

### Film Front Weimar: Representations of the First World War in German Films from the Weimar Period (1919-1933)

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FILM  
CULTURE

IN TRANSITION

# FILM FRONT WEIMAR

Representations of the First World War  
in German Films of the  
Weimar Period (1919-1933)

BERNADETTE KESTER

AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

Film Front Weimar

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**Representations of the First World War in German films  
of the Weimar period (1919-1933)**

*Bernadette Kester*

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# Contents

<b>Preface and Acknowledgements</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>11</b>
The aftermath of the First World War	11
The War Experience	12
Research into war films: film historians	16
Siegfried Kracauer	19
Cultural historians: Eksteins, Winter and Mosse	21
Carrying out the research	25
Press sources	28
Chapter arrangement	30
<b>Chapter 1: ‘Lehrreich und amüsant’ – Historical films in the period 1896-1933</b>	<b>33</b>
German film industry during the First World War	36
Bufa and Ufa	39
Screening the war	41
Film in the Weimar Republic	45
Censorship	46
The military in film	49
From relative stability to crisis	53
<b>Chapter 2: ‘Die Legende von der Unschuld’ – Films about the run-up to the war, especially 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND</b>	<b>59</b>
The Weimar Republic and the <i>Kriegsschulddebatte</i>	60
1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND	63
‘Zensur – der böse Engel’	69
Emil Ludwig and the <i>Kriegsschuldfrage</i>	71
DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO	75
Brandstifter Europas	77
Critical reception of 1914	80
Political context	82



<b>Chapter 3: ‘Das Dokumentarische gewinnt die Oberhand’</b>	
<b>– Archival footage and constructions in war films</b>	<b>87</b>
DER WELTKRIEG, an official outlook on the war	90
The beginning of the war	95
The battles of Liège, Tannenberg and the Marne River	97
The battle of Ypres, the myth of Langemarck	99
The battles at Verdun and the Somme	102
Fort Douaumont at Verdun	103
The battle at the Somme	104
SOMME and DOUAUMONT, monuments for the unknown soldier	106
TANNENBERG	112
TANNENBERG without Von Hindenburg	113
History and tragedy	115
<b>Chapter 4: ‘Wenn wir Helden wären, wären wir schon längst daheim’</b>	
<b>– Realism and anti-war tendencies in four films</b>	<b>123</b>
Literary context: war literature	123
NAMENLOSE HELDEN	125
WESTFRONT 1918	127
The war scene	131
Cinematography	134
DIE ANDERE SEITE	136
NIEMANDSLAND	141
National identities	144
The reviews	147
Comradeship, heroism and nationality	152
<b>Chapter 5: ‘Auf dem Meere, da ist der Mann noch etwas wert’</b>	
<b>– Films about the German navy during the First World War</b>	<b>161</b>
The surface ships	164
UNSERE EMDEN and KREUZER EMDEN	164
Criticism, mythologisation and intertextuality	168
SCAPA FLOW and the navy rebellion	172
The U-boat films	175
DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE and U9 WEDDIGEN	175
Critical reviews	180
DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD	181
MORGENROT	183
The press	189



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<b>Chapter 6: ‘Neid, Leid, Tränen – das ist der Krieg’</b>	
<b>– Gender and war films</b>	<b>193</b>
DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ and DEUTSCHE FRAUEN – DEUTSCHE	
TREUE	194
Motherhood and fatherland	198
Suffering and love in other war films	200
Companionship and betrayal: ICH HATT’ EINEN KAMERADEN	206
Husbands coming back home: FELDGRAU and HEIMKEHR	212
<b>Epilogue</b>	<b>219</b>
The various narratives	220
Myths	223
Critical assessment	224
Complex representations	225
<b>Notes</b>	<b>227</b>
<b>Credits Weimar War Films</b>	<b>291</b>
<b>Archives and Libraries</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>Index of names</b>	<b>319</b>
<b>Index of subjects</b>	<b>325</b>



## Preface and Acknowledgements

People have often wondered why I chose to spend so much time of intensive research on a subject so loaded with violence and human suffering. In daily life I am known as someone more interested in harmony and balance than in conflict and extremes. Maybe my fascination for historical events of violence originated from the need to understand how people can cope with such tragic and extreme experiences. War is the situation which produces the greatest upheavals in the life of individuals as well as nations. In what way do people come to terms with such devastating experiences? How have the books and films about the First World War, made in Germany, contributed to the act of coming to terms with a past so difficult to digest? A close reading of German war films made during the Weimar period and of the way these films were received might lead to answers to these questions.

A historical investigation requires years of effort and struggle with the remains of an unmanageable past, especially because this work of research involves several subdisciplines: besides film studies – film history in particular – historiography, military history and press history. Thanks to the sincere interest in the subject and the valuable criticism of a number of people with various backgrounds, it was possible to master the different angles and perspectives to complete this book.

Prof. Piet Blaas (Emeritus professor) was a great inspiration, not least because of his enthusiasm for the subject. Prof. William Uricchio (MIT and the University of Utrecht) and the participants of the seminar he instigated were a constant and stimulating influence. I also owe a great deal to Dr André van der Velden, a most critical reader and a good companion during our walks through Berlin.

I am also grateful for the valuable advice of, among others, Dr Bas Schot (University of Leiden) and Dr Annette Förster during the final phase of actually finishing the book that was first published in Dutch in 1998. I thank Prof. Thomas Elsaesser for encouraging me to publish my book in English. Last but not least, I would like to express my feelings of appreciation to the friendly people of the Bundesarchiv / Filmarchiv in Berlin where I did most of the research; they were of great help. During the periods I spent in Berlin I had the privilege to stay with Renate Assmus, who has become a dear friend.



# Introduction

## The aftermath of the First World War

'The war experience is an ultimate confirmation of the power of men to ascribe meaning and pattern to a world, even when that world seems to resist all patterning.'<sup>1</sup> This quotation from Eric John Leed's *No man's land* puts the main concern of the present study in a nutshell, that is, the problematic nature of ascribing meaning and form to an unprecedented historical experience, the experience of the First World War. It is the reflection of research into German films about the First World War that were made during the Weimar Republic.<sup>2</sup> This study will focus on cinematic representations of the catastrophe that swept the world between 1914 to 1918 and which was to have profound consequences for post-war Europe and many of its overseas colonies. This study probes the role played by the most popular medium of the twenties in coming to terms with this war. How did the cinematic imagination deal with the war and how were these efforts received by critical viewers? In addition, the present study will explore both the possibilities and the limitations of representing the First World War in cinematic form.

There are several reasons for taking Germany and German war films as the starting point for this study. All countries involved in the war were heavily weighed down by its effects, but I would like to emphasize the differences between Germany and the other warring parties. The circumstances under which people in Germany had to come to terms with the war were not only different psychologically, but also in a broad social, political and cultural sense. After all, Germany not only lost the war, but with two million dead it also suffered a higher casualty rate than all the countries involved. Furthermore, the allies put most of the blame for the war on Germany by forcing it to accept the Versailles Peace Treaty. In the years after the war, this led to what Michael Salewski has called the 'Weimarer Revisionssyndrom', that is, the collective aim, supported by government policy, to get the so-called war guilt clause in the peace treaty revised.<sup>3</sup> This war guilt clause and the resulting international pressure to pay huge reparations was considered to be humiliating and unjust by most Germans.

Germany also differed from the other European countries in other respects. When the war had just ended, a brief but violent outbreak of revolutionary fervour swept across the country, ending the old empire and ushering in the first parliamentary democracy in Germany in the form of a republic. In order to make a success of this new form of government, traditional ways of thinking as well as traditional power structures would have to be broken down. In the

end, however, those supporting the republican principles failed to gain the political influence needed to unravel old networks of aristocratic, military, economic and bureaucratic power. The seeds of anti-democratic protest and increasing political polarisation had thus already been sown in the earliest stages of the Weimar Republic. If we then consider the impact of the economic crisis that swept German society between 1919 and 1923, it is clear that the fledgling democracy was very much prone to political conflict and social turmoil.

It is an open question whether the process of coming to terms with the war was actually impeded by these circumstances. On the one hand, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that such a process could only begin under stable social conditions. On the other hand, the period between 1924 and 1929 saw such a regeneration of spirit that the Weimar period has since become known as the Golden Twenties. The late twenties were marked by an unprecedented zest for life, with the young cultural elite throwing themselves into new forms of leisure, more liberal (sexual) manners and new fashions that had mostly blown over from the United States. New developments could also be observed in the arts, architecture and design.<sup>4</sup> However, the Canadian cultural historian Modris Eksteins takes the view that this attitude often led to the repression or denial of the war, or as he puts it, 'a flight from reality'.<sup>5</sup> This would suggest that stable conditions do not by definition encourage people to come to terms with a deeply traumatic experience. Even so, both the period of stability and that of crisis saw an upsurge in cinematic representations of the war.

### **The War Experience**

Let us give some thought to the war experience itself for a moment. Besides the question how the social circumstances of the time played a role in coming to terms with the war, this of course also depends on the nature of the experience. The experience of the war was new in nearly all respects, not only because of the confrontation with the enormous casualty figures, but also because of the way the war was conducted. The offensive strategy which led to an almost static defensive line of trenches and the use of modern arms technology caused a permanent state of shock and feelings of disorientation in many of those involved. Though every war is a traumatic experience for many people, this war for the first time brought about the recognition that there was such a thing as a 'war trauma', mostly in the form of the so-called 'shell shock'.<sup>6</sup> Conditions in the trenches were indescribable. The soldiers were exposed to artillery fire for days on end, they would stand knee-deep in mud for days or even weeks surrounded by lice and rats and the stench of decomposing corpses. There were long periods of utter boredom and times when any motivation to fight

had all but disappeared completely. After all, how often were they forced to give up terrain they had conquered only just before? In recent analyses, this condition has been interpreted as a 'crisis of masculinity': 'A gender crisis ensued within the male self when the irresistible forces of conventional martial courage ran up against the unmovable object of stalemated war.'<sup>7</sup>

Some of the military men saw the exposure to danger and stress as an ultimate (virile) life experience. Men like Walter Flex and Ernst Jünger expressed this condition of euphoria and comradeship when they were still in the front lines.<sup>8</sup> Romantic notions of firm male bonding ('Männerbünde') had been popular before the war, especially in German youth movements such as the Wandervogelbewegung and the Freideutsche Jugend.<sup>9</sup> Such notions were then mostly an expression of protest and resistance against the sluggishness and materialism of middle class society. After the war, such war-glorifying ideas played an important role in the anti-democratic movement known as the 'Konservative Revolution'.<sup>10</sup>

Regardless of whether the front experience was positive or negative, it was certainly extreme. Like the positive experiences, the negative ones also found a release, people 'came to terms with them' in various cultural practices. One of these was the German cinema, and especially the war films that are the subject of this study. Before focusing on these films, it is important to consider the meaning of the term 'coming to terms' as it is used in this book.

It appears that 'coming to terms' can be understood in two different ways, namely as a psychological process, in the sense of 'overcoming something', and as the concrete expression of something in something else, for example the expression of an experience in literature, film or in a work of art. Experts agree that the one follows naturally from the other. The Dutch historian and psychologist Eelco Runia wrote that: 'People not only need to come to terms with reality in order to make it credible, but also to make it bearable' and 'narratives enable us to come to terms with events, or rather, constructing narratives that are credible to ourselves as well as to others is in fact coming to terms with events.'<sup>11</sup> This means that there has to be some form of communication, an exchange of narratives. Even though coming to terms with things is, as the Dutch sociologist Abram de Swaan writes, an individual matter, it does not take place in isolation: 'There are all kinds of notions, models, narratives available in society which someone can use in editing his life's story.'<sup>12</sup> Besides that, De Swaan continues, it is unavoidable to present this narrative 'to others, if only to see whether the structure and coherence he has found is convincing to other people'. From these remarks follows the question with which narratives and notions the German war films have played a role in coming to terms with the war. Other relevant questions concern the power of persuasion these films brought to their representation of the war and whether they brought any sense



of coherence to the fundamental incoherence of the war experience or if they left this incoherence intact.

Collective processes of 'coming to terms' can only be interpreted theoretically. The question which role war films played in this process can therefore only be answered tentatively. It is my opinion, however, based on the views of Runia and De Swaan, that this kind of research offers insight into the function German war movies had in the social and cultural process of mourning or 'coming to terms' with the war experience. By exploring the various themes, narratives, cinematographic means, film reviews and relevant contexts, we can at least arrive at some idea of the way German film culture engaged with the war experience and what notions, models, narratives and images the films offered to the public. According to De Swaan, 'even the most individual process of coming to terms with a strictly personal experience is also a form of social labour, because nobody can fully keep clear of the views and images that operate in conversation, reading or public discussion'.<sup>13</sup>

The fact that films played their part in the collective mourning process becomes clear when we consider that the earliest war movies were produced in 1925 and 1926, when Germany was still without a national war memorial. A number of these early films were labelled 'national monuments' by the critics. They saw the films as cinematic 'monuments' to the memory of the war and its casualties. In reviews of later war films, critics would often return to this memorial function, which they also claimed was in the interest of the youth.<sup>14</sup>

There is more, however. After all, some experiences are so horrible and have such drastic consequences that words and images cannot describe them afterwards. Perhaps the most convincing example of this is the problematic representation of the holocaust.<sup>15</sup> Though the First World War front experience is in many ways incomparable to the holocaust, it is relevant to ask how problematic any representation or communication of that experience was. For this reason, Hayden White considered the First World War one of the 'holocaustal events' that have occurred in this century. The extremely violent nature of such historical events complicates the process of remembering and mourning:

They cannot simply be forgotten and put out of mind, but neither can they be adequately remembered; which is to say, clearly and unambiguously identified as to their meaning and contextualized in the group memory in such a way as to reduce the shadow they cast over the group's capacities to go into its present and envision a future free of their debilitating effects.<sup>16</sup>

The problematic nature of fashioning representations of the First World War not only emerged from the war films I have studied, but also – and often even more explicitly – from reactions in the press and from censorship authorities. It

goes without saying that these are therefore indispensable sources for this study.

Modris Eksteins stresses that people may sometimes need an entirely new or different language to be able to come to terms with terrible experiences:

Traditional language and vocabulary were grossly inadequate, it seemed, to describe the trench experience. Words like courage, let alone glory and heroism, with their classical connotations, simply had no place in any accounts of what made soldiers stay and function in the trenches.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, although courage, heroism and honour were ultimately not the driving forces that allowed men to survive their stay in the trenches, these terms were used in many testimonies written after the war.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps these terms no longer carried the meaning they had before the war. In fact, processes of ascribing meaning to something are very complicated. Though a notion such as heroism lost much of its lustre, and turned out to be inadequate as a means of ascribing meaning to reality, it proved indispensable to many, precisely because of the unspeakably horrible nature of their experience. Especially nationalists, monarchists or neo-conservatives needed to make some sense of the war experience in this way. They were the inheritors of a socio-political system that considered war a legitimate means of resolving conflicts. It was absolutely unacceptable to them to declare the war devoid of meaning. That is why they refused to accept that the German army had been beaten in the field, saying the troops had been stabbed in the back by the home front. Nor did they feel Germany should bear any guilt for the outbreak of the war, and any attempts to put the blame on Germany were renounced as the so-called 'Kriegschuldlüge' or war-guilt lie. While heroism was held up to all German soldiers as a guiding principle and as a means of achieving unity, there was in actual fact no such thing. Even earlier than Eksteins, Robert Weldon Whalen had qualified the idea of heroism by introducing the notion of 'Zerrissenheit'. 'Some people become lost in the resulting chaos, others desperately search for new symbols, still others repeat the shattered old formulas ever more frantically. (...) People discover they no longer speak the same language. (...) The result is not disillusionment, but a bitterly painful sense of dissonance, of Zerrissenheit.'<sup>19</sup> This also meant that 'there was no national mythology that could explain the meaning of four long years of mass violence'.<sup>20</sup>

Whalen offers a balanced perspective from which to study the representation and description of the war experience. In spite of the crisis of meaning and the alleged indescribable and unrepresentable nature of the war experience, which in a psychological sense also implies a blocked mourning process, there have been countless attempts to describe and represent the war. This is borne out by the huge numbers of letters, diaries, poems and novels written during

and after the war. The same is true for photographs, postcard pictures and films, which were often just as penetrating in their depiction of the brutal war experience.

### **Research into war films: film historians**

The place of the war in literature, painting, monumental architecture, photography and postcard pictures has often been the subject of research.<sup>21</sup> It is therefore all the more remarkable that the German war films from the Weimar period have largely been ignored. The period itself has been studied more often than nearly any other period in German history before the Second World War.<sup>22</sup> More than thirty war films were made between 1925 and 1933. While this fact has been observed, it has never been the subject of serious study.<sup>23</sup> If war films were studied, the impression was given that only one film represented the German war experience, *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* (Lewis Milestone, 1930). The German-dubbed version of this American film created such an uproar that interest in other (German) war films was shifted to the background. The film was based on Eric Maria Remarque's bestselling novel *Im Westen nichts Neues* (1929). A survey of the reactions that *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* caused in the press, with the general public and in political circles, can be found in a book by Bärbel Schrader, which anthologizes contemporary criticism.<sup>24</sup> This study not only shows how much a (critical) film representation of the war was able to stir up emotions, even more so than the novel, but it also reveals the huge role that the war past played in cultural and political life in the Weimar Republic. In fact, the book also shows that film criticism is indispensable source material for anyone studying the social process of ascribing meaning.

This does not answer the question why so little attention has so far been given to German war films. I would like to offer a number of possible explanations and give a survey of what various authors have asserted about German World War One films. If we confine ourselves to experts in the field of film history, we see that a canon has been created in literature dealing with 'the' Weimar film. Furthermore, expressionism and social realism take up a dominant position in that canon. The first movement refers to the avant-garde of the pre-Weimar period, when expressionism in painting, graphic art, theatre and poetry soared to new heights. Only after the expressionist movement was well past its peak – many representatives of expressionist art were killed in the war – was it discovered by the film industry. The first truly expressionist film was *DAS CABINET DES DR. CALIGARI* (Robert Wiene) from 1919, one of the first films to contribute to the artistic status of the cinema.<sup>25</sup> A number of other, less extreme, expressionist films followed in its wake. Films that are generally con-

sidered to be part of this 'movement' are still an important starting point for studies dealing with film in the Weimar period.

The second 'movement' referred not so much to something that was already past its peak, but to the contemporary present. While expressionist films were mostly made during the first half of the Weimar period, most realistic films can be situated in the period from 1924-1929, the so-called stable phase of the republic.<sup>26</sup> This period has become known as *Neue Sachlichkeit* or New Objectivity. In realistic films, the emphasis was not on the characters' inner perception of their environment, as was the case in expressionist films, but on objective and concrete reality. In the first place, this meant that these films took as their subject matter various modern phenomena, including the many wrongs in contemporary society. The films dealt with the many excesses of metropolitan life, poverty, class differences and prostitution, and also with the dynamics and pulse of the big city. Images of the swinging nightlife, new fads, fashions and trends, all kinds of leisure pursuits and technological gimmicks and innovations were first introduced to a broader public in films. Secondly, some directors chose to shoot their films in a much more realistic way, regardless of their subject matter. A number of war films from this period, and from the one immediately following it (1929-1933), can also be called realistic films. Some of them are even explicitly 'documentary' in character. These films will be discussed within the context of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* phenomenon in the third chapter.

The film-historical canon for the Weimar period has thus been selected from expressionist and realist films. The decisive factors in making this selection were aesthetic criteria. This means that we know relatively much about a very small minority of all the films produced during the Weimar period, on average around two hundred every year.<sup>27</sup> Films that failed to create much sensation in an aesthetic sense, mostly box-office successes, received little attention.<sup>28</sup> As we will see, German war films are not aesthetically uninteresting in every respect, but to most film historians, they are still largely *terra incognita*.

This does not mean, however, that film history fails to offer useful perspectives from which to study the Weimar war films. The approach that exclusively studies the canon and the work of the 'great masters' meanwhile becomes outdated. Much the same is true for the approach that only focuses on the film text itself. In the seventies and eighties, studies by Robert Sklar, Garth Jowett, Robert Allen and Douglas Gomery widened the angle by putting great emphasis on the social, political and cultural contexts in which films circulated, in short, on cinema as an institution and as a cultural practice.<sup>29</sup> The standard work on classical Hollywood films by David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Janet Staiger also deliberately departs from this canonical approach.<sup>30</sup>

Studies by the above-mentioned authors and the works of Stephen Bottomore, Tom Gunning, Miriam Hansen, Charles Musser, Roberta Pearson and William Uricchio have ushered in a new approach in film history. The focus has so far mainly been on the gaps in film history, and this has resulted in extensive studies of especially the early period (1895-1917). This approach, called New Film History, shifts attention from the isolated film text itself to the context that surrounds the screening of the film. This context consists of social and cultural frameworks, and also includes the immediate contexts of cinema and programme. Early cinema was intricately tied up with entertainment such as variety shows and vaudeville.<sup>31</sup> One of the effects of this new approach has been an increase in the development of theory on various film-historical and historiographical issues.<sup>32</sup> Researchers began to study source material that had until then been neglected or ignored because it was deemed too unconventional. In addition to film criticism, programmes and reports in specialist journals, sources such as fan mail, correspondence by people involved, regulations and provisions by local authorities, insurance agencies and fire departments, advertisements, posters, postcards and building licences all contributed to the creation of a different image of this early period in film history.

Representatives of the new approach in film history no longer make the analysis of an individual film text their top priority, if only because more than half of the films from the early period have been lost. The present study charts a middle course by analysing individual films as well as discussing the various contexts to which these films refer.<sup>33</sup> My approach will be explained in detail in the final paragraph of this chapter.

The fact that German war films have rarely received detailed and serious attention does not mean that they have therefore gone unnoticed. However, books about war films in general are limited in scope and often serve to list films rather than to analyse or contextualise them.<sup>34</sup> Studies of the First World War film deal mostly with American films or anti-war movies.<sup>35</sup> Standard works usually devote no more than several paragraphs to individual German war films.<sup>36</sup> In short, there has never been that much critical interest in the thematic genre as such, and the perspective is all too often confined to the so-called 'masterpiece' or author approach. As I indicated earlier, this means that discussion has been narrowed down either to films that are thought to possess great artistic merit, or to films that are seen as important steps in the development of a director's individual and recognizable style. This is why a film such as *WESTFRONT 1918* by Georg Wilhelm Pabst, released some months ahead of its American counterpart *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*, will seldom be absent from such studies. After all, a number of his films are considered to be major representatives of the New Objectivity.<sup>37</sup>

## Siegfried Kracauer

The German critic, essayist and journalist Siegfried Kracauer is one of the best-known experts in the field of Weimar film culture. His standard work, *From Caligari to Hitler*, written during his American exile shortly after the Second World War, and based on his experience as a film journalist with the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, is unrivalled in its comprehensiveness and depth. Kracauer saw film as an important symptom of the modern age, an age marked by the all-pervasive influence of metropolitan and mass culture. With Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch, Kracauer was one of the major cultural 'seismographs' of the Weimar era.

Kracauer's intention in *From Caligari to Hitler* was to uncover what he called 'deep psychological dispositions predominant in Germany from 1918 to 1933' by means of a psychological and sociological (and impressionistic) analysis of German films.<sup>38</sup> The films were said to offer an insight into the collective mentality of the German people and also served as evidence that besides social, economical and political circumstances, psychological factors played a significant part in the rise of the Nazi regime. According to Kracauer, the fact that the Germans later turned out in massive support for National Socialism had already been foreshadowed by the themes of Weimar films.<sup>39</sup> As early as 1927, he wrote that 'the existing society is mirrored in these films' and that 'the mindless and unreal film fantasies are the Daydreams of Society, in which actual reality surfaces and repressed desires are given shape and form'.<sup>40</sup>

Kracauer gained much admiration with his approach, but he also received much criticism. The critics were concerned with his highly debatable methods of interpretation and his unclear criteria for selection. Kracauer also conducted his analysis one-dimensionally and finally from the later perspective of National Socialism, thereby assuming that he could reveal latent meanings in Weimar films as an omnipotent interpreter. No wonder that Kracauer found what he had been looking for, a strong authoritarian predisposition on the part of the German people.<sup>41</sup> Although I do not subscribe to his school of thought, I would like to mention his huge knowledge of the period and its cinematography. He also tried to interpret the meaning of the First World War films produced during the Weimar period, although he did not approach them as belonging to a 'genre'. It is therefore useful to examine his assertions on these war films.

Kracauer rightly places the war films – he mentions no more than nine in total<sup>42</sup> – in the period after 1924. He writes that this stable period of New Objectivity was a time when traditional German dispositions towards power no longer seemed to be able to cope with the democratic and republican policy principles: 'Authoritarian dispositions fell into a state of paralysis.'<sup>43</sup> Even though a

time when the democratic forces were prevailing might be seen as fertile ground for coming to terms with the war, Kracauer observes a 'widespread inner paralysis' caused by the inner collective mentality's wish to restore the authoritarian structures of the past.<sup>44</sup> According to Kracauer, this state of paralysis was mirrored in the rapid decline of artistic standards in films. After all, expressionism was then already past its peak. A number of realistic, neutral films reflect this new, objective position. Kracauer also included a number of war films in this category, among them not only the historical films that are central to this study, but also a number of broadly farcical soldier plays.<sup>45</sup> According to Kracauer, more serious war films such as *UNSERE EMDEN*, *DER WELTKRIEG* and *U9 WEDDIGEN* mirrored 'the existing paralysis of nationalistic passions'<sup>46</sup> that he saw lurking behind the false appearance of political neutrality. My analysis of critical film reviews will show that this was true only to some extent.

According to Kracauer, the intellectual climate begins to change towards a more critical position around the year 1928, when *Im Westen nichts Neues* was serialized in the *Vossische Zeitung*. It was only from 1930 onwards, however, that the true dispositions appeared: 'The German film became a battleground of conflicting inner tendencies.' This was expressed in two different types of film: those anti-authoritarian in character, such as *WESTFRONT 1918* and *NIEMANDSLAND*<sup>47</sup>, and those with more authoritarian and nationalistic tendencies, such as *BERGE IN FLAMMEN* and *MORGENROT*.<sup>48</sup> According to Kracauer, films in the latter category were ideologically far more convincing than those in the former, and in addition, they formed more of a unity. The conclusion was that the authoritarian films had contributed to the establishment of National Socialism.<sup>49</sup> The question is whether we can arrive at the same conclusion with regard to the other war films which Kracauer does not mention. Tempting though it is, wishing to interpret war films from the perspective of National Socialism is too simple and therefore ultimately also misleading.

While Kracauer attempted to show that the Weimar films had a specific meaning that could be deciphered by looking at them from the perspective of later events, my study aims to discover what different meanings were ascribed to war films at the moment when they appeared, and what role the films and the reactions they prompted played in coming to terms with the war experience. My approach may therefore be characterised as historicist and retrograde. In do not a priori consider war films to prefigure or symptomize the National Socialist era, unless the relevant film indicates as much in specific terms, or if contemporary critics characterised the films as overtly nazist. In placing the films against the specific background of the German past (and the role played by this past when the films were in circulation), I see them as cultural practices expressing the memory of the war and a historical awareness of



the war. To paraphrase Johan Huizinga's well-known definition of history, the present study tries to answer the question how, in other words, by what kind of narratives and cinematic means, the Weimar war films gave an account of the past. Since it is impossible to answer this question solely on the basis of film analysis, critical reviews from specialist film journals and daily newspapers of different political hues play a major role in this study. As indicated earlier, these texts are the only primary sources that open up the wide variety of opinion on cinematic interpretations of the war past.<sup>50</sup>

### **Cultural historians: Eksteins, Winter and Mosse**

The lack of interest in German war films cannot simply be attributed to the limited number of films that have been preserved. True enough, more than half of them are lost, but those that are still there have hardly been examined. I have defined these films as war films because of the fact that the war plays a prominent role in the narrative, in other words, the characters' actions are in large part determined by the war. 'Documentary' films are films that explicitly take the war as their starting point. This means that a film such as *FRIDERICUS REX* (1923) or any other film about a Prussian topic and the so-called mountain films, which contain latent references to the war, are here left out of consideration. My criterion for defining a film as a war film has been whether it is an explicit depiction of the war or not.

Now that we have looked at the attention film historians have given to the First World War films, the question arises whether cultural historians have actually offered a valid contribution, especially since they are slowly losing their diffidence with respect to (audio-)visual sources and have begun to engage in the study of historical representations. Three major cultural historians who have studied the war experience and the process of coming to terms with the First World War, and who have in addition given relatively much attention to post-war Germany, are Modris Eksteins (1989), George Mosse (1990) and Jay Winter (1995).<sup>51</sup> The works of these authors have been a major inspiration for the present study, especially because of their use of non-traditional sources. Even though these authors approach their subjects from different angles, they share an interest in phenomena connected to mass culture, representations that were aimed at mass audiences, the people who had no access to the written press and the (audio)visual media. This is especially true for Mosse and Winter. The work of these three cultural historians is closely connected to the recent rise in interest in the history of mentality and experience.<sup>52</sup>

The main starting point of Modris Eksteins' *Rites of Spring* (1989) is the notion that the First World War has been a decisive factor in the rise of cultural modernism and the pursuit of emancipation. Germany was the most progres-

sive country in Europe both in terms of economic modernisation and the development of art. Germany was, in Eksteins' words, 'the modernist nation par excellence'.<sup>53</sup> Eksteins also has an eye for the positive consequences of the war. In his view, the war not only put a heavy burden on society but later produced what he calls 'a celebration of life'. While Kracauer saw this period mainly as a state of escapism, paralysis and artistic decline, Eksteins emphasises the *élan vital* that was expressed in, for example, an anarchic attitude towards the existing values and norms. In the field of music, jazz became popular. The short dress became fashionable, and if women really wanted to look modern, they cut their hair in the boyish 'Bubikopf' style. Sexual etiquette became more liberal as night life for homosexuals flourished, especially in the larger cities. An increased objectivity and functionality could be observed in architecture and design (Bauhaus).<sup>54</sup> One might expect Eksteins to pay much attention to films that mirrored this vitality, or to films that caused a sensation because of their modernity. One need only think of the first German screening of Eisenstein's *BRONENOSIZ POTJOMKIN* (better known as *BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN*'), avant-garde Bauhaus experiments, Fritz Lang's *METROPOLIS* or Walter Ruttmann's *BERLIN, SYMPHONIE EINER GROSSSTADT*.<sup>55</sup>

However, Eksteins tells us nothing about these films, nor does he pay much attention to war films. This is remarkable when we read the following passage: 'If the past had become a fiction and if it all was indeed flux, then perhaps the cinema, some witnesses felt, was the only appropriate vehicle for capturing the movement to the abyss.'<sup>56</sup> Eksteins devotes one chapter to Remarque's bestseller *Im Westen nichts neues*, but the film version of the book is hardly discussed at all. He did, however, write an article about this film in 1980.<sup>57</sup> There was an upsurge in war literature in the wake of Remarque's novel and, Eksteins emphasises, also of war films, the 'war boom of 1929-1930'.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, Eksteins fails to notice that this upsurge was not confined to this period alone. On the contrary, most war films were made between the years 1926 and 1931. According to the author, the relative rise in interest in the war can be explained with reference to the confusion and disorientation troubling the generation that had grown up during the war. The war had cut this generation off from the psychological and moral ties with the home front and thus from post-war society. According to Eksteins, this made Remarque's novel 'more a comment of the post war minds, on the post war view of the war than an attempt to reconstruct the reality of the trench experience'.<sup>59</sup> I assume Eksteins meant this comment to refer also to the film version of the novel. He goes on to say that this was also true for the reviews, which reflected the post-war 'emotional and political investments'.<sup>60</sup> Although Eksteins makes some interesting observations here, it should be said that they refer especially to anti-war novels and films, which he apparently also considers to be modernist.

However, they only made out a very small percentage of the total production in this field. If Eksteins, on the basis of one anti-war novel, explains the upsurge in literature and films about the war with reference to dissatisfaction with the post-war period, how then can the majority of 'ordinary' war films and novels be explained?<sup>61</sup> Also with reference to discontent with contemporary society or to a desire for the restoration of pre-war civil society? Perhaps. It is more likely, however, that things are more complicated than that, as the present study aims to show. Considering the Weimar period mainly from a modernist perspective leads to one-sided conclusions. In addition, Weimar Germany was troubled by deep divisions, and the 'modern' and the traditional co-existed in a precarious balance.<sup>62</sup>

Jay Winter tries to restore that balance in his book *Sites of memory, sites of mourning* (1995). He dismisses the kind of approach represented by Eksteins. While in Eksteins' view, the First World War is a fraction that paved the way for a new era characterised by a modernist language of forms, 'Traditional modes of expression – words, pictures, even music – were inadequate in this situation'<sup>63</sup>, Winter defends the idea that the war did not constitute a completely new departure. 'The overlap of languages and approaches between the old and the new, the "traditional" and the "modern", the conservative and the iconoclast, was apparent both during and after the war.'<sup>64</sup> As a result of his study of ways of mourning for war victims during the interbellum, Winter arrives at the conclusion that precisely the traditional, religious and romantic language of forms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were used in the mourning process.<sup>65</sup> This is not only true for prose, poetry and various social practices, but also for visual expressions such as painting, posters and films. War films practised historical mystification by means of a 'sanitisation of the worst features of the war and its presentation as a mythical or romantic adventure.'<sup>66</sup> Some films tried to show the opposite, such as *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*, *WESTFRONT 1918* and *VERDUN*, *VISION D'HISTOIRE*, but Winter rightly states that these films belonged to a very small minority.<sup>67</sup> In his analysis of several (non-German) war films, Winter confines himself to the theme of the 'symbolic' return of the dead, a theme which runs like a thread through his entire study.<sup>68</sup> Winter's approach offers a correction to the dominant modernist perspective. The meaning of his approach for the present study lies in the question to what extent the war films use traditional symbols and images, and to what extent they can be seen as modernist representations. In addition, I do not exclusively associate modernism with anti-war films, as Eksteins and Winter do in an implicit way.

George Mosse, in his book *Fallen Soldiers* (1990) also confirms that there was mystification and mythologising. According to Mosse, the confrontation with the mass slaughter of the First World War, especially on the western front, has

been the most important and drastic experience. Combined with modern weapons technology and new means of communication, this brought a whole new dimension to the practice of warfare. According to Mosse, people not only revisited the horror in trying to come to terms with this experience, but feelings of patriotism and glory sometimes played an even bigger part.<sup>69</sup>

For some people, it was an absolute necessity to invest the war with some positive meaning and purpose. The idea that all the suffering had been for nothing was simply unbearable. The horrible reality of the war was therefore 'transformed into what one might call the Myth of the War Experience, which looked back upon the war as a meaningful and even sacred event'.<sup>70</sup> This myth, which according to Mosse had been created by young war volunteers, fell on fertile ground in defeated Germany, and played an important role in post-war politics.<sup>71</sup> The war experience was mythologised into an idealised and religious experience, complete with its own 'acts of worship' in the form of memorial services and images of martyrdom, heroism and comradeship.<sup>72</sup> Symbols taken from Christianity and nature (mountains, forests, the arch of heaven) were dominant references in the representation of this myth.<sup>73</sup> Mosse not only focuses on cultural practices such as the monument-building and tourist excursions to places at the former front and war cemeteries, but also on seemingly trivial things like picture postcards, kitsch and children's toys.<sup>74</sup> With his views on the construction of this myth, Mosse emphasises a sense of unity which authors like Weldon Whalen, Eksteins, Hynes and Winter have tried to nuance.

Mosse discusses the post war film in only a few paragraphs, concentrating mainly on Germany. He only indirectly mentions the fact that relatively many war films were produced in the second half of the Weimar period. This is hardly surprising, because Mosse's account is based on literature from 1927 (Hans Buchner, *Im Banner des Films*).<sup>75</sup> From this source also derives Mosse's statement that 'German war films at the end of the 1920's have been called singularly realistic', after which he goes on to quote Buchner: 'Soldiers fall before our eyes and writhe in the agony of death, the faces of deadly wounded young men show their pain.' Buchner must have referred to the Austrian war film *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* or the first part of *DER WELTKRIEG*, for other German war films that showed such images were hardly made before 1929. Mosse does, however, consider the genre of the so-called mountain films as surrogate war films because they 'glorified the national image of combative manliness'.<sup>76</sup> This new masculinity plays a central role in Mosse's 'Myth of the War Experience'. Needless to say that images of the new and youthful male hero and warrior, so attractive to the right, continued to fulfil their function under the Nazi regime.<sup>77</sup> Though the similarities between Mosse and Winter are obvious, their interest in religious symbols for example, Mosse considers the myth mainly in

the context of right-wing nationalism, while Winter gives more attention to the everyday practice and the more artistic expressions of mourning. Mosse emphasizes the heroism, while Winter stresses the suffering that has been caused. Both are far removed from Eksteins' notion that traditional language and imagery are inadequate means for conveying and coming to terms with the experience of modern warfare.

Despite the many differences in approach that are apparent in the literature discussed here, the three authors agree on the central notion that representations of the war were not only problematic, but seemed almost impossible in essence. It is true that traditional symbols, myths and fictions fulfilled their functions, but they also stood in contrast to the modern experience of warfare, which was dominated by disorientation, fragmentation, deafening noise and chaos. These 'features' are generally associated with modernist art and literature. The question whether, and if so, how, both traditional and avant-garde aspects functioned in the post-war German war films is not answered by these authors, and the examples of the films they mention can certainly not be called representative.

### **Carrying out the research**

Within the historical context outlined above, the present study aims to answer three main questions. In the first place, which narrative forms and cinematographical means do the selected films use to represent the war experience? Secondly, how did the critics react to the war films? Thirdly, on the basis of the cinematic representations of the war and the reactions they received, what can be said about the process of coming to terms with the war?

These questions will be discussed specifically in each chapter. Two central topics for research emerge from them: the films themselves and the critical reviews (and more generally, the written texts about the films). It is my aim to discover what meanings the war has generated through these texts by describing and analysing the films and the reviews. It is true that studying the specifically cinematic production of meaning is my central concern, but in order to understand its function within a broader social context, this production of meaning cannot be considered independently from reactions in the press. On their part, films and criticism cannot be assumed to exist outside socio-cultural practices.

Another part of the analysis concerns the way the stories are told and the cinematic means that are used, although these cannot be seen apart from each other. This does not imply that my discussion involves a detailed analysis of things such as camera positions, editing and *mise en scène*. My cinematographical analysis focuses on the historiographical means of representation; in

other words, the attempts made in the films to get as close to the past as possible, especially where the battlefield scenes are concerned. With regard to the selection of films, I would like to make the following remark. While this study is concerned with German war films made in the Weimar period, most but not all films from the period will be discussed. The first objective was to make an analysis of the specific way German war films approach the past, not completeness. For war films that are not discussed in these chapters, I refer to the appendix that lists the credits.<sup>78</sup> The omission of several German films is balanced by the inclusion of two Austrian films, *BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS* and *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*. They offer an interesting view on German war history, and were both released and reviewed in Germany.

A second limitation has to do with the fact that some of the films discussed in this study have been lost. That is why some analyses have been confined to the narrative of the film as paraphrased in programmes and reviews.

One way of researching the special role played by war films in coming to terms with the war is comparing them with what was written about the war in novels of the time. This would cause the research to lean over to the literary field – more than two hundred war novels, memoirs and so on appeared between 1928 and 1932 – and create an overlap with existing research on the subject.<sup>79</sup> Instead, I have only drawn on literature in a strictly intertextual sense, i.e. novels that served as the starting points for the relevant war films.

The literary context is only one of many referred to by the films. Studying the relationships between films and their social contexts is more problematic than one would suspect at first glance. Projecting socio-cultural developments, trends or events onto story contents or cinematographic features of individual films may all too often lead to highly speculative conclusions, as we have seen with Kracauer.<sup>80</sup> It is much better to think of the films as being grouped around one particular theme and having been produced in roughly the same period. In this way, the films can be considered as representing a theme that was of topical interest at the time. This applies to the films that are central to this study, but it does not solve the problem of what they actually mean. We will get some idea of how the war past was perceived at a certain moment, or how the war past should be perceived, but this does not tell us what role the films played in coming to terms with the war, nor how they functioned in the broader social contexts. The contexts of the films are therefore approached as follows: on the one hand, my research draws on data about the realisation of the films; on the other hand, it involves written texts about the films, such as advertisements, critiques and other reviews. Information about the realisation of the films has been gleaned from specialist journals, advertisements and some of the critical reviews. The latter category of written texts in-

cludes a representative selection of articles from the daily press. The main consideration was using source material that was accessible to the general public. Such material would also give some idea of the sources that influenced the perceptions or opinions of the cinema-going public. Since there is hardly any source material about concrete audience reactions, we have to make do with the response of only a very select part of the audience, the representatives of the press. In addition, there are hardly any specific data on the numbers of people who came to see these films, nor do we know exactly how long these films ran in the cinemas. However, some indication of the popularity of the films exists, because lists of the most popular films of a given year were published in the specialist film journals.

I consider the critics that I base myself on to belong to the 'interpretative community', people who contribute to the formation of public opinion.<sup>81</sup> Just as politicians, intellectuals, teachers and clergymen represent authority and influence our world views, critics mould and shape opinion within a cultural practice such as the cinema. They stimulate their readers to form an opinion by arguing for or against a particular film and ascribing a certain value to it, and they also help to establish a certain image about the medium of film in general. Just as importantly, the critical reviews also contain direct or indirect comments on social developments. Such direct references to any text outside the film, such as a book, another film, or a contemporary or historical event, are part of my analysis. In this way, the films are not only placed in a certain context by the opinion leaders of the day, but also by me.

Contemporary critics often reviewed films or gave social comment from a political or ideological angle, since most of the press were aligned to certain political parties. The scope for interpreting the war past, its consequences and the way it could be represented as defined by the ideological positions taken up by the parties: communist, social democratic, left-wing or right-wing liberal, confessional, monarchist or National Socialist. In 1930, someone cynically portrayed a film critic thus: 'He does not judge according to his own feelings, but according to the leanings of his newspaper. He does not write his own opinion, but that of his editors. He does not consider what he has seen, but he takes the interests and connections of his publisher into consideration.'<sup>82</sup> By opting for a broad ideological spectrum I have tried to lend a platform to a wide range of different or even conflicting 'voices' commenting on the war and its cinematic representation. By close-reading the reviews, I have tried to bring the arguments, emotions and the associations with regard to the war itself and the films to the surface. My goal was finding out how the images of war were perceived and for what reason certain films or sequences of film were either rejected or accepted, booed or cheered.



## Press sources

The various 'voices of the press' which are discussed in this study cover the political spectrum from the communist left to the National Socialist right. On the extreme left wing, I have chosen *Die Rote Fahne* (1918-1933) and *Die Welt Am Abend* (1926-1933), published by Willi Münzenberg. While the former was the party newspaper for the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, the latter was connected to the Internationale Arbeiterhilfe – the Leninist Münzenberg had been connected to the Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands or USPD, which disbanded in 1922. The difference between the two newspapers was not so great in strictly political terms, but while *Die Rote Fahne* clearly presented itself as a propagandist party paper, the illustrated magazine *Die Welt am Abend* tried to gain a large critical and leftist readership by including long and detailed reports about sports and sensational events. The tone of voice used in *Die Welt am Abend* was therefore less dogmatic and shrill than that of *Die Rote Fahne*. The fact that the latter could not always serve as source material has to do with the many bans and restrictions it had to endure: in total, more than one thousand issues of *Die Rote Fahne* never saw the light of day.<sup>83</sup> Needless to say perhaps that the views of these papers with regard to film tied in with their political positions. *Die Rote Fahne* saw the medium mainly as a means of political education and propaganda<sup>84</sup>, while the less orthodox *Die Welt am Abend* reviewed a broader range of films, mainly in terms of their political connotations but also in terms of aesthetic merits. On the whole, film aesthetics received more attention in papers that were less progressively orientated.<sup>85</sup> Ties between the two communist publications were strengthened after 1928, when *Die Welt am Abend* was issued as an evening supplement to *Die Rote Fahne*.

The social democratic *Vorwärts* (1891-1933) was the main party paper for the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) and saw as its task defending the social democratic and republican ideas. In 1929, a *Vorwärts* editor wrote: 'We fight the film industry, because it consciously or unconsciously, openly or covertly, seeks to deride, discredit and undermine the republican form of government and wishes to hinder the international politics of reconciliation between the peoples.'<sup>86</sup>

The leftist liberal press also belongs to the democratic end of the political spectrum. In the present study, it is represented by the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* (1868-1934)<sup>87</sup>, the *Vossische Zeitung* (1775-1934), the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the *Berliner Morgenpost* (1900-1945) and the *Berliner Tageblatt* (1906-1939). These newspapers were not so much aligned to any particular party, but they had loose affiliations with the political orientation represented by the Deutsche Demokratische Partei (DDP).<sup>88</sup> While there was often no sign of commitment

to democratic principle on the part of right-wing or national-liberal parties such as the Deutsche Volkspartei (DVP), the left-wing liberal papers were committed defenders of the republic. However, they also had their own identities and readerships. The *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, *Berliner Morgenpost* and *Berliner Tageblatt* were popular newspapers with a high circulation, bringing local news for readers in the capital.<sup>89</sup> The well-respected *Vossische Zeitung* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, published in Frankfurt am Main, were slightly more moderate and focused on 'Bildung'. This attitude tied in with the view on film represented by the DDP that it could serve as a 'demokratisches Bildungsmittel'<sup>90</sup> or means of democratic education. Though the specialist film journals were officially unrelated to political ideologies, there were some differences between them. Politically speaking, *Lichtbildbühne* and the *Filmkurier* stood somewhere between the social democrats and left-wing liberals.<sup>91</sup>

On the right side of the spectrum, there was the national or right-wing liberal *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (1918-1945) which had been led under this name by the industrialist Hugo Stinnes since 1918. This newspaper was politically aligned to Gustav Stresemann's Deutsche Volkspartei (DVP).<sup>92</sup> The paper was generally seen as a mouthpiece for the Foreign Ministry, whose head was Gustav Stresemann. As far as the medium of film was concerned, the newspaper offered a word of warning. Cinemas should not just show 'kitsch films' but stimulate the medium's potential for education by showing so-called 'Kulturfilme' and historical films that illuminated the country's past, such as those about Frederick the Great (see chapter 1).<sup>93</sup> The industry-sponsored specialist film journal *Der Kinematograph* can also be placed in this political category, just like the more neutral organ of cinema-owners, the *Reichsfilmblatt* (1923) and *Der Film* (1916). The *Kinematograph* was clearly aligned to a particular political position, since it was published by the Scherlverlag owned by Alfred Hugenberg, the later owner of the Ufa film production company. The conservative tendencies in most film reviews are obvious.

The two confessional newspapers included in this study charted a conservative yet democratic course, the catholic *Germania* (1870-1937) and the protestant *Der Deutsche* (1921-1935). *Germania* had strong links with the catholic Zentrum party, which saw film as a medium for education, especially in the international political and cultural arena: 'With its help we can have a clarifying, propagandising and persuasive effect on other countries in order to convince them of the notion of Germany's spiritual and cultural standing in the world.'<sup>94</sup> *Der Deutsche* served as the Christian trade union's organ.<sup>95</sup>

Finally, the following newspapers can be situated on the far right of the political spectrum: the monarchist (*Neue Preussische*) *Kreuz-Zeitung* (1848-1939), the *Deutsche Zeitung* (1896-1934), the Scherl/Hugenberg newspapers *Der Tag* (1900-1934), the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* (1916-1944) and its weekly supplement

*Der Montag*.<sup>96</sup> All these newspapers were extremely nationalist and anti-republican. Politically, they were aligned with the Deutschnationale Volkspartei (DNVP). The *Deutsche Zeitung* was also the mouthpiece for the Alldeutscher Verband, a nationalist movement of industrialists of which Alfred Hugenberg was a member. Hugenberg became chairman of the DNVP in 1928. The *Kreuz-Zeitung* was taken over by the association of war veterans, Stahlhelm. With respect to the medium of film, a DNVP representative put forward that film should fulfil a 'national mission'. The idea was not so much to present films with a clear political tendency to the audience, but to contribute to the following aims: 'It is our generations' mission to reunite and bind together the German people, which has been fragmented into all kinds of different political groups and mavericks.'<sup>97</sup>

The group of right-wing newspapers also includes the National Socialist dailies the *Völkischer Beobachter* (1921-1945) and *Der Angriff* (1927-1945), which was published under the supervision of Joseph Goebbels.<sup>98</sup> Both newspapers were aligned to the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) and represent the 'völkische' or pan-germanic, nationalist, racist and anti-Semitic strains which could also be found in other parties on the extreme right. In contrast to those parties, however, the NSDAP managed to appeal to large parts of the population and grow into a mass movement. But whatever their political differences, the National Socialist newspapers used the same shrill jargon as the communists, and they also saw the medium of film primarily as a propaganda instrument to be used for political manipulation.

### Chapter arrangement

This book has been set up thematically, which enables me to study how different directors captured certain aspects of the war, and if and how a cinematic approach of the same theme changed over time. It is very interesting to compare a navy film such as *UNSERE EMDEN* from 1926 with the remake done in 1932, *KREUZER EMDEN*, however short the intervening six years may seem. The Weimar Republic was subject to major changes in these years. The same is true for the press reactions to both films. During that period, the films and the critical reviews not only prompted discussions about the war, but also about the time in which they were made, the Weimar period. This is why the chapters also address issues such as the war debt, national historiography, memorial services, war monuments, rearmament, the rise of war literature and other issues that are associated with the films.

As was said earlier, the chapters in this book have been arranged thematically. The themes relate to specific aspects of the war. However, this principle of thematic arrangement is not entirely unequivocal. After a chapter that sur-

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veys the first three decades of German film history, with a strong emphasis on historical films, the following chapters discuss the films that have been researched for this project. The second chapter deals with films that represent the run-up to the war, and the third chapter discusses the 'war documentaries'. Since two of those documentaries give a filmed account of the entire war, the history of the war is shown predominantly from a German perspective. The other chapters follow a less chronological order. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with films that are tied to specific locations, films that are set on the mainland and films where the action takes place at sea. The final chapter deals with the issue of gender in war films by discussing the representation of the home front and the images of femininity and masculinity that the war films construct. The study closes with a concluding epilogue.



# I 'Lehrreich und amüsant'<sup>1</sup>

## Historical films in the period 1896-1933

For a long time, the historiography of German cinema, understood as a complex entity of industry, films, audience and criticism, has been oriented mostly towards the years following the First World War. General studies begin with a description of the first German film screenings, only to make a carefree jump across two decades to the 1920s, a period in which film as art was said to have flourished. Gradually, this historical gap is being closed. Attention to early film has increased enormously since the famous 1978 FIAF conference in Brighton, and it has not passed by German film historians either. In the meantime, several interesting studies have appeared dealing with the first two decades of German film history.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, at least two countries in Europe pioneered the development of the film medium. The French Lumière brothers created a furore with their cinematograph, while in Germany, the brothers Max and Emil Skladanowsky stole the (variety) show with a presentation of film images recorded and projected with a home-made device, the so-called Bioskop. Their first public presentation took place in Berlin's Wintergarten on 1 November 1895. The programme, typically consisting of a series of short alternating segments, would influence the design of cinema programmes for years to come.<sup>3</sup> However, in the early years of the new medium, film was also distributed by the so-called Wanderkino operating mainly on fairs and similar festivities. Under the caption 'Neu! Neu! Das Bioskop, die interessanteste Findung der Neuzeit', a Berlin daily described the first experience with the new medium as 'lehrreich und amüsant' – educational and entertaining.<sup>4</sup> In the next few decades, the cinema would move between the two poles, education/entertainment and politics/art. Various social institutions such as religion, education and politics would unleash fierce discussions about the potentially negative and/or positive uses of the film medium.

The presentation of film programmes typically consisting of ten or more very short films about a variety of subjects – such as music, acrobatics, sports, current affairs, drama and humour – drew mixed crowds. Contrary to what has long been assumed, it was not only the lower social classes who were fascinated by film presentations. With the exception of the university-educated 'Bildungsbürgertum', the composition of the audience was rather diverse, also in terms of sex and age.<sup>5</sup> Even the German Kaiser himself was a film enthusi-

ast, especially when he could appear before the camera himself.<sup>6</sup> This meant that film could, to a certain extent, count on a good press.

The 'Wanderkino' phenomenon of travelling 'Bioskope' changed in terms of dimension as well as nature from 1906 onwards. More and more so-called 'Ladenkinos' opened their doors in former shops, cafes and houses, creating serious competition for the 'Wanderkino'.<sup>7</sup> This competition ultimately became an important factor in the establishment of the big 'Kinopaläste', the first of which, the Union-Theater, was opened at Berlin's Alexanderplatz in 1909.

The change of cinema space was accompanied by other developments. From 1910 onwards, the running time of films increased and the narrative structure became more complex. So far, the technological aspect of cinema had been an important novelty attraction and the images actually showed something rather than telling a story. Now, the 'Erzählkino' era began.<sup>8</sup> Story, suspense and film stardom played an increasingly central role. Also, the composition of the audience gradually began to include middle-class spectators. Screen adaptations of works of literature, plays and important historical events – often defined as 'Autorenfilme' meant that even for the middle class, a visit to the cinema became a legitimate leisure activity. This was one of the beat-them-if-you-cannot-join-them strategies used by opponents of the medium – united in the 'Reformbewegung' – to transform the cinema into a respectable cultural practice.<sup>9</sup> Despite these efforts, however, the cinema kept the stigma of being a proletarian and immoral institute for a long time.

The fact that screening spaces became ever larger, narratives more exciting and complex, and audiences more sophisticated, was not really due to the German film productions themselves. On the eve of the First World War, only around fifteen percent of cinema screenings on offer consisted of German films.<sup>10</sup> The other films that were screened came mainly from America, France, Italy, Denmark, and Great Britain. Especially the French film industry operated expansively. From 1908 onwards, production companies such as Pathé Frères, Gaumont and Éclair gained a dominant position within the German cinema circuit.<sup>11</sup> They lost this position during the First World War, when film exports were curbed. Another strong foreign competitor was Nordisk from Denmark which, because of its neutral status, was allowed to continue wartime exports to Germany.<sup>12</sup> Germany owes one of its major stars to the Nordisk company: Asta Nielsen gained such widespread popularity that she became the country's biggest star next to German diva Henny Porten.

The fact that Germany's film industry at first lagged behind the film industry of its French neighbours was due to the lack of enthusiasm on the part of German banks to invest in this young industry. Because of the limited prospect of sound developments in the future, German banks had strong reservations about the relatively new medium. This did not mean that production compa-

nies lacked capital, but in the first decades the development of new technology received the lion's share of investments.<sup>13</sup> In 1912, a total of seven companies were involved in the production of motion pictures, six of them operating in Berlin.<sup>14</sup> One of the best known film producers was Messter Projektion led by Oskar Messter.<sup>15</sup> He not only produced films, but his studio in Berlin's Friedrichstrasse was also a workshop where he carried out important technical experiments. After Pathé and Gaumont had already established their reputation as newsreel producers, Messter also successfully ventured into this territory. Still during the first decade of the twentieth century the German film industry was hardly able to compete with foreign film production.<sup>16</sup> German film industry did not take off until after 1911, with films starring, among others, Asta Nielsen.

From 1915 onwards, when narrative structure and aesthetics became more complex in films, the discourse about cinema changed, too. So far, the medium had received most of the attention from the daily press and some theatre periodicals, the former usually using a condescending and unprofessional tone. There was hardly any serious criticism. Most film reports were concerned with the design and make-up of the theatre, with technical innovations or with the alleged perverse influence of cinema attendance rather than with the film itself or its aesthetic qualities. More often than not, these reports were nothing more than recommendations to go and see the film. Also, with a weekly average of five hundred premieres, there could hardly be any question of individual film reviews.<sup>17</sup>

The first instance of a serious film review practice came with the establishment of a number of specialist periodicals, *Der Kinematograph* (1907), the *Erste Internationale Film-Zeitung* (1908) and *Lichtbildbühne* (1908).<sup>18</sup> The first and latter remained influential for a long time, while the *Film-Zeitung* was already shut down in 1920. Other important specialist periodicals that appeared after the First World War were *Film-Kurier*, *Reichsfilmblatt* and *Der Film*. These periodicals covered news and had critical reviews on production companies, economic and technical developments, problems of censorship and matters of an organisational nature. In a word, they are important sources for film-historical research.

The 1913 breakthrough in film criticism was partly due to the emergence of the so-called 'Autorenfilme'.<sup>19</sup> At this time, there were some twelve specialist periodicals on the market, and the daily press also began to take more interest in the medium.<sup>20</sup> However, truly professional film criticism written by specialised critics only appeared in the 1920s. In the years preceding this professionalisation, it was normal practice for periodicals and dailies to send their theatre critics or any other interested journalists to the cinema to deal with the step-



child of culture which the medium still was. The process of professionalisation was at first slowed down by the war, but later, reviews were produced that amounted to more than simply a description of the contents of the film. Films were increasingly judged on their own merits and, not surprisingly, the nineteen-twenties saw the emergence of the first theories on functions, objectives and aesthetic possibilities and limitations of film, in a word about the 'essence' of the medium. Some critics, including Rudolf Arnheim, Siegfried Kracauer, Bela Balasz, Herbert Ihering (who was also a theatre critic), Lotte Eisner, Willy Haas, Hans Sahl, Erich Kästner, and Alfred Kerr gained a certain degree of fame.<sup>21</sup> With the exception of Ihering and Kracauer, these were not the critics who would shine their light on the war films of the Weimar period – simply because they hardly wrote about these films – but less famous ones like Ernst Jäger and Georg Herzberg (*Film-Kurier*), Ernst and Hans Wollenberg (*Lichtbildbühne*), Hans-Walther Betz (*Der Film*), Kurt Kersten, (*Welt am Abend*), Heinz Pol, (*Vossische Zeitung*), Walter Redmann (*Berliner Morgenpost*), Erwin Gephard (*Der Deutsche*), Hans-Ulrich Henning (*Kreuz-Zeitung*) and others did. The identity of some critics could not be traced because they chose to remain anonymous or signed their reviews with only their initials, as did a number of the above-mentioned critics.

## German film industry during the First World War

The outbreak of the First World War gave a new impulse to the development of a national film industry. Germany closed its borders to its enemies, gradually putting most of its competitors in the film industry out of business,<sup>22</sup> after a brief initial period when all kinds of exceptions crossed the border.<sup>23</sup> The *Kinematograph* reported on the new situation as follows:

Vor ca. drei Tagen schon sind die französischen Staatsangehörigen der grossen Pariser Firmen Pathé, Gaumont usw. nach ihrer Heimat abgereist, und Leute, die jahrelang als Kollegen friedlich an einem Pulte arbeiteten, können sich in nächster Zeit als Feinde auf Leben und Tod mit der Waffe in der Hand gegenüberstehen; die Internationalität unserer Industrie bringt das so mit sich – c'est la guerre!<sup>24</sup>

As early as five days after the German mobilisation on August 1st, the Verein der Lichtbildtheater-besitzer Gross-Berlins und Provinz Brandenburg (e.V.) had called on cinema managers to stop showing any French films.<sup>25</sup> Although many complied with such calls, much French film material was smuggled into Germany via neutral subsidiaries abroad, and shown in cinemas around the country.<sup>26</sup> Only on 25 February 1916 did the German state officially issue a ban

on film imports.<sup>27</sup> From that moment on, the country was practically left to its own devices and forced to satisfy the domestic demand for film entertainment itself.<sup>28</sup> The products of the neutral Danish, American (until 1917) and Italian (until 1915) film industries were the only ones allowed on the German film market.<sup>29</sup>

How the national film industry reacted to this situation can partly be seen from the figures. The number of domestic production companies grew constantly from 25 in 1914 to 130 in 1918.<sup>30</sup> The centre of German cinema was Berlin; later, Munich would become the film centre of southern Germany. In fact, an increase in film activities could be observed in Germany just before the war, as was shown by the construction of the famous Babelsberg studio complex near Berlin. The success of (foreign) films had convinced German entrepreneurs that producing films could be a profitable activity. In a retrospective published in 1919, the *Kinematograph* confirmed that the war had given a strong impulse to the German film industry:

Der Krieg hat erst so eigentlich eine bedeutungsvolle deutsche Filmindustrie geschaffen, eine Industrie, die heute erfolgreich auf den Plan mit der ausländischen Konkurrenz treten kann.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, German industry emerged from the war as a winner. Germany was not called 'Europe's Hollywood' for nothing.<sup>32</sup>

At the beginning of the war, it quickly became clear that the German film industry was lagging far behind that of its enemies. Although in Germany the influence of film was overestimated in a negative sense rather than underestimated – it was seen as a factor in the increase in crime and moral decline in the masses –, France and Great Britain had meanwhile discovered the propagandistic possibilities that the new medium offered. It seemed logical to use film and its capacity for manipulation as a means to convince the population of the depravity of the German enemy. The suggestive effect of the medium turned out to be very suitable to mobilise or fan the flames of anti-German sentiment in order to summon the warlike spirit and willingness to sacrifice soldiers and civilians alike.<sup>33</sup> Once the Germans realised the extent to which foreign cinema defiled German honour, they also decided to take action.

In circles which, in the past, had taken a hostile attitude towards film, much activity was sparked by the desire to restore the damage done to Germany in the international arena. After all, all these so-called *Hetzfilme* were also exported to neutral countries and allies of the Entente states. People in the higher reaches of press, industry, trade, tourism and culture, as well as representatives of the Foreign Ministry, joined forces in order to develop an antidote. Although the first result was meant as an antidote, it looked far less aggressive than what was being produced in France, Great Britain and later the United

States. In November 1916, interested parties created an organisation which was to formulate a first response to allied anti-German propaganda. This organisation was christened 'Deutsche Lichtbild-Gesellschaft' (DLG).<sup>34</sup> The rightwing nationalist industrialist and media tycoon, Alfred Hugenberg, and his right-hand man, Ludwig Klitzsch, were considered the most powerful men in the DLG organisation.<sup>35</sup> During the Weimar period, they would emerge as the two most powerful men in the Ufa organisation. DLG concentrated mainly on the production of short propaganda documentaries which served to show the success of German industrial development, the beauty of the German landscape and the riches of German culture.<sup>36</sup> Germany was to be shown in a positive light. It will hardly come as a surprise that this 'soft' approach was no match for the more aggressive propaganda films produced by the Allies that, for some time, had been able to penetrate the neutral markets. Germany failed to come up with an effective response to the negative stereotype of the cruel and lustful 'Hun'. In 1917, Reichstag member Gustav Stresemann wrote in *Der Film*:

Wenn sich heute der Deutsche oft verwundert fragt, woher es denn komme, dass dieses Deutschland, das 44 Jahre hindurch stets die Politik des Friedens getrieben und sich bestrebt hat, der Welt den Frieden zu erhalten, einen so geschlossene Phalanx von Feinden allüberall im Erdenrund, und wie die jüngsten Tage wieder gezeigt haben, bis hinauf in den fernsten Osten sich erwerben konnte (...) dann übersieht er neben anderen meist die ausserordentlich wirkungskräftige Filmpropaganda, welche unsere Feinde sehr im Gegensatz zu uns überall in der Welt getrieben haben. (...) Tausende und Abertausende von Kilometern Ententefilms sind auf die Neutralen losgelassen worden, Films, die dazu bestimmt waren, eine deutschfeindliche Stimmung zu verbreiten und die noch neutralen Länder zum Eintritt in den Weltkrieg an der Seite der Entente zu verleiten.<sup>37</sup>

This statement illustrates an untold belief in the power of the medium of film. Also, Stresemann used the enemy film propaganda to advertise Germany's peace-loving mission.

After the first battles, it quickly became clear that the initial war of movement soon changed into a war of attrition with stagnating front lines. The heroic spirit with which Germany and the other countries that were involved had first entered the war had to be revived. After about two years of battle, the great losses at the front and the food shortages among the civilian population created feelings of dejection and resistance against the desperate situation. Nevertheless, the arms industry was ordered to step up production via the so-called Hindenburgprogramm. At this stage, military circles became interested in the possibilities of the medium of film, too. So far, high-ranking military officials had only taken a passing interest in film propaganda. Matthias Erzberger,

a signatory of the 1919 armistice, wrote in his memoirs: 'Bei den militärischen Stellen fand man 1914-15 äusserst wenig Verständnis für die Notwendigkeit der Aufklärung im Ausland.'<sup>38</sup> Erich Ludendorff, however, had, for quite some time, been unhappy with the war propaganda as it had been conducted thus far. He believed that the film industry was too fragmented to be effective.<sup>39</sup>

Ludendorff therefore thought that the time was right to create production companies that would operate entirely under the guidance and control of the military authorities. Compared to the Entente states, Germany had left it rather late to engage seriously in this form of war propaganda. The idea that the war would be brief had been the ruling thought for too long. This meant that many private film companies were wary of switching to a type of film production that would only serve war propaganda, even in the most testing of times. Also, in Germany it was still unusual for the state to provide financial support to national film production. The situation in the Entente states was quite different, where state authorities poured large sums of money into the production of anti-German propaganda films. In Germany, people felt they were above the vile nature of the antagonistic 'Hass-, Hetz- und Lügefilmen'.<sup>40</sup> Yet it became impossible to ignore these films any longer; something had to be done to redress the balance, and less subtly so than DLG had done.

## **Bufa and Ufa**

The year 1917 saw the establishment of the Bild- und Filmamt (Bufa) on 30 January and the Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft (Ufa) on 18 December. Bufa became an umbrella organisation for all governmental and military film and press agencies. The production company was supervised by the Foreign Ministry's military section and concentrated on producing documentaries on military action and propaganda feature films.<sup>41</sup> During the war, Bufa was responsible for the establishment of hundreds of small screening venues at the front. Showing films behind the front lines was supposed to stir up the ordinary soldiers' fighting spirit. This meant that the programme offered them entertainment in an alternation with images from reality which referred to the actual situation at the front as little as possible.<sup>42</sup> In 1916, field doctor Spier Irwing wrote in *Der Film*:

In der Front, im Einerlei des Stellungskrieges, nach den Kampftagen des Schützengrabenringens erweist sich das Kino als nervöses Heilmittel, als ein einflussreicher Faktor bei Überregtheit und Depression, (...) die Kinos an der Front sind mehr als Amüsierlokale, und ihre Tätigkeit kann man nur billigen und unterstützen.<sup>43</sup>

These film screenings were, of course, very popular with the soldiers. People who had, until then, treated film with contempt often developed a more posi-

tive attitude towards this leisure activity after their experience with the medium at the front. This was an important side issue for the film industry.<sup>44</sup>

After the war, Bufa eventually became part of the Interior Ministry.<sup>45</sup> Many of the film recordings made during the war were later used in documentaries about the First World War. The best known examples are *DER WELTKRIEG I* (1927, Soldan) and *DER WELTKRIEG II* (1928, Lasko), both Ufa releases. Many feature films shot after the war contained footage derived from the Bild- und Filmamt archives. This so-called front footage was often shot during parades or exercises behind the lines rather than at the theatres of war which they were supposed to depict.

While Bufa focused on producing short documentaries, Ufa concentrated mainly on the production of feature films. The year 1917, when the two companies were established, was also the year in which the United States gave up its policy of passive support to the Entente states and entered the war to play an active role on the battlefield. The American film industry had involved itself in the war earlier by producing countless patriotic and anti-war movies.<sup>46</sup> The final step towards war propaganda proved a small one after 1917. Within a short period of time, both American and foreign film theatres were supplied with new war movies that portrayed the Germans in a very bad light.<sup>47</sup> Eight months after the Americans had declared war, Germany took up the gauntlet by establishing the Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft (Ufa).

Ufa originated from a co-operative association between the military leadership and top-level management of German banking, represented by Field Marshall Ludendorff and the President of Deutsche Bank, Emil Georg Stausz.<sup>48</sup> With money brought together by Deutsche Bank, the government and the heavy industries – a starting capital of no less than 25 million marks – the largest and most famous film company was founded that Germany would ever see. Ufa was a giant in two respects, both horizontally and vertically. Ufa took hold of the three sectors that make up any film industry: production, distribution and film theatres. The company also became the parent company for a great number of daughter companies, including Union Film and Messter-Film. Ufa also gained control over part of the Danish Nordisk concern whose extensive film theatre chain was the only means of access to the German film market, and, as a neutral institution, it had some influence on film markets both in anti-German and in neutral countries.<sup>49</sup>

The establishment of Ufa proved an enormous impulse for the German film. It attracted the cream of the crop of the film world. People like Viggo Larsen, Fritz Kortner, Konrad Wiene, Robert Wiene, Joe May<sup>50</sup>, Mia May, Ernst Lubitsch, Harry Liedtke, Emil Jannings, Giuseppe Becce<sup>51</sup> (musician), Henny Porten, Reinhold Schünzel<sup>52</sup>, Karl Freund, Ossi Oswalda, Margarete Kupfer<sup>53</sup>, Pola Negri, Käthe Haack<sup>54</sup> and Harry Piel would make Ufa famous. Together

with an excellent production infrastructure, including the fabulous Tempelhof studios, this enormous creative potential made sure that, in the 1920s, Ufa was seen as Europe's answer to Hollywood. The aim was to build a strong basis from which to compete with the foreign film industry. Nonetheless, the films with which Ufa shelled its competitors were not of a baiting nature.

### Screening the war

What was actually shown to the audiences during the war years? It emerges from the two main specialist film periodicals, *Kinematograph* and *Lichtbildbühne*, that the film industry adjusted almost immediately to the changes after the first days of August 1914.<sup>55</sup> People were generally aware that they would be asked to fulfil new tasks.<sup>56</sup> In the impending years of war, audiences would need images that provided up-to-date information, stirred up patriotism and a fighting spirit, as well as images that offered entertainment and consolation. Only three days after the outbreak of war, the *Kinematograph* said more people visited the cinema than ever before.

Das Publikum harrt ungeduldig der definitiven Nachrichten. Bis in die späten Nachtstunden sind die Strassen dicht bevölkert, und die vielen im Betrieb befindlichen Kinotheater sind eine höchstwillkommene Gelegenheit, ein Paar Stunden in den Lichtspielstätten zu verbringen, um mit Hilfe der flimmernden Bilder Angst, Unruhe und Aufregung zu beschwichtigen.<sup>57</sup>

As yet, however, up-to-date images were lacking. Until then, these had mostly been provided to the Germans by French production companies. Germany was now called upon to solve the problem of visual news gathering itself. The Messter company alone was unable to fulfil this task. In addition, the army leadership initially resisted the idea of having film cameras at the front. Fortunately, there were enough creative minds to come up with other solutions. On 12 August 1914, *Kinematograph* ran an article whose author gave a number of useful tips on how to meet demand without actually using up-to-date images. In a somewhat irritated tone, he wondered why people in the film industry were not as smart as those who provided the illustrated magazines with pictures. His solution to the problem was as follows: take a number of back issues of 'Wochenrevue', cut out shots and scenes of matters that are relevant to war, such as health care in wartime, car technology in the army, dogs being used as couriers (Kriegshunde), top-notch equestrian performances by the German, Austrian and Italian armies, military aviation, etc., and edit them together with suitable intervening titles. 'Im Handumdrehen wäre ein aktueller Film fertig, dem kein mensch ansieht, dass er schon früher in den Theatern Revue passierte.'<sup>58</sup> It goes without saying that footage of earlier wars such as the 1912-

1913 Balkan conflict should be used for images of real war. The critically acclaimed *MIT DER KAMERA IN DER SCHLACHTFRONT* thus contained footage shot during the war in the Balkan countries.<sup>59</sup> On the basis of similar – usually brief – films, special war programmes were compiled, which were shown at reduced admission fees, or free of charge for war invalids and soldiers.<sup>60</sup> Such programmes drew crowds of people that would otherwise not have gone to the cinema.<sup>61</sup> Many overcame their reservations about the medium in order to be able to watch the filmed activities of the German army. The massive advertisement campaign for war newscasts instead of feature films was a deliberate attempt to interest a large audience for the medium. The composition of the audience also changed. Since a larger part of the male population was fighting at the front, after a while the audiences consisted of mostly women and young people.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to the trick of using old images to compile new films, another method to meet demands was simply to provide older films about war, or films set in war, with new subtitles and/or intervening titles. In this way, films were dressed up, so to speak, with ‘feldgraue Uniformen’ as someone would write later.<sup>63</sup> In order to create the appearance of actual, up-to-date footage, an Italian company, for example, gave the German release *WENN DIE HEIMAT RUFT* the subtitle ‘Kriegsepisode in drei Akten’.<sup>64</sup> The film deals with a conflict between a husband and wife of different nationalities. The producers believed that this metaphor would draw large audiences, especially in wartime. Films about conflicts between friends with different nationalities were also popular.

The wars of the nineteenth century were an inexhaustible source for the representation of theatres of war. Germany’s glorious role during the war of liberation against Napoleon and in 1870/1871, again against the French proved an important subject, both during and after the war. Although before 1914 the film industry had shown little interest in historic feature films about the nineteenth century<sup>65</sup>, such films became hugely popular during and after the war. The heroism of previous generations of Germans was a suitable subject for transposition to the new war situation. Films whose main subjects were indefatigability, the willingness to sacrifice and patriotism clearly served a propaganda purpose, which is why they were known as ‘Durchhaltefilme’. In addition, the demand for images of more or less realistic theatres of war had to be met. This meant that the market was quickly flooded with short and long feature films which were released and released. The specialist periodicals recommended these pictures with catchy slogans. The film *BISMARCK*, for example, was given the subtitle ‘patriotisches Gemälde aus Deutschlands Ruhmes-tagen’, and the advertisement for the film reminded readers that ‘Wir Deutsche fürchten Gott, und sonst nichts auf der Welt!’<sup>66</sup> In addition to Germany’s national pride, Bismarck, Theodor Korner was also honoured with a



film. In a number of ways, this character played an important role in the 1914 rush to war. Not only had his name become immortal because of his heroic death in the war of liberation against Napoleon, but the patriotic songs that he composed had made him even more famous. The melodies of his songs could be heard again everywhere during those first days and weeks of the war. The film, which was named after its hero, had already been shot in 1912, but could now be re-released under very favourable commercial conditions.<sup>67</sup>

In a number of cases, historical-patriotic films were promoted with direct reference to the current situation. One distribution company tried to recommend the film *IM SCHATTEN DES GROSSEN KRIEGES* (Episoden aus dem Feldzuge 1870/71) by referring to the threat of war, even though war had not yet broken out: ‘Wollen Sie sich bei der Momentanen Kriegsbegeisterung angesichts der *österreichisch-serbischen Spannung* ein volles Haus sichern, dann beeilen Sie sich.’<sup>68</sup>

In the wake of these films followed a new trend, which film publicist Oskar Kalbus saliently called ‘feldgrauer Filmkitsch’.<sup>69</sup> Such patriotic films contained high levels of drama and sentiment. They told stories about a reconciliation between a father and son as a result of the mobilisation (*KRIEGSGETRAUT*); volunteers reporting to the front (*ES BRAUST EIN RUF WIE DONNERHALL*); a French nurse (Henny Porten) conveying the sad news of the death of a son to his mother (*EIN UEBERFALL IN FEINDESLAND*); and stories about brave Red Cross nurses and mothers (*DAS ROTE KREUZ*, *DAS VATERLAND RUFT*, *DEUTSCHE FRAUEN-DEUTSCHE TREUE*, *FÜRS VATERLAND*). According to Kalbus, ‘Die Taschentucher der Zuschauer’ were ‘zum Auswringen’ at these screenings.<sup>70</sup> As the war was becoming a painful reality for most people in due course, interest in such drama quickly waned. After 1915, the genre all but ceased to exist.

Heroic acts, drama and a large dose of patriotism – these were the things that the civilian population needed according to the film industry. Hardly surprising, the industry showed itself to be very adept at the commercial exploitation of the war effort. In view of the difficult circumstances in which the German film industry found itself, this almost went without saying. After some time, the clever moves needed to meet demand for images from the theatres of war in the first days of the war were no longer necessary. Germany had gone to war against its surrounding countries on different fronts. The advance of the German army had been successful until the last months of 1914, on both the western and the eastern fronts. The war changed from a war of movement into a war of attrition, a state of affairs that would last until the 1918 armistice.

Until the outbreak of war, the weekly cinema newscasts were produced by French film companies but, from now on, Germany itself would have to provide film news. In due course, production companies such as Eiko-Film,



Messter, the Nordisk company, and, from 1917 onwards, the Bild- und Filmamt would engage in the production of this category of film. Over a short period of time, a limited number of cameramen, hand-picked and subject to very strict military control, were sent to the front. Subject to permission from the highest military authorities, they were allowed to film at the front and in the occupied territories.<sup>71</sup> In spite of the strictest regulations, which were also in part put in place because of the dangers of espionage, these cameramen were very rarely in a position to film actual fighting, as was also the case with the Bufa films mentioned earlier.<sup>72</sup> As one cameraman remarked:

Besonders schwierig ist es, Szenen aus dem Schützengraben auf den Film zu bringen, denn die Bauart der Gräben gibt dem Kino keinen guten Blick. Direkte Kampfszenen aufzunehmen, ist noch schwieriger, denn der Kinematograph erfährt selbstverständlich nichts vor dem geplanten Angriff.<sup>73</sup>

The heavy and unpractical tripod cameras, which were practically unmanoeuvrable in the trenches, made shooting combat situations very dangerous. The camera and its operator would have to be raised to a position looking out over the parapet in order to be able to film anything at all, and even then, chances were that there was nothing to be observed except plumes of smoke and earth, and a barren landscape shelled to pieces. Also, many front line activities took place at night. There was little else to do for front line cinematographers than to shoot relatively innocent scenes of activities behind the front lines, or of military parades and exercises. As had been the case with the films compiled from footage of earlier wars, the producers of so-called front footage also assumed that the audiences would be unable to notice the deceit.<sup>74</sup>

Nonetheless, when cameramen managed to shoot some fragments of what happened on the battlefield, this did not mean that the footage would be released for presentation without further ado. Military as well as local censorship authorities had the power to halt or seriously slow down the release of such footage in the interest of national security.<sup>75</sup> This meant that when they were finally shown, such films were often behind on current events.

Besides these more or less up-to-date images, heroic films on historic subjects and patriotic drama, the audience also had an increasing need for moments of true distraction. The film programmes that were shown in the cinema after the first year of war show that images of war, even if most of them were products of the imagination, were avoided more and more. Just like soldiers at the front craved film stories about anything but the war, the tastes of the home audience appeared to be subject to change as well. Especially after 1915, when the first enthusiasm for the war had subsided, the need for escapism increased. The film industry, which was by now operating at full steam, tried to meet this demand by producing a wide variety of films in the category of light entertain-

ment. The extent of the offer is shown by the rotation schedules of cinema programmes. The smaller theatres would offer new programmes every eight days, while the larger theatres changed their programmes at an even faster rate.<sup>76</sup> This not only illustrates the speed at which German film industry managed to work itself out of the slump, but also the growing popularity of the medium.

The programmes on offer included a collection of various film genres. Apart from the serious Autorenfilm mentioned earlier, love dramas, detectives, comedies, and satires were programmed. At the same time, a new phenomenon appeared in the film world – the film star. Many films, especially love dramas, became nothing more than a vehicle for letting one single actor or actress become the centre of attention of a relatively simple story. Some of them came from the theatre and, after some embarrassment and diffidence, had switched to the young medium.<sup>77</sup> With the film star as its main selling point, the industry flung itself headlong into the production of film serials. After the first one by Joe May, many other complete series were set up around actresses such as Wanda Treumann, Fern Andra, Mia May, Leontine Kühnberg, Erna Morena, Asta Nielsen, Henny Porten, and in detective stories around actors such as Max Landa, Harry Liedtke, Ernst Lubitsch and Ernst Reicher.<sup>78</sup> Some of them became highly popular among front soldiers, like Henny Porten, who was not only popular as a modest pin-up on the many billboards, but also served as a symbol of German women and German identity in general. The fact that she herself had become a war widow in 1916 certainly played an important role in this.<sup>79</sup>

## Film in the Weimar Republic<sup>80</sup>

After the war, a period began in which cinema attendance was extremely popular.<sup>91</sup> This development could also be seen elsewhere in Europe, its cause probably having something to do with the widespread feeling of war fatigue.<sup>82</sup> If going to the cinema had already been popular on the eve of the First World War, after the war it turned out to be a popular leisure activity, even for the middle classes.<sup>83</sup> Also, the status-boosting effect of cinema attendance coincided with the gradual recognition of film as the seventh art. Add to this the influence of a change in the architecture of film theatres. More and more 'film palaces' emerged in the centres of big cities; more than the muggy, out-of-the-way little venues in the suburbs had done, they began to shape the image of the cinema in the city.<sup>84</sup> In Berlin, the construction of such theatres was concentrated mainly in the Bahnhof Zoo district, where theatres like the Ufa Palast am

Zoo, Marmorhaus, Alhambra and Primus-Palast were built.<sup>85</sup> These are only three examples of the twenty large film palaces built in Berlin in the early 1920s. In total, however, there were more than three hundred film theatres in Berlin.<sup>86</sup> This meant that not all theatres were replaced by luxurious film palaces, but that the profile of a different kind of audience became increasingly clearer. These developments meant that visiting certain cinemas became an artistically acceptable thing to do.

This last development was not only due to the screening context but also to what was actually shown. Aesthetically modern films – and indeed any other films that were in some way striking – that we nowadays associate with the canon of Weimar period films did not by definition belong to the most popular category of films. That category included films that were commercially very successful during the Weimar period but subsequently sank into oblivion: *AN DER SCHÖNEN BLAUEN DONAU*, *DAS TANZENDE WIEN*, *DIE HEILIGE UND IHR NARR*, *DAS LAND DES LÄCHELNS* and *BOMBEN AUF MONTE CARLO*.<sup>87</sup> Popular war films were *UNSERE EMDEN*, *WELTKRIEG I*, *HEIMKEHR*, *VERDUN* (a French production by Léon Poirier), *WESTFRONT 1918*, *BERGE IN FLAMMEN* and *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT (VS)*.<sup>88</sup> The co-existence of modernist and conventional artistic expressions and culture practices can be observed in different periods, but it was especially poignant in the Weimar period. Co-existence did not mean that they were separated, however. One may suppose that there was a certain intertextual connection between both practices. Artistically interesting films, even if they were attended by relatively small audiences, were probably partly responsible for raising the status of film in general. The same was true for the more popular ‘Autorenfilme’ and large historical productions. Also, new developments in filming techniques had a great influence on the productions of conventional film makers. There were, for example, other approaches in the use of the camera, editing, set construction, effects of light and shadow, acting styles, the direction of mass scenes, exterior footage and (after 1929) sound registration.<sup>89</sup>

Directors and producers of war films, however, did not in the first place worry about creating artistically satisfying productions. In a number of war films, the main emphasis was on communicating a historical narrative in a didactically effective way. Yet a large number of other war films were concerned with telling a captivating or exciting story about the adventures of individuals during the war.

## Censorship

Interest in popular history, i.e. historical writing for the largest possible audience, was considerable during the Weimar period. There was a big market for

historical novels or biographies (Emil Ludwig), illustrated histories or chronicles (including those about the war) and historical films. As we have seen, the cinematographical representation of the past had already become popular in the first decades of cinema's existence. This trend continued in the Weimar period. One of the largest historical spectacles, *MADAME DUBARRY* (1919), about the French Revolution, was made by Ernst Lubitsch. Many more historical films would follow.

Our main topic, however, is films that were concerned with the German past. The *FRIDERICUS REX* films dealt with the life and accomplishments of Frederick the Great.<sup>90</sup> The Prussian past, usually taken to cover the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, turned out to be an inexhaustible source of entertainment, interest and inspiration. Besides the lives of Frederick II (1712-1786) and Queen Luise (1776-1810), the period of the wars of liberation against Napoleon was also a subject greeted with enthusiasm. Several dozens of such films on Prussia were released in the 1919-1932 period, and they became instant commercial successes.<sup>91</sup> Films about historical figures such as Lasalle, Bismarck, Oberst Redl and Nicholas II were very popular, too.

Reactions to these films are more interesting than simply knowing that these films were made. These reactions are important indices to the political climate in which these and later or contemporary war films were screened and perceived. The popular *FRIDERICUS REX* films, for example, provoked major controversies and their screening sparked riots. Leftist groups suggested that the screenings should be boycotted or banned altogether.<sup>92</sup> Why should there have been such an uproar surrounding these films? It was because of the link that was made between the past and the present. The authoritarian power structure, imperialism and nationalism represented by Frederick the Great was associated with the monarchist rule of Wilhelm II, and the films were thus said to be monarchist propaganda. Some saw the films as innocent entertainment, while others, especially leftists, took offence. Something similar happened with a current events documentary made towards the end of the war, *KOLBERG* (not to be confused with the 1945 Nazi film about the Napoleonic wars of liberation), about the history of this city, which would be handed over to the Poles in 1919. This film also contained footage of Field Marshall Von Hindenburg. His appearance in the film sparked serious disturbances. The train of thought among the protesters probably ran something like this: Von Hindenburg = war = monarchist politics = anti-Weimar = republican protests = anti-republican reaction, etc. The censorship authorities decided to ban the film unless the Hindenburg footage was removed. The Oberfilmprüfstelle, which was given the task of revaluing the film, judged that this was an overreaction and passed the film without any alterations.<sup>93</sup> Such incidents indicate

the sensitivity of the political context in which the films were screened, and what rejection and fear they provoked.

The political sensitivity had to do with the propaganda function that film had served during the war. The distrust caused by this continued after the war. After all, in a democratic society where various political party interests were in direct competition, film could again be used as a means of propaganda. Even if certain films, in this case historical dramas, could not be used as direct propaganda, they could very well be used to serve the interests of political parties. The *Kinematograph* wrote in 1922: 'Der Krieg ist gewesen. Ist der Propagandafilm damit begraben? Nein. Nur der Rahmen ist enger geworden. Nicht mehr der Grosspolitik, – der Parteipolitik wird der Film jetzt überall dienstbar gemacht. Auch in Deutschland.'<sup>94</sup> In a society that was not used to democratic freedom of expression, people would quickly take to the streets against any political element that could be found in a public form of expression. Film was thought to be a very powerful medium of manipulation, which became clear, among other things, from the fact that film, and to a much lesser extent theatre, art and literature, was subject to censorship.<sup>95</sup> No German or foreign film could be screened without the permission of the censorship authorities.

The 1920 introduction of the Film Act saw the establishment of two censorship agencies, the 'Filmprüfstelle', operating from Berlin and Munich, and the 'Oberfilmprüfstelle', with its office in Berlin.<sup>96</sup> One could appeal to the latter agency for reevaluation if one was dissatisfied with the ruling by the lower 'Filmprüfstelle'. This latter agency consisted of a chairman and a committee of four persons who had a vote and who were appointed by the Interior Ministry for a period of three years. The chairman was generally expected to have had legal training, had worked in public services or to have work experience in the courts. The committee members were recruited from the world of film, arts and literature (always representing a minority) and from general welfare, education and youth care.<sup>97</sup> 'Durch die Zusammensetzung der Prüfstellen (...) wurden im vornhinein Entscheidungen begünstigt, die nicht auf künstlerischen, sondern auf tradierten sozialemischen und – entgegen den Intentionen des Gesetzes – politischen Grundauffassungen beruhten.'<sup>98</sup> Besides the appointed members of the committee, there were usually another five interested parties present at the Filmprüfstelle sessions. People from the film industry, education or other cultural agencies were usually allowed to attend these sessions.<sup>99</sup> A film could be banned if it (1) was likely to jeopardize public order; (2) presented religion in a negative light; (3) was coarse and immoral; (4) was likely to damage Germany's relations with foreign countries.<sup>100</sup>

The censorship authorities' motives for banning a film were of course very important to the film industry, the general public and the critics. However, the

ensorship board often offered only vague arguments that could be interpreted in many ways, such as jeopardising public order and causing displeasure abroad.<sup>101</sup> The latter argument was especially popular when censorship authorities were evaluating displeasing images or scenes from war films. At a time when the implementation of the Versailles Treaty was being negotiated, it was tactically unhelpful to offend the former enemy at the negotiating table or to furnish him with counterarguments by screening anti-foreign films or films critical of Germany.<sup>102</sup>

For this reason, export films had the propaganda purpose of giving a positive image of Germany. In addition, the authorities considered this necessary because so-called *Hetzfilme* were still being produced in foreign countries. The press very attentively monitored these productions, even if they would appear in German cinemas much later, and then only in heavily censored form. Examples were American films like *THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE* (1921) and *MARE NOSTRUM* (1925), both based on novels by the Spanish writer Vicente Blasco Ibañez and directed by Rex Ingram.<sup>103</sup> The press also painstakingly reported about (uncensored) foreign screenings and about the protests against these by the *Reichsverband deutscher Lichtspieltheaterbesitzer* and the *Spitzenorganisation der deutschen Filmindustrie*.<sup>104</sup> As had been the case during the war, Germany (that is, the Foreign Ministry) again opted for the 'soft' approach. Germany did not respond with films that depicted the former enemy in similarly negative or stereotype ways, but it protested via the appropriate channels, or tried to exert a positive influence on foreign countries by exporting aesthetically startling films and 'politically neutral' German films.<sup>105</sup>

### **The military in film**

It turned out to be inevitable that films about a controversial past – still so fresh in people's memories – were followed very closely. *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* (1925) and *VOLK IN NOT* (1926)<sup>106</sup> were among the first war films after 1918 to depict the battlefields. The latter was not the only war film to see the light of day in 1926. It was followed by *FELDGRAU*, *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ*, *BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS*, *ICH HATT'EINEN KAMERADEN* and *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE*. Nevertheless, these individual films initially did not cause much of a stir; this did not happen until after the screening of *UNSERE EMDEN*, towards the end of 1926. Initially, the press focused on the phenomenon in its entirety, the phenomenon of the 'Militärfilme'. The 1925-1926 period saw a boom of military films. Films about the First World War were only a fraction of the total number. Most of the films dealt with military life during the Prussian era or the Napoleonic wars: 'Soldatenfilme, Offizierstragödien, Königsdramen.'<sup>107</sup> These

were films by producers trying to copy the success of the FRIDERICUS REX films. ROSENMTAG, ASCHERMITWOCHE, REVEILLE, DER TOTENGRÄBER EINES KAISERREICHS (about Redl), ANNEMARIE UND IHR ULAN are just some of the titles from a whole series of similar films. Some people were disturbed by the new trend and considered it a threat to republican values. In September 1926, the left-liberal *Berliner Tageblatt* published a survey of military films that had been shown in the cinema over the previous eighteen months.<sup>108</sup> The newspaper counted at least twenty, while the author of the article expected another fourteen of such films to be shown in the cinema during the next season. The most striking aspect, he found, was that none of these films had been banned by the censorship authorities. He was also very critical of the fact that so many high-ranking officers had been employed as advisors to the producers of these films, because 'dann weiss man zur Genüge, aus welcher Richtung der Wind weht.'<sup>109</sup>

The *Berliner Tageblatt* was not the only newspaper to take note of the boom in military films. The specialist periodicals also looked for an explanation of the latest trend. *Kinematograph* tried to put things into perspective by saying that these films were popular with only a small portion of the public. Also, protests were not heard until the films were serialised in the cinema and began to dominate the entire screening programme.<sup>110</sup> It is therefore very well possible that the demand for such films was stimulated by the supply-side, by which a process of self-generation was set in motion.

A psychological argument was presented by Ilse Zerbe writing for the moderate journal *Der Film*. Starting from the question why these films were so popular with certain audience groups, she reasoned as follows: 'Ist das nun lediglich eine plötzliche Geschmacksumkehrung zu der früheren Vorliebe für Uniformen?' She rejected this suggestion, however, because costume drama had been popular for years. 'Ist es die Rückkehr zur Freude an alter, rhythmisch vertrauter Militärmusik (...)?' This could not be the only reason. 'Der Grund liegt also tiefer. Das Volk (...) fühlt sich in der grauen Gegenwart, der seit Jahren jeder Ansporn zu seelischer Schwungkraft fehlt, bedrückt.' In addition, the future was also very uncertain.

Einen hellen Schein aber braucht die Seele, um Elastizität zu bewahren. Erdichtete Heldentaten fehlt in solcher Zeit der zündende Funke; also zurück zu Wirklichkeiten der Vergangenheit.<sup>111</sup>

After all, what could bring more joy than 'der Durchmarsch vorn Soldaten mit Militärmusik!' The army still embodied security and glory. Audiences did not so much like military films as that they wanted to see a 'lebendiger Wiedergabe erhebender, nicht zu fern liegender Vergangenheit, in der noch persönlicher Mut, Tatkraft, Unternehmungsgeist, Stolz und Ehrgefühl über



Schwachheit und Hinterlist triumphierten’. It is clear that Zerbe expressed sentiments popular among the monarchist or otherwise conservative sections of the general public, unless she had meant to be ironical. Anyway, the article suggested that the films under consideration were serious in nature, while they were actually soldiers’ farces, so-called Soldatenhumoreske or Militärklamotten.

Military films nonetheless provoked many protests, which is why specialist periodicals called on cinema owners to change their rather one-sided programmes.<sup>112</sup> Representatives of the film industry did not want the cinema to become an arena for political struggles, which the military films threatened to bring about. Film was supposed to be above party politics and should strive for neutrality. This was not only a ‘prescript’, some people even considered it a matter of indisputable fact: ‘Man darf nicht vergessen, dass der Film als Industrie absolut unpolitisch eingestellt ist, dass auch die Filme als Kunstgegenstand sich jedweder Tendenz zu enthalten haben und auch enthalten’, wrote *Der Film*.<sup>113</sup> (Some months before, Ilse Zerbe, writing in *Der Film*, had shown a lot of understanding for films propagating a monarchist and military world view).

The film industry fiercely defended the myth of neutrality and used it on every possible occasion. When the union ADGB threatened to boycott theatres which showed military films, the industry called on the cinema owners to observe some distance from the successful ‘genre’.<sup>114</sup> Also, *Der Film* was not only afraid that the actions might have financial consequences, but that they might lead to sharper censorship rules as well.<sup>115</sup> So far, censorship regulations stated that films could not be banned because of their political content, but only if they jeopardised public order or blemished Germany’s prestige abroad.<sup>116</sup> Despite protests, military films remained popular and in the end, nothing could prevent them from being shown in cinemas. The dominant opinion was that these films were in themselves neutral, and that the (leftist) press was responsible for their politicisation. For example, *Der Film* named the article in the *Berliner Tageblatt* as one of the factors responsible for rousing public sentiment, while the moderate *Reichsfilmblatt* blamed socialist press in general.<sup>117</sup> This was not true, however, for films that had a clear party-political orientation, regardless of how difficult it was to make the distinction. A film like KEINEN PFENNIG DER FÜRSTEN, for example, which took sides in the discussion surrounding the dispossession of lands and properties held by sovereigns (‘Fürstenenteignung’)<sup>118</sup> was considered a clear instance of propaganda and rejected as a film for the general public by the left-liberal *Film-Kurier*.<sup>119</sup>

The social democrats soon responded to the military films. In 1924 and 1925, two republican films were produced, SCHMIEDE and FREIES VOLK, respectively, both of them made by the socialist director Martin Berger.<sup>120</sup> Al-



though the films appeared to be geared to appeal to large audiences, they were not very successful and received negative reactions from the critics.<sup>121</sup>

The complicated relationship between film and politics caused contradictory argumentation. In a short article, the left-liberal *Lichtbildbühne* spoke out against party politics in film. In another part of the periodical, however, it said:

Hat ein Film eine politische Tendenz, mit der jeder Deutsche einverstanden ist, weil es sich um keine Parteisache, sonder eine nationale Angelegenheit handelt, so ist natürlich in keiner Weise dagegen etwas einzuwenden.<sup>122</sup>

These words were used by the author to voice his approval for a propaganda film about the former German colonies, *ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN!* The point of view expressed by *Lichtbildbühne* was very similar to statements made five years later by the right-wing *Kinematograph* – which addressed its reader from the front page as follows:

Sie wissen, dass wir die Behandlung nationaler Stoffe, wie etwa der Verfilmung der Nibelungen oder rein geschichtliche Filme wie 'Königin Luise' oder 'Fridericus Rex' niemals als ein Politikum ansehen.<sup>123</sup>

Following the scandal surrounding the Phoebus film company – which produced navy propaganda films in exchange for covert financial support (see chapter 5) – the specialist press was rocked in 1926 by an outrage concerning film material about the First World War that had been put into circulation. In a front page article headlined 'Wir verlangen Aufklärung', the *Lichtbildbühne*, in an indignant tone, started a discussion about film material from the war being used by politically suspect right-wing radical circles connected with Stahlhelm.<sup>124</sup> The magazine had discovered that private gatherings, so-called 'Vaterländische Film-Abende', were held under the auspices of the Berlin association *Deutschtum im Bilde*. Among the films shown were *VOGESENWACHT*, *MELDEHUNDE IM FEINDLICHEN FEUER*, *HELDEN AN DER SOMME*<sup>125</sup> and *HÖLLENKAMPF AN DER AISNE*. 'Also Filme, die das ganze Volk interessierten und nicht *einseitig politischen* Tendenzen dienstbar gemacht werden sollten.'<sup>126</sup> After some research, *Lichtbildbühne* discovered that the films originally came from the Bufa archives. Shortly after the war, when Bufa went from the Defence Ministry to the Foreign Ministry and eventually became a much reduced film department at the Interior Ministry<sup>127</sup>, several films had been given for safekeeping to the *Vaterländischen Film-Gesellschaft*.<sup>128</sup> This agency was also given permission to lend out films, sporadically and under very strict conditions – without commercial intent and only for educational purposes – for screening at private gatherings. According to the magazine, these conditions were not met.<sup>129</sup> The fact that they were German propaganda films was left out

of consideration. Several days later, a group of former Bufa cameramen who had worked at the front reacted with indignation to the abuse of 'their' images.<sup>130</sup> An official reaction came from the left-liberal Interior Minister Külz (Deutsche Demokratische Partei) in the form of an article in the *Vossische Zeitung* in which he promised to prosecute the association in question if it would continue to serve its specific (that is, right-wing radical, ergo, hostile to the republic) clientele.<sup>131</sup>

It is not surprising that discussions about films and politics would flare up in 1925 and 1926. Although the discussion was sparked by the FRIDERICUS REX films and the military films that followed, it also took place at a time when political controversy was running high on account of a number of issues: the death of social-democrat president, Friedrich Ebert, and the election of the former war hero and monarchist, Paul von Hindenburg, as the president of the Reich; the flag decree; the referendum about the dispossession of sovereign lands and properties; the Phoebus scandal; and the screening of Eisenstein's Russian propaganda film POTEMKIN (and the ban and subsequent lifting of the ban).<sup>132</sup> The mutual mistrust between the political left and right was gigantic, and because of the power ascribed to the medium, the parties kept a close watch on each other after 1926, too. Discussions about politics and film never fell completely silent. This meant that with respect to war films, German and foreign critics remained very much on their guard.

## From relative stability to crisis

Despite the fact that the second half of the 1920s remained full of unrest, it was nevertheless the most stable period of the republic. This was due to political and economic factors, such as the 1925 election of Paul von Hindenburg as president of the republic. The embodiment of German heroism during the First World War and new political beacon for the right had been put forward as a candidate for the second round by the right-wing parties. Von Hindenburg's victory had made the republic more acceptable to the anti-republican, monarchist and vindictive right-wing parties. Until 1928, the country would no longer be governed by a centre-left cabinet (the Weimarer Koalition) but, with only a short interruption, by a centre-right coalition. This contributed to political stability during this period.

The tide also turned with respect to the economy. After the 1919-1923 crisis, the success of the currency reform checked inflation and, buoyed up by American loans and the 1924 Dawes plan, the German economy was back on track

again. The economic aid programmes contained regulatory provisions about German reparations as laid down in the Versailles Treaty. In close correlation with this, Gustav Stresemann achieved substantial successes with his foreign policy. Germany was accepted as a member of the League of Nations and concluded security pacts which guaranteed its (western) borders. These developments marked a period that saw Germany slowly emerge from international isolation.

Political and economic stability did not mean, however, that there were no conflicts in Germany. Conflicts had only temporarily disappeared below the surface and stability was only relative. This situation was reflected in the film industry. At first there was a downswing which forced many companies to close. After the surge of inflation, German films had become considerably more expensive abroad, causing exports on which Germany depended to drop. Another reason for company shutdowns was the increase in the number of mergers in production, distribution and screening sectors. Film companies such as Ufa, Emelka, Terra and National Film swallowed parts of these sectors. In the end, the German film market also suffered heavily from American competition. American movies were popular with the general public and dominated the cinema screens. Protectionist quota regulations requiring production companies to match every American production shown in Germany with a domestic production provided an economic impulse but they also resulted in the production of many mediocre films. All in all, German film production totalled between 200 and 250 annually during this period.

In March 1927, the film industry was rocked by a drastic change: to stave off bankruptcy, the largest film company in Germany, Ufa, was taken over by Alfred Hugenberg, industrial tycoon, newspaper magnate and, from 1928 onwards, chairman of the Deutsche Nationale Volkspartei or DNVP. Alfred Hugenberg, his managing director Ludwig Klitzsch and production manager Erich Pommer, brought back from Hollywood, decided to move into a new direction. Expensive experiments such as Murnau's *FAUST* and Lang's *METROPOLIS* could no longer be allowed. Ufa decided to commit to mediocrity. One of the first films to be premiered after the changing of the guard was the first part of the epic *DER WELTKRIEG!* However prominent Ufa's role in Weimar cinema was, the company only released two other war films after the two *WELTKRIEG* films: *HEIMKEHR* and *MORGENROT*.<sup>133</sup>

After the upsurge of films about the First World War had died down around 1926 in favour of yet other military and Prussian films, a reaction followed in 1928 against both military films and commercial productions in general. A group of leftist intellectuals and artists, including Heinrich Mann, Leonhard Frank, Käthe Kollwitz, Karl Freund, Erwin Piscator, Bela Balasz and Georg Wilhelm Pabst established the *Volksverband für Filmkunst*. *Die literarische Welt*

wrote: The organisation 'fordert den sozial gerichteten, die wahren Gegenwartsprobleme behandelnden Film. Er bekämpft den nationalistischen und militaristischen Filmkitsch'.<sup>134</sup> In addition, the Volksverband argued for a boycott of theatres which showed such productions. As did most other organisations and producers with left leanings, the Volksverband would eventually get the worst of it. At any rate, its efforts achieved nothing to halt the renewed rise in the production of war films that occurred in the early thirties. The production of the anti-war film, *WESTFRONT 1918* (G.W. Pabst, 1930), by the leftist production company Nero-Film can in a sense be seen as one of the very few answers to the rise of war films. The same is true for films such as *DIE ANDERE SEITE* (Heinz Paul, 1931) and *NIEMANDSLAND* (Viktor Trivas, 1931).

The relative political and economic stability ended around 1929. The death of Gustav Stresemann who, as Foreign Minister between 1923 and 1929 had been one of Germany's most important advocates abroad, brought an end to the peaceful revision of the Versailles Treaty. The so-called Young-plan provided new American loans so that Germany could continue to meet its reparation requirements. Led by Alfred Hugenberg, the DNVP and the Stahlhelm organisation of veterans joined forces in a committee against ratification of the plan. They said that foreign support would only bring Germany in a position of dependence. The action failed, but it made Adolf Hitler a household name, which was an important step towards further consolidation of his party.

Late 1929, the international economic crisis also reached Germany. The effect on the German film industry was devastating. In 1930, film production had sunk to 127 films.<sup>135</sup> Many small production companies went bankrupt, which again sparked a process of monopolisation. Ufa, Tobis, Emelka, National Film, Deutsche Lichtspiel-Syndikat and Südfilm managed to stay afloat.<sup>136</sup> The crisis was deepened by another factor, the switch to sound-film. Perfected in America in 1927/1928, the talking picture was now developing in Germany, too. This development was supervised by Tobis-Klangfilm, a merger of two competing companies established in 1929.<sup>137</sup> The first sound-film about the war that was dominated by dialogue was 1914. *DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND* (Richard Oswald, 1930). The ear-splitting noise of the front could first be heard in *WESTFRONT 1918*, which made a huge impression on audiences for that reason alone.

The final phase of the republic was marked by economic as well as political crisis. As part of a strategy devised by Schleicher and Von Hindenburg to end the republic, Zentrum politician Heinrich Brüning was found willing to lead a presidential minority cabinet. Article 48 of the Constitution, which had been written earlier, allowed a great concentration of political power with the president of the Reich, ultimately to the detriment of parliament, the Reichstag. Von

Hindenburg used the article as an instrument to install new cabinets or appoint chancellors without having to deal with parliament. This period was marked by the infamous presidential cabinets (March 1930 – May 1932) which would lead to the dismantling and ultimate dissolution of the German democratic order and the annihilation of the opposition. As a veteran with strongly vindictive sentiments, Brüning did his utmost to get the reparations imposed by the allied powers cancelled. Even before this was achieved, he lost Von Hindenburg's support, partly because of his economic and financial policies, and was replaced by Franz von Papen at the end of May 1932.

In the meantime, DNVP, DVP and SPD suffered great losses in the 1930 Reichstag elections, while both the NSDAP and the communist KPD achieved great gains. The country's two major anti-democratic movements became the largest, if not the most powerful parties in Germany. There could of course not be any question of co-operation between the two. The same was true for the other parties. Hitler's party was watched very closely by other right-wing parties and tolerated at best, while the weak social democrats and the communists were like cats and dogs. The polarisation was intensified even further by the Reichstag elections of 31 July 1932. The liberal DVP and DDP were practically annihilated, and both the SPD and the DNVP lost votes. Again, the KPD won considerably. No party, however, gained as much as the NSDAP, which took possession of 230 seats.

In order not to antagonize the NSDAP, Von Papen had promised to cancel the ban on the SA established earlier that year. The SA now continued its reign of terror in the streets with a vengeance. The street violence was mainly targeted at the communists, who were not exactly innocent bystanders themselves. In the summer of 1932, no less than 18 people were killed and 68 injured in street fights in Hamburg's Altona district (the so-called Altonaer Blutsonntag). Something of this terror had emerged earlier in Berlin during screenings of Lewis Milestone's *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* (December 1930). Joseph Goebbels and his henchmen had set off stink-bombs and released white mice to frighten the audience and scare off potential spectators. This resulted in counter demonstrations. At the end of the day, however, all this agitation failed to produce the desired effect. The authorities first banned demonstrations, and then the film. In addition to the familiar motive of disturbing public order, defiling German honour and an overzealous propagation of pacifism were also cited as reasons for banning the film.<sup>138</sup> However, after a vote was taken in the Reichstag, the film was released for screening again, albeit after a number of judicious cuts. The members of parliament for the SPD, DVP and Zentrum had joined forces to vote in favour of lifting the ban. More than eighteen months later, the film was finally banned by the National Socialists.

In these crisis-ridden final years of the republic, interest in the war past surged again. Also, this interest was much more explicit in the early thirties than it had been around 1926. The reason was that, from 1929 onwards, more war films were produced – SCAPA FLOW, SOMME, WESTFRONT 1918, 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND, DOUAUMONT, IM GEHEIMDIENST, BERGE IN FLAMMEN, DIE ANDERE SEITE, NIEMANDSLAND and MÖRGENROT – and an enormous amount of war literature was published. This upsurge in interest in the war also left its mark on the theatre. In 1929 alone, plays such as *Karl und Anna*, *Douaumont*, *Die Marneschlacht* and *Die andere Seite*<sup>139</sup> became overnight successes. As far as literature is concerned, Hans-Harald Müller indicates in his study of the period that between 1928 and 1933 more than two hundred books were published that dealt with the war, while no more than one hundred war books appeared in the ten years preceding that period.<sup>140</sup> Various authors have pointed to the economic crisis and the political instability as important factors.<sup>141</sup> It may perhaps be unnecessary to indicate that this crisis situation was not reflected directly in the individual films. How these social and cultural contexts ‘found their way’ into the films will emerge in the course of this study. Reactions in contemporary criticism clearly show how controversial representations of the war past could still be, ten or fifteen years after it took place. Nowhere has this been illustrated better than in the film 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND.



## 2 'Die Legende von der Unschuld'

### Films about the run-up to the war, especially 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND

The Weimar period was characterised by numerous burning questions which each in their turn, or simultaneously, troubled public opinion. One of these was receiving attention almost constantly: the negotiations surrounding the Treaty of Versailles and the issue linked to them, that is, the question whether or not Germany was to blame for the outbreak of the First World War. In order to prove that Germany did not bear any guilt for the war – and would therefore not have to pay for it – large-scale research was carried out into the period that had preceded the war. This chapter deals with the way films tried to contribute to the discussions surrounding the run-up to the First World War. One film especially will be central to the discussion in this chapter: 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND (1931) (from now on referred to as 1914).<sup>2</sup> This film was director Richard Oswald's first (and only) serious attempt to make the complex issue of the question of guilt accessible to a large audience. In two earlier films that dealt with this subject, a central position had been taken up by the romantic aspect. They are DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO (1920) and BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS (1926), which had originally been made in Austria. Since very little source material has been preserved about these films, they will be given less attention than 1914.

This chapter will deal with the question which interpretations of the question of guilt were possible in the Weimar period, especially in film and literature. Which means of representation did the directors and authors choose, what were their starting points, what obstacles did they find on their way, and finally, what were the reactions in the press? The three films were, to a greater or lesser degree, part of the debate surrounding the guilt question. In order to understand the outspoken reactions that came from the authorities and the press, we will analyse the above-mentioned films and discuss some of the specific sources that formed the basis for the 'film stories'. This procedure is especially useful for 1914. The controversies sparked by this film even before its release indicate the sensitive nature of the subject. Incidentally, war films were part of a group of films that induced critics to use different evaluation criteria. While critics judged films that had nothing to do with the recent war past mainly on the basis of their aesthetic and dramaturgical merits, war films were often judged in terms of how 'accurate' they were historically and how 'correctly' they reflected the recent past in political terms.



## The Weimar Republic and the *Kriegsschulddebatte*

On Wednesday 21 January 1931, an extraordinary event took place. In the Tauentzien-Palast, one of the oldest cinemas in Berlin-Schöneberg, Richard Oswald's film 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND premiered.<sup>3</sup> Both the director and the film (and its run-up) already enjoyed some measure of fame.<sup>4</sup> The premiere sparked so much interest that many visitors had to be disappointed. The audience included a large number of officials: members of the Prussian federal government, senior civil servants, ambassadors and consuls, police officers, Foreign Ministry representatives and two Reichstag delegates, Philipp Scheidemann and Hermann Müller-Franken.<sup>5</sup> Scheidemann had been prime minister during the first round of negotiations at Versailles and had refused to sign the treaty, while Müller-Franken had been the eventual signatory as Foreign Minister. According to the *Film-Kurier*, the premiere was

... ein Ereignis nicht für die Filmwelt, sondern auch für weite Publikumskreise, die sich an der gerade in letzter Zeit sehr lebhaft gewordenen Debatte über die Zusammenhänge bei Kriegsausbruch interessieren.<sup>6</sup>

While the First World War was still being fought, secretary of state for Foreign Affairs Gottlieb von Jagow had ordered his civil servants to collect all documents that testified to the impossible situation which Germany had found itself in before the war. The country was said to have been surrounded by enemies, with the exception of Austria-Hungary. France was said to seek revenge at any cost following the defeat it had suffered in 1871. Since Russia was an ally of England and France – the Entente – it did not really count as a friend of Germany, and England would never accept Germany as a growing sea power in international waters. In this way, the 'Einkreisungsthese' was used to spread the notion that Germany was surrounded by enemies. During the war, and especially since the peace negotiations with U.S. president Woodrow Wilson, the Foreign Ministry document collection found its way into many brochures and notes that were made available to a select readership. Some years later, these documents, and others containing new evidence, would be used as evidence against the allied accusation that Germany was the sole party responsible for the outbreak of the First World War.

This accusation, laid down in article 231, was one of the most controversial paragraphs in the Treaty of Versailles, and it is generally considered an important factor in the eventual take-over by the national-socialists. Literally, the paragraph reads as follows:

Die alliierten und assoziierten Regierungen erklären, und Deutschland erkennt an, dass Deutschland und seine Verbündeten als Urheber für alle Verluste und alle Schäden verantwortlich sind, welche die alliierten und assoziierten Regierungen und ihre Angehörigen infolge des ihnen durch den Angriff Deutschlands und seiner Verbündeten aufgezwungenen Krieges erlitten haben.<sup>7</sup>

Blaming Germany also meant holding the country responsible for the damages inflicted. While the peace treaty had already been signed in 1919, the height of reparations was not established until 1921. Since Germany had not been allowed to bring anything substantial to the negotiating table – the German delegates were only allowed to respond in writing – public opinion would soon call the treaty a peace 'dictate'. Especially France, represented by Georges Clemenceau, 'Le Tigre', who chaired the conference, had no intention of letting Germany get off easy. Only the U.S.A. (Wilson) and Great Britain (Lloyd George) were more moderate in their approach of Germany. Besides reparations, Germany was also required to substantially reduce its army and military equipment, annul all border extensions, relinquish its colonies and place itself under foreign protection for a certain period of time. These and other drastic demands produced a consensus in Germany with respect to having the Treaty of Versailles reviewed. Before and during the negotiations, Germany was actively attempting to disprove its guilt. This resulted in the development of a huge propaganda effort under the special direction of the Foreign Ministry, which was led by Gustav Stresemann from 1923 to 1929. In 1919, a special department was created at the ministry, the so-called Kriegsschuldreferat.<sup>8</sup> The main advocates of influencing public opinion at home and abroad worked at this department. Besides, hundreds of interest groups were formed whose aim was to champion the cause in Germany, as well as two periodicals, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*<sup>9</sup> and *Der Weg zur Freiheit*, which served as platforms for publications about the issue.<sup>10</sup> The pinnacle of all this activity was the publication in 1927 of a forty-volume document collection called *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914*.<sup>11</sup> Both at home and abroad, the publication sparked more admiration than criticism.<sup>12</sup> After all, it was the first serious piece of research into the run-up to the war. There was praise but also criticism, mainly about the selective presentation and arrangement of the documentary material. The outcome that Germany was not to blame at all for the outbreak of the war was of course a foregone conclusion. According to the publication, the guilty parties were firstly, the Russians and, secondly, and more implicitly, France and Great Britain. One of the reasons for this conclusion was the fact that the authors had to take into account the German negotiating position at Versailles; Russia hardly played any part in the treaty negotiations.

The height of the sum to be paid in reparations which was established in 1921, turned out to be extravagant. Germany suffered enormously from the economic crisis (1919-1923) and soon complained that it could not comply with the demands. The U.S. then decided to offer Germany financial assistance through the so-called Dawes plan. This ushered in a relatively stable period for Germany, lasting for five years until the economic crisis of 1929-1930. Despite this social stability, the war guilt issue continued to figure prominently on the political agenda. The numerous negotiations that followed time and again resulted in further reduction of reparations. Parallel to this development, relations between Germany and the other European powers also began to improve. The whole matter of reparations was finally laid to rest in 1932, when all remaining debts were cancelled. The success that Germany had achieved in the last phase of the republic did not mean that people were no longer interested in the war guilt issue. After Stresemann's death, a centre-right government led by prime minister Brüning was inaugurated in Berlin. This meant a further intensification of the struggle against the allied yoke which, according to the political right, was still holding Germany down. Rebuilding military power was prohibited and in spite of material success, Germany still felt dishonoured by the Treaty of Versailles. After all, the notorious paragraph 231 remained unaltered, despite separate adjustments to certain treaty stipulations.

It is generally agreed that the German desire to undo the so-called 'Kriegsschuldfrage', which Michael Salewski characterised as the 'Weimarer Revisionssyndrom'<sup>13</sup>, to a certain extent fulfilled the function of binding things together in the 'split' society which the Weimar Republic was in a number of respects.<sup>14</sup> The tentative sense of unity, that is to say, in this specific area, was hardly strong enough to support the young republic. According to the historian Wolfgang Jäger, the political importance as well as the emotional significance of the revision issue not only led to a taboo on pre-war politics, but also on the idealisation of the recent German past, which in turn stimulated nationalist tendencies.<sup>15</sup> Especially in the Brüning era (1930-1932), the Treaty of Versailles more and more became a propaganda vehicle for monarchist and nationalist ideas. Every attempt to make subtle distinctions in the representation of the war past was nipped in the bud or met with fierce reactions. In his book, Jäger stresses the strength of the Foreign Ministry's hold on the issue. Only two doctrines about the past were allowed: that of relative guilt, which said that all parties involved were guilty, or that of Germany's absolute innocence.<sup>16</sup>

1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND<sup>17</sup>

Produced in 1930, the film 1914 partly testified to the shift from silent movie to sound film.<sup>18</sup> While some films indulged in exuberant music and song to illustrate the state-of-the-art technology and craftsmanship of the German film industry, 1914 only used sound technology to reconstruct dialogues. Spoken word dominated the film to such an extent – music occurs only in the last scene – that the power of the images was reduced. A special gallows construction and a swivelling mechanism had been built especially for the film by sound engineer Charles Métain.<sup>19</sup> One would expect the actors to have more freedom to move<sup>20</sup>, but the opposite turned out to be the case: most actors appear to serve only as the static embodiments of a voice. The camera is almost completely static too, while the film is dominated by medium and total shots. The editing is very measured and unassuming, it is there simply to serve continuity. The film was shot entirely in the studio and does not contain any documentary footage. The historical characters played by well-known actors seem to come to life only at some moments. The dramaturgy is quite restrained, wooden even, with one or two notable exceptions. However, it may be true that the story itself contained enough drama for the audience, which was of course well aware of the outcome of the negotiations that had been conducted on the eve of the war. Besides that, the issue also continued to play an important role in public opinion.

The film 1914 opens with a voice-over announcing that Dr Eugen Fischer, about whom no further details are given, so that we may assume that he was a well-known public figure, will introduce the film and give an outline of events in the run-up to the war. Fischer then appears in shot, standing behind a lectern, and speaks the following words:

Meine Damen und Herren. Sie sollen einen Film sehen, in dem die freie Form der Kunst ein Stück Weltgeschichte darstellt. Und was für ein Stück! In der ganzen Geschichte ist kein Vorgang an Gehalt mit dem zu vergleichen, dass *ein* Machtwort fast 100 Millionen Männer aller Völker für Jahre zu Feinden machte; und zwar das Machtwort, das sich in den Sekunden formte, als der letzte Zar unter ein vorbereitetes Papier seinen Namen setzte: Nikolaus und somit den Befehl zur Mobilmachung des gesamten russischen Heeres gab.<sup>21</sup>

The first sentences of a speech, lasting about six minutes while there is no change to the image, set the tone for the film, and they are also its very core. Little in this film is left to free interpretation, even though opinions in the press were sharply divided. In the first few seconds of the film, it is established that

Russia is guilty of starting the war. The diplomatic negotiations that preceded the outbreak of the war are the main starting point for the narrative. Nevertheless, however self-assured the introduction may sound, the second sentence already seems to keep a number of options open: Speaking of the free form of art suggests that film is only 'one possible' interpretation of history. After the screening, Fischer and Oswald used this argument, among others, to defend themselves against attacks by critics.<sup>22</sup>

The speech closes with a sentence that leads into the short scene that follows ('... in den Strassen staute sich die Menge...'), which shows the assassination of archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo. The murderer, Gavrilo Princip, is arrested. There is no dialogue, the only thing to be heard is the crowds cheering. Fischer's introduction and the murder scene appear nearly completely detached from the narrative that follows. Fischer's speech is a commentary on the narrative as well as an introduction to it, and as such, it is no part of it. Although Fischer more or less blames Russia, he had become known and had gained respect as Dr Eugen Fischer, a left-liberal 'Kriegsschuldforscher'.<sup>23</sup> He had already given his views on the issue in his book *Die kritischen 39 Tage*.<sup>24</sup> Published in 1928, this book had failed to become a success. In a press conference about 1914, Fischer summarised his views as follows:

Fraglos liegt bei den kaiserlichen Regierungen von Deutschland und Österreich ein Teil von Schuld vor. Über das Mass sind die Meinungen geteilt, die Autoren des Films "1914" jedenfalls vertreten die mildere Richtung.<sup>25</sup>

The second scene, at Sarajevo, leads the viewer into the actual diegesis of the film.<sup>26</sup> Here, the film deviates from the scenes that follow in terms of its location, its relative exuberant nature and the fact that diplomatic history does not yet play a role. Ending with images of cheering anonymous crowds, the scene is followed by a series of scenes about the individual diplomats, politicians and monarchs who hold the key to Europe's fate. This makes the film an example of a historiography in which history is determined by individual agents. The first one to appear in shot is the emperor of Austria, Franz Joseph (Eugen Klopfer), who is being shown reports on the archduke's assassination. The film continues with a short and silent scene showing the questioning of Princip at the police station. From that moment on, the atmosphere of the film appears to change. All attention is focused on the diplomatic reactions and negotiations taking place behind closed doors. Although the film story covers 39 days, the proper succession of these days has not been taken as a starting point. No dates are shown, and the difference between one day and the next is often blurred. More attention is paid to establishing a distinction between the various locations where the negotiations are taking place. Separated by 'hard cuts', the individual scenes form important national landmarks. Depending on their



A conversation between Sasonow (standing) and a foreign diplomat

nationality, the main characters nearly all the time move about in the same recognisable rooms. For example, Franz Joseph can always be seen sitting at a desk in a spacious room, with two high windows that filter the sunlight. We see German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg (Albert Bassermann) in a small, sparsely decorated room with a desk that is large yet simple, and with bookcases covering the walls. The French government leaders move in a room dominated by Napoleon's buste. However, the most striking rooms are those of the Russians. Czar Nicholas II (Reinhold Schünzel) moves almost without exception in an empire style room in his spacious and well-lit palace, containing few pieces of furniture but with ample decorations on walls and ceiling. The style and lighting contrast strongly with the dark room occupied by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sasonow (Oscar Homolka).

His room is full of baroque furniture, and his desk is entirely covered by all kinds of bric-a-brac, statuettes and candleholders. The splendour of the Russian court is sharply contrasted with the simplicity of the German and other 'national' locations. The Russian, German and Austrian locations are, in this order, the main contexts in which the short run-up to the war is played out. The





Grand duke Nicolai, the czar and the czarina

other locations, of Serbia, Great Britain and France, are also official rooms, but they are contrasted far less sharply than the above. The 'official spaces' are left only for the last scenes of the film, when we move to the shabby newsroom of the daily *L'Humanité*, with the portly figure of its founder, Dreyfussard, socialist and anti-war agitator Jean Jaurès (Heinrich George). After his murder in a restaurant, where he had just begun eating his entry, the last scene ends with the sound of church bells chiming.

As said before, the filmic representation of this history is very balanced and even, aesthetically speaking. Only a few scenes stand out, and it is no coincidence that these are the scenes in which an important role is played by the main agents in the narrative, the Russians. They are given the strongest profile in the narrative. The intrigue surrounding the czar, his wife (Lucie Höflich) and grand duke Nicolai (Ferdinand Hart) makes sure there is plenty of high drama in a number of scenes. We see the czar wrestle with the choice between the opinions of his pacifist wife and the views of the military men in power, led by the hawkish grand duke Nicolai. Put under pressure by Nicolai, the czar will eventually sign the order to mobilise.

The role of the czar was played by Reinhold Schünzel, who had earlier acted in the war drama *IN DER HEIMAT, DA GIBT'S EIN WIEDERSEH'N* (1926, Leo Müller and Reinhold Schünzel) and was known for his roles in countless romantic comedies. Lucie Höflich, also known as a comedienne, played his wife; Ferdinand Hart was grand duke Nicolai, while Sasonow, the Russian Foreign Minister, was played by Oskar Homolka. In this film, Schünzel and Höflich proved, not for the first time, that they were able to play tragic roles, and especially Schünzel was praised in the press. The choice for Homolka seemed a clear case of typecasting. Several years earlier, he had played the mysterious protagonist in *FELDGRAU*, also known as *DER MANN AUS DEM JENSEITS* (1926 Manfred Noa). Lurking about in his dark baroque rooms, Sasonow is the ultimate schemer, plotting with Nicolai, Defense Minister Suchomlinow (E.A. Licho) and Chief-of-staff, general Januskewitsch (Hermann Heilingner), to get the czar to adopt a firmer attitude against Austria-Hungary and its ally, Germany. In Sasonow's rooms, the ambassadors of Germany, France and Great Britain are coming and going. The first as a potential enemy, the other two as allies. The British ambassador, Buchanan (Fritz Alberti), points out that Great Britain will only be able to join the Russians in a war as an ally if the Germans take the initiative and strike first. He says Germany must be made to take responsibility for the war. In a long scene, lasting more than six minutes, the German ambassador tries to calm the Russians down by pointing out that Germany will not be able to avoid war if the Russians mobilise. Yet he wants to try to prevent a war. After this scene, they meet again twice, without making any progress towards rapprochement. Once Russia has been mobilised, a demoralised German ambassador Von Pourtales (Hans Pepler) hands Sasonow the German declaration of war. The relationship and contrast between the two men is worked out in three scenes, to the German ambassador's advantage, who clearly conveys the notion that his country does not want this war. Sasonow's cunning is shown in a later scene, persuading the czarina that Von Pourtales actually favours the war.

Meanwhile, Sasonow learns that Austria-Hungary has attacked Serbia. This was the moment to persuade the czar to issue the mobilisation order.

The scenes that follow are the narrative core of the film. We see how the czar is manipulated by the four conspirators to sign the mobilisation order. This order is countermanded when a telegram arrives indicating that Wilhelm II is not in favour of war. The telegram reveals Sasonow's lie, since he had told the czar that Germany wanted war. Angered by the cancellation of the mobilisation, Nicolai and his cronies step up pressure on the czar. They do not want any half measures, no partial mobilisation, but a total one. In this power struggle, czar Nicholas is represented as a weak and impressionable man, who appears in



shot with his eyes wide open with fear, chainsmoking, apparently unable to make a decision. A number of total shots serve to illustrate his weakness and despair. He is dwarfed by the enormity of the rooms, and he seems literally to carry the world on his shoulders. In the end, he caves in, and, under the watchful eye of the hawks, signs the order to mobilise.

In the meantime, the film switches to parallel scenes in Germany, to Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg's rooms. Chief-of-staff, general Von Moltke (Wolfgang von Schwind), makes clear that a German reaction to Russian activities at the border has become inevitable. Bethmann-Hollweg reacts in a loud, hoarse baritone voice when Defence Minister Von Falkenhayn calls on him 'los zu gehen'. And even when the kaiser, after the Russian mobilisation, urges him to react strongly, Bethmann-Hollweg will not have anything to do with war, and instead proposes to reopen negotiations. While the Russian czar is shown extensively, the figure of the German kaiser does not actually appear in the film, not even in the form of a picture.<sup>27</sup>

1914 confirmed the notion that in Germany as well as in Russia, politics was dominated by the military. This meant that the heads of state, kaiser Wilhelm II and czar Nicholas II, were kept out of range. The same was true for the main political players, like German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg. The message appeared to be that war is something that is first set up and then fought between soldiers. Another notion is that the European cabinets failed to resist the military's belligerence. But the most important message the film wished to convey was the notion that Germany was not guilty of beginning the war. According to many of the advertisements for the film, this was the express purpose of the film.<sup>28</sup>

The question remains whether it was at all possible at the end of the Weimar period to offer a different take on pre-war history, or, indeed, to interpret the vast number of documents that had been collected and published in a different way than had been done in the film. Analysis of the film shows that 1914 closely follows the main conclusions of the document collection called *Die Europäischen Kabinette*. Blaming Russia was the safest way not to offend France and Great Britain, Germany's main partners in the treaty negotiations. It should hardly come as a surprise, therefore, that the roles played by the French and British government leaders do not receive much attention in the film.<sup>29</sup> Most of the time France gets in the film is not spent on government leaders, but on the great French pacifist, Jean Jaurès. Although Oswald has represented Jean Jaurès sympathetically, he puts words in his mouth to the effect that Russia is indicted for wanting the war, while France is blamed for failing to stop it.

Oswald's specific attention to Jaurès also betrays the director's signature. His interest in recent French history had already become apparent with his

1930 film about the Dreyfus affair.<sup>30</sup> As a Jew and a democrat, Oswald had explained the shameful events surrounding this affair. It was no wonder, therefore, that he would portray Jaurès in a sympathetic light in 1914.

The country that received most screening time – a total 45 minutes – was Russia. This was probably so because it was blamed for the war, for these scenes were the dramatic climax of the film. The mechanisms of political power operating between the Russian army, the czar and his ministers were represented in a relatively subtle way. Oswald showed the czar's inner struggle with much compassion. The Soviet Union, which could hardly be suspected of harbouring a great love for the czar, appears to have filed an official protest with the German government in 1931, saying it objected strongly to Oswald's interpretation.<sup>31</sup>

It is clear that the film did not deviate much from the official German reading of the causes of the war. It is strange, therefore, that the Foreign Ministry and the censor should have reacted the way they did.

### **'Zensur – der böse Engel'<sup>32</sup>**

In October 1930, Richard Oswald began shooting 1914 in the Ufa studios at Babelsberg. Since the subject was a sensitive one, both nationally and internationally, he had at an early stage asked the Foreign Ministry for help. He did not just want official approval of the script, so that he would be covered against any objections from the powerful censorship authorities, he also wanted the ministry's advice on this historically complicated issue. It is not known how exactly the ministry handled the assessment of the script and the supervision of the production process. If we are to believe the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the situation at the Foreign Ministry was close to complete chaos, and the entire matter was left in the hands of an inexperienced junior civil servant.<sup>33</sup>

The shooting finished in early December, after which the film was given to the censor (Filmprüfstelle) in Berlin for approval.<sup>34</sup> At the session on 23 December, no fewer than six expert representatives of the Foreign Ministry were present.<sup>35</sup> The press was not allowed to witness the session, as had been the case with the assessment of the film *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*, which had premiered in Germany earlier that same month.<sup>36</sup> After a long and enervating session, the committee returned a negative advice. The committee issued a ban because it deemed the film capable of 'Beziehungen Deutschlands zu auswärtigen Staaten zu trüben', and because it believed the film might damage Germany's prestige abroad.<sup>37</sup>

The press was rife with speculations about the true reason for the ban. While the conservative *Kinematograph*, without offering any arguments, claimed to understand the ban, the left-liberal press was furious, since it did

not understand the reasons why this film should have been banned. The left-liberal press was especially puzzled by the ban because the film had been produced with the support of the Foreign Ministry. A *Lichtbildbühne* editor had seen the film and, after having given it some thought, could find no reason for the ban<sup>38</sup>, since the film completely refuted the 'Kriegsschuldlüge'. The anonymous *Lichtbildbühne* editor further remarked that the film also showed that the war had been an ill-fated concurrence of circumstances and misunderstandings, and that Germany had been left with no other choice than to mobilise. At any rate, the film did not point to Germany as the only guilty party: 'Soweit Berlin den Schauplatz bildet, ist Vermittlungs- und Verständigungswille immer wieder der Grundton.'<sup>39</sup>

Oswald, too, was furious, especially since the film had been produced with the support of the Foreign Ministry. He planned to sue the federal tax service for damages.<sup>40</sup> However, events took another turn.

It goes without saying that the negotiations did not end with the Filmprüfstelle's negative and poorly motivated decision. It turned out that the decision had not been taken by a clear majority. Two participants in the meeting, a lawyer and a representative of the film company, filed a protest with the 'Oberfilmprüfstelle'.<sup>41</sup> This meant that the film would at least have to be re-examined. However, in the end this would not happen. After long and difficult deliberations, a solution was found: some substantial changes would be made, and a scene would be added at the beginning of the narrative in which 'Kriegsschuldforscher' Eugen Fischer would read out an introduction<sup>42</sup>, thus filling out the historiographical gaps in the film. This also meant that the objection would not have to be heard at the 'Oberfilmprüfstelle'. But the film would now have to be approved by a lower censorship authority, and this occurred on 9 January 1931.<sup>43</sup> The press was again barred from the meeting. One day later, it became known who had been on the committee and which scenes had earlier been considered offensive by the Foreign Ministry.<sup>44</sup> The first scene was one in which the then Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, wants to step down because he does not want to take responsibility for war. The second offensive scene involved the czar and Sasonow discussing the declaration of war. The way this episode was portrayed was said not to correspond to the facts.<sup>45</sup>

In the end, after discussions lasting about five hours, the film was finally approved for release, 'ohne Ausschnitt'.<sup>46</sup> The film was also approved for the young, and it was given the predicate 'künstlerisch'. The press said it was mostly thanks to the pleading of one of Oswald's scriptwriters, Dr Wenzel Goldbaum, that the committee decided to approve the film.<sup>47</sup>

The history of the film in the period between its production and the actual premiere provides an insight into how much room there was to manoeuvre when

a film represented anything to do with the war. Oswald wanted to base his film on official war documents. In order to make the story of the run-up to the war accessible and attractive for a large audience, he had to find a way to select, interpret and dramatised these documents so that the result would be a suitable production. Although he adopted the conclusion and a number of dialogues from the document collection, he was probably also inspired by earlier literary and historical accounts of the period. For example, contemporary reports and reviews refer to both Eugen Fischer's book *Die kritischen 39 Tage* and to Emil Ludwig's book *Juli 14*.<sup>48</sup> Fischer's book, which had hardly received any attention at all in the press, was soon lost in oblivion, as was indeed its author. The reception of Emil Ludwig's *Juli 14*, however, has been extensively documented and is an example of the way that non-academic, narrative historiography was perceived and assessed, both in the press and by professional and academically-trained historians. Audio-visual historiography may also be included in this form of historiography, and especially the war films studied here, which were, or were said to have been, based on historical sources. *1914* is such a film. The next paragraph sketches part of the context in which historically oriented war films were produced and viewed.

## **Emil Ludwig and the *Kriegsschuldfrage***

The book *Juli 14*, published in 1929 by Rowohlt publishers, was at least as controversial as Oswald's film. It appears that, while the film credits do not actually refer to the book, the writers of the screenplay, Heinz Goldberg and Fritz Wendhausen, had at least allowed themselves to be inspired by Ludwig's book. A report that appeared in *Lichtbildbühne* of 12 September 1930 seems to underline this. It said that Oswald and Rowohlt had been negotiating about the production of a film version of *Juli 14*.<sup>49</sup> Nothing is known about the outcome of these talks, and yet it is meaningful enough that the book was referred to, since there are important similarities between the approaches and points of view in the book and in the film.

*Juli 14* was a huge success. Around 140,000 copies were sold before 1931, 60,000 of which within two weeks after its publication.<sup>50</sup> Ludwig had written his first draft as early as 1921. It was not until 1929 that he deemed the time right to publish a revised version of his manuscript, an account of the crisis that had led to the First World War.<sup>51</sup> In a spirited style he described the negotiations, thoughts and emotions of the main characters who played lead roles on the European stage. Much emphasis was given to Nicholas II, Wilhelm II, Franz Joseph, Bethmann-Hollweg, count Berchtold (Austria's Foreign Minis-

ter), Sasonow, Sir Edward Grey (Great Britain's Foreign Minister) and others. The fact that the book did not appear until the late twenties can only have benefitted its author, since at that moment, the largest international document collections pertaining to the run-up to the war had already been published.<sup>52</sup> Part of the source material used by Ludwig had begun appearing in 1926, including the forty-volume standard work published by the Foreign Ministry.<sup>53</sup> It had been his idea to reconstruct the main conversations and actions of the moment on the basis of the documents. Even though Ludwig was not an academically-trained historian, he tried to meet the criteria of professional historiography in his own way. Despite this, he came into conflict with several prominent German historians because of his style and methods. It was especially the historians on the political right who were not impressed with Ludwig's historical novels and biographies. The new genre that was introduced in Germany by Ludwig and others became known under the neologism 'historische Belletristik'. Ludwig himself preferred to describe his work as belonging to a new school of historiography, as opposed to the old historiography practised by professional historians.<sup>54</sup> Especially Wilhelm Mommsen revolted against this, among other things by writing an article entitled '*Legitime*' und '*illegitime*' *Geschichtsschreibung*.<sup>55</sup> Needless to say perhaps that Mommsen considered Ludwig's writing as an example of 'illegitimate' historiography.

In the end, however, the controversy was not so much about Ludwig's style or method, but about his position in the debate about the guilt issue. The preface to his book opened with the following lines:

Die Schuld am Kriege trifft das gesamte Europa: das hat die Forschung in allen Ländern erwiesen. Deutschlands Alleinschuld und Deutschlands Unschuld sind Märchen für Kinder jenseits und diesseits des Rheines.<sup>56</sup>

This view was later expressed by Lloyd George as well, and later German historiography was dominated by the notion that Germany did not bear guilt, and was certainly not the only country to blame. Until much later this view was attacked in the early sixties by the Hamburg historian Fritz Fischer in his *Griff nach der Weltmacht* and caused much controversy amongst German historians.

Yet Ludwig did not deny that some countries had to bear more guilt than others:

... mit der Schuld (sind) Wien und Petersburg am stärksten belastet; Berlin und Paris folgen ihnen in sehr verschiedener Entfernung als Sekundanten; London folgt in viel weiterer Distanz.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, Ludwig puts into perspective the hypothesis of innocence that was propagated so often. Though he did not put most of the blame on Germany, he

did put the country in a shared second place of guilty parties. However, by not pointing at Germany as the main guilty party, he also undermined the Treaty of Versailles. According to Christoph Gradmann in his study of 'historische Belletristik' from the Weimar period, this meant that Ludwig placed himself in the camp of the moderate pacifists.<sup>58</sup> Ludwig's table of guilt also shows that he did not so much consider the peoples concerned guilty, as the various governments residing in the various capitals of Europe. This made his book a protest against the pre-war political system, which offended those still harbouring warm feelings for the former imperial Germany. Witness Ludwig in his preface: 'Die Gesamtschuld lag in den Kabinetten, die Gesamtunschuld auf den Strassen Europas.'<sup>59</sup> The masses as such were innocent and had been thrown into despair by the deceit practised on them by the generals and politicians: 'Dieses Buch ist eine Studie über die Dummheit der damals Mächtigen und den rechten Instinkt der damals Machtlosen.'<sup>60</sup>

Reviews of the book can be distinguished on the basis of political preferences. Kurt Tucholsky proved right when he said about Ludwig and his book: 'Er weiss, welche Dreckfluten sich nun auf ihn ergiessen werden. Der Mann hat Zivilcourage.'<sup>61</sup> It is obvious that these 'Dreckfluten' would mostly be poured over Ludwig by the right-wing press, which emphatically disagreed with his democratic stance and his efforts to put Germany's role into perspective.<sup>62</sup> The left-liberal press praised the pacifist message in the book<sup>63</sup> and also agreed with Tucholsky that the masses got off much too lightly in the book. In fact, Tucholsky argued, they were as guilty of the outbreak of war as the politicians and generals.<sup>64</sup>

In any case, the good reputation Ludwig had enjoyed was finished in some circles after the publication of his book in 1929. Gradmann writes: 'Von nun an wurde er, zusammen mit Autoren wie Remarque, verstärkt zur Zielscheibe völkischer und nationalsozialistischer Kritiker.'<sup>65</sup> These were exactly the two groups that would increasingly come to dominate political life in Germany. Not surprisingly, it became more and more difficult to present a balanced view on Germany's role in the outbreak of the war. Any so-called 'Popularisierung' of history was anathema to academic historians and drew fire from the right if it defended views that did not suit them. Yet the majority of historical novels, a genre that was very popular at the time, hardly received any serious attention at all.

It is rather obvious to label the reactions to Ludwig's book as a sign of an ever more powerful shift to the right, and of the erosion of democratic government at the end of the Weimar period. Although this is certainly true, it does not tell us anything about the way the political right intervened on various social levels (press, politics, university) in the discussion about the different ways of representing the German war past. Besides taking restrictive measures

to curb books and theatre plays, which were applied with restraint, the authorities also used the press to influence public opinion. As far as Ludwig's book was concerned, it was especially the right-wing professional historians and journalists with a right-wing orientation who initiated and to a great extent determined the discussions about the perspective represented by Ludwig. As Gradmann already indicates in his conclusion, these reactions can also be seen as a sign of a 'soziale und intellektuelle Krise des Bildungsbürgertums der Zeit'.<sup>66</sup> The fact that the book was a bestseller in spite of this, can partly be explained by the popularity of the genre and by the successes Ludwig had achieved with his earlier books, in a word, by his popular reputation. Besides that, the sensation caused by the book would surely not have hurt the sales figures.

Similar factors also played a role with respect to the film *1914*, although it was less successful. Besides the fact that the film had been inspired by Ludwig's book, that this 'genre' of historical films was hugely popular and that the director, Richard Oswald, enjoyed a certain prestige, the press gave more attention to the film than it normally would have done, both before and after the film's premiere. Unlike Ludwig's book, the film met with strict censorship measures.

The film *1914* and the book *Juli 14* were released in roughly the same period. However, it was not just the film that had a connection with Ludwig's book, a play entitled *1914* was also associated with his work. The play premiered in Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater on 1 September 1930. This play, referred to as a 'dokumentarisches Schauspiel' or 'Zeitstück', was shrouded in mystery. No one seemed to know who was the actual author behind the name of Georg Wilhelm Müller. Critics speculated that it was Emil Ludwig himself, but since he categorically denied any involvement (and if he had been the author, the critics said he would certainly have admitted this) everyone was in the dark about the author's identity. The question whether someone like Eugen Fischer could have written the play was never asked. Whatever the case may have been, the play immediately sparked negative reactions from nearly all reviewers. They were unanimous in their dislike for especially the dialogues, which followed the original documents literally, creating a completely lifeless theatrical performance. Only the direction, by Gustaf Gründgens, earned some praise.<sup>67</sup>

The remarkable thing is that, in the end, neither Ludwig's book nor Müller's play caused the kind of controversy stirred up by Oswald's film.



## DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO

The film 1914 was not the only film about the run-up to the war and the guilt issue, respectively. It was preceded by DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO (1920) and the Austrian production BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS (1926), two films that were substantially different in terms of narrative strategy. While 1914 shows us the history of diplomatic efforts prior to the war, the emphasis in DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO, must have been, as the title already indicates, on the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife. In BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS, the places of action, according to the programme brochure, were especially the Austrian and Russian courts before and during the war. Both 1914 and BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS present the Russians as the main instigators of the war. Unfortunately, the two early films have not been preserved, and secondary information about them is scarce. As far as we know, nothing is left of DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO but a programme brochure containing the credits, a few still photographs from the film and a description of its contents.<sup>68</sup> Even critical reviews for specialist publications could not be found, though it must be said that in the early twenties, film criticism was not developed to such an extent that a review was written of every single film that appeared. More information has been preserved about BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS, most of it in the form of reviews.

Although the three film narratives appear to be different from each other in many respects, the similarity in the subtitles is remarkable. All three refer explicitly to the guilt issue: the subtitle of DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO was *Die Schuld am Weltkriege*; BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS was also called *Ein Beitrag zur Kriegsschuldfrage*<sup>69</sup> and 1914 was presented as a *Film gegen die Kriegsschuldfrage*.<sup>70</sup> The first thing that strikes one, is the fact that the suffix... *lüge* is missing in the subtitle of the 1920 film. While the other two films referred directly to the public debate, DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO may not have been more than a relatively innocent historical film. Besides, the debate on the guilt issue did not yet have the intensity that it would develop later. True, the guilt paragraph included in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles was actually known among the general public, but the height of the reparations was not established until 1921. From then on, the debate intensified considerably. The main research bodies were also set up after 1921. It is likely, therefore, that the word 'Kriegsschuldfrage' did not yet have the currency that it would later gain.

Since BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS and 1914 referred to the guilt issue and tried to clear Germany from any guilt, they directly or indirectly contributed to the propaganda campaign against German guilt. Judging from reports in the press, it is not likely that the Foreign Ministry interfered with BRANDSTIFTER



EUROPAS the way it did with 1914. Nevertheless, 1914 was in the end approved for people under eighteen, unlike BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS.<sup>71</sup> The reason for this must have had something to do with the kind of love drama that BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS showed, which was apparently considered likely to corrupt the 'sittliche, geistige oder gesundheitliche Entwicklung oder eine Ueberreizung der Phantasie der Jugendlichen...'.<sup>72</sup>

It is also striking, but altogether not very surprising, that only the promotion of these films referred to the use of documentary material. For example, the front page of the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* and an advertisement in the specialist publication *Lichtbildbühne* said that BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS had been made 'nach wahren Begebenheit und Material aus den Geheimdokumenten eines russischen Diplomaten'.<sup>73</sup> We will find out later, from reviews of the film, whether presenting anonymous sources such as 'a' Russian diplomat lent the film any additional credibility. Advertisements for 1914 said the film had been made 'unter Verwendung internationaler Staatsdokumente'.<sup>74</sup> This may sound at least as obligatory, but the film received so much publicity, even before it was premiered, that it had meanwhile been revealed that those documents that came from the national archives had also been used by Foreign Ministry researchers in their struggle to refute Germany's guilt. This did not mean, however, that the film was accepted at face value simply because it was based on official source material, as will emerge from the reviews.

The programme brochure of DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO did not refer to the use of any documents, probably because of the nature of the narrative. Judging from the description of the contents in this brochure, *Der Doppelmord* had nothing to do with diplomatic history, nor did it point an accusing finger at certain governments or military leaderships. In fact, this film showed what had happened before the July crisis of 1914. After all, the diplomatic entanglement did not develop until after the murder of Franz Ferdinand and the infamous Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. The emphasis was therefore on the activities carried out by the conspirators, who were all supposed to be members of Narodna Obrana.<sup>75</sup> Although the film opened and closed with the figure of Franz Ferdinand, four of the six acts in the film were devoted to the men set to kill him.<sup>76</sup> Only a few lines were spent on the motives for the murder. After it had been indicated that Franz Ferdinand was not exactly loved by everyone – to which he reacted with the words: 'Wer hasst und liebt, niederreisst und aufbaut, muss sich auch Hass und Liebe gefallen lassen!'<sup>77</sup> – tensions in the empire were described as follows:

Und schon spinnen sich langsam die Fäden, die ihn zu Fall bringen sollen. – Panslavisten, Revolutionäre und Antimilitaristen, sehen in ihm das schreckliche Hindernis zur Verwirklichung ihrer Ideen, in allen erdenklichen Formen erhält der

Thronfolger Warnungsbriefe dieser Geheimverschwörung, doch lächelnd geht er seinen geraden Weg des Wollens.<sup>78</sup>

In the film, the things that happened to Franz Ferdinand in the circle of his family have served as a contrast to the events threatening him from the outside. Although his marriage with lady-in-waiting countess Sophie von Chotek had met with fierce opposition because of her lowly birth, he persevered in his wish to marry for love, despite the consequences for Sophie's position at court. This morganatic marriage was probably closed privately.

Ratlos arbeiten aber die unbekanntenen Gegenspieler. "Bosnien, du Träne im Auge Serbiens, du Waisenkind unter allen Ländern", predigt der Lehrer Ilic seinen jungen Schülern und mit glühenden Augen nehmen Princip, Grabez und Grabilowic den Fanatismus in sich auf und gedeihen zum Handwerkzeuge der Verschwörer.<sup>79</sup>

The narrative ends with their departure for Bosnia, where the fatal shots will ring out.

## BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS

Six years after *DER DOPPELMORD*, the Austrian film *BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS* premiered in Berlin on 17 September 1926. Judging from the story in the programme brochure, the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*, this film was far more ambitious than the 1920 film. The time span in which the narrative unfolded was wider, and the film was not limited to events in Austria-Hungary. As far as the first aspect is concerned, the narrative opens with colonel Alfred Redl's suicide in 1913 and ends with Rasputin's death and subsequent downfall of the Romanov dynasty in 1917. The two central countries must therefore have been Austria-Hungary and Russia. The narrative focuses on the Russian dancer and spy Sonja Starewna, who has come into the possession of secret Austrian army documents because of colonel Redl's untimely death, which may, or indeed, may not have been entirely voluntary. Starewna hands the documents containing Austria's 'Aufmarsch' plans, to the Russian grand duke, who then falls in love with her.

Der erste Schritt zu der kommenden Welt-Katastrophe ist getan – der Zar ordnet, auf Veranlassung des Grossfürsten, den Aufmarsch der sibirischen Regimenter (sic) an die österreichische Grenze an. – Die russische Militärpartei drängt den Zaren zur Kriegserklärung.<sup>80</sup>

Besides Starewna and the Russian grand duke (probably referring to grand duke Nicolai), who both make an effort on behalf of armed battle, the figure of Rasputin plays an important role. He is against the war and tries to use his huge influence on the czar. He fails to win the czar for his cause, however, and war breaks out. Despite her love for the grand duke, Starewna is engaged to the Austrian lieutenant Michael Korsakow. He gets the worst of it in a duel with the grand duke and is sent to Siberia. However, he manages to escape and falls in love with another woman. In the meantime, Rasputin has gained so much influence that he is able to persuade the czar to relieve the grand duke of his duties. For the grand duke's military party, this is the signal they have been waiting for to get rid of Rasputin, with the help of Starewna. Meanwhile, Lenin has arrived in the country. Rasputin's prophecy that his death will also mean the end of czarism has come true, according to the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*.

The contents description indicates that the director intended to heighten the film's romantic and dramatic action by including non-historical figures like Sonja Starewna and Michael Korsakow. The historical characters' actions have been romanticised to such an extent that it seems as if the director meant to replace all objective-diplomatic negotiations by personal interest and intrigue. This is all in stark contrast to what the film promised to be, namely a film 'Nach wahren Begebenheiten'. The promise that the film would be a contribution to the guilt debate is, based on the story, made good, however. Germany is kept out of range. The guilty party was Russia, and in particular the faction around the grand duke, which the text in the programme brochure refers to as the 'Militärpartei' (which seems to confirm the likelihood that the grand duke refers to the historic count Nicolai). The czar is presented as a weak and impressionable cog in the wheel of state.

Things were rather more complicated with respect to Austria. This country was blamed only indirectly. After all, the documents Starewna takes to Russia were said to contain plans for the Austrian advance against Russia, which was an act of aggression. In response, Russia stationed a regiment at the Austrian border.<sup>81</sup> Although there was some attention to the murder of Franz Ferdinand, the narrative keeps silent about the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. Austria refused to put on the hair shirt with this film, as Germany had done in 1914.

The occasional reviews provide a limited yet interesting insight into the reactions to *BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS*. It is interesting, for example, to work out how serious critics took the historical perspective of the film and whether they explicitly connected the film with the public debate about the guilt issue.

The specialist publications unanimously passed a positive judgement on the film, though they had some marginal comments. Reviews in the *Kinematograph* and *Reichsfilmblatt* both opened by paying attention to the film's

promise of providing 'Ein Beitrag zur Kriegsschuldfrage'. This promise was immediately shown up as a nice publicity stunt by the *Kinematograph*. The film itself was said to have nothing to do with the guilt issue, and as far as the narrative itself was concerned, history '... erzählt uns etwas anderes', according to the critic.<sup>82</sup> Yet, he reasoned, the historical aspects did not matter where the dramatic action of the film was concerned. It was clear that he emphasized the effect that the film might have on an audience, by which he also presupposed that historical reliability was of secondary importance.

The *Reichsfilmblatt* tentatively decided to give the film the benefit of the doubt. The critic believed that *BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS* was nothing more, but absolutely nothing more, than only a very small contribution to the guilt issue debate. There were issues at stake which the audience '... gern übersehen, wissen möchte – und die doch noch so unerkant tief verborgen liegen, für spätere Zeiten objektiverer Erkenntnismöglichkeiten'.<sup>83</sup> Twelve years after the facts, the critic said, it had turned out that 'objective' knowledge about what actually happened was almost impossible to come by. Nevertheless, he assessed the way the director had represented the history from colonel Redl up to Lenin in a positive light. Though he indicated in the above statement that there could not yet be any objective knowledge, some lines down he wrote that it is always risky to visualise historical events and characters. 'Man sollte dem Film in dieser Beziehung mehr Freiheit gönnen und sich nicht unbedingt immer an die absolute Treue der Wiedergabe halten.'<sup>84</sup> Like his colleague in the *Kinematograph*, this critic did not consider historical reliability necessary for the success and appreciation of a film. It might even have an adverse effect – 'Es wirkt der Versuch der genauen Nachahmung zu hölzern, zu steif'<sup>85</sup> – and it might rob the audience of its viewing pleasure, so he argued.

The *Film-Kurier* also paid much attention to the excellent acting performances and the captivating drama. Only at the end of his review, the critic briefly discussed the historical level of the film. The first point he made was that the film refrained from passing any kind of political judgement. The film was said to present the facts in a sober and objective manner, but whether it actually told the truth 'was left aside'. However, 'Da aber die Debatte über die Ursachen des Krieges noch lange die Menschheit beschäftigen wird, dürfte er überall auf stärkstes Interesse stossen.'<sup>86</sup> No one distanced themselves from the film because it was an Austrian film.

Of the three daily newspapers, only *Vorwärts* and *Der Montag* discussed the question of historical reliability and the guilt issue in their reviews of *BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS*. The third daily, *Germania*, did little else than briefly describe the film's contents and pronounce a eulogy on the actors and actresses. Only the first two sentences of the review mentioned, without any further comment, that the film wanted to be 'ein Kapitel zur Kriegsschuldfrage'

and that this was what it actually was.<sup>87</sup> The *Vorwärts* critic, however, hardly paid any attention to the contents at all, but, from the first line down, went in for blanket rubbishing of the entire film, ending his review with the deprecatory remark that the film was in fact nothing more than a 'Kasperlespiel der Weltgeschichte'. In any case, the film was said not to fulfil its promise of being a contribution to the debate surrounding the Kriegsschuldfrage. Besides, the 'linked-up scenes' were nothing more than a 'banales Zerrbild der Geschichte', said the author. 'Mit der historischen Wahrheit und mit dem Filmwerk ist es also beide Male nichts.' In short, *Vorwärts* could find nothing but fault in the film.<sup>88</sup> The critic writing for *Der Montag* was very superficial. It said the assertion that the film was a contribution to the Kriegsschuldfrage debate was an exaggeration. The critic thought it was no more than 'Ein kleines Scherflein, bei dem man noch nicht weiss, ob die Münze, in der es entrichtet wird echt ist' and in the end called the film an 'Anekdotenbüchlein'. The film was finally deemed worthy of the predicate 'mediocre'.<sup>89</sup>

There is a certain paradox in these reviews. On the one hand, the film was said to be historically unreliable, while on the other hand, the reviews said that, since there was a lack of information, no final pronouncements could be made about the past. It is remarkable, therefore, that no critic indicated the exact reasons why the film was unreliable. Without giving any reasons, the film was judged too pretentious in its promise to offer a contribution to the guilt discussion. The only motive shining through was that a genuine contribution to the debate was at that time considered not yet expedient or even possible. *Vorwärts* found the film's assertions an important ground for disapproval. Despite the assumed lack of knowledge in the area of guilt research, the reviews did not contain any explicit protest against the film's notion that Russia was especially guilty of the outbreak of the war. Nor was there anything about the fact that the film did not pay any attention at all to the role played by Germany in the run-up to the war. This would suggest that, at least in the reviews discussed here, there was implicit approval of the perspective offered by the film. Broadly speaking, this perspective was the same as the one put forward by the Foreign Ministry's 'researchers'.

## Critical reception of 1914

There is an abundance of source material about 1914, at least as far as film reviews are concerned. 1914 is quite different from what the other two films discussed above may have been. The director of 1914 apparently meant to make

a serious historical production, and, accordingly, based his film on source material that had received official approval. This also meant that most critics did not approach this film the way they would have done any other film. In several reviews, it is clear that the author feels that a 'historische Reportage' as some critics called it, should be assessed in different terms than other completely fictional narratives. For example, fictional narratives would have to be judged on their dramaturgical and cinematographical merits, while 'historische Reportagen' deserved an assessment in terms derived from the historical discipline. This distinction sometimes also seemed to refer to another distinction, namely that between art and politics. If a critic discussed the historical content of the film, the review would almost automatically get a political dimension, at least in the case of 1914. As was shown in the previous chapter, the majority of critics wanted a clear distinction between politics ('Tendenz') and film. However, it turned out to be almost impossible to review 1914 without making political statements. Only confessional newspapers such as *Der Deutsche* and *Germania* refrained, as was their custom, from making explicit political comments.<sup>90</sup>

Critics writing for the specialist publications tried to confine their reviews to the dramaturgical and cinematographic aspects of a film. However, 1914 clearly gave cause for a different approach. If a reviewer held on to his traditional understanding of his job, he apparently also felt the need to justify himself. For example, Hans Wollenberg explained to the *Lichtbildbühne* readership that it was the critic's most important task to deal exclusively with the 'Filmische eines Films'.<sup>91</sup> His review of 1914, therefore, not only discussed the type of film – according to Wollenberg, 1914 struck a balance between report and drama – but also paid attention to the acting performances and direction, and gave a short account of the contents. No attention was paid to the role played by the government and the censorship authorities, probably because the periodical had extensively reported on these matters in previous issues. According to Wollenberg, the dramatic impact of a film depended on 'die Gestaltung persönlichen, menschlichen Einzelschicksals'.<sup>92</sup> The main task of the writers of the screenplay, therefore, had been to reduce this world event to the level of psychology. They had succeeded in this, according to Wollenberg, by making the events at the Russian czar's court the emotional epicentre of the film. It should hardly come as a surprise that the *Lichtbildbühne* critic was not interested in the historical authenticity of the film narrative. The important thing was conveying human experience and perception which 'unter allen Umständen echter ist als jede "Echtheit" aller Dokumente'.<sup>93</sup> According to Wollenberg, Richard Oswald's film was an excellent achievement based on this principle.

The other major specialist publications, *Reichsfilmblatt*, *Der Film*, *Kinematograph* and the *Film-Kurier*, as well as most daily newspapers, had an opposite

approach. They paid much more attention to the historical content than to the cinematographical qualities of the film. One of the film's most outspoken critics was Hans-Walther Betz, writing for *Der Film*: 'Man muss diesen Film politisch nehmen und kann ihn nicht als nur filmisches Werk beurteilen, unter ängstlicher Vermeidung alles dessen, was für ihn Idee, Antrieb und inhaltliche Notwendigkeit war.'<sup>94</sup> Other specialist periodicals also believed that 1914 was 'kein Kinowerk im üblichen Sinne (...) sondern eine historische Reportage'<sup>95</sup> or 'ein Geschichts-Bildbericht'<sup>96</sup>, which means that these periodicals also focused on examining the historical content of the film.<sup>97</sup> Although the film was mostly considered as a work of history, this did not mean that its other qualities were not taken into account. Nevertheless, the pressing question continued to be asked whether this film was a 'dokumentarisch-historische, wahrheitenthüllende Arbeit' or 'ein Film(kunst)werk'.<sup>98</sup>

As has been said before, concentrating on the historical content of 1914 almost inevitably prompted reviewers to make political statements or observations. The subtitles and main titles of the reviews are an indication of the tone of voice of the critics. The 'indicative' titles below both reflect the political range of the daily press and the critical assessments of 1914.

*Die Rote Fahne*: 'Im Westen 1914' (subtitle).<sup>99</sup>

*Welt am Abend*: 'Die Legende von der Unschuld des deutschen Imperialismus' (subtitle).<sup>100</sup>

*Vorwärts*: 'Ein Narrenstück der Filmzensur/kein Meisterstück der Filmkunst!' (subtitle).<sup>101</sup>

*Frankfurter Zeitung*: 'Filmspiel und Politik' (main title).<sup>102</sup>

*Kreuz-Zeitung*: 'Verschleierung der historischen Wahrheit durch den Film' (with the following caption: 'Ein neuer Skandal').<sup>103</sup>

*Der Angriff*: 'Hausse in Weltkrieg' (main title).<sup>104</sup>

Practically all aspects of the history of 1914 are reflected implicitly or explicitly in these newspaper headlines: the recent scandal surrounding ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT; the role played by the censorship authorities and the interference of politics; the mythologizing of the guilt issue, and the enormous commercial interest that war films attracted.

## Political context

As we saw earlier, the meaning of 1914 as a controversial film had already been pre-figured by the problems created by the censorship authorities. It was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that the censor made a name for him-



self in this way. Due to the various vicissitudes surrounding German or foreign films, the need arose in the early nineteen thirties, especially with the right-wing political parties Zentrum, DVP, DNVP and NSDAP, to review, that is, sharpen up, the 1920 censorship laws. Since agreement could not be reached among all federal states, a number of adjustments were made in 1931 that mainly involved the sound film. This meant that from then on, spoken text was also subject to censorship.<sup>105</sup>

Following the inauguration of the first presidential cabinet led by Brüning, in March 1930, and following the Reichstag elections in September of that same year, which saw huge gains by NSDAP and KPD, anti-democratic influences on political life increased noticeably. These developments had clear repercussions on cultural policy, especially where it involved the censor, who more and more became a political instrument. Nevertheless, all this political power had been unable to prevent the screening of a film such as 1914. Still, it became increasingly clear that the right's battle to get a film such as ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT banned, could also be waged outside the parliament. In the previous chapter, we already discussed how Goebbels' henchmen managed to get this film banned even after it had received official approval for release.

Rumours were circulating about the screening of 1914 that it might suffer from disturbances by NSDAP supporters. According to the national-socialist *Der Angriff*, the *12-Uhr Zeitung* (actually the liberal *12 Uhr Blatt*) had deliberately created this 'smear campaign' against the NSDAP.<sup>106</sup> However, according to the daily newspaper coverage, actual disturbances did not occur.

It should be clear from the above that attention to the historical contents and political observations did not only involve the film and its previous history, which had extensively been covered in the press, but also the volatile political situation. Opponents of film censorship, especially leftist liberals and social democrats, watched the film with an appropriate measure of distrust, with in the back of their heads the question how the censorship measures had affected the film.<sup>107</sup> In this respect, the connection with ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT, released one month earlier, that *Vorwärts* discerned is interesting:

Warum die Zensur diesen Film ursprünglich verboten hat, um ihn dann mit einer ledernen Vorrede laufen zu lassen, wäre gänzlich unerfindlich, wenn es nicht einen Remarque-Skandal, wenn es nicht einen gewissen Herrn Goebbels und weisse Mäuse gäbe. (...) Dieses Zensurstück ist ein Gradmesser für die ans Pathologische grenzende Hysterie, in die unsere Filmzensur durch das Goebbelssche Lärmtheater hineingepeitscht worden ist. Hysterie ist ein Fremdwort. Sagen wir auf Deutsch: Bibbernde Feigheit.<sup>108</sup>



Advocates of censorship, however, also being very distrustful, wondered whether the director had sufficiently been subject to official supervision, or they expressed their grievances in a motion of no-confidence against the government in its entirety.<sup>109</sup> For example, a statement in the *Kreuz-Zeitung* read as follows:

Worin der Kampf unserer Regierung gegen diese Lüge besteht, ist uns bisher nicht klar geworden. (...) Wenn aber ein Film der Öffentlichkeit übergeben werden soll, der unumwunden zugibt dass wir *nicht* frei von Kriegsschuld sind, dann gibt die Regierung ihre Zustimmung, dieselbe Regierung, die angeblich gegen die Kriegsschuld lüge kämpft.

The only newspaper that was actually behind the Foreign Ministry's decisions was the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. As the Foreign Ministry's mouthpiece, it was also the only newspaper that had something relatively positive to say about the film. The critic found that the censored version served historical truth much better than the first, banned, version. The extent to which the critic identified with the whole procedure was indicated by the last sentence of the review, in which he used the pronoun 'our': 'Aber immerhin muss es als begrüßenswert verzeichnet werden, dass Richard Oswald *unseren* berechtigten Vorwürfen gegen die früheren Fassungen in gewissem Ausmass entgegengekommen ist' [italics BK].<sup>110</sup> This statement would imply that *Vorwärts*, in the passage cited above, was right, and that the ministry had allowed itself to be swayed by fears of right-wing protests. However, reports in the specialist publications prove that changes to the film had only been minimal. The most important change was adding Eugen Fischer's introduction and making minor adjustments to two scenes. No single scene was said to have been cut.<sup>111</sup> However, this was contradicted by two left-liberal quality publications, *Vossische Zeitung* and *Die Weltbühne*, which mentioned the cutting of the Von Pourtales scene in Petersburg.<sup>112</sup> Even if this was actually the case, we may nevertheless establish that it was not entirely clear to many other critics what exact changes had actually been made to the film – only a few critics had been able to see the first version of the film –, which was clear from the reporting on a number of occasions. Some critics said major alterations had been made, others said there were none, apart from the brief introduction that had been added to the film.

In comparison with the reactions to *BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS*, made five years earlier, it is striking that the cautious attitude towards the notion of 'objective' knowledge about the July crisis that existed in 1926 had completely disappeared in 1931. Nearly all critics had meanwhile lost their timidity with respect to the run-up to the war. Pronouncements on the dramatic licence one was allowed to take with historical subject matter, such as had been made by the *Reichsfilmblatt* and the *Kinematograph* about *BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS* could

not be found in reviews of 1914. The reaction to a statement that Eugen Fischer was said to have made during a 'Pressetee' may serve to illustrate the point. Fischer said that, for him, it was 'doch nur ganz einfach "Spielfilm", kein Kulturfilm', to which a critic replied: 'Ein "Spiel" aber ist mit solchen Dingen, die uns allen bitterernst sind, nicht erlaubt.'<sup>113</sup>

How serious critics took the issue can be seen from their reviews. Most of them were afraid the general public might be subjected to 'wrong' influences. They believed most people based their knowledge on what they were told by the mass media, and film in particular. In order to protect the public from 'wrong' ideas, some critics adopted the confident attitude of the expert and, without indicating any sources, gave an alternative 'objective' interpretation of the war past. Depending on his newspaper's political persuasion, the reader was able to digest a wide variety of views on the past. Besides that, many readers turned out to have developed completely individual interpretations of the film.

Communist newspapers such as *Die Rote Fahne* and *Welt am Abend* interpreted 1914 as a film that cleared Wilhelm II, Franz Joseph, King Karel and czar Nicholas II of all guilt, while blaming Russia, and grand duke Nicolai in particular. Besides Russia, France was also partly held responsible for the war, via the statement made by Jaurès. The alternative that was offered by the papers, especially by *Die Rote Fahne*, was an analysis in which German and Austrian-Hungarian imperialism, incompetent diplomacy by Berchtold and Pourtalès, German-French relations and the ultimatum to Serbia were seen as the main factors contributing to the outbreak of the war.<sup>114</sup>

The reviews in those newspapers (and specialist publications<sup>115</sup>) that belonged to the left-liberal, social democratic and confessional<sup>116</sup> centre, however different their political persuasions, were closer to the communist view than to the one represented in the nationalist press.<sup>117</sup> No wonder that a number of authors could see no justification for the right-wing accusation of support for the Kriegsschuldfrage. Their alternative interpretation was that German and Austria-Hungary, through their diplomatic activities, and because of the role played by Wilhelm II, had actually played a part in the outbreak of the war. Besides that, the problem was not any neglect of the run-up to the war, but the fact that the social context – the people, the press, the soldiers – had been left out completely, which made the film rather lifeless.

At the other end of the political spectrum, there were newspapers such as the nationalist and monarchist *Kreuz-Zeitung*, *Der Montag*, *Der Tag* and the National Socialist *Der Angriff*.<sup>118</sup> The *Kreuz-Zeitung* especially reviewed the film extensively, though the author only discussed the historical contents. It is also the most emotional and fiercest review of all the pieces I have been able to find. In

contrast to the communist papers, the *Kreuz-Zeitung* and *Der Angriff* were absolutely convinced that the film did actually blame Germany, Austria-Hungary and especially Russia for the outbreak of the war. Serbia, France and especially Great Britain had no guilt, or so the film suggested, according to the *Kreuz-Zeitung* and *Der Angriff*. This reasoning prompted the notion that the so-called historical falsifications had been inspired by commercial motives, to avoid the film being banned in France and Great Britain. However, the emotions in the *Kreuz-Zeitung* concerned the fact that the film only seemed to confirm the accusations laid down in the Treaty of Versailles.

The main objection that the three newspapers had, although the *Kreuz-Zeitung* paid the most attention to this, was that the run-up to the war was left out of consideration too much. According to the papers, it was supposed to begin in 1870/71 (also the point of departure for the Foreign Ministry document collection), and address such matters as the threat that Serbian pan-Slavism posed to Austria-Hungary, the Entente Cordiale between France, Russia and Great Britain and their deliberate tactic of surrounding Germany, and the rampant revanchism that had dominated in France since the defeat in 1871 (the role played by Jaurès was considered ridiculous). In this alternative version of history, it was not so much Russia that deserved the blame, but Great Britain. Sir Edward Grey was not so much against the war itself, according to the author, but he found it had come too soon. The director had also left out the naval rivalry between Germany and Great Britain. According to the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, it was exactly those factors that had caused the war. *Der Tag* added that the secret Anglo-Belgian treaties and the Poincaré visit to St. Petersburg had been left out of the film. The *Kreuz-Zeitung* critic was one of the few who mentioned a source: *Wie es zum grossen Kriege kam* by Alfred von Wegener, one of the most influential figures in the 'Revisionsbewegung', former staff officer and DNVP supporter.<sup>119</sup> Only the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and the specialist publication *Kinematograph* positioned themselves squarely behind the film.<sup>120</sup>

To sum up, there were critics all across the political spectrum who pointed that the film failed to show the 'truth'. The arguments they used to support their case differed considerably. Although the consensus was that the guilt section in the Treaty of Versailles should be altered, there was no agreement on the causes of the war, nor on the guilt issue.

### 3 'Das Dokumentarische gewinnt die Oberhand'<sup>1</sup>

#### Archival footage and constructions in war films

The importance of the idea of a 'historically accurate' and 'ideologically sound' representation of the past is shown by the reactions sparked by the historical film 1914. *DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND*. Adapting the run-up to the war for the screen on the basis of official documents had in the case of this film resulted in a theatrical and rather static approach dominated by studio sets and dialogue. But it was not so much the staging that got reactions from the press but the contents of the dialogues: were the assertions made by the characters and their mutual relationships correct? Was the order in which the diplomatic manoeuvres took place altogether correct? The underlying question turned out to be whether the film's version of events corresponded at all with the various existing political interpretations represented by the newspaper critics.

From this chapter onwards, the emphasis will lie mainly on films dealing with the historical events that occurred at the battle front and at the home front during the war. The battle front in the trenches is the central topic of this chapter and of the next one. Representing life at the front of course called for a filmic approach that was totally different from the one used to represent diplomatic history. In both cases, the historical reality was so complex that it was not at all clear what was actually happening. People at the front often had no idea what was going on, while the press, citing 'security reasons', often provided the people back home with incomplete information. The films that were later made about these subjects served to reduce things to comprehensible and well-ordered proportions. 1914 was an attempt to recast the confusing history of pre-war diplomacy into an understandable sequence of events. But what archival footage and narrative strategies could be used to reduce the front experience to well-ordered and 'acceptable' proportions? What exactly was shown about the horrors, the mortal fear, the boredom and the daily realities of the trench experience, and what was left out? What kind of characters were introduced to represent the German, French, Russian or British soldier? What filmic means were used to represent both the historical course of events and the trench experience itself? These questions are the central concerns of this chapter and of the next one.

At least five films are similar in the way they represent the fighting at the front, being the only 'war documentaries' made during the Weimar period: *DER WELTKRIEG I* (1927), *DER WELTKRIEG II* (1928), *SOMME* (1930), *DOUAUMONT* (1931) and *TANNENBERG* (1932).<sup>2</sup> The main features that set these films apart from completely 'dramatised' films were the extensive use of archival footage and the construction of battle images meant to resemble the original footage (which they sometimes did). In short, the films looked like 'documentaries'.<sup>3</sup> It is important to use this term with some reserve because there was no unequivocal term for this 'genre' at the time. This was certainly true for Germany. In the 1920s, the term appears to have been in use in France and the Netherlands, and in Great Britain it gained currency in the thirties.<sup>4</sup> However, John Grierson is generally thought to have coined the term in 1926. In addition, the war films dealt with in this chapter differ considerably from what we would now call documentaries. For example, much space is given to fictional scenes and to scenes that were by necessity constructions.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the term 'Dokumentarfilme' was used only very rarely. Instead, critics used terms such as 'Reportagefilme', 'Kulturfilme', 'Lehrfilme' or simply 'historische Filme'.<sup>6</sup> A film is usually considered to be a documentary when the public and the critics label it as such. While it is true that this label is based on certain features, mainly the film's mimetic qualities and its alleged objectivity, but there is no watertight definition or consensus, nor is it likely that an unequivocal description of what exactly makes a film a documentary will be formulated.

The multiplicity of generic terms used for more or less the same type of films indicates one clear similarity: these films were not seen as pure works of fiction. This not only meant that these films differed substantially from films that did not in principle aim to evoke historical reality, but also that they were unlike films that focused on an interior world of experience represented through the adventures of fictional characters played by professional actors. In short, the films that will be the central concern of Chapter 4: *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*, *WESTFRONT 1918*, *DIE ANDERE SEITE* and *NIEMANDSLAND*. The fact that, in this case, the demarcation between fiction and 'documentary' is only relative will be shown by the content and criticism analyses of both 'genres'. *WESTFRONT 1918* was praised by many critics for its realistic and 'documentary' character. The front scenes were often experienced as more realistic than the many constructions included in the 'documentary' war films.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the film appeared to create a 'documentary' effect. However, this film uses no or hardly any explicit archival footage. Besides, the 'point of view' is mostly assumed by fictional characters and not by an invisible 'narrator', as is usually the case in documentary films. At any rate, both film genres, the 'documentary' film and the realistic movie were part of a socio-cultural tendency that took realism as its starting point, the New Objectivity.

New Objectivity not only refers to films dealt with here, but also to a 'movement' that characterized especially the second half of the Weimar period, called *Neue Sachlichkeit* or New Objectivity. In various forms of representation, there was the ambition to approach reality in a more direct, restrained and 'objective' way, a new realism. Although it is generally agreed that this 'movement' did not exert any dominant influence upon society<sup>8</sup>, it could not be neglected in the cultural arena. The origin of the term *Neue Sachlichkeit* is generally ascribed to Gustav F. Hartlaub, who in May 1923 announced an exhibition of new realistic painting in his Mannheim art gallery under the heading *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Hartlaub used the term to refer to paintings which, – and I am quoting from an article by Jost Hermand – 'in an almost proclamatory way remain loyal to a positively tangible reality'.<sup>9</sup> The new tendency was seen as a reaction to expressionism's social criticism, which held that art should reflect the psychological and emotional condition of the individual, an individual who was on principle 'marked' and 'disfigured' by bourgeois society. In the New Objectivity, the idealistic fervour featured in so many expressionist art was replaced by a more sober view of reality. However, this does not mean that this more sober view should be interpreted as a naive and photographic way of looking at reality. The range of artistic expressions within this 'movement' of new realism extended from photographic and socio-critical verism to abstract constructivism.<sup>10</sup> New Objectivity was not confined to painting, but also influenced photography, film, literature, architecture, design, fashion and journalism.<sup>11</sup>

According to Hartlaub, New Objectivity also had something to do with the period of relative stability that followed the economic crisis that had hit Germany in 1923. According to Hartlaub, this period of New Objectivity was characterised by on the one hand, a sense of resignation and cynicism (after a period of hope and revolution that had disappeared together with expressionism), and on the other hand by new-found enthusiasm for an immediate and tangible reality.<sup>12</sup> The movement indicated a sense of surrender to or reconciliation with the times and its phenomena, such as sport, technology, jazz music and other expressions of modern mass culture. Since many of these new phenomena had blown over from the United States, this aspect of the period was also called 'Amerikanismus' or Americanism.<sup>13</sup>

However, focusing on an immediate and tangible reality was not without ideological implications. Being open to what was modern and contemporary could be taken to mean that one valued democratic and republican principles<sup>14</sup>, and an unveiled representation of reality could also imply social criticism. For this reason, a number of authors distinguish a neutral, 'objective' and resigned tendency, and an attitude of social criticism.<sup>15</sup> Antagonists like Ernst Jünger and Bertold Brecht are both representatives of the New Objectivity. Al-

though the movement was ambiguous in ideological terms, the tendency to resignation dominates most descriptions.<sup>16</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, for example, said that the movement's main feature was 'its reluctance to ask questions, to take sides'.<sup>17</sup> Following this statement by Kracauer, authors such as Helmut Lethen and Peter Sloterdijk interpret the New Objectivity as a movement that has facilitated the rise of National Socialism.<sup>18</sup>

In short, the attention some war films give to a 'documentary' and realistic representation of the war past cannot be seen as separate from the rise of the New Objectivity. To what extent this modern approach did or did not inform the representation of the past will be seen in the following. The films and the reactions they provoked are discussed in chronological order.

### **DER WELTKRIEG, an official outlook on the war**

The film cycle *DER WELTKRIEG* was the first post-war attempt to represent the period of 1914 to 1918 in a documentary way. The original aim was to make a documentary trilogy about the historical course of the war. The titles and subtitles the producers had thought up corresponded with the fate that fell to the German people during the war years: *DES VOLKES HELDENGANG*, *DES VOLKES NOT* and *DES VOLKES SCHICKSAL*. The first two parts appeared in the cinema in 1927 and 1928. The third part, however, was never realized.<sup>19</sup> The reasons for this are unknown. This part was to show the slow decline of the German army and the defeat itself. Whether the makers actually shied away from a painful confrontation with the facts remains undecided.

The idea to produce a three-part documentary series about the war originated with government circles around 1923.<sup>20</sup> The project was worked out under the responsibility of the film's organiser Ernst Krieger and the state archivists George Soldan and Erich Otto Volkmann. It was then called *Heeresfilm*.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann was involved in the decision-making process around the films.<sup>22</sup> The series could only be brought into circulation after his approval. The project was probably the first German initiative to film the recent war past in documentary form, and for the Ufa production company, it was a project with quite some prestige attached to it. The fact that the *WELTKRIEG* project was produced under the auspices of the authorities makes it an interesting source of information about the official outlook on the war.

Although the idea for the film had already come up in 1923/1924, it was not until 1927 that the first part was actually released. The intervening years had seen the release of a relatively large number of films about the war, some more



successful than others: *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*, *FELDGRAU*, *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ*, *ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN*, *BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS*, *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE* and *UNSERE EMDEN*. As we saw earlier, the year 1926 was marked by an upsurge in the production of war films. These paved the way for the first attempt to give a post-war screen interpretation of war history. The following section discusses the problems that the filmmakers encountered in their factual approach and the filmic means which they used to solve these problems.

The inclusion of archival footage was an important starting point for the production of a 'documentary'. When promoting their film, the directors emphasised that they had tried to include as much footage as possible that was actually shot during the war. The film credits claim that the film was made 'using original historical footage', mostly from the state archives. Nevertheless, some critics were disappointed with the relatively large number of constructed scenes.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the critics remarked that horrific images such as could be found in the work of George Grosz, Otto Dix and the photographer Ernst Friedrich were absent in the *WELTKRIEG* films.<sup>24</sup> In short, the criteria for selection appear to have been dubious. Contemporary critics, however, were divided on this point, which will be discussed later. Front line footage from the beginning of the war was quite rare as a result of the restrictions mentioned earlier (see Chapter 1). This meant that the makers of the film sometimes resorted to footage shot later on in the war.<sup>25</sup> The archival footage included in the first part of the documentary trilogy mostly shows soldiers marching to the front, lines of refugees, various activities behind the front, and cities and villages in ruins. There was hardly any shortage of such footage.

It was, indeed, much more difficult to find footage of actual fighting at the front in the early stages of the war, the years 1914 and 1915. We will probably never know how hard it was to find such archive material, but it is beyond dispute that the filmmakers made a rigorous selection from the limited amount of archive material available. The fact that they used constructed fighting scenes indicates that they were prepared to show some of the horrors of the front. Because the illusion of authenticity was important to the directors, they did not use professional actors for these fighting scenes, but German soldiers, preferably men who had themselves fought in the war and could use their own experience. For example, the director Leo Lasko wrote in the promotional bulletin that Ufa released to accompany *DER WELTKRIEG* that 'Schauspieler durften nicht genommen werden – aber Menschen, denen das Herz voll von jener Zeit war!'<sup>26</sup> As if there were no actors who had first-hand experience of the war at the front! The bulletin also stressed that the constructed scenes had been de-

vised in keeping with the war experiences of George Soldan, state archivist and retired major in the German army. Soldan himself wrote in the bulletin:

Wir rekonstruierten Bilder, die ich persönlich erlebt habe oder die in Schlachten-schilderungen (...) plastisch greifbar überliefert worden sind, und liessen sie von Kriegerproben und erfahrenen Mitkämpfern spielen.<sup>27</sup>

This procedure did not, however, always produce the results the directors were after. Soldan admitted that they had not always succeeded in

... Bilder zu schaffen, die der Wirklichkeit einigermaßen entsprachen. Wir kamen mehr zu der Ueberzeugung, dass nicht Schlachtenbilder, sondern allein Kampfeindrücke, erzielt durch starkes Schneiden der Bildstreifen, gewissermaßen allegorisch die von uns gewünschte Stimmung geben konnten.<sup>28</sup>

Soldan here in fact reveals the limitations inherent in any attempt to use realistic constructions to represent the reality of war. He shifts his attention from the image itself to its effects, and instead of using realistic representations, he attempts to achieve his goal by fast editing and a stylistic device such as allegory (and metaphor as well, as we shall see later on).<sup>29</sup> The aim was to create an 'atmosphere' that would correspond with reality at the front, as is indicated by statements from others who worked on the film. They stressed in every possible way that the film was both realistic and objective.<sup>30</sup> The so-called 'Organisator des Films', Ernst Krieger, who was like Soldan a retired major, said the film '... unter Ausschluss schönfärbender oder entstellender Legendenbildung...' showed '... wie der Krieg in Wirklichkeit war...' by foregoing any form of whitewashing or distorting creation of legend.<sup>31</sup> In spite of his nuances, Soldan stressed elsewhere in his bulletin that the criterion of 'geschichtliche Wahrheit' had been the main starting point and that 'Parteisucht' and 'Weltanschauungen' had been avoided.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, there is little need to explain that on top of state interference, the series of interventions, ranging from the selection of archival footage and devising constructions on the basis of personal experiences to the use of allegorical scenes, had only enhanced subjective and partisan elements in the film.

As was said earlier, the WELTKRIEG series was meant to give an outline of the history of the war. However, by exclusively showing images of the front, the audience would still not get an insight into the course and the broader context of the war, as was the case during the war itself. One means to increase this insight was the use of animation techniques.<sup>33</sup> For example, Svend Noldan, who directed the first part, designed a large number of maps showing the main centres of conflict, troop movements and changes in the front line.<sup>34</sup> He drew in

moving trains travelling to and from the front, including little puffs of steam, and used small flames to mark the areas where the fighting was the fiercest. In this way, the filmmakers achieved some coherence in the main course of events during the war. Besides animation, the filmmakers also showed images of documents such as letters from generals reporting on their assignments or the outcome of a battle. Finally, since it was after all a silent movie, the makers used numerous intervening titles to clarify the war situation. That the *WELTKRIEG* series in the end also assumed a didactic function is shown by the recognition it was given by the Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht. The institute labelled the film 'educational'<sup>35</sup>, which meant that cinema-owners screening the film were exempt from paying taxes and that people under eighteen could see the film at reduced admission prices.<sup>36</sup> The film was thus assured of the largest and broadest potential audience possible.

Of all the filmic means employed in the film, only the animation sequences met with unanimous approval and enthusiasm from the critics. They praised the filmmakers' aim to give a clear historical outline of the war or of one specific battle, and despite a number of major points of criticism against the *WELTKRIEG* project, the critics remarked that this was the first time that '... the broader coherence of these world events is revealed in an understandable and consistent way.'<sup>37</sup> The use of animation techniques turned out to be a suitable strategy to achieve this, and one that was highly appreciated. The *Kreuz-Zeitung* wrote:

... die Trickfilme, die zur Darstellung der Schlachten benutzt wurden, vermögen besser als alles andere die Vergangenheit auferstehen zu lassen. Und hier fühlt man auch am stärksten den ewig nagenden Schmerz, dass die Ereignisse *diesen* Weg gehen mussten.<sup>38</sup>

A critic writing for the *Germania* expressed similar views.

Es liegt im Wesen der Sache, dass die eigentliche Kriegshandlung sich besser in der schematischen Darstellung deutlich macht als in den gespielten Schlachtenszenen.<sup>39</sup>

These quotations illustrate the desire to see the chaos of war represented in an orderly and abstracted way, and the animated sequences contributed significantly to this effect. However, audiences generally find it hard to identify with orderly and generalised images since they reduce their sense of emotional involvement in what is shown. Despite their didactic approach, the filmmakers' aim did not appear to be creating detachment in their audiences. Judging from reactions in the press, there were, nonetheless, several moments in the film where they managed to give the audience some idea of the war experience through the use of animation techniques.



### DER WELTKRIEG

This was the case with scenes showing the chaos on the Ypres and Somme battlefields.

What has been preserved of the two *WELTKRIEG* films in Berlin's film archives is probably a compilation of the two original films. This compilation film, also made by Ufa, was released in a sound version in October 1933.<sup>40</sup> Some of the cuts that were made concern less famous battles such as the one in Galicia on the eastern front. In addition, some of the intervening titles have been left out.<sup>41</sup> Presumably, less footage from *WELTKRIEG II* has ended up in the compilation than from *WELTKRIEG I*.<sup>42</sup> Even though the National Socialists apparently considered it worthwhile to release a compilation of the *WELTKRIEG* films, it was finally decided in 1938 to take the films out of circulation.<sup>43</sup> With preparations for the war underway, the authorities apparently decided that the film was unable to serve any propaganda purposes.

The compilation film thus contains considerably fewer images and texts than the original films. The core of the film has been preserved, however, and many of the scenes preserved in the compilation are well worth discussing. Whether the relevant scenes were actually part of the original versions can be checked with reference to the various critical reviews. I will therefore regularly

draw on these critical reviews in my analysis of the scenes. My film analysis is confined to those scenes that either later turned out to represent controversial moments in the war or those that apparently stood out in the film itself, such as the period immediately before the war, the occupation of Belgium and the battles at Tannenberg, the river Marne, Ypres/Langemarck and the Somme.

Judging from Walter Redmann's critical review in the *Berliner Morgenpost*, the film was more than a didactic means to explain the history of the First World War to the public. The directors appear to have achieved their aim of creating the desired 'Stimmung' – see the quotation by Soldan – by using their specific cinematography, because Redmann described the film as

Ein Furioso von durcheinander wirbelnden Riesengeschützen, Schlachtkreuzern, Unterseebooten, Granateinschlägen, Munitionsfabriken, Eisenbahnzügen, ein Durcheinander von überkopierten Bildern mit dutzendweise aufblitzenden Titeln könnte man sich vielleicht eine Viertelminute lang gefallen lassen, aber in ihrer steten Wiederkehr, besonders am Schluss des Films, zermüden und schmettern sie den Zuschauer nieder.<sup>44</sup>

The following sequence analyses will deal with the way this effect has been worked out in the separate scenes.

### **The beginning of the war**

Protagonists in films are usually presented through characteristic features. The first sequence shows with which characteristics the director(s) associated the protagonist of Germany or the German people. After the opening caption 'Im Segen des Friedens blühten...' there are images of vast farmlands with a cart taking farmers to their work (these images are similar to the opening sequence of TANNENBERG); industrial areas with images of smoking chimneys, factories, rotating machines, a steam engine and finally commercial and shipping activities, including the loading and unloading of ships. The images of industrial life are striking because they have been superimposed, strengthening the impression that modern industry and economy move at an accelerated pace. This sequence is followed by the caption: 'Völker rüsteten für die drohenden Auseinandersetzungen und ihren Lebensraum', after which there are images of the steel and arms industries (the manufacture of a cannon). This sequence is followed by images of various national armies seen marching or being drilled. Next appears the caption 'Sarajevo. 28. Juni 1914', followed by constructed images representing Archduke Ferdinand's assassination in Sarajevo by images of only a few clouds of smoke and a hand holding a pistol. A map of the Balkans on fire appears, followed by the map of Europe with sparks flash-

ing up from Vienna to Petersburg and from there to Berlin, Paris, London and then back again to Berlin.

This sequence has two striking features. In the first place, armament precedes the Austrian heir to the throne's assassination, and secondly, the maps in flames suggests that Germany was not the main instigator of the war. It is interesting to compare this filmic representation with the text describing the film's contents in the programme brochure. Under the heading 'Frieden zum Kriege', the first part of the film is described as follows:

Der über alle Massen rasche Emporstieg des deutschen Reiches zur Weltmacht erregt bei den Nachbarn Missgunst und Abneigung. Im Irrgarten der Politik werden dunkle Pläne geschmiedet. England, Frankreich und Russland schliessen sich zum Ring um Deutschland und Oesterreich-Ungarn zusammen.<sup>45</sup>

In this text we see the return of the Lebensraum thesis as well as the thesis of dominant encirclement. This categorically saves Germany from guilt and aggression. After all, Germany is shown to have been challenged to the conflict, and is therefore said to be conducting a justified defensive war. The impossible ultimatum that Austria put to Serbia is not mentioned, and neither is the unconditional support that Germany offered to Austria, which in fact amounted to a blank authorisation, in case the Austrians would find themselves at war. In the second part, according to the brochure, Russia is blamed for the outbreak of the war: 'Wir sehen, dass Russland als erste Grossmacht am 30. Juli die allgemeine Mobilmachung anordnet und damit den Ausbruch des Weltkrieges unvermeidlich macht.'<sup>46</sup>

In the film, Petersburg appears as a photograph with street scenes, followed by a poster showing the Russian mobilisation order in type. We see the czar and several officers conducting a parade ground inspection. We then see French soldiers taking a rest and Poincaré inspecting his troops. The penultimate scene shows several national military parades and soldiers saying goodbye before going to the front.

The diplomatic manipulation and confusion that precede the mobilisation (see chapter 2) are not mentioned. The sequence has not only been structured historically and chronologically, it has also been framed in a narrative sense. The sequence concludes with a continuation of the same kind of farming images that opened the film, after which we see a farmer being called up for service handing over the plough to his son and saying goodbye to his flesh and blood. A similar pastoral scene of saying farewell can also be seen in *TANNENBERG*.

It is clear that the filmmakers chose the association of Germany as a farming nation and are referring to notions of family and Heimat. Industry was in this sequence presented as something of another order, something associated with

modern times, trade and the arms industry. We will return to the form of the industrial scene in our discussion of the way the *Materialschlacht* is represented.

### **The battles of Liège, Tannenberg and the Marne River**

The first historical battle to be waged was the one with Belgium at the beginning of August 1914. In the original film, this battle scene was indicated by the intervening caption 'Siegesrauschen', which is lacking in the compilation film. The violation of Belgian sovereign territory, which according to international agreements would stay neutral, is not mentioned. In the film, the conquest of Belgium is confined to the battle of Liège, one of the towns closest to the German border, circled by fortifications. Ludendorff was the only one who managed to reach the town past the fortifications, which made him a hero. The battle takes up 3.5 minutes in the film and is mainly represented by maps and captions. The programme brochure only mentions the various victories achieved by the German army, and concludes with: 'Die deutschen bleiben Sieger. "Siegesrauschen" geht durch das deutsche Land.' In connection with this sequence, *Vorwärts* remarked that the film approaches the raid into Belgium in a very circumspect way, and Walter Redmann of the *Berliner Morgenpost* wrote that 'Der Durchmarsch durch Belgien dem Laien nicht begründet wird.'<sup>47</sup> The closing caption to this sequence simply states: 'Lüttich fiel. Der Weg nach Frankreich war frei!'

The battle of Tannenberg (26-30 August 1914) is represented by a mixture of original footage and constructed scenes. Von Hindenburg appears here for the first time. The scene shows him poring over ordnance survey maps with Ludendorff, suggesting that they are discussing strategy for the next day. This strategy consists of encircling the Russian army at Tannenberg, which is shown on a drawn map. The film gives much attention to archival footage of fleeing civilians and massive numbers of Russian prisoners war. The battle itself is hardly shown, with the exception of a night scene (shot in the studio) showing German soldiers, pistols drawn, attacking an East-Prussian village, after which they set fire to or occupy the houses. People are fleeing while a German soldier is seen lurking on every corner. The scenes led to negative reactions from the critics, who did not appreciate the fact that the scenes were shot in a studio using artificial lighting.<sup>48</sup> After these German successes, the battle of the Marne river (5-12 September 1914) marked the first moment of disillusionment for the Germans. By faults of their own, the Germans allowed a fifty-kilometre gap to develop on the right flank east of Paris between the First German Army Group under Von Kluck and the Second German Army Group under Von Moltke. At the same time, French and British troops created



a strong new armed force near Paris. Because of the gap between the two German armies and the threat posed by the Anglo-French force, the German command ordered a retreat to the Aisne. One of the reasons why the strategy that called for a rapid push to Paris failed was the fact that the German troops were exhausted. In addition, the Germans had established their headquarters too far away from the front in Luxembourg, some 240 kilometres from where the fighting took place. A mission by lieutenant-colonel Hentsch to report back from the front to the headquarters in Luxembourg failed because of the general chaos and confusion. Bad communication was one of the main reasons why this German expedition ended in total failure.<sup>49</sup>

The sequence dealing with the Marne battle lasts five minutes, including one minute showing a reconnaissance aircraft, soldiers in battle, military headquarters receiving a despatch, a courier on horseback (Hentsch?), officers surveying the battlefield from a hilltop, a town in ruins, again headquarters, a telegraph service at the front and finally a number of horsemen. These images were meant to evoke the confusion and to indicate why communication had broken down. The screen is filled with tragic images of human and animal corpses, which are followed by soldiers retreating with their heads bowed down. ('Innerlich widerstrebend folgte die Truppe dem Rückzugsbefehl.') The last scene is an obvious reconstruction.

Not every critic was satisfied with the filmmakers' interpretation of this battle, and some even said there were tactics of obfuscation. Historically speaking, the critics considered the battle 'ungeheuren Fehler der Leitung' and they blamed the filmmakers for failing to represent the factors that would decide the war (*Vorwärts*<sup>50</sup>). Ihering of the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* also asked himself:

Warum aber wird die Verantwortung für das Versagen nicht klar wiedergegeben? Namentlich und bildlich werden nur die ersten Sieger angeführt: Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Mackensen, Rupprecht von Bayern, Kluck. Im ganzen Film kommt (sic) der Name Moltke nicht ein einziges Mal vor.<sup>51</sup>

While the *Berliner Morgenpost* opined that

die entscheidende Marne-Schlacht, die das Schicksal des Krieges war, so verschleiert (wird), dass auch der Zuschauer vor der Leinwand über die gewaltige Bedeutung der grössten deutschen Niederlage im Weltkrieg im unklaren bleiben muss. Hier kann den verantwortlichen Leitern der Vorwurf nicht erspart werden, dass Absicht vorgeherrscht hat.<sup>52</sup>

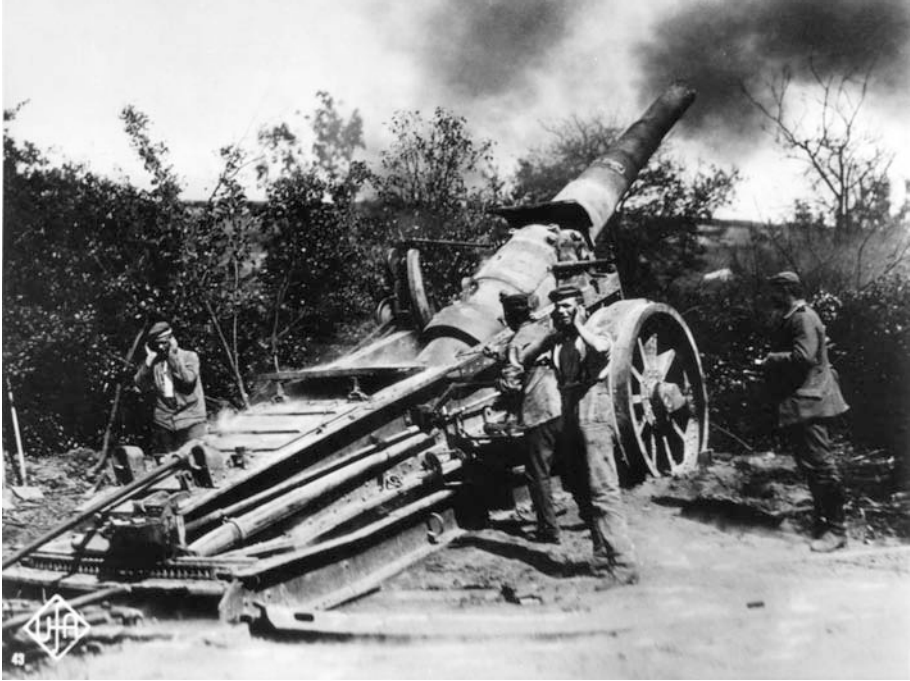
The directors apparently did not consider realistic images suitable for representing this turning-point in the war, because in addition to constructed scenes, they used metaphorical presentations in the form of animations. Un-

fortunately, these animations did not survive the editor's scissors, they are lacking in the compilation film. According to Gerd Misch, who deals extensively with the scene in the *Vossische Zeitung*, a large chessboard with chess pieces appeared on the screen. He says a hand sweeps the white pieces off the board before the game is decided.<sup>53</sup> This would create an impression with viewers ignorant of the facts that army command had withdrawn its troops from the front without any reason. Others absolutely disagreed with the way Hentsch' mission had been represented.<sup>54</sup> With the exception, however, of the *Lichtbildbühne*: 'Bemerkenswert ist die Darstellung der Marneschlacht, deren Verlust (...) ohne jede Verhüllung auf das Konto der Obersten Heeresleitung geschoben wird.'<sup>55</sup>

### **The battle of Ypres, the myth of Langemarck**

The battle of Ypres or Langemarck, as the Germans wished to call it (October–November 1914) marked a second tragedy for Germany. In the compilation film, the scene begins with the caption: 'Die neu gebildeten Freiwilligen-Korps wurden Mitte Oktober zum entscheidenden Stoss in Flandern eingesetzt', which is followed by a map of Ypres and its surroundings. Next, we see an interesting sequence of constructed images that mark a significant departure from the rest of the film, especially in terms of editing and lighting. Though the scene lasts only 1 minute and 43 seconds, it obtains an enormous intensity by the quick succession of shots. The images of the fighting itself consist of a total of 59 shots, compressed into 1 minute and 17 seconds. This means that each shot lasts about one and a half seconds, creating a rhythm not unlike that of modern-day commercials. It is not clear what nationality the soldiers who appear in this shot are. Many of them were not wearing any helmets at all, while others wore the German 'Pickelhaube'. The battle at Ypres was fought between the Germans and the British. Some of the images in the last shots refer to the flooded countryside. In a defensive move, the Belgian army had flooded the country by opening the locks at Diksmuiden in October 1914. Langemarck lies a few kilometres from Ypres and some fifteen kilometres south of Diksmuiden and the IJzer river. The Germans probably only included the name Langemarck in their historical annals because of its German-sounding quality.<sup>56</sup> Military historians usually speak about the battle at Ypres.

These shots conclude the representation of the fighting, while the complete scene about this battle ends with four shots containing references to death and religion. These shots have been put together in a much slower edit. In the first shot, we see a number of crosses on the banks of a water. One soldier watches as several others walk past the crosses. Next, we see original footage of an official memorial service with salutes being fired. The penultimate shot is a slow



### DER WELTKRIEG

wipe (and panning camera) to a statue of Saint Christopher with the child Jesus on his arm (against the background of a church in ruins). The scene ends with a soldier placing a small plant beside the two crosses, one which probably bears an English name, the other a German.

Judging from the critical reviews, this scene was also part of the original film in a more extensive version. Just as in the representation of the Marne battle, the original film used allegorical animation to illustrate the intervening caption: 'In Flandern reitet der Tod', a caption that is lacking in the compilation film, as is the animation. The allegorical means of representation referred to the Grim Reaper riding across the Flemish countryside on horseback.<sup>57</sup> Both the image and the caption met with disapproval from leftist-liberal critics in particular. The *Berliner Börsen-Courier* reported:

Man zeigt den Kriegsfreiwilligen bei Ypern. Aber es heisst: Der Tod reitet in Flandern; nicht, dass falsche militärische Massnahmen an diesem tragischen Ende Schuld hatten. Auch der Name des Generals Falkenhayn kommt in diesem Film nicht vor.<sup>58</sup>

The *Berliner Morgenpost* critic considered the representation of the battle at Ypres one of the derailments – ‘hahnebüchernen Entgleisungen’ – in the film and an endorsement of the so-called ‘Langemarck-Legende’.<sup>59</sup> The *Vossische Zeitung* also lambasted the representation of this battle<sup>60</sup>, and *Der Bildwart* found the use of the Grim Reaper on horseback inappropriate and bordering on kitsch.<sup>61</sup> Again, the *Lichtbildbühne* was a notable exception, remarking that ‘die Bearbeiter in den Kämpfen um Ypern dieses grosse Sterben eindrucksvoll (haben) dargestellt’. It thus joined ranks with the admirers of the film, who could mainly be found on the right side of the political spectrum.<sup>62</sup>

According to Bernd Hüppauf, the creation of a myth around this battle, both during and after the war, marked one of the first successful attempts to transform military defeat into moral victory.<sup>63</sup> It is clear from the numbers of casualties, more than 100,000 on the German side alone, that the battle was in fact a total disaster.<sup>64</sup> In addition, no strategic goal was achieved, not even the capture of Langemarck. Because of General Von Falkenhayn’s failure, the battle was also called ‘der Kindermord von Ypern’.<sup>65</sup> The Langemarck Myth was especially applauded and supported by conservatives and nationalists, and it would play an important role in National Socialist propaganda and myth; a twenty-five year old Adolf Hitler had fought in the battle as a volunteer. According to Hüppