aufstieg Und Krise Der Deutschen Jugendfürsorge Von 1878-1932*. Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1986). See further Christina Benninghaus and Deborah Laurie Cohen. "Mother's Toil and Daughters' Leisure: Working Class Girls and Time in 1920s Germany." *History Workshop Journal* 50 (2000): 45-72; Susanne Rouette and Pamela Selwyn. "Mothers and Citizens: Gender and Social Policy in Germany after the First World War." *Central European History* 30 1 (1997): 48-66. Edward Ross Dickinson. *German Child Welfare: From the Empire to the Federal Republic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

modern mass culture were almost immediately muted. The new regime not only claimed to have transformed the entire cultural production in accordance with National Socialist principles, it also celebrated an increasingly organized youth as the wellspring of cultural rejuvenation and converted, at least rhetorically, the ‘beast of the masses’ into the force of *Volk*.

Immediately after taking power, National Socialists reorganized cultural production in the Reich in direct opposition to the experiences and trends that characterized the Weimar Republic.³ Placing an essentialized notion of *Kultur* in the service of National Socialism, Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda and *Schirmherr* of the German Film, constructed a presumptively omnipotent apparatus to produce, deploy, and monitor culture as a political force that would express Germanic essence as racial supremacy. At the same time it would offer entertainment and instruction to the new masses, elevating them along the way. The Nazi repeal of the 1926 law against smut and trash (*Schmutz und Schund*) in 1934 indicates the level of confidence with which the new regime regarded cultural production in the Reich. Throughout the 1930s, discussions among politicians and cultural ambassadors, both locally and at the level of the Reich, carried a self-congratulatory tone and unanimously affirmed the Nazi rhetoric which placed culture at the center of German politics.⁴

Ultimately, war transformed film discourse in the Reich. Questions of place returned to the forefront of discussions among local civil servants, welfare workers and educators as the cinema gradually absorbed the social function of a range of entertainment possibilities that had been either deliberately dismantled by the regime as war progressed or destroyed by the aerial bombardments. While the Ministry of Propaganda continued to boast of film as an instrument of war and a powerful tool to educate and entertain a war-worn public, local administrators in Hamburg increased their

³ Compare Jonathan Petropolous. *Art as Politics in the Third Reich*. (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1996) and Joan L. Clinefelder. *Artists for the Reich: Culture and Race from Weimar to Nazi Germany* (New York: Berg, 2005)

⁴ Compare Detlev J.K. Peukert. *Grenzen der Sozialdisziplinierung*; Klaus Petersen. *Zensur in der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995); See also Kara Ritheimer. Protecting Youth From ‘Trash.’ Anti-*Schund* Campaigns in Baden, 1900-1933. Dissertation (New York: Binghamton University, 2007)

efforts to control the spaces that provided individuals with pleasure, release and distraction.

As film reached large new audiences and became more technologically sophisticated, the crescendo of voices speaking out against the demoralizing, sexualizing, and ultimately detrimental effects of film grew more noticeable within the ranks of Hamburg's administration.⁵ While providing the motor and rationale for Germany's film industry's ascent to arguably its most dominant position in the twentieth century, war ultimately broke the national consensus over the role of film in Nazi culture that had been negotiated over the course of the 1930s. Although there was no ideological dispute over the necessary role entertainment and pleasure played in the context of war, Hamburg's social welfare officers began focusing on the socially corrosive effects of public leisure and mass entertainment. The renewed focus on public amusements was part of the local administration's attempt to maintain its legitimacy, police society and increase public cooperation. Even before material shortages and military developments imposed logistical problems on film production and distribution, abstract ideas about the *Volksgemeinschaft* lost viability at the local level as concrete concerns about sexuality, age and gender played an ever more important role in light of mobilization, rationing, black-out regulations and eventually aerial warfare.⁶

The Police Ordinance for the Protection of Youth in Wartime, decreed in March 1940, effectively reinforced local charges that the cinema exacerbated wartime dereliction [*Verwahrlosung*]. Intended to strengthen social discipline, the Police Ordinance anticipated and responded to youthful disorderliness resulting from the lack of familial and social control. Acknowledging moral decay, the ordinance opened up a space for the discussion of the cultural status quo. Film again constituted an arena in which a cacophony of voices partook in politics without partaking in power.

⁵ On the technological progress of film from silent, sound, color see Wolfgang Jacobsen, Anton Kaes, and Hans Helmut Prinzler *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Films* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993); Corinna Müller and Harro Segeberg *Die Modellierung des Kinofilms. Zur Geschichte des Kinoprogramms zwischen Kurzfilm und Langfilm (1905/6-1918)*. Mediengeschichte des Films Band 2 (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998)

⁶ For a careful history of this concept and its practices before and in Nazi Germany see Michael Wildt. *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung: Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919-1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007)

The regime's affirmation of film as a positive cultural form came to stand in opposition to its commitment to the protection of the nation's youth. The incompatibility of youth-welfare and moviegoing was not an ideological phenomenon but a spatial one. Local and national defenders of film's quintessentially positive role during wartime had to contend with resurgent charges of cultural trash leveled against the cinema by local wardens of youth. These people acknowledged their inability to enforce social discipline and blamed cultural products, their producers and the national organs controlling production for putting youth at risk.

In this chapter I will trace the debates over the debilitation of youth and cultural debasement in discussions of smut and trash in film and literature over the first three decades of the twentieth century. I do this to historicize the explanatory models that linked youth endangerment and mass entertainment. Reviewing the literature on the development of social discipline and cultural control in Germany's urban centers, I suggest that the National Socialist cultural revolution was created in part as a response to these earlier debates. Secondly, concentrating on official institutions such as Hitler Youth film screenings and the People's Film Day, I examine Nazi film policy in the 1930s and suggest that the regime claimed not only to produce a new kind of film but also to transform the urban masses into an embodiment of *Volk*, thereby forging a new kind of audience.

With a focus on policy affecting adolescents, I argue that the compromise local film enthusiasts and national officials reached over the role of film in the Reich, which was rehearsed over the course of the 1930s, ultimately was called into question by the agitation of social reformers and welfare workers. I demonstrate that the concerns about mass culture, muted in response to the Nazi take-over, resurfaced locally with the outbreak of war. The return of this issue revealed the limits of the herculean effort of the Ministry of Propaganda and the Reich Film Chamber to deploy pleasure as a weapon of war. Even though Nazi cultural authorities attempted to turn film into a placeless, timeless form of *Volksmassenkunst* (national mass art), the shallowness of the Nazi solution to earlier concerns about mass culture became evident as local administrators

grew weary of their inability to guarantee the control of the population in wartime. Analyzing the debates over the dangers to youth in wartime Hamburg, this chapter demonstrates that concerns about urban space, about ‘the masses’ and about the perils of modern visual culture came back with a vengeance as adolescents and their mothers navigated the urban landscape without much assistance or support. The absence of moral authorities – Hitler youth leaders, teachers and most importantly fathers were fighting at the front lines – left officials in Hamburg worried that adolescents were abandoned to the sole care of their pleasure-seeking (*vergnügungssüchtige*) mothers. They were concerned that young people were vulnerable to the demoralizing effects of film and pulp fiction. Such fears reveal local official skepticism of the claim that a tightly controlled media disseminated entertainment and education for the benefit of the entire *Volk*. These debates further illustrate how local Nazis attempted to counteract what they believed was a threat that could ultimately undermine National Socialist power on the ground.

Lastly I will place these local debates over dangers to youth in the context of the disciplinary measures taken by the Reich authorities and the simultaneous mobilization of cinema as a weapon of war. The reactions of national administrators to increasing pressures from the local level were twofold. Both were consistent with the vision that reimagined film as an educational implement of the state. On the one hand, the regime imposed strict (but essentially unenforceable) regulations to keep adolescents off the streets, as my discussion of the 1940 Police Ordinance will reveal. On the other hand, the Reich’s Film Chamber was more vigorous than ever in pushing its ambitions for cinematic repute. The Film Chamber poured millions of Reichsmarks into mega productions that quite literally added color to the drudgery of war. Analyzing the reservations expressed locally in light of such self-confident celebrations of cinema as *Münchhausen* (Baky 1943), I argue that not only film’s textual qualities were riddled with inconsistencies and contradictions. The success of the Nazi cultural revolution was called into question at the moment that it most clearly articulated itself.

The Forgotten Debates

After 1 September 1939, the memories of world war and revolution weighed heavily on the minds of local administrators. They feared the conditions that guaranteed governability were inextricably connected to the pressing national questions of victory and defeat. As war directed the national gaze toward the external enemies of a racially defined German nation, local and regional authorities grew weary of the incoherence resulting from the necessary reshuffling of people, goods, and authorities as part of the war effort. Since the 1920s, the Nazis had made a constant point of reminding their supporters and foes alike that the First World War had not been lost on the battlefield, citing the legend of the conspiratorial ‘stab-in-the-back’ according to which Jews, Communist, Socialists, and more generally the German home front undermined national unity and sabotaged the Reich’s war effort.⁷ Since the seizure of power the Reich had moved decisively against the racial and political enemies within Germany’s borders, preemptively attacking potential saboteurs and building support for a repressive regime by enlisting citizens in everyday brutality.⁸ As Hitler mobilized the Nazi war machine against the West and the ‘rest’ of Europe in September 1939, local authorities were left with the task of addressing those dangers to the system that either defied classification or were symptomatic side-effects of the war itself.⁹ In Hamburg, administrators anticipated discontent, unruliness, and *Zersetzung* as primarily a generational phenomenon that could not be divorced from the moral and cultural decay that paralleled the weakening of the

⁷ For a history of the legends that were collapsed into ‘stab-in-the-back’ see Boris Barth. *Dolchstoßlegenden und politische Desintegration. Das Trauma der deutschen Niederlage im Ersten Weltkrieg 1914 - 1933*. (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2003). Barth illustrates that broader trends and structural developments prepared the ground for claims that explained the defeat of 1918 as the result of treason and sabotage already during the war. Moreover, Barth uncovers the legend of the ‘stab-in-the back’ as a displaced and multi-faceted indictment of the inner weakness of the home front.

⁸ This argument has been made explicitly by Michael Wildt throughout *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung*. Moreover Andrew Bergerson’s study on everyday life in Hildesheim illustrates that already the mundane practices such as exchanging greetings articulated and refined local ideas of *Volksgemeinschaft*. Andrew Stuart Bergerson. *Ordinary German in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

⁹ I have borrowed the use of the dichotomy of a European West and its discontinuous ‘Rest’ from Eric Wolf’s important book *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) With respect to the European division between east and west that was so crucial to Nazi ideology of *Lebensraum* in its implication for war see Charles Ingrao and Franz A.J. Szabo. Eds. *The Germans and the East* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008)

Frontgeist in the last war.¹⁰ Based on their experiences from 1917 and 1918, they were determined to confront the early signs of moral decay, disobedience, and disorder before these social ills could pose a threat to political stability in Hamburg and undermine the success of the current war effort.

Explanatory models that linked danger to youth and mass entertainments had a long and widespread tradition. A broad consensus about the negative effects of certain kinds of explicit and sensationalist literature crystallized around the turn of the century, and reformers of different political hues, representatives of the churches, bourgeois feminists and various cultural pessimists rallied together against the perceived dangers to German youth.¹¹ Debates about the spread of cultural decay as a result of the ‘lust for sensation’ united social and religious reformers, educators, and police officials in an uneasy alliance against what they defined as *Schmutz und Schund* [smut and trash] in popular literature and film. While these debates preceded the establishment of the movie house as a stable feature in Germany’s urban centers, they gained a new kind of urgency after the First World War when cinematic entertainment became a regular feature of urban life.¹² Burgeoning working class populations were availing themselves of the modern forms of urban amusements, yet the discourse on cultural degeneration must be seen in light of what Detlev Peukert defined as the production of a new type of minor [*Unmündiger*] around the turn of the century – the adolescent – who required protection from a host of structural urban dangers.¹³

¹⁰ For a link between moral / cultural decline and defeat in the memories of intellectuals of the Weimar Republic compare Boris Barth *Dolchstoßlegenden und politische Disintegration*, in particular 422, 432, 454. Moreover see Dagmar Barnouw. *Weimar Intellectuals and the Threat of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988) and Laurence Rickels. “The Demonization of the Home Front: War Neurosis and Weimar Cinema” *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic*. edited by Thomas W. Kniesche and Stephen Brockmann (Columbia SC: Camden House, 1994.)

¹¹ Mirijam Storim. *Ästhetik im Umbruch: Zur Funktion der ‘Rede über Kunst’ um 1900 am Beispiel der Debatte um Schmutz und Schund* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2002)

¹² See Gary Stark. “Cinema, Society, and the State: Policing the Film Industry in Imperial Germany” (122-166) in *Essays on Culture and Society in Modern Germany*. Gary D. Stark and Bede Karl Lackner. eds. (Texas: A&M University Press, 1982). See also Sabine Hake *German National Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2002)

¹³ Peukert. *Grenzen der Sozialdisziplinierung*, 54

Peukert suggests that the designation ‘adolescent’ did not appear in public discourse as a social and generational category until the late 19th century, when concerns about risks to youth (*Jugendverwahrlosung*) seemed to reflect the structural interstices in social control facing the juvenile worker.¹⁴ Working class youth, usually males who had outgrown the authorities of school and family, found themselves in a sort of disciplinary vacuum following their entry into the workforce. They presented authorities with a threefold problem: A relative psychological immaturity, a lack of social commitment, and a new financial independence all rendered them susceptible to the deleterious effects of modern mass culture.¹⁵ Lack of discipline was seen as a systemic characteristic of the ‘adolescent’ produced in industrial society. This new category required not only a new bureaucratic language to identify, describe, contain and reform those qualities that presented a threat to bourgeois social order, but also concrete administrative structures to address the inherent possibility of *Verwahrlosung* and *Zuchtlosigkeit* of every individual in this particular age group.¹⁶

It is no coincidence that voices like that of Ernst Schultze fell on fertile ground in urban centers that had just discovered the pervasiveness of this new type of individual.¹⁷ It was widely accepted that adolescents required the protection of the state from the incursion of “‘dirty’ and ostensibly dangerous literature, art, and films.”¹⁸ Schultze lamented the decline of ‘humanist culture’ in the face of a “modern nervousness [which] constituted the essential precondition for an entertainment industry that satisfied the

¹⁴ Peukert, 54.

¹⁵ Peukert, *Sozialdisziplinierung* 55. Peukert illustrates that contemporaries defined the adolescent primarily as a male. In 1912, the Hamburg pastor Clemens Schultz characterized the socially problematic type of the adolescent (yob, teenager) as “a young man at the age of 15 - 22 years (...), who belongs to the debilitated city-youth.” Moreover, Schultz describes the type as lazy and a enemy of order. “He hates regularity, similiarly everything beautiful, and especially work, moreover the orderly, regular fulfillment of duties.” Schultz, according to Peukert, clearly identified the social and familial factors of the lower classes as the major predisposition and the necessary realm of reform. Cited in Peukert, 63-64.

¹⁶ Peukert, 137.

¹⁷ Compare Horst Dräger. *Die Gesellschaft für Verbreitung von Volksbildung: eine historische-problemgeschichtliche Darstellung* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1975)

¹⁸ Andrew Lees. *Cities Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002),128.

short-term needs for ongoing stimulation at the cost of the long-term health both psychological and moral, of the growing masses of people who consumed it.”¹⁹ The new medium of the cinema, which “had grown directly out of popular forums that had long been the preserves of the lower classes,” and was seen as a threat to established forms of high culture and art, immediately captured the attention of reform-minded authorities.²⁰

Before the establishment of film distribution companies in 1904/5, cinema was a nomadic phenomenon. Operators of *Wanderkinos* [traveling cinemas] found it more profitable to exchange audiences rather than procure new cinematic fare. But between 1905 and the outbreak of the war in 1914, movie-going developed into one of the most popular urban pastimes. Movie houses “were established in German towns and cities at profuse rates, varying in size but all drawing predominantly audiences from the lower classes.”²¹ After moving out of the circus tents, those first kinematographs were established in the back rooms of bars and in empty halls or shops. Some Berlin theaters apparently garnered more ticket sales in a year than the city counted citizens.²² The programs ran continuously, as audiences moved in and out of the showing rooms, ate, drank, and smoked, or used the imperfect protection of even less perfect darkness to “engage in actions that normally shun the light of day.”²³ Thus cinema audiences in an almost iconic way encapsulated and displayed the characteristics that urban reformers considered so detrimental to the development of healthy adults.²⁴ Not only the prevalence of movie houses, but also the particular energy and lack of inhibition that characterized

¹⁹ Lees. *Cities Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany*, 126

²⁰ Gary Stark. “Cinema, Society, and the State: Policing the Film Industry in Imperial Germany,” 126

²¹ Stark, 124-5.

²² Stark, 125.

²³ Stark, 126-7

²⁴ It is questionable to speak of the recipients of films in bars and like establishments as primarily audiences. Much more aptly, I think, they should be described as consumers of a multiplicity of pleasures that not only occurred simultaneously but reinforced each other in this particular setting. Compare Scott Courtis “The Taste of a Nation: Training the Senses and Sensibility of Cinema audience in Imperial Germany” *Film History* 6:4 (1994): 445-

them, worried imperial and later Weimar authorities.²⁵ And of course, adolescents were drawn in great numbers to the screen and the activities that took place in the theaters of silent film.²⁶ While the adolescent continued to be imagined as primarily male, he subsequently merged with the quintessentially female consumer in the debates over *Verwahrlosung* and youth corruption.²⁷ Small entrance fees, lack of adult supervision, and the opportunity to enter a dream-like world made the movie theater a place that appealed to audiences of different class backgrounds, sexes and ages. This rendered the cinema genuinely suspect as it “threatened to blur not only the boundaries maintaining hierarchic distinctions of class but also the boundaries between public and private in that it obfuscated the conventional difference between individuals with access to social representation by virtue of their economic position and those traditionally confined to the domestic sphere.”²⁸

In the theater, the generically male adolescent experienced gender differentiation and “the high percentage of women in cinema audiences was perceived as an alarming phenomenon” by social and cultural reformers alike.²⁹ Miriam Hansen argues that “the block of resistance to cinema’s path to cultural respectability (and thus acceptance into the dominant public sphere) was sexual and gender-related, rather than primarily class-

²⁵ Stark, 127

²⁶ See Miriam Hansen, “Early Silent Cinema. Whose Public Sphere?” in *New German Critique* 29 The Origins of Mass Culture: The Case of Germany (1871-1918) (Spring-Summer, 1983) 147-184. Hansen illustrates how the cinema itself was likened to a prostitute characteristic of bourgeois attitudes “towards an openly commercial (‘venal’) art” as “[c]ouples making out in the background are carried away and withdraw their undisciplined fingers. Children wheezing with consumption quietly shake with the chills of evening fever; badly smelling workers with bulging eyes; women in musty clothes, heavily made-up prostitutes leaning forward, forgetting to adjust their scarves” populated the imagination of the contemporary observers of the cinema. (174)

²⁷ Warren Beckman argues that “the frequent association of women with luxury seems to have expressed a fear that Germany was becoming ‘effeminate.’” He further illustrates that with regards to gender, the class-boundary seemed more porous as “the dangers of over-spending and, more importantly, shoplifting were considered to apply both to lower class and middle-class women” in. “Disciplining Consumption: The debate about Luxury in Wilhelmine Germany 1890-1914” in *Journal of Social History* 24:3 (Spring 1991) 485-505

²⁸ Hansen. “Whose Public Sphere” 175

²⁹ *ibid.*

related.”³⁰ Because cinema drew such large and diverse audiences, the discourse around its alleged effects on the body and mind of the viewer effectively merged existing concerns about class, age and gender with an increasingly medicalized approach to social welfare and national culture. While I agree with Hansen that the presence of women in early cinema audiences “foregrounds the sexual subtext,” the action packed narratives merged that sexual subtext artfully with crime, madness, and adventure. This was a convenient visual example of the presumed connection between rising crime rates, prostitution, and cultural trash.³¹

According to social and medical authorities, the young were even more vulnerable to the detrimental effects of the medium than their older working class peers. The cinema either effectively corrupted adolescents by appealing to their visual sense with images that were sensational exaggerations or alternatively by presenting them with representations that were so realistic that immature patrons were bound to mistake these images for reality.³² Thus, anxieties about urban space and the value of art, as well as fears of the irrational masses, coalesced around the particular technological innovations that characterized the cinema. To combat these perceived evils, concerned teachers, religious leaders, and conservative cultural groups founded the *Kinematographische Reformpartei* [cinematic reform party] in 1905.³³ Even though members did not agree on methods, they “felt compelled to protect children from what they perceived to be the dangerous effects of the cinema,” which, according to the first systematic inquiry into the effects of cinema-going on children conducted in Hamburg in 1907, were severe.³⁴

Over the next two decades, concerns about moral decay and the brutalization of youth intensified. Reformers concentrated their efforts on channeling leisure activities

³⁰ Hansen, 173.

³¹ For the prevalence of action in cinematic narratives see Anton Kaes. “The Debate about the Cinema: Charting a Controversy (1909-1929)” *New German Critique* 40 Special Issue on Weimar Film Theory (Winter 1987), 7-33

³² Stark 129.

³³ James D. Steakley. “Cinema and Censorship in the Weimar Republic: The Case of Anders als die Andern” in *Film History* 11:2 (1999) 188.

³⁴ Curtis, 450

away from the cheap sensations which the wages of an unskilled laborer could buy. They attempted to reorganize activities through a growing host of *Vereine*, which since the youth welfare decree of 1911 received substantial financial support from the state.³⁵ Concerns about deterioration of morale and behavior of adolescents were heightened by a steady increase in juvenile crime rates that breached the boundaries of class and place. Moreover, relapse statistics confirmed that punishment neither deterred nor reformed the juvenile delinquents.³⁶ Between 1900 and 1922 the state increasingly grew into its pedagogical role, consistent with the era's "abiding faith in the ability of education to overcome societal ills and promote social progress."³⁷ Officials began to imitate efforts by religious *Vereine* and youth movements such as *Wandervogel* without replacing these structures. In 1910 Johannes Petersen, director of a Hamburg orphanage, founded and headed the new organizational model – the Department for Youth Welfare [Jugendamt].³⁸

Yet it was not until after the end of the First World War that the various concerns about the urban working masses, smut and trash, cinematic entertainment and the debilitation of youth were addressed in legislation. As the proliferation of sensationalist entertainment during the war "confirmed the worst suspicions of many German authorities," the state, in close cooperation with the military, subjected the movie industry to centralized supervision and regulation.³⁹ And for the first time the state (if imperfectly) recognized cinema's potential propagandistic usefulness.⁴⁰ In the aftermath of war and revolution, the heightening disquiet about youth welfare and the proliferation of smut and

³⁵ Peukert, 113-14.

³⁶ Peukert, 73

³⁷ Margaret F. Stieg. "The 1926 German Law to Protect Youth against Trash and Dirt: Moral Protectionism in a Democracy" in *Central European History* 23:1 (Mar. 1990), 30.

³⁸ Peukert, 137. Also see Dickinson *German Child Welfare*, 48-63. For the politics of youth welfare in Germany see further Derek S Linton. *Who Has the Youth, Has the Future: The Campaign to Save Young Workers in Imperial Germany*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Elizabeth Harvey. *Youth and the Welfare State in Weimar Germany*.(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

³⁹ Stark, 155-160. Further see Jerzy Toeplitz. *Die Geschichte des Films 1895-1928* (Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1979) 138-140. Toeplitz suggest that the disruption of trade-relations between the Reich and its European neighbors affected film distribution and boosted German production, in particular of the sensational film.

⁴⁰ Stark, 161.

trash found support in the medical community, which identified the cinema as an indirect cause of venereal disease and crime. These arguments ensured broad-based support of legislation that would presumably protect youth “against moral, spiritual, and physical debilitation.”⁴¹ While the Weimar Constitution generally guaranteed freedom of speech and the press and moreover stipulated that “censorship does not take place,” exceptions concerning measures to counteract the effects of smut and trash and cinematic censorship were written into the constitution with the explicit goal of protecting youth at risk.⁴²

Developments in science and technology held out the promise of the eradication of mental illness, alcoholism, sexual abnormalities, crime and other forms of “degeneration.”⁴³ At the same time, these developments created many of the problematic features of modern society—mass media, mass entertainment, and monoculture.⁴⁴ In the eyes of reformers, the novelty of the cinema and the exaggerated form of delivery characteristic of silent film rendered it even more powerful than pulp fiction and pornographic literature. They presumed that *Schundfilme* debased the “spiritual faculties of the masses” and wore down a “viewer’s inner inhibitions and moral standards.”⁴⁵ The 1920 Cinema Law was the first of a series of laws that clarified the nascent Republic’s response to the protection and education of youth.⁴⁶ While cinematic censorship was primarily concerned with the control of politically inflammatory materials, a focus that remained controversial, the law explicitly required special approval before films could be shown to children between 6 and 18 years of age.⁴⁷ The Youth Welfare Law [Jugendwohlfahrtsgesetz] of 1922 responded to the debilitation of youth by creating a

⁴¹ Peukert, 177.

⁴² quoted in Peukert, 177

⁴³ Peukert, 161

⁴⁴ Peukert, 175

⁴⁵ Stark, 131-132

⁴⁶ Bruno W. Nikles. “Immer komplexer: Die Entwicklung der rechtlichen Regelungen zum Jugendschutz” *KJuG* 4 (2002), 119.

⁴⁷ Passed on 12 May 1920 the Cinema Law banned films that posed a threat to public order, insulted religious sensibilities, debilitated or deliberately weakened more (entsittlichen). *RGBL*, 936.

state department to monitor and ultimately eradicate perceived threats. The Juvenile Court Law [Jugendgerichtsgesetz] of 1923 rearticulated a pedagogy of education and reform that addressed debilitation and decay in the absence of comprehensive social and cultural reforms.⁴⁸

Debates over the cultural value of cinema, smut and trash, and the negative effects of industrialization and urbanization illustrate a new kind of pragmatism and revealed the face of a democratic *realpolitik* that focused on youth reform, since only with respect to minors could a viable consensus between feminist, socialist, bourgeois, and more conservative interests be reached. Yet the debates over the Law for the Protection of Youth Against Smut and Trash [Gesetz zur Bewahrung der Jugend vor Schund- und Schmutzschriften, 3 December 1926] reveal that the consensus was shaky and incomplete. Even though debates over *Schund* had been prevalent since the 1890s, they developed a new kind of urgency in the face of the moral and social upheaval following war and revolution. Again, debates about *Schund* were focused primarily on the perceived threats to adolescents and occurred among a rather heterogeneous non-partisan alliance of teachers, librarians, welfare workers, youth officials, religious leaders, police and working-class advocates.⁴⁹ When the law was finally passed in 1926, the flimsiness of the consensus was all too apparent. Advocates, primarily from the center-right, considered the law to be too lax, whereas parties on the political left argued that the bill reintroduced state censorship disguised as welfare legislation.⁵⁰ The dispute further divided already estranged parties that remained committed to the republic. The Democrats (DDP) split their vote and the Socialists (SPD) declined to join a minority government with the Catholic Center (Zentrum) at a moment when tensions between the Center and the SPD escalated into a full-blown ideological conflict over the role of the state in the welfare sector.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Peukert, 138.

⁴⁹ Stieg, 29.

⁵⁰ Peukert, 182. Petersen, 65

⁵¹ See Young-Sun Hong. *Welfare, Modernity, and the Weimar State, 1919-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 185-94, 203-5

While bourgeois reformers saw the protection of youth primarily as a means to prevent, heal and if necessary weed-out social ills, the ultimate goal of both bourgeois and conservatives parties was the domestication of working class youth, which they believed had been thrown into disarray by the inevitable effects of modern life.⁵² Advocates of the law, who considered *Schund* a particularly dangerous variant of modern mass culture, left the social causes of perceived decay unaddressed. Suggesting that the violation of innocence destroys the capacity of young people to form a mature sense of reality and ultimately leads to intemperance and licentiousness, moralizers generally refused to recognize the relevance of massive housing shortages and exorbitant unemployment rates. In contrast, the KPD asserted that the capitalist producers of trash literature, were the real but unnamed culprits.⁵³

The political fallout surrounding the 1926 Law against Smut and Trash was far greater than it had been to the 1920 Cinema Law. Resistance to the *Reichslichtspielgesetz* of 1920, limited to industry-based interests groups, was primarily concerned with restrictions imposed on profitability and competition, even though the law required all films to pass a national censorship board prior to their release.⁵⁴ Largely absent in 1920, concerns about democratic principles were figured prominently in 1926. Hansen explains that

[t]he exclusion of the cinema from constitutional protection of expression in print involved elaborate speculations as to the process of exhibition and individual reception, focusing on the distinction between the celluloid product – marked by separate fixed frames (the ‘body’ of the print as protected by law) – and the moving image on the screen, which obliterates the scriptural character of the ‘body.’ The justification for denying film showings the prerogative of a public gathering was the alleged lack of a ‘public cause’ (*öffentliche Angelegenheit*) to convene the spectators, as contrasted with events of a ‘serious’ – i.e. scholarly, religious, political – nature that served the ‘interest of the general public’ (*Interesse der Allgemeinheit*). Subsumed under the category of entertainment

⁵² Peukert, 180. Klaus Petersen. *Zensur in der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995), 59

⁵³ Peukert, 181ff. See also Petersen, 60-1

⁵⁴ James d. Steakley. “Cinema and Censorship in the Weimar Republic: The Case of *Anders als die Andern*” *Film History* 11:2 (1999), 191

(*Lustbarkeiten*), ‘diversion,’ ‘pleasure,’ socializing’ in the cinema were relegated to the status of the ‘merely’ private.⁵⁵

The Weimar Constitution maintained a distinction between film and print. By treating cinema not as a medium akin to the press or literature, the constitution affirmed the definition of cinema as an amusement for the pleasure of private individuals, thereby justifying the decision to exempt film from the general ban on censorship.

Initially, Weimar politicians did not perceive government control over public amusements as interfering with freedom of speech, particularly not if such control was directed at the protection of youth – which was guaranteed by the constitution. Yet with the establishment of film as a distinct cultural form that increasingly found defenders in intellectual, academic and political circles as a form of art, its status in the public realm changed. In 1924 about 4000 movie houses with a total of 1.4 million seats drew annual audiences of 500 million patrons.⁵⁶ By 1926 newly established “palaces of distraction” shared less and less with their precursors in the back rooms of shops and neighborhood pubs.⁵⁷ Prominent intellectuals such as Bela Balazs, Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Kracauer and many others repeatedly stated their case that the cinema should be recognized as a medium for high art and culture.⁵⁸ As film art found outspoken defenders in the public sphere, starting roughly in 1926 intellectuals on both sides of the political spectrum criticized the increasing politicization of film censorship.⁵⁹ Even though the Imperial state did in fact discover film’s political potential during the First World War and began deliberately to enlist the persuasive powers of the cinema in the war effort and even

⁵⁵ Hansen, 168-9.

⁵⁶ Petersen, 51.

⁵⁷ Siegfried Kracauer. “The Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Picture Palaces” *New German Critique* 40 Special Issue on Weimar Film Theory (Winter 1987), 91-96. The article was originally published as “Kult der Zerstreuung” in *Frankfurter Zeitung* Mar 4, 1926.

⁵⁸ Compare Anton Kaes. *Kino-Debatte. Texte zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Film, 1909-1929* (München: DTV, 1978). At this point it serves to note that architectural design of the movie palaces and their pomp rivaled that of the most lavish stage theaters and opera houses.

⁵⁹ Effectively advocating to loosen existing censorship laws, SPD proposed a bill that would allow the employment of film for party political propaganda in February 1931. The bourgeois parties rejected the SPD proposal and the Reichstag ended up voting for the compromise promoted by the Center which introduced the political use of film as a possibility, not a right instead. Petersen, 54-55

though the Weimar era understood that film was a volatile political medium, the Weimar Republic remained consistent in its treatment of film as primarily a “private” amusement. It was not until 1933 that the elevation of film screenings were elevated to a “public cause.”⁶⁰

A New Kind of Film for the New Masses

National Socialist ideologues looked with contempt on films made during the Weimar years, claiming that “the ‘age of enlightenment’ was nothing but play on erotic sensibilities.”⁶¹ In their rejection of films that explicitly focused on matters of sexuality, National Socialists in fact agreed with the members of Weimar’s educated bourgeoisie who were appalled by the sensationalist treatment of sexual matters in Weimar *Aufklärungsfilme*.⁶² Dagmar Herzog has suggested, National Socialists were no more hostile to pleasure and no more prudish regarding sexual matters than Weimar intellectuals.⁶³ However, this is not to say that with the Nazi seizure of power, bourgeois prudishness was automatically eradicated or that Weimar authorities were undivided tolerant of a general loosening of sexual mores. While the Nazi state instrumentalized sexuality to increase productivity of labor and soldiers, and ideas about sexuality were subservient to Nazi racism, sexuality, more so than anti-Semitism continued to provide an acceptable public venue to criticize popular culture and moreover continued to feed the

⁶⁰ See David Welch. “Cinema and Society in Imperial Germany 1905 - 1918” *German History* 8:1 (February 1990) 28-46

⁶¹ “Der Weg des Films im neuen Reich” in *Hamburger Anzeiger* 28 Mar 1936

⁶² Important examples include *Anders als die Andern* (1918/19), *Sündige Mütter* (1918), *Gesetz der Liebe* (1927) and *Geschlecht in Fesseln* (1928). While many Weimar intellectuals embraced the scientific interest and move for social acceptance of a more open discussion of sexuality as fostered by such establishments as Magnus Hirschfeld’s Institute for Sexual Research (*Institut für Sexualforschung*) and sexual advice clinics,⁸⁰ they argued that the “films in vogue immediately after the war [which] elaborated upon matters of sex life with an undeniable penchant for pornographic excursions” only “took advantage of the sexual enlightenment officially promoted in prewar Germany.” Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* rev. ed. Leonardo Quaresima (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) 44.

⁶³ Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Also see the contributions to the the special issue in *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, 1,2 (Jan/Apr. 2002) which later appeared in an edited collection *Sexuality and German Fascism* ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York: Berghahn, 2004)

concerns of cultural conservatives.⁶⁴ While Goebbels' anti-Semitism rather than his prudishness accounts for his hatred of Weimar era cultural productions, at the level of municipal administration that was not necessarily the case.⁶⁵ Nazi moralizing simply provided yet another code of language that was socially pervasive and could effectively connect with parental concerns about youth sexuality and moral education. The new regime presented the *Volksfilm* as an answer to previous debates over cinema's potential to corrupt the nation's youth.

Film propagandists described Weimar as characterized by moral, cultural, and economic atrophy despite its insulated cultural successes, implicitly validated the efforts of the morality leagues in their attacks on smut and trash. More importantly, they effectively insinuated racism into the Nazi promises for cultural renewal and moral revival.⁶⁶ In July 1936, a headline in the Cologne newspaper *Kölnische Zeitung* boasted that there were "no Jews in the German movies."⁶⁷ The *Film-Kurier* followed in April 1938 with comparisons of pre and post 1933 conditions in the film industry, listing the complete and utter elimination of Jews from German film production, distribution and exhibition, as the first and most important National Socialist accomplishment.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Herzog positioned her important intervention primarily against the work of Stefan Maiwald und Gerd Mischler, *Sexualität unter dem Hakenkreuz: Manipulation und Vernichtung der Intimsphäre im NS-Staat*. (München: Ullstein, 2002); Udo Pini, *Leibeskult und Liebeskitsch: Erotik im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1992), and Hans Peter Bleuel, *Sex and Society in Nazi Germany*. trans. Maxwell Brownjohn (New York: Lippincott, 1973) who argued that Nazism divested sex, sexual discourse and sexual imagery of erotic content and stripped it of pleasure. Illustrating that this was not that case, that Nazism very much instrumentalized pleasure, mobilized sexual images to entice the population and sell its policies, that Nazism continued some of the sexually permissive policies of the Weimar period, Herzog did not deny that individual welfare workers, Nazi politicians, or even Hitler himself remained in tune with or at least aware of the continuing reservations the bourgeois public harbored towards sexuality, in particular when young people were concerned.

⁶⁵ Still in November 1938 the Censorship office reminded the Nazi press that the German people lack the necessary anti-Semitic practices since "a group of wimpy philistines talk about the poor Jews and takes their side at every opportunity." 3378 ZSg. 102/13/60 24 Nov 1938 in *NS-Presseanweisungen der Vorkriegszeit. Edition und Dokumentation*. Bd 6/III 1938. bearbeitet von Karen Peter (München: Saur, 1999), 1117-8

⁶⁶ See "Der Weg des Films im neuen Reich" *Hamburger Anzeiger* 28 Mar 1936

⁶⁷ "Kein Jude im deutschen Film" *Kölnische Zeitung* 26 Jul 1936

⁶⁸ "Eine Gegenüberstellung: So war es gestern - und so ist es heute" in *Film-Kurier* 6 Apr 1938.

Celebrations of the redefinition of film as an art form replaced debates over *Schmutz und Schund*. While protecting adolescents from unsuitable films, the Reich deliberately enlisted film in youth education and entertainment and continued to stress the educational benefits of film to adults as well. Trying to cast film as an art form accessible to a broad popular base, Councilor Zimmerman of the film censorship office affirmed that film art “has nothing to do with wages or monthly salaries, with village schools or universities, with heavy labor or inwardly focused erudition.” Rather, Zimmermann preached, “film wants *Volk*, film wants the entire *Volk*,” and argued that it is precisely film’s *Volksverbundenheit* which distinguishes it from and ennobles it in comparison to all other art forms.⁶⁹ Experts continued to argue for authenticity, earthy-bound realism, and recognizably German settings. Nonetheless, they agreed that absolute verisimilitude [*Wirklichkeitsnähe*] should not be at the aesthetic center of German films.⁷⁰ Ultimately, popular tastes would align with the changes signaled by films such as *Heimat* and *Du und ich* which infused serious subjects with the glamour of stars like Zarah Leander and Brigitte Horney.⁷¹

Many film ideologues assumed that the cinema itself would eventually “coax” rather than “convince” audiences to acknowledge its artistic qualities, even if they were unable to agree on what exactly constitutes artistic quality.⁷² The vagueness in official discourse must be seen in light of Nazism’s half-baked attempts to return to the roots of German *Kultur* while renouncing its Weimar permutations and aspiring to crush the hegemony of Hollywood.⁷³ As Karsten Witte has illustrated and scholars since corroborated, National Socialist film had little to call its own in terms of style or

⁶⁹ “Die Anpassung and den Publikumsgeschmack: Filmschaffende dürfen Kunst nicht mit künstlichkeit verwechseln” in *Film-Kurier* 15 Dec 1938

⁷⁰ “Was will das Publikum auf der Leinwand sehen?” in *Film-Kurier* 24 Sep 1938

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² Compare “Die Aufgaben der Avantguard” in *Film-Kurier* 13 Dec 1938. [my emphasis]

⁷³ “Deutscher Film dein Feld ist die Welt” *Film-Kurier* 13 Mar 1939.

technological innovations.⁷⁴ It seems that National Socialist film required a certain kind of *Haltung* (inner predisposition) and accordingly National Socialist audiences rather than a particular National Socialist style made National Socialist culture.

