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People as Propaganda: Personifications of Homeland in Nazi German and Soviet Russian Cinema

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the use of film in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia as extensions of propaganda and sociopolitical indoctrination within both regimes. Moreover, this thesis analyzes the ways in which each respective nation's concept of homeland (*'Heimat'* in German, *'Rodina'* in Russian) coincided with political thought. Through this, both regimes utilized cinema as a platform for propagating ideas of homeland via the portrayal of the perfect citizen of their regime. This study demonstrates this through the analysis of Nazi German and Soviet Russian films of similar content, themes, and production dates. This study thus argues that a homeland, as demonstrated through select films produced by each regime between the years of 1933-1945, is comprised of its people, whom each State attempted to mold into perfect citizens. Although ideas of what defined the perfect citizen varied between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, many similarities between them are to be drawn. Dissecting these similarities allows for greater academic understanding of the atrocities and events that occurred throughout the twentieth century in the name of both schools of thought.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Power based on guns may be a good thing, it is, however, better and more gratifying to win the heart of a people and keep it.” – Joseph Goebbels

The cultural, historical, political, and humanitarian legacies of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia have forever embossed themselves upon the collective conscience of the masses, both within and without of academia. To study and analyze both regimes, whether it be from a hobbyist point of casual fascination, or meticulous academic, historiographical engagement, is to connect and further understand the turbulent wartime histories of both nations, and the ways in which their actions shaped, scarred, and pummeled our present-day society, and the billions of lives living within it¹.

However, the aforementioned effects of both nations have their roots in more than just military and political history. Nazi Germany existed as a nation for six years following the country's invasion of Poland in 1939, as Soviet Russia had for twenty-two. Years' worth of propaganda, pamphlets, political meetings, laws, and feature films had long been instated within both nations, so as to coerce and manipulate the populations, and fashion the homelands into the impenetrable, ironclad, political, ideological hotbeds desired by their leaders.

Cinema, not even half a century old in 1933, was already utilized as a crucial tool of propaganda and indoctrination within both regimes. Directors, writers, and movie stars were used as

¹One can argue that the Russian Revolution of 1917 is the most important event of the twentieth century. Without it, the events necessary for Hitler's rise to power, the catastrophic events of the Second World War, the subsequent Cold War, and division of East and West Germany, may not have occurred. To understand the connection between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, and the contexts in which they brutalized one another as the enemy, is to understand the meaning behind Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia's wartime actions, legacies, as well as their postwar actions and development. It also establishes a baseline of understanding for those interested in East Germany on a political, linguistic, cultural, and political level.

deliverers of state-sponsored messages, systematically consumed by the rural and urban, wealthy and poor, educated and illiterate alike. Moreover, because said films (and the entire political and artistic ministry associated with them) were created with the average Soviet Russian or Nazi German citizen as the audience, one must first understand what it mean to be a citizen under these regimes.

What did society expect from the men, women, and children countrymen who composed the audiences, the consumers of media, and how were those values conveyed via their onscreen counterparts? How did each regime use specific characters in their films as propaganda to convey their messages? Did each regime place emphasis on certain historical, political, racial, or socio-economic values, and if so, how were citizens expected to interact with said values? By engaging intimately with film intended for the *Deutsches Volk*, and Russian *Narod*, one comes to understand the historical context and importance of how such regimes successfully envelop an entire nation.

The aim of this study is to connect, compare, and contrast the functional, political, and cultural origins, contexts, and significance of the roles of *homeland* and *folk* in Soviet Russian and Nazi German cinema. More specifically, this study will explore the concept of *homeland* specific to Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, so as to better understand the ways in which various films and characters are fashioned in order to embody said concepts, and thus exert a total appeal to each audience. Additionally, this study will compare and contrast two films from both nations, similar in theme and date released, and the ways in which they functioned as political and cultural instruments, as well as medial extensions of *homeland*.

The films to be explored are as follows: *Partiniy Bilet*, or *The Party Card*, 1936, and *Zoya*, 1943, for the Soviet selection, and *Hitlerjunge Quex*, or *Hitleryouth Quex*, 1933, and *G.P.U.*², or *The Red Terror*, 1944, for the Nazi German. Each of the four films tackle, at a minimum, themes of community, homeland, political and/or racial “duties”. Furthermore, comparing and contrasting these

² GPU stands for the Russian “Государственное политическое управление” or State Political Directorate, another agency of the Soviet Secret Police.

films allows for understanding the films as vehicles for understanding the sociopolitical contexts under which the film was produced, and under which the audience was meant to interpret it.

Lastly, this study will use the analysis of the above to argue the importance of understanding Nazi German and Soviet Russian cinema in tandem with one another, so as to identify and underscore the importance of film as a machine of propaganda, as well as the ways in which Soviet Russian and Nazi German citizens imagined, perceived, and fought against their respective enemies, resulting in the deaths of millions, and the formation of our modern world.

Chapter 2: Establishing the Importance of Homeland: *Heimat* and *Rodina* under Nazi German and Soviet Russian Influence

In order to understand the people, or *Das Volk* in German and *Narod* in Russian, and the films they consumed, one must first outline and deconstruct the homeland from which they hail. Without the underlying idea of *homeland* to entice and unite millions of Soviet and German citizens to give their lives to defend it, the unthinkable actions of Stalin and Hitler would have devolved into nothing. The concept of “*Homeland*” functions as one of the most defining aspects of understanding the sociological, political, and historical contexts of any given people. It also exists as one of the most abstract and complex keys to understanding culture and the sociopolitical climate and events that then go on to shape humanity's global history. *Homeland* exists as political borders, a cultural outline, and as a figurative parent to the shared experiences, lands, and identities of the community residing within it. It also transcends these tangible ideas: it is more than a *home or native region*. In an almost legendary sense, the idea of a *homeland* can also exist as a makeshift creation myth, as the origin of a group's sense of belonging and collective personhood.

Thus, to simply resort to the usage of the English word *homeland* when referring to another peoples' place of origin loses cultural and linguistic context. *Heimat*, or *homeland* to German speakers, does not carry the same linguistic, cultural, or contextual weight as *Rodina*, or *homeland* does to the Russians. Peter Blicke, a German historian, states in his work, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*, that the German word of *Heimat*, though translated into English as *homeland*, has no true English equivalent for the level of intimacy that couples itself with the concept. This work will use Peter Blicke's Definition of homeland³, or, “...[an] origin...defined by a common tradition, a common past...[and a]

³Blicke's definition is a summation of Lutheran minister Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744-1803) eighteenth-century

common language” (Blicke 53).

Likewise, *Rodina* carries a much more somber implication in the original Russian meaning than the translation, “Russian Homeland” can convey. The closest one can get to understanding the ideas as portrayed in the original German and Russian are *Fatherland* and *Motherland*, respectively. Even still, the idea of Germany's patriarchal homeland figure requires its own contextual explanation, as does Russia's matriarchal. Just as a mother and father are seen as two figures with two separate and specific, definitive roles, so too are the meanings behind *Rodina* and *Heimat*. This chapter will define *Rodina* and *Heimat* for the purposes of this work, as well as establish the political and social climate under which the average Soviet Russian and Nazi German came to understand the ideas of the two themselves.

Defining Heimat

Peter Blicke recalls the fifteenth-century German spelling of *Heimat*, namely *Heinmut*. By etymologically breaking down the archaic word, Blicke derives a crucial meaning hidden within the word itself: *hein*, to mean home, and *mut*, to mean bravery. He further concludes that because the idea of *Heimat* contains within it ideas of bravery and warrior-like aggression, it is an offensive concept that is meant to scare away and “violently” exclude outsiders (Blicke 5). Celia Applegate, however, writes the following regarding *Heimat* in 1990:

“...Heimat has been at the center of German moral --- and by extension political --- discourse about place, belonging, and identity. Unfortunately, the very ordinariness of the contexts in which the word crops up has obscured the range and richness of what Heimat can tell us about the peculiarities of German history” (Applegate 4).

In other words, *Heimat* has its origins in Heine's poetry, Kant's philosophy, and Nietzsche's theorizing. That being said, Blicke supports Applegate's argument with the following quote: “...Heimat is as much

exploration of homeland.

a part of [these things] as it is of Adolf Hitler's propaganda...whether Germany was already on a *Sonderweg* toward National Socialism owing to special German, political, economic, and military developments long before Hitler came to power...is quite telling...[of the] premodern and anti-modern connotations of *Heimat*” (Blicke 9).

Understanding Hitler's fascination and obsession with *Heimat* and the idea of uniting all German-speaking peoples within it is to understand the spatial and abstract notion of Germanness that *Heimat* not only fails to capture and define in its entirety, but is unable to do so. For example, are the Bavarian sights the only sights to see in the eyes of all German speaking peoples? Are the outfits of the Kieperkerls of Northern Germany the same as the Lederhosen worn in Tirol? What role does the idea of Hitler's *Heimat* --- rustic, traditional, Bavarian peasant imagery --- actually play in the minds of other German, Swiss, and Austrian peoples who have no frame of reference for the “typically ideal” German image of *Heimat*?

Blicke alludes to Hitler's narrow-visioned simplification of *Heimat* with the following passage: “The incongruency between linguistic-cultural nationalism and political nationalism in modern German history always creates a tension between 'German' and 'Germany'...an answer to the question 'what is German?' is ever elusive” (Blicke 51). In short, Hitler's view of the German *Heimat* could be seen as incomplete, thus spreading a muddled image of belonging. Such fanatic unpredictability, coupled with Germany's infancy as a nation, and Hitler's notions of German racial superiority, created the perfect sociopolitical concoction necessary to transform the elusiveness of 'What is Germany?' into an era of violent self-discovery. Even given the confusion, that is not to say there was no definitive message Hitler and the NSDAP did not project for his *Volksgenossen*.

*Racial, Gendered, and Political Expectations
of Das Volk in Hitler's Germany*

Maiken Umbach underscores a point significant to understanding the idea of *Heimat* under

National Socialism: “...fascist political language was heavily permeated with political metaphors...fascists repeatedly identified empire-building as a vital sign of a nation's health” (Umbach

2). Likewise, Umbach continues with the following:

“*Heimat* became the single most powerful trope in discourses of Germanness. The word denotes the attachment to an immediate experiential homeland – originally the locality. But the political career of the *Heimat* idea really took off when it was applied instead to the abstract sphere of the nation. *Heimat* became a way of making one’s attachment to the nation thinkable, configuring identity not as the property of an individual but as a cultural construct emerging at the intersection of people and space...The persistent instability of German space made it attractive to any movement that combined radical change with a palingenetic tendency to lay claim to timeless popular or indigenous traditions. National Socialism was one such movement.” (19).

In other words, the collective experiences of German existence were left susceptible to radical ideologies, such as National Socialism. National Socialism thus replaced the budding ideas emerging from Germany's sense of self discovery⁴ with motifs of Hitler's fanatic obsession with Germanic racial legacy. Ideas of a German space being within the traditionally defined borders of the *Heimat* were replaced with *Lebensraum*, or the idea of expelling allegedly racially inferior peoples out of their lands, so as to make space for the *Herrenvolk*, or the 'racially pure' German people.

This is where this study argues *Heimat's* transformation into a racially coded concept: The German people were no longer German speakers within the borders of the nation, who could recount shared cultural experiences⁵, but were instead defined as a *Volk*, to which the exclusive idea of being *Arisch* belonged. The thousands of German Jewish people, whose families had once held an intimate, centuries old stake in shared German legacy, were now detested exceptions to the almost divinely prophetic idea that Germans would rule the world.

⁴It should be noted that neither Hitler nor the NSDAP were the first within Germany to popularize the idea of Right-Wing, Anti-Semitic, German-centric politics. As early as 1871, followers of the German Empire promoted anti-liberal, anti-socialist, conservative ideals (Verheyen, Dirk 5). Furthermore, ideas of eugenics and Social Darwinism were also prevalent in German political and scientific thought prior to Hitler's rise to power. Hitler merely officially legislated or expounded upon many ideas that were already circulating in many German scientific and political circles.

⁵For example, in some parts of Poland and Eastern Europe, there were pockets of ethnic German populations, as well as pockets of people who merely “looked” German, whom the Third Reich deemed as being either Aryan or Aryan-looking enough. They were subsequently ripped from their families and communities and reassimilated with German families, even if the children themselves had no context outside of the USSR or Poland, etc. The film G.P.U. touches upon this exact demographic.

In fact, the very vision of Hitler was to unite all racially qualified Germans, regardless of national or regional origin, in an effort to discover and assert their divine potential *as* Germans, and to exhibit it onto the rest of the world as its master. That being said, a society of superior peoples was to adhere to a strict set of rules and expectations put into place by Hitler and the NSDAP. Every facet of a German's private, professional, and political life was to permeate the morally and racially standards presented unto them as members of the Third Reich.

Even the act of simply being a man or woman was politicized: both genders within Nazi Germany were both held to separate, although equally demanding, sets of political, social, and moral obligations, so as to prevent “degenerate behavior” from deteriorating Hitler's carefully crafted National Socialist society. In order to understand these differences, the underlying thread between both men and women in Nazi Germany must be explained.

This was to promote “racial hygiene”, and to promote a strong, racially healthy, Aryan population. More specifically, this meant German men and women were not to associate --- especially romantically --- with either Jewish, non-White, asocial, mentally or physically challenged, or politically questionable individuals. Leading back to the role of women,

“...most of the scientific and pseudoscientific superstructure of eugenic racism, especially in its mythology of hereditary character traits, is concerned with the supposedly “natural” or “biological” domains in which women are prominent --- body, sexuality, procreation, education --- the heretofore “private” sphere...those with this perspective see National Socialism as either a culmination of, or a reactionary return to, belief in women's 'traditional' role as mothers and housewives; motherhood and housework become essential factors in a backward, pre-modern, or pre-capitalist role assigned to women” (Bock 402).

The woman's role was to be the child-bearer, the mother, the housewife, the home maker. Given the political and financial incentives⁶ within Nazi Germany for women who fulfilled these limited roles,

⁶Such as the Mutterkreuz of varying degrees, given to women in Nazi Germany personally by Adolf Hitler, based on the number of children they birthed. The Lebensborn Program was also among many state-sponsored programs that promoted politically and racially ideal procreation. Specifically, it was a program that encouraged SS men and unwed German women to procreate, free from any moral implication. The men, who would eventually leave the women, were thus given asylum and prenatal care within the Lebensborn institutions, and their children were then adopted by the state.

the state allowed little room for, or encouragement of, women who wanted to experience mobility out of the home. An interesting comparison can be drawn between women's role in Nazi Germany, and the idea of the *Fatherland*. The German mother was to be exactly that: the birthgiver of Germany's children, the literal and metaphorical mother, whilst the state, the country, the *Heimat*, was to take on the role of father, who provides for the mother and her children, and serves as the head of the household.

Thus, women were excluded and discouraged from assuming political or academic positions. Groups such as the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* and the *NS Frauenschaft* encouraged gender-based activities and communities for racially eligible women. Women such as Magda Goebbels, wife of Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, were celebrated as mothers before political figures.

Although German girls were educated alongside German boys, university education was all but restricted to German women. German girls were also politically educated, though forbidden from participating properly by holding any political position or office⁷. These circumstances left women with little professional control. Women found their reproductive rights were so tightly restricted in Nazi Germany, that doctors and midwives were to hand over the address and name of every healthy, Aryan woman who suffered a miscarriage, and, in more extreme cases, were to be investigated if they were suspected of aborting the child. The accessibility of abortions for women in Nazi Germany was starkly reduced and outlawed, and, under the jurisdiction of Heinrich Himmler, the “Protection of Marriage, Family, and Motherhood” law even demanded the death penalty for German women who were “extremists” in homosexual or antinatal behaviors (Bock 408). This is not to say that motherhood in Nazi Germany was not a point of reverence. To bear children was to bear a soldier, fit to fight the Third Reich's racial holy war. To be a mother in Nazi Germany was to be a soldier in her own right, one that was respected, cherished, and praised.

⁷Until wartime shortages made their participation necessary in 1942 (Sigmund women of the third reich pages 8.22. 30).

The roles for men were not much more lenient. The cult of Nazi German manhood was militarized to the same extent as a woman's body was maternalized. Dr. Ute Scheub of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung writes the following in the preface to her memoir:

“I am the daughter of a former soldier and fanatical National Socialist who never came to grips with the downfall of the Third Reich. He despised his own wife for being “racially inferior”, was incapable of building personal relationships, never laughed, ran everyone down, never spoke about his past and ultimately didn’t speak anymore at all. During the Church Congress in Stuttgart in 1969, he publicly committed suicide in front of 2,000 people during a reading by Günter Grass by drinking a bottle of cyanide...In reaction to my book, hundreds of people wrote me letters and e-mails about their own families...over 60 years after the war had ended, my father’s biography was anything but the fate of one individual. There were numerous drastic cases among them: for example a woman who had been raped by her own SS father. Or a man who, as a child, was left behind by his Nazi parents when bombs rained down at night. He was simply told to pull himself together: “A German boy knows no fear.” (Militarized Masculinity in Germany).

The testimony presented above from Scheub and countless other children of Nazi soldiers paints a grim picture: namely that of the many effects the oppressive masculinity of German men in the Third Reich. From a young age, German boys were not meant to know fear, as indicated in Scheub’s memoir. Scheub, however, argues that oppressive masculinity predates Nazi Germany, referring to the cult of imperialist worship that followed the country's elite --- the German soldiers under Emperor Wilhelm II. Even as early as 1904, Scheub quotes German journalists who proclaim that “More than ever, our era needs men who can think and can use a weapon”.

Scheube argues that this early romantization of militarized manhood led to the inevitability of Nazi German hyper-masculinity. “To quote the Anglo-German historian George Mosse: “Never before and never afterwards, has masculinity been elevated to such heights as during fascism”. Nazi leaders vaunted man-male ties in grandiloquent speeches and rituals, around campfires, in the Hitler Youth, in the “sacred circles of comrades”, in military parades and trouping of the colour.”

Beginning in a young German boy's youth, it was made clear by the state that the Nazi German “new man” was not one who could fashion his manhood out of the mere every day. Instead, he was expected to demonstrate and earn his masculinity by his willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of

the state: whether it be at war against Germany's racial and political enemies, or as a moral arbiter of proper racial and political practice for his family, community, and *Volksgemeinschaft* (Loroff 2).

Like the BDM and *NS-Frauenschaft*, young German men were indoctrinated into the *Hitlerjugend* at age fourteen. In the HJ, young German boys were educated in political and racial issues, engaged in physical exercise, paramilitary training, and activities promoting camaraderie. Young German men were expected to shed their individuality and instead identify with their fellow men and *Fuehrer*, enveloping the legion mentality as race warriors of the Third Reich. The HJ monopolized every aspect of life for the young German male. His friends, after-school leisure activities, excursions, and toys were determined by the organization. According to a German documentary about the Hitler Youth, to not be a part of the HJ was social damnation and grounds for political suspicion. “From the youngest recruit right up to the Reich youth leader, the basic law of the Nazi Reich applied: One commands, the rest follow”. Rolf Janche, who grew up in Nazi Germany, shared his poignant memory of his youth in Nazi Germany with the moderator as well: “.The attraction was that everyone in Germany could rise into a position of command over someone...” (Hitler's Children).

These were the very same boys who would grow up to become the ruthless soldiers of the Reich, whose countless crimes against humanity will never escape the global conscience, even long after their perpetrators have passed on. The following quote from Scheub supports this ingrained sense of brutality, fostered by the Nazi state's bastardization of manhood:

“But the requirement to be ruthless also triggered fears of being shown up in front of their entire squad if they didn't join in. They had to fear that, if they refused, they “would be seen as pussies”, said one SS squad leader in defense of his involvement in executions. And Frank Werner confirms this: “The reports about how officers and comrades would scorn those disobeying an order as being ‘cowards’, ‘pussies’ or ‘sissies’, or would quite simply brush them off as being “too soft” are legion .” When presented with two evils, that of either suffering social death as a man or taking part in bloody deeds, most of the soldiers opted for the second solution as the apparently less bad alternative. It's better to be a murderer than unmanly: this highlights the entire madness of polarized gender roles.”

Thus, as men and women, they had certain ideals and expectations to live up to, placed upon them by the Third Reich. Exhibiting signs of weakness or defiance led to ridicule, sterilization,

deportation to labor or concentration camps, or even death. Even in terms of leisure, men and women in Nazi Germany were bombarded with proper racial etiquette. As stated above, young boys and girls were expected to befriend one another in their respective NSDAP-sponsored groups. Likewise, trips, excursions, and vacations were also sponsored by the state, and incorporated health and fitness campaigns into their program⁸. It should also be noted that Prewar Nazi Germany did enjoy a standard of living on par with that of the United States and other global powers (Swett 23).

Nazi Germany as a consumer nation was particularly bustling, contrary to what one might think. However, marketing studies done in the 1930s resulted in Germans listing German brands and makers as number one in many areas (such as Opel for cars, Wolff und Sohn for beauty products, Maggi and Knorr for food). This is certainly not an accident. Germans were encouraged by the state to support domestic products --- from vacuum cleaners to make up, from film to music and art, Germans were encouraged to support “racially pure” products, as opposed to “degenerate” foreign commodities, branded by supposed Jewish and African American influence.

In many cases, these bans were supported with legislation. Joseph Goebbels placed regular embargos on Hollywood films, and instead promoted German stars and films suitable for Aryan audiences. The 'Entartete Kunst' exhibit, which opened in Munich, 1937, was an exhibit sponsored by the state to actively acquaint the German public with degenerate and racially impure works of art. The exhibit had its reach, being the first of its kind in human history to draw in over one million viewers. Laws against the consumption of Jazz music surfaced as well, supported by racially insensitive caricatures of African American Jazz artists⁹.

Even what German men and women drank was a subject of attempted regulation:

“Women’s organizations and the Hitler Youth attacked drinking as a dangerous distraction from one’s ideological commitments, and health officials labeled it as a ‘genetic poison’ that led to racial

⁸The Kraft Durch Freude program being one of many, for example.

⁹The genre was dubbed “Negermusik” and was outlawed in its entirety in Germany in 1935. Swing Kids, or 14-18 year olds who consumed Jazz music in secret clubs, would come together to enjoy the genre despite its illegality and racially impure origins.

degeneration. Despite such dire warnings, the regime never denied Germans the right to drink for pleasure. Doctors and health experts also denounced caffeinated coffee as a poison linked to the rise of nervous disorders, but this did not translate into the banning of caffeine (though coffee became unavailable during the war).” (Swett 25).

Furthermore, Nazi Germany also attempted to regulate smoking amongst its people in an effort to promote good racial health and hygiene.

“Germany was the only country to have ‘a broad medical recognition of both the addictive nature of tobacco and the lung cancer hazard of smoking’. In their quest to engineer a hygienically pristine race, the Nazis waged a frontal assault on smoking by banning ads for cigarettes, prohibiting smoking in public spaces like party offices and waiting rooms, and launching anti-smoking educational campaigns that emphasized, among other things, the dangers of tobacco to the male libido.” (Swett 26).

The most notable of German public expectations, is the Nazi German view on sex. While many within the party held on to traditionally Christian ideals of sex and sexual conduct, many others within it considered such ideals to be a thing of the past, whilst still advocating for the “cleansing of Republican era trashiness” (Swett 43). Considering the State's desire to promote high birth rates amongst the German people, however, the repression of sexuality was lessened slightly. In an almost contradictory sense, one notes the attitudes toward sex at the beginning of the war¹⁰, as being an institution of purity and family building, yet, the taboo surrounding it had dissipated. In 1910, even, it was rare to even allude to a woman below the neck in good company (Seaman 17), yet some twenty odd years later, in Nazi Germany, it was not only being discussed that men and women were sexual creatures, but campaigns for sexual pleasure, albeit masked behind decent terms, were launched, so as to promote healthy marriages, and thus stronger, Aryan German families.

In a similar effort to promote a collective, healthy Aryan *Volksgemeinschaft*, Hitler and the Nazi Party sought to establish a regime within Germany that transcended social class and status. At party rallies and functions, the image of the German laborer and farmer were glorified. Propaganda posters typically featured Germans families in plain or traditional clothing, so as to avoid creating an image of

¹⁰This refers once more to the Lebensborn program, as well as the wartime sexual exceptions in which the procreation between two Aryan parents trumped negative ideas surrounding premarital sex or sexual promiscuity.

social exclusion amongst its members. The Harvest Festival became a national holiday, and Hitler himself spent many days at his Bavarian retreat, overlooking the Alps and taking many photos with children dressed in Dirndls and Lederhosen.

The relationship between the Nazi party and the working class, however, was not a spontaneous phenomenon. Out of 42,000 Nazi Party membership cards, over forty percent of them belonged to working class individuals (Nazism and the Working Class). In fact, according to Sergio Bologna, a historian of Nazi Germany, "...not only [was] the working-class component decisive within Nazism before Hitler's taking of power, but also that, after taking power, the policies pursued by the Nazi regime were actively favorable to the working class and tended to bring its social status closer in line with that of the middle classes, along tendentious egalitarian lines, thus making Hitler a true "social-revolutionary" of the twentieth century." David Schoenbaum, supplements Bologna's argument in that he explains the, "...worker motif and the farmer motif was the common motif of *Blut und Boden*, an anti-urban animus..." (Schoenbaum 46).

What can be derived from the two claims are the following: as Hitler passionately admits himself in various speeches throughout the 1934 film *Triumph Des Willens*¹¹, The Third Reich seeks to shed any traces of class, caste, and social stratification. As members of the *Herrenvolk*, or Master Race, Hitler's goal is to rebuild Germany anew as a unified, racially "pure", militarized and mobile force ready to wage war not only against those who fought against her in the First World War, but also against those who sought against her subsequent "humiliation" vis-a-vis the Treaty of Versailles. In order to unite Germanic peoples under the Reich, regardless of regional, educational, and professional, and economic biases, they must come together free of the stigmas that accompany the aforementioned potentials of division. Furthermore, the Reich was to function as a form of racial education and indoctrination.

¹¹Particularly in the scenes in which Hitler stands before the HJ congregation, and the scene in which he stands before the Reichsarbeitsdienst.

Following Hitler's rise to power, the concept of *Heimat* was replaced with a racialized version of the idea. Namely, one that was not only to be defended by an obedient, united, disciplined, and militarized racial collective, but also to exalt its right to superiority over the unworthy, as an aggressive and insurmountable force, with the German soldier at its helm as both the defender and aggressor.

The educated, cohesive collective of the Nazi German people were bred and born to fight, take charge, and adhere to commands, no matter how grisly, so as to take the reigns of the world into their collective hands and direct it under Germany's will. The Nazi pursuit of racial purity thus granted the state a self-ordained significance over the lives of its citizens, be it through their systematic elimination in the cases of those who did not fit into its purview of being worthy of life, or through the dictation of every duty, opinion, action, thought, and act of consumption over those it did¹².

Defining Rodina

The Russian word *Rodina* is a word that shares its core meaning with other Slavic languages: *family* in Czech, and *homeland* in Russian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, and Macedonian. What is it about the imagery captured by the word *Rodina* that allows its shared usage to draw a unifying thread throughout Eastern Europe, where borders, politics, religion, and culture never could? Peter Blicke defines the significance of this masterfully:

“The Russian word *Rodina*, often rendered into English as *motherland* or *Mother Russia*, is another term that translates in German into *Heimat*. Its qualities are close to the German *Heimat*. It is femininely encoded and invoked for aggressive as well as defensive nationalistic purposes. But there are differences between *Rodina* and *Heimat*...*Heimat* is much less overtly sexualized than *Rodina*. *Rodina* is always based on a mythic mother-son relationship, powerfully eroticised and incestuous...Russia becomes a beautiful mother assigned to the role of mother, wife, and lover...” (Blicke 6).

In other words, following the October Revolution of 1917, the Russian *homeland* was often quite literally characterized¹³ as a recognizable, distinct individual: well endowed, fleshed-out, but

¹² Hitler's *Mein Kampf* touches upon providence being a decisive factor in Germany's self-proclaimed supremacy. Such notions of superiority gave way to components of German society meant to micromanage the *Volk*, such as the Nuremberg Laws, T4 Program, and the Holocaust.

¹³ Various Soviet-Era monuments, propaganda pieces, memorials, and painting such as *Rodina Mat' Zovyot!* Or *The*

obviously peasant-like, strong-jawed but alluringly feminine, fertile, yet aged and matronly, plain and familiar, yet striking and easily identifiable as being *The Mother Russia*. In some images she grips a sickle, in others, a sword. She is the matron figure of Russia: the birthgiver, the mother of the people, the provider and sower of grain, yet, like a mother, she is to be supported, revered, and honored. Her image, as described above, is not dainty. Though she is feminine and motherly, she is not frail and in need of total protection, but rather requires her sons, or *Narod*, the people to fight alongside her, at her *defense*.

*Racial, Gendered, and Political Expectations
of Narod in Stalin's Russia*

Joseph Stalin, born Ioseb Jughashvili to impoverished Georgian shoemakers in 1878, would join various circles of various thinkers and revolutionaries in world cities, rising to the top in said circles, shedding blood as a revolutionary, until the momentum of his own manipulative prowess left him at the top of Russia and, eventually, the USSR. Following the Bolshevik seizure of power within Russia in 1917, Stalin was appointed as “People's Commissar of Nationalities”, a bureau of the party dealing specifically with non-Russians within the state. Fighting existed between Stalin and Vladimir Lenin regarding the extent to which the peoples and nations within the Soviet sphere of influence would be allowed to experience autonomy and the right to cultivate their native cultural-linguistic practices. In 1923, both men reached the temporary compromise of granting each state a sense of autonomy, though they were still expected to answer to their central Communist party chapters, who in turn answered to Moscow (Suny 246).

Although Stalin's office changed throughout the 1920s, his positions consisted entirely of relations with the public, average citizen. Most decisively in Stalin's career was that he understood the Russian people's love for ideological orthodoxy. Thus, despite his numerous and often fundamental

Motherland Calls! Located within the Ukraine, capture the same image of the Russian/ Soviet mother, implying her crafted imagery serves as a deliberate motif.

disagreements with Lenin, Stalin understood that to be his political sycophant was to position himself higher upon the political ladder. Stalin also continued to advocate for the autonomy of different ethnic peoples within Soviet space, and “consistently held that ethnicity would not be eliminated from the Soviet Union until global Communism had been achieved” (Suny 248).

Stalin's illusions of peaceful policy would soon unravel. 1928 marked the beginning of Stalin's forced collectivization policy, the aims of which were impossible even at its conception. In an attempt to erase Capitalism from Soviet memory, Stalin's forced collectivization policy called for:

“...rapid industrialization of the economy, with an emphasis on heavy industry. It set goals that were unrealistic-- a 250 percent increase in overall industrial development and a 330 percent expansion in heavy industry alone. All industry and services were nationalized, managers were given predetermined output quotas by central planners, and trade unions were converted into mechanisms for increasing worker productivity...because Stalin insisted on unrealistic production targets, serious problems soon arose. With the greatest share of investment put into heavy industry, widespread shortages of consumer goods occurred.” (Library of Congress).

Stalin also believed that his collectivization policy would “...improve agricultural productivity and would produce grain reserves sufficiently large to feed the growing urban labor force”, and executed every will within his power in order to forcefully mold the country to fit his reality, no matter how dire or bloody the cost. While a sizable portion of peasants resisted, many of those who did were systematically rounded up and were never seen or heard from again. Those who did not resist were not much better off. The famine that followed in 1932 left approximately ten million people across the Soviet Union fatally starved.

To disagree or disobey was to ally with the enemy: capitalism. Furthermore, Stalin felt his political and social practices would thrust the Soviet Union into the “future”: the rising death toll as a result of his policies were considered a means to an end at best, and the rightful judgment of dissenters at worst. Consider the following excerpt from Stalin's 1931 speech addressing the “history of old Russia”:

“[Old Russia suffered] continual beatings from its backwardness. It was beaten by the Mogul Khans. It was beaten by the Turkish Beys. It was beaten by the Swedish feudal lords...the Polish

and Lithuanian gentry...the British and French capitalists...the Japanese barons...because of [Russia's] backwardness...it's military, cultural, and agricultural backwardness...such is the wolves' law of capitalism... that is why we must no longer lag behind". (Suny 249).

Soon, pressures from Japanese and German mobilization encouraged Stalin to accelerate the total execution of his plans for the Soviet Union. The very little independence non-Russian republics experienced were stripped away, and were enveloped in the Union. Stalin went on to further wage violent attacks against the leaders of said republics, uncovered dissenters and enemies of the monolithic party as "saboteurs" and saw that they too, were quietly disposed of. Most notably, was Stalin's violent actions were all executed under the banner of "Friendship of the peoples", a haphazard attempt to foster cohesion and collective socialism amidst Stalin's bloody rulings.

By 1939, Stalin's Great Purges¹⁴ had resulted in over four million individuals under either the jurisdiction of the NKVD, or the Russian secret police, or were dead or near-dead in labor camps.

By 1941, Stalin forcefully uprooted and deported non-Russian ethnic peoples within the republic who were thought to be "conspiring" with German forces¹⁵. Stalin's distrust of his own countrymen was not merely reserved for ethnic non-Russians. "All of us around Stalin were temporary people... the moment he stopped trusting you, Stalin would start to scrutinize you until the cup of his distrust overflowed," Nikita Khrushchev would later write about Stalin (Suny 250).

The Soviet people were expected by the state to be a hardworking, selfless conglomerate of laborers who toiled in the name of communism, Stalin and *Rodina*. The clergy was quickly prosecuted and outlawed¹⁶. Priests were forced to leave their positions, and their children to renounce them, as demonstrated in an excerpt of one such son's renunciation of his father: "I, Nikolai Ivanov, renounce my father, an ex-priest, because for many years he deceived the people by telling them that God exists,

¹⁴ The Large scale execution of Communist party leaders and other political dissidents, peasants, military and police

¹⁵ Such as Crimean Tartars, Chechens, and many others.

¹⁶ Though in the 1940s, wartime desperation allowed for a resurgence in Russian orthodoxy, as Stalin found the church worked well to drum up patriotic sentiment amongst rural communities, thus the clergy experienced a brief respite in persecution, and were not only encouraged to reconvene with their congregations, but were also mobilized by the Soviet State as a vessel of Anti-German propaganda.

and that is the reason I am severing all my relations with him.” (The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalinist Russia).

Religion, regarded by Karl Marx as the “opium of the masses”, was quickly outlawed under Stalin. Even still, traditional moral values were to be upheld. The previous Bolshevik lifts on homosexuality, limitless divorce, and abortions of the 1920s were dissolved.

Following Stalin's rise to power, divorce became nearly impossible, and homosexuality and abortions were once again outlawed, as Stalin's emphasis on the family as being a building block of his Soviet utopia directly contradicted the idea of intimate fluidity. That being said, while women were still encouraged to assume the traditional role of housewife and mother (complete with financial incentives to have children from the government), women were still encouraged to take on manual work in factories and professions alongside men, especially come wartime¹⁷.

For example, many women, particularly on the eve of the Siege of Leningrad, were able to experience career mobility into roles such as doctors, military orderlies, government official, factory worker, and even enlist in the military (Perlina 5).

The model for the ideal Soviet community was “passive conformity and outward obedience”. “Families could monitor one another, reporting any hint of disloyalty. Spouses and children could be sent away after an arrest or an execution. The age of criminal responsibility was lowered to twelve in order to reinforce pressure on adults to cooperate with interrogators and spare their children. A wife was expected to divorce her arrested husband.” (The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalinist Russia). Children were subjected to intensive rigorous exams in school, and expected to join the Octobrists, Pioneers, and Komsomol --- political groups, that, in many ways similar to the Hitlerjugend, promoted proper party ideals whilst also serving as a place in which state-ordained, extra-curricular friendships

¹⁷ This surge of equality stemmed partly from the nature of Soviet socialist ideals: that all were laborers and all were needed to do so to ensure the good health of the *Rodina*. While the Soviet Union was far from a feminist poster child, many works of art starkly feature young, strong Russian women in laborous, physical positions that invoke the *Rodina Mat* motif present in propaganda works featuring the anthropomorphizing of Russia itself.

and activities were carried out.

This meant life for the average Soviet under Stalin was driven by fear. Unsurprisingly, the state controlled most, if not all, aspects of daily life, and threatened labor camps or other means of quiet removal from society to those who showed any sign of political or social insubordination. The people themselves were used to shattered routines, uprooted lives, and instability (Fitzpatrick 221). Diaries collected from myriad citizens living in Stalinist Russia all reflect the same inevitability: should the State suspect them of any misconduct, there was “nothing they could do” (222). To find a stable job as a veterinarian, for example, was to align oneself with fateful death. “A veterinarian has the possibility of getting good food¹⁸, but it is dangerous. There is planning. The plan is high, and a man can be brought to court at any moment...the greater the position meant more responsibility. The more responsibility, the greater the risk. It was safer to sit at the bottom.” (220).

Even amidst the diaries of other diverse individuals --- peasants, housewives, urban laborers, artists --- where personal lives, sorrows, and feelings are present, the entries are intruded either with worries or concerns of the state, or *Mother Russia* herself (221). This is not to say that there was not time for the events of daily life to run their course. Even the literary intelligentsia, by far the most intimidated and politically despised social class in Stalinist Russia, were allowed to take part in and entranced by the idea of the regime, as well as belonging to the greater idea of “*our*” revolution (Fitzpatrick 224).

This sense of “our” revolution was also, according to Fitzpatrick, the only worldview in 1937 Soviet Russia that allegedly aligned itself with modernity. Education, too, was one of the core values of Soviet thought. To reject the worldviews of the older generations – that is, the worldview of those over thirty in 1937 – was to assume collective momentum into the future, just as Stalin had projected in his speech renouncing the “Old Russia” six years prior.

¹⁸ Food and quality groceries were scarce, let alone in wartime Russia.

Racial identities in the Soviet Union, as mentioned before with Stalin's policy of deportation, resettlement, and linguistic, and geopolitical assumption of non-Russian republics into the USSR, while not particularly celebrated or protected, were still not the primary subject of persecution in Stalinist Russia. One was more likely to be discriminated against due to issues of class, as opposed to race, or ethnicity¹⁹. In fact, in the 1930s, Joseph Stalin invited hundreds of Black Americans to the Soviet Union in order to create a variety of films, poems, plays, and novels monumentalizing the racial discrimination faced by blacks in the United States²⁰, of which many took the invite, and expressed their love for the sense of equality they experienced within the nation (Russia's Black Community). Artwork within Soviet Russia did not merely extend to unlikely communities such as the African American. Many within the USSR took up pens and brushes, creating many masterpieces. Celebrated Russian author Mikhail Bulgakov, writer of the Stalinism-critical work, *The Master and Margarita*, even despite heavy censorship, experienced underground, but substantial, critical acclaim and praise for his works. Valentina Sharporina, stage director, and organizer for the Petrograd marionette theater, continued to write during the siege of Leningrad, both in her diary and privately, and even during the stress of her newly assumed role of nurse, tending to those injured within the city.

Thus, *Rodina* was not dominated by racial theory, but class warfare. Where Nazi artwork is distinctly racially coded, Soviet artwork was more concerned with issues of class. This preoccupation gave birth of a genre of artwork titled Socialist Realism. Prominent works of this genre feature realistic, meek depictions of the lower and working classes engaging in laborious but fulfilling, group-oriented tasks – such as working together in a factory, in a field, or in urban environments, usually constructing or building a structure. Not only was Socialist Realism adopted as the (one of very, very few) genre(s)

¹⁹ Though Soviet Jews would suffer brutal scapegoating and persecution in Stalinist Russia, a point that will be elaborated upon further into the paper.

²⁰ Although this was certainly a strategic move: to incite and encourage (socialist) revolution from black Americans against the white American system. Regardless, many of the poets, actors, and authors enjoyed their time in the USSR and many even stayed to marry Russian men and women.

of the State, but it was also seen as glorifying a Proletariat, or working-class, culture. Many of the works also featured Stalin, usually clad in white, prominent and accessibly surrounded by plain-clothed workers of all professions, ages, and genders.

However, that is not to say the Soviet Union was free from any racial discrimination. Anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union under Stalin had only continued where the Tsarist order had left off. In a November 1936 edition of the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* (Truth), Joseph Stalin can be quoted as saying the following: “Anti-Semitism, like any form of racial chauvinism, is the most dangerous vestige of cannibalism” (Berkhoff 62). His wartime actions regarding Jewish populations within the Soviet Union would tell a completely different story. Many Soviet-Jewish scholars, such as Gennady Kostrychenko, Pavel Polian, and Yeshoshua Gibloa, underscore the reality of Joseph Stalin's Anti-Semitism, as well as that of the Anti-Semitic acts of the Soviet state (64).

The State operated in constant silence regarding the wide scale mass murder of Soviet Jews within German-occupied territory. “Soviet announcements and publications during this period point to a deliberate attempt to conceal the Jewish tragedy behind general descriptions of German ferocity. Only rarely were massacres of Jewry specifically mentioned, the dominant line adopted being not to single out such massacres from among the ‘criminal plans aimed at annihilating the Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, and other peoples of the Soviet Union.’” (65).

In other words, Stalin's attempt to curtail public discussion and knowledge regarding the Holocaust within Soviet boundaries was only broken insofar an opportunity existed in which Stalin could further dilute the information by referring to the Holocaust as a general act of aggression against all Soviet peoples, as opposed to a specific war against Soviet Jews, Bolshevists, and other groups of Nazi Germany's ill-fated interest.

Jewish members of the Soviet Anti-Fascist Cabinet were lethally silenced at Stalin's

discretion²¹, particularly individuals such as Solomon Mikhoels, who often voiced his concerns regarding the “Anti-Jewish” policies of invading German forces, of which the Kremlin were acutely aware. Much of this sentiment was echoed throughout the non-Jewish Soviet population as well.

In June of 1941, following the German invasion of Lithuania, General Bobelis of the Lithuanian military stoically reported to civilians that, should any Jews fire upon German soldiers marching into the territory, one hundred Jews would be killed for every German shot. Anti-Jewish pogroms throughout occupied Lithuanian cities²² commenced, carried out by German soldiers and Lithuanian partisans alike (Barkan 355). Many within Lithuania saw the German invasion as a glimmer of hope: the German soldiers represented potential liberation from Soviet Russia, and thus saw the German forces as a vehicle through which the partisans could drive out Red Army troops, and thus reestablish an independent Lithuanian nation, free from the Soviet Union. The German forces, however, felt Lithuania offered either their war effort or their nation little value. Although compliance from Lithuanian partisans was met with German allegiance, it did nothing to inhibit the German agenda of using the territory to drain Soviet resources and deport known Communists and Jews (358).

In Moscow, Stalin's earlier vow to eliminate “Jewish domination” within Soviet government and popular culture intensified. Earlier efforts to create a “Soviet Zion”²³ had been abolished with the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact (Berkhoff 70). Liquidations of Jewish members of the State and high ranking cabinets were executed. That is not to say that Stalin, or the Russian people, welcomed impending German forces with the enthusiasm of the Lithuanians. Where Stalin had previously praised Nazi Germany for their Anti-Western, Anti-Capitalist sentiments, violent and brutal Anti-German artwork, slogans, poetry, and prose appeared in heavily-circulated Soviet magazines such as *Pravda*, *Kyiv'sky*

²¹ Though were, unsurprisingly, doctored to look like accidents.

²² The violent pogroms in Slobodka, Lithuania.

²³ This refers to Stalin's early 1930s attempt to placate what he thought was a resurgence of Soviet-Jewish Zionism. By establishing an autonomous Jewish “homeland” within Soviet Russian, Stalin hoped to quash both any revolutionary or violent anti-establishment ideas. He would, however, have complete control over the Oblast's culture and politics.

Pravda and *Radian'ska Ukraina*. Soviet historian Serhy Yekelchyk refers to the surge in violent, anti-German propaganda as the “civic duty to hate” encouraged by Stalin.

Namely, that this “civic duty” was outlined by the love of the Motherland and Stalin, and hatred for the German. Headlines such as *The Strength of Our Hatred*, and *Kill The German!* Spotted many newspapers. “Let Us Avenge Ourselves without Mercy for the Blood and Ruins of Kiev!” opens a poem in the newspaper, *Radian'ska Ukraina* “...A curse on the German cannibals; death to them. Avenge the blood and sufferings of Kiev...May the enemy’s black blood flow like a river! Damnation and death to the butchers, killers of nations!..Tremble, you hostile subhumans...the Red Army is coming!” (Yekelchyk 557). These wartime poems and headlines encapsulate the spirit of an embattled Soviet people: one who is constantly united as an alleged Soviet utopia, yet separate, wary, and divisive, by ethnicity, class, and belief. It is one one that is constantly toiling for *Mother Russia*, yet left abused and destitute by her patron Son. The Soviet people can be described as one hopeful yet misguided, abused, and manipulated. Much like Nazi Germany, the Soviet state exerted complete and utter control over the fate of every citizen's future, personal, professional, love, and leisure life, alluding to the many fateful and intertwined similarities between both brutal and oppressive regimes.

Comparisons of and Similarities Between Soviet Russian and Nazi German Culture and Policy

“Today, not only in peasant homes but also in city skyscrapers, their lives alongside of the twentieth century the tenth or the thirteenth. A hundred million people use electricity...Despair has raised them to their feet fascism has given them a banner. Everything that should have been eliminated from the national organism in the form of cultural excrement in the course of the normal development of society has now come gushing out from the throat; capitalist society is puking up the undigested barbarism. Such is the physiology of National Socialism.” - Leon Trotsky

Under both the banner of *Narod* and *Das Volk*, one can conclude that Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia shared many similarities in terms of daily life, policy, and political expectations of their citizens. Although National Socialism and Soviet Communism²⁴ were, ideologically speaking, at odds, both

²⁴ For example, National Socialism in Germany was pioneered by Germany's military elite. Russia's October Revolution, on the other hand, was spearheaded primarily by peasants, cossacks, and factory workers. Granted, the pushers of the October Revolution were the Red Guard, a paramilitary force consisting mostly of the aforementioned demographics. Although both parties were meant to unite their desired demographics, both regimes had their beginnings in different social classes. To

were totalitarian, oppressive regimes that utilized violence and corruption as means of controlling, molding, leading their societies and people.

Both regimes were preoccupied with ideas of “biopolitical utopias” (as coined by German historian Michael Geyer), though the extent to which it was carried out in Nazi Germany stands in the forefront of the collective global conscience through Nazi Germany's Holocaust throughout occupied Europe. Still, to say that Stalin's regime was not guilty of similar acts of bloodshed would be disingenuous. Stalin's perceived political, governmental, and military enemies met very violent, systematic deaths, hushed by the regime.

As mentioned in the previous segment, Stalin's persecution of Soviet Jews lied in his deliberate sacking of Jewish persons from offices of power, ignoring, covering up, and belittling the persecution of Soviet Jews by invading German forces. Furthermore, Stalin exploited the Nazis as a scapegoat for atrocities actually committed by himself²⁵. Likewise, Hitler painted the Soviet peoples as subhuman, due to their allowance to be influenced by Bolshevism, which was seen as a Jewish school of thought, and thus worthy of extermination and their lands usurped through bloody, decisive, and “unavoidable” conquest.

Both societies also had state-sponsored, military terror organizations – the SS (*Schutzstaffel* or Protection Brigade) of Nazi Germany, and the NKVD (*Narodnij Kommissariat Vnuternix Del'*, or the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) of Soviet Russia. These organizations lent to the militarization of both nations and their people. Their anti-Western, anti-Capitalist values also lend to the idea that both nations were in accordance with one another as Socialist entities. However, Nazi Germany's usage of 'Socialism' alludes more to the idea of eliminating class and other societal divides, though only as a means of fashioning racial camaraderie the establishment Pan-Aryan communal

quote Leon Trotsky's work on National Socialism whilst in exile: “...the big bourgeoisie, even those who supported Hitler with money, did not consider his party theirs. The national “renaissance” leaned wholly upon the middle classes, the most backward part of the nation, the heavy ballast of history...”

²⁵ For more information on the extent to which, look up the Soviet atrocities of Katyn and Babi Yar, respectively.

dominance, as opposed to the inclusive idea of global, embittered laborers overthrowing the Bourgeoisie articulated in Soviet Russia.

Both nations also manipulated artwork, literature, and other forms of media so as to bend and influence the Nazi German and Soviet Russian peoples into more politically palatable connoisseurs of ideologically accepted art. Themes of *Rodina* and *Heimat* are invoked in their respective genres with their embodiment of *Narod* and *Volk*: usage of traditional, rustic settings, such as fields, factories, or other blue collar backdrops, were mostly accompanied by masses of people who too, were plainly-dressed (in color as well as the articles of clothing themselves), and toiling over a communal goal.



Figure 1 All For Victory! The Front of Soviet Women!

This picture invokes the image of Rodina Mat: a strong, steel-faced figure, clad in dull-hued workers garb, whose feminine features do not overshadow her solemn strength in the face of fascist adversity. Women in the war-effort were heralded alongside men as heroes of the front, and not merely treated as those left behind who were meant to pick up slack. Compare this woman to the Protagonist Anna from The Party Card, who is a factory worker and ideal Bolshevik.



Figure 2 The iconic "Motherland Calls!" poster.



Figure 3 Sister, by Maret Sansonov, 1941. This image was dedicated by Sansonov to all women on the Front. It highlights the true necessity of the above portraits calling all to fight for the Motherland, that women have places on the battlefield too, and can also personify the strength of a nation.



Figure 4 A.S. Tkachev, *Years of Hardship*, 1944.



Figure 5 Sergei Gerasimov, *The Partisan's Mother*, 1943. Notice the imposing woman who stands before Nazi soldiers without fear. Her peasant clothes are once more ill-fitting and dull, but do not completely shroud her femininity. The painting's title, *The Partisan's Mother*, demonstrates Soviet idealization of the strong woman independent of men, the ultimate Rodina Mat embodiment. Although the ideal Soviet citizen was an urban laborer, she appears to have nothing, distancing herself from any potential of being a Kulak, or someone belonging to a wealthy Russian farming minority who opposed collectivization. The demonization of Kulaks will come up in *The Party Card*.



Figure 6 Gregory Ryazhsky, The Collective-Farm Team Leader, 1932. Note how various themes and motifs are present throughout Socialist Realist artwork even prior to the war: pretty young woman who are still willing to shed their youthful femininity in the name of collective labor, even rising to take charge of it.

The above paintings are choice selections of the Socialist Realist genre between the years of 1932-1945. As demonstrated in the works selected, Soviet women were not dedicated to subservient, background positions. They are the heroes, the builders, the partisans, the soldiers, the builders, the people, Russia *herself*. One can interpret the artists' use of sepia and other subdued tones to both limit the flamboyance of the depicted proletariat, as well as embossing the imagery in dusty, dirty backdrops, i.e. in areas well labored. One must not look too deeply into Soviet Socialist Realist paintings in order

to see a genre of artwork that encapsulates Soviet Russian societal, political, and gender-oriented values.

Likewise, Nazi German artwork, too, was deliberately morphed into a political experience felt by the people. As mentioned above, the Nazi regime fascinated its inhabitants with the *Entartete Kunst*, or Degenerate Art exhibit, which featured works by artists whom the Nazi Regime deemed unfit for Aryan consumption. Artwork was to be ‘pretty’ and ‘sensual’ to, according to figures such as Joseph Goebbels and Adolf Hitler, not warped and abstract, such ‘demented’ characteristics seen as signs of Jewish and Black inferiority. Thus, the images consumed by the public were aesthetically pleasing. They also paid homage to great European genres, such as ancient Greco-Roman sculptures, and renaissance paintings.



Figure 7 Arno Breker Readiness, 1939. This sculpture, and many others like it, embodies Nazi obsession with peak Aryan condition, coupled with classic, inarguably European, aesthetic art



Figure 8 Arno Breker, Eos, 1939. Likewise, women too, are depicted in a more classically familiar sense. They too, are almost always naked, but never obscene.

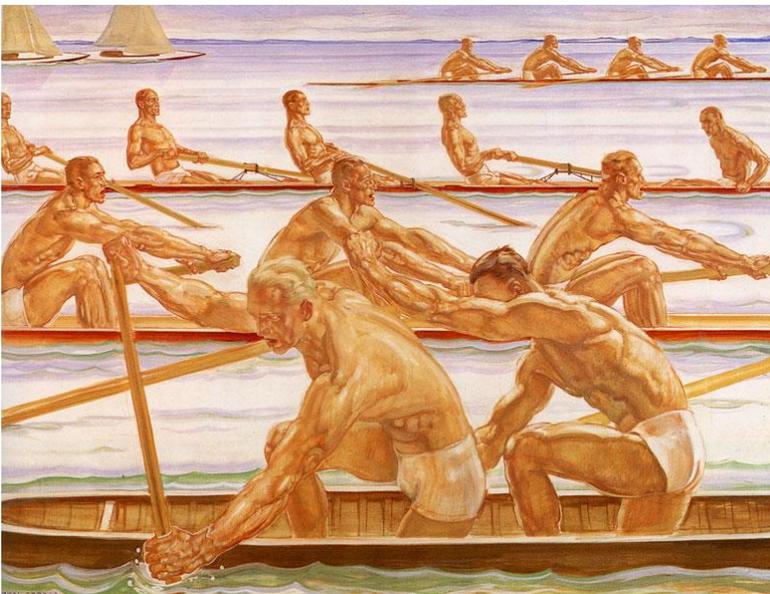


Figure 9 Albert Janesch. Water Sports. 1936.



Figure 10 Working Maidens by Leopold Schmultzer, 1940

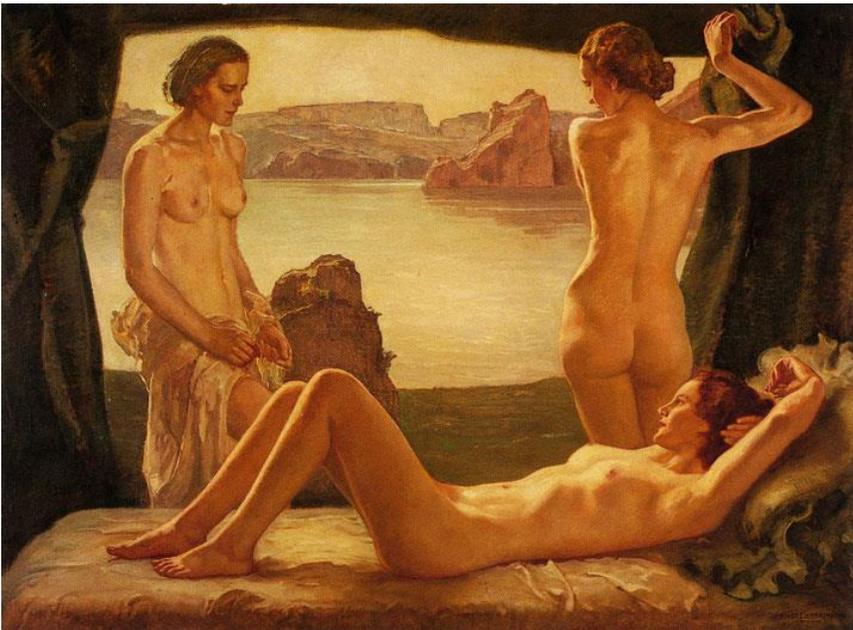


Figure 11 Ernst Liebermann, *By the Water*. Date unknown. Note the consistently leisurely depiction of women in Nazi artwork, versus the emphasis of mens' rustic physicality.

As mentioned above, Nazi German and Soviet Russian artwork mirror one another in their attempt to, literally, repaint reality in the eyes of the public. By refusing to depict certain demographics as being

either the subjects or creators of such works, they are thus eliminated from the public sphere. Both nations focused on insular imagery relevant to their respective nation (i.e. farmers in traditional Bavarian clothing, or factory workers in traditional Russian dress) meant to appeal to the working and low-income classes: laborious backdrops, plain, monochromatic clothing.

However, there are obvious differences between the morals portrayed in Nazi German and Soviet Russian artwork. As exhibited in the paintings chosen above, Russian women were not only encouraged to assume traditionally-male roles for the sake of the war effort, they were revered in such positions. Although Soviet Russia was no utopia for gender equality, portrayals of *Rodina* as being a strong and capable woman extend to her daughters, within and without propaganda. In Nazi Germany, women were expected to fulfil the typical role of motherhood. Although Nazi artwork and propaganda featured women involved with the public sphere of National Socialism (through clubs centric around racial hygiene and racial comradeship), they were still expected to be mothers and racially proper wives first and foremost. Men, on the other hand, were hyper-masculine political vehicles used to convey notions of proper manhood to German society.

Furthermore, the arts and entertainment served as a public outlet for displaying Soviet Russian or Nazi German ideals on a mass scale. Those in charge of each respective regime's cultural ministries thus understood that they controlled the eyes, minds, and hearts of the people. By controlling the media consumed, one controls the people. By controlling the people, one controls the nation. Fritz Hippler, a Nazi German director, quotes Goebbels as having believed that film had an advantage over theater, literature, and fine art: film actively engaged the subconscious, and tuned into the public spirit at a massive rate. With both regimes doing well to condition their men and women into becoming the perfect citizens through a myriad of avenues, one can quickly come to understand the decisive role cinema and entertainment further played to assimilate cultural and political values for the people. As demonstrated with the selected works of art above, media played a very valuable role doing just this

(Rentschler 23).

Chapter 3: The Role of Cinema as a Socio-Political Phenomenon in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia

“Eines Tages werden die Lügen unter ihrer eigenen Last zusammenbrechen, und die Wahrheit wird wieder triumphieren” – Joseph Goebbels

With Adolf Hitler’s swearing in as Reichskanzler in 1933, the potential of film was still a relatively uncharted medium. Genre-defining successes in Hollywood were beginning to flourish. In just thirty years, films grew from one minute nickelodeons into longer, more technically intricate adventures. Actors and actresses were no longer artists but cults of personality with large reaches of influence. Film transformed from a fleeting novelty into an intimate experience, from the conception of a film, to its crew, to its stars, to the moviegoers themselves (Rentschler 316).

Films, and the act of going to the cinemas as a working-class movie goer, turned into an entire leisure experience otherwise unrivaled in cult status. Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous chapter, stories, ideas, and concepts once forever emblazoned in paintings and portraits were now extended into multi-faceted, multimedia experiences that revolutionized the art of culture and, thus, the human experience.

Thus, in nations such as the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, film extended beyond the idea of movie stars and artists --- it was an invaluable vehicle of thought manipulation and indoctrination. In fact, Nazi cinema has been described by modern historians as “...an abject entity: its most memorable achievement is the systematic abuse of film’s formative powers in the name of mass manipulation”.

Joseph Goebbels, a prominent Nazi, confidant of Hitler, thoroughly understood the importance of film, and “...its ability to mobilize emotions and immobilize minds, to create overpowering illusions and captivate audiences.”(ii). Thus, Goebbels’s appointment as minister of propaganda for the Nazi regime proved to be a very lucrative decision in favor of the Nazis. His brainchildren, such as the book

burning of May 10th, various speeches, and public ostracizing of the Jews, were still overshadowed by his work as the minister of film. “I shall not relax until the entire film industry belongs to us,” Goebbels wrote in a 1940 diary entry, a claim he expertly challenged in his practice as minister of propaganda (Williams 141).

Film studios were state-owned and consolidated, leaving little room for interference over the film industry outside of Goebbels and his ministry. The Ufa (Universum Film AG) film studio, formed in 1917, quickly saw control under Nazi *Gleichschaltung*, or coordination, as well as the merging with three other major German studios, including radio, press, film, and administration. Other leisure indulgences, such as clubs, religious and political parties, were either liquidated or taken over by the State and reworked into state-sponsored programs, such as *Kraft Durch Freude* or the *Arbeitsdienst*.

This allowed for Goebbels to have much more intimate control over all cultural stimuli. Any organization or idea was co-opted and made palatable for mass German consumption, and meant to “spiritually guide” the country (Petley 175) content-wise. Anyone involved in the film industry were obliged to become members of the Nazi party. Those of questionable ethnic and sociopolitical origin were either stripped of their status, or, like in the case of Fritz Lang, fled Germany altogether²⁶.

Thus, those within the film industry with Hitler and Goebbels’ blessings experienced mass success. Leni Riefenstahl²⁷, an actress turned director, was not only entrusted by Hitler and Goebbels for the portrayal of Hitler’s political fanfare in her 1935 documentary *Triumph des Willens*, but her actual finished film contained cinematic techniques otherwise unused in film history at the time²⁸.

“Riefenstahl creates a unique cinema: a cinema which transfigures “real life” while apparently

²⁶ Naturally there are some cases of “Jewish” and other “racially unfit” (by Nazi standards) performers, such as Heinz Rühmann, whose first wife was Jewish, as well as remaining unpolitical despite his rampant popularity with the Nazi regime. However, such cases are the exception and not the rule.

²⁷ In addition to her infamous, though nonetheless groundbreaking and spectacular, contributions to global cinema history, it should be noted how incredulous it is that Riefenstahl wrote, directed, edited, and produced what historians and film buffs alike consider to be the most striking work of propaganda of all time.

²⁸ That are also alluded to or mimicked today in films spanning various genres and eras.

recording it; which is essentially avant-garde while ostensibly conventional; which, in short, is dedicated to the creation of grand and ultimate illusion.” (Kelman 3).

That being said, Goebbel’s Nazi German film industry was not merely one of overt Nazi symbolism and constant fanfare. Ninety percent of films made in Nazi Germany had little to no overt political content. Films with banners, swastikas, and military marches, were also amongst Goebbel’s least favourites. Film, as Goebbels felt, in order to be effective as propaganda, was still to be entertaining first and foremost. In fact, Goebbels likened cinema to a symphony, a grandiose conglomerate of very many parts playing very different and seemingly unrelated roles, that, when enjoyed together, composed a cohesive and very beautiful picture. Such was the nature of how Goebbels saw film.

Entertaining films were to be objects of escapism --- albeit encoded with ‘correct’ thought appropriate for German audiences. Still, they were to be free of overly political overtones. Political films were meant to also be just that. Most of Goebbels’ favorite films were Hollywood blockbusters, such as *Gone With the Wind*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. Hitler and Goebbels together appreciated the level of escapism non-political Nazi cinema played in placating the public. That is not to say, however, that even apolitical films were not carefully screened and engineered with a pro-German, pro-Aryan agenda.

Merely that, due to Hollywood’s “tainted” status, Goebbels understood that, in order to reach the level of success of Hollywood amongst the German people whilst simultaneously drawing them away from the “negative” influences Hollywood would impart, some films would have to sacrifice blatant political indoctrination in favor placating entertainment. Such films could be used to bombard the German public with images of what I interpret to be a “Germany to come” or “Germany as it should be”: strong men, obedient women, clean streets with a homogenous, white German community. The occasional film’s backdrop of “the war” only comes in to play so as to augment heroism or the

distance between two lovers, never truly touching upon the brutal reality under which wartime Germany would gravely suffer.

Wim Wenders once said about the Nazi regime, that...“Never before and in no other country, have images and languages been so abused unscrupulously as here, as vehicles to transmit lies” (Rentschler 54). I argue that Soviet Russia’s Ministry of Film practiced comparable methods of manipulating, censoring, and redefining reality, to an even more dire extent than Goebbels and the Nazi party. “Of all the arts,” Vladimir Lenin said at the height of the October Revolution, “...for us, the cinema is the most important.” Lenin’s acute observation would become a socio-political staple of the Soviet Regime (Taylor 43).

Although Lenin’s literacy campaigns throughout the 1920s and 30s did much to decrease illiteracy amongst the peasant and working classes in the Soviet Union,²⁹ feature films still provided the budding regime with a critical tool necessary to project political thought on the masses: the ability to convey information, ideas, themes, and thoughts, to the illiterate, uneducated, and working classes.

This should not be interpreted as Soviet films then being anti-intellectual. Soviet Russian films, while meant to appeal to the worker and the peasant, were not always produced to appeal to the lowest common denominator. Films such as *Battleship Potemkin* and directors such as Sergei Eisenstein serve as great markers of how (Soviet) Russian cinema could set the standard for global cinema.

While Hitler was known to be engaged with Nazi German film, Stalin stood as the sole authority on the Soviet Russian film industry. Boris Shyumiatsky was appointed head of Soyuzkino (Union Cinema, the Soviet Union’s premiere studio that oversaw all film produced within the nation)

²⁹ “...The number of rural mailboxes increased from 2,800 in 1913 to 64,000 in 1926 as newspaper subscriptions and the exchange of written communications substantially increased—a notable corollary of increased literacy. In unions, literacy programs were quite successful. To give one example, a campaign among railway workers led to a 99 percent literacy rate by 1924.³⁷ Similarly, in the Red Army, where literacy and education were deemed crucial to ensure that soldiers were politically engaged with its project, illiteracy rates decreased from 50 percent to only 14 percent three years later, and 8 percent one year after that. On its seventh anniversary, the army achieved a 100 percent literacy rate, an immense accomplishment, even if short-lived, as new conscripts made continual education necessary...” (Behrent 83).

by Stalin himself in 1930. Shyumiatsky, despite his high ranking status, still described his role as such: “The publication of Comrade Stalin’s pronouncements on cinema, of his most valuable instructions to the masters, is our greatest and most significant duty facing the whole country and cinema and this is a duty we must fulfil as soon as possible.” (Taylor 168). Stalin’s dictation of the standards of Soviet Cinema were so rigid, in fact, that individuals on both the artistic and political sides of the Soviet film industry grew weary and suspicious of Stalin’s constant meddling and doctoring of Soviet-made films. ““Cinema is the greatest means of mass agitation...” Stalin commented in 1924. “...The task is to take it into our own hands”. By 1938, Shyumiatsky was arrested under Stalin’s orders under suspicion of being a Fascist, and was subsequently executed³⁰ (174).

To follow Stalin’s orders, the Communist Party Congress thus executed a resolution in accordance to Stalin’s proclamation, supporting the importance of cinema as a sociopolitical tool, and mobilizer of the *Rodina*: ““Cinema must become the most powerful means of Communist enlightenment and agitation. It’s essential to draw the attention of the broad proletarian masses and of the Party and professional organizations to this.” Hundreds of projectors were erected in isolated villages across Russia throughout the 1920s (170).

Even films made according to Stalin’s liking were still scrutinized and questioned by the dictator himself. If the films were able to escape criticisms of stroking the *Rodina* with a brush that did not fit his Soviet Realist mold, he would personally alter content, from character names and titles, to entire scenes and segments of dialogue. Where Hitler’s enjoyment of cinema allowed him too, to find a sense of escapism in a non-existent Aryan wonderland, both his and Stalin’s appreciation of film came from a sense of paranoia: albeit Hitler seemingly trusted his own comrades with the ability to masterfully portray his desires and those of the Nazi party. “Comrade Stalin recommended that they

³⁰ Although Hitler was known for deliberately causing tension amongst his cabinet, so as to always solidify his centric control whilst splintering that of others, Stalin was consistently at odds with even his closest confidants, advisors, and generals.

should read more books and study our reality³¹ more closely...” Shyumiatsky claims in his 1935 diary noting Stalin’s views on cinema. “...Our films, he said, apart from the fact that they highlight enormous tasks within the country, also fulfil a great political function abroad. Once they get over there, they show our life in all its colorful diversity and what our books cannot do...” (Taylor 445).

That is not to say Stalin was not aware of the fact that Soviet audiences seeking entertainment, as opposed to constant political bombardment, inevitable; merely that he considered it repulsive, as opposed to Goebbels’s embracement of Nazi German cinematic escapism. Stalin begrudgingly concedes the following stance on Soviet films meant merely for entertainment: “You will never eradicate the foreign hackwork of the overseas films that dominate Soviet screens without yourself learning how to make films that are saturated with engaging material and that have a plot-line and heroes, whose actions the viewer has to observe and follow...with, of course, the correct political slant” (Kenez 35).

Stalin’s control of Soviet cinema was all encompassing, from issues of title, to production crew, to actors, to scenes and background props. There were still a variety of comedies and other films that gained his unabashed seal of approval. A thin line quickly appeared for Stalin’s cinematic artists, however: the issue of comedy venturing too far into the realm of satire. Nikolai Lebedev, a great director and historian of postwar Soviet cinema, noted Stalin’s diligent and “constant attention to artistic problems, his sensitive leadership and his specific assistance in the resolution of these problems” in his own publication (28).

However, Stalin’s heavy-handed control of Soviet film was directly responsible for the advancement of sound film throughout the Soviet Union, due to his belief that sound allowed politics to indoctrinate the illiterate. With religion and the written word already commandeered by the state, film

³¹ Specifically the false reality that is Socialist Realism

was the last addition to the propaganda trifecta that was Stalin's machine, and was great for conveying party values, and drumming anti German sentiment. The following films are selections of both Soviet Russian and Nazi German cinema. They are to be compared and contrasted in a variety of contexts, so as to convey the many similarities between both regimes and how they utilized film.

Chapter 4: The Usage of the People as Propaganda in Soviet Russian and Nazi German Films.

Hitler Youth Quex and The Party Card

The analysis of the films will begin with two prewar films from each nation: *Hitlerjunge Quex* (*Hitler Youth Quex*, 1933), and *Partynij Bilet* (*The Party Card*, 1936). Both films share a similar and haunting agenda: to educate the audience on issues of the party before the family. *Hitlerjunge Quex* was directed by Hans Steinhoff, a seasoned Nazi director with a lengthy list of works. Notable, however, was Baldur Von Schirach's, leader of the Nazi Youth program, the *HJ* (*Hitlerjugend* or *Hitler Youth*), involvement with the film as screenplay writer. Considering the subject matter of the film, one can see where his influence, as well as that of the novel the film was based upon, filters in to the overall production.

The film starts by introducing teenager Heini Völker³² and his family. Heini's father is a veteran of the First World War and a very staunch communist, his mother quietly apolitical and mistreated by her husband. The family resides in a communist neighbourhood of Berlin at the height of the Great Depression. Disillusioned, unemployed and violent, Mr. Völker represents the state of the Heimat of Weimar Germany³³. Domestic life for Heini and his family becomes more politically complicated, as Heini finds his communist peers to be boisterous, particularly compared to the refined, organized, and proud Hitler Youth.

³² The choice of the surname Völker, derivative of *Volk*, or the people, is certainly no coincidence. Not only does it imply that Heini's story is an every man's story, but that it is a story of the struggle of the German people, or that his struggle and sacrifice was begotten in the name of the German people.

³³ Particularly because Mr. Völker eventually becomes a Nazi sympathizer towards the film's end.

Heini begs for his father's approval to join the party, but to no avail. Heini's politically neutral mother tells him that despite his desire to please his father, he must follow his own way, to which he confesses his desire to leave the communists and join the HJ instead. Although Heini eventually earns the respect of a few Hitler Youth peers by alerting them of a communist plot to bomb their party facilities, his deed brings the communist youth leader to his family's door, enraged at Heini's actions. His mother, who fears for her son's safety, attempts to asphyxiate the family, so as to spare them from being victims of political violence.

Heini awakens in the hospital, and learns of his mother's death. Although he is surrounded by grateful and admiring youth of the HJ. Having proved his loyalty to the party, he earns himself the nickname of Quex, or quicksilver, due to his diligent devotion. Heini is naturally in poor spirits at the loss of his mother, whilst his father sits engaged with a HJ youth leader, who explains to Mr. Völker the importance of their shared German experience, Later on, his father can be seen in a bar, spouting Nazi rhetoric, obviously having undergone a political change of heart in favor of the Nazis. However, the film tragically ends with Quex posting party leaflets about the neighbourhood, when he is ambushed by dozens of communists, and murdered. Before he dies, he is discovered by his comrades, and, with his dying breath, proclaims that the flag flies before them.

1933 was an important year for the Nazi party, namely for its newly gained political victory. Goebbels thus saw *Hitlerjunge Quex* as a first-time opportunity to broadcast National Socialist ideals in cinema, to an audience now living under a victorious National Socialist regime. It is one of the few which combine blatant political ideals with fiction, rather than refusing to intermingle the two. The initial September 1933 release drew in over one million viewers.

What makes the film interesting as a work of propaganda is that “[*Hitlerjunge Quex*] focused on a human subject and transformed him into political property” (Rentschler 55). Moreover, the human subject in question is not a valiant soldier, or stalwart father, but a young boy. The film's subtitle, *Ein*

Film vom Opfergeist der Deutschen Jugend (A Film of the Sacrificial Spirit of the German Youth), implies a morbid expendability about the regime's view on the people it proclaims paramount to all other peoples on earth: 'The Flag means more than death' as the film's theme song declares multiple times throughout. Even if the last person in German falls, victory is won if the party survives. Such was the message *Hitlerjunge Quex* conveys. By officially endorsing the belief that bloodshed is inevitable and excusable in the name of National Socialism, it successfully desensitized German audiences to the regime's eventual systematic persecution of European Jews, as well as violent military campaigns that took millions of German lives by 1945.

The film also implies that the country's youth to be the ones who guide National Socialist Germany to the future. Heini Völker, who cannot be older than fourteen, demonstrates a greater bravery (as per the Nazi definition) than most adults portrayed throughout the film. As stated above, the name "Völker" is no coincidence: First and foremost, Heini and his father represent the *Heimat* and *Volk* in that they are the everyday German. This portrayal has various points of significance. Heini's father as a Berlin-born, WWI veteran, believes in the communists towards the beginning of the film. He represents the older generation of Germans. Although he was at first completely adverse to Heini's admiration of the Nazis, Heini, who represents Germany's budding, *Völkisch* youth too young to have experienced life prior to Weimar Germany, is not afraid to divert from the authority figures in his life --- family and party, and more symbolically, Germany's alleged slavery to an international Jewish conspiracy --- in order to join the HJ and stand instead for the new authority --- flag, *Volk*, and *Heimat*.

His mother's death is the symbolic death of a Germany who lived in fear of communist oppression (in that she feared her disillusioned, veteran, communist, husband, was brutalized by communist party officials, and told her son, i.e. the youth of Germany, to follow his interest in National Socialism), whose death was linked with her blessing of Heini's political defection.

At first, Mr. Völker is offended by the implication that Heini belongs with the party, rather than

his family and social class. The leader likens Heini's voluntary service to the Nazi Party to Mr. Völker's, and two million others', own voluntary service during the First World War. He further explains to Mr. Völker the significance of his own German identity, the German identity Mr. Völker fought for. Through his recognition of Heimat, and its importance over the Communist notion of social class and global class warfare, he eventually comes around to understanding the "necessity" of the Nazi party, and grows to support a National Socialist German future, which he sacrifices his son, wife, and family, to secure.

Children like Heini are meant to be the lifeblood of this new Germany, both in that they are to lead the Fatherland towards it, as well as die for it, just as the youth of the "lost generation" of WWI, spilled and sacrificed in the name of the Fatherland. It should be noted that the film does not portray any racial others. Like in the Nazi artwork, members of the Nazi party are lithe, sculpted, blonde, and attractive like classical artwork. This alludes to the Nazi Party's goal to restore Germany to a glory comparable with the great Empires of Rome and Greece. Figures like Heini's parents do not live up to Nazi ideals of perfection as representatives of a forlorn generation of Germans ready to pass the fate of the nation into the hands of the (Nazi) youth. Jewish Germans are not presented in the narrative as neither villains nor protagonists, as the film addresses internal divides within the white-German community, as opposed to external threats without. To target the Jews would not have resonated with wish fulfilment of the audience. Instead, the film glorifies Nazi promises of jobs, unity, and the elimination of social chaos. This can be read as the Nazi party deliberately selecting and grooming its audience: disenfranchised, working-class white Germans, whose allegiance may yet be torn between the Communists and the Nazis.

Any German filmgoer at the 1933 release of this film was to take away the following from the film: The Nazi party was to transcend all other personal and political convictions, so that nothing else remained but martyrs, flag bearers, and the flag itself. Additionally, with the Nazis already having been

in office eight months, *Hitlerjunge Quex* is like a celebration of the Nazi Party's roots and triumph over Communism.

What's more, Heini Völker's character was based off the real life figure Herbert Norkus, a sixteen year old Nazi Sea Scout whose similar devotion to the Nazi cause led to his subsequent violent death at the hands of communist youth. Norkus' death was thus commandeered into a political statement and party blood rite. His tragedy became a variety of books, plays, operas, and obviously, the subject of one of the first works of cinematic propaganda the Nazi party had ever produced. Moreover, after "witnessing" the spilling of a young German boy's blood spilled by Communists in the name of Nazism, it gives Nazism an image of martyrdom, of being an unlikely dream for which the people sacrificed in the name of Heimat.

Rather than using abstract images, such as runes or Swastikas to awaken Aryan comradeship, *Hitlerjunge Quex* turns Heini Völker and Herbert Norkus into personifications of *Heimat*, as well as a feature-length political advertisement. If even children, such as Heini and his comrades, are able to place their faith in the Nazis, how could any self-respecting, red-blooded, German-born Aryan support the Communists as they are depicted, compared to that of a unified, dignified Hitler youth who have little care for anything other than Germany's glory, and the party flag flying before them for eternity?

The film itself lends credence to Goebbels's valid critique of an individual film as being either a work of entertainment or propaganda, never both. The characters are one dimensional and uninteresting: there is never a scene of characterization (or even a scene period, for that matter) in which politics or political conviction is not the dominating topic. Even the apolitical mother is so only at Nazi discretion.

Heini is seemingly never concerned with school, friends, girls, his impoverished life, or any other subjects typical for a young preteen his age. Although he is politically ignorant at first, the Nazi séance awakens an interest in flags, knives, rituals, and *Volk*. He is not only portrayed as being the ideal

youth as per a National Socialist agenda, but is also depicted as being the ultimate martyr and proponent of (Nazi) German life, *Volk*, and *Heimat*. Likewise, The Hitler Youth children are polite and respectful of their surroundings (the basements they borrow for their gatherings), their fellow citizens, and, even their communist counterparts. The rowdiness of the communist adults condemns them, both in the faces of the Hitler Youth, as well as to the audience. The angle of communist adults targeting young men merely because of their beliefs allows for Nazism to paint itself as a battered victim overcoming adversity, as opposed to having been a political bully on par with communist violence.

Apart from staying true to Norkus' story, the significance of Heini's boyhood is the national message he promotes to the *Volk*: that where their fathers sacrificed themselves in the name of Germany, the young boys of Heini's day were to grow into Aryans, bound to race and nation.

The film also relies on more than just dialogue to convey its message. The only times props or peoples' physical positions are symmetrical and orderly is when the Nazis are on screen, or the scene takes place in Nazi space. Otherwise, public spaces and Heini's house are tense and disheveled, as if to say that the Nazis will bring unity, and respectable order to a ravaged Germany.

The Hitler Youth anthem, "Unser Fahne Flattert Uns Voran", or our flag flies before us, has a bar that could be interpreted in two different ways: "Und die Fahne führt uns in die Ewigkeit/Ja die Fahne is mehr als der Tod"(And the flag leads us into eternity, yes the flag is more than death). One way of interpreting these lyrics is that the flag grants its bearer belonging into a German regime that shall last an eternity, and that the flag transcends even death, i.e. that Nazi Germany is immortal. Another interpretation is that the flag grants its bearers a right to a National Socialist idea of Heaven, and that to sacrifice oneself for flag, *Heimat* and *Volk*, ideas commandeered by the party, is a glory and duty that counter any fear of death.

Figures with legacies of propaganda such as Heini Völker were not unique to the Nazi regime. Also in 1932, thirteen year old Russian Communist youth Pavlik Morozov was murdered due to his

own political dedication. Pavlik was a hot-blooded leader of the Young Pioneers, a communist youth group similar to that of the Hitler Youth, and a fervent supporter of Stalinist policies. Pavlik was disgusted with his father's anti-communist, fraudulent activities that allowed political dissidents the ability to commit various illegal acts against the state.

Morozov, again only thirteen years old, alerted the NKDV of his father's activities, who was subsequently sentenced to ten years in a gulag. Because of Pavlik's actions, the rest of the family, excluding the mother, brutally murdered him for exposing his father's actions. In the trial that resulted from Morozov's murder, the entirety of Pavlik's family --- again, excluding his mother --- were sentenced to death by firing squad (even including his younger brother, who also participated in the murder). When Morozov's mother was cross examined in the trial, she mourned her son, and spoke ill of her husband's anti-party behavior, and spoke of his alleged abuse of his family, and how she was proud of her son to have died devoted to the party.

Soviet director of *Battleship Potemkin* fame Sergei Eisenstein worked on a film dramatizing Morozov's story. The film, titled *Bezhin's Meadow*, was repeatedly re-shot and re-edited by various government officials, including Stalin himself. The editing continued until Boris Shumyatsky deemed the film to be Eisenstein's indulgent project, rather than clear and concise in message, and thus a political failure. Morozov's story was still memorialized in plays, operas, novels, and school lessons (Taylor 89).

The fact that both regimes would decide to nationally herald the stories of these hyper-engaged, politically fanatic young boys, who turned against their families and died at the odds of their devotion demonstrates how crucial both parties understood total allegiance of their nation's youth to be, especially to the point in which betrayal of the family and community is inevitable. Ivan Pryev's 1936 film *The Party Card* touches upon these exact themes.

In *The Party Card*, the viewer is introduced to Pavel Kuganov, a Siberian worker who moves to

Moscow to work in a factory, and appears honest and full of Soviet integrity. Together with his friend Anna, they laugh, sing, and joke and share a seemingly simple life, dedicated to *Rodina* and party together. Pavel, a handsome, diligent worker, and talented musician, quickly steals Anna's heart. Pavel and Anna's good friend Yasha begins to develop feelings for Anna, and implores her to see past Pavel's charm and choose him instead. Anna, however, picks Pavel.

Together with Anna's help, Pavel seemingly sheds his rural, Siberian identity and becomes a truly integrated, politically active Muscovite: he works his way well into Anna's family, is steady and solid in his position at a factory, is beloved by the local communist party chapter, and even manages to secure Anna's hand in marriage. Pavel's true colors begin to show as it becomes more and more clear that Pavel is actually an anti-communist spy. Stemming from a family of relatively wealthy farmers, or *kulaks*, Pavel's façade is revealed the night him and Anna are to consummate their marriage. In a hysterical outburst, he grips onto Anna and pridefully boasts the way he has been able to not just shed his country boy life, but transform into a Muscovite with such conviction, and fool so many³⁴. His dramatic tirade ends in a physical scuffle.

The next day, Anna realizes her party card is missing from her purse. The party card is precisely what it sounds like: a form of identification required by the communist party to be carried on ones' person at all times. When her party leader and friend, Ivanovich, realizes that her card is missing, she is chastised. Because of her carelessness, Anna stands on trial before Ivanovich and the rest of the party. He refers to her as our "oldest and most beloved comrade", and berates her seeming lack of respect for the party and her card in the next breath.

Anna is expelled from the courtroom and party. As Pavel returns to her, Anna holds him at gunpoint, aware of his subterfuge. Crying and pleading, Pavel begs for his life, asking her if she loves him, to which she says no. Before he can bludgeon her to death with a chair, NKDV agents march him

³⁴ The significance of which I will touch upon at the end of the film's summary.

out of Anna's house at gunpoint, and the camera fades as Yasha, Anna, and Ivanovich stoically watch his arrest.

It should be noted that Stalin had a direct influence over *The Party Card* at all stages of the film's development. At first, it was meant to be a love story with political undertones. However, Stalin immediately saw room for his personal improvements, and had director Ivan Pyriev instead rewrite the film entirely. Romantic themes were entirely neutralized. The film instead became a cinematic public warning that enemies of the state are everywhere, even your beloved ones, and that one can never be too trusting in regards to delicate party matters, and thus their socio-political belonging.

Party cards were instated by the government so as to be able to keep track of its millions of members, many of whom were illiterate. However, it came with a special set of privileges, such as access to special party buildings, special food rations, and other favorable perks (Kiaer 44).

This film works well in tandem with *Hitlerjunge Quex* in terms of using film to deduce the ways in which Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia utilized people as propaganda. Both films establish what it means to "belong" to the *Narod* or *Volk* (and even what it means to not belong to either). *The Party Card* as a film is a perfect example of how party ideals and values are personified in seemingly average characters with whom the audience can relate. Much like *Hitlerjunge Quex*, the characters are barely characterized outside of plot-convenient details, better fitting for their usage as propaganda, and projections of *Narod*. As if stripped of all emotion and humanity, Anna was not upset over her breached marriage --- what upset her was the fact that her husband stole her key to the communist party and got her expelled from it. She does not lament her relationship or feelings, but rather her place in the state. Although Pavel is revealed to be a spy, Pavel's complete shedding of his rural Siberian identity was so easily shed for that of an ideal Soviet Muscovite: urban, hardworking, party driven, and integrated into a Bolshevik family in what was the heart of the Soviet Union. Marriage with Anna is marriage with Moscow, with the party, with the Soviet Union.

Consider, also, the characters of Yasha, Anna, and Pavel. Both men are in their middle twenties and deliberately nearly identical, thus giving the audience no visual indicators that one is any less trustworthy than the other (which of course, emphasizes Stalin's point about being unable to trust anyone). They are working class, and wear either generic laborer clothes in browns and whites and party uniforms. Anna, who is the same age, is also a pretty woman, but never done up with jewels, make up or fancy dresses. Her hair is always plainly done, and is symbolic of her prioritizing her factory work over her own personal styling. Their working class, yet attractive, aesthetic allows for audiences to better empathize with the characters, and strive for their model life. However, it also underscores the film's argument that not all can be trusted, even those seemingly perfect, like Pavel.

These elements together project a very 'Soviet Realist' picture, with the working people standing in for one that Stalin, once again, directly requested of the film's staff, as in the original cut, Anna was supposed to be sexualized and licentious (i.e., caught alone sweaty and hot in nothing but a very form fitting shirt) (47). However, very few elements of traditionally recognizable femininity remain in Anna's character for the final cut. Although she is love struck, she often rejects Pavel's typically chivalrous advances. Furthermore, it should be noted that Anna is Pavel's key to integration. Because of her own coveted status in the party, Pavel is able to play his character, and move up as well. Thus, this further underscores the film's paranoid argument that no one is to be trusted but the party, as they come just as Pavel meant to bludgeon her to death.

Anna being a young, politically successful female, was naturally not an accident: her character could have been swapped with Pavel, who was the patriot, and Anna the double-crosser. Or the main character could have been a senior citizen of either gender. Anna's youthful femininity can be interpreted in two ways: one is the symbolic deflowering of Anna's political purity (Pavel's reveal as an enemy of the state is in the exact moment in which they were to consummate their marriage). Rather than stealing her virginity, however, he steals her party card, i.e., her political purity. The other is Anna

is a symbolic representation of *Rodina*, of the Motherland herself.

If one interprets Anna as being a characterization of Russia herself, one can interpret the film as being a warning to Soviet filmgoers that their country, a communist monolith, is strong and flourishing under Communism, but that counterrevolutionaries and enemies of the state could easily double cross and weaken the country, overthrowing its position both domestically and globally. Russian men of the *Rodina*, naturally of the Communist party, thus rush to her defense, even at her lowest moment, and save her in the end. The film had real world repercussions: party card checks were conducted of filmgoers prior to screenings, turning up worrying results in regards to who carries their cards at all times, versus who knew their card's whereabouts in the case they did not have it on them (50). Stalin's vision had thus come to pass: the Soviet public had come to not even trust their closest members in the community, lest they allow the *Rodina* to end up in the hands of the ruthless enemy.

Similarities can be drawn between both *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *The Party Card*. Both are pre-war, harrowing works of propaganda meant to swell the public into patriotic allegiance for their respective State, even if it means abandoning family and community (Heini and the loss of his mother, going against his father, and eventually dying for the party and Anna and the loss of her husband, and eventual expulsion and redemption from her local party chapter). Furthermore, both films emphasize that even at your lowest and most dire time of need --- Heini, once-communist, who lies dying, surrounded by his comrades, and Anna, whose expulsion from the party does not stop them from coming to save her from certain death by Pavel --- where family and community will not. Thirteen year old Heini cries out the Hitler Youth anthem upon his death, and laments her party status as she loses her community and husband.

Both films also clearly establish political others. In *Hitlerjunge Quex*, said "others" were more clearly established as communist and communist-sympathizers. Where enemies of Nazism in *Hitlerjunge Quex* are identifiable through their party affiliations and actions, *The Party Card's* message

is a lot direr. The Soviet every man, woman, and child's place in Soviet society is precarious so long as the party feels you to be a threat or a disgrace. The Hitler Youth are shown as an intuitive, organized, and righteously victimized in Heini's actions with both youth groups and his death. Particularly as an alternative to the supposedly unruly and bloodthirsty communists, who gang up on children as adults in numbers, and use deceit and bully tactics to discipline their members. "Others" for Anna and her fellow countrymen are everywhere, and of all backgrounds and convictions. They are disguised as the perfect Bolsheviks, as husbands and friends. Both films leave audiences with two very distinct impressions about the societies both regimes sought to create, and use the images of their own compatriots to convey them: "Our flag flies before us", and "you have lost your card, you have lost our trust". Germany's nation is yet to be built, and the Soviet dream of global unity is a nation to be guarded.

Zoya and GPU

Where the previous two films dealt internally with issues of propaganda, people, and state, the next selection of films, *Zoya (1944)* and *GPU (1943)* are wartime works whose influential purposes turn the lens of reflection toward the enemy. However, both films still use personifications of homeland and people, as well as where they fit in terms of *Heimat* and *Rodina*. The years of 1943-1944 serve as a contextual guide for understanding the basis of both films. The height of success Germany experienced in the first thirty-six months of the war is behind it. The arrangements of the already tentative Molotov-Ribbentrop pact are breached by nearly two years. Operation Barbarossa, the treaty-breaking German offensive on Soviet Russia of 1941, had failed.

Despite severe Soviet losses suffered by the USSR from 1941-1943, a Soviet counter push under the command of Soviet General Gregory Zhukov outside Leningrad (St. Petersburg) begins to turn the tide against invading German forces. As the Soviets begin recapturing strategic points outside of the great city, Soviet morale began to take a boost³⁵. As touched upon in an earlier chapter, the

³⁵ Although Soviet news outlets had often feigned the reality of the war so as to not incite panic.

Soviet people were mobilized against all things German via very bloody, violent articles and films, the deeds of the army needlessly falsified at times to promote them to a greater level of unfathomable brutality³⁶.

Likewise, German civilians at home were bombarded with images of the Bolshevik masses as being allegedly incapable of leading themselves but as needing Jewish masters. Images of the inferior Soviet *Untermenschen*, however, were saved for newsreels, political cartoons, and non-fictional documentary shorts detailing the Soviet people. The images below demonstrate how each regime portrayed the enemy nation:



Figure 12 German propaganda for an occupied Soviet audience. The placard reads, Members of the Red Army, You Go to "Free" The People? Free Yourself First Of Your Oppressors! The implications of this placard are that the Soviet Peoples are ruled and enslaved by Jewish puppeteers.

³⁶ As mentioned before, Stalin's own regime held often contradictory, no nonetheless unfavorable, views of the Jews, and thus pinned Soviet tragedies such as that of Katyn forest upon Nazi forces. German anti-Jewish thought is seemingly little emphasized in Soviet reaction to Nazi invasion, despite the Jewish population within Soviet borders.



Figure 13 To the Heroes of the Red Army - Glory! This poster depicts a Russian soldier, erect, proud, handsome, and unscathed, with Nazi paraphernalia under his heels



Figure 14 A German Anti-Soviet drawing. It depicts the Soviets as militaristically untrained, heavy handed, destructive, unrefined soldiers, with a strained and simple-minded expression. The text reads, 'Red Bayonets Against Europe, Spain: The First Victim!'



Figure 15 A Russian poster detailing Hitler, whose reflection in the mirror is that of death. This could be interpreted as Hitler being a bearer of death, or the death he will meet from his invasion of the USSR. The text reads, 'And so shall it be!'

What makes *GPU* interesting as a film is that, while there are various Soviet Dramas detailing the cruelty of invading German forces, *GPU* is the only German fictional drama with Soviet antagonists in existence³⁷. *GPU* was directed by Karl Ritter, a veteran in both a literal and figurative sense: One of the first German pilots, Ritter thus went on to be a director of various Nazi films, most of which were propaganda (among them, he was the producer of *Hitlerjunge Quex*). As a committed National Socialist and distant relative to regime-favorite Richard Wagner, Ritter's credentials as an Aryan mouthpiece for this Volk-appropriate film were well established.

The film starts in chaos, with the following quote superimposed over a black screen and

³⁷ One could say it is because the Germans were not invaded by Soviet forces, but one would still think that Nazi cinema would be rife with Anti-Soviet imagery, or at least with negative Soviet/Russian characters.

ominous music:

In all countries across the world, Bolshevism tries to perpetuate anarchy and chaos. The tools of this Bolshevik genocide are: Komintern and G.P.U.³⁸. This film shows only a portion of the countless crimes the GPU has committed throughout the Soviet Union. It also shows what the three letters stand for...

The music crescendos, and the letters dramatically transform into full words: G for *Grauen*, or Gray, P for *Panik*, or Panic, and U for *Untergang*, or Downfall. It is 1919, and a GPU commander is shown giving orders to a group of panicked, ethnic German villagers, composed predominately of women and children. He singles out an entire family, corners them, and shoots them as smoke billows. The film cuts to 1939 in Riga, and a man in a tuxedo walks down an auditorium, in which the audience sits captivated by a solo violinist. The violinist is introduced as Olga Feodorovna, a Baltic German, and the protagonist. She is introduced as apolitical and staunchly anti-communist. She is also revealed to be the surviving little girl of the family shot at the beginning of the film. As she sits devastated by the memory of that day, a woman encourages her to find out the identity of the Soviet man who massacred her family.

While Olga sets off on her quest, the film dedicates the majority of its screen time to depicting the corruption the local communist party office executes over the people. “The Russian community is extra-territorial”, commissar Nikolai warns all in his district. Nikolai embodies traits undesirable to the Nazis: his lips are thick and full, his eyes small and beady, his body is untoned, and he stands much shorter than Olga.

Meanwhile, Olga seemingly joins the local communist party chapter, though only in order to get more information on her family’s killer. The film also follows two non-German individuals who are victims of the Soviets: Irina, an Armenian secretary of a party official wrongfully thought to be a spy,

³⁸ Komintern could refer to the small rural Russian provinces in which many ethnic German Soviets lived, or to the WWI Soviet military cruiser. G.P.U. stands for one of the Soviet Union’s many secret police forces.

and Peter, a young Latvian man manipulated by the party to be an accessory of assassination, for which they try to wrongly imprison him.

Olga comes across both individuals whilst performing her duties for the party, and arranges for their escape west, to the Netherlands. Nikolai, the commissar in charge of inciting terror, is revealed to be the murderer of Olga's family, as well as a fan of her music, her colleague, and love interest. Olga helps Peter and Irina escape to Rotterdam.

Nikolai, overcome with love for Olga, reveals plans of his escape to the French coast, where he will assume a new identity and live a quiet life with her, free of politics. Olga agrees to move with him, seizing all proof of his plans, and presenting them to the party chapter. The *GPU* order a manhunt on Nikolai, and subsequently assassinate him in France. The party rewards Olga, who reveals her hatred of the *GPU* and party, having sought her revenge. Pleading for her discharge from the party, an officer laughs her off as party property. She shoots herself in the head in his office out of protest.

In the meantime, *GPU* forces had tracked down Peter and Irina. Before the two can be murdered, German planes are shown descending on Holland on May 10th, 1940, the day of Germany's invasion. The bombing that follows thus stops the interrogation, and the two are shown as being saved from the Communist menace as a result of Germany's declaration of war.

As *GPU* officers run to the cells of the prisoners, shooting them in the face in a hastened attempt to deal with them in the wake of the German invasion, Peter is able to break free, bludgeoning the officer to death with concrete blocks. He finds a passed out Irina and carries her from the cellar. The two of them, along with dozens of other *GPU* prisoners, emerge to German tanks rolling past them. The prisoners laugh and wave at the incoming German forces.

As mentioned before, the film's director, Karl Ritter, has experience with cinematic propaganda. Where *Hitlerjunge Quex* was an explicitly party-oriented endeavor, *GPU* is more a story of *Volk* than it

is a direct glorification of the Nazi Party. Olga Feodorovna is a Baltic German --- referring to an ethnic German minority living in Latvia and Estonia. The film also conveys two points to German audiences:

1. It demonstrates the necessity of their invasion of the Soviet Union (and the rest of Europe) and the alleged cruelty of the Stalinist regime. By using Baltic Germans as the victims of Soviet cruelty, rather than native Russians, Ritter could turn German audiences against the Soviets without humanizing Soviet civilians.
2. It shows German audiences that their struggle for racial survival is a global question. It also informs Germans that a Baltic German minority even exists.

The success of this film as a work of propaganda for German audiences is entirely contingent on the two points above. Ideas of *Heimat* changed drastically between *Hitlerjunge Quex* of 1933, to wartime *GPU* of 1943. *Heimat* in Pre-war Nazi Germany could be described as a nostalgic cultural memory that all Aryans shared. Its invocation in the context of the Nazis is characterized by its remembrance of Pagan Germanic rituals, as well as festivals, dances, and traditional dress. Depictions of *Heimat* usually rely on Southern German agricultural imagery, bound together with the Nazi idea of blood and soil being the fertilizer of Aryan German roots. It is from these values and soil that the Aryan German family was crafted. *Heimat* as a concept was no a homage to the idea of a homeland, but rather a politically usurped perversion, newly infused with a component of racial belonging.

While Germany luxuriated in many successful campaigns from 1939-1941, so too, did the idea of *Volk* and *Heimat* begin to shift. As German soldiers successfully began to occupy European territories, Hitler's plan for racial warfare could begin. While the regime expended many resources on the genocide of millions in occupied nations, questions also arose regarding ethnic German minorities, or otherwise passable "Aryans", and their status within the Reich. Nazi conquest surfaced issues of

Lebensraum, or living space. Hitler and his men felt entitled to the land of inferior peoples. *Heimat* was no longer confined to the German borders, and the ramifications regarding those who could and could not reside within it were growing ever harsher. While European Jews and other ethnic and political minorities were systematically exterminated, ethnic German or otherwise Aryan populations were often sent back to Germany in an attempt to “reintegrate” them into the ever growing *Heimat*, the growing global conquest for Nazi space.

Olga as a character is meant to expose German audiences to the plight of Aryan diaspora, and the need for a pan Aryan *Heimat*. Her personal tragedy suffered as an ethnic German surrounded by political and ethnic “enemies” is meant to simultaneously demonize the Soviet space from which she technically stems, serving as propaganda for the justification for Nazification of Europe in order to spare the worthy and eliminate communist tyranny along with those who are not. Therefore, her character is seemingly bland and nondescript, as she is a fictionalized approximation of ethnic German Baltic identity, and namely one taken in the interest of National Socialism. Apart from her typically Aryan appearance, desire to avenge her family’s deaths, and her talent as a violinist, she is nondescript. Nothing is elaborated upon regarding her life before the murders, her adolescence, or adulthood. There is also nothing to cue the audience into her Latvian background save her name.

She is also explicitly apolitical, save for her hatred of the GPU and communist party, both of which were actively persecuting ethnic Germans in Soviet space for decades. This is characterized in the film in the opening scene, as Nikolai and his rifle are featured in a low angle shot, shooting multiple times. The film does not establish a context for why Nikolai and his men are shooting, or the significance of whom they are shooting, save for their ethnic identities. Right away, German audiences are “attacked” by this nameless man, and thus plunged into violence. There is also a lack of German presence in the film’s Riga, a disingenuous representation of the city, given the city’s affiliation with one of the most infamous Nazi death camps of the Holocaust, operating alongside the film’s

production.

This can be interpreted as a strategic attempt by Ritter to not alienate German audiences. By stripping Olga of her Eastern European cultural nuances and indicators, she is less easily confused for being “Russian”, and is easier to imagine oneself or daughter, sister, etc. in the position of Olga --- a victim of Communist violence, whether within or without German borders. By using a beautiful, talented, young, blonde to play Olga, German audiences could also project themselves, and their families, onto her. The amount of chaos the communist Party/GPU brings to an otherwise seemingly stable (ethnic German/non Soviet) community is tragic without being over exaggerated. It also displays to German audiences the need for Nazification of Europe: had Olga had access to the Nazi party, she could have found solace in the party ready to campaign for her interests, and bring peace to the region. Instead, Soviet space without Nazi presence is presented as a bloodbath in which Aryan blood flows freely.

This is characterized in the film by Nikolai’s daunting office, in which his ceiling is never seen, and all spaces, from hallways to furniture, are narrow and tall. It gives the communists an appearance of impenetrability, and also simulates claustrophobia, literally demonstrating that there is no room to live without invading another’s personal space. This juxtaposes with Olga’s height, showing that although she is towering and radiant (she is shown as being taller than all communist officials, Nikolai in particular), she drowns in the depths of Soviet oppression. Her gaze is always drawn past the camera and the audience, as if looking for an escape that does not exist in the confines of the film. Moreover, she never makes eye contact with Nikolai.

Although Olga’s journey is a personal struggle, as opposed to Heini’s national sacrifice for the party, her story is portrayed vaguely. This way, German audiences can consider issues of German diaspora as being “Germans *like* Olga abroad”, as opposed to thousands of different people with which one is meant to identify. This is the easiest way to demonstrate to Germans that there are hundreds of

thousands of ethnic Germans like Olga suffering similar fates. Peter and Irina's characters also allude to Nazi sympathies many Baltic state countries had towards Hitler during the war, who saw them as liberators from the Soviet Union. Though Armenia fought in the war under Soviet allegiance, Hitler still maintained popularity within the nation. Alfred Von Rosenberg declared the Armenians Indo-European Aryans.

1943 was a decisive year in the Soviet Russian and Nazi German struggle for victory. While both regimes released films featuring enemy soldiers as antagonists, Olga's story only varies from that of Zoya's in both as a function of propaganda, as well as a character. Zoya being the titular character of a Soviet film produced in the same year. Both are attractive young women motivated by hatred of their respective enemies, who meet tragic ends with bravery. *Zoya* begins with the somber zoom in on the village of Petrischewo. The darkness of the village is countered by the brightness of the snow on the ground. A German soldier patrols the ruins, and captures a saboteur. Bringing them back to the Nazi stronghold in the city center, it is revealed that the saboteur is actually a woman.

This surprises the Nazi soldiers, but their brutal torture of the young woman commences. Stripped, beaten, and pummeled, elderly Russian prisoners awaiting their own sentencing watch as the young woman suffers, yet still refuses to answer Nazi questions surrounding her identity. As the soldiers repeatedly ask, "Who are you?" the film transitions to a flashback of Stalin and other party figures mourning Lenin at his funeral, then to the birth of a healthy, young Russian baby girl, whose birth certificate reveals her to be Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, the film's protagonist, and the woman in Nazi captivity. Scenes of Zoya's childhood growth begin to play, as well as her seemingly happy childhood within a proper Soviet Russian family. Scenes of factory workers, construction workers, and other laborious scenes convey the working class community Zoya's family belongs to. Even at a young age, though she is innocent and childlike, Zoya is unafraid and brave. She is shown, for example, to be fearless in the face of men when she is antagonized by boys at school, but eventually earns their

respect. The film intersperses scenes showing Zoya's fearlessness throughout her childhood, along with further scenes of parades celebrating Stalin's various political accomplishments.

A couple of years later, Zoya is shown getting inducted into the Lenin Pioneers. Asked to explain what her sash means, the red is meant to symbolize "the blood of thousands of fighters", the hammer and a sickle a signal of her "wearing her *Rodina* on her chest". As news of German invasion reaches her community, her determination to defend the Motherland crescendos. She chops off her hair and is shown leading partisans on the Eastern Front, saving many of the soldiers from a German ambush. A montage of Zoya single-handedly thwarting German war effort underscores her intrepid determination, until her eventual capture by the patrolling soldier.

Cutting back to the present, Zoya sits, awaiting her death. The whole town gathers in the village center, where a perfectly assembled gallows awaits her. In her final words, she tells her *Narod* that she is not afraid to die, that she does it with happiness for her own people and country. "Be brave, burn, beat, smash the fascists!" she screams as Germans try to silence her. As her neck snaps, mortars blast, guns fire, and planes fly overhead, with Zoya's stoic face superimposed as the film ends.

Firstly, one must understand that, like Heini in *Hitlerjunge Quex*, Zoya of Zoya was an actual Soviet young woman whose martyrdom was commandeered into a political statement by both Nazi and Soviet forces. Real life Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya was indeed a Muscovite driven to the battlefield due to her deep hatred of Fascism and Germany. Where the Zoya of the film was silent, real-life Zoya gave the German commandant the Jane Doe-like code name of "Tanya", signaling to her captors that her identity is irrelevant when there are millions of Soviet daughters like her with which to reckon. The scenes of Stalin's various accomplishments juxtaposed with moments of Zoya's childhood development implies that as the State grew older and stronger, so did she. Her parents are featured in the film, but are quickly replaced by superimposed images of Stalin and the Lenin Pioneers, suggesting the party to be her surrogate parents. This emphasizes her status as the ultimate daughter of the *Rodina*

and *Narod*, as being an all but literal daughter of Stalin.

Where films such as *GPU* focused on the violent crimes of the communist, *Zoya* stresses intellectual crimes committed by the Nazis against the world. This lends to Soviet ideas of striving to unite the world as an international working class. *Zoya*'s aversion to Nazi book burnings and censorship inspires her at a mere eight years old to read exactly those books the Nazis banned. She also closely followed newspaper articles detailing Nazi policies and diplomacy, and volunteers as a Komsomol leader on reducing illiteracy rates throughout the city. The fictional depiction of *Zoya* presents her interest in the Motherland's wellbeing through her stature in comparison to the rest of the class, as well as being more physically mature and visibly weary.

Zoya's level of influence on her classmates is demonstrated throughout the mis-en-scene of the classroom settings. The classroom represents public, and therefore mainstream, indoctrination into the proper Soviet mantra. With all children required to go to school, it is ensured that all children are properly and equally educated in the *Rodina*. The cramped space of the classroom, with students constantly bustling around the room gives way to the illusion that *Zoya*'s class is larger in size than it truly is. The constant usage of over-the-shoulder angles when filming scenes featuring *Zoya* and her classmates places the audience in the position of a fellow classmate and comrade. This implies that there are large numbers of students all across the Soviet Union, ready to take arms as properly educated members of the *Narod*.

The German invasion of Moscow is shown through a mid-shot of German planes flying in the air. The actual destruction of the city isn't shown, nor is any actual violence, apart from the destruction of the school library. The destruction of the library, the source of knowledge and the gathering point of *Zoya* and her friends, devastates the students. *Zoya*, who grows enraged that the Germans are destroying Soviet books as they had their own, explains to her classmates that happiness is no longer to be found in their shared experience as children of the state, but as fearless fighters who rise up to

defend the Motherland. Together with fellow classmates and Komosols, the students observe historical Moscow landmarks, and Zoya joins the partisans and ships to the Eastern front. With Zoya's enlistment, the audience discovers that it is the passionate drive of the citizens, from school children to factory workers, that will ensure the Motherland's defense against Nazi tyranny.

True to life is also her in-film depiction of bravely going to gallows and giving her fellow Soviets a speech on resilience. However, the reality of Zoya's death was morphed into a political statement by the Nazis: killed on November 29th, her hanging body was left in the public square for over a month. On New Years, German soldiers stabbed her decaying body with bayonets, severing her left breast from her chest before finally allowing for her burial. She was only eighteen at the time of her death.

Photos of her exhumed body were published in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda*, and served as a gruesome centerpiece of a portrait of German cruelty Soviet propaganda loved to print about their fascist enemies. Comparing and contrasting *Zoya* and *GPU* as works of propaganda meant to demonize the enemy proves very rich. Where *Zoya* shows Soviet audiences their imminent triumph over the Nazis, *GPU* shows German audiences why they should fear the Soviets, and seek to destroy them at all costs. *GPU* also depicts the Germans as heroes, both through the actions of Olga as well as the incoming Wehrmacht who symbolically end Soviet tyranny in the Netherlands (and by extension, potentially throughout all of Europe). The Red Army in *Zoya* is not depicted as a liberator. The film never glorifies elite military forces and weaponry, but rather the power of community and citizenship. The role of liberator is given to the average Soviet citizen. The *Narod* is demonstrated as being the greatest defenders of the *Rodina* there is. Hence the usage of powerful figures as measures of propaganda. Heini, Anna, Olga, and Zoya share the common theme of being unafraid to stand up to authority figures in the interest of their dedication to *homeland* and *people*.

While Communist atrocities are directly shown in *GPU*, with the active slaughter of innocents,

in *Zoya*, Nazi crimes are intellectual and damaging to property, the actual carnage taking place entirely off screen. Consider the history teacher who mourns the loss of intellectual freedom in Germany, which in turn encourages *Zoya* to read said banned books. The bombing of Russian cities is implied, never shown. In fact, the only time military weaponry is ever shown is when it features Soviet defenses. This is due to the emasculation of the German forces, who are thwarted by a solitary Russian school girl. Her subsequent hanging and desecration does not invoke fear in her countrymen, but pride and strength³⁹.

Once again, *Zoya* is hinted to, both in portrayal as well as directly through the narrator, as being a daughter of the country and of the people. Like Heini, Anna, and Olga her struggle is no longer personal, but a national memorial to remind the *Volk* and *Narod* of the faces of their compatriots and their oppressors⁴⁰. Where Heini and Anna are used as personified figures of propaganda who demonstrate to audiences the internal threats of the *Volk* and *Narod*, Olga and *Zoya* are brave women who neither falter before their enemies, even in the face of death.

Although all four films leave audiences with no question as to whom the morally upstanding figures are supposed to be, *GPU* also adds a bit moral ambiguity to Olga's character in that she uses subterfuge and sabotage to achieve her revenge. She is deceptive, manipulative, stoic, and undeveloped as a character outside of her trauma. Were it not for her family's brutal murder, one would have no reason to sympathize with or even like *Olga* as a character, apart from her status as an victim, stolen of her Aryan potential by Soviet invaders. Irina and Peter represent much more tragic and sympathetic heroes, who are grateful for Germany's advancement in Europe, and dissolution of Soviet forces. The

³⁹ This is not to say that the Soviet Union did not practice war crimes on par with Nazi Germany. As the Red Army began to push back German forces to Berlin, the absolute ruthless bloodthirst of invading Soviet forces was utterly unspeakable and comparable to Nazi war crimes in their own right.

⁴⁰ Though the question of preserving the German race, both within German borders as well as in Baltic states, adds a collective element to Olga's story. It is also a surprisingly inclusive film that shows that Communists will target all, not merely their enemies.

protagonists of *GPU* imply a need to be saved by Germany, and work to draw support of German forces abroad, the alleged saviors.

Zoya, however, is an inarguably “likeable” hero. She is a brave, bright, and proficient, even as a very young girl, using nothing but her own intrepid personality to bring out the best in her people, party, and state. Her progression to a national hero is story supported by her nature as a child, as well as her selflessness and bravery for her people. The significance of using a woman in the image of *Zoya* is more than an homage to reality. It is an embodiment of Russia herself, of the perfect depiction of a people ready to defend itself from fascism. Where Olga and Heini needed saving, *Zoya* and Anna *were* the saviors of the Motherland, and instructed the audience to be their own saviors of the Motherland.

Heimat and *Rodina* are thus politicized through the protagonists of each film, who are turned into ideological legends for the function of propaganda. Their over exaggeration of party values or interests is used to invoke cultural memory, through identity and belonging. Using cultural memory to brand a political film as more palatable for mass consumption is a basic and timeless staple that connects the present to the past with a common thread of lineage, hence its value to the Nazi party. For the Soviets, it was a rallying call of what was to come of a globalized working class.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia stand as two great memorials of twentieth-century tyranny. As citizens of a Post-Cold War world look back onto the legacy of decay and destruction left in the wake of both nations, questions of how such massive and intricately orchestrated acts of cruelty and destruction were possible, namely with the support of the people.

Although both regimes varied in ideologies and values, their recognition of the importance of propaganda as a tool of mass manipulation proves key in understanding the context in which both regimes were able to command a level of success that forever defined history.

Administrative and military records are an insightful source for beginning to understand the depth with which both regimes manipulated reality for the sake of public favor. However, the analysis of film and entertainment as forms of propaganda grant new points of insight for those who wish to understand the success behind Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. By using images of people and country to appeal to audiences composed of politically mobilized collectives obsessed with the cult of both concepts, the Nazi and the Soviet governments were able to successfully program their populations into the beliefs of party above all else, coupled with the ultimate hatred for the enemy.

The power of such propaganda coupled with Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia's mutual detestation led to the brutal deaths of millions on each side, hushed and unacknowledged war crimes, cultural, ethnic, and national complexes, war torn and disenfranchised populations. Moreover, the analyzation of such propaganda gives way to understanding the ways in which millions of each country's youth were manipulated into sacrificing themselves in the name of toxic, destructive, paranoid schools of thought. By successfully deconstructing the falsified, violent realities portrayed in the respective cinema of the regimes, one can come to understand the ways in which history decisively unfurled and has come to shape the twenty-first century.

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