Yet despite the frequent affirmation in daily and speciality presses of film's potential for societal renewal, National Socialists were not willing to cede control over the revolution of culture to such a politically ambiguous entity as the local viewing public. Rather they attempted to transform the uncultured masses into model audiences for the National Socialist film. Institutions such as the *Filmvolkstag* (People's Film Day) and the weekly film screenings organized in conjunction with the Hitler Youth Service (*Jugendfilmstunden*) were to effect long lasting changes in popular tastes and define pleasure as a necessary element in the establishment of national cohesion.⁷⁵

While the *Filmvolkstag* was a model coming-together of the nation in an encounter with art derived from its own spirit, the weekly film screenings for youth (*Jugendfilmstunden*) offered a communal cultural experience as a regular feature in the lives of young people. Organized by Hitler Youth leaders in coordination with regional film offices (*Gaufilmstellen*), these screenings were first carried out during a Hitler Youth initiative in the winter of 1934/5.⁷⁶ They drew audiences of 300,000 boys and girls. Two years later, the *Jugendfilmstunden* could boast an audience of over one million. In 1937/8 about three million young people went to weekly youth film viewing sessions as the institution expanded to include virtually every established movie theater in the Reich.⁷⁷ Local theaters were required to provide space and screen those films previously chosen from the regional film archives by district representatives of the Hitler Youth. The

⁷⁴ Karsten Witte "Film Im Nationalsozialismus: Blendung und Überblendung," and "The Indivisible Legacy of Nazi Cinema." *New German Critique* 74 Special Issue on Nazi Cinema (Spring - Summer 1998): 23-30. See also Eric Rentschler. *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996) and the essays in Robert C. Reimer, ed. *Cultural History through a National Socialist Lens: Essays on the Cinema of the Third Reich*. (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2000).

⁷⁵ On the Nazi "Film Hour for the Young" see David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema*, 27ff.

⁷⁶ Welch. *Propaganda and the German Cinema*, 27

⁷⁷ "Filmpublikum Jugend" in *Film-Kurier* 9 Nov 1938. See also "Jugend wandelt Filmgeschmack" in *Hamburger Nachrichten* 10 Oct 1937.

screenings were limited to certain days of the week and usually only took place during the winter semester so they would not interfere with Hitler Youth and BDM service.⁷⁸

The *Reichsleitung Film* had placed great confidence in film as an educational tool. Originally the youth film screenings were conceived of as entertainment for Hitler Youth and BDM groups, but educators and youth leaders increasingly realized that individual films could be framed effectively in the context of a disciplined community of young minds. Claiming to have observed “that films are experienced completely differently in the community of like-minded and similarly disposed comrades,”⁷⁹ National Socialist educators rejected earlier reservations as to which “film might negatively influence the development of adolescents and was therefore dangerous at least to young people.”⁸⁰ The social settings in which film was received – rather than film itself – were problematic in the eyes of National Socialists. Hence, a new kind of film viewing experience was modeled after the great party rallies. Entire Hitler Youth units marched to a designated theater in lock-step and watched a “valuable” film after receiving a short introduction on its political relevance by the youth leader [*Bannführer*]. In the context of National Socialist discipline, film became an “enlightening and education tool” that provided young people with “agile experience, role model[s] and a festive exhibit.”⁸¹ That the boys and girls used these outings in precisely the ways originally conceived – as a form of relaxation from the highly ritualized Hitler Youth and BDM service – did not denigrate the impressive public demonstration of disciplined pleasure and channeled entertainment.

The weekly film screenings for adolescents are the most dramatic example of the Nazi endeavor to transform cinematic experience. Organizers of the first of the *Jugendfilmstunden* in the winter of 1937/38 envisioned a simultaneous audience of 40,000 adolescents in Hamburg alone and another 150,000 in the Reich in front of what

⁷⁸ “Hamburger Jugendfilmstunden beginnen” in *Film-Kurier* 7 Oct 1938.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ “Filmpublikum Jugend” in *Film Kurier* 9 Nov 1938.

⁸¹ *ibid.*

appeared to be a single movie-screen.⁸² These efforts to reinvent the cinema as a national *Jugendbildungsstätte* were meant to reach the “broad mass of adolescents passively interested in film” and subject them to the “far-reaching effects that would establish taste and will” as the result of a disciplined communal experience.⁸³

Save for an occasional reminder in the *Film-Kurier* that youths were only to be admitted to films approved for this purpose, National Socialist public discussion of film was unanimously positive and affirmative.⁸⁴ Rather than seeing a need to protect adolescents from the presumably amoral and suggestive effects of film over the course of the 1930s, film propagandists hoped that the younger generation would ultimately resolve the conflict between art and kitsch.⁸⁵ They further hoped to unleash the “gargantuan propagandistic force” inherent in film, and to “fully liberate German film from the fetters of so-called public taste [*Publikumsgeschmack*] that still lingers in the studios’ and production programs’ cajolery.”⁸⁶ The youth film days held in Hamburg in October 1937 highlighted the unanimous avowal of German youth to the ‘film of tomorrow’ and registered the Hitler Youth movement as an active factor in shaping not only film

⁸² “Jugend wandelt Filmgeschmack” in *Hamburger Nachrichten* 6 Oct 1937.

⁸³ *ibid.* Further see Jeffrey T. Schnapp, “Fascination Fascism” in the special issue on “the Aesthetics of Fascism” of the *Journal of Contemporary History*, 31, 2 (Apr 1996). The phrase was first used by Susan Sontag’s cutting-edge and highly controversial essay “Fascinating Fascism” published in 1974. It was prompted by Leni Riefenstahl’s publication of *The Last of the Nuba* and pointed to the current and ongoing (often erotic) fascination with fascism and its regalia. Sontag ascribes to fascism its own aesthetic. “The fascist dramaturgy centers on the orgiastic transactions between mighty forces and their puppets, uniformly garbed and shown in ever swelling numbers. Its choreography alternates between ceaseless motion and congealed, static, ‘virile’ posing. Fascist art glorifies surrender, it exalts mindlessness, it glamorises death.” But Sontag provocatively claims that fascist art “is hardly confined to works labeled fascist or produced under fascist governments.” Compare Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism” in *Under the Sign of the Saturn* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980), 91. Also important in this context is the work of historian See George Mosse’s explorations on the connections between German fascism and sexuality in *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability & Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*. (New York: Fertig, 1985). Even though Mosse focuses on the role of *Männerbünde* and continued to consider Nazi sexuality primarily repressive, he pioneered the view that Nazi display of (male) bodies and bodily discipline was not just spectacular but also pleasurable. In addition see Debord, Guy *The Society of the Spectacle* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. (New York: Zone Books, 1994.)

⁸⁴ “Besuch nicht jugendfreier Filme durch Jugendliche” in *Film-Kurier* 1 Feb 1939.

⁸⁵ “Die Aufgaben der Avantgard” in *Film Kurier* 13 Dec 1938

⁸⁶ For the first quote see “Film als objective Geschichtsschreibung” in *Hamburger Tageblatt*, 5 Oct 1937. For the second quote consult “Junge Filmziele” in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* 7 Oct 1937.

reception but also film production. The younger generation was being groomed to assume important roles in the production of a new kind of film.⁸⁷

The regime, which felt there was an almost organic connection of youth to the young medium of the cinema, sought to convert the population as a whole to this modern *volk*-bound art form. Film seemed to transcend the traditional boundaries of mass culture, art, and politics. The People's Film Day was first organized on 25 April 1935 as part of the International Film Congress in Berlin.⁸⁸ The event was a tremendous success, and it became a regular feature of the annual convention of the Reich Film Chamber, drawing increasingly larger audiences.⁸⁹ While the Reich Film Chamber orchestrated the first *Filmvolkstag* as part of a grand demonstration of German film culture to the world public, the event itself exemplified the cooperation between exhibitors in Berlin and the Reich's film authorities to recruit large groups of first-time filmgoing audiences.⁹⁰ Held on a designated Sunday in participating movie theaters in the Reich that suspended their regular programming for this purpose, the *Filmvolkstag* was supposed to "bring film to the broadest classes of people and simultaneously function as a mass advertisement for the good film and the visit to film theaters in general."⁹¹ To lure newcomers and regulars into the theater, the *Filmvolkstag* was technically free of charge.⁹² For only one *Groschen* – one-fifth of the cheapest regular ticket price – citizens could purchase a program, a pin, or a pamphlet, which guaranteed them entry to any participating cinema to see an old-

⁸⁷ "Filmarbeitsgemeinschaften der HJ" *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 10 Oct 1937.

⁸⁸ Ein Film-Volkstag. Beim Internationalen Filmkongreß. *Film-Kurier* 27 Mar 1935.

⁸⁹ The *Filmvolkstag* did not take place in 1936, since free screenings had already been orchestrated by the Winter Relief Works. See Yong Chan Choy, "Inszenierung der *völkischen* Filmkultur im Nationalsozialismus: 'Der Internationale Filmkongress Berlin 1935'" Diss. Technische Universität Berlin. Berlin 2006, 218.

⁹⁰ "Auch in Hamburg alle Theater gut besucht" *Film Kurier* 28 February 1938. Also compare Choy, 127.

⁹¹ "Richtlinien fuer die Durchfuehrung des Filmvolkstages am Sonntag den 5. März 1939" in *Film-Kurier* 15 February 1939.

⁹² In 1935, Berlin audiences gained entrance for 10 Pfennig whereas everywhere else the token admission amounted to 20 Pfennig. As of 1938 the *Filmvolkstag* offered admission at 10 Pfennig throughout the Reich. Compare Choy, 227

time favorite or finally get a look at a film that everyone was talking about.⁹³ Based on earlier models, the 1939 People's Film Day guaranteed admission to every citizen who bought *From the time of the boob tube to film art [Von der Zeit der Flimmerkiste zur Filmkunst]*, a pamphlet advertising the event available for the price of 10 Reichspfennig.⁹⁴

Even though the *Filmvolkstag* drew large numbers into “life-threateningly overcrowded” theaters, it appears that these people were predominantly veteran audiences already initiated into the pleasures of moviegoing instead of large numbers of novices.⁹⁵ While “there should have been hardly a theater that could not market its advertisement pamphlets successfully,” the *Film-Kurier* hinted that theater operators “would have preferred that the cheap admission would benefit those citizens who cannot afford regular tickets.”⁹⁶ However, rather than recruit new audiences to the worthwhile German film, the *Filmvolkstag* redistributed existing audiences to those movie theaters that colluded with the regime to extend the reach of the State into the social fabric of the city.

Events like the People's Film Day or the regular screening of films to Hitler Youth groups performed the kind of community National Socialists envisioned to create on a national scale. Yet contrary to the high-minded ambitions of the Nazi propagandists, such events neither undermined the importance of the neighborhood theater nor fundamentally altered the significance of movie-going in everyday life. While Nazi officials

⁹³ “Filmvolkstag. Überall überfüllte Theater” in *Film-Kurier* 28 February 1938

⁹⁴ Compare “Filmvolkstag. Überall überfüllte Theater” in *Film-Kurier* 28 February 1938 and “Richtlinien für die Durchführung des Filmvolkstages am Sonntag den 5. März 1939” in *Film-Kurier* 15 February 1939. Rather than ensuring the profitability of local movie houses, the *Filmvolkstag* was a gigantic advertisement campaign for a new consumer product: Nazi film. In the end, the *Filmvolkstag* was financed by participating theaters which were thought to benefit most dramatically from increases in new regulars the *Filmvolkstag* promised to recruit. Yet the Nazi state was quite effective in distributing cost down to individual businesses. Sunday already was the Reich's Cinema Day par excellence as most patrons went to the movies when they could neither run errands nor had to go to work. The suspension of the regular programming, for which the theater had already paid and run advertisements to screen one of last years favorites did not cogently promise an increase in revenues for individual theaters.

⁹⁵ Compare “Filmvolkstag. Überall überfüllte Theater” and “Auch in Hamburg alle Theater gut besucht” *Film-Kurier* 28 Feb 1938.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

promulgated the transformation of film culture and audiences alike by virtue of massive gatherings that were meant to signify the awakening of the *Volk*, the changes that marked movie-going in the Third Reich were profoundly less revolutionary. The movie industry recovered financially (in part due to the heavy-handed state sponsorship), ticket sales increased as admission fees declined and independent theaters struggled to survive next to state-sponsored and vertically integrated film corporations.⁹⁷ As of autumn 1938, audiences composition reflected the racial policies that had stripped the industry of its greatest directors and stars. In the aftermath of the “Night of Broken Glass” Jews were banned from all forms of German cultural life and prohibited from going to the movies, attending concerts, plays or public lectures.

However, films produced in the 1930s were neither more wholesome nor more suitable for audiences of young people. They did not attain the realism and verisimilitude (*bodenständige Wirklichkeitsnähe*) to which Nazi film ideologues aspired, nor would such films have found receptive audiences. Individuals continued to go to the movies for pleasure rather than for reasons of patriotic devotion. The neighborhood theater still remained the most obvious choice for regular citizens who only occasionally treated themselves to a more expensive and extravagant experience in one of the city’s prestigious movie palaces.⁹⁸ Operators continued to pretend that the hordes of adolescents seeking admission to *Hallo Janine* (Boese, 1939) were actually very young-looking adults.⁹⁹ Hollywood still made films that were artistically and technically beyond the reach of German film production companies.¹⁰⁰ These same German companies continued to work with stars, directors, and in genres that were popular. They were more interested in making money than producing Nazis. Except for some unsuccessful early

⁹⁷ The slump in which the film industry found itself in 1930 must be seen in part as a result of the world economic crisis but more importantly it reflected systemic difficulties in the industries transition to sound film, which had been completed in 1935.

⁹⁸ Uwe Storjohann. Personal Interview. Hamburg Eimsbüttel 18 September 2006

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Compare Felix Moeller. *The Film Minister: Goebbels and the Cinema in The "Third Reich"*. (Stuttgart and London: Axel Menges, 2000), 32 ff.

attempts to produce political films, German cinema did not abruptly change in the immediately aftermath of 1933/4.¹⁰¹

The cinematic experience changed more drastically after the introduction to sound than after the introduction of Nazi regulations. In fact, the very notion of an audience that can be inundated by propaganda, educated with political messages, and distracted from the harsh realities of everyday life as Goebbels postulated, presupposed that members of this audience would devote their undivided attention to the on-screen world.¹⁰² In contrast, during film's early days audiences often consumed alcohol and engaged in behaviors that normally shun the light of day. After 1917, narrative cinema required a more attentive audience, but at no point was it necessary that this audience was silent and accordingly, movie theaters were filled with talk, gasps, exclamations and laughter.¹⁰³ The discourse on Nazi film since then has eclipsed the less spectacular fact of individuals in front of the movie screen. The masses kept coming back to theaters for more. Until the beginning of the war both local and a national observers considered the consistently rising numbers of movie patrons to be a validation of the successful transformation of a flickering amusements into a national art form of the first order.

¹⁰¹ See in particular Sabine Hake, 23-45

¹⁰² Since the transition to sound was completed in Germany only after the Nazis took power, it is not surprising that scholars tended to foreground the instrumentality of the cinema under a regime that was generally considered to be hostile to pleasure, entertainment, and sex and in contrast terrorized and brainwashed an audience into submission. Accordingly, the earlier literature on Nazi film, the so called first wave historiography was very much in line with larger historiographical trend. The most notable examples of these first examinations of Nazi film took Goebbels' ambitions for shaping an audience very seriously. And even if scholars now agree that Nazi films were hardly the ideological tool Goebbels willed them to be, these earlier works are still useful in reviewing the primary role leading Nazis ascribed to film. See in particular David S. Hull, *Film in the Third Reich*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973); Erwin Leiser, *Nazi Cinema*. Translated by Gertrud Mander and David Wilson. (New York: Collier, 1975) and David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945*, (Oxford: Clarendon 1983) and Gerd Albrecht. *Der Film im Dritten Reich. Eine Dokumentation*(Karlsruhe: Schauburg, 1979) and Gerd Albrecht *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik. Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reichs* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1969).

¹⁰³ Corinna Müller, and Harro Segeberg, eds. *Kinoöffentlichkeit (1895-1920): Entstehung - Etablierung - Differenzierung / Cinema's Public Sphere (1895-1920): Emergence, Settlement, Differentiation*. (Marburg: Schüren, 2008). Miriam Hansen. "Early Silent Cinema. Whose Public Sphere?" *New German Critique* 29 Special Issue: The Origins of Mass Culture. The Case of Germany, 1871-1918 (Spring-Summer 1983): 147-84. Richard Abel, ed. *Silent Film*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996) and Thomas Elsaesser. *Filmgeschichte und Frühes Kino: Archäologie eines Medienwandels*. (München: Edition Text + Kritik, 2002).

The Return of the Repressed¹⁰⁴

The thorough Nazification of German cultural production rendered moral reservations about film as much as about literature obsolete. ‘Dangerous’ books had been burned, ‘bad’ films banned, and the new censorship stipulations presumably ensured that any type of unsuitable art would no longer be produced. Instead of continuing the struggles against smut and trash after 1933, the wardens of German culture focused on the imperative task of guarding national *Kultur* against racial defilement and foreign competition.¹⁰⁵ Yet the coming of war called the Nazi feat of cultural transformation into question and local welfare workers revived the debates over the undesirable effects of film and pulp fiction that played such an important aspect of the push for social reforms in the aftermath of World War I.¹⁰⁶

In Hamburg, the educational platform on which film-as-*Volkskultur* was thought to be firmly resting under Goebbels’ all-seeing eye was gradually undermined by local concerns about dangers to youth. War not only realigned film with entertainment more generally, but also rekindled a certain fear of the irrationality of the masses that was thought to make such entertainment detrimental to public morality. Moreover, the spatial connections between the cinema and various urban amusements, which did not figure in local or national debates over film policy before the war, came to inform the concerns and premonitions of Hamburg’s local administrators once war refocused their attention to potentially disruptive behaviors of the populace. As the war progressed, the Propaganda Ministry’s insistence on the importance of film to the war effort and local opinions regarding the risks of film were increasingly at odds as debates over the war-related moral decay of youth reveals. Ultimately, film’s connection to urban leisure, the

¹⁰⁴ See Michel de Certeau. *The Writing of History*. Trans. Tom Conley. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) on Sigmund Freud’s concept of the ‘return of the repressed.’ “On the very scene of the crime, this ‘revenant’ will forever return: the victim, who, yesterday, was a threat [...] such that beneath the disguise of the ‘proper,’ only the quid pro quo of the proper is known.” (329)

¹⁰⁵ See especially Dr. Adolf Dresler. *Deutsche Kunst und entartete “Kunst”*; *Kunstwerk und Zerrbild im Spiegel der Weltanschauung* (München: Deutscher Volksverlag, 1938) and later examples such as “Unverschämt, Schamlos, Albern” in *SS Das Schwarze Korps* 5 Jan 1939 and “Lasset die Kindlein” in *SS Das Schwarze Korps* 16 Feb 1939 on the negative influence of racial mixing in US culture.

¹⁰⁶ See Andrew Lees. *Cities, Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2007)

comfortable darkness of the theater and the circulation of visual fantasies, dragged cinema – the celebrated *Volkskunst* – into the proverbial mud.

The coming of war was not received with enthusiasm, neither in Hamburg nor elsewhere in Germany, yet when it arrived it was hardly a surprise.¹⁰⁷ After all, recent foreign policy maneuvers (the Austrian *Anschluss* in March 1938 and the annexation of the Sudetenland in September 1938) revealed the Third Reich's expansionist aspirations. And rearmament and the introduction of the draft in 1935, the second four year plan of 1936, air raid drills in schools, the Hitler Youth Law of 1936 and conscription into the labor service in 1938 restructured social life in preparation for war.¹⁰⁸ Yet until the first air strikes against Hamburg in May 1940, the home front experienced war primarily as a series of absences: fathers, brothers, teachers, and Hitler Youth leaders were drafted or volunteered for the war effort, lights were switched off and the shop windows grew empty as more goods were subject to rationing.¹⁰⁹

Meat and butter had been rationed in some cities since the fall of 1935, when the regime was still hesitant to ration staples such as bread.¹¹⁰ A rigorous system of rationing food and clothing was put into place within the first weeks of the war and for most food staples – bread, cereals, meat and butter – the regime introduced rationing even prior to

¹⁰⁷ Compare Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, 71. For Hamburg see Axel Schildt, "Jenseits von Politik? Aspekte des Alltags." 288.

¹⁰⁸ For the four year plan of 1936 see Mason, *Nazism, Fascism, and the Working Class*, 107. In Hamburg the first model bunker was built in April 1933 and since the summer the party recruited *Blockwarte* in the form of *Luftschutzwarte*. In 1934 Hamburg had its own commissioner for air protection in the person of Senator Richter and in the later part of the 1930s, air raid and darkening drills introduced the population to the use of gas masks and the cellars in which they would spend many nights in the years to come. See Axel Schildt, "Jenseits der Politik? Aspekte des Alltags" in *Hamburg im Dritten Reich*, 287. The *Hamburger Tageblatt* reported repeatedly on air raid drills, particularly in schools throughout 1938. For the Hitler Youth Law compare Arno Klönne, *Jugend im Dritten Reich* (Cologne: Eugen Dietrich Verlag, 1982), 27-8 and for conscription see Compare Mason, *Nazism, Fascism and the Working Class*, 117 and Mason, *Social Policy in the Third Reich*, 165. Jill Stephenson in *Hitler's Homefront*, further differentiates between the various kinds of labor conscription introduced. While men were primarily conscripted into the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (labor service) or *Landdienst* (service in agriculture), the *Pflichtjahr* (a year of domestic service) was introduced for unmarried women aged 18-25. On general labor conscription see also Tooze, 261.

¹⁰⁹ Hamburg switched off the lights on September 1. Compare Schildt, 289

¹¹⁰ Tooze, 193, 659

the invasion of Poland.¹¹¹ Rather than addressing existing food shortages, the regime redirected disposable income into savings accounts, effectively folding the increase in wages back into the war economy at the expense of private consumption.¹¹²

Youth reformers failed to recognize the rise in purchasing power and the effacing of consumer products for what it actually was – the “silent financing” of the war.¹¹³ Rather Professor Rudolf Sieverts,¹¹⁴ a local expert on juvenile crime, postulated that a rise in real income afforded by economic recovery, which in Hamburg arrived with considerable delay and made the extravagant consumption of urban amusements a financial possibility for a majority of people and hence exposed greater numbers of them to the demoralizing effects of modern mass culture.¹¹⁵ Sieverts argued that economic recovery, compounded by the absence of male authority figures (who, as heads of households, presumably would have ensured that excess income would be deposited into a saving account), enabled irresponsible mothers and their immature offspring to indulge in films, pulp fiction, and vaudeville revues.¹¹⁶

Simultaneously, the leading trade journal *Film-Kurier* boasted production statistics as evidence of Germany’s determination to intensify cultural output through the film studios.¹¹⁷ While there were suggestions of rationing visits to the cinema later in the war, it remained the most consistently available form of entertainment during this time period, at least in urban areas.¹¹⁸ It is hardly surprising that after the population recuperated from anxiety after receiving the news of the war, cinema attendance rose

¹¹¹ Noaks, *Nazism* vol. 4 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998) 511 ff.

¹¹² Compare Tooze, 355-6

¹¹³ Tooze 355.

¹¹⁴ For biographical information on Sieverts see Appendix A.

¹¹⁵ Referat von Dr. Sieverts. In StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11 Niederschrift der Aussprache über Jugenschutz im Kriege 7 Mar 1940.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ See “In Zwei Kriegsmonaten 21 Filme begonnen” *Film-Kurier* 2 Nov 1939

¹¹⁸ For prosed rationing of moviegoing see Schildt ,296. Stephenson demonstrates in her study of Würtemberg during the Second World War that such amenities as the cinema were often unavailable in small village communities. See Stephenson 20 and 34.

consistently until 1944.¹¹⁹ Only as raw material shortages slowed down film production and aerial bombardments destroyed vast numbers of theaters in Germany's urban centers did the Reich statistics of moviegoing register a decline.¹²⁰

The rise in visits to the movies, however, clearly predated the war. In 1934 Hamburg alone counted 11,989,899 ticket sales, and three years later in 1937 that number nearly doubled as the city registered 21,772,138 movie patrons.¹²¹ Moreover, in response to the news of war, patrons streamed into theaters during the day to watch the latest newsreel. Many local theaters in Hamburg institutionalized an afternoon program that preceded the first regular performance of the day so that patrons could find their way home before the fall of darkness.¹²²

The weekly newsreel, which in response to war almost doubled in length, drew people into movie theaters in larger numbers.¹²³ It provided one of few tangible connections between the *Heimat* and front. Across the Reich movie theaters added additional performances [*Sonderveranstaltungen*] to satisfy audience demands for newsreels and short documentaries.¹²⁴ In Hamburg, theater operators responded forcefully to the community's call for a smooth and consistent flow of information.¹²⁵ The wartime newsreel, even more than the Hitler youth film screenings [*Jugendfilmstunden*] and the national People's Film Day [*Filmvolkstag*], accomplished

¹¹⁹ See "Überall im Reich starker Filmtheaterbesuch. Unsere Korrespondenten berichten über den 1. Monat des Abwehrkampfes" in *Film-Kurier* 5 October 1939. Also compare Gerhard Stahr, Gerhard. *Volksgemeinschaft vor der Leinwand: Der Nationalsozialistische Film und sein Publikum*. (Berlin: Hans Theissen, 2001), 174 ff.

¹²⁰ Schreiben an Reichsminister vom Filmintendant Hinkel 27 Oct 1944 and Schreiben und Anlage betreffend der Umwandlung von Sprechtheatern 6 Oct 1944 in BArch R 109 III 13. See moreover, Wiederherstellung von fliegergeschädigten Lichtspieltheatern 12 Mar 1945. BArch R 109 III 19

¹²¹ For the statistical information on theater attendance see StAHH A2-2 Statistisches Jahrbuch 1934-5 and Statistisches Jahrbuch 1937-8.

¹²² "In Hamburg: Vorbildliche Kameradschaft der Theaterbesitzer" *Film-Kurier* 5 Oct 1939.

¹²³ "RFK-Anordnungen über die Programmlänge." *Film-Kurier* 26 Oct 1939

¹²⁴ "Aufruf; An alle deutschen Filmtheaterbesitzer: Jedes deutsche Filmtheater soll nach Möglichkeit ausserhalb der normalen Spielzeit Sonderveranstaltungen durchfuehren." *Film-Kurier* 30 Sep 1939

¹²⁵ "In Hamburg: Vorbildliche Kameradschaft der Theaterbesitzer" *Film-Kurier* 5 Oct 1939.

the Nazis' goals of drawing new audiences into the movie theater.¹²⁶ Cinema attendance rose continuously and allowed an ever growing number of people to participate in the "great events of the German existential struggle [*Lebenskampf*]." ¹²⁷

Hamburg's weary welfare workers cast this 'struggle' in very particular terms. The assumption that criminality, like other undesirable social behaviors, could be learned from the movies was not a new idea, but it gained a new legitimacy in the context of the war.¹²⁸ The reels ran continuously, but not just butter was in short supply. Shifting explanation for criminality from economic necessity and dearth to the financial excess of the morally enfeebled, welfare workers drew a new link between people's purchasing power, youth endangerment, moral decay and criminality. Arguments that sought to connect the increase in crimes against property with the low standard of living would have certainly undermined the notion of a classless and fully-employed *Volksgemeinschaft*. Instead, Sieverts linked the rising crime rates to the fictional increase in purchasing power of the gainfully employed. Furthermore, he identified that purchasing power as the decisive factor in adolescents' pursuit of pleasure. After all, for the price of one pound of butter (which wasn't available anyway) one could afford to see

¹²⁶ "Der Film im Dienste der nationalen Erziehung" *Film-Kurier* 6 Nov 1939.

¹²⁷ "Aufruf; An alle deutschen Filmtheaterbesitzer: Jedes deutsche Filmtheater soll nach Möglichkeit ausserhalb der normalen Spielzeit Sonderveranstaltungen durchführen." *Film-Kurier* Sept 30, 1939

¹²⁸ In February 1939, the *Hamburger Tageblatt* published an article about a seventeen-year old cineast turned murderer and in the same issue affirmed that New York was still leading the world murder statistics. While the comparison between the United States and Germany casts murder as a quintessential Jewish crime, the report on the young Eberhard Goetz invested *Kinosucht* with the explanatory power of murder. Obviously, as the *Tageblatt* does not fail to point out, Goetz was not a normal adolescent. The physical and mentally retarded individual not only had a predilection for crime drama, but displayed "grave intelligence deficits" to the extent that "congenital feeble-mindedness of a substantial degree must be assumed." To procure the necessary cash to satisfy his cinematic needs, he beat the sale's clerk in a cigar shop, stabbed her with a knife, took money from the cashier and left her behind unconscious. She died from her injuries. A psychiatrist certified Goetz's insanity and he was permanently admitted into a mental institution. See "Aus Kinoleidenschaft zum Mörder: Siebzehnjähriger vor Gericht - In einer Anstalt untergebracht" and "New York hält den Mord-Rekord" in *Hamburger Tageblatt* Feb. 16, 1939. It should be noted that admission to a theater cost about 1 Reichsmark in a more prestigious venue, at the neighborhood theater a ticket cost as little as 0.50 RM. In contrast, the price for butter was above 1.60 RM per pound, a pound of roastbeef cost 1.21RM, a pound of bacon 1.57RM, a pound of pork roast 2.20RM, a pound of potatoes for around 0.05RM, a pound of coffee 2.00RM, and a pound of bread 0.16RM. Compare STAHH A2-2 Statistisches Jahrbuch 1937-38. pages 128-138

three films at one's favorite neighborhood movie theaters and enjoy a cigarette afterwards on two of these occasions.¹²⁹

Within Hamburg's administration, it was a belief in the obsessive pursuit of personal pleasure by young people that framed debates about potential social disorder. In early March 1940, the Nazi regional political director Karl Kaufmann set out to investigate and counteract the "false or at least greatly exaggerated rampant allegation" of the rapid increase of dangers to young people in Hamburg as a result of the war and denied the spread of moral decay. Gauleiter Kaufmann empowered Senator Oscar Martini¹³⁰ to promptly convene district leaders, the chief of police, local experts on juvenile delinquency, and social welfare workers to discuss the rumors of "already advanced threats to our youth [*Verwahrlosung*] due to the war."¹³¹ In tandem with Senators Witt and Kohlmeyer, and supported by Police Chief Kehrl, Kaufmann decided that

in order to secure the tactical cooperation of the numerous agencies in the party, state, municipality, and the army that are concerned about the welfare [of youth], an appropriate interface with these institutions will be created through collective exchange of viewpoints that should include previous observations as well as anticipated remedial measures.¹³²

For the purpose of coordinating the agencies concerned with protection of youth, Martini subsequently established the Consortium for the Protection of Youth in Wartime under the direction of Prof. Rudolf Sieverts. The renowned expert on juvenile law ensured that the deliberations were duly recorded, transcribed and filed for posterity. From then on, civil servants from the governor's office, the general and criminal police, the Security Service (SD), the social welfare office, the department of education, the health and labor

¹²⁹ Close to two thirds of German taxpayers earned 30 Reichsmark per week or less in 1936, after the country had returned to full employment at last nominally. The wages of working women at an average of just above 19 Reichsmark per week were considerably lower still. See Uwe Lohalm "Für eine leistungsbereite und 'erbgesunde' Volksgemeinschaft: Selektive Erwerbslosen- und Familienpolitik." (379-431) in *Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich'*, 386-7.

¹³⁰ For information on Martini see Appendix A.

¹³¹ See StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I-IV VT38.11 Niederschrift der Aussprache über Jugenschutz im Kriege 7 Mar 1940.

¹³² *ibid.*

ministries, as well as representatives from the school administration, the juvenile court, the municipal court, and various spokespersons from the Reich's women's organization, the NSV, the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls were to report on and debate the state of past, current, and future problems regarding the morality of adolescents and suggest ways to remove these threats. The Hamburg Consortium left an impressive 300-page record of these inter-departmental exchanges, which constitutes the basis for my assertion that local concerns about the demoralizing effects of the war provided the impetus for subsequent changes in juvenile law. Based on his evaluation of the reports by the SD, Gerhard Stahr's analysis underscores the prevalent return of concerns about youth and their moviegoing practices in the first years of the war. However, it remains important to recognize the initiative of local administrators and the reactivation of their earlier conservative convictions that undergirded the measures subsequently decreed by the Reich for addressing juvenile dereliction.¹³³ Local administrators called into question the national affirmation that film was the Reich's most formidable educational tool.

There had been no reason to search for structural explanations for increases of *Verwahrlosung*, *Kinosucht*, and *Vergnügungssucht* in the years since the seizure of power.¹³⁴ In the context of the war, welfare workers were bound to see what ideological commitment had occluded from view. The local state fixed its gaze on women and children stripped of paternal authority and explained urban social ills such as promiscuity, obsessive pursuit of pleasure, neglect of children, vagrancy, petty crimes, and indecencies as products of war. The war, simply changed the frame within which local welfare workers and administrators evaluated the status quo. Debates that had been silenced as a result of the Nazi revolution regained viability without undermining the ideological foundations of the regime.

¹³³ Compare Stahr, 208-226.

¹³⁴ For most of the 1930s, the *Verwahrlosungs*-discourse was limited to prostitution and its control. The city of Hamburg actively transformed itself into the guardian of prostitutes willing to submit or unable to resist regulation, monitored their health and confined their whereabouts with the goal to guarantee sexual access for German men and protect these men from STD. See StAHH, 351-10 Sozialbehörde I, EF70.21. Further See Letter by chief criminal inspector, 10 Oct 1933. in 351-10 Sozialbehörde I, EF70.15 BAnd I. Also "Der Kampf gegen die Prostitution" in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 8 Sep 1933.

Members of the Consortium for Youth Protection in Wartime were particularly upset by the upsurge in sexual *Frühverwahrlosung*. It was reported that “very young girls, some even under 16 years of age” were having repeated and indiscriminate sexual relations with soldiers.¹³⁵ The youth protectors were legitimately concerned about the safety of female adolescent workers returning home from late shifts through the blacked-out city. Still, they blamed “irresponsible young soldier’s wives [who] pursue[d] their own pleasures and [did] not care for their children.”¹³⁶ While husbands were fighting at the front lines, these ‘warrior wives’ were charged with conducting themselves in a questionable manner. Observers claimed that “the addiction to pleasure [Vergügungssucht] among wives of conscripts is constantly on the rise” and cited as evidence complaints about women leaving their young children alone in apartments to hang around in bars and restaurants or go to the movies.¹³⁷ *Oberführsorgerinnen* across Hamburg bemoaned the rising divorce rates and blamed this on the moral dissolution of women, while soldiers, replenishing their fighting spirit in these sexual encounters generally escaped reproach.¹³⁸ On the other hand, school girls, some as young as fourteen, were expelled from school once their sexual transgressions became known to the authorities.¹³⁹ What troubled the Consortium even more than the tender age of these vectors for venereal disease was the observation that fewer numbers of girls used their sexuality as a source of income. The

¹³⁵ See Referat Blunk “Entwicklung und Erscheinungsformen der Jugendkriminalität in Hamburg seit Kriegsbeginn.” Niederschrift über die Aussprache der 5. Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege. 5 Jul 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11. See further the excerpts from monthly and quarterly reports of welfare workers in StAHH 345-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b. and 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG 30.70.

¹³⁶ See Referat Blunk “Entwicklung und Erscheinungsformen der Jugendkriminalität in Hamburg seit Kriegsbeginn.” Niederschrift über die Aussprache der 5. Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege. 5 Jul 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11.

¹³⁷ Often, one observer noted, mothers are “addicted to pleasure” and take it upon themselves to teach their daughters detrimental moral conduct. See 361-2 Oberschulbehörde VI 1541 report 18 September 1942. See further Auszug des Kurzbereichs der Kreisdienststelle 4a, 3 May 1940. in StAHH 345-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b

¹³⁸ See for example StAHH 345-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b Kreisstelle 4b 24 Nov 1941.

¹³⁹ Niederschrift über die 8. Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege, 7 Feb 1941 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11

statistics regarding sexual promiscuity seemed to imply the “utter abandon of girls to their sex-drive [*Triebleben*]” rather than being the result of economic hardship.¹⁴⁰

While the causes of criminality and sexual transgressions were intimately linked in the minds of welfare workers and experts on juvenile delinquency, sexuality soon trumped other symptoms of moral decline in adolescent social behaviors, because it could easily be linked with fears of racial contamination. This necessitated a careful exploration of the interaction between genetic predisposition and environmental influence on the person in question. Since female sexual promiscuity was characterized as an abnormality even more so in the case of adolescents, the alarming surge in sexually transmitted diseases weighed heavily on the minds of administrators and educators in Hamburg.

Welfare workers identified excessive *Triebhaftigkeit* [lack of restraint] in women and girls as one of the prime mediators between environmental and hereditary causes for the symptoms of *Verwahrlosung*. The lack of self-restraint, “which generally expresses itself in sexual matters, [appears] also in inordinate love for pleasure and unrestrained addiction to cinema,” the representative from the social welfare office, Frau Director Cornils, reported. Excessive pursuit of entertainment, of pleasure, of cinema, appeared to result from the same weakened hereditary predispositions that were presumed to underly uninhibited sexuality. Moreover, these traits seemed to reinforce each other. Frau Director Cornils explained that most girls cannot be considered hereditarily ill but *anlagengeschwächt* and listed dishonesty, irresponsibility, laziness, frivolousness, and *Triebhaftigkeit* as the most commonly enfeebled hereditary traits. She concluded that “genetics weigh heavily on the paths of life’s fate,” especially in the case of *Triebhaftigkeit*, which finds a hotbed in the “entertainment districts of the cities [and] areas contaminated by prostitution.” These urban preconditions were particularly precarious, when the person in question had been raised under conditions characterized by “an alcoholic father; a neglectful and slovenly mother; cramped, poor living quarters; earlier abuse through unscrupulous elements” and so forth. Since weakened genetic traits

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

were thought to render individuals more susceptible to environmental factors, the city itself progressively represented the greatest threat to the efforts of the Consortium.¹⁴¹

Physical disease was a symptom of a much larger and potentially far more dangerous social phenomenon that directly undermined National Socialist ideas about Aryan racial supremacy. Hence, rather than focusing on internal hereditary conditions as a cause of moral decay, local state officials blamed the effects of a seductive leisure culture, of sexualizing content of films and increasingly pornographic pulp fiction on the deterioration of public decency in the absence of the disciplining hand of the familial father.¹⁴²

Members of Hamburg's Consortium for the Protection of Youth were certain that the described dereliction of moral values and public behaviors they observed could best be explained by the increasing sexualization of life due to modern entertainment media.¹⁴³ They devoted special attention to the "deplorable" conditions in literature, theater and film, and organized a special workshop for the identification, collection and abatement of *Schmutz und Schund*.¹⁴⁴ During the first meeting on July 31, the workshop focused its deliberations on the effects of erotic images and texts in pulp fiction. Sieverts argued that it was hardly a coincidence that criminal and morally-compromised adolescents "read pulp fiction and viewed films of appalling quality on a large scale." He

¹⁴¹ See Niederschrift über die 3. Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege. Aussprache 25 Apr 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11 In 1939 Hamburg recorded 876 cases of VD which required hospitalization. Report from 6 Apr 1940 in StAHH Sozialbehörde I GF 33.10 Band 1. By 1943 the city pooled resources from the Hauptgesundheitsamt, der Gesundheitsfürsorge des Pflegeamts und des Landesjugendamt in providing guidelines for the battle against VD in Hamburg. See Richtlinien für die Zusammenarbeit des Hauptgesundheitsamt, der Gesundheitsfürsorge des Pflegeamts und des Landesjugendamt bei der Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten in der Hansestadt Hamburg 25 Feb 1943 in StAHH Sozialbehörde I GF 33.10 Band 1

¹⁴² In contrast, immediately after the seizure of power, the administration in Hamburg approached the issue of sexually permissive women primarily from a biological perspective and moved to declare them legally incompetent, incarcerate them, and if possible sterilize them. Compare in particular, Letter by chief criminal inspector, October 10, 1933. in 351-10 Sozialbehörde I, EF70.15 Band I. See Letter to the president of the district court by Prof. Petersen and Senator Martini, 25 Jan 1935 in StAHH, 351-10 Sozialbehörde I, EF70.21 and a later publication by Käthe Petersen, "Entmündigung geisteschwacher Prostitutierter" in *Zeitschrift fuer psychische Hygiene* Band 15, Heft 4/6 (January 1943): 67-76.

¹⁴³ StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I-IV VT38.11 Niederschrift der Aussprache über Jugendschutz im Kriege 7 Mar 1940.

¹⁴⁴ See Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Arbeitskreises zur Bekämpfung von Schmutz und Schund. 31 Jul 1940.

further argued that the cinema clearly lacked any positive influence on the spiritual proclivities [*Geisteshaltung*] of young people in general.¹⁴⁵ Sieverts insisted that the highly sexualized materials in film and pulp fiction had a negative effect, from both a biological and a moral perspective. He explained that “the life of youth in the big cities, especially during adolescence [*Reifezeit*], is often meaningless.” Young people were predisposed, he suggested, to seek out leisure activities that had the most harmful moral and biological effects. As a result, “urban youth are subject to a general process of acceleration.” Boys and girls were not only physically taller but they also entered puberty “on average two years earlier than before the World War.”¹⁴⁶ Pediatricians were concerned that such developments were extremely unhealthy and surmised that they resulted from “the boundlessness of stimuli that to an ever increasing extent assails our youth.” Street traffic, cinema and the print media were thought to be the most powerful sources of such unhealthy overstimulation. Claiming that the annulment of the law against *Schmutz und Schund* in 1934 had hidden the matter of filth and trash in literature and film from public view, the workshop set out to examine what they considered insidious publications. Slamming about twenty magazines on the table, Sieverts asked workshop participants to get to work in the hope that Governor Karl Kaufmann would, in his office as Reich’s defense commissioner, utilize “the instruments of power of the New State” to ban and confiscate the identified material in Hamburg, thus setting an example for the Reich to do the same.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Arbeitskreises zur Bekämpfung von Schmutz und Schund. 31 Jul 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT 38.11.

¹⁴⁷ The fight against trashy publications was, however, continued in certain provinces of the Reich even though the Reich’s chamber for literature refused to ban or take out of circulation the identified materials. See protocol from the Rheinprovinz regarding the measures against youth endangerment during the war especially due to pornographic literature [*Nacktliteratur*] attached to Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Arbeitskreises zur Bekämpfung von Schmutz und Schund. 31 Jul 1940 StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT 38.11 Senator Prellwitz specifically instructed assembled to investigate the suitability of film magazines. Niederschrift über die 2. Sitzung des Arbeitskreises zur Prüfung und Schmutz und Schund 7 Aug 1940. Problematic literature included *Mocca*, *Die Muskete*, unnamed crime-novellas and Nacktkulturliteratur, moreover novellas such as *Ich zwinge dich zu deinem Glück*, *Unterbrochene Hochzeitsreise*, *Ein Kuss Madame*, *Ernst heiratet eine Theory*, and *Barbara im Liebesfeuer* See Niederschrift über die 6. Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege 27 Sep 1940

Workshop participants were clearly enraged by the execrable standards of the popular literature of the day, but they also argued that the cinema merited much greater attention than the theater or vaudeville revues because “adolescents are much more affected by film than stage plays” and attend movie-screenings in much larger numbers.¹⁴⁸ While local critics of the Third Reich’s media policies did not explicitly deny film’s place in the realm of high art, they argued that the artistic value of any given film would be lost to the immature mind. They speculated that most adolescents went to the movies out of boredom rather than to satisfy their artistic or educational curiosity. Even though the Consortium did not collect data to support these assumptions, they felt it was reasonable to assume that both adolescents and adults went to the cinema for rather banal reasons.¹⁴⁹ A careful reading of diaries confirms that suspicion. The 57 year old Hugo B., for example, who was stationed at various branches of the concentration camp Neuengamme from June 1944 to the end of the war, wrote diligently to his wife in Hamburg, detailing his mundane tasks and his multiple visits to the movies. He went to see the same film several times – he later couldn’t even remember the title – but all of his attempts to finish a rather unspectacular movie were interrupted by alarm. So he kept coming back.¹⁵⁰

Like their elders the young went to the movies rather than volunteering for chores to assist the *Volksgemeinschaft* through the various Hitler Youth activities.¹⁵¹ This public

¹⁴⁸ Niederschrift über die 2. Sitzung des Arbeitskreises zur Bekämpfung von Schmutz und Schund. 7 Aug 1940. The workshop reports that responses to a survey indicate that in the city 18.5% of adolescents go to the movies weekly, 51.3% occasionally and 30.2% never. There is no record of the survey and much of the observations are mostly likely taken from Alois Funke’s book on the endangerment of youths due to cinema, published in 1934, as the workshop participants had hardly enough time to collect a significant number of responses in a week’s time. It seems that the attendance rate in 1940 was much higher as cinema attendance between 1934 and 1940 increased significantly overall, it is implausible that the numbers from 1934 would still be accurate in 1940.

¹⁴⁹ DTA Emmendingen 1454/I *Liehebriefe auf KZ Wache*.. See in particular 6 Jan 1945 and 7 Jan 1945, pages 109-115

¹⁵⁰ DTA Emmendingen 1454/I *Liehebriefe auf KZ Wache*. 2 Sep 1944. page 39

¹⁵¹ See in particular Kathrin Kollmeier. *Ordnung und Ausgrenzung. Die Disziplinarpolitik der Hitler-Jugend* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 2007); Michael Kater. *Hitler Youth* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Hans-Christian Brandenburg *Die Geschichte der HJ* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik Berend von Nottbeck, 1982) and Arno Klönne *Jugend im Dritten Reich. Die Hitler-Jugend und ihre Gegner. Dokumente und Analysen* (Köln: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1982

display of boredom was more than a slap in the face of the NS youth organization – it was an overt demonstration of disrespect to the useful service that Hitler Youth and BDM squads provided on the home front. Youth reformers were quick to postulate that adolescents were primarily driven in their actions by erotic motives and other subconscious needs. Herein the workshop participants relied solely on the ‘findings’ of Alois Funke.¹⁵² In 1933 Funke had interviewed young boys and girls about their cinematic habits and the Consortium now reiterated that film moved adolescents in a negative way – a way that compromised their sense of reality, that drew them into the action of the film, that excited and aroused them unnaturally.¹⁵³ The Consortium failed to take into account, however, that Funke’s research was conducted in 1933. The purpose of his data then was to give support to Nazi claims that Weimar culture as a whole and film in particular were nothing but Jewish-capitalist exploitation on the sexual sensibilities of immature individuals.

For the Consortium to conclude that almost all films in 1940 were “riddled with erotic scenes” was a grave reproach that directly contradicted the national consensus on film as an ideological weapon and called into question the benefit of such Nazi institutions as the Hitler Youth’s weekly film screenings. The Consortium insisted that because “films which entail no love-scenes whatsoever, do not exist,” the healthy sexual development of adolescents is *continuously* in danger of being corrupted.¹⁵⁴ The Consortium explicitly castigated not only the press in Hamburg for uncritically applauding every film, even those of the lowest quality. Its members also leveled overt criticism at the party and the state for allowing the film industry to produce films of such cheap and corrosive eroticism.¹⁵⁵ The effects, Prof. Dr. Mulzer, explained were most noticeable in young women. Dr. Mulzer and prosecutor Blunk explained that even films

¹⁵² Alois Funke, *Film und Jugend: Eine Untersuchung über die psychischen Wirkungen des Films im Leben der Jugendlichen* (München: Ernst Reinhardt, 1934)

¹⁵³ Niederschrift über die 2. Sitzung des Arbeitskreises zur Bekaempfung von Schmutz und Schund. 7 Aug 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT 38.11.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*

distinguished as ‘artistically valuable’ by the Reich’s censorship office had been found to “slowly prepare female adolescents for fornication.”¹⁵⁶

It is remarkable that members of the Consortium refrained from mentioning specific films. The gaping absence of specific references was most likely a concession to the power of the Propaganda Ministry. However, the challenge leveled by the excessively vague reports was a far greater than disapproval of individual films.¹⁵⁷ The very general language that pervades the 1943 report of the Consortium insisted that most films, and almost all entertainment films, were utterly detrimental to the moral and mental well-being of the younger generation, but particularly harmful to the sexual ethics of young women.¹⁵⁸ Instead of a criticism of a specific cultural product, the Consortium exposed the transience of the entire Nazi cultural project and implied that it was ultimately a failure.

Small Pleasure and Disciplinary Measures

The work of the Consortium for the Protection of Youth in Hamburg should be viewed in terms of its inter-administrative and national contexts. The NSV (*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*) was the first of Hamburg’s institutions to address war-related dangers to youth. In October 1939, the NSV suggested the institutionalization of a special curfew for adolescents, but Police Chief Kehrl rejected the proposition both as both unnecessary and unfeasible.¹⁵⁹ The office for social welfare, however, increased its surveillance efforts at request of Senator Martini and the reports of *Führsorgerinnen* and *Oberführsorgerinnen*

¹⁵⁶ This seems to be based on Alois Funk again. The workshop participants neither name films nor individuals that had to endure the horrific effects of film viewing.

¹⁵⁷ Complaints about individual films to the RFK were not uncommon. Compare BArch R 109 II 5 Herein complaint about Heinz Rühmann’s film *Der Engel mit dem Seitenspiel*. In BArch NS 18/ 348 we find complaints about *Die Feuerzangenbowle*, *Ich liebe Dich*, and a complaint by the Gauleiter of Sudentenland about *Die goldene Stadt*.

¹⁵⁸ See Geschäftsbericht der Gauarbeitsgemeinschaft fuer Jugendbetreuung in Hamburg. 1940-1943. in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT 38.11

¹⁵⁹ Schreiben vom Amt fuer Volkswohlfahrt, an die Arbeitsgemeisnchaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege, 8 Aug 1940 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343c

became an essential tool in monitoring public morale and conduct.¹⁶⁰ During the fall of 1939 these reports indicated the administration's discontent with young women who quit their jobs when they became eligible for state support as a result of their marriage to an active soldier.¹⁶¹

In early 1940s instances of adolescent transgression increased. There were 160 reports by police patrols of adolescents loitering in Hamburg's red-light district. The frequent incidences of public dancing were also lamented. To protect female minors from moral dissolution, the Hamburg police intensified the surveillance of adolescents and came to rely more and more on Hitler Youth patrols for information.¹⁶² In this way, the police stumbled on the Swing Kids, Hamburg's most famous examples of civil disobedience. The Swing Kids or Swing Youth first came to the notice of the authorities in 1938.¹⁶³ According to the HJ report, close to 500 adolescents gathered in a back room of the dapper Kaiserhof in Altona on 3 February 1940 to listen to English-language swing and jazz records. Even in the presence of the Gestapo, the boys and girls danced "holding hands and then bent over each other with their upper body limp and tilted forward, their long hair disheveled in their faces and knees half-bent throwing their legs about."¹⁶⁴ A month later, again as the result of a tip from the Hitler Youth, forty Gestapo and criminal police officers cracked down on various gatherings of Swing Youths in Hamburg, closing down the premises and meticulously recording the names, ages, and addresses of 408 young people.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ See internal memo from 30 September 1939 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

¹⁶¹ Compare various Stimmungsberichte der Kreisdienststellen November 1939 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

¹⁶² Niederschrift über die Sitzung betr. Verwahrlosung der Jugend als Begleiterscheinung des Krieges. 2 Feb 1940 354-5 Jugendbehörde. I. 343c

¹⁶³ Gauarbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendbetreuung, 'Arbeitskreis zur Bekämpfung von Jugendkriminalität und Jugendgefährdung. 2 Feb 1943 361-2 Oberschulbehörde VI 1541

¹⁶⁴ Schreiben an Gebietsführer Kohlmeyer vom HJ STreifendienst 8 Feb 1940 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde. I. 343c

¹⁶⁵ Aktennotiz: Razzia im Curio-haus am 2.3.40. and letter from Hitler Youth leader Nygaard to Kohlmeyer 6 Mar 1940. in 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343c.

While the Anglophile attire as well as the English music scandalized local authorities, it was the Gestapo who interpreted the unfamiliar dance moves to tunes like the “Tiger Rag;” the predominantly English conversations and the fashion statements of umbrellas, tweed-jackets, and lipstick as *staatsfeindlich*. Gauleiter Kaufmann was more worried about the city gaining a negative reputation in Berlin than about the organized subversion of National Socialist ideology by swing-dancing (mostly middle class) adolescents.¹⁶⁶ The behavior of these predominantly 14 to 19 year-olds in the Curio-Haus appeared to Kaufmann and to the people working for him in the Social Welfare Office to be an unfortunate but ultimately controllable side-effect of war rather than as resistance to Nazi ideology. Acknowledging these incidences as potentially subversive would have called Kaufmann’s ability to enforce discipline in the city into question and the direct interference of the Gestapo had the potential of undermining his power and standing within the Party. Accordingly, Kaufmann responded in person and moved to coordinate “the numerous agencies in the party, state, municipality and the army concerned with the welfare [of youth]” under the aegis of individuals whose personal loyalty to Kaufmann was beyond question.¹⁶⁷ After consulting with Senators Witt and Kohlmeyer, as well as Chief of Police Kehrl, Kaufmann order the formation of the Consortium for Youth Protection in Wartime, the first such group in the Reich. Members met for the first time on March 7, only days after the Curio-Haus roundup.¹⁶⁸ In October 1941 the Reich followed up with its own Consortium for the Protection of Youth. In the summer of 1942 they ordered the organization of Gau-Consortia for the Supervision of Youth, mandating the reorganization of existing consortia in the Gaue Niederrhein, Moselland, Nordsee, Hamburg and Niederschlesien.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Gauarbeitsgemeinschaft fuer Jugendbetreuung, ‘Arbeitskreis zur Bekämpfung von Jugendkriminalität und Jugendgefährdung. 2 Feb 1943 StAHH 361-2 Oberschulbehörde VI 1541

¹⁶⁷ See StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11 Niederschrift der Aussprache über Jugenschutz im Kriege 7 Mar 1940.

¹⁶⁸ Geschäftsbericht der Gauarbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendbetreuung in Hamburg, 1940-1943. StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11.

¹⁶⁹ Deutscher Gemeindetag Nr III 1806/42. Letter to the regional youth departments 25 Jul 1942 StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VZ38.10

During the inaugural meeting of the Hamburg Consortium for the Protection of Youth, Party Comrade Eckhard, the representative of the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*), still insisted on taking seriously the threat of “political debilitation [*politische Verwahrlosung*]” since, as the Curio-Haus incident revealed, “there are sizable groups of politically estranged [*politisch abseitsstehend*] adolescents.”¹⁷⁰ Subsequent assemblies no longer focused on the activities of Swing Kids. Instead, they concentrated on combating urban mobility and the corrupting influence of film and pulp fiction. In the fall of 1940 a renewed series of arrests pushed the Swing Youth further from public view. From then on, the Swing Kids gathered in smaller groups in private homes usually under the protection their parents. Since early 1942, Kriminalrat Hintze admitted “nothing of relevance about the Swing Youth has come to the notice of the authorities.”¹⁷¹ And *Oberbannführer* Paul insisted that the Anglophile affectation was only fashion statement that disappeared after the first roundups. He urged those “Hamburg departments that had sent reports on the Swing-Youth” to send concluding reports to Berlin. The reports should explain, Paul insisted, “that the Swing Youth, contrary to earlier fears, was a phenomenon that had been confined to a rather limited circle of minors and has henceforth been eradicated in Hamburg.”¹⁷² Even though *Oberführersorgerinnen* continued to occasionally mention Swing Youth until 1944, the matter was officially solved – for Hamburg in any case.

While the authorities in Hamburg continued to insist that any presumed threat emanating from the Swing Youth was greatly exaggerated, the incident in the Kaiserhof and the Curio-Haus made considerable waves in Berlin and inspired a sizable literature

¹⁷⁰ See StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11 Niederschrift der Aussprache über Jugenschutz im Kriege 7 Mar 1940.

¹⁷¹ Gauarbeitsgemeinschaft fuer Jugendbetreuung, ‘Arbeitskreis zur Bekaempfung von Jugendkriminalitaet und Jugendgefahrdung. 2 Feb 1943 361-2 Oberschulbehörde VI 1541

¹⁷² *ibid.*

on adolescent nonconformity.¹⁷³ The Reichsführer SS and Chief of Police responded swiftly by launching a comprehensive Police Ordinance for the Protection of Youth in Wartime on 9 March 1940, which was posted to all the police departments across the Reich.¹⁷⁴ Until the new Protection of Young Persons Act of 1943,¹⁷⁵ the Police Ordinance provided the legal basis for curbing the mobility of youth and counteracting juvenile crime in wartime,¹⁷⁶ It was “the harshest and most comprehensive measure ever enacted for the protection of youth.”¹⁷⁷ The dangers to adolescents addressed by the ordinance were hardly unique, but the combination of excessive prohibitions and wide-ranging flexibility regarding local enforcement of these was more comprehensive.¹⁷⁸ The Police Ordinance banned adolescents from streets and public places after dark, which was its most important feature to members of Hamburg’s Consortium.¹⁷⁹ It allowed authorities to take action against the “roaming adolescents” and “gathering of hooligans [Halbstarke] for the purpose of debating, flirting, and other kinds of horseplay.”¹⁸⁰ The Ordinance purposefully did not define “public,” leaving the term to be “applied appropriately”

¹⁷³ Otto Bender. *Swing unterm Hakenkreuz in Hamburg: 1933-1943* (Hamburg: Christians, 1993); Ursel Hochmuth and Gertrud Meyer. *Streiflichter aus dem hamburger Widerstand 1933-1945* ((Frankfurt a.M: Röderberg, 1980); Kater Michael. *Gewagtes Spiel: Jazz im Nationalsozialismus*.(Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1995); Arno Klönne. *Gegen den Strom: Bericht über Jugendwiderstand im Dritten Reich* (Hannover: Norddeutsche Verlagsanstalt Goedel, 1957); Gunter Lust. *The Flat Foot Floogee ... treudeutsch, treudeutsch: Erlebnisse eines Hamburger Swingheinis* (Hamburg: Dölling and Galitz, 1992); Bernd Polster. *Swing Heil: Jazz im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Transt, 1989); Peter Steinbach. *Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), Jörg Überall. *Swing Kids* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2004) and Detlev Peukert. *Die Edelweisspiraten : Protestbewegungen Jugendl. Arbeiter Im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation*. (Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1980.)

¹⁷⁴ Runderlass der Reichsführung SS Chef der Deutschen Polizei 18 Mar 1940. in 3510-10 Sozialbehörde I VT 38.11.

¹⁷⁵ See Kollmeier, 86

¹⁷⁶ Rundererlass der Reichsführung SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei

¹⁷⁷ See report of criminal inspector Geib, 25 Apr 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I, VT38.11

¹⁷⁸ Civil Servant Lemcke elaborated on the dangers that faced adolescent during the First World War and reviewed the measures taken by the Imperial Government to counteract these dangers. The respective prohibitions and stipulations of were almost identical in both wars.

¹⁷⁹ Rundererlass der Reichsführung SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei S-V A3 Nr. 382/40 II vom 18 Mar 1940.

¹⁸⁰ Niederschrift der 2. Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege, 4 Apr 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde VT 38.11.

because of the recognition that “darkness entices young people to rather harmless escapades which soon turn into evil mischief or even criminal activities.”¹⁸¹ Obviously entering public spaces after dark for legitimate reasons such as returning home from work or HJ service did not fall under the ordinance. Subsequent articles defined the potential destinations of these “roaming adolescents” more narrowly and banned individuals under the age of 18 from restaurants (including all such establishments “in which beverages, victuals, or stimulants [*Genussmittel*] are offered for consumption as part of the business operation”), cinemas, vaudevilles, cabaret shows, public dances [*Tanzlustbarkeiten*], public shooting galleries and gambling casinos.¹⁸²

Local administrators and welfare workers quickly realized that the Police Ordinance was largely unenforceable and did not provide them with the adequate disciplinary tools to crack down on the kinds of behaviors *they* deemed most dangerous to society in general. Sieverts’ criminal pedagogy emphasized re-education based on strict discipline and a rigorous separation of juvenile delinquents from their adult counterparts.¹⁸³ He lamented that “unfortunately we still lack the legal [*reichsrechtlich*] means to impose weekend incarceration sentences on young people or perhaps a fortnightly arrest instead of their short term imprisonment.” Sieverts, an enthusiastic participant in national discussions concerning this matter, expected the Reich to provide the necessary legal tools shortly.¹⁸⁴ And on July 25, 1940, Reinhard Heydrich, acting as a proxy of Reichsführer SS, Heinrich Himmler, informed the provincial governments and the inspectors of the security police and security service that the Reich Youth Leadership decreed youth arrest as a disciplinary measure [*Dienststrafe*] of the Hitler Youth to

¹⁸¹ Runderlerlass der Reichsfuehrung SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei S-V A3 Nr. 382/40 II vom 18 Mar 1940.

¹⁸² *ibid.*

¹⁸³ In addition to Sieverts own statements that more then suggest his involvement and contribution in conceptualizing youth arrest as noted in the protocols of the consortium, see *Akademie für Deutsches Recht 1933-1945. Protokolle der Ausschüsse*. Band XI ed. Werner Schubert. (Berlin: DeGryter, 2001) and Katrin Kollmeier, *Ordnung und Ausgrenzung: Die Disziplinarpolitik der Hitler-Jugen* (Göttingen: Vandehoeck & Ruprecht, 2007),80-81.

¹⁸⁴ Referat von Prof. Dr. Sieverts über Jugendkriminalität und Jugendverwahrlosung seit 1933 in Hamburg” in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I-IV VT38.11 Niederschrift der Aussprache über Jugenschutz im Kriege 7 Mar 1940.

become effective as of September 17, 1940 and that it be enforced by the municipal police upon instruction of a special agent (*Sonderbeauftragten*) of the Reich's Youth leadership.

The *Dienstpflicht*, the mandatory Hitler Youth service for boys and girls ten years and older, was introduced in 1939 and implemented in the spring of 1940.¹⁸⁵ Even though the complete registration of young people remained administratively impossible and was not successfully realized until 1943/44, it provided the basis for and rationale of the youth arrest.¹⁸⁶ Instead of requiring the involvement of the municipal courts, the disciplinary measure of the Hitler Youth allowed individual officers of the local police to incarcerate young people at the local police office or within the facilities of the secret police (*Geheime Staatspolizei, Gestapo*).¹⁸⁷ In practice, however, the measure insured the continued involvement of the Gestapo and the Hitler Youth in the communal project of youth reform. The cooperation between the HJ and police in patrolling the city's entertainment establishments was bound to lead to jurisdiction conflicts. The leader of district 2a reported in February 1942 that the police withdrew from the cooperative patrols with the Hitler Youth because they no longer deemed it necessary since public dancing had been banned. At the same time, the field staff of the Social Welfare Office (*Führsorgerinnen*), who considered regular patrols essential, found it utterly unacceptable to subordinate themselves to the leadership of the Hitler Youth representatives.

While the founding of the Consortium for the Protection of Youth in Wartime was a direct municipal response to the activities of the Swing Youth, it also was a vehicle for the political activity and ideological zeal of welfare workers and youth reformers who were not prepared to surrender the idea of social reform to the repressive apparatus of the

¹⁸⁵ See ordinances regarding the Hitler Youth Law from Januar 12, 1936 which were decreed on March 25, 1939 and re-articulated the claim that the entire education and care of youth outside of school and home fell into the domain of the Hitler Youth and further making service in the Hitler Youth mandatory for all youths ages 10 to 18. Cited in Arno Klönne *Jugend im Dritten Reich: Die Hitler-Jugend und ihre Gegner* (Köln: Eugen Dietrich Verlag, 1984), 36-37. Compare further Gerhard Wehner. *Die rechtliche Stellung der Hitler-Jugend* (Dresden: Verlag M Dittert, 1939),99. The Hitler Youth was responsible for youth outside of family and school.

¹⁸⁶ Compare Kollmeier, 200.

¹⁸⁷ Erlass des Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei, 25 Jul 1940 Abschrift in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT 38.11.

Gestapo. Setting the agenda and producing examples of moral decay occupied the members of the Consortium, and these agile servants of the state in Hamburg placed responsibility for the growing dangers to youth squarely on the authorities in Berlin. Working against the stigmas that Swing Youth's activities had given rise to – namely that strong pro-British sentiments were prevalent within Hamburg's society – Prof. Sieverts personal commitment to fighting smut and trash in film and literature insured that the debates about youth problems in Hamburg were conveniently refocused.¹⁸⁸

It should be noted that the threat posed by the Swing Youth has been disproportionately represented in academic scholarship on civil disobedience and passive resistance in the Third Reich. The exaggerated response of Berlin did not fall on fertile ground in Hamburg, where administrators were adamant about eradicating any record of Swing Youth activity in order to keep the Gestapo agents out of local affairs. Most of the young people who identified themselves as Swing Youth came from middle class backgrounds and withdrew from rather than subverted Nazi discipline. They sought the types of adventure and entertainment that the Hitler Youth consistently failed to deliver. At the dance in the Curio-Haus, close to half of the 408 youths questioned were active members of the Hitler Youth and BDM. As later roundups confirmed, only a few adolescents were committed to Swing as a way of life. Listening to music, dancing and speaking in a special shared vocabulary were certainly expressions of discontent with wartime scarcity and the demands of increased service to the Reich. More importantly, these activities served as temporary distractions from the intense boredom and lack of opportunity experienced by teenagers and young adults.¹⁸⁹

In Hamburg, the existing sexual infrastructure was overwhelmed by the large numbers of young soldiers in the city. The state-mandated black outs presented far greater threats to public order than a few middle class delinquents with umbrellas. In December

¹⁸⁸ Sieverts worked tirelessly behind the scenes, rallying support for a workshop devoted to battling smut and trash in film and popular literature. See letters to Prof. Mulzer 15 Jun 1940, to Senatsdirektor Lindemann (Staatliche Pressestelle) 27 Jul 1940 and to Senatsdirektor Pg. Dr. Krebs (Amt für Kunst und Kulturangelegenheit) 10 Aug 1940 in 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VZ38.10

¹⁸⁹ Compare Niederschrift ueber die 6 Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendschutz im Kriege 27 Sep 1940. in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I, VT38.11

1939 *Oberfürsorgerinnen* reported that more youth patrols were desperately needed in the harbor region and Neustadt, Hamburg's hot spots for prostitution.¹⁹⁰ And even though the Police Ordinance was enthusiastically received by members of the Consortium, it reflected a fundamental disagreement between local and national agents of the Nazi regime. Administrators, politicians and social workers in Hamburg were deeply concerned about the loosening of sexual mores, which they had feared would happen since the onset of war. In the eyes of local observers, the thousands of soldiers and military personnel stationed in barracks on the outskirts of the city were a threat to the moral and social order. They were the main culprits for the dramatic deterioration in propriety and restraint of Hamburg's female population. However, the Police Ordinance explicitly excluded them from all of its strictures. The criticisms grew successively more intense. *Fürsorgerinnen* and the Consortium repeatedly lamented the lack of restraint by young soldiers and appealed to their superiors to reiterate the imperative of restraint, at least with regards to minors. The Consortium stopped short of blaming the military leadership and instead focused its criticism on the dearth of authority figures that usually kept the sexuality of women and girls in check.

However, in 1940 the military leadership was still certain of victory and considered soldiers' sexual access to German women or women of equal racial value paramount to German military viability.¹⁹¹ In December 1939, Heinrich Himmler, who was obviously aware of the threat posed by congregation of large numbers of soldiers in German cities, had considered "whether the moral dangers to adolescent girls might be attenuated through the establishment of additional brothels in which lecherous elements

¹⁹⁰ Auszüge aus Berichten der Kreisstellen und der Oberfürsorgerinnen, 1939-1943. Aktennotiz from 1 Dec 1939. in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b.

¹⁹¹ Compare Annette Timm "Prostitution, Venereal Disease, and Militarized Masculinity" (223-255) in *Sexuality and German Fascism*, 238. For a general overview of prostitution policies in the Third Reich see Julia Roos, "Backlash against Prostitutes Rights: Origins and Dynamics of Nazi Prostitution Policies" in *Sexuality and German Fascism* ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York: Berghahn 2005):67-94.

could find satisfaction.”¹⁹² Focused on alternatives for the sexual release of German fighting men, Himmler neither addressed nor felt the need to take seriously the daunting suspicion pervading local social workers’ discussions that the “lecherous elements” were congregating in front of the barracks as much as within. Annette Timm has convincingly argued that National Socialist ideology built on earlier views that considered normal male sexual urges to be uncontrollable. The Nazis “took this belief one step further, equating sexual gratification with masculine power.”¹⁹³

Fearing that men were bound to lapse into homosexuality in the absence of regular sexual outlets, Himmler constructed a bureaucratically controlled apparatus that would provide sexual relief as a major incentive for male and laborers. Only days after the invasion of Poland, a secret directive ordered the construction of numerous state-controlled brothels in larger cities whose explicit purpose it was to serve the sexual needs of fighting men. At the same time that local health officials, police and welfare workers cooperated in the control of prostitution, the increase in sexual permissive behavior and extramarital sex as a side effect of war confronted these local alliances in their fight against venereal disease. Welfare workers in Hamburg realized that most men did not fit Himmler’s model of the sexual automaton and that women’s need for sexual pleasure undermined the functionalization of male sexuality within the bureaucratic machinery of war.¹⁹⁴

In their insistence that sexual activity had the power to revitalize and rejuvenate the nation and hence justified both “sexual violence on the front and the provision of sexual gratification as a reward for military service,” Nazi leaders failed to take into account the need of both men and women for reciprocal human contact, whether that led

¹⁹² On March 7, Pg Eckhardt (Sicherheitsdienst) reported on his conversation with the Reichsführer SS, Heinrich Himmler regarding the question of youth dilapidation, during which Himmler supposedly suggested to outsource the sexual functions currently filled by adolescent girls to professional prostitutes which were subjected to mandatory medical examinations. Compare Niederschrift über die Aussprache ueber Jugendschutz im Kriege, 7 Mar 1940.

¹⁹³ Timm. 227

¹⁹⁴ Compare Timm , 247

to sexual intercourse or was just limited to flirtation and courtship.¹⁹⁵ While continuing to label promiscuity as a form of asocial behavior, local youth protectors in Hamburg assumed that young girls from respectable backgrounds were not likely to be seduced by soldiers unless they had been exposed to inappropriate leisure activities, reading materials, or films. Since its inception the Consortium for the Protection of Youth in Wartime explicitly lamented the general scarcity of suitable leisure activities for youth and focused their attentions on the presumably corrosive effects of film and pulp fiction.

The conflict between local authorities and their superiors at the level of the Reich boiled quietly below the surface. The establishment of brothels was neither a solution to the dramatic increase in the rise of venereal disease nor did it particularly diminish the desire for sexual encounters outside the state-controlled spheres of brothel and marriage. The Police Ordinance for the Protection of Youth was only a token acknowledgement of already obvious wartime disruptions. It did expand police surveillance and encourage cooperation between the police and the Hitler Youth, yet until the introduction of youth remand in the summer of 1940, the stipulations amounted to nothing more than empty threats with an extensive paper trail. Ultimately, even youth incarceration was ineffective in changing the behavior of adolescents and it had not effect on the behavior of the much derided soldier's wife.

Taking seriously the stresses on everyday life during war, welfare workers grew increasingly worried about what they perceived to be the escalating addiction to pleasure and sensation among Hamburg's population. *Führsorgerinnen* in all districts linked the moral fragility of soldiers wives with the growing numbers of dissolute adolescents. Welfare workers concluded that women who neglect their children and go to the movies or pubs, and especially those who leave children at home alone during bombing raids, displayed grave symptoms of excessive *Vergnügungssucht*.¹⁹⁶ At the same time, youth patrols observed that violations of the Ordinance were increasing and that "a large

¹⁹⁵ Timm, 255

¹⁹⁶ Auszug aus Bericht Kreisstelle 5b 29 Nov 1941. in 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b.

number of adolescents are not brought to their senses by weekend incarceration.”¹⁹⁷ The conduct of female adolescents particularly worried welfare workers who observed that young girls displayed the same unsound moral judgment as the consistently growing number of soldiers’ wives weakened by the absence of their husbands.¹⁹⁸ *Fürsorgerinnen* in St. Pauli explained that “many women suffer from loneliness; they can’t bear the absence of their husbands very well.” No longer were such complaints about women going out at night limited to “enfeebled women.” Increasingly women “who thus far made a sound and orderly impression, leave their children home alone while pursuing their own pleasures.”¹⁹⁹

Cumulatively the welfare reports suggested that the behavior of young people was intimately linked with the behavior of mothers, who were simultaneously cast as victims of war and as social predators. While boys whose mothers could no longer control them displayed symptoms of delinquency in the form of dishonesty, theft and *Arbeitsscheue*, girls’ symptoms were the exact mirror image of their mothers conduct.²⁰⁰

Frivolous initiations of friendships, intercourse with other men, and visits to night clubs are extraordinarily prevalent. Again and again one hears of mothers, who frequent pubs late into the night. It is surprising that the cinema matinees are visited so actively. The cuing in front of shops has largely ceased. Hence, in the mornings, when the children are in school, there is time for the movies. Women don’t take their time when cooking lunch anymore, or they don’t cook at all. Schools and daycare directors generally lament children’s much too frequent visits to cinemas and theaters. Many young people disregard the prohibitions and just sneak in. There are a fair number of children now, who intercept adult strangers in front of the movie theaters and ask them to take them in. Thus the imaginations of children are warped from watching too many films.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Auszug aus Bericht der Kreisstelle 8 24 Nov 1941 in 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b.

¹⁹⁸ Auszug aus Bericht der Kreisstelle 6a reports that girls between 14-15 often already have sexual intercourse. 31 Mar 1941 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b.

¹⁹⁹ Auszug aus dem Kurzbericht der Kreisstellenleiter und Oberfürsorgerinnen July 1941, Kreisstelle 3b. 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b.

²⁰⁰ Auzug Kurzbericht January 1941 Kreisstelle 5b 4 Jan 1941 in 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b.

²⁰¹ Auszug aus den Vierteljahresberichten der Kreisstellenleiter July 1943. Kreisstelle 23 Feb 1943 in 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b.

Yet pleasure-seeking was only one of the symptoms of the progressive dissolution of society. People were simply exhausted from the bombings, from standing in line for the most basic and always insufficient provisions, from the need to control their young and waiting for news from the front. Observers noticed the apathetic resignation of men and women throughout the city who were “under such duress due to work and duties and their own experiences that the strength ... for strong, lasting human emotions—be they joy or sorrow—no longer exist.”²⁰² While neighborhoods rallied together in the face of the first bombing raids on the city in May/June 1941, by the following summer local social networks started breaking down as a result of exhaustion and growing irritability. Disagreements and quibbles became the order of the day, further straining social relations.²⁰³ Even though the welfare workers cited an overabundance of free time as a reason for the misdemeanors and questionable conduct of women, time constricted for adults during the war. Hence the rare allotment of various treats, be they candy, wine, or a visit to the local movie theater, represented small but significant victories in the struggle against the overwhelming disorganization of everyday life. These were no longer simply mindless pleasures.

In contrast, war destabilized the routines of the younger generation. Their free time during the day expanded, while at the same time they experienced the terrible stresses that bedeviled their parents. Schools operated irregularly and when they were in session they didn't have the personnel to enforce attendance and monitor student progress.²⁰⁴ Willful and unexcused absences became the order of the day, and young people deliberately withdrew from the disciplinary grip of the authorities. At the same time, the Hitler Youth service grew in importance as it geared up to support the war effort. But it was impossible for the authorities to enforce the mandatory service for all children between 10 and 18, until well into 1943.²⁰⁵ Many adolescents evaded service

²⁰² Auszüge aus den Kurzberichten 8 Nov 1942 in 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VZ38.10

²⁰³ *ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Auszug aus Berichten der Kreisdienststellen und Obefürsorgerinnen. Kreisstelle 4a 1 Dec 1939, 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b.

²⁰⁵ Kollmeier. 199ff

without their parents' knowledge. Young people certainly felt the burden of their parents' lives as they assisted with household chores and childcare.²⁰⁶ The much despised Hitler Youth service meetings became an excuse to leave the house for an increasing number of adolescents. Their parents were often too exhausted to check whether they had actually attended a Hitler Youth event or ignored the fact that their children went to the movies with a couple of friends instead.²⁰⁷

The law banning youths from cinemas was particularly important to the authorities in Hamburg. The Consortium immediately bemoaned the lack of man power necessary to enforce the stipulations of the Police Ordinance. Since male authority figures were needed at the front, the ability of the state to actually enforce the stipulations left much to be desired. Rather than dwell on the ineffectuality of police control in Hamburg, the Consortium centered its criticism on the deplorable state of modern entertainment in the Reich and the vast amount of sexually explicit visual materials available. The experts reasoned that these images slowly prepared young girls to acquiesce to casual sexual activity. Local discussions regarding popular entertainment deplored "the much too lax attitude surrounding so-called g-rated films [*jugendfreier Filme*] through the film censorship office."²⁰⁸ Aware that local standards of propriety and modesty were much more conservative than those held in the central agencies in Berlin, Senator Martini demanded that the policing of the city's cinemas be considerably intensified. Individual Consortium members "point[ed] to the unsuitable selection of films in certain theaters for [designated] children's shows."²⁰⁹ The Consortium was eventually able to pressure Gauleiter Kaufmann into considering to enforce a ban on films and reading materials found unsuitable by local experts from Hamburg,

²⁰⁶ Kollmeier, 204ff

²⁰⁷ See Auszüge aus den Berichten der Kreisdienststellenleiter. Kreis 3b 25 Feb 1942. See also Bericht der Oberführerinnen Stand März 42, für Kreisdienststelle 2a, 25 Feb 1942. in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343b. Regarding incidents of dogging Hitler Youth service see also 2 Feb 1943 Gauarbeitsgemeinschaft fuer Jugendbetreuung, 'Arbeitskreis zur Bekämpfung von Jugendkriminalität und Jugendgefährdung. StAHH 361-2 Oberschulbehörde VI 1541.

²⁰⁸ Niederschrift über die 2. Sitzung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft fuer Jugenschutz im Kriege 4 Apr 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*

independent of the authorities in Berlin. They hoped that this would start a national trend.²¹⁰

By October of 1940, Sieverts realized that even though the Reich Chamber of Literature had finally bowed to local pressure and had banned approximately 20 of the most objectionable examples of pulp fiction. The ‘cinema-problem’ proved to be much harder to solve.²¹¹ Accordingly, administrators demanded that cinema owners should rigorously be held accountable if adolescents were routinely admitted to films that had not been approved as suitable for youth. This deflected the responsibility for adolescent transgressions to local cinema operators and to national institutions—which remained utterly unresponsive—for condoning the production of unsuitable cinematic fare in the first place. The local state thus relegated blame for moral debilitation both upward and downward. They reaffirmed the bond between the *Führer* and the *Volksgenossen*, which was so essential to National Socialism. The local administration was no longer culpable; responsibility for the failure to establish social control was conveniently reassigned to the Reich and the *Volk*.²¹²

Projections of War

At the same time that local administrators called the beneficial role of cinema into question, the Reich stepped up its movie-production, employing film as a weapon of war within and beyond the Reich’s boundaries. With few notable exceptions, the most popular

²¹⁰ Niederschrift über die Besprechung von Dr. Sieverts und Herrn Senator Dr. Becker. 2 Aug 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VT38.11

²¹¹ Letter from Sieverts to Prof. Mulzer 14 Oct 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VZ38.10

²¹² Yet the monthly reports of “Übertretungen der Jugendschutzverordnung” sent to Berlin lists between 30 and 40 cases of adolescents violating the particular stipulations with regards to movie-going. For example from the introduction of the police ordinance in mid March to the end of April, 1940 reported 40 cases of adolescents in movie-theaters after 9:00 PM, out of which 30 were male. In contrast 189 adolescents were found in violation of the ban of youth from public restaurants and over 600 individuals who visited public dances. Yet the Reich Youth Leader could slouch back in his chair by mid July when he received the report for June which listed no violation of the dance prohibition. See 354-5 Jugendbehörde I 343c. Various letters to the Reich Youth Leader. See in particular Schreiben an den Jugendführer des Deutschen Reichs, 16 Jul 1940. The Consortium for the Protection of Youth in Wartime, however, was quite comfortable assuming that the number of unreported cases was much higher.

and most (in)famous Nazi films were produced during the war years.²¹³ On the one hand, films such as *Der ewige Jude* (1940), *Jud Süß* (1940), and *Ich klage an* (1940), *Achtung! Feind hört mit!* (1940), *Heimkehr* (1941) were used to further anti-Semitism and visually reproduce the threat the German *Volk*. Films like *D III 88* (1939), *Feuertaufe* (1939/1940), *Wunschkonzert* (1940), *Kampfgeschwader Lützow* (1940/1), and the war epic *Kolberg* (1945) were employed to glorify war itself and celebrate military conquest. On the other hand, many films spoke to the seriousness of the time by highlighting tragic fates,²¹⁴ belaboring heroic sacrifices,²¹⁵ and celebrating the nation.²¹⁶ It was during the war years that Nazi cinema perfected its self-definition as popular cinema.²¹⁷

I argue that Nazi cinema decisively came into its own during the war years, not just as a vehicle of propaganda, but also as a Nazi art form. The National Socialists championed an artistic vision that valued *Volk* and monumentality simultaneously. Instead of adhering to rhetorically inflated standards of propriety, these productions fully exploited sensationalist emotions and sexual subtexts without publicly revising cinema's claims of authenticity.²¹⁸ War ultimately resolved the confusion over the meaning of *Wirklichkeitnähe* once the reality of everyday experience was clearly no longer mistaken for the reality supposed to be represented in films. Instead, cinema offered emotive

²¹³ Obvious exceptions include Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *Olympia* (1938),

²¹⁴ Veit Harlan *Die Goldene Stadt* (1942), Rolf Hansen *Die Große Liebe* (1941/2), Rolf Hansen *Damals* (1942/3)

²¹⁵ Gustav Ucicky *Mutterliebe* (1939), Veit Harlan *Die Reise nach Tilsit* (1939), *Opfergang* (1942/4), Rabenalt ... *reitet für Deutschland* (1940/41)

²¹⁶ Wolfgang Liebeneiner *Bismarck* (1940), Herbert Maisch *Friedrich Schiller* (1940) and Veit Harlan *Der Große König* (1940-2), Hans Steinhoff, Rembrandt, Herbert Selpin *Carl Peters* (1940/1), Werner Klinger, *Die Degenhardts* (1943/4) Erich Waschneck *Die Rothschildts* (1940)

²¹⁷ Hake, *Popular Cinema of the Third Reich*. Hake has convincingly argued that Nazi cinema was a popular cinema that shared much in its social function, mode of address, and reception with other popular cinemas of the time.

²¹⁸ See Sabine Hake for Nazi cinema's thrust for *Wirklichkeitsnähe* as politically and aesthetically motivated. (173-188) Also compare "Der Präsident der Reichsfilmkammer über die Aufgaben des Deutschen Films" in *Völkischer Beobachter* Berlin, 27 Oct 1935. "Der Weg des Films im neuen Reich" *Hamburger Anzeiger* 28 Mar 1936; "Gegen lebensfremden Film und nutzlose Diskussion" in *Hamburger Tageblatt*, 5 Mar 1938. See also "Die Anpassung und den Publikumsgeschmack: Filmschaffende dürfen Kunst nicht mit kuenstlichkeit verwechseln" in *Film-Kurier* 15 Dec 1938 and "Die Arbeitsparole für alle Filmschaffenden" in *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 5 Mar 1938.

alternatives to a factual reality, films that felt, sounded and looked as though they could be real.

The cluttered interior spaces and hectic narratives with their muted sexual subtexts in comedies and melodramas,²¹⁹ the melancholic dramas that bind female protagonists to the forces of nature,²²⁰ and the national epics that provided a historical anchor for claims of cultural dominance²²¹ together form a body of work that displays sufficient coherence and a variation on stylistic and ideological levels that allow for the whole to be recognized in each of its distinct parts. Despite being contained by the basic parameters of *volksgebunder Kunst*, the film industry freely dispensed visual and narrative pleasures. The wartime cinema grew self-consciously indulgent, excessive and sensationalist. The expensive wartime color films such as *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* (Jacoby, 1939-41), *Die Goldene Stadt* (Harlan 1942), *Immensee* (Harlan, 1943), *Opfergang* (Harlan 1942/4), *Die Frau meiner Träume* (Jacoby, 1944), *Große Freiheit Nr.7* (Käutner, 1943/5), and *Kolberg* (Harlan, 1943/5) attest to the regime's endorsement of pleasure as a remedy to wartime deprivation, but no one film illustrates this particular phenomenon better than Josef von Baky's fantasy *Münchhausen*.²²²

The discrepancies between local criticism of the cinema and the Reich's endorsement of film as a weapon of war manifest most clearly in *Münchhausen* (von Baky, 1943). The film provides the most vivid examples of the kinds of images that fueled the criticisms of the local protectors of youth in Hamburg; in fact it was the only film the Consortium openly criticized and cited as an example for the dangers of even

²¹⁹ Comedies such as *Nanette*, *Weltrekord im Seitensprung*, *Ich vertraue dir meine Frau an* (1942/43), *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* (1939/40), *Schrammeln* (1944), and *Die Feuerzangenbowle* (1943) and the revue films *Hallo Janine* (1939), *Wunschkonzert (1940)*, or *Fronttheater (1942)* illustrate the function of sexual subtexts within a tightly knitted bourgeois frame.

²²⁰ For example, films such as *Ihr erstes Erlebnis* (1939), *Es war eine rauschende Ballnacht* (1939), *Das Mädchen von Fanö* (1941), *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* (1942), *Nacht ohne Abschied* (1943), *Reise in die Vergangenheit* (1943), *Sommernächte* (1944), and *Nora* (1944) all present female leads in situations that are sexually and romantically conflicting ultimately providing resolution that recognizes the quality and character of the female protagonist by finding her a suitable mate or mentor.

²²¹ See in particular *Ohm Krüger* (1941), *der Große König* (1942), *Die Entlassung* (1942)

²²² It should be noted that none of these films was considered suitable for minors; they were either not approved for adolescents or explicitly prohibited for audiences under 18 years.

great art to the immature mind. At the same time, *Münchhausen* was touted by the regime as one of the most prestigious *Staatsauftragsfilme*. Fashioned for the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the Ufa, Germany's most prominent studio, the film ultimately cost more than 6.5 million Reichsmark.²²³ The production of *Münchhausen* preceded both the massive aerial bombardments of German cities and the defeat of the 6th army at Stalingrad. When it premiered in Berlin on March 5, only three days after British planes dropped 900 tons of bombs on the city, it was seen as a prescient example of Goebbels' attempt to "transform the military debacle into a spiritual renewal, the planning for and production of the film preceded both the massive aerial bombardments of German cities and the defeat of the 6th army at Stalingrad, even though *Münchhausen* was not conceived of as a response to military losses.²²⁴ The exigencies of war justified the cranking up of the pleasure dispenser even before Goebbels began entertaining the possibility of winning a war that had already been lost by sheer willpower alone.²²⁵ These circumstances notwithstanding, *Münchhausen* was primarily a tribute to Nazi film production and its transformation from an obscure nationalist heir to the financially ruined industry of the depression era into a cultural force of international relevance and renown that now forcefully articulated its challenge to Hollywood dominance.²²⁶

Scholars have made convincing arguments for the film's exceptional position in Nazi cinema. Certain features of the film, in particular its self-reflexivity and its reliance on fantasy were unique in the history of the regime's film production.²²⁷ The film was recognized as extraordinary and lauded as "the Third Reich's consummate cinematic

²²³ Rentschler, 194.

²²⁴ See Rentschler, 193. Shooting took place in Berlin Babelsberg, Bodenwerder, and Venice between April and December 1942. Compare Kreimeier, *Die Ufa Story: Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* (Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1992), 386ff www.filmportal.de

²²⁵ Here Veit Harlan's epic *Kolberg* appears as the last effort to mobilize the cinematic apparatus to proclaim the belief that willpower alone can reverse adverse material preconditions.

²²⁶ Linda Schulte-Sasse argues that "*Münchhausen's* raison d'être is to celebrate cinema." See *Entertaining the Third*, 302. Rentschler suggests that *Münchhausen* was at a testament to the war with the "German cinema's own past as well as with Hollywood competitors" (212).

²²⁷ See in particular Witte, Kreimeier, Schulte-Sasse, 303.

achievement.”²²⁸ The celebration of German cinema around *Münchhausen* and its refurbished tale of the Liar Baron’s many adventures – a film that details the movement of German men beyond national bounds sowing their wild oats and then returning home, ultimately devoting themselves to their patiently waiting wives – connects with wartime reality in slightly different ways than scholars have previously considered. The film is more than just an action-packed distraction from the everyday drudgery of life during war. It offers profound, gender specific commentary and commendations. In contrast to films tackling issues of potentially unfaithful wives caught in the constricting frame of bourgeois morality like *Eine Frau für drei Tage* (1943), a comedy with Heinz Rühmann, *Münchhausen* promises the making of new and better men by mixing three potent ingredients: adventure, war, and sexually available women.²²⁹

The adventure of war that *Münchhausen* celebrates and attempts to affirm was difficult to reconcile with the military situation after the fall of Stalingrad. *Münchhausen* invokes the atmosphere of the blitzkrieg victories, when German war heroes could return home and find a jubilant and intact society. When the film was released in early March 1943 the tide of war had turned. When Goebbels hoped to “transform the military debacle into a spiritual renewal,” he not only overestimated the transformative powers of film, but he was utterly oblivious to the protracted struggle between local administrators and a war-weary population.²³⁰ *Münchhausen* reached audiences on 16 September 1943, only weeks after British and American bombers had leveled the city between July 25 and August 3 during the most devastating series of raids Germany had experienced until then.²³¹ Due to heat and pressure massive conflagrations escalated into an inferno of unheard of proportions.

²²⁸ The first quotation is from Rentschler, 196, the second from Schulte-Sasse, 303.

²²⁹ Compare in particular Schulte-Sasse, 307

²³⁰ Rentschler, 193

²³¹ See advertisement in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 11 Sep 1943.

While *Münchhausen* certainly invited the kind of escapism most often associated with the film, scholars tend to construe this escape in terms of “therapeutic relief.”²³² By September, the Hamburg administration was struggling to restore the basic functioning of utilities, clear major traffic arteries, provide drinking water, and resume garbage collection while the population slowly began to adjust to life in overcrowded quarters, makeshift shelters, and bunkers. The *Hamburger Zeitung* described the local situation in the summer, by inverting observations. Offering a eulogy to the city’s “tenaciousness” and determination, the paper exclaims that “nobody between Elbe and Alster, wants to shirk from their new duties.”²³³ The soldiers of the home front would return to work and hold their positions at all cost, while armies of volunteers would offer their services to ensure the continued well-being of the population. The paper did not tire of lauding the selflessness and the communal closeness of a population that was supposedly exuding *Herzenswärme* [warmth]. If the *Hamburg Zeitung* had accurately captured the situation, the escape offered by *Münchhausen*, would have simply given its Hamburg patrons a few hours of respite. Yet as the welfare workers had observed since the beginning of the war, the entertainment and pleasure the regime provided for the population rarely resulted in an outpouring of recharged conscientiousness.

The relevance of *Münchhausen* is seen in a different light when one considers the protracted school closings, the disruptions to the gas, water, and electrical services, and the continued bombardment of a city that no longer had the man (or woman) power to control an increasingly mobile adolescent population. Much to the chagrin of Hamburg’s welfare workers, moviegoing proved to be also an actual escape from the duties of labor, family, and housework into the comfortable darkness of the cinema. Goebbels might very well have believed his own rhetoric when he explained that the problem of overcoming the current setbacks of the war was “primarily a psychological one.”²³⁴ But the material shortages and the resulting production bottlenecks that strained the “psychology” of the

²³² Rentschler, 195

²³³ “Hamburger Alltag” *Hamburger Zeitung* 7 Aug 1943

²³⁴ Quoted in Rentschler, 193

population soon affected the apparatus designated to provide the cure. By 1944 film production was severely hampered despite the fact that it had been declared a strategic industry.

The behaviors noted by Hamburg's welfare workers suggest that the state-mandated escapism did connect with everyday life in quite unproductive ways. As war dragged on and as the bombardment of German cities intensified, the general mood was characterized by apathy as well as hopelessness. The most menial tasks required immense willpower and determination. Instead of completing valuable services to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, women and adolescents took advantage of the therapeutic relief they found in the cinema. Film going was construed by the authorities in Berlin as a form of psychological recuperation, but local observers recognized the behavior of citizens for what it was: not merely an escape from personal hardship, but a retreat from a *Volksgemeinschaft* that increasingly resembled *Pflichtgemeinschaft*, a community of sacrifice.

While the Ministry of Propaganda (RMVP) and the Reich's Film Chamber (RFK) deliberately pursued a policy of entertainment and diversion as the war progressed, local debates over moral abandon, cultural decay and the various dangers to youth dragged film into the muck of smut and trash and revived anxieties about the modern era's most dangerous beast: the masses. This shift in perspective is illustrative of continuities that survived the Nazis' cultural revolution. Old ideas were reintroduced to defend the regime from the corrosive effects of its own cultural artifacts. *Münchhausen*, perhaps more than any other film, celebrated conditions that provided local administrators with many sleepless nights: The film translates the assumption that sexually available women are essential to the fighting power of German men into a fantastic lifeworld and deploys it in the context of the home front's dissolution. *Münchhausen* may have perfectly captured the sexual policies of the *Wehrmacht* but on the home front women were both victims of and hazards to the inevitable self-assertion of male prowess, as Hamburg's army of youth reformers observed on a daily basis.

Chapter 6

Out of War

‘Operation Gomorrha’ had stopped the clocks in Hamburg.¹ In just ten days, between 25 July and 3 August, roughly 2570 British bombers and an additional 600 US bombers dropped approximately 8.500 tons of explosive and fire bombs on the city in four nighttime and two daytime raids.² Tons of tin foil strips dropped from the sky blinded and ultimately incapacitated Hamburg’s anti-aircraft defense.³ The first attack took place in the night of 25 July and was directed against the inner city; the areas west of the Alster, Eimsbüttel, Harvestehude, and Altona’s city center were most severely hit. Two daytime attacks focusing on the harbor and surrounding areas followed on 26 and 27 July respectively. The worst destruction was brought on by the strike in the night before 28 July 1943. The densely populated new working class districts of Hamm, Hammbrook and Borgefele had filled with bomb victims from the first raids against the city center. In the night to July 28, they were flattened within three hours time. A firestorm, resembling a Tornado, developed as a result of the weather conditions which compounded the immense pressure and heat generated by the explosions, creating temperatures of 800 centigrade in some areas. Thousands died in the explosions, burned alive, suffocated in bunkers, and fell victim to the excessive heat. In the night before 30 July another fleet of British planes, struck a by now largely depopulated city, leading to further conflagrations

¹ Wolfgang Borchert. “Die Küchenuhr” *Das Gesamtwerk* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1949), 201-204.

² Ursula Büttner. “‘Gomorrha’ und die Folgen. Der Bombenkrieg.” (613-632) in *Hamburg im Dritten Reich* ed. Forschungstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2005), 616

³ Büttner, 616. See also the powerful descriptions by Hans Erich Nossack, *Der Untergang: Hamburg 1943*. 1948. (Hamburg Ernst Kabel Verlag, 1981). In this context, the controversial and problematically decontextualized book by Jörg Friedrich *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany, 1940-1945*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) also offers some valuable description.

covering vast parts of the razed city.⁴ On August 3, the British conducted a last and far less successful strike on Hamburg.

While the city had learned to live with bombs since the first air strikes of 18 May 1940 and 137 subsequent attacks until ‘Operation Gomorrha’ in July/August 1943,⁵ the experience of those tens days utterly exceeded everyone’s worst nightmares. Approximately 34,000 people died and an additional 900,000 were left without shelter since more than half of the remaining residential housing had been destroyed. Those who could tried to get out of the city after the first night of attacks, despite explicit prohibitions.⁶ Thousands left the city after the first attack, violating explicit orders by Kaufmann to remain calm and defend the city. The exodus continued over the next several days until Kaufmann sought to take charge of a situation that could no longer be stopped and organized the evacuation of roughly 800,000 of the estimated 900,000 bomb-refugees leaving Hamburg. Many were transported to temporary quarters across the Reich but before long most of the refugees returned. Immediately after the attacks the city’s population shrank to a quarter of its prewar size. However, many people returned already by the end of August and by the end of November the population again exceeded one million.⁷

The buildings’ silhouettes, the heaps of rubble, the stinking garbage piles remained the city’s only language of reproach long after the main traffic arteries had been cleared by the *Wehrmacht* and rudimentary relief reached the surviving citizens amidst the ruins. The administration struggled to ensure basic provisions for the population and repair the city’s infrastructure. Since the regime had expunged the language of defeat, the remaining years of war collapsed into a single moment of ‘hanging on.’ And the zeal of local welfare workers to reform the *Volksgemeinschaft* never quite recovered.

⁴ Büttner, 617.

⁵ Büttner, 614-5

⁶ Büttner, 621-22; 627.

⁷ *ibid.*

Beginning with this protracted moment of ‘hanging on,’ this chapter demonstrates the importance of film and film discourse in overcoming the *Zusammenbruchsgesellschaft* and articulating a local vision for a post-fascist future. It was in contrast to the state of emergency, in contrast to life amidst the rubble, in contrast to the excessive scarcity that characterized the last years of the war, that people in Hamburg imagined a postwar return to normality. Expecting radical change after surrendering to British forces, people in Hamburg resentfully adjusted to continued hardships, in particular the critical food shortages that shaped their multi-layered sense of victimization. This pervasive sense of victimization framed local interactions with the occupying authorities, effaced the suffering endured by the victims of Nazism from popular discourse, and shaped the political language that described the Nazi regime an alien force victimizing Germany. A view of Nazism as a *Betriebsunfall* of modern history underwrote Germany’s cultural revival.

In Hamburg, this chapter argues, film constituted an important venue for coming to terms with the present and for shaping a national future. Discussions about film and film production not only provided a space for local political participation but moreover opened up opportunities to articulate local visions for the city’s role in a post-fascist Germany. The first part of this chapter returns to the last years of war and maps out the disintegration of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in Hamburg. Even though war-weariness preceded “Operation Gomorrha,” the events of the summer in 1943 grounded the prevalent sense of victimization in a specific local trauma. Symbolic of the regime’s downfall and a monument to war, the destruction of Hamburg demanded radical change and anticipated the end of war as a blank slate of radically new beginnings.

After Gauleiter Kaufmann surrendered the city to British Forces on 3 May 1945 changes affecting everyday life were many and far reaching.⁸ But the continuities of need and want, traceable since the end of the First World War, would take much longer to unmake.⁹ The *Reichsnährstand* continued to issue ration cards (now to British allocation specifications) and almost immediately, people in Hamburg complained about British inefficiency. The military administration compared unfavorably to the exaggerated orderliness of Nazi provisioning.¹⁰ As war ceased to be an explanatory factor for suffering, food shortages, lack of raw materials and sluggish administrative adjustments, the continuation of scarcity appeared to be the result of caprice and incompetence on part of the occupiers. In short, the state of exception continued but the in light of war's end, it seemed no longer justifiable. The often quoted popular phrase "enjoy the war! The peace will be dreadful," may illustrate the extent to which Germans had anticipated retribution.¹¹ More importantly, this phrase expressed the expectation that the end of war was going to bring about dramatic change. The myth of the "zero hour" had long been in the making before the moment of its articulation finally arrived.

⁸ In a legendary move, Hamburg's foremost National Socialist "saved" the city from further destruction by handing it over to the British rather than defending it. Kaufmann's racism, corruption and hunger for power notwithstanding, the political elites in Hamburg described Kaufmann as an "island of relative reason" and claimed that his personality saved them from "participating in actions" or from gaining "knowledge of such plans and actions" that were tried at Nuremberg. The *Hamburger Freie Presse* even asserted that Kaufmann had had no knowledge of the going-ons at Neugengamme Konzentration Camp. See "Auch Kaufmann wußte nichts" *Hamburger Freie Presse* 10 Apr 1946. For a more comprehensive discussion of the Kaufmann-legend and an excellent study of his person and political career see Bajohr, Frank. "Gauleiter in Hamburg. Zur Person und Tätigkeit Karl Kaufmanns (1900-1969)." *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 43 (1995): 267-95

⁹ Compare Michael Wildt. *Am Beginn der 'Konsumgesellschaft.' Mangelserfahrung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren.* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse, 1994). 36-7. Wildt illustrates that the experience of want and deprivation in the immediate postwar period must be seen in light of a much longer trajectory of want and need since the First World War. Wildt argues against the notion that the fall of Stalingrad and the destruction of Germany cities in 1943 presented one of two endpoints framing a period of "extra-ordinariness" that lasted until the monetary reform of 1948 and instead suggests that neither the notion of 'orderliness' before the war nor celebrated immediate effects of monetary reform on everyday life withstand more careful historical investigation.

¹⁰ Senator Friedrich Frank. "Karten Klarheit und Karten Wahrheit wollen wir haben" *Hamburger Echo* 7 Mar 1947. StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IR1b. The senator writes against the seemingly pervasive presumptions that the "rape of the calorie" set in after the collapse of the Reich and instead assures the readership that the deterioration of food provisions already began during the war, but apparently, only in a democratic Germany can frustration about it be expressed.

¹¹ Joachim Szodrzynski "Die 'Heimatfront' zwischen Stalingrad und Kriegsende" in *Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich,'* 639.

Historians have long questioned the validity of a *Stunde Null*, of 8 May 1945 as a blank slate representing radically new beginnings. They instead have emphasized continuities (in structures and personnel) beyond the presumably all-defining rupture.¹² Obviously certain markers were national in their relevance and ultimately pivotal for the course of postwar German development, such as the defeat at Stalingrad,¹³ the establishment of the Bizone,¹⁴ the monetary reform,¹⁵ and the establishment of two German States.¹⁶ Even though Hamburg surrendered, many of the hardships that had characterized the last years of war continued under British occupation and betrayed local hopes for the abrupt and fundamental improvement of everyday life. Faced with British reeducation, men and women in Hamburg instead focused on their own suffering and cast themselves as three-fold victims – as betrayed by the Nazi regime, as punished by the international air war and as occupied by indifference to their continued suffering.

Whereas the first part of the chapter highlights the grim continuities in everyday life, the second part zooms in on the particular visions for change as I argue for the crucial role of cultural politics in the unmaking of Nazism.¹⁷ The British occupying forces hoped to raise local partners to reform the population and build a democratic

¹² See in particular the contributions in Geoffrey J. Giles. Ed *Stunde Null: The End and the Beginning Fifty Years Ago* (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1997); also Hans Braun, Uta Gerhardt, and Everhart Holtman. *Die lange Stunde Null: gelenkter sozialer Wandel in Westdeutschland nach 1945* (Baden Baden: Nomos, 2007).

¹³ See *Stalingrad Erinnern: Stalingrad im deutschen und russischen Gedächtnis*. ed by Peter Jahn (Berlin: Ch Links Verlag, 2003) and Robert Moeller's review thereof in *Central European History* 38:4 (2005) 697-699 points to the significance of Stalingrad as a symbol of the victim status of German soldiers at the hands of their own murderous government. Also see Robert Moeller, *War stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001)

¹⁴ The Bizone was established between the British and American occupation zone, effective as of 1 Jan 1947. Compare "Ab 1.1.47 Wirtschaftliche Zusammenlegung der britischen und amerikanischen Zone!" *Hamburger Freie Presse* 4 Dec 1946. See also Wolfgang Benz *Von der Besatzungsherrschaft zur Bundesrepublik: Stationen einer Staatsgründung 1946-1949* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1984)

¹⁵ Bernd Weisbrod. Ed. *Von der Währungsreform zum Wirtschaftswunder; Wiederaufbau in Niedersachsen* (Hannover: Hahn, 1998)

¹⁶ Establishment of BRD (23 May 1949) and DDR (7 October 1949)

¹⁷ Heide Fehrenbach's *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler*. (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1995) makes a compelling case when arguing that "the most fervent clashes over postwar reconstruction occurred in the putatively apolitical realm of culture – where politics could run rampant precisely because hard-nosed economists and political scientists considered it a tertiary sphere" (4-5)

European future. Film played no small role in British attempts to instruct ordinary Germans in the ways of democracy and introduce as desirable the British way of life.¹⁸ Ultimately, however, the British reopened the cinemas in their zone with German wartime classics instead of British films. Audiences and the nascent civil authorities in Hamburg, in turn, embraced movies made during the Third Reich as German culture worthy of rehabilitation. The reruns of so-called escapist entertainment films affirmed the unbroken value of German culture and therewith provided a starting point for local journalists to reclaim a voice as Hamburger and as Germans. Whether contemplating the state of German culture after Nazism or discussing the pressing *Magenfrage*, Hamburg's newspapers were essential in performing the city's denazification.¹⁹ However, in their multiple references to 'Democracy' and their attempts to make a more democratic language their own, local papers and authorities primarily lobbied for recognition of German suffering.²⁰

In contrast to my analysis in previous chapters, the postwar discussions about film in Hamburg took on an overtly national outlook and focus. The division of Germany into four occupation zones certainly added particular urgency to the question about Germany's national future.²¹ In addition, the political landscape of postwar Germany also furthered the crystallization of Hamburg into a center for film production. Many well-known actors and directors had abandoned Berlin during the last months of war and bided their time in

¹⁸ See in particular Gabriele Clemens. *Britische Kulturpolitik in Deutschland, 1945 - 1949: Literatur, Film, Musik Und Theater*. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Herein Clemens makes convincing argument for the crucial role of film and cultural policy more generally in the "projection of Britain" and the transmission of cultural and political values.

¹⁹ For the importance of the *Magenfrage* (belly question) in creating postwar German identity see Alice Weinreb. "Matters of Taste: The Politics of Food and Hunger in Divided Germany, 1945-1971." Dissertation. University of Michigan, 2009, 105

²⁰ For Germans focusing on their own suffering see in particular Robert G Moeller. *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany*. 2001. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Atina Grossmann. *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Helmut Schmitz, ed. *A Nation of Victims? Representations of German Wartime Suffering from 1945 to the Present*. (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007).

²¹ Compare Klessmann, Christoph. *Die Doppelte Staatsgründung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1982); Mary Fulbrook. *History of Germany 1918-2000: The Divided Nation*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Jeffrey Herf. *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Hamburg or Munich during the so-called *Filmpause* accompanying the regime's collapse.²² As occupiers granted the first licenses to German filmmakers in the spring of 1946, famous film directors who had survived as "inner emigrants" in the Nazi-coordinated and tightly controlled culture industry, came forth as spokespersons for a new era.²³ Focusing on *In Jenen Tagen* (Käutner 1947) the first postwar film produced in Hamburg, the last part of this chapter illustrates how film provided a language that charted the unmaking of Nazis, the rehabilitation of Germans and the celebration of democracy in a collective turn towards a beginning that cleared the past away with the rubble.

My use of film here differs considerably from that in previous chapters. Contrary to *Ein Mädchen geht an Land* or *Große Freiheit Nr. 7*, Käutner's first postwar film *In Jenen Tagen* was not a film about Hamburg or made as a tribute to the city's history. Instead, it was embraced as a local intervention (even though it was not made by 'Hamburger') in the national discussions about how to frame the past in order to retain it at all. In previous chapters I have shown how film was instrumental to and symptomatic for the search for an authentic Hamburg – a National Socialist Hamburg nonetheless – and as such shaped and focused local discourses about Hamburg's place in the Reich. In this chapter, my film analysis functions differently. Rather than a subject of public discussion, *In jenen Tagen* articulates a vision and steps into the discussion as an actor – thus, reversing the relationship between the film and Hamburg's cineasts. Whereas in earlier chapters, local cineasts self-styled themselves as advocates for a particular kind of culture, in my reading Käutner's film becomes itself an advocate in the name of culture for a particular kind of people.

²² Scholars generally describe the period between German capitulation and April 1946, when the first license to produce films in Germany was given to DEFA, as the *Filmpause*. Both the Allies and denazified German filmmakers considered a 'break' important to facilitate the break with Nazi traditions. It was also the period in which questions about how to revive German film productions were discussed. Filmmakers questioned whether Weimar offered a point of return as they found German cinematic traditions delegitimized. See Hester Baer, *Dismantling the Dream Factory: Gender, German Cinema, and the Postwar Quest for a New Film Language*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 10-11, 23,

²³ Hermann Haarmann, ed. *Berlin Im Kopf - Arbeit Am Berlin-Mythos: Exil Und Innere Emigration 1933 Bis 1945*. Berlin: B&S Siebenhaar Verlag, 2008); Hermann Haarmann, ed. *Heimat, Liebe Heimat: Exil und innere Emigration (1933-1945)*. (Berlin: Bostelmann & Siebanhaar, 2004); Ralf Schnell. *Literarische innere Emigration: 1933-1945*. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976).

The film was made in Hamburg, which was doubly significant in the postwar landscape of political division: It highlighted the productive capacity of that particular place and emboldened spokespersons in Hamburg to claim this particular film as a local contribution to the remaking of a post-Fascist Germany. The local resonances of *In jenen Tagen* and the fact that Käutner produced his rebuttal to British reeducation policy in Hamburg without access to a studio or professional equipment, revived a vision first articulated in 1941. Filmmakers, the Hamburg press, local interest groups and the city government debated the feasibility of turning Hamburg into a modern film production center. Emboldened by conciliatory cultural politics of the British, by the presence of important representatives of the German film in the city, and by Hamburg's reputation as place for pioneering *Filmarbeit* during the Third Reich, advocates of CineCity saw the opportunity to bring revenue, jobs, and prestige to Hamburg. Moreover, the success of *In jenen Tagen* nurtured the hope that Hamburg would have an important role to play in reviving national culture.

Monuments to War

To understand the local power of the pervasive language of *German* victimhood in the immediate postwar years, it serves to trace the experiences of wartime and their postwar continuities across two key events: The destruction of Hamburg in the summer of 1943 and the unconditional surrender of Germany in May 1945. In particular, I will focus on the role played by rationing and continuous food shortages to ground not only the sense of victimization of the Hamburg population in specific experiences but also to highlight the Hamburg's responses to the reeducation efforts in the face of the Allies' inability to adequately address and considerably ease the suffering of the population. Whereas scarcity of foodstuffs appeared to be an unavoidable side effect of war, in wars aftermath scarcity and hunger bore the imprint of defeat.

In September 1940, the reports by social workers in Hamburg still praised the "courageous spirit of the National Socialist soldiers" and detailed how it transferred "onto the racial comrades at home, who all are fellow combatants and fellow victors in this

momentous struggle.”²⁴ While the victories in the West had made a great impression on the population and nurtured the hope for a quick and painless war, as reports about victories ebbed off, “trivial vexations and gripes returned to the forefront” in people’s consciousness.²⁵ With increasing alarms and the intensification of the air war, the atmosphere morphed from optimistic and confident to serious and composed.²⁶ As the third war-Christmas (*Kriegsweihnachten*) was approaching, social workers in Hamburg noted growing discontent, apathy, and sluggishness of the population.²⁷ Even though social workers continued to stress the indefatigable will to achieve final victory and recognized the willingness of the population to bear with dignity and calm the grave sacrifices demanded by war, the erosion of the *Volksgemeinschaft* could hardly be praised away.²⁸

Authorities observed with consternation that the popular will to sacrifice had very clear limits, bemoaning that even women “with just one or even no child” began to draw on public welfare for undergarments, infant clothing, health care costs, and heating supplies.²⁹ In the long lines in front of insufficiently stocked shops, women experienced the war as a force that had begun to destroy communal and neighborhood bonds as it

²⁴ Halbjahresbericht Kreisdienststelle 2a, 26 Sep 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

²⁵ Sozialverwaltung Kreisdienststelle 2b. Bericht für die Zeit vom 1 Apr 1940-30 Sep 1940 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

²⁶ In early May 1941 heavy air strikes against the city shattered the hope that war was to be quick and relatively painless. See reports of Oberführsorgerrinnen from Kreisdienststelle 1a, 3a, 4a on 27 May 1941 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70 and Kurzbericht Kreisdienststelle 2a. 24 Nov 1941 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

²⁷ Auszüge aus den Kurzberichten. Kreisdienststelle 3a 25 Nov 1941. in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

²⁸ Halbjahresbericht Kreisdienststelle 10, 29 Sep 1941. “the reports of the last six months stood under the great impact of the dramatic developments in the East. This heated struggle tore deep and painful wounds here as well. Suffering and grief are great, as great and as unrelenting is the stern determination for ultimate victory. Until now, 48 of our men fell in the Russian campaign, whose loved-ones are receiving welfare support. [Das Berichtshalbjahr April/September 1941 stand zum grössten Teil unter dem Eindruck der gewaltigen Ereignisse im Osten. Dieses heisse Ringen hat auch im hiesigen Bereich schon teife und schmerzliche Wunden gerissen. Leid und Trauer sind groß, ebenso groß und unterschüttlich ist aber auch der Wille zum endgueltigen Sieg. Bisläng sind aus dem Feldzug gegen Russland 48 Gefallene zu verzeichnen, für deren Angehörige FU gewährt wurde.]”

²⁹ Halbjahresbericht Kreisdienststelle 7 for October 1940. StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

sharpened their attention to everyday inequality, class difference and social injustice.³⁰ Most of all, the constant bomb alerts sending citizens in droves to cellars and shelters, began to take their toll on nerves and property.³¹ After the first bombs were dropped on the city in May 1940, alarms and trips to the bunker became part of a wartime normality. By the third winter of the war, thousands of people in Hamburg had lost their homes and had to rely on family, friends and neighbors for shelter. While in 1940 social workers still observed the willingness of women to help each other out in times of need, only a year later the rhetoric of *Volksgemeinschaft* focused instead on individual shortcomings when helping neighbors, showing compassion to those affected by worse hardship and demonstrating moderation and restraint with regards to personal consumption.³²

In Hamburg, “Operation Gomorrha” escalated the hopelessness that had gripped the population en masse since the fall at Stalingrad in early February 1943. Over the following months British and American forces increased the air raids on German cities. In July 1943 Cologne sustained a severe series of attacks and the reports sent shock waves through the Reich. However, the operation against Hamburg between 25 July and 3 August 1943 eclipsed the fears raised by experiences in Cologne. Within days rumors spread through the Reich that 100,000 people had died in Hamburg; the charred corpses lying in the streets side by side for days were cited as evidence.³³ Today scholars estimate that about 34,000 people died during these raids in Hamburg. Soldiers, the police, and rescue workers struggled to free people trapped in the rubble and worked to salvage as

³⁰ See Vierteljahresbericht der Leiter und Oberfürsorgerinnen der Kreisdienststellen. Stand Dezember 1941 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG 30.68 Band 4

³¹ Karl Christian Führer “Karl Christian Führer. “Meister der Ankündigung. Nationalsozialistische Wohnungsbaupolitik” in *Hamburg im ‘Dritten Reich’* 432-444 in *Hamburg im Dritten Reich*. See also Tilman Harlander. *Zwischen Heimstätte und Wohnmaschine: Wohnungsbau und Wohnungspolitik in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1995)

³² See Vierteljahresbericht der Leiter und Oberfürsorgerinnen der Kreisdienststellen. Stand Dezember 1941 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG 30.68 Band 4. See also Berichte der Oberfürsorgerinnen 2a 28 Aug 1942 351-10 Sozialbehörde I UG 30.92

³³ “SD-Berichte zu Inlandfragen” 2 Aug 1943 Heinz Boberach. *Meldungen aus dem Reich. Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1938--1945*. Band 14. (Berlin: Pawlag Verlag Herrsching, 1984), 5560.

many household effects as possible from burnt out apartments and bombed buildings.³⁴ Hans Erich Nossack remembers that entire districts were closed off (with walls built from rubble) to facilitate and remove from the public's gaze the efforts of forced laborers who waded through maggots and often burned their way to the trapped cellars that were inaccessible due to swarms of flies, which together with rats "ruled the city."³⁵

Distribution of provisions was initially entirely chaotic: Food was rotting in the streets but impossible to obtain through regular venues. Rescue workers were forbidden to scavenge through the remains as a means of replenishing their own stocks, but food and drink were up for grabs. In a letter to his parents, Wehrmacht soldier Herwarth von Schade, who worked as part of a rescue squad in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, recalls an unusual feast instead of chronicling the disaster he witnessed. Eating was the most concrete evidence of being alive. Hence, Herwarth describes the two cuts of pork, each the size of a toilet-lid, that were sizzled in bacon (*klosettdeckelgrosse, in Speck gebratene Koteletts*) and allotted to each man in his unit after a day's work in the burning rubble.³⁶ Blazing fires made the rescue work immensely difficult and even after the fire was under control clouds of smoke hung over the city for days.

Provisions for the general population were breaking down and particularly drinking water was in exceedingly difficult to obtain, since filter stations were few and the water dragged from neighborhood pumps needed to be boiled before consumption. To counteract the disintegration, the city released extra rations of liquor, coffee, and sweets in the first days after the catastrophe, but generous gesture was hardly able to restore a

³⁴ Familienfürsorge im Ortschaft St. Georg und in der Ortstelle Billbrook. Lagebericht nach dem Stande von Ende September 1943. The reports by social workers only hint on the burning of bodies and never actually explain who took care of the thousands of dead left in the wake of the bombings. Through statements such as "in general the streets have been cleared relatively well over the past weeks despite the breaking down of garbage collection; the heaps of waste have been burned or buried" the city adamantly asserted control at least as a matter of record. See Familienfürsorge Uhlenhorst. Lagebericht nach dem Stande von Ende September 1943. 29 Sep 1943 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70. In contrast, Hans-Erich Nossack's eyewitness account reminds us of the protracted rescue efforts that for weeks to come would retrieve burned and suffocated bodies that had been trapped in collapsed buildings or bunkers. Addressing the rumors regarding the dead he asked "why are we trying to lie to the dead? Why doesn't anyone say, we cannot count them?" See Hans-Erich Nossack. *Der Untergang: Hamburg 1943*. 1948. (Hamburg Ernst Kabel Verlag, 1981), 98-99

³⁵ Nossack, 99-100.

³⁶ Letter from Herwarth von Schade 1 Aug 1943. StAHH 731 Zeitgeschichtlich Sammlungen 14c

semblance of normality.³⁷ Uwe Storjohann remembers the truck loads of sausages, butter, chocolates, smoked fish, and canned meats that seemed to appear from nowhere and were distributed free of charge, no food stamps required. Faced with such rare delicacies, people neither asked where they came from nor did they take the time to wonder why they had not been available before.³⁸

“Operation Gomorrha” had dramatically altered life in Hamburg. To understand the magnitude of the catastrophe it is worth while to take a comparative look at the total destruction inflicted prior to July 1943.³⁹ From the beginning of the war until 30 June 1943 a total of 3,906 planes attacked the city dropping 164,768 bombs, killing 1431 and leaving 24,204 people homeless. By the end of August the statistics published by the police department of Hamburg listed a total of 6,756 planes and 3,972,124 bombs dropped. Numbers for fatalities and estimates for destruction were still unavailable at that time.⁴⁰ More than three million different kinds of bombs were dropped on the city, killing more than 30,000 people,⁴¹ wounding an additional 37, 000 and destroying 270,000

³⁷ “Die Sonderzuteilungen für alle!” *Hamburger Zeitung* 27 Jul 1943. Everybody received 30g coffee (Bohnenkaffee), sweets as of Aug 2, and 1/2 bottle of liquor for every 18/year old. In addition, tobacco was promised. Letter from Herwarth von Schade 1 Aug 1943. StAHH 731 Zeitgeschichtlich Sammlungen 14c. See also Uwe Storjohann *Hauptsache: Überleben. Eine Jugend im Krieg 1936-1945* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 1994), 148.

³⁸ Uwe Storjohann, *"Hauptsache: Überleben" Eine Jugend Im Krieg 1936-1945*. 1993. 2nd ed. Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 1994. Print. 148.

³⁹ See Jörg Friedrich, 220-225; also 72-74. The Millenium Raid on Cologne on 30 May 1942 is generally seen as the beginning of a different kind of air war. In the aftermath of the thousand bomber raid, fire fighters from Cologne and surrounding cities, managed to keep the fires in check by pumping tons of river water through pipes into the city. Subsequent raids, in particular since 1943 were more effective in wreaking the intended havoc.

⁴⁰ Statistik über Luftangriffe auf Hamburg, 30 Jun 1943, 31 Jul 1943, 31 Aug 1943 in StAHH 331-1 Polizeibehörde I 1537.

⁴¹ The immediate reports by Nazi authorities list 30,500 dead. Scholars have since estimated that between 34,000 and 40,000 people died as a result of the bombing. Büttner, 618 and Jörg Friedrich. *The Fire*, 166



Figure 37 *Barmbek 1943*

apartments.⁴² The official report from December 1943 listed 900,000 people as homeless or missing, illustrating the impossibility of establishing reliable information regarding the whereabouts of individual inhabitants.⁴³ Large parts of the city were left without gas, water, and electricity for months. In the bourgeois district of Eppendorf, 75% of buildings were destroyed and by September the population of that district had increased by 5,000-6,000 bomb victims from districts worse off still.⁴⁴ In Eppendorf as elsewhere in Hamburg, people hauled water from hydrants and pumping stations, doing laundry and washing dishes (if they had any left) in the streets to minimize the agonizing transport of water through the debris. As streets were rudimentarily cleared of rubble, the city

⁴² Der Polizeipräsident der Stadt Hamburg and das Reichspropagandaamt, December 1943. in StAHH 331-1 Polizeibehörde I 1537.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Lagebericht der Familienfürsorge im Ortsamt Eppendorf, in der Ortstelle Breitenfelderstrasse 35, 29 Sep 1943. in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70.

organized wagons and pull-carts to facilitate the transport of water to residential areas. Tap water had to be boiled before use and people began exhausting their coal supply for the next winter as only a handful of filter-stations were available.⁴⁵ Stinking garbage piles accumulated in streets and doorways and soon the ruins themselves were appropriated by the population as garbage dumps. In some districts, regular garbage collection did not resume until September and even then the biweekly collection barely managed to keep up with the production of household waste.⁴⁶

The NSV (National Socialist People's Welfare), supported by the Wehrmacht, offered hot meals to inhabitants in soup kitchens and the city further enlisted bakers, butchers, grocers, restaurants, and canteen kitchens in providing for the population.⁴⁷ More often, however, survivors had to fend for themselves, dragging coal and wood burning stoves into their yards or cooking on balconies.⁴⁸ In parts of Eimsbüttel, 85% of houses had been destroyed. Several families shared tiny and often unsanitary quarters. The many who had fled began to return over the course of August and September, feeling unwelcome elsewhere and afraid of leaving everything behind. The administration tried to accommodate people in emergency housing, but lacked the human and material resources to construct the necessary number of makeshift shelters and huts. Those with family or friends to take them in were lucky. Many more continued to live in air raid shelters, made a place for themselves in the ruins, or moved into dark cellars damp from the inner city waterways.⁴⁹ Shops and administrative offices remained closed for weeks after the attacks and reopened only at random. Schools had operated irregularly since war

⁴⁵ Lagebericht der Familienfuersorge im Ortsamt Eppendorf, in der Ortstelle Breitenfelderstrasse 35, 29.9.43 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70. See also "Die ärztliche Versorgung" *Hamburger Zeitung* 29 Jul 1943.

⁴⁶ Familienfuersorge Im Ortsamt Innenstadt/bisher 3a St. pauli in der Ortsstelle Zeughausmarkt 32. Lagebericht nach dem Stande von Ende SEptember 1943 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

⁴⁷ "Lebensmittelgeschäfte, Gaststätten offenhalten!" *Hamburger Zeitung* 29 Jul 1943 and "Die Hamburger Verpflegungstätten" *Hamburger Zeitung* 3 Aug 1943.

⁴⁸ Lagebericht der Familienfuersorge im Stadtteil Eimsbüttel, September 1943 in StAHH 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

⁴⁹ Familienfuersorge im Ortsamt Innenstadt/bisher 3a St. pauli in der Ortsstelle Zeughausmarkt 32. Lagebericht nach dem Stande von Ende September 1943 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70

began but now remained closed as well. In certain districts even shops only reopened in September.⁵⁰ As people struggled to return a semblance of a routine to their lives, Kaufmann not only secured access to coffee (which was difficult to prepare without access to kitchen supplies and stoves) but also distraction and maybe more importantly, uplifting propaganda. Hence, long before basic utility services were functioning again, Hamburg's movie theaters resumed operation. On August 10, the *Hamburger Zeitung*⁵¹ listed the first movie theaters to reopen to the public on the following day.⁵² When newspapers printed advertisements again about week later, only 21 of the 100 movie theaters in Hamburg were operable. The rest had been destroyed by bombs or fire.⁵³ When the first theaters started playing again on Tuesday August 11, the Ufa Palast reopened its doors with *Das Ferienkind* in two screenings starting at 4 and 6:30 p.m.⁵⁴ In the Harvesthuder Lichtspiele, *Gefährtin meines Sommers* played at 5 p.m. and again at 7:30 p.m. In contrast, the prestigious Lessing Theater on Gänsemarkt ran the two latest German newsreels, Nr 673 and 674, interspersed with a cultural documentary, continuously from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., just in case the citizens of Hamburg had not yet heard Goebbels' latest interpretation of war developments.

By the weekend, the *Hamburger Zeitung* promised, most remaining theaters would resume operations with the pre-attack program.⁵⁵ As a result, the August program in Hamburg's first-run houses was unsuitably gloomy and rather melancholic.⁵⁶ Ferdinand Marian and Marianne Hoppe returned the UFA screen in Helmut Käutner's

⁵⁰ Familienfuersorge Im Ortsamt Innenstadt/bisher 3a St. pauli in der Ortsstelle Zeughausmarkt 32. Lagebericht nach dem Stande von Ende September 1943 351-10 Sozialbehörde I VG30.70.

⁵¹ On 25 Aug 1943 the first issue of the *Hamburger Zeitung* was printed at 11PM, reporting on the first night of 'Operation Gomorrha.' Until 21 August 1943, the *Hamburger Zeitung*, an emergency cooperative of Hamburg based dailies replaced the *Hamburger Tageblatt*, *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, and *Hamburger Anzeiger* and was distributed by the Gaupropaganda Office to the citizens of Hamburg free of charge.

⁵² See "Wochenschau und Filme" *Hamburger Zeitung* 11 Aug 1943

⁵³ Reissmann, Toeteberg. *Mach dir ein paar schöne Stunden*, 85

⁵⁴ "Wochenschau und Filme" *Hamburger Zeitung* 11 Aug 1943.

⁵⁵ "Wochenschau und Filme" *Hamburger Zeitung* 11 Aug 1943.

⁵⁶ For the following films see advertisement in *Hamburger Tageblatt* 26 Aug 1943

Romanze in Moll and Tourjansky's *Nacht ohne Abschied* started at the Lessing Theater. Knopf's Lichtspiele, in contrast, offered a lighter fare with *Der kleine Grenzverkehr*. The inconspicuous hero of everyday life, Heinz Rühmann, ensured that there would be laughter on the outskirts of the city: The Lichtburg Iserbrook and the Bahrenfelder Lichtspiele presented Rühmann in his usual role as the upstanding and almost amusing bachelor in *Ich vertraue dir meine Frau an*.

Despite the massive destruction, the city's economy rebounded relatively quickly, but people were emotionally exhausted and the general mood was dull and desperate.⁵⁷ Alarms continued and a numbing fear characterized the new routine that developed amidst ruins.⁵⁸ With the new rationing period, recommencing on 16 August, the waiting in front of food and provisions offices to obtain the necessary ration cards and allotment certificates also resumed and further demoralized a traumatized population.⁵⁹ Frustration, anger, and lack of understanding contributed to a fatalistic atmosphere. To coerce a fatigued population back to work, the city made the assignment of available housing contingent upon displayed effort and willingness to work.⁶⁰

In the context of general apathy, moviegoing developed into an ever more popular pastime. For Luise Solmitz going to the movies had been an act of conscious self-indulgence since November 1938, when her husband, a German Jew, was prohibited from attending performances in theaters, movie-houses, or concert-halls.⁶¹ Anti-Jewish

⁵⁷ Büttner, 628. By the end of September many of the shipyard operated again and even though the industrial output of the city of 1943 could not match that of the previous year, it exceeded it in 1944. See also "Die Wiederaufnahme der Arbeit" *Hamburger Zeitung* 3 Aug 1943. For the deterioration of the general mood see also Jörg Friedrich. *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany, 1940-1945*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 98. Here Friedrich discusses the investigations by US occupying forces into the reactions of bomb victims and explains that the accumulation of experiences tended to dull the effect of shock that accompanied the first attack.

⁵⁸ See for example "SD-Berichte zu Inlandfragen" 4 May 1944 and 18 May 1944 Heinz Boberach. *Meldungen aus dem Reich. Die Geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1938--1945*. Band 17. (Berlin: Pawlag Verlag Herrsching, 1984), 6509 and 6535

⁵⁹ "Ab morgen neue Lebensmittelkarten" *Hamburger Zeitung* 15 Aug 1943

⁶⁰ "Die Verteilung des Wohnraumes an Berufstätige" *Hamburger Tageblatt* 26 Aug 1943. Büttner, 630.

⁶¹ After the Night of Broken Glass, Jews were banned from all German cultural institutions and establishments. See note by Luise Solmitz, 12 Nov 1938 FZH. Bestand 11 S12 Solmitz Tagebücher 1938-1940, 459

legislation had turned the negotiation of pastime activities into interpersonal power-struggles. Even though her husband complained that, “he was disenfranchised and dishonored, while she goes where he mustn’t,” Frau Solmitz kept going to the movies nonetheless, if even less frequently.⁶² She had awaited the latest Rühmann film, *Die Feuerzangenbowle* (1944) with eagerness. After two attempts and a marathon run after bomb alerts from the Harvestehuder Lichtspielen back to Kippingstrasse in Eimsbüttel, she defied the bombs and stayed in the theater to reap the long awaited reward – laughter.⁶³

By the spring of 1944, the atmosphere in Hamburg was fatalistic. Even the cacophony of propaganda about new lighting offensives and magic weapons could no longer counteract the crippling effects of exhaustion, depression and fear. Bombings continued and the retreat of the Wehrmacht in the East became a systemic feature of the war rather than a momentary setback. Shortages of every kind affected private citizens and armaments industry alike and news of more destruction in more German cities arrived almost daily. The Duce betrayed his loyalty to the Germans, and the Allied forces landed in the bay of Normandy on 6 June 1944.⁶⁴

At the same time, social inequality deepened and became ever more visible as the war entered its final phase. The more people worked the worse off they were. Housewives had the ‘luxury’ to walk all over town, stand in line, and draw on networks

⁶² Also compare Luise Solmitz, 9 May 1939 FZH. Bestand 11 S12 Solmitz Tagebücher 1938-1940, p.497

⁶³ Solmitz, 29 Mar 1944. Tagebücher, 1932-1945. FZH Bestand 11 S 11-13

⁶⁴ On 6 June 1944, the Allied forces invaded occupied France and liberated Paris on 24 Aug 1944. For reactions to Italy’s surrender see SD-Berichte zu Inlandfragen” 29 July 1943 Heinz Boberach. *Meldungen aus dem Reich. Die Geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1938--1945*. Band 14. (Berlin: Pawlag Verlag Herrsching, 1984), 5540 here: “The reports regarding the resignation of the have according to available reports, shocked the population at fears ... almost the entire population in all parts of the Reich was of the opinion that fascism had obviously been ‘done in’”

of friends in the ever more time consuming procurement of food and daily necessities.⁶⁵ Around Christmastime the mood lifted slightly, as the Reich distributed the sugar allocations until March in advance. Cake and cookies, potatoes and cabbage, dumplings, applesauce and even meat graced the tables of the more fortunate. Waiting for doomsday, the pork roast tasted like duck and frivolousness felt like defiance.⁶⁶

As the *Volksgemeinschaft* was rationed to bits, the film industry mustered its forces in a last stand – after all, movies were the last item of personal consumption that had not yet been subjected to the rationing regime.⁶⁷ Veit Harlan’s manuscript for the war epic *Kolberg* had been in Goebbels’ drawer since July 1943. Whenever the minister needed a little respite from his exhausting workday, he would review the latest film proposals and contemplate how he might further elevate the caliber of German cultural production.⁶⁸ Apparently this time, Harlan’s manuscript promised the right tone for a drama befitting the Reich’s undoing. When Harlan started shooting in the fall of 1943 Hamburg was slowly adjusting to life amidst the rubble. In the following summer, Harlan was still trying to wrap up one of the Third Reich’s most expensive productions.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *Das letzte halbe Jahr: Stimmungsberichte der Wehrmachtpropaganda 1944/1945*. edited Wolfram Wette, Ricarda Bremer und Detlef Vogel. (Essen: Klartext, 2001), 392, Workers, who were the last at make it to the already under-stocked stores, demanded more rigorous persecution of favoritism and secret deals (*Schiebereien*). For illicit dealings see Heinz Boberach, ed *Meldungen aus dem Reich. Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS, 1938-1945* Band 17 (Herrsching: Pawlak, 1984) . “The population reacted with skepticism to the Minister’s claims that bartering and smuggling remained the exception.” (6539) Instead, “there was doubt in the mind of the population that certain individuals receive more than 50 times the amount of sugar allotted to the ‘normal consumer’ [Normalverbraucher] due to connections, relations, or friendship. Especially business men and innkeepers are scrutinized for signs of favoritism.” (6713)

⁶⁶ Letter from Else Behncke to her husband 28 Dec 1944. DTA 1454 I Liebesbriefe auf KZ Wache. Briefe-Tagebücher von Hugo und Else Behncke Mai 1944 bis Kriegsende, 101.

⁶⁷ For those who could not afford exorbitant prices - bread was apparently sold for up to 400 RM64 and who had no connections or wares to trade, the last week of a food allocation period was indeed a Horst-Wessel-Week: Since nothing was available any longer, people only ate in spirit. See *Das letzte halbe Jahr: Stimmungsberichte der Wehrmachtpropaganda 1944/1945*. edited Wolfram Wette, Ricarda Bremer und Detlef Vogel. (Essen: Klartext, 2001), 403

⁶⁸ Joseph Goebbels. 14 Jul 1943 Joseph Goebbels. *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. ed. Elke Fröhlich. Teil II Ditkate 1941-45. Ban 9 Juli-September 1943. (Munich: Saur, 1993), 99-100.

⁶⁹ Rolf Giessen calculates the total costs for *Kolberg* at 8.8 million Reichsmark. See Giesen, Rolf. *Nazi Propaganda Films. A History and Filmography*. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2003), 171.

While the film's production history remains controversial, *Kolberg* was the Reich's last massive mobilization in the realm of film production.⁷⁰ Goebbels clearly had no intention of sparing either cost or effort when it came to celluloid testimonies to the German fighting spirit. Yet on the reception side the Reich Film Chamber did not hesitate to tighten the screws. As if anyone still cared about balancing the budget, the RFK effected a simplification in price structure for movie tickets, effectively raising the minimum cost of film-viewing for consumers. The circular from 20 August 1944 required a reduction of the number of seating categories and the imposition of one standard price reflecting the previous average across seating categories and price gradations.⁷¹ By November 1944 the office for price regulation in Hamburg reported the surprising fact that the general income of all movie theaters had risen dramatically, noting the penalization of the underprivileged.⁷² Yet, nobody seemed to complain about the higher prices. Even though continuing destruction of infrastructure made film distribution more difficult and the air war had drastically reduced the number of movie theaters, people continued to go to the pictures regularly.⁷³ Hamburg's prestigious first-run house, Lessing Theater, counted 69,825 patrons in August 1944 and the onset of fall weather increased ticket sales to 88,350 in October.⁷⁴ Together, the twelve Hamburg theaters run by the Deutsche Filmvertriebsgesellschaft counted 450,462 patrons in August and 491,029 in

⁷⁰ The production of *Kolberg* drew substantial numbers of soldiers from the front to obtain the necessary extras for the film only months before the Reich mobilized the *Volkssturm* in September 1944. Veit Harlan claimed in his memoirs that he requested 6,000 horses and 187,000 Wehrmacht soldiers for the making of the film. Drawing on the memory of Heinz Pehlke, the assistant camera man, Giessen offers a more realistic estimate of about 5,000 extras, out of which about 2,000 were sailors. Compare Giesen, Rolf. *Nazi Propaganda Films. A History and Filmography*. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2003), 171-2

⁷¹ Beauftragte für den Vierjahresplan. Reichskommissar für die Preisbildung. Runderlass Nr. 38/44 vom 20 Aug 1944 Betr. Vereinfachung der Eintrittspreisbildung der Filmtheater für die Dauer des Krieges. in StAHH 371-16 Behörde für Wirtschaft und Verkehr 1852.

⁷² Amt für Preisbildung und Preisüberwachung. Bericht .22 Nov 1944. StAHH 371-16 Behörde fuer Wirtschaft und Verkehr 1852.

⁷³ For a history of the *Volkssturm* and its significance see David K. Yelton. *Hitler's Volkssturm: The Nazi Militia and the Fall of Germany 1944-1945*. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002)

⁷⁴ Schreiben der UFA Theater-Betriebs-GmbH and Amt für Preisbildung und Preisüberwachung, Hamburg. Betrifft: Lessing-Theater. 23 Mar 1945. StAHH 371-16 Behörde für Wirtschaft und Verkehr 1852

October, which amounted to 14.5 and 15.8 thousand daily ticket sales respectively.⁷⁵ The program hardly mattered; theaters were packed, even early in the day.

By March 1945, Hamburg's cinemascape had been reduced to 36 functioning movie theaters.⁷⁶ By that time, only few –with eyes wide shut – dared to hope for a victorious outcome of Hitler's promised *Endkampf* (final struggle).⁷⁷ To many, the prospect of the enemy bringing it all to an end, was preferable to the continuation of war a which was nothing but "senseless murder of the population."⁷⁸ Despite the fear of vengeance and retribution, people almost wished the Tommy would come.⁷⁹ However, the hopelessness of the last years of war, the desperation and exhaustion of the population also provided the backdrop for the anticipation of radical change to follow the end of war.

After Hitler committed suicide on April 30 in his Berlin bunker, Kaufmann was not prepared to transfer his loyalty to Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz and handed Hamburg over to approaching British forces the day after Berlin surrendered to the Russians. On 3 May 1945, as of eight o'clock in the morning, transmitters blasted the news through the city: "Over the course of the day Hamburg will be occupied by English troops. Start of the invasion 13:00 hours."⁸⁰ As of 10 a.m. all offices in Hamburg remained closed. Public transportation ceased to operate at noon. The raising of red or white flags was expressly forbidden. The police, responsible for the guarantee of public order, were instructed to revert to the military greeting of "bringing the right hand to the headgear."⁸¹ Police officers saluted old style and the occupation took place without significant interruptions or incidents. British troops took up residence in the Hindenburg Barracks and Major

⁷⁵ Aktenvermerk zum Prüfungsauftrag vom 16 Feb 1945, Ergänzungsprüfung 30 Mar 1945. in StAHH371-16 Behörde für Wirtschaft und Verkehr 1852.

⁷⁶ Bericht des Reichsbeauftragten für die deutsche Filmwirtschaft an Reichsfilmintendanten. Betreff: Wiederherstellung von fliegergeschaedigten Lichtspieltheatern. 12 Mar 1945 BArch 109 III 19

⁷⁷ Cited in *Das letzte halbe Jahr*, 396

⁷⁸ *Das letzte halbe Jahr*, 401

⁷⁹ *Das letzte halbe Jahr*, 390

⁸⁰ Bekanntmachung des Polizeipraesident Betr. Einmarsch der Besatzungstruppen in Hamburg 3 May 1945. StAHH 331-1 Polizeibehörde 340

⁸¹ *ibid.*

Irvin, the commander of British military police, made himself at home in the Hotel Four Seasons overlooking the Alster. The long awaited zero hour had arrived. People waited not just in anxious anticipation but also with hope.

Denazification of the civil administration and the removal of Nazi officials focused the efforts of the British Military Government in addition to organizing the provisioning for the population. At first, the dismantling of Nazi Hamburg was primarily symbolic. On May 6 the British military administration ordered the removal of all national and military emblems.⁸² Skilled craftsmen were ordered to remove the swastikas from the belt-buckles of the police forces and the ‘German Greeting’ was forbidden in all public places and buildings.⁸³ Images of leading National Socialists, as well as military leaders from the two world wars were to be removed as were images, books, magazines and other print materials of National Socialist content. Nazis and Nazism became invisible.⁸⁴

As a first step in reestablishing the administration and economy of the city, the occupying forces demanded a list of previously dismissed civil servants, teachers and professor, union leaders, Jews (including a declaration of profession), clerics, leaders of earlier political parties who had resisted the Nazis, and leaders of anti-Nazi organizations to have a pool from which to pick civilian partners and employees.⁸⁵ The military government installed Rudolf Petersen⁸⁶ as the new mayor of Hamburg on 15 May 1945, who promptly fired all civil servants who had joined the Nazi party before 1 April 1933 and as a first demonstration of his authority nullified all blackout regulations.⁸⁷

⁸² Kommando der Schutzpolizei. Betr: Anordnung der Britischen Militaerverwaltung 6 May 1945. StAHH 331-1 Polizeibehörde 340.

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁸⁵ Anordnungen der Militärverwaltung 6 May 1945. StAHH 331-1 Polizei Behörde I, 340.

⁸⁶ For biographical information see Appendix A

⁸⁷ Öffentliche Bekanntmachungen für die Zivilbevölkerung 15 May 1945 StAHH 131-14 Verbindungsstelle der Militaerregierung VI 1

Yet the penultimate goal for all reorganized German institutions was “to gain a respected and equal place for a Germany freed from Nazism among other nations in honest and honorable cooperation with the occupying forces.”⁸⁸ Even before the schools reopened in Hamburg,⁸⁹ the mayor achieved a first symbolic victory: On 24 July he obtained permission from the military government to fly the Hamburg flag at city hall.⁹⁰ While the British made no secret of their conviction that the German nation and the German people were responsible for the war, the atrocities or war crimes as the Holocaust was referred to at the time, and the destruction of Europe, Germans learned quickly to transfer responsibility for crimes committed in their name to an obscure and alien force – the Nazis. After all the Nazis had coerced and misled the German population. Soon no such Nazis could be found in Germany. In fact, the original proclaimers of the *Volksgemeinschaft* were soon identified as part of an alien regime by the nascent political and cultural authorities who hoped to salvage some accomplishments - such as the revitalization of German film production – from the stigma of Nazism.⁹¹

At the same time, however, the sense that the Nazis had been able to take better care of the population under conditions of war than the occupiers could in war’s aftermath, proved persistent even beyond the hunger years.⁹² In 1943 the average adult

⁸⁸ Der Kommandeur der Schutzpolizei and Kameraden der Schutzpolizei, Verwaltungspolizei, und Kriminalpolizei 29 May 1945 in StAHH 331-1 Polizei Behörde I, 340.

⁸⁹ Elementary schools resumed operations on 6 Aug 1945. Öffentliche Bekanntmachungen aus dem Hamburger Nachrichten-Blatt vom Donnerstag, den 2. August 1945

⁹⁰ Bekanntmachungen der Militaerregierung aus dem Hamburger Nachrichten-Blatt vom 24. Juli 1945. StAHH 131-14 Verbindungsstelle der Militaerregierung VI 1

⁹¹ “Zur Gründung des Wirtschaftsverbandes der Filmtheater e.V. (Brit. Zone) in *Film-Echo* Hamburg May 1947, 26. in StAHH 371-16 Behörde fuer Wirtschaft und Verkehr 1852. “ If film managed to ascend due to victorious development and potentiated artistic expression, so is this only the result of the will and skill of filmmakers and film technicians, but in no measure is this the result of the state-sponsorship of the industry by the Nazi regime. After the collapse of the regime, this assertion can be proven beyond doubt, as we slowly learn about the grim struggle the film art of Germany fought under the *alien* [volksfremd] regime.” (my emphasis)

⁹² Compare Stüber, 108. The German Interregional Food Allocation Committee (GIFAC) set daily ration was at 1550 calories the average daily rations in the summer 1944 still hovered around 2,000 calories according to American calculations. The *New York Times* reported on that “Germans, at the time of their surrender, were regularly getting twice as much meat as Britons got throughout the war, living reasonably well off the stocks in stores and warehouses, which are being doled out by the Military Government much in a continuance of the German rationing system.” See “‘Starving’ in Reich is put up to U.S.” *New York Times* 17 May 1945.

food intake amounted to roughly 2,000 calories per day; a figure that dropped to 1,412 calories in 1945/6.⁹³ However, Nazi cruelty rather than efficiency had guaranteed the rations for the German population. After the food shortage in 1942, Hitler and Herbert Backe (Minister of Food and Agriculture) implemented the Hunger Plan. The Reich not only ceased to supply food the Wehrmacht and left German armies to feed off of the population in the territories they occupied, Backe's new scheme required that the General Government now make substantial food deliveries to the Reich by drastically reducing civilian consumption in occupied Poland.⁹⁴ Occupied Europe already supplied a large share of Germany's food supply and more than half of the imported rye (51%) oats (66%), and potatoes (52%) were extracted from occupied Poland.⁹⁵

After the war, Germans no longer enjoyed monopolistic access to the European food supply. Destroyed farms and the massive population movements disrupted production. Where food was produced, farmers were reluctant to sell it for any of the devalued European currencies.⁹⁶ Instead food, ended up on the black market, which in itself became the most significant symptom of the times. As a function of price, the black market was able to provide almost everything. This in turn only confirmed the callousness of the military government in the eyes of the German population.⁹⁷ The goods, so people in Hamburg reasoned, were obviously available, the occupiers were simply unwilling to provide even the most basic necessities. If the British "at least deregulated a fraction of, for example, what is available in terms of housewares," social

⁹³ Tony Judt, 21.

⁹⁴ Tooze, 544-5. The first population group designated for starvation under the Hunger Plan were the Jews. Except for 300,000 Jews designated as workers, Polish Jews no longer received any official rations in August 1942. Rations for non-Jewish Poles were supposed to be cut of in March 1943 but could be sustained at a ridiculously low level due to an exceptional harvest the previous fall.

⁹⁵ Tooze, 548

⁹⁶ Judt, 21-22.

⁹⁷ Sozialabteilung Innenstadt. Familienfuersorge. Lagebericht fuer die Monate April bis Juni 1947 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde II Ablage 22. 7.1981 1. The case worker noted "that nobody can make do with the rations for a normal consumer, is a truism and hardly needs reiteration. It happens more and more often that people declare they are running out of money and cannot by additional provisions on the Black Market. A large part is dependent on scavenging (Hamsterfahrten)"

welfare reports insisted, “life would have been easier for an endless number of people.”⁹⁸ The false belief that the black market was a cruel yet efficient counterbalance to British mismanagement was moreover confirmed once monetary reform filled the shops and stores seemingly overnight.⁹⁹ Michael Wildt convincingly argues that the state and the black market functioned as two competing economies, yet only the state was responsible for administering shortages. The black market, in contrast, did not attempt to equally distribute the limited victuals and good. Hence, so Wildt suggests, the seeming ‘efficiency’ of the black market was misleading. It was able to supply certain individuals with better or otherwise inaccessible goods, but by no means would the black market have been able to provide everyone with even a minimum of the much needed provisions.¹⁰⁰

In 1945, the shadow economy confronted the nascent civil authorities and the military government with the ungovernability of need and want, unmasking the acceptance of greed as a fact in a landscape stripped of rules and routines. For the 78th ration period (23 July - 19 August) the regional food office allotted 600g of meat, 400g of fat, 5000g of wheat and rye breads, 400g of sugar and an additional 400g of sugar for fruit preservation to every normal, registered adult in Hamburg.¹⁰¹ That Italians received the lowest rations of all Western European nations and in Eastern Europe, drought and failed harvests led to outright famine, hardly put matters in perspective for Hamburg.¹⁰² In contrast, the immense and ubiquitous hunger in postwar Europe turned suffering into a highly competitive and politicized condition.¹⁰³ Tony Judt explains the structural

⁹⁸ Fürsorgerinnendienst Innenstadt. Lagebericht für die Monate April, Mai und Juni 1948 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde II Ablage 22. 7.1981 1.

⁹⁹ Fürsorgerinnendienst Innenstadt. Lagebericht für die Monate April, Mai und Juni 1948 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde II Ablage 22. 7.1981 1.

¹⁰⁰ See Michael Wildt. *Am Beginn der 'Konsumgesellschaft.' Mangelersfahrung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren.* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse, 1994), 31

¹⁰¹ Proposal for announcement in the Hamburg newspaper. Rations for 78th Ration period (23 July - 19 August) Hamburg 17 Jul 1945. StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IRIB

¹⁰² Tony Judt. *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945.* 2005. (New York Penguin, 2006), 86-7.

¹⁰³ For this argument see in particular Alice Weinreb. "Matters of Taste: The Politics of Food and Hunger in Divided Germany, 1945-1971." Dissertation. (University of Michigan, 2009).

dilemmas that underlay the European food crisis. For once Germany, previously as a major importer of goods and raw materials, no longer had any economy to speak off. Secondly, almost all machinery imports of Western and Eastern Europe had previously been supplied by Germany and the United States. Germany was no longer producing exportable goods and the US required hard currency, whether for machinery or foodstuffs. Since European states had nothing to sell they had no means of acquiring hard currency to buy the much needed provisions for their populations.¹⁰⁴

Political criticism towards the military authorities was explicitly forbidden and popular complaints about the lack of foodstuffs and the persistent suffering of the population quickly took the place of more directly formulated reproaches. Clearly, the authorities registered the deterioration of popular mood. Yet rhetoric about an impending international food crisis did little to change the situation on the ground. The United States reiterated its position from 1944 again in May 1945 insisting that it would not ship food “merely on the assumption that some Germans are going to starve.”¹⁰⁵ From the British perspective the food shortages, which were particularly grave in Hamburg and the Ruhr area, produced real challenges that were impossible to address in a satisfactory manner. Citing the likelihood of unrest and riots, the British decided to at least fill people’s leisure time if their stomachs had to remain empty.

After having observed the apathy of the Germany population over the past two years of carpet bombing, the occupying forces had little reason to expect large scale riots

¹⁰⁴ Judt, 86-7

¹⁰⁵ “‘Starving’ in Reich is put up to U.S.” *The New York Times* 17 May 1945.



Figure 38 *Knopf's Lichtspiele*

or even revolution in response to food shortages in the summer of 1945. In light of the deteriorating mood of the population, entertainment and distraction may indeed have appeared essential to the occupying powers, yet the expediency in their decision to begin with the reorganization of civil society's infrastructure

should not be underestimated.¹⁰⁶ The decision to reopen theaters in the British Zone two months earlier than scheduled by British-American negotiations, gave the British a head start in the close competition with the US over the moviegoing public.¹⁰⁷

On 10 July 1945 the British Military Government permitted ten Hamburg movie theaters to open their doors after the representatives of the Political Intelligence Department's Film Section raked through the inventory of German films made before the collapse of the Reich.¹⁰⁸ The first films to play in Hamburg (and elsewhere in the GB zone) were German films made between 1942 and 1944; clearly a makeshift solution to meet the pressing demand.¹⁰⁹ As the newspapers immediately pointed out, the regular

¹⁰⁶ Töteberg and Reissmann, 93

¹⁰⁷ Gabriele Clemens. *Britische Kulturpolitik in Deutschland 1945-1949: Literatur, Film, Musik und Theater*. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997), 130-1. Clemens argues that the British feared a flooding of German cinemas with US films and a resulting loss in reputation and power, as well as increasingly difficulties for British commercial interests in Germany.

¹⁰⁸ "Wiedereröffnung der Hamburger Kinos" *Hamburger Nachrichtenblatt* 26 Jul 1945 in 372-3 Gewerbepolizei Gen IX F 32.

¹⁰⁹ *Das Bad auf der Tenne* (1942/3), *Ich vertraue dir meine Frau an* (1942/3), *Der Engel mit dem Saitenspiel* (1944), *Gefährtin meines Sommers* (1942/3) were the first four films to play in Hamburg after the collapse of the Reich. The first British film *Rembrandt* started at the refurbished Waterloo Theater on 20 Sept 1945. Compare Bericht: Eröffnung des "Waterloo-Theater" in 376-2 Gewerbepolizei Spz IX F 13

program to follow would feature German, English and American films and a changeover every Friday.¹¹⁰

Originally American and British authorities had planned to reopen movie theaters in both zones on 1 September 1945 anticipating that by then a sufficient number of British and American features, documentaries and newsreels would be available that corresponded to the general policy of denazification and reeducation.¹¹¹ Britain considered film an important if not the most important tool in disseminating the British way of life, which was to ensure British influence in occupied Germany.¹¹² The exaggerated threat of food riots in Hamburg was a welcome excuse to prepare the ground for the “projection of Britain” with a conciliatory move. Instead of opening theaters with British films, the British offered German wartime classics to which subtitled and later dubbed British films would provide an enlightening supplement as they became available.¹¹³ Fading out German reruns, the British authorities hoped, would be easier than weaning Germans off of Hollywood films. As I demonstrate below that was not immediately the case.

When select theaters opened in the US-zone by the end of July in 1945 and general movie exhibition resumed in September, German films were explicitly banned from the screens, not just in the interest of denazification.¹¹⁴ Whereas Great Britain retained copies of British films for the home market, American studios sought to extract additional revenue from run-down copies of second-rate Hollywood films.¹¹⁵ As of

¹¹⁰ “Wiedereröffnung der Hamburger Kinos” *Hamburger Nachrichtenblatt* 26 Jul 1945 in 372-3 Gewerbepolizei Gen IX F 32.

¹¹¹ See Clemens., 127

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ Clemens convincingly argues that the “Projection of Britain” was the main goal of British cultural policy in occupied Germany. Instructing Germans in democracy British style and simultaneously using cultural media to present the British Nation in favorable and sympathetic ways, the British policy was one of mediation. (33-38). A similar argument is advanced by David Welch “Priming the Pump of German Democracy. British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War” (215-238) in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany: British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones, 1945-1955* edited by Ian D. Turner. (Oxford: Berg, 1989)

¹¹⁴ Feherenbach, 54

¹¹⁵ Clemens, 130.

December 1945 even the Americans admitted select German films to the regular program, not only because of obvious language barriers and laborious subtitles, but also because audiences clearly preferred German films once they realized that *Gone with the Wind* was not going to appear on the program anytime soon.¹¹⁶ Thus comedies and melodramas of the Nazi period paralleled continuities in shortages of food, heating materials and household goods and continued to reiterate the promise for better times to come.¹¹⁷

In the summer of 1945, the population of Hamburg still resisted the identity of a vanquished people. The living quarters were cramped, structurally unsound, poorly lit, unventilated and exceedingly damp. Social workers pointed out the scrubbed floors and the simple tablecloths when insisting that “for us, poverty and filth don’t belong together!”¹¹⁸ Stressing the extraordinary resourcefulness of women in mending everything and making a virtue out of necessity, social workers explained the impression apparently prevalent among foreigners that “we’re not doing that badly, since destitution doesn’t catch the eye. They [the foreigners] do not know of the suffering that hides behind the apartment walls.”¹¹⁹ Pointing to the orderliness with which the population accepted “the continuous shortages of victuals, especially the cuts in fat allocations,” welfare workers drew attention to the untenability of current circumstances and defended the population’s bitterness towards the British military government and its methods. After the harsh winter of 1946/7, popular trust in the ability and willingness of occupying power to ameliorate conditions and facilitate reconstruction [*Wiederaufbau*] increasingly

¹¹⁶ “Zur Situation des Films” *Die Welt* 7 Jan 1947 and “Millionen für den Mülleimer” *Hamburger Echo* 16 Jun 1949 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJVIIIb.. The film *Gone with the Wind* was considered unsuitable for German audiences by the Office of War Information (OWI) in the US and the Information Control Division (ICD) in occupied Germany because of “objectionable ... Negro incidents.” Quoted in Fehrenbach, 55.

¹¹⁷ Familienfürsorge Kreis 1. Sozialabteilung Innenstadt. Lagebericht für die Monate November/ Dezember 1946 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde II Ablage 22. 7.1981 1.

¹¹⁸ Familienfürsorge Kreis 1. Amt Innenstadt. Lagebericht für Monat Oktober. 13 Nov 45 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde II Ablage 22. 7.1981 1.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

waned.¹²⁰ And by the fall of 1948, social workers in Hamburg mused that “[i]t is hard to evaluate whether the magnitude of bearability had already been exceeded and the particular [*gewisse*] apathy with which everything is born is already indicative of the abatement of physical and psychological strength.”¹²¹ While resilience and an unarticulated hope for the future characterized the population in the first month of occupation, by the summer of 1947 the population was truly defeated. Both men and women appeared years older than their actual age, they were in terrible health and looked spent, worn, and exhausted.¹²² The reopening of movie theaters in July 1945 hardly changed the perception that under the Nazis at least suffering was effectively organized and evenly distributed.¹²³

Modeling Democracy

Nobody denied that life was filled with hardship in postwar Europe. Germans affirmed the cruelty and injustice of war. They were unwilling, however, to accept the Allies’ insistence on a fundamental difference between German suffering and the suffering caused by systematic extermination of entire populations, particularly the Jews of Eastern Europe.¹²⁴ Casting themselves as “victims of a war that Hitler had started but everyone lost,” Germans not only claimed parity in their status as victims but also as heroic survivors of an inhumane war. While the selective remembering of war produced a national narrative in which the suffering of Russian POWs and German expellees from the East occupied a central position, in Hamburg the narratives about German

¹²⁰ Sozialabteilung Innenstadt. Familienfürsorge. Lagebericht für die Monate Juli, August und September 1947 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde II Ablage 22. 7.1981 1.

¹²¹ Sozialabteilung Innenstadt. Fürsorgerinnendienst. Lagebericht über die Monate Oktober November, Dezember 21 Jan 48 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde II Ablage 22. 7.1981 1.

¹²² Sozialabteilung Innenstadt, Familienfürsorge. Lagebericht für die Monate Januar bis März 1947 15 Apr 47 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde II Ablage 22. 7.1981 1.

¹²³ See Weinreb, 105.

¹²⁴ West Germans continued to equate the suffering of expellees, POW, and bomb victims with that endured by the victims of the Nazi regime. Compare Moeller, Robert G. *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany*. 2001. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)

victimization foregrounded the experiences of allied bombings.¹²⁵ Precisely because these “bombs were faceless,” the people of Hamburg could cast war as an evil force that had literally befallen innocently ordinary people.¹²⁶

Practicing their imperfect understanding of democratic principles, the Hamburg press eagerly mobilized in the context of the food crisis. When they counted the numbers of starving children, when they reiterated the severe lack of food, when they compared caloric allotments between zones, the people in Hamburg appealed to the superiority of victors not on the basis of their weapons but on the basis of their democratic values and their humanitarian responsibilities.¹²⁷ Explaining how hunger interfered with democratic reeducation, the *Hamburger Freie Presse* invoked the current food crisis as the litmus test for the humanism of Western democracy in whose name the victory over German barbarism had been won:

The others' weapons had been strong enough for victory. Now all depends on whether their hearts are too. Because ossified hearts can only be overcome by kindness. And the hearts of Germans have not yet reemerged from the stupor into which thirteen years of dictatorial pressure, six years of remorseless war, and the downfall of unimaginable scale have catapulted them.¹²⁸

In reckoning with defeat, the *Hamburger Freie Presse* sought to speak not just for people in Hamburg but for all of Germany when claiming that the *Volk* had been misled and betrayed by a leader who “lured it onto a mountain, showed it the riches of the earth, and promised to lay them at its feet, if only it were willing to bend its knees before the false God.” As if awoken from a bad dream, they found themselves beggars rather than masters of the world and seemed to grieve for broken promises more than for their own dead, not

¹²⁵ Moeller, 13. See in particular his chapter “*Heimat*, Barbed Wire, and ‘Papa’s Kino,’” 123-170.

¹²⁶ Moeller, 5

¹²⁷ See in particular “20 Millionen Kinder hungern” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 6 Apr 1946; “Hunger als Schuld und Schicksal” in *Hamburger Freie Presse* 10 Apr 1946; “Die schlimmste Hungersnot der Weltgeschichte vor der Tür” *Hamburger Freie Presse*, 18 May 1946; and “Man kann ein hungerndes Volk nicht zu Demokraten erziehen” *Hamburger Freie Presse*, 8 Jun 1946; “Mit 1000 Kalorien kann weder Mann noch Frau gesund bleiben” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 4 May 1946; “Repatriierung - Entnazifizierung - Lebensmittelnot” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 11 May 1946.

¹²⁸ “Hunger als Schuld und Schicksal” in *Hamburger Freie Presse* 10 April 1946

to mention the countless victims of Nazism which the paper simply ignored.¹²⁹ Like similar voices across the Reich, the *Hamburger Freie Presse* cast the German *Volk* as a crippled and helpless victim of the Nazi State and its genocidal policies.

Starving, defeated, but most of all disoriented and disillusioned, people in Hamburg hesitantly tried their luck with democratic principles. Saturated with a *volk*-bound mysticism reminiscent of the Nazi past, the definition of democracy as “the spiritual sourdough [*Sauerteig*] sodding [*durchtränken*] the life of a nation from beginning to end” primarily emphasized obligation [*Verpflichtung*] and probation [*Bewährung*].¹³⁰ While the Hamburg press quickly caught on to the principle that democracy implied the consent of a free people, they saw the British occupiers as a greater obstacle to the creation of truly democratic reconstruction than their residual Nazism.¹³¹ Comparing the post-45 landscape to the 1918, the *Hamburger Freie Presse* sees the primary problem in Germany’s inability to forge democracy for itself, both times, democracy came to “us on the tip of foreign bayonets.”¹³² The resulting slippage in the local press came rather close to rendering military occupation a continuation of German subjugation, a continuation of the mistakes made at Versailles in 1918. In this historical trajectory the Third Reich appeared as just another unhappy interlude in which the German people ceased to exist as a historical subject and became the “abused object of one single will.”¹³³

Rejecting *Kollektivschuld*, the press asks the Allies to imagine how “trampled and deflated the innermost German friends of democracy” felt when faced with the “most generous concessions the world [das Ausland] granted to Hitler, the dictator” only years after “denying even the smallest the concessions the democrats [sic] Stresemann and

¹²⁹ “Hunger als Schuld und Schicksal” in *Hamburger Freie Presse* 10 April 1946

¹³⁰ “Demokratie – recht verstanden” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 6 Apr 1946.

¹³¹ “Demokratie – recht verstanden” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 6 Apr 1946.

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ “Kollektivschuld” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 4 May 1946. It should be noted that neither Stresemann nor Brüning qualified as democrats. Stresemann’s Realpolitik and Brüning’s governance by decree were reflective of an uneasy commitment to the Republic rather than as a commitment to Democracy per se.

Brüning?” Insisting on the co-responsibility for the massive and inhumane crimes of Nazism, the press implied that rigorous enforcement of the “Diktat” of Versailles drove Germans under the yoke of Hitler.¹³⁴ The extent to which the majority of people in Hamburg as elsewhere resented allegations of collective responsibility illustrates the extent to which they were focused on their own suffering and failed to grasp the magnitude of the crimes committed against the Jews of Europe, ethnic minorities, the civilian population of eastern Europe, political dissenters and all those the Nazi deemed socially and racially undesirable. The Hamburg paper quoted British Minister Hyndt that “one cannot instruct a hungry people in the ways of democracy” who simultaneously admonished the visitors to the London based exhibition ‘Germany Under Control’ that “if the plight of Germany is not be overcome, there will be a new tragedy.” The juxtaposition of these two quotes suggested that if the hunger and hardship after World War I produced Hitler, one can only imagine what hunger after Hitler might breed.¹³⁵

The British Military government was well aware that people in Hamburg were suffering from hunger and exhaustion. They were also keenly aware of the very concrete limits to available relief.¹³⁶ However, the positions resorted to by occupied and occupiers to explain the cause of such massive suffering and assign responsibility for it, were dramatically different.¹³⁷ And while Hamburg mobilized in the context of the food crisis, it was in the cultural realm that these positions were most clearly staked out. Film was deemed a particularly important vehicle by occupiers and occupied in all zones to communicate and negotiate these respective positions without making programmatic political statements or attributing blame. Heide Fehrenbach convincingly argues that

¹³⁴ “Kollektivschuld” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 4 May 1946

¹³⁵ “Man kann ein hungerndes Volk nicht zur Demokratie erziehen” *Hamburger Freie Presse*

¹³⁶ “Britain’s Problems at Home and Abroad” *The Manchester Guardian* 17 Aug 1945. “Food and Politics” *The Manchester Guardian* 20 Apr 1946.

¹³⁷ In terms of the food shortage, all occupying forces rightly blamed Hitler and his war as the first cause of the immense scarcity of food stuffs. However, the Western powers continued to explain the exacerbation of hunger on the division of Germany into occupation zones, with the Russians dominating the “food producing zone.” According to the British press, the Russians in turn spread rumors that the Western powers deliberately aggravated an already untenable situation. Compare “Simple Equation” *The Manchester Guardian* 18 Jul 1945 and “Food and Politics” *The Manchester Guardian* 20 Apr 1946.

in the aftermath of a war whose weaponry was as much psychological as technological, cinematic representation, reorganization and control constituted a crucial cultural component of both the victors' postwar plans to denazify and democratize Germany *and* German elites' attempts to construct a new uniquely 'German' identity cleansed of fascist traces.¹³⁸

The military authorities rarely recognized that cultural discourse was a two way street in which the German obstinacy in the face of reeducation did not necessarily reflect a lack of refinement or residual Nazi indoctrination, but a deliberate choice to reject as alien the cultural artifacts, films, narratives selected by the Allies to instruct Germans in the ways of democracy (or socialism in the case of the Soviet zone).

Removing Nazi officials, re-staffing the police, replacing teachers, trying criminals, disarming the population, supporting the formation of political parties, and imposing military governments destroyed the bureaucracy of the Nazi regime but it neither got rid of Nazis nor of Nazi ideology. All occupying powers agreed that "security does not rely solely on fortifications, soldiers and armaments; far more important is a radical transformation of the mentality of the enemy."¹³⁹ Accordingly, one of the first tasks of the military authority in all zones was to seize control of the press, the radio, the film sector, the postal service, and public libraries and shut down all cultural institutions.¹⁴⁰ The Russians much more readily allowed limited participation in politics and guaranteed for entertainment by reopening theaters, cinemas, concerts halls to the

¹³⁸ Fehrenbach, 5.

¹³⁹ Theodore Huebener. "The French Cultural Program in Germany" *The French Review* 24:5 (April 1951): 421-425, here 425.

¹⁴⁰ Fehrenbach, 51. For the British zone in particular see Clemens, 36.

general public.¹⁴¹ In the western zones cultural life was slowly revived over the course of the summer in 1945 with the express goal to instrumentalize information *and* enjoyment in the denazification and democratization of German institutions and German thinking.¹⁴²

Insisting that democratic institutions can only be viable and successful if sustained by a democratic culture that pervades everyday life, the Western powers not only feared that Germans might relapse into “authoritarianism.”¹⁴³ While the Russians started out from this position, eventually all Allies realized that it was rather convenient and safe to allow Germans to practice democratic principles and behaviors, such as free

¹⁴¹ The international press was well aware of the Russians’ revival of cultural life in their zone. See “Simple Equation” *The Manchester Guardian* 18 Jul 1945. The article surmises that Russian policy was “opposite of that adopted by the Roman Emperors. Where the Emperors gave the people ‘bread and circuses’ to keep their minds off politics the Russians are giving them politics and circuses to keep their minds of bread.” Moreover, Cora Sol Goldstein has pointed to the pervasive differences in US and Soviet approaches to reeducation. Whereas the Americans made it very clear that “Germany will not be occupied for the purpose of liberation but as a defeated enemy nation,” the Soviets considered “the cultural renewal of Germany essential to the process of political transformation” and unlike their American counterparts the SMAD (Soviet Military Administration, Germany) were “directly involved in cultural policy.” Compare Cora Sol Goldstein. *Capturing the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied Germany*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009), 11, 14. See further David Pike. *The Politics of Culture in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945 - 1949*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992). Even though Pike focuses predominantly on the reorganization of organizations of high culture and their relationship to party doctrine, his discussion of the Kulturbund, organized in the spring of 1945, illustrates how essential cultural policy was to the Soviet occupation policy in general.

¹⁴² Compare Raymond J. Spahn and Leslie I. Poste. “Germans Hail America: Some Aspects of Communication Media” *The Modern Language Journal* 33:6 (October 1949): 417-426.

¹⁴³ The concept of authoritarianism gained increasing validity as an explanatory model after the fall of the Third Reich. The concept was developed by members of the Institute for Social Research in the United States in the hope of explaining and thus facilitating the defeat of European. Only after the *Reichskristallnacht* in November 1938 did the Institute’s members (many of whom were Jewish and did not wish to draw attention to their Jewishness) consider anti-Semitism a major threat to peace in Europe and a subject worthy of systematic exploration. What started as an investigation into the origins of anti-Semitism, turned into a comprehensive study on ethnocentrism as related to a distinctive personality type. Grounded in Freudian psychology, Adorno et al suggested that the repressed hostility derived from exploitative child-parent relationships is released in a “desperate clinging to what appears to be strong and a disdainful rejection of whatever is relegated to the bottom.” Devising a theory of a personality type that in their thinking took the place of the rational thinking individual, Adorno et al, not only sought to explain the very historically specific experience of the post-World War I generation of German men (those often fatherless men who themselves had been too young to fight in the war themselves) who ardently supported National Socialism but racism and xenophobic ethnocentrism more generally. By discussing Nazism and racism in general in terms of types of people, Adorno et al not only hoped to provide insight into the particular historical context for popular support of the Nazi regime, but also offer a remedy to prevent such developments in the future. See Theodor W. Adorno et al. *The Authoritarian Personality*. (New York: Norton, c1950). For a useful discussion of the concept of authoritarianism in context of political psychology as well as for the above quoted passage from Adorno et al see John Levi Martin. “The Authoritarian Personality, 50 Years Later: What Lessons are There for Political Psychology?” *Political Psychology* 22:1 (2001):1-27. For the context of Adorno’s intervention see Ehrhard Bahr. “The Anti-Semitism Studies of the Frankfurt School: The Failure of Critical Theory” *German Studies Review* 1:2 (May 1978): 125-138

choice, tolerance, debate, and cooperation in a presumably apolitical sphere of culture. At the same time, culture not only offered a supposedly secondary realm for the rehearsal of eventual German independence, it also allowed the Allies to perform their own political culture before each other in a highly competitive ideological climate. Therefore British cultural policy and cultural practices and discourses in Hamburg should be seen as lying at the heart of the political relationship between occupiers and occupied.

Moreover, in the eyes of Great Britain the political balance of Europe depended on a successful rehabilitation of Germany's economic and political power. Hoping to rebuild Germany into a strong continental partner and an economic counterweight to the Soviet Union, the British allowed the revival of German culture while providing an alternative model to US dominance.¹⁴⁴ While the US was able to and felt compelled to make Germans feel her invincible military might, the British hoped to persuade Germans to democracy and waged a mainly cultural campaign.¹⁴⁵

The war had cost Great Britain its position as a global player as it turned the United States into a hegemonic world power. Britain had no military prowess to demonstrate and it had no use for an economically weak and politically reduced Germany in the center of Europe. In fact, Britain's hostility towards the Soviet Union explains its leniency towards Germany, which remained an essential part in the British vision for a

¹⁴⁴ Anne Deighton. "Cold-War Diplomacy: British Policy Towards Germany's Role in Europe, 1945-9." *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany: British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones, 1945-1955*. Ed. Turner, Ian D. Oxford: Berg, 1989. 15-34.

¹⁴⁵ US policy makers insisted on not repeating the mistake of 1918 when Germans "were permitted to believe that the Reich Army had not been bested by Allied arms but was the victim of disaffection on the home front." In 1945 the Allies were resolved to demonstrate with brutal honesty that there can be doubt that "Germany was defeated badly by a batter-armed force." Charles E. Egan. "OWI Will Drive Home the Truth to Germans" *New York Times* 15 Apr 1945. See also Goldtsein's discussion of American propaganda in occupied Germany in *Capturing the German Eye*. See also James F. Tent. *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982) and in comparison see Timothy R. Vogt *Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany. Brandenburg, 1945-1948* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

non-socialist Europe.¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, the British more so than their American counterparts granted considerable independence to Germans in the cultural realm and invited participation of local elites in the revitalization of German social and cultural institutions.

As showpieces of this policy all occupying nations had so-called information centers that functioned as a sort of museum for curious Germans to observe what a successful democratic (or alternatively socialist) culture looks like. The first *Amerika Haus* was opened in Frankfurt in 1945. To years later 49 such Information Centers allowed Germans to experience the benefits of U.S. culture. Libraries stocked with books and periodicals, lectures, concerts, discussion groups, English language classes, and story hours for children were supposed to convince Germans of the achievements of American Culture at absolutely no cost at all. Since “every intelligent German admits to the excellence of French Culture,” the *Institute Française* emphasized leisure activities, instruction on all levels, as well as fine arts and theater rather than a museum of French cultural superiority, or so Theodore Huebener explained. The Russian *Haus der Kultur* offered information about Russian culture and life in the Soviet Union. It furthermore housed a well-stocked library. In contrast to such centers housed in imposing buildings, the British proceeded with their “propaganda activities in a very conservative and quite unostentatious manner” through so-called *Brücken* (bridges). A British information center or *Brücke* was much smaller and did not primarily stress British achievements but featured works of art and books from a variety of European artists and authors. Housed in

¹⁴⁶ Deighton, 15-34. Judt highlights how Britain stood at the sidelines when it came to European affairs beyond its own particularist interest. (206) and further suggests that the Cold War did have its origins before 1945, origins that because of a shared enemy between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union are too easily obscured (103). While earlier in the war their prime goal was the defeat Germany even if that meant that the continent would be dominated by Soviet Russia, by 1945 British positions had shifted. Judt argues that the “real British fear in Europe was not that the USSR might control eastern Europe – by late 1944 that was a *fait accompli* – but that it might draw a prostrate, resentful Germany into its orbit as well and thus establish mastery over the whole continent. To prevent this, the British Chiefs of Staff concluded in the Autumn of 1944, it would probably be necessary to divide Germany and then occupy the western part.” Compare Judt, *Postwar*, 103, 110-111,

business buildings or within a larger museum these British centers did not draw attention to their educating mission.¹⁴⁷

The British (just like their American, French and Soviet counterparts) insisted on the importance of film as an instrument of denazification and political education, because it offered the opportunity to *show* rather than to *legislate* a different social model.¹⁴⁸ Film was central to both British and American occupation policy and deemed particularly useful in confronting the German public with the crimes committed by Germans under the Nazi regime.¹⁴⁹ The United States tested the first atrocity film *Death Camp* in Erlangen from late June through July 1945. As was the case with the later examples of American reeducation films such as *Die Todesmühlen* [*The Death Mills*] (1946), the Americans stressed collective responsibility for the Nazi crimes. Viewing of the film was mandatory. It confronted the population directly with actual footage taken during the liberation of the Nazi death camps in Eastern Europe.¹⁵⁰ In contrast to their American counterparts, the British did not resume movie screening with atrocity films supplemented only by the American-British co-produced newsreel *Welt im Film*. Instead, acknowledging the need for entertainment, the British decided to screen carefully selected German films until subtitled or dubbed copies of British films were available. Thus the familiar faces of the shoddy German wartime productions remained an integral part of the regular program for the entire duration of British military occupation.¹⁵¹ And while British film producers were also not eager to sell their product against worthless

¹⁴⁷ Compare Theodore Huebener, "The French Cultural Program in Germany" and further see Harrison Kerr. "Information Control in the Occupied Areas" *Notes*. Second Series 4:4 (September 1947):431-5

¹⁴⁸ Robert Joseph. "Our Film Program in Germany: How far was it a Success?" *Hollywood Quarterly* 2:2 (Jan 1947) 122-130 Against discontent from industry representative the article asserts again the importance of the involvement of government agencies in educating the German public. The Americans, the article claims are doing the best possible job of all occupation powers in deploying film as a means of instruction.

¹⁴⁹ Kathleen McLaughlin "U.S. Now Operates Reich Movie Studio" *New York Times* 5 Aug 1945; Charles E. Egan "OWI Will Drive Home the Truth to Germans" *New York Times* 15 Apr 1945; "Film Education Urged" *New York Times* 24 Mar 1945; "Bestiality of the Nazis" *The Manchester Guardian* 2 May 1945; "Nazi Camp Films" *The Manchester Guardian* 26 Apr 1945.

¹⁵⁰ Fehrenbach, 56-8

¹⁵¹ Theaters in the French zone also started on German reruns and introduced foreign films later. Compare Clemens, 130.

Reichsmark, the first British film, *Rembrandt*, (also a 1930s rerun) reached theaters in the British Zone in September 1945. Yet even when British and American films became available, movie audiences continued to prefer German reruns as supplements to the first postwar German films over British and American fare.

When the Americans opened the first select theaters in their zone in late July 1945 (also violating American-British agreement to open theaters only in September) they only screened informational shorts. German reruns were expressly banned in the American zone and only slowly admitted in December 1945. Popular demand was certainly a factor and the fact that German films played in the rest of occupied Germany, eased the reservations of US military authorities.¹⁵² However, the real reason for resorting to the despised Nazi product was Hollywood's particular policy towards the European market, which in war's aftermath only promised returns in utterly devalued currencies.

During the war, the dominant US studios had argued against government 'editing' of films designated for European export in order to preserve the international appeal of Hollywood products. The Production Code Administration, the self-imposed censorship board of the industry, had been slow in admitting the value of propaganda and generally maintained that pure entertainment is the best propaganda for freedom and pleasure guaranteed by democracy. But in the aftermath of the war and in light of the worthless European currency, studios held back the current production and instead deemed run-down copies of the last production cycles good enough for a market that had been deprived of Hollywood products for half a decade. The Information Control Division (ICD) was rather slow in approving Hollywood features for the German market. Towards the end of 1946 only thirty-two films had been approved for exhibition in Germany.¹⁵³

Already in June 1945, the British military government decided to allow concerts, operas and plays to recommence in German theaters, lifting the former ban on aggregations of more than five people.¹⁵⁴ Libraries reopened, and first newspaper and

¹⁵² Compare Fehrenbach, 7

¹⁵³ Compare in particular the analysis by Fehrenbach, 54-58.

¹⁵⁴ "A more liberal policy in Germany" *The Manchester Guardian* 30 Jun 1945

later book-publishing slowly resumed.¹⁵⁵ As of 1 July 1945, a limited civil postal service resumed and allowed Germans to send personal postcards.¹⁵⁶ While the Americans still insisted that “it is not the policy of the occupying authorities to entertain Germans but to educate and inform them of events in the outside world as an antidote to the long dosage of Nazi propaganda,” the British deliberately re-opened movie houses in their zone with German films and began to add British and American fare by early September.¹⁵⁷

Film distribution remained in hands of the Film Section of the British military government until January 1947 with various offices staffed by German civilians. Commercial distributors were licensed in the British and American zones during the second half of 1947 and the British Eagle Lion and the American Motion Picture Export Association (MPEA) were joined by German competitors.¹⁵⁸ The British insisted on keeping exhibition, distribution, and production separate to avoid the concentration of the film sector in a few hands to avoid replicating an Ufa-type monopoly.¹⁵⁹ All Allies agreed on the necessity to dismantle the Nazi film apparatus, but the revival of postwar German film production was more controversial and followed different rationales in each zone.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ A first news agency was formed a months after the end of the war in Bad Oeynhausen consisting of a mixed team of British military personal and civilians. “Freedom of Mind in Germany” *The Manchester Guardian* 15 Feb 1947

¹⁵⁶ “A more liberal policy in Germany” *The Manchester Guardian* 30 Jun 1945

¹⁵⁷ Kathleen McLaughlin “U.S. Now Operates Reich Movie Studio” *New York Times* 5 Aug 1945; Gladwin Hill “British to Show German Motion Pictures in Zone Despite Delay in American Area” *New York Times* 29 Jul 1945

¹⁵⁸ “U.S. Zone Revives Film Competition” *New York Times* 9 Dec 1947. Compare Clemens, 132, 241. As of October 1948 the distribution system was extended to the French Zone as well.

¹⁵⁹ Clemens, 241. Decree from 8 March 1948 which prohibited monopolies in German film industry and prescribed the separation of the exhibition, distribution and production.

¹⁶⁰ Ufa Film GmbH (UFI) was broken up, the property appropriated and administered by a public trust appointed by the military governments. Only the revenues of reprises continued to flow into frozen Ufa accounts. Compare Clemens, 133.

The German Ufi¹⁶¹ was broken up, the property appropriated and administered by a public trust appointed by the military governments. The revenues from reprises of old German films continued to flow into frozen Ufa accounts.¹⁶² Personnel and sites, whether for production or exhibition, were seized by the occupying power in the respective zone. The two most important film production centers, the Ufa studios in Berlin, Tempelhof and the Ufa studios in Geiseltal, near Magdeburg, were controlled by Russian and US authorities respectively. At first they lay fallow.

The Russians granted the first license to produce a postwar film to the newly founded DEFA on 17 May 1946 and ended the *Filmpause* in postwar Germany.¹⁶³ Only ten days later the British military government licensed Helmut Käutner's *Camera*. During the so called-*Filmpause*, the period between May 1945 and May 1946 in which no German films were produced, actors and actresses, script writers, cameramen and directors kept a low profile and many moved from Berlin to either Hamburg or Munich to await the political development.¹⁶⁴ Helmut Käutner began working on *In jenen Tagen* in Hamburg and Wolfgang Staudte completed the first postwar German film *Die Mörder*

¹⁶¹ For the creation of the Ufa Film GmbH (UFI) compare Spiker, 194. Ufi reorganized all major German film companies under the aegis of a state-monopoly. The previously state-dominated companies, Ufa, Tobis, Terra, and Bavaria plus Berlin-Filmkunst, Prag-Film AG, Wien-Film, Continental Films, Paris with two subsidiaries, Deutsche Zeichenfilm, Mars-Film and Berliner Künstlerbühnen were included in this giant trust. Moreover the entire distribution sector, studios, the Deutsche Filmtheater GmbH and the Ufa-Theater Betriebs GmbH also became part of this umbrella organization. Even the newsreel production and distribution were under direction of Ufi. See Spiker, 226

¹⁶² Clemens, 133

¹⁶³ Clemens, 235. The Russians were generally more lenient when it came to popular entertainment and apparently did not impose a general ban on movie exhibition. Compare Gladwin Hill "British to Show German Motion Pictures in Zone Despite Delay in American Area" *New York Times* 29 Jul 1945

¹⁶⁴ Will Roland. "The Film Scene in Germany" *New York Times* 6 Jan 1946. Dana Adams Schmidt "Germany's Muddled Film Situation" *New York Times* 22 Jun 1947. Among the famous hiding out in Munich or American occupied Germany were Hans Albers, Erich Engel, Emil Jannings, Von Bolvari, Harlad Braun, Willy Forst, Ilse Werner, and Ferdinand Marian. Zarah Leander, at first, returned to her native Sweden.

sind unter uns in Berlin. In 1946 four films were produced by licensed German films.¹⁶⁵ The Americans who had inherited the intact production sites of Geiseltal in Munich, licensed the Neue Deutsche Filmgesellschaft in November 1946 and even then preferred to saturate the German market with dubbed or subtitled fare. By 1947 a total of 56 pictures, German and German language films by the occupying powers, were in production.¹⁶⁶

Germans eagerly received these first postwar films and took them as a sign of cultural regeneration. Even though Germans went to the movies to see Russian, American or British films, they generally preferred their homemade variants whether they were new releases or old time favorites. The British assumed that Nazi era features would eventually become dated and Germans would embrace the films made by British filmmakers, but the German reprises proved to have a rather long shelf life simply because they offered a *German* alternative to foreign-made films. It is not that American or British films from the 1930s and early 1940s were poorly made; in fact British film under the guidance of media czar J. Arthur Rank,¹⁶⁷ made a forceful appearance on the international film scene and successfully pushed into the US market.¹⁶⁸ The problem with American and British film was of a very different nature: The films were not *German*.

As the case of Hamburg illustrates, in the postwar landscape discussions about film took on explicitly national overtones; in fact film became a medium through which to articulate hopes and claims for *national* cohesion and equality among nations (*nationale Gleichberechtigung*). Patrons in Hamburg demanded to see films that spoke *their*

¹⁶⁵ Egon Larsen. "The Emergence of a New Film Industry" *Hollywood Quarterly* 3:4 (Summer 1948): 387-394. These were *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, *In jenen Tagen*, *Sag die Wahrheit* (Weiss, Studio-45, 1946) and *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen* (Braun, NDF, 1947) Compare Chronik 1946-47 in Jacobson, Wolfgang, Anton Kaes, and Hans Helmut Prinzler, eds. *Die Geschichte Des Deutschen Films*. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993), 535. See further the appendix on films produced between 1945-1949 in Jennifer Fay, "The Business of Cultural Diplomacy: American Film Policy in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949" Dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison (2001), 329

¹⁶⁶ "German Film Growth Decried by U.S. Aide" *New York Times* 18 Jan 1947

¹⁶⁷ Arthur J. Rank was a British Media Czar who in 1937 formed the Rank Organization, a vertically integrated film company that not only effectively dominated British film production but also controlled a large number of exhibition outlets. See Allen Eyles. *Odeon Cinemas 2: From J. Arthur Rank to the Multiplex*. (London: Cinema Theater Association, 2005).

¹⁶⁸ "British Lords Commend Rank, Film Czar, for Efforts to Compete With Hollywood" *New York Times* 24 Feb 1944; "British Film Group Plans to Invade World Market" *New York Times* 11 Feb 1944;

language and reflected *their* cultural sensibilities.¹⁶⁹ In the immediate postwar period, these cultural sensibilities were intimately connected with German suffering; a suffering that was imagined and cast as a peculiarly national: a collective response to the allegation of *Kollektivschuld*.¹⁷⁰

The return of National Socialist films to the postwar screens implied that German culture might at be at least in part rehabilitated. Since postwar Germany could hardly look to its political traditions to contest the authority of the occupying powers, the re-admission of German films, books, theater performances as well as the revival of German cultural production provided a space from which the superiority of victors could be safely challenged while demonstrating some rudimentary understanding of the sort of exchange democracy fosters. Filmmaker, Veit Harlan, was tried for crimes against humanity and even though acquitted few film critics disagreed that he had knowingly placed his “art” in the service of murderous ideas.¹⁷¹ Those artists who had contributed to overtly propagandistic fare were singled out as the Nazis among those employed in German film, whereas the great mass of cultural experts, artists, and filmmakers remained relatively untainted by the 13-year long slip-up of blood-soiled artistic grandeur. Hans Albers appeared in the first American-made postwar film.¹⁷² The reruns of so-called escapist entertainment films and the continued employment of prominent actors and actresses, scriptwriters, directors, and support personnel in postwar film production reasserted the separation of art and politics that presumably allowed German artists to survive as inner emigrants in a regime that left no doubt about the functional subservience of culture to politics.

¹⁶⁹ Erich Lüth. “Zensur auf Umwegen” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 7 Jul 1948

¹⁷⁰ “Kollektivschuld” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 4 May 1946

¹⁷¹ Veit Harlan was facing charges for crimes against humanity in Hamburg. After a seven-week long show trial Harlan was acquitted for lack of evidence. The Hamburg jury court felt unable to determine whether the anti-Semitic hate film *Jud Süß* had been able to injure Jewish sense of honor or led to later crimes against Jews. See “Ein Umstrittenes Urteil: Veit Harlan freigesprochen” in *Der Neue Film* 3:12 30 Apr 1949.

¹⁷² Joseph von Baky directed the first postwar German film made by an American licensed studio and Hans Albers played the lead role in *Und über uns der Himmel* (1947) without invoking references to their last common venture *Münchhausen* (1943), a film made in celebration of 25th anniversary of Ufa.

Thus, local cineasts and nascent political authorities felt emboldened to express their desires for national revival and self-reliance in the cultural realm and felt fewer compunctions in voicing critical opinions towards the occupying powers. While criticism towards the military authorities was expressly forbidden, neither military government required that audiences *liked* the films they were shown. As I have emphasized throughout this dissertation, Hamburg had cultivated its cosmopolitan throughout the Nazi period and adjusted that cosmopolitanism's hue to wartime developments. Hamburg's movie audiences had regularly attended Hollywood films until they were banned by the regime in the late fall of 1940 and continued to visit the Waterloo Theater when its predominantly Hollywood fare was replaced by Czech, Hungarian, French, and Italian films. In light of this history, audience reactions to British films are surprising. In December of 1946, the social democratic Mayor Brauer of Hamburg informed the British Information Control Unit in Hamburg that the population often misunderstood British films. In an obsequious letter, Brauer insisted that "the interest of Hamburg cinema-audiences in British film is extraordinarily great and the desire and readiness to acquaint oneself through these films with the British conception of life, is no doubt genuine."¹⁷³ But beneath this servile tone, the Mayor bluntly told the occupiers that British film is an unsuitable and inferior substitute for even average-quality German fare and accordingly rejected by audiences for "being too primitive."¹⁷⁴ The Mayor primarily blamed poor dubbing or confusing subtitles that destroyed "the subtleties of the dialogue" for the substandard reception of British film. In particular, Brauer referred to *Brief Encounter* (1945), which he considered to be a good film that was completely ruined in the process of synchronization. Rather than faulting British film per se, the Mayor invoked a cultural and a language barrier that supposedly prevented British films from fostering an "understanding of the British way of living [sic]" with Hamburg audiences. *Brief Encounter* (Lean, 1945), *I'll Be Your Sweetheart* (Guest, 1945) and *The Wicked Lady* (1945), apparently made British ideas and customs appear ridiculous to Hamburg

¹⁷³ Der Bürgermeister der Hansestadt Hamburg an Information Control Unit, Hansestadt Hamburg, 20 Dec 1946 in StAHH 131-14 Verbindungstelle der Militaerregierung III2 band 9

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

audiences (or at least to Mayor Brauer) as they caused “foolish explosions of derision and laughter.”¹⁷⁵ What exactly people in Hamburg found laughable about these films the Mayor would not say, however he felt compelled to suggest that the Information Control Unit prescreen British films to a panel of regular patrons of Hamburg’s prestigious and art-conscious Waterloo Theater to avoid causing “bewilderment of public [sic].”¹⁷⁶ All of the films the Mayor singled out enjoyed a positive international reception when playing in the United States as well as other European countries.¹⁷⁷ When Brauer imagined that German reactions to *Henry V* (Oliver, 1944), another internationally acclaimed British film, would be more positive, he simply demonstrated his awareness that British selections for the German film market excluded some of the most successful features.¹⁷⁸

The Hamburg press continued to lambast British films and insisted that achievements of a different nature, of a *German* nature needed to be placed next to the productions of Arthur Rank’s British film monopoly.¹⁷⁹ Film critics and journalists in Hamburg made it known that they were able to exercise their democratic right to disapprove of Rank-films, even if the British are convinced of the superior quality of his films. Erich Lüth, the director of the public relations’ office in Hamburg, invited the unnamed military authorities to make use of the freedom of speech and weigh and measure the achievements of the young German film production with a critical eye but demanded that first they grant it the necessary freedom to grow.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ Der Bürgermeister der Hansestadt Hamburg an Information Control Unit, Hansestadt Hamburg, 20 Dec 1946 in StAHH 131-14 Verbindungstelle der Militaerregierung III2 band 9.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Brief Encounter* was even nominated for three Oscars in 1947 and David Lean won the Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1946. Even though Celia Johnson did not receive an Oscar, she won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress in 1946. Compare *The Internet Movie Database* <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0037558/awards> retrieved (21 Oct 2010)

¹⁷⁸ Laurence Olivier won the Honorary Award for outstanding achievement as an actor, producer and director of this film at the 1947 Academy Awards. Compare *The Internet Movie Database* <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0036910/awards>

¹⁷⁹ Erich Lüth. “Zensur auf Umwegen” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 7 Jul 1948

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*

In Hamburg as elsewhere, individuals seemed prepared to ignore regional differences and cast themselves and their efforts as part of a national agenda of *Wiederaufbau* [reconstruction]. Audiences rejected British films not for lack of understanding or because of essential incompatibility of British films with “German sensibilities.”¹⁸¹ In fact, Hamburg’s film viewing public had been so well versed in the English language that the Waterloo Theater could profitably screen Hollywood films with their original sound-track up to 1940. Rather, Hamburg’s cosmopolitan film public rejected Hollywood movies and Rank-films because they could. Just like their counterparts in other cities, audiences rejected the movies of the occupying powers as a demonstration of their democratic rights to disapprove and speak out publicly for the value of German art and culture.¹⁸²

And as the British attempted to revive German civil administration and encouraged the formation of political parties, Hamburg only grudgingly submitted to British guidance in this respect. Hamburg’s press performed its complicity with British imposed policies when contemplating what to do with 40 million cubic meters of rubble, when addressing questions about the political reorganization of Germany or when reporting on the sustained interest of the population in informing themselves about Nazi crimes by attending screening of atrocity films. But the press ultimately attempted to meld the “Nazi crimes into “the history of human cruelty” from the crusades and the religious wars, the witch trials and persecutions of Christians to the conquests of Genghis Khan and Napoleon.¹⁸³ Admitting that the destruction of Nazism “may have opened up the possibility for democracy to grow out of our own law, out of our own life” the press

¹⁸¹ “Germans Boo British Film” *The Manchester Guardian* 16 Nov 1946

¹⁸² For example, when movie theaters first opened in the US zone, Germans “almost mobbed the theater in the hope of seeing *Gone With the Wind*” and accordingly were more than disappointed when being treated to an hour and fifteen minutes of “rotten propaganda” that was subsequently described as “the worst show I’ve ever paid to see.” Compare Kathleen McLaughlin “Munich Germans Score Film Fare” *New York Times* 5 Aug 1945 and Dana Adams Schmidt “Our Movies Leave Germans Hostile” *New York Times* 23 Jul 1946.

¹⁸³ “General Angriff auf die Trümmer” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 3 April 1946.; “Die Todesmühlen.” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 3 April 1946.; “Demokratie - recht verstanden” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 6 April 1946; “Kollektivschuld” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 4 May 1946 and “Briefe an die Redaktion: Zur Schuldfrage” 3 Apr 1946

insisted that “it was neither the objective nor the business of the victors to deliver democracy; we have to forge it ourselves, have to dig it out from underneath the rubble, discover it anew and render it precious and binding for our state.”¹⁸⁴ While in principal correct, such statements diminished the pervasiveness of Nazi ideology in German society and concealed direct claims to British withdrawal from German political life.

It is not that the occupying powers did not begin to reorganize political life. Their efforts just did not go far and fast enough in the eyes of Germans. The military government permitted, encouraged in fact, the reformation of political parties.¹⁸⁵ Already on 15 September 1945, the British permitted the reorganization of political parties but limited German participation in politics to an advisory function that was institutionalized in the Zonal Advisory Council (*Zonenbeirat*) on 6 March 1946.¹⁸⁶ The Zonal Advisory Council presented an unwelcome development primarily to the leaders of the *Länder* who had met regularly (with permission of the military government) since the fall of 1945 and considered themselves the real representatives of the German people. The Zonal Advisory Council privileged the seven representatives of the reformed political parties (two for each SPD, CDU and KPD and one for the Free Democrats) over the six representatives of the *Länder*. The council moreover included two representatives each from the unions and cooperatives in addition to ten professional representatives.¹⁸⁷ Regardless of the parliamentary nature of the debates in the Council, the military government decreed what kinds of topics could be discussed and hardly felt compelled to heed the ‘advice’ from the council if it contradicted British convictions or security concerns. While the press in Hamburg would not go as far as compare military occupation to the political oppression

¹⁸⁴ “Demokratie - recht verstanden” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 6 April 1946.

¹⁸⁵ In Hamburg as in most parts of Germany the communist party (KPD) was the first to obtain a license and generally tightly bound to the principles of the Soviet Military Authority. In contrast, the CDU in Hamburg formed in the image of traditional dignitaries (*Honoratiorenpartei*). The FDP (Free Democrats) in Hamburg conceived of itself as a successor to the Weimar DDP. The SPD developed into strongest party in Hamburg. Compare Werner Jochmann and Hans Dieter Loose, eds. *Hamburg. Geschichte Einer Stadt Und Ihrer Bewohner: Vom Kaiserreich Bis Zur Gegenwart*. Vol. II: Vom Kaiserreich bis zur Gegenwart. Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1985), 391-394

¹⁸⁶ Gabriele Stüber, ed. *Zonenberiat. Zonal Advisory Council, 1946-1948. Protokolle und Anlagen 1.-11. Sitzung 1946/47*. (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1993), XXII

¹⁸⁷ Stüber, XXXI-XXXII

of the Nazi regimes, popular expressions such as “Gott gib uns ein fünftes Reich, das Vierte ist dem Dritten gleich [God give us a fifth Empire, the fourth is just like the third]” illustrate the wide spread level of discontent with the limits imposed by Allies as they hoped to transform Germans into democrats.¹⁸⁸

Hamburg’s self-proclaimed advocates for democracy stressed that democracy does not compare to a discarded piece of furniture that can be retrieved after 13 years and decoratively resituated nor is it “a coin one picks up of the street when one’s own political change has run out.” Democracy could not be borrowed like a “political decal from other nations and plastered over the bashed-up facade of one’s own state.”¹⁸⁹ Yet few felt ready say, what in fact the organically grown German version of democracy was supposed to entail. However, as I demonstrate below filmmakers did indeed hope to dig it out from underneath the rubble.

Of Humans and Victims

Unfettered optimism, verisimilitude, and a will to worthy art, was supposed to carry the reborn German film and its new realism to international recognition and deliver testimony that “out of the spiritual ruins of the past new life will spring.”¹⁹⁰ The first British licensed post-45 film *In jenen Tagen* captured precisely this sentiment in its closing shot: As the camera brings into focus a little flower, the ruins amidst which it sprouts blend into the background.

Käutner’s *In Jenen Tagen* (1946/7) offers an episodic history of the Third Reich through the perspective of an old car and the seven anecdotes this car relates to two men searching for meaning, humanity (*Menschen*) and new beginnings in the rubble littered cityscape of Hamburg. Yet this film is not about Hamburg, the city’s ruins are merely the foil upon which the history of the entire nation is projected and which ultimately serves as an rebuttal to the Allies’ insistence for Germany’s recognition of collective guilt. Guilt

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Raymond Ebsworth. *Restoring Democracy in Germany: The British Contribution*. (London: Stevens & Sons, 1961), 21

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Erich Lüth, “Das Rahlstedt-Projekt ist noch zu retten” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 21 Jul 1949

and suffering, Käutner's history insists, are born by a much wider collective than Allied accusations implied. Only alluding to the racial and political order created by the Nazis, the film zooms in on individual fates to reassert the shattered belief in German humanity. In the response to the hopeless of the two men and their uncertainty about the future, the omniscient car retells unconnected stories of fictional 'ordinary Germans' who, like the car, were scarred by as a result of a brutal history's unfolding.



Figures 39 and 40 *Flower amidst ruins IN JENEN TAGEN*

In the opening scene of the film two young men gut the car in the midst of this “*Sauleben*” and thus symbolically deconstruct the Nazi promise for better times. The world they inherited is characterized by absences: “No smokes, no booze, no food, no coal, no real job, no apartment, no money, no news from Susanne, no future, no illusions, no ..., no ..., no ...” summarizes Willi (Gert Schaefer) the current situation. But Karl (Erich Schellow), the more educated of the two, brings the conversation to a more philosophical level as he adds, defeatedly: “no humans [*Menschen*].” When his friend doesn't seem to understand Karl reiterates: “There are no humans anymore, just like there hadn't been any in all those damn years.” Yet, when pressed to explain “what actually is a human?” Karl remains silent. In his stead, the car's solemn introspection reproaches the men for their remissness and moves to answer the question by showing *Menschen* in seven case studies.

While observers in the US remained divided as to whether German films probed deep enough “into German history, explaining the fateful mistakes made by Germans,

and laying bare the roots from which a peaceful renaissance of the people could spring in our time,” German cultural critics and film enthusiasts hoped that film would facilitate an exchange in which Germans were not simply called upon to watch, listen, and learn, but might be allowed to impart their own (inherently German) artistic perspective to Germany’s recent history and its impending future.¹⁹¹

The first postwar films, disparagingly called *Trümmerfilme* (rubble films) have enjoyed renewed scholarly interest in recent years.¹⁹² Yet even before the rubble was removed from German cities, even before the ruins were rebuilt, the rubble film vanished from the postwar screens. But its “new realism” that scholars also dismiss as “lacking in experiments [keine Experimente]” lastingly shaped postwar German cinema.¹⁹³ I retain the term “realism” not because I mean to suggest that the rubble film reflected reality. Rather I retain the label from filmmakers at the time who understood “realism” in the sense of being relevant to the here and now. Johannes von Moltke makes a compelling argument that locates Jugert’s *Film ohne Title* (1948) as a hyper-*Trümmerfilm* at a point of transition that relocates the setting from the city to the country side and by naming the city as the source of social conflict, anticipates the *Heimat*-film genre that translated the self-reflexive realism of the rubble films into rural authenticity.¹⁹⁴ When faulting German postwar film for failing to develop a signature cinematic style, scholars generally

¹⁹¹ Egon Larsen. “The Emergency of a New Film Industry” *Hollywood Quarterly* 3:4 (Summer 1948): 387-394

¹⁹² See in particular Robert R. Shandley, *Rubble Film: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001); Hester Baer. *Dismanteling the Dream Factory*; Jaimey Fischer. “Wandering in/to the Rubble-Film: Filmic Flanerie and the Exploded Panorama after 1945” *The German Quarterly* 78:4 Special Issue: Focus on Film (Fall, 2005): 461-80; Robert R. Shandley, “Rubble Canyons: Die Mörder sind unter uns and the Western” *The German Quarterly* 74:2 (Spring, 2001):132-147; Robert R. Shandley, “Dismantling the Dream Factory: The Film Industry in Berubbled Germany” *South Central Review* 16:2/3 Special Issue: German Studies today (Summer-Autumn, 1999): 104-117. See also *German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins* edited by Wilfried Wilms and William Rasch (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and compare to earlier, rather short descriptions of the rubble film in Fritz Göttler, “Westdeutscher Nachkriegsfilm: Land der Väter” in *Geschichte des deutschen Films*, 178

¹⁹³ For a dismissal of postwar German film as a cinema of “opportunism and mediocrity. No Experiments, no risks, no movement” as characteristic for German Cinema between Ufa’s collapse and the Oberhausen Manifesto see Fritz Göttler. “Westdeutscher Nachkriegsfilm: Land Der Väter.” (171-210) *Die Geschichte Des Deutschen Films*. Eds. Jacobson, Wolfgang, Anton Kaes and Hans Helmut Prinzler. (Stuttgart and Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 1993), 173

¹⁹⁴ Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, 73ff.

measure post-45 German film against Weimar Art Cinema, locating the shift from expressionist techniques and discontinuous narratives to the glimmers and escapist products of Goebbels' dream factory in the politics of Nazism. Accordingly, many scholars considered the failure of postwar film to return to the experimental styles of Weimar indicative of residual Nazism, rather than a combined result of lack of resources and the continuation of development of film as a first and foremost *national* art form.

The rubble film preceded and prefigured the 'mediocrity' of the 1950s films which produced one of Germany's most lasting and widely popular film genre: The *Heimat*-Film.¹⁹⁵ In contrast to the *Heimat*-films, the rubble films hardly constituted a coherent genre, but shared an intense preoccupation with questions about German guilt and collective responsibility and therein articulated a mode of address suited (or so their advocates hoped) to mend the broken moral compass of the times.¹⁹⁶ As a testimony to a filmic zero hour, the rubble film remained an essential *Begriff* even after it disappeared from the screens but it hardly produced many cherished memories.¹⁹⁷

In what follows I will offer a careful reading of Helmut Käutner's *In jenen Tagen* (1946/7). The film played an important role in reviving Hamburg's cosmopolitan traditions that war had broken. Placing Käutner's debut in the context of other rubble films, I argue that *In jenen Tagen* performed on an international stage the goodwill, imperfect ability, and staunch determinism with which Germans attempted to reinvent

¹⁹⁵ Compare in particular Moltke, *No Place Like Home*, "Roots" 21-35

¹⁹⁶ Erica Carter. "Sweeping up the Past: Gender and History in the Post-war German 'Rubble Film'" in *Heroines Without Heroes: Reconstructing Female and National Identities in European Cinema, 1945-51* (New York: Cassell, 2000): 91-112. Erica Carter suggests that the rubble film can hardly be described as a genre since the individual films differ from one another dramatically in terms of style.

¹⁹⁷ Robert Shandley points to the complicated reception of the rubble film when explaining that the well-attended houses do not necessarily signal approval of the film, since movie houses offered a warm place to sit in addition to entertainment. The fact that few rubble films return as classics to German television screens later, seems a more reliable measure about rubble film's place in popular memory. At the time, however, for better or worse they offered something new and "etwas eigenes" for which one did not have to apologize.

themselves as democrats with a criminal past during “those hardest times.”¹⁹⁸ Moreover, I am particularly interested in the role this film played for Hamburg’s subsequent revival of its film-political ambitions. *In jenen Tagen*, Hamburg’s cinephiles hoped, would reopen the doors that the city shut in the face of *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* and the *Great Dictator*. It was in *In jene Tagen* that fed local claims about the importance and exportability of German cultural products.

Käutner, reborn as the quintessential anti-Nazi and pro-German and outfitted with a British license, began shooting *In jenen Tagen* in June 1946.¹⁹⁹ The film was made with the most rudimentary technical equipment available and save for two scenes, it was shot entirely under Hamburg’s open skies.²⁰⁰ Käutner’s postwar debut was a tribute to the wrecked city of Hamburg and a self-assured nod towards the British military government. For seven months Käutner’s expediency and creativity were put to the test: the sound equipment was ex-Wehrmacht property and previously used for transmission of war information, the camera a relic left after previous outside takes; after the light bulbs burst, car headlights provided the only lighting; and the ruins of a ravaged city had to do for the setting. In June 1947, the film finally opened in Hamburg’s Waterloo Theater.²⁰¹ Like the film’s director, the movie theater where the film first ran had effortlessly morphed from the home of the Nazi Film Consortium to the most prestigious movie theater in the British occupation zone and the home of the *Wirtschaftsverband für Filmtheater e.V.*

¹⁹⁸ On “Germany’s hardest times” see Kommandeur der Schutzpolizei Georges an die Kameraden der Polizei, Verwaltungspolizei und Kriminalpolizei in Hamburg 29 May 1945. “I am aware that I hold a difficult office in Germany’s most difficult of times. It is essential that each and everyone of us, to rebuilt the state that broke down under the Nazi regime. [Ich bin mir bewusst dass ich in Deutschlands schwerster Zeit ein schweres Amt übernommen habe. Es gilt für jeden von uns, den unter dem Naziregime zusammengebrochenen Staat wieder aufzubauen]” in StAHH 331-1 Polizeibehörde I 340

¹⁹⁹ Still in 1944 Goebbels identifies Käutner as the greatest German film artist, the true avant-garde of the German film. See Joseph Goebbels. 28.12.1944 in *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil II Band 14 ed Elke Froehlich (Munich: Saur, 1996) 476 Film scholars and historians, however, have consistently stressed Käutner’s inner emigration and his political distance from the regime. Witte, “Film im Nationalsozialismus” 138 and Karsten Witte “The Indivisible Legacy of Nazi Cinema” in *New German Critique* 74 Special Issue on Nazi Cinema (Spring-Summer 1998): 23-30. See also Rentschler’s discussion of Käutner’s *Romanze in Moll*, 218.

²⁰⁰ Töteberg, *Filmstadt Hamburg*, 110-113

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

under the continuing direction of Heinz B. Heisig.²⁰² On Friday June 13, the main protagonist, an old automobile, welcomed Hamburg's audiences to the premiere.²⁰³ Leisurably waiting in the foyer of the recently refurbished theater, the Opel Olympia was ready to confront the audience with Käutner's definitive version of the recent German past, presented in a collage of snapshots that take the viewer through the history of the Thousand Year Reich.²⁰⁴

In jenen Tagen was a first attempt to offer a particularly German perspective on the contemporary problem of living in the shadows of the past. Sandwiched between the Third Reich Dream Factory and Hollywood, the earliest postwar productions such as Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns* [*The Murderers Are Among Us*] (1946) translated the Nazi language of *Kulturschaffen* into rubble formulae of self-reflexivity and conscious framing.²⁰⁵ Unwilling to adapt an existing mode of cinematic address, the rubble films visibly searched for visual style befitting the new times. This 'realism' neither emulated Hollywood's nor Ufa's escapism and glamour and further rejected the instruction of Weimar-era postwar returnees such as Eric Pommer and the lofty avant-gardism that came with it. As a contemporary observer aptly remarked:

As under the circumstances there is little chance of a get-rich-quick career in film production, the ranks of the German film workers are relatively free from people who regard film production as just another means of making big money. You need considerable enthusiasm to write, direct, or produce film in Germany today, and such enthusiasm usually springs from the conviction that you have to express important ideas in your medium.²⁰⁶

Helmut Käutner's *In jenen Tagen* clearly had something to say. It intervened in the current discourse about German collective guilt by mobilizing victimhood and

²⁰² "Zur Gründung des Wirtschaftsverbandes der Filmtheater e.V. (Brit.Zone) *Film-Echo* (May 1947), 26

²⁰³ Tötegerg, *Filmstadt* 110-1

²⁰⁴ Fritz Göttler, "Westdeutscher Nachkriegsfilm: Land der Väter" in *Geschichte des deutschen Films*, 178 argues that Käutner rather than offering a tentative and suggestive exploration of what it might have been like clearly affirmed "this is how it was." For the premier see "'In jenen Tagen' Helmut-Käutner-Film-Uraufführung in Hamburg" *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* 24 June 1947 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V. IJ VIII a.

²⁰⁵ See Carter, "Sweeping up the Past" 93 and compare von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 74.

²⁰⁶ Larsen, 388

suffering as universal human experiences in a perpetratorless landscape. Like Staudte's *Mörder*, Käutner's *In jenen Tagen* searched the rubble for redeemable victims and literally put them to work for a better future. Unlike *Mörder*, however, *In jenen Tagen* renders guilt, individual or collective, an extra-narrative category, demarcating in its framing the line that separated the Germans from Nazis, the occupiers from the vanquished.

Scholars have described Käutner's *In jenen Tagen* as a fraudulent attempt to grapple with German guilt and have compared it (unfavorably) to Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns*.²⁰⁷ Reminiscent of Fritz Lang's *M*, Staudte's film traces the transformation of the disillusioned and self-destructive war-veteran Dr. Mertens (Wilhelm Borchert) into a responsible citizen and human being capable of love. After finding himself unable to prevent the senseless murder of innocent civilians by his commander Ferdinand Brückner (Arno Paulsen) on Christmas Eve 1942, Mertens returns a broken man. Susanne Wallner (Hildegard Knef), a camp survivor, falls in love with the Mertens nonetheless and eventually succeeds in preventing him from murdering his former commander who now lives a comfortable life as a businessman in Berlin.

The place attributed to perpetrators in the narrative is indeed very different in Staudte's film. Yet, in their respective differentiation between various kinds of victims these two earliest rubble films converge to a remarkable degree. Victimhood is the central filmic category in both *Die Mörder* and *In jenen Tagen*, refracting the most pressing social and political issues occupying German society in its divided whole. In both films, Jewish victims are either absent (as is the case in *Mörder*) or their victimhood compromised by their own implication therein (*In jenen Tagen*). While Staudte is indeed explicit in his argument that the Nazi murderers continue to live among the rest of the population, his choice of the smallish Himmleresque captain-turned-capitalist is no more

²⁰⁷ See in particular Fritz Göttler. "Westdeutscher Nachkriegsfilm: Land der Väter" in *Geschichte des Deutschen Films*, 171-210. and Ulrike Weckel. "The Mitläufer in Two German Postwar Films: Representation and Critical Reception." *History & Memory* 15:2 (Fall/Winter 2003), 64-93. Both Göttler and Weckel describe *Die Mörder* as exceptions to German general unwillingness to explore questions of German guilt rather than German victimhood. Robert G. Moeller suggests that guilt and victimhood were mutually exclusive categories in postwar Germany and identifies Staudte's film as one that raised difficult questions about war guilt. *War Stories: In Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

accepting of collective guilt than Käutner's exploration of universally interchangeable (and ultimately perpetrator-less) victims.

Together these two first postwar films offset the moral imperatives of reeducation with a *Vergangenheitsbewältigung der Tat* - a literal overcoming of the past through work that revived the Nazi valorization of labor (of a *Schaffensgemeinschaft*). Evocative of Wolfgang Borchert's short stories, *In jenen Tagen* refracts the history of Nazism, war, and genocide through disconnected human fates and retrieves from all the Nazi bestiality *Menschen* with real hopes and dreams, with desires and fears, with sympathetic weaknesses and glaring imperfections. In response to a question of presumably international relevance about the incompatibility of Nazism and humanity, here posed in the film by two men scavenging through the rubble, the film explicitly rejects the foregone conclusion that the bestiality of Nazi Germany was predicated on the absence of people and the presence of beasts (*Bestien*). Thus the *In jenen Tagen* provides a stunningly blunt repudiation of *Kollektivschuld*.²⁰⁸

To do so effectively, Käutner resorted to an unusual framing device and located objective authority in an inanimate object – a dilapidated automobile. Rendering the “objective, unbiased, or heartless” car an expert witness on German humanity (*deutsche Menschlichkeit*), Käutner deliberately sidesteps the polarity between occupied and victors that rewrote the political landscape in the postwar years. An object by definition lacks perspective and hence is mobilized in the film to function as a wide angle lens into a past that replaces perspective with a totalizing view.

²⁰⁸ The concept of collective guilt did not suggest that all Germans were “legally guilty of having directly committed atrocities” Rather, the concept of collective guilt implied that all Germans who did not actively resist National Socialism “were *morally* responsible for having allowed National Socialism to come into being and for having tolerated its crimes.” For this differentiation of German guilt see Morris Janowitz. “German Reactions to Nazi Atrocities” *The American Journal of Sociology* 52:2 (Sept 1946): 141-146. For local reactions to collective attribution of guilt see “Kollektivschuld” *Hamburger Freie Presse*, 4 May 1946.

That the object is a car is even more significant: It embodied the Nazi's promise



Figure 41 *Protagonist IN JENEN TAGEN*

of a better life to come from unrelenting sacrifice. The people's car or Volkswagen had been the pinnacle of the consumer society envisioned and promised by the Nazi regime.²⁰⁹ Opel, a GM affiliate, built close to half of all 1.5 liter models sold in Germany in 1936. Hitler who wanted to motorize Germany society in a matter of years and

envisioned a moderately comfortable four-seater at a people's price of 1000 RM – two thirds of the price asked by Opel for its cheapest model.²¹⁰ Porsche began designing the people's car and took Hitler for a spin in the first VW beetle. The problem of production costs, however, could not be solved, and was thus addressed in a savings scheme. Paying 5RM into a non-interest earning DAF account every month, the VW-saver was entitled to delivery once the account balance reached 750RM. By the end of the war 340,000 people had invested their money into these non-transferable motor-contracts, but “not a single Volkswagen was ever delivered to a civilian customer in the Third Reich.”²¹¹ Hence despite its presumed objectivity, the object did have a perspective on those days: It personified the sellout of the German dream, the squandered promise of a good life of *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksfilm and Volksgemeinschaft*.²¹² Subsequently

²⁰⁹ See Wolfgang König. *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft. 'Volksprodukte' im Dritten Reich: Vom Scheitern einer nationalsozialistischen Konsumgesellschaft*. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004)

²¹⁰ Tooze, 152

²¹¹ Tooze, 156.

²¹² For the significance of *Volks*-products to Nazi notions of consumer culture see Wolfgang König. *Volkswagen, Volksempfänger, Volksgemeinschaft. 'Volksprodukte' Im Dritten Reich: Vom Scheitern Einer Nationalsozialistischen Konsumgesellschaft*. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004) See also Tooze, 147ff

mobilized as an explanation for German acquiescence, the broken promise of KdF vacations, German autobahns, and the people's car appear as honest accusations. The film confronts its audiences with German victims of war; it chronicles the story of German betrayal.

In response to German self-loathing (as displayed by Karl) the 'objective' perspective of the car reveals the complicated subject positions of Germans rather than the clouded view of the victors. Relegating the victors to an extra-narrative position, the frame imagines the Allies as the primary audience for this different kind of reeducation film.²¹³ In the first sweeping takes *In jenen Tagen* reveals the perspective of the Allies: There is no compassion in their gaze as the camera wanders across the rubble-littered landscape of Hamburg, hardly noticing the hungry children, the cripples, and the bent backs of toiling women, who blend into the violated landscape. But the car's tales will reform the camera, reeducate and soften its gaze to the suffering performed before it. Claiming to show *Menschen*, the car in turn presents the audience with victims first: dying German soldiers, uprooted refugees, disillusioned émigrés, one disenfranchised Jew, bereft wives, betrayed husbands, and hungry mothers are shown to be victims of brutal circumstances, of war, of corrupting and corrupted times. Directly addressing the audience the car recapitulates at the end of the film

I haven't seen much of those days, no great events, no heroes, just a few fates, [*Schicksale*] and of those only excerpts. But I have seen a few humans [*Menschen*], that is whom you asked about Herr Willi. The times were stronger then they. But their humanity [*Menschlichkeit*] was stronger than the times. They have existed, those humans [*Menschen*], and they will always exist.

Invoking the format of the documentary by having an 'objective' narrator mobilize 'evidence' for an argument articulated only in the frame, the film formulates a response to British and American reeducation films and rehabilitates Germans as victims. The *Menschen* we encounter in the film are bound by suffering, hardship and impossible

²¹³ Reeducation films such as *Die Todesmühlen* (The Death Mills) consisted of footage from the liberation of the camps and meant to confront the general German population with the horrendous Nazi crimes. Forcing more than thousand citizens of Weimar to march the six miles to Buchenwald and see the conditions in the camp for themselves, the Allies watched and filmed the reactions of Germans to the atrocities.

choices. The ideological battle for the reintegration of Germans into the community of nations was a battle over the qualities of victimhood. Juxtaposing the fate of a rank and file Wehrmacht soldier with the suicide of the German-Jewish couple in the face of escalating anti-Jewish violence, *In jenen Tagen* essentially denies the structural difference between their respective suffering.²¹⁴

In the sixth episode, the film presents the simple German soldier in the East, who no longer writes letters to his family. He is consumed by war, conquered by the inhospitable expanse of the Russian landscape. At the train station, he is supposed to pick up a ‘fresh’ lieutenant, a lieutenant who is not yet familiar with the kind of war he is about to enter. The old hand explains, “Russia is not Poland, Sir Lieutenant. Poland was a campaign. Here it’s war, not just against soldiers. Here everything fights: the women, the air, the earth, the forest.” As if to underscore the natural connectivity between people and land, the moon spells doom for the two men riding eastward as it gives away their cover and guides the eyes and bullets of the partisans.

It is this particular scene that propelled contemporary critics to invoke the poetry of Goethe, Mörike and Dehmel as they praise how “the human voice in such austere application resembles a divine instrument, which humanizes the murderous landscape” of Russia.²¹⁵ The Wehrmacht soldier talks of the



Figure 42 *The vast Russian landscape*

²¹⁴ See Moeller, *War Stories*, 49-50. Further see Ulrike Weckel and Edgar Wolfrum “*Bestien und ‘Befehlsempfänger’*”: *Frauen und Männer in NS-Prozessen nach 1945*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 2003)

²¹⁵ “‘In jenen Tagen’ Helmut-Käutner-Film-Uraufführung in Hamburg” *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* 24 June 1947 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V. IJ VIII a.

people who inhabit the land, but the cinematography reifies the postulated emptiness of the East that drove Nazi expansionism while affirming the common soldier's humanity in his ultimate powerlessness.

This sense of powerlessness pervades the film. Just like in *Die Mörder*, the Germans in *In Jenen Tagen* not only appear victims of war, they are utterly divested of agency. Much like the car, the people remain objects of circumstances. In *Die Mörder*, the physician pleads with his commander for the lives of innocent women and children about to be executed. In the eyes of his superior, Mertens' humanity is a sign only of weakness and Brückner sends him to craft a Christmas star, while his company shoots innocent civilians. The senseless murdering shatters Mertens' belief in humanity, and even though he keeps fighting for the Nazis, the film rehabilitates Mertens as a casualty of war. Both Mertens in *Die Mörder* and the common soldier in *In Jenen Tagen* are aware of the brutality, the bestiality, in a country where "nobody wants to turn around." In either case, the narrative eliminates personal choice and thus affirms individual blamelessness. As a counterweight to the bestiality and sadism postulated by Allied observers, Käutner and Staudte underwrite the story of genocidal war with universal human weakness.

There is an important exception in each film, however: The third episode of *In jenen Tagen*, which Töteberg describes as "the most impressive part of the film" confronts the viewer with the Nazi racial laws and the ensuing persecution.²¹⁶ Herr and Frau Bienert are a 'mixed-race' elderly couple. Because of her Jewishness, she has lost her citizenship rights and he is supposed to write her Jewish maiden name in big white letters on the window of their little frame shop. The Opel is loaded with boxes and suitcases; the couple heads for their cottage in country. Here Frau Bienert (Ida Ehre), a brusque, self-sufficient person, who is always in a rush, fears her husband's shame and asks for a divorce, pretending that nothing but habit keeps them together after 32 years of marriage. Unwilling to accept such "foolishness," Herr Bienert (Willy Maertens)

²¹⁶ Töteberg, *Filmstadt*, 112.



Figures 43 and 44 *Herr Bienert smashing his window*

convinces his wife to return to the city with him. As they arrive brown-shirts vandalize Jewish property. Herr Bienert demonstrates his loyalty to his wife and smashes in his own window. The shop had been spared by the Nazi thugs because of his tardiness in putting up the white letters of his wife's Jewish name. Realizing that in Nazi Germany there is no room for them, they return to the country and commit suicide. The Bienerts certainly appear victims of historical circumstance, but the film refuses to depict the extent of their persecution. Even though Käutner linked the Holocaust (referenced by the death of the couple) with Nazi racial policy, he renders the victims collaborators in their own fate. Not only do they smash their own livelihood, but the Bienerts are also the ultimate agents of their own destruction. In a prohibitive twist they gas themselves in their cottage outside the city.

As a German response to the Allies' reeducation films, *In jenen Tagen* is illustrative of the intense competition between the various statuses of victims.²¹⁷ Käutner's film provides an uneasy meta-discourse to the squabbles on the ground over rations and extra food allocations. Since caloric allocations were not only calculated based on the estimated energy expended during labor, but also as a compensation for endured suffering, Germans in all four occupation zones subscribed to the view that DPs

²¹⁷ Atina Grossmann has carefully illustrated the extent to which Germans competed with Jews and DPs over the status of victimization primarily in relation to food allocations. See Atina Grossmann *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 175-177

and former victims of Nazism were better off than the starving Germans and fattened themselves at the expense of the German population.²¹⁸ Instead of blaming surviving Jews and refugees from the East for German suffering, the *In jenen Tagen* refused to place responsibility for Jewish suffering squarely and exclusively on German shoulders. *In jenen Tagen* implicates the victims of Nazi persecution in their extermination, thus redistributing not only suffering but also responsibility.

In contrast, Staudte's film features refugees, returnees (*Heimkehrer*), rubble women, and splinter children, yet the victims of the Holocaust are conspicuously absent.



Figure 45 *Able to love again DIE MÖRDER SIND UNTER UNS*

In their stead, Susanne, the blond concentration camp survivor returns unmarked, sane. Her soul is not compromised by guilt (and her Germanness not discredited by Jewishness), her victimhood is pure and beyond reproach.²¹⁹ Willing the camp survivor (a beautiful and well-nourished one on top of it) to be the healer of German men, *Die Mörder* renders the suffering

of Susanne – and by implication the suffering of all victims of Nazism – passé. She had indeed been in *Sicherheit* (safety) as Mertens initially assumes when she returned from a

²¹⁸ By the end of 1946, the US zone discontinued the practice of distributing higher food rations to victims of Nazism. Yet the perspective that DPs and Jews enjoyed the protection of powerful foreigners who “were feeding themselves at the expense of the population” persisted. See Alice Weinreb, *Matters of Taste*, 125, 129. Compare also Grossmann, 164-5, who argues that Germans often viewed DP camps “as a kind of *Schlaraffenland* (magic kingdom)” where milk and honey, jam, magerine and cigarettes, flowed freely from American patrons into the hands of the protected.

²¹⁹ It should be noted that the film never explicitly expounds on Susanne's ‘racial’ qualities. Yet at the time, her nordic features were clearly read as a confirmation of her Germanness and which in turn explains her dedication to rebuilt, revive, and reform the defeated society she enters upon her return from an unspoken hell.

Nazi concentration camp outwardly unharmed to her bombed out apartment in Berlin. She escaped from war's grasp, free of shame and untouchable by reproach. Her selfless love, prevents Mertens from committing murder and promises a better future, even happiness for both. Implying that forgiveness, can repair the broken humanity of the 'ordinary' German, Staudte places the responsibility for coming to terms with the history of industrial murder on its few survivors at a time when rumors about German victimization at the hand of DPs and Holocaust survivors, and their Allied protectors, fueled the German sense of injustice in the face of their hunger, their cold, their national disrepute.

Together these two very first postwar films offered a unique point of departure for re-imagining a post-Nazi future built on and by the humanity retrieved from the rubble. Staudte offers a conveniently narrow location for German guilt and reminds his fellow Germans of their duty to accuse.²²⁰ While *Die Mörder sind unter uns* in essence performs German internalization for a collective responsibility, if not for the past than at least for the future, *In jenen Tagen* takes its reeducation mission one step further. *In jenen Tagen* postulates an even broader collective of perpetrators than had been implied by Allied insistence on German recognition of their collective guilt for war and genocide that basically picks up where the people in Hamburg had left off.²²¹ Throughout the film perpetrators remain faceless and unnamed. The individual episodes are stitched together by the omniscient car and present a totalizing collage in which the brown-shirted mob and the Nazi police are presented in parity with allied bombs and tanks, the barbarous Russian landscape, and universal tragedies of hunger and cold. Stripped of Nazi symbols, the tale mobilizes individual examples, disconnected *Einzelschicksale* to counteract

²²⁰ It was the express goal of the Allied nations to make Germans "realize the war guilt of their country, the devastation their armies brought to the peaceful lands of Europe and the invincible military might of the United Nations." See Charles E. Egan. "OWI Will Drive Home the Truth To Germans" *New York Times* 15 Apr 1945

²²¹ "Briefe an die Redaktion: Zur Schuldfrage" 3 Apr 1946. Asking "who is to blame when a demonic person seizes the government [*Staatsgewalt*] and fashions himself as dictator? The Nazis? – The Non-Nazis? 8 Million? or 80 Million? Who was to blame when Caesar conquered Gaul and thereby extinguished entire tribes? The Roman people? or the Senate? Who was to blame for the terror wars of Ghengis Khan – the Mongols perhaps? Who bares responsibility for Napoleon's wars of conquest? The French or their Grenadines?" the letter writer insists on the political immaturity of the Germans on their Romanticism as a people of poets and thinkers who now need to act to build a better future.

vilification of an entire people and offers a starting point from which to re-imagine a better future.

In jenen Tagen rehabilitates ‘ordinary Germans’ and asserts their humanity in the face of cruel times. Instead of offering an answer to the film’s original question about the limits of humanity, Käutner offers a vision for the future: Rather than continuing to dwell on the past, rather than to paralyze one’s reformation with philosophical contemplation” *In jenen Tagen* fixes the eyes of the audience onto the future: “The main thing,” Willi suggests in response to Karl’s original question about the nature of man “is that one tries to be one.” Since we “have damn many opportunities today,” they both get to work and begin to clean up rubble. By the end of the film, even the camera recognizes “*Menschen*.” Two children, carrying a bundle of wood through the ruins, capture the camera’s gaze. Reformed and softened, the camera zooms in on a small flower blossoming amidst the rubble and documenting the spring of a new age.

Critics discussed these first postwar films with great interest and took their existence as an indication that the German “public rediscovered its appetite for the *Geistige Schaffen* [spiritual production] of the nation.”²²² The absence of a viable industry and of a clear policy on film and film censorship, promised unmediated creativity that did not have to answer to anyone but the artist himself. While welfare workers were busy chronicling the continuous shortages of shoes, baby clothing, and victuals of all sorts, the cultural ambassadors in Hamburg began to re-articulate their hopes for cultural recognition and artistic acclaim.²²³ The local press explicitly identified Käutner as a pioneer of German film and his film *In jenen Tagen* as “indicative of the artistic seriousness” with which filmmakers worked in Hamburg for the “renewal of film far from the old idol of the dream factory.”²²⁴

²²² “In jenen Tagen” *Rhein-Neckar Zeitung* 24 Jun 1947

²²³ See for example Sozialabteilung Innenstadt. Familienfürsorge. Lagebericht für die Monate April bis Juni 1947 and Familienfürsorge Kreis I. Sozialabteilung Innstadt. Lagebericht für die Monate September/Oktober 1946, 11 Nov 46 in StAHH 354-5 Jugendbehörde II Ablage 22. 7.1981 1

²²⁴ “Film-Chance” *Hamburger Allgemeine Zeitung* 30 Sept 1947 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJ VIIIb

In Hamburg the newly discovered self-reliance built on the success of *In jenen Tagen* and emboldened the local press to speak out against British control of the nascent industry. Rejecting censorship, the advocates in Hamburg insisted that “the film of our past’s fate [*Schicksalsfilm*], requires neither artificiality nor supervision by schoolmasters [*Schulmeisterei*].”²²⁵ Since the military government made raw material allocations contingent upon the subject of a proposed film, arguing that “the scarce raw film is too precious for the mere entertainment feature,” Hamburg’s cultural advocates drew uneasy parallels between the media czar Mr. Rank, the British Film Section, and Goebbels, the former Nazi Minister of Propaganda.²²⁶ The director of Hamburg’s public relations office, Erich Lüth, felt summoned to call on the heavens to protect the nascent German democrats “from new monopoly-despots [...] whose many terrible films already damaged public perception of England among their German audience.”²²⁷ Insisting that international audiences eagerly awaited German films, Hamburg’s film critics demanded freedom of expression, freedom from censorship, and freedom from material shortages in the realm of film.²²⁸ In short they called for more “art-friendly politics” to benefit the “millions of joy-deprived [*freudearmer*] urbanists.”²²⁹ Clad in the postwar language that redeemed entertainment as a viable substitute for material shortages, the spokespersons of film in Hamburg ultimately expected the loosening of supervision as a reward for the successfully performed moral catharsis in Käutner’s film.

As another demonstration of Germany’s ability to responsibly engage with its criminal past, the *Hamburger Volkszeitung* lauded Staudte’s *Die Mörder sind Unter Uns*, claiming that *Die Mörder* finally identified the real culprit of *faschistischen*

²²⁵ Erich Lüth “Zeitfilme oder Zeitklischees?” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 28 Jul 1948 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJ VIIIb

²²⁶ Erich Lüth. “Und was sagt die Film-Section” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 10 Aug 1948 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJ VIIIb

²²⁷ Erich Lüth, “Zensur auf Umwegen” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 7 Jul 1948 in 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJ VIIIb

²²⁸ Erich Lüth. “Und was sagt die Film-Section” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 10 Aug 1948 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJ VIIIb

²²⁹ “Film-Chance” *Hamburger Allgemeine Zeitung* 30 Sep 1947 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJ VIIIb

Weltverbrechens [Fascist crimes against the world]: The capitalist philistine. But the article was equally quick to point out that this particular type of human “exists in all countries, instead of Wendriner he also goes by the name of Babbit, and everywhere he is equally willing to surrender to the enticements of capitalist demagogues.” Admitting that the particular type was never as vicious as “under the leadership of the brown carpet-eater,” the *Hamburger Volkszeitung* extends the film’s caution against the philistine in the disguise of “decent family fathers, diligent entrepreneurs, and honorable democratic citizens,” to those who now seek to profit from the Marshall Plan and “hope that the USA soon throws atomic bombs into the Soviet Union.”²³⁰

In response to the first post-fascist productions, Hamburg’s film-scene rediscovered its confidence and found a voice in both the press and on German screens. The RealFilm soon supplemented British escapism with German introspective tales that resonated with the Film Section and German audiences.²³¹ Building on the success of *In jenen Tagen* and *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, these new productions served as confirmation that German culture would flourish again if freed from the shackles of military administration and without the smothering influences of a big industry.²³²

Cineasts in Hamburg had dreamed of turning Hamburg into a film production center since at least 1941.²³³ In 1945, they immediately revived the discussion, even before the British had licensed the first production company.²³⁴ Whereas in 1941, the plans for a *Filmstadt Hamburg* resonated most strongly with the program of the Film Consortium in 1945, the VIPs of German film, listlessly waiting for better times in Hamburg or Munich, were the driving force behind the subsequent plans for turning Hamburg into a CineCity. By 1946 films were already being produced in Hamburg, if

²³⁰ “Die Mörder sind unter uns” *Hamburger Volkszeitung* 23 Aug 1948

²³¹ Compare Töteberg, 118-129. Note in particular titles such as *Die Freunde Meiner Frau*, *Derby*, *Wasser für Millionen*, *Gabriela* and *Die Dritte von rechts*.

²³² Compare Erich Lüth. “Zensur auf Umwegen” *Hamburger Freie Presse* 7 Jul 1948 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJ VIIIb

²³³ “Hamburg als Filmproduktionstätte” *Film-Kurier* 13 Aug 1941.

²³⁴ “Kann Hamburg Filmstadt Sein? Ein Praktiker nimmt das Wort zu einer viel diskutierte Frage” *Neue Hamburger Presse* 17 Oct 1945 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJVIIIb

primarily under the open skies and to a lesser extent in a converted dance hall of 7 by 15 meters in the idyllically rural suburb of Ohlstedt.²³⁵ But the success of *In jenen Tagen* pushed the question about CineCity Hamburg into the Senate. As monetary reform provided a stable currency, Mayor Brauer approved the von-Goltz Barracks located in Rahlsted for the location of the *Filmstadt*. The Senate motioned to finance the project proposed by the ex-Tobis director Friedrich Mainz and provide the 7 million DM needed to complete construction over the next two years.²³⁶ Film production would bring jobs, tax revenues and income from rent. In total, so advocates estimated, Hamburg would derive an income of of 1.6 Million DM annually.²³⁷ But the political far left shot the project down when the Senate presented it to the house of representatives (*Bürgerschaft*) in April 1949. Not only did the Communists object to the source of the financing (the ex-Tobis financier reminded them too much of the earlier Hugenbergization of Ufa), they had very different priorities of spending – CineCity would at first at least require an investment from the city of an initial 7 Million DM.²³⁸ Hugenbergization or not, *Filmstadt Hamburg* was a prestige project that would serve the vanity of local ambition but hardly help resolve much more pressing social questions such as the city’s momentous housing crisis.²³⁹

But most importantly, the proposal for the *Filmstadt* undercut one of the most central principles of the political left. The projected financial success of *Filmstadt* Hamburg could only be guaranteed by German division. The Christian Democrats (CDU)

²³⁵ Käutner shot *In Jenen Tagen*, the first film made by a film company licensed by the British, without any resource to a studio. All takes were shot outdoors. In contrast, the Real-Film Arche Nora was shot in the Ohlstedt dancehall turned makeshift studio and focused, since wide angle takes were out of the question, on extreme close-ups and tableaux. See “Hamburg doch eine Filmstadt?” *Die Welt* 12 Aug 1947 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJVIIIb.

²³⁶ “Filmstadt Hamburg wird Wirklichkeit” *Die Welt* 29 Mar 1949 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJVIIIb.

²³⁷ “Hamburg projiziert Filmindustrie” *Hamburger Echo* 29 Mar 1949. in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJVIIIb

²³⁸ “Filmstadt Hamburg wird Wirklichkeit” *Die Welt* 29 Mar 1949 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJVIIIb.

²³⁹ “Millionen-Filmprojekt vorläufig abgelehnt” *Hamburger Volkszeitung* 14 April 1949. in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJVIIIb

and the Free Liberals (FDP) openly admitted that “Berlin is lost anyway, ” but to the Social Democrats (SPD) and the very small Communist party (KPD) unification of all zones remained a paramount goal despite its unattainability. In the event of German unification, the old Ufa facilities at Babelsberg, now used by Communist controlled DEFA, would certainly undermine the profitability of the Rahlstedt project, while Hamburg’s population would continue to live in makeshift shelters, so the political left reasoned in Hamburg.²⁴⁰ After the three Western Zones formed the Federal Republic of Germany on 23 May 1949, the primary objections from the political left were removed and Rahlstedt did have a chance at profitability. On 1 November 1949 Hamburg’s Senate made 3.5 million DM available for construction to begin at Rahlstedt, a northeastern suburb of Hamburg. Around Christmas time in 1949, women clad in fur coats and baggy grey pants, with painted lips and slim hips brought color to the rural idyll of Rahlstedt where Walter Koppel’s RealFilm predominantly worked. By the end of 1949, the German paper *Die Welt* affirmed the diligence and toughness of the local film advocates in Hamburg and applauded the feat by which Hamburg “became a metropole of the German film.”²⁴¹

Since Real’s first production *Arche Nora* (1947/8) more than ten films “had been launched” from Hamburg’s film port. CineCity Hamburg drew well-known directors, actresses and actors and fixed its eyes firmly on the prospect of exporting Germany’s New Realism. Continuing along the path set by the Film Consortium in the early 1930s, Hamburg celebrated film, the previous weapon of war, as a “medium with *völkerverbindender Mission* [a mission to promote international understanding]” that once more promised to turn Hamburg into an international cultural center.²⁴²

As Hamburg’s cineasts celebrated 30 years of pioneering work in the realm of the cultural documentary, British and American feature films systematically replaced the old

²⁴⁰ “Millionen-Filmprojekt vorläufig abgelehnt” *Hamburger Volkszeitung* 14 Apr 1949 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJ VIII b. For the importance of unification to the Social Democrats compare Moeller, *War Stories*, 23.

²⁴¹ “Optimisten in Rahlstedt” *Die Welt* 3 Dec 1949 in StAHH 135-1 Staatliche Pressestelle V IJ VIIIb

²⁴² “Kulturfilm vereint Nationen” *Hamburger Allgemeine Zeitung* 9 May 1949

Nazi productions.²⁴³ The continuous popularity of old Nazi films no longer spelled an ideological threat but presented the Military Government in the Trizone with concrete limits to their respective expansion into the German market and in July 1949, the occupying powers publicized their intentions of withdrawing from circulation films made prior to 1945.²⁴⁴ The films that had propelled local advocates for youth protection less than a decade earlier to rally against the return of smut and trash to the Germany's screen had morphed to an endangered cultural species: "German culture is in danger again" proclaimed the *Hamburger Freie Presse*. With a considerable dose of self-irony, the paper attempted to placate exaggerated reactions of the German population. Insisting that the Nazi treasures were hardly designated for a British garbage dump, the press reassured the public of British goodwill in coffering the remaining copies of pre-1945 features in climate controlled archives.²⁴⁵ To journalists it may have been clear that the eradication of "cultural values" residing in old Nazi film was not at stake. The danger to German culture, so the *Hamburger Echo* explained, had little to do with the German past but directly affected the nation's future: The removal of German classics in the absence of a sufficiently revived German film industry opened the German film market to the ruthless conquest by "Rank's second rate horror films and Hollywood's glamour productions."²⁴⁶ While Hamburg's newspapers had little difficulty in parting with the Goebbels' escapist fare, they were hardly prepared to give up on the Minister's expressed goal of turning the German film industry into a viable cultural international force and insisted that the entertainment films of a past era can only be discarded "when a *German* production can adequately replace its share."²⁴⁷

²⁴³ "Hamburg wird internationales Kulturfilm-Zentrum" *Hamburger Allgemeine Zeitung* 11 May 1949.

²⁴⁴ For a careful review of the expansionist ambitions of Hollywood in particular see Robert Shandley, "Dismantling the Dream Factory," 104.

²⁴⁵ "Militärregierung gegen deutsche Filme?" *Hamburger Freie Presse* 5 Jul 1949

²⁴⁶ "Millionen für den Mülleimer" *Hamburger Echo* 16 Jun 1949

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*

Chapter 7

Als der Papa klein war ...

Concluding Reflections

I grew up with parents who were rather critical of the effects of visual media and hence carefully controlled what, when, and how much television I watched. Yet I remember my mother, in a moment of weakness, allowing my sister and me to watch *Die Mädels vom Immenhof* (Schleif, 1955), a childhood favorite of hers. Glowing with excitement (I must have been in grade school), I exclaimed to my father's bemusement and my mother's horror: "You don't let us watch TV a lot, but if something *really good* is on we don't miss out." A few years later I saw my first Nazi film. My hung-over history teacher needed the two hours between 8 and 10 A.M. to recuperate from his wife's 50th birthday celebration. While his head rested on the desk, he exposed us to an all time German classic and personal favorite of his: *Die Feuerzangenbowle* (Weiss, 1943/4). By then I was old enough to recognize the datedness of the picture and placed it into that treasured box of childhood pleasures that already contained *Die Mädels vom Immenhof*, the *Sissi*-films and some Heinz Erhardt comedies.

My own exposure to the "afterlife" of Nazi cinema is illustrative of the continuities this study has traced and of those it can only hint at.¹ When the boisterous representatives of the New German Cinema² lashed out against 1950s German films, they were certainly correct in pointing to continuities between what they rejected as "*Papas*

¹ Rentschler's pathbreaking study has raised important questions about the "afterlife" of Nazi Cinema. Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996)

² Johannes von Moltke. "Home Again: Revisiting the New German Cinema in Edgar Reitz's 'Die Zweite Heimat' (1993)" *Cinema Journal* 42:3 (Spring 2003): 114-43 ;

*Kino*³ and its Nazi-era precursors.⁴ However, these continuities hardly vanished with the proclamation of a younger and *newer* German cinema. Seven years after the Oberhausen Manifesto, *Die Feuerzangebowle* was first screened on national television in West Germany and produced viewing rates that exceeded 50%.⁵ More recently years German university students have come together for mass-viewings of the *Feuerzangebowle* in lecture halls across the country, screening the film, reciting its dialogue by heart, and celebrating with sparkling wine in anticipation of the Christmas Holiday season.⁶

The film is a story about second chances. The writer, Dr. Johannes Pfeiffer listens to the anecdotes of his aged friends about their school-time pranks and decides to make up for this glaring lack in his personal history (because he received private instruction instead of attending school). While reliving his youth, he finds the love of his life and challenges the authority of the calcified, stony-faced professors, whom he matches in life experience but exceeds in youthful passion. Apparently, the film is still a vehicle to register discontent with the waspish elites of the German education system. Originally, *Die Feuerzangebowle* represented the challenge Nazism mounted to the antiquated authorities of an earlier time. How many of today's German university students had the

³ *Framing the Fifties: Cinema in Divided Germany* edited by John Davidson and Sabine Hake (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007); Johannes von Moltke. "Trapped in America: The Americanization of the Trapp-Familie, or 'Papas Kino' Revisited" *German Studies Review* 19:3 (Oct 1996): 455-478

⁴ Recently a number of important studies have reevaluated the place of the 50s in German cinematic History. See most importantly, Johannes von Moltke *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); John Davidson and Sabine Hake. *Framing the Fifties: Cinema in a Divided Germany* (Berghahn Books, 2007) and Hester Baer. *Dismanteling the Dream Factory: Gender, German Cinema, and the Postwar Quest for a New Film Language* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009)

⁵ See Miriam Hansen. "Cooperative Auteur Cinema and Oppositional Public Sphere: Alexander Kluge's Contribution to Germany in Autumn." *New German Critique* 24:25 Special Double issue on New German Cinema (Autumn 1981 - Winter 1982):36-56; Eric Rentschler "Remembering Not to Forget: A Retrospective Reading of Kluge's Brutality in Stone" *New German Critique* 49 Special Issue on Alexander Kluge (Winter 1990) 23-41.

⁶ Benjamin Maack. "Der (M)untergang" *SpiegelOnline* 28 Jan 2009. The comment from 14 April 2010 in the online forum by Eberhart Schmidt, however reveals the *Spiegel's* particular West-German preoccupation with the history of Third Reich film. Schmidt, who corrects the date of the re-screening of *Die Feuerzangebowle*, remarks that the film had been first shown by Deutscher Fernsehfunf Berlin-Adlershof but "surmises that again 'DDR' doesn't count as German" Compare http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/topicalbumbackground/3569/der_m_untergang.html (retrieved 25 May 2010)

pleasure of watching this film while their history teachers recovered from their hangovers? One can only wonder.⁷

In this dissertation I have attempted to reinterpret the relationship between film and the Nazi State while tracing the rise and fall of Nazi Cinema as a function of war. However, rather than exploring the “polyphonic ways in which Nazi films channel[ed] perception and render[ed] reality” under the aegis of a “media dictatorship” that aimed at nothing less than total control over “perceptual possibility,” I have attempted to broaden our understanding of the actors involved in the making of Nazi Cinema.⁸ Of course, the Ministry of Propaganda and the Reich’s Film Chamber played key roles in defining not just the individual product that reached mass audiences but also controlled the deployment of films across the Reich. By implementing a totalizing apparatus for the production and deployment of film and claiming film as a most powerful tool of the State, the Nazis created one of their most persistent legacies. There has been an uncritical acceptance of Goebbels’ claim that Nazi film was a topdown instrument of state power.⁹ While film scholars have come to chip away at these pervasive interpretations by demonstrating that the control over messages, feel, textures, visual styles and contextual resonances of individual films was less perfect than the RFK claimed, this study offers an additional corrective by revealing the discussions on and usages of film and cinema in the city of Hamburg.¹⁰

I have argued that just as film texts produced under the auspices of Goebbels’ ministry were riddled with inconsistencies and textual excesses, the very structures of film deployment and film discourse were less totalizing and more ‘pluralistic’ than the

⁷ On the problematic practices in German History teaching post-1945 see *The Holocaust’s Ghosts: Writings on Art, Politics, Law, and Education* edited by F.C. DeCoste and Bernard Schwartz (Edmonton, Alta., Canada: University of Alberta Press, 2000)

⁸ Rentschler, 21; 217

⁹ See for example “Weiter aufwärts mit dem Film” in *Film-Kurier* 4 Mar 1938. Reichminister Goebbels is quoted on establishing ‘the primacy of art’ as the transforming factor in the film industry since 1933. and Compare “Die Arbeitsparole für alle Filmschaffenden” in *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 5 Mar 1938.

¹⁰ In particular Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion* and Schulte-Sasse. *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema*. (London: Duke University Press, 1996). Their work was in turn inspired by Karsten Witte, “Film im Nationalsozialismus” in *Geschichte des Deutschen Films* ed. Wolfgang Jacobsen, Anton Kaes and Hans Helmut Prinzler (Stuttgart and Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 1993),170.

organization of the RMVP and the RFK imply. Nazi cinema was a political space in and around which the articulation of local and national identities have coalesced since the early 1930s. In examining the perspectives of local agents to the project of Nazi film, my dissertation connects with some of the achievements of *Alltagsgeschichte*.¹¹ It speaks directly to the continued scholarly interest in questions of popular consent to and everyday complicity with Nazi ideology and its implementations.¹² The many important investigations into the economies of pleasure which the Nazi state fostered and exploited as part of its racist expansionism have convincingly argued for the significance of popular culture, leisure, consumption, and sexuality in the study of the Third Reich. The most radical revisions of Nazism's relationship to pleasure have been advanced by the historians of sexuality. Reopening foreclosed questions about sex and genocide, about pleasure and war, about pro-Natalism and prostitution, these scholars have rewritten both short- and longer-term continuities.¹³ The present study rests on the premise that Nazism was not fundamentally hostile to pleasure, an assertion most forcefully argued by Dagmar Herzog in her reevaluation of Germany's relationship to sexuality in reference to the Nazi past and since.¹⁴

¹¹ See in particular Alf Lüdtkte *Alltagsgeschichte : Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1989) for a summary of original goals and perspectives. Recent contributions to *Alltagsgeschichte* in this sense includes Andrew Bergerson *Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) and Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War. Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946-1949*. (Cambridge/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007; Belinda Davis. *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Jan Palmowski. *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945-1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and Steege, Paul, et al. "The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter." *The Journal of Modern History* 80 (2008): 358-78.

¹² See Geoff Eley's review "Hitler's Silent Majority? Conformity and Resistance Under the Third Reich" in *Michigan Quarterly Review* 42, 2 and 3 (Spring, 2003), 389-425 and 550-583.; Connelly, John. "The Uses of Volksgemeinschaft: Letters to the NSDAP Kreisleitung Eisenach, 1939-1940." in *The Journal of Modern History*, 68, 4 (Dec 1996), 899-930; Gellately, Robert. *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coersion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001); Peter Fritzsche. *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998)

¹³ The first path-breaking contributions to the study on sexuality were published as part of a special issue of the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 11 (Jan/Apr. 2002)

¹⁴ Dagmar Herzog. *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003)

In addition, historians of leisure and consumption have deconstructed the once widely held view of an omnipotent state that terrorized its population into submission. Shelly Baranowski's important study on the official leisure organization in the Reich illustrates that the regime solicited consent by promising post-expansion prosperity and then offering its citizens small tastes of what was envisioned in the future. Far from simply reducing Nazi leisure to an occasionally offered carrot in a public sphere dominated by the stick, historians of travel, leisure, and consumption have demonstrated that Nazi consumer society promised fond memories of small pleasures that ultimately failed to fully materialize.¹⁵ Building on these insights, the focus of this dissertation is on the local. This perspective allows me to reexamine the relationship between politics and culture implied by earlier studies. I argue that local actors, rather than merely consenting to a pre-articulated version of Nazism, actively shaped its character. That they did so within the tightly controlled frame of a state liberally wielding the instruments of terror and repression is even more significant. Every inopportune opinion, every instance of disagreement, every divergence from previously articulated directives illustrates that cultural politics, even in the Third Reich, continued to foster certain, if limited, spaces for exchange which in turn casts the widespread agreement with and support of Nazi cultural policy in a different, consensual, light.

As I have shown throughout this dissertation, film discourse offered various venues for local actors to make themselves seen and heard. A local perspective renders Nazi film less totalizing without invoking individual actions as a form of ideological

¹⁵ See Shelly Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2004); Rudy Koshar. "Seeing, Traveling, and Consuming" in *Histories of Leisure*. ed. Rudy Koshar. (New York: Berg, 2002). See also Alon Confino and Rudy Koshar "Régimes of Consumer Culture: New Narratives in Twentieth-Century German History" in *German History* 19,2 (2001), 135-61. Rudy Koshar, "Germans at the Wheel: Cars and Leisure Travel in Interwar Germany" in Rudy Koshar Ed. *Histories of Leisure* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 215-252.

resistance.¹⁶ A semblance of normal life continued to exist even in extraordinary times. When the members of Hamburg's film club printed leaflets to cajole the population into attending the long awaited Hamburg-film *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*, they were attempting to put Hamburg on the cinematic map of the Reich. At first it might seem as if members of the local film community were merely eager converts to Goebbels' gospel about German film art. In light of the city's self-conception as Germany's gateway to the world, the film itself and its local reception tell a rather different story. As I have shown in chapter 4, the film consortium had its own agenda when pushing Hochbaum's Hamburg debut to local audiences. This fit rather well into officially proclaimed ideas about *Wirklichkeitsnähe* [versimilitude] and avant-gardism.

The city's pride and its idiosyncrasies, however, were never fully controlled or defined by a top-down Nazism. Rather, Nazism must be seen as a function of local cooperation, whether with regards to the territorial gains attained via the Greater-Hamburg law, the grandiose plans for reconstruction of the Elbe river front, its grand appearance on the national film scene as a National Socialist cultural center, or its expressed admiration of Hollywood.¹⁷ Hamburg yearned to be a big player in national politics, and it sought to document its particular value both in a reconfiguration of its urban landscape and by way of its cinematic representation. When Hamburg lost its status as an independent free city and with its economy in ruins, it seemed to both the

¹⁶ In the historiography on Hamburg in particular questions about popular resistances demonstrate a rather resilient presence, not least because of the city's prime location for the so-called *Swing-Youth*. Otto Bender. *Swing unterm Hakenkreuz in Hamburg: 1933-1943* (Hamburg: Christians, 1993); Ursel Hochmuth and Gertrud Meyer. *Streiflichter aus dem hamburgener Widerstand 1933-1945* ((Frankfurt a.M: Röderberg, 1980); Kater Michael. *Gewagtes Spiel: Jazz im Nationalsozialismus*. (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1995); Arno Klönne. *Gegen den Strom: Bericht über Jugendwiderstand im Dritten Reich* (Hannover: Norddeutsche Verlagsanstalt Goedel, 1957); Gunter Lust. *The Flat Foot Floogee ... treudeutsch, treudeutsch: Erlebnisse eines Hamburger Swingheinis* (Hamburg: Olling and Galitz, 1992); Bernd Polster. *Swing Heil: Jazz im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Transti, 1989); Peter Steinbach. *Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994) and Jörg Überall. *Swing Kids* (Berlin: Archiv der Jugendkulturen, 2004) For more balanced treatments of the place of resistance in Third Reich Hamburg see the contributions on resistance in both *Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich'* ed Forschungsstelle fuer Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (HH: Wallenstein Verlag, 2005). *Kein Abgeschlossenes Kapitel: Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich'* ed. Angelika Ebinghaus and Karsten Linne (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1998). See also Detlev J.K. Peukert's influential book *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982)

¹⁷ Compare Bose et al '... ein Neues Hamburg entsteht' *Planen und Bauen von 1933-1945* (Hamburg VSA, 1986), 33.

administration and cineasts that its national relevance could best be reasserted by returning to film, the cultural form that enjoyed the most formidable backing of the state.

Here Goebbels' vision of film must be taken into account.¹⁸ He prohibited municipalities from using public funds to disseminate their local *Eigenart* to the rest of the Reich by making yet another version of the generic transition from an unemployed, disgruntled, and poor municipality into a prosperous, orderly, and proud tributary of the Thousand Year Reich. Even so, he sought to foster creativity and welcomed initiatives in the realm of German culture (of course, only from members of the "culture-producing race"). Accordingly, film provided a small entrance back onto the national arena. In the case of Hamburg, so local officials hoped, even beyond. While the Film Consortium specifically sought to foster local artists and local (i.e. northern German) art, its members were quite outspoken in their enthusiasm for Hollywood.

As I have demonstrated in Chapter 3, exclusive local alignment with the Reich was an uncomfortable choice, a choice that conflicted with Hamburg's history, its expressed identity, and also with the tastes of most of its citizens.¹⁹ I am not suggesting that the men and women in Hamburg preferred Hollywood films over their homegrown variants.²⁰ However, their insistence on a certain kind of cosmopolitanism and their interest in foreign film and music was part of what they hoped would be an exchange that featured *Hamburger Vergnügen* on the other end.²¹ That Hollywood, by way of the Warner Brothers film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* beat Hamburg to a declaration of war, should be seen in the context of Nazi propaganda on the one hand and the challenged

¹⁸ Minister of Propaganda and Education, 1933-1945. For a useful overview of Goebbels' life and role in the Nazi party and state see among others, Erwin Barth. *Joseph Goebbels und die Formierung des Führer-Mythos 1917-1934* (Erlangen: Palm & Enke, 1999) and Ralf Georg Reuth. *Goebbels* (New York: Harcourt Brace, c.1993)

¹⁹ The trope has survived the war unscathed. See for example *Hamburgs Tor zur Welt: 125 Jahre Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg* ed. Wulf Köpke and Bernd Schmelz (Hamburg: Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, 2004); *Industriekultur in Hamburg: des deutschen Reiches Tor zur Welt* (München: Beck, 1984)

²⁰ Compare Karl Christian Führer "Guckfenster in die Welt: Das 'Waterloo' -Kino in Hamburg in den Jahren der NS-Herrschaft" (65-73) in *Zeitgeschichte Hamburg Nachrichten aus der Forschungstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg, FZH* (Hamburg: FZH, 2005)

²¹ "Auf der Reeperbahn nachts um halb eins" in *Norddeutsche Nachrichten* 18.7.39

posed by Fascist countries to stability in Europe on the other.²² To many observers in Europe and beyond, Fascism, in its German and Italian variants, suggested a third way out of the ideological gridlock that linked Communism and capitalism in a historic model that implied the rise of the former on the back of the latter.²³

For Hamburg, however, the cinewar, was a threat to its particular identity. Moreover, it meant a realignment of world interests against the political and cultural imperatives of Hitler's Germany. Violating Goebbels' instructions to the national press, the *Hamburger Tageblatt* vented its disappointment regarding the "disrespectful defamations" of Germany. That Hollywood, in contrast to Babelsberg, was a significant international player at the time, obviously threatened Germany's (by implication Hamburg's) image on the international stage. As the turn to war forced Hamburg's outspoken cineasts to join forces with the regime (a feat that was less arduous in light of the production boost that the reorganization of German film companies facilitated and less spectacular given that they had little choice), other venues for local political participation that had previously been shut, rapidly opened, which I have shown in Chapter 5. And again, film and moviegoing appeared at the heart of the local efforts.

During war connections between the spatial context of film viewing and the particular landscape of pleasure that characterized Hamburg became very apparent.²⁴ The connections between the cinema, the bar, and the bordello that framed local discussions about moviegoing in wartime, had been ignored by Nazis in Hamburg and in Berlin during the 1930s as they busied themselves with the redeployment of film as a form of high culture with a particular popular resonance. As a marker of their confidence to remap the cultural landscape of Germany, the Reich had repealed the Weimar Law against Smut and Trash in literature and film in 1934.

²² Robert Fyne *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II* (Metuchen, NJ and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1994) and Clayton D. Laurie. *The Propaganda Warriors. America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996)

²³ This argument has forcefully been made by Wolfgang Schivelbusch. *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006)

²⁴ Helene Manos. *Sankt Pauli: Soziale Lagen und soziale Fragen im Stadtteil Sankt Pauli*. (Hamburg: Ergebnisse, 1989),86

Given the anxieties about the effects of the war, debates that had all but disappeared for most of the 1930s moved back onto the agenda of welfare workers in Hamburg. The memory of the First World War was not only fresh, but also particularly threatening to local authorities. Since before the publication of his first book, Adolf Hitler and the volkish movement that then still contained him, had made it blatantly clear that in their eyes the World War had not been lost on the battlefield, but on the home front.²⁵ Administrators and social welfare workers were all too well aware of the proximity of Hamburg to Kiel where the revolution started in 1918, yet they were even more conscious of the continuous fragility of the city's economic infrastructure in light of Germany's preparation for war.²⁶

Rather than criticize Hitler's war, welfare workers in Hamburg began early to establish blame for the eventual disaggregation of the local *Volksgemeinschaft* to Berlin and the Reich.²⁷ Focusing on young people rather than adults, the newly founded Consortium for Youth Protection in Wartime lobbied against the various influences that supposedly corrupted the easily manipulated minds of adolescents and single women. They reopened the debates on smut and trash in literature and film. In criticizing film, which meanwhile had developed a more self-confident style and a more direct form of cinematic address, the social workers in Hamburg resorted to the same language that had inflected the search for a place-bound nazified German *Volkskultur* only a few years earlier. Until British bombs could be blamed for the collapse of 'normal life' in Hamburg, officials pooled their efforts to leave a detailed record of the negative effects of film, urban entertainments and trashy literature in the absence of the powerful gaze of male authority and father-figures.

The disorder that war created on the home front even before aerial bombardments transformed the landscape into a wasteland, resensitized local observers to the spatial

²⁵ Boris Barth. *Dolchstoßlegenden und politische Desintegration. Das Trauma der deutschen Niederlage im Ersten Weltkrieg 1914 - 1933*. (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2003)

²⁶ See Klaus Weinbauer, "Handelskriege und Rüstungsboom: Die Wirtschaft" in *Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich'* ed, ed. Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (HH: Wallenstein Verlag, 2005)

²⁷ Michael Wildt. *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung: Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919-1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007)

points of contact between cinema and urban amusements – the bar, the vaudeville, the revue, the dancehall, and the brothel – conveniently ignored for the past several years. As young women and youths navigated the blacked-out city, the very real limits to social control became more obvious to local authorities. War utterly disrupted the functioning of everyday life. This was not just due to the bombs: Men were absent in increasing numbers; schools operated irregularly; grocery shopping took longer and was less fruitful; work hours increased and rationing tested the resourcefulness of citizens. As the fabric of everyday life started to unravel, very few constants remained. Cinema and film offered one (perhaps the most constant) source of pleasure in Germany's urban centers. The concerns over youth welfare naturally returned to the powerful effects of film. Critics of the cinema pointed out that to the immature mind even the great works of art may pose a health threat. Sexual or sexualizing content in films would undermine the development of adolescents into responsible members of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. In the minds of Hamburg's social workers the uncontested and widely advertised powers of film merged with the lurid pleasures offered in Hamburg's back alleys and entertainment establishments. That Hamburg prided itself on welcoming international tourists to its world famous entertainment district in St. Pauli only heightened the particular urgency felt in Hamburg.

As bombs flattened the city, as the price of war became clear, and as defeat was a looming certainty, film's corruptive power waned along with the power of the regime, even in the over-zealous minds of Hamburg's welfare workers. In the face of utter collapse the so called *Durchhaltefilme* solicited only a few occasional outbursts from observers while rearticulating for Hamburg audiences the waning promise of better times to come. The British reopened Hamburg's movie theaters with Rühmann comedies and the melodramatic retreats into an ahistorical present made at the height of the war. Hence, it is hardly surprising that cultural experts and cineasts in Hamburg returned to the only aspect of national life that was not officially discredited, proscribed and denazified by the occupying forces when trying to rearticulate their local identity. Film offered the political space in which old claims about Hamburg's national and international relevance could be

staked without challenging the political authority of the victors. Moreover, film and culture were reclaimed as quintessentially *democratic* spaces that would (so players hoped) eventually guarantee the fulfillment of the older dreams of cultural reciprocity and exchange, as I have argued in the final chapter.

Even though the international film world observed the developments in Germany and occasionally commented on the effective mobilization of film in first attempts of coming to terms with the Nazi past, the gates to the world remained. At its height, I hypothesize, *Papas Kino* should be seen as the fulfillment of a promise first articulated within a National Socialist frame and later vetted for vanity. German film as it was revived in the rubble-littered landscape of postwar Berlin, Hamburg, and Düsseldorf, again integrated local histories within a larger national framework. Nazi cinema was less totalizing in its fare *and* its deployment. Thus after the war, film *continued* to be one of the primary venues to articulate and contest certain visions of the German nation and local identities in relation to National Socialism. For reasons that ultimately lie outside the scope of this dissertation these discussion could not have found their bearings in a return to the art-cinema of the Weimar period. Neither did these discussions end with the proclamation of the Oberhausen Manifesto.

Appendix A

Cast of Local Characters

Albers, Hans

Hans Albers was born as the youngest of six on September 22, 1891 in St. Georg in Hamburg. Interested in sports and theater but less in his intellectual development, Albers did not enjoy school and broke of an apprenticeship as a pharmacist. As of 1911 he worked at a silk firm in Frankfurt, where he started taking acting classes without his parents' knowledge. He appeared his first role in 1912 and regularly played in Altona as of 1913. He volunteered as a soldier during World War I, almost lost his leg and returned home in 1917. He continued his acting career in theater, first in Wiesbaden, then in Berlin and continued taking on film roles. He appeared in his first film *Jahreszeiten des Lebens* in 1915 before his service in the war. In 1929, Albers is cast in the first German sound film *Die Nacht gehört uns*. After the Nazis take power, he concentrates completely on his film career and no longer appears on stage. In response to Nazi pressure he leaves his Jewish wife, Hansi Burg, takes roles in numerous prestigious films during the Third Reich. After the war he returns to the stage, his wife returns to him and they live together until his death in 1960.

Literature: *Hamburgische Biografie 3. Personenlexikon*. Franklin Kopitzsch and Dirk Brietzke, eds. Band 3 (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2006), 13-15. See also Hans Albers, Darsteller. *Filmportal.de* available at <http://www.filmportal.de/df/2a/Uebersicht,.....59736BC60AA64B34BF29473BAF9291C1,.....html>

Allwörden, Johannes Wilhelm von

Wilhelm Johannes von Allwörden was born in Hamburg Altona on June 1, 1892. Leaving trading school without a degree, von Allwörden worked as a commercial clerk prior to and again after WWI, during which he had been part of the infantry on the eastern front until captured by the Russian forces. An ardent nationalist and Antisemite, von Allwörden joined the NSDAP after its reestablishment in 1925. During the Weimar period he was NSDAP member of the city council and functioned as propagandist in Altona and Schleswig Holstein. Since 1930 he was vice-*Gauleiter* of Hamburg and advanced to the

position of chief executive officer of the NSDAP in the GAU Hamburg. Part of the close circle around governor Kaufmann, he was chosen as Senator for the Department of Social Welfare (Wohlfahrtsbehörde) on May 8, 1933. In addition, since October 1, 1933 he was responsible for cultural affairs and educational policy in Hamburg until March 31, 1938. The following day he assumed responsibility as the full time deputy for the administration of trade, shipping and industry. During the same year Kaufmann appointed him port commissioner and Aryanization commissioner. The latter function von Allwörden never actually executed, as he suffered from heart problems. After his recuperation in May 1939 he became the deputy for economic affairs. During the war, he was also responsible for the main office of economic and alimentation (Hauptwirtschafts- und Haupternährungsamt) and represented Kaufmann on several supervisory boards in business and industry. Hence von Allwörden was one of the most important executives in the realm for economic affairs in Hamburg. In May 1942, Allwörden moved to Berlin where he was supposed to organize the administration and economic exploitation of occupied eastern territories. Back in Hamburg in March 1945, von Allwörden was responsible for all matters relating to the destruction due to aerial bombardment. Von Allwörden was imprisoned and denazified by the British military government in May 1945 and released in 1949 as *Minderbelasteter*. His assets were frozen and he was banned from public or private administrative offices. He died in Hamburg on August 10, 1955.

Literature: *Hamburgische Biografie 3. Personenlexikon*. Franklin Kopitzsch and Dirk Brietzke, eds. Band 3 (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2006), 16-18

Brauer, Max

Max Brauer was born in Ottensen, Altona on September 3, 1887. As one of thirteen children in a working class family, Max Brauer began an apprenticeship as a glass blower after finishing 9th grade (Volksschule) at the age of 14. His family moved to Magdeburg where Brauer joined the union and became an active member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). In 1909 he is back in Hamburg. In 1915 he returns from his service in World War I and marries Erna Pehmöller a year later. He remains an active member of the SPD and is elected first Mayor of Altona as the youngest person to ever hold such an office in 1924. In 1933, Brauer leaves Germany, fearing arrest and persecution. In 1936 he emigrated to the USA, his family joined him in 1938. In 1943 he became a US citizen and returned to Germany only after the war. He was elected Mayor of Hamburg on July 14, 1946 an office he held until the SPD is ousted by the conservative coalition of the "Hamburger Block" in 1953. In 1957 he again held the office of Mayor. In 1965 he withdrew from politics and remained a private citizen in Hamburg until his death in 1973.

Literature: *Hamburgische Biografie 2. Personenlexikon*. Franklin Kopitzsch and Dirk Brietzke, eds. Band 3 (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2006), 63-65

Flickenschildt, Elisabeth

Elisabeth Ida Marie Flickechildt was born in Blankenese near Hamburg on March 16, 1905. She finished secondary school in Hamburg and worked in fashion until she started playing small roles at Thalia Theater in Hamburg in 1930. As of 1936 she played at the Deutsche Theater Berlin and also started appearing in supporting roles in films, her only main part was Erna Quandt in Hochbaum's *Ein Mädchen geht an Land*. She was married in 1936 (to Rolf Badenhausen until 1944). In 1955 she follows Gustav Gründgens to Berlin, plays at Deutsche Schauspielhaus and continues her film career. In 1977 she died on a farm she had purchased in 1940.

Literature: Cinegraph: Lexikon zum Deutschsprachigen Film. Edition Text und Kritik, D1-D2

Kark, Werner

Werner Karl was born on August 26, 1913 in Hamburg. On April 30, 1938 he married Elfriede Elsa Wilhelmina Ella Emilie Seiber. He was editor at Nazi organ *Hamburger Tageblatt*. Kark was Hamburg's most outspoken cineast, the president of the local film club and the founder of the Film Consortium. He wrote regularly about the role of film in the Reich and published individual film reviews. During the war, he served as a war reporter [Kriegsberichterstatter] on the eastern front. He accompanied Oberstleutnant Helmut Lent, whose plane crashed on October 5, 1944. He died from injuries incurred on October 6, 1944. He was considered missing after the war and only listed in the Hamburger Sterbebücher only in 1946.

Literature: There is unfortunately no literature on Werner Kark and the sources are extremely scarce. He is listed as one of Lent's companions at http://lexikon.freenet.de/Helmut_Lent

Kaufmann, Karl

Karl Kaufmann was born on October 10, 1900 in Krefeld. Part of the *Kriegsjugendgeneration* (Bajohr), he joined the Freikorps to make up for a war he was then too young to fight and found his way into the NSDAP in 1922. At the tender age of 24, he became Gauleiter of Rheinland-Nord with his friend Joseph Goebbels as his chief executive secretary. Kaufmann, who never completed his education, devoted his entire existence to the Nazi party. In May 1929, Kaufmann became Gauleiter of Hamburg and turned the Nazi party into the most formidable political force in a then predominantly 'red' Hamburg recklessly using terror and fostering corruption. In this period, Kaufmann developed a tight network within the Hamburg NSDAP and beyond which allowed him

to push party interests as well as defend Hamburger interests in the economy. In course of his tenure as Reichsstatthalter from 1933 to 1945, Kaufmann continued to add the titles and functions, such as leader of Hamburg's State Legislature, chief of Hamburg State and City Administration, Reich's-Defense Commissioner of defense-district X, and finally in 1942 the Reich's-Commissioner of German Maritime Shipping. Accordingly, unlike the obediently serving mayor, Carl Vincent Krogmann, Kaufmann put his experience of inner-party competition to use and carefully nurtured a network of followers to support his willed system. Seeing an opportunity to alleviate strictures in Hamburg's tight budget, Kaufmann pursued a vigorous aryanization policies and personally initiated the mass deportation of Hamburg Jews in the Fall of 1941. Nonetheless, Kaufmann is remembered as an approachable everyman with the nickname 'Kuddel-Karl' who was highly popular for what Bajohr fittingly termed *Gefühlssozialismus*. Kaufmann, who already in the last two years of the war, began planning for his post-fascist future, did in fact negotiate the *Kampflose Übergabe* of the city to the British military on May 3, 1945 in a less legendary move than was frequently remembered and for far less heroic reasons. After the war, Kaufmann retreated from the political arena without having to take responsibility for his actions. He died in Hamburg on December 4, 1969.

Literature: Frank Bajohr. "Gauleiter in Hamburg. Zur Person und Tätigkeit Karl Kaufmanns 1900-1969) in *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 43 (1995): 267-295

Krogmann, Carl Vincent

Carl Vincent Krogmann was born on March 3, 1889 in Hamburg. Part of Hamburg's traditional bourgeoisie, Krogmann, a shipbuilder, was installed as Mayor in 1933 as a concession to traditional elites in the city. A Nazi sympathizer and ardent anti-Semite, Krogmann only joined the NSDAP after the seizure of power. However, within the Nazi hierarchy of the city, Krogmann answered directly to Kaufmann but was often sidelined to a representative figurehead. Interested in the arts, and particularly in film, Krogmann wined and dined the VIPs of the German film, a fact on which he reported in detail in his diary. After the war he was arrested and released in 1948. As a wood merchant he died in 1978.

Literature: Klee, Ernst. *Das Personenlexikon Zum Dritten Reich: Wer War Was Vor Und Nach 1945*. (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2005), 342. *Hamburg im Dritten Reich*. Ed. Forschungstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2005), 52, 122-5. Krogmann, Carl Vincent. *Es Ging Um Deutschlands Zukunft: 1932-1939. Erlebtes Täglich Diktirt Von Dem Früheren Regierenden Bürgermeister Von Hamburg*. (Leoni am Starnberger See: Druffel-Verlag, 1976.)

Martini, Oscar

Oscar Martini was born in Schwerin, Mecklenburg on Februar 4, 1884. A lawyer by trade, he became the director of the welfare office in Hamburg upon its foundation in 1920. A diligent official and practical thinker, Martini, who only became an NSDAP member in 1937 was left in office after the seizure of power and was greatly appreciated by Governor Kaufmann and Mayor Krogmann. He first entered the civil service in Hamburg as an assessor after completing his education in law in Rostock and Marburg in 1910. Member of the DVP during the Weimar republic, Martini served the new regime after 1933 with the same diligence and became the vice president of the consolidated health and welfare ministry in Hamburg until he directed the again independent welfare office as president as of 1936. In 1938 he joined the social welfare office (Sozialbehörde) as deputy officer and was appointed senator in 1939, an office he occupied until october 31, 1945.

Literature: Uwe Lohalm, "Für eine leistungsbereite und 'erbgesunde' Volksgemeinschaft: Selektive Erwerbslosen- und Familienpolitik" (379-431) in *Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich'* (Goettingen: Wallstein, 2005) 420-422. See also Michaela Freund-Widder, *Frauen unter Kontrolle: Prostitution und ihre staatliche Bekämpfung in Hamburg vom Ende des Kaiserreichs bis zu den Anfängen der Bundesrepublik* (Berlin, Hamburg, Muenster: LIT Verlag, 2003)

Petersen, Rudolf

Rudolf Petersen was born into a traditional family on December 30, 1878 in Hamburg. Before he was installed as Mayor by the British military authorities in May 1945, he had never belonged to a political party but rather devoted his life to an active career as an international merchant. Though classified as a half-Jew by the Nazis, he felt hardly threatened and in fact sympathized with National Socialism's anti-Communism. In 1946 he joined the CDU and continued his engagement in the reformed overseas merchant club (Übersee-Club). He died in Wentorf in 1962.

Literature: *Hamburgische Biografie 2. Personenlexikon*. Franklin Kopitzsch and Dirk Brietzke, eds. Band 3 (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2006), 322-3

Sieverts, Rudolf

Since 1934, Rudolf Sieverts was professor for criminal law in Hamburg, where he habilitated in 1932 and succeeded Professor Delaquis, specializing in juvenile law. During his tenure as the director of the London branch of the German Academic Exchange from 1935 to 1936, he developed an intimate familiarity with British pedagogical approaches to juvenile delinquents. The work done by Sieverts and his

colleagues were of great conceptual importance for the re-issuance of the 1943 law for the protection of youth. Sieverts continued to be a national authority on juvenile law in the Federal Republic and presided over the penal commission of the federal justice ministry in 1967.

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STADTTEILARCHIV BARMBEK

Privat Bestand Saloch
Nachlass Marga Ehlers
Nachlass Karl-Heinz Denecke

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Filmography

Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv

Yvette (Liebeneiner 1938)
Ich liebe dich (Selpin, 1938)
Menschen vom Variete (Baky 1939)
Menschen vom Variety (Baky, 1939)
Die Reise nach Tilsit (Harlan 1939)
Ihr erstes Erlebnis (Baky, 1939)
Wir tanzen um die Welt (Anton, 1939)
Frau am Steuer, (Martin 1939)
Nanette (Engel 1940)
Frau nach Mass (Käutner 1940)
Die keusche Geliebte (Tourjansky 1940)
Das Mädchen von Fanö (Schweigkart, 1941)
Das leichte Mädchen, (Buch, 1941)
Illusion (Tourjansky 1941)
Fronttheater (Rabenalt 1942)
Anuschka (Käutner, 1942)
Reise in die Vergangenheit (Zerlett, 1943)
Nacht ohne Abschied (Tourjansky, 1943)
Sommernächte (Ritter, 1944)
Das alte Lied (Buch, 1945)
Meine Herren Söhne (Stemmler, 1945)

Kinematik Berlin

Ein Mädchen geht an Land (Hochbaum,1938)
Zwischen Himmel und Erde (Braun, 1941/2)
Romanze in Moll (Käutner, 1943)
Weltrekord im Seitensprung (Zoch, 1940)
Zwischen Himmel und Erde (Braun, 1941/2)
Romanze in Moll (Käutner, 1943)
Grossstadtmelodie, (Liebeneiner, 1943)
Nora (Braun 1944)

Das Gesetz der Liebe (Schweikart, 1945)
Der Verzauberte Tag (Pewas, 1944)
Via Mala, Die Strasse des Bösen (Baky, 1943/4)
Vor uns liegt das Leben, die Fünf vom Titan (Rittau, 1948)
Herrliche Zeiten (Ode/Neumann, 1949/50)

Film und Fernsehmuseum

In Jenen Tagen (Käutner 1946/7)
Arch Nora (Klinger, 1947/48)

University of Michigan Library / Donald Hall Collection

Berlin. Die Sinfonie der Großstadt (Ruttman, 1927)
Wunschkonzert (Borsody, 1940)
Münchhausen (Baky, 1943)
Jud Süß (Harlan, 1940)
Der Ewige Jude (Hippler 1940)
The Great Dictator (Chaplin, 1940)
Confessions of a Nazi Spy (Litvak, 1939)
Kolberg (Harlan, 19435)

DVD / VCR

Der alte und der Junge König (Steinhoff, 1934/5)
Zu neuen Ufern (Sierck, 1937)
Der Mustergatte (Liebeneiner, 1937)
Fuenf Millionen suchen einen Erben (Boese, 1937/38)
Bel Ami (Forst, 1938/9)
Dein Leben gehoert mir (Meyer, 1939)
Hallo Janine (Boese, 1939)
Es war eine rauschende Ballnacht (Froelich, 1939)
Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten (Jacoby, 1939/41)
Friedrich Schiller (Maisch, 1940)
Die keusche Geliebte (Tourjansky, 1940)
Achtung! Feind hoert mit (Rabenalt, 1940)
Der Gasmann (Froelich, 1940/41)
Quax Bruchpilot (Hoffmann,1941)
Die Goldene Stadt (Harlan, 1941/2)
Titanic (Selpin, 1942/3)

Ich vertraue dir meine Frau an (Hoffmann,1943)
Grosse Freiheit Nr 7 (Käutner 1943/4)
Die Feuerzangenbowle (Weiss, 1943/4)
Warum luegst du Elizabeth (Kirchhoff, 1943/44)
Eine Frau für drei Tage (Kirchhoff, 1943/44)
Opfergang (Harlan, 1944)
Unter den Brücken (Käutner, 1944/5)
Die Mörder sind unter uns (Staude, 1946)
In Jenen Tagen (Käutner 1946/7)
Film ohne Titel (Jugert, 1947/8)
Der Apfel ist ab (Käutner, 1948)
Rotation (Staude, 1948/9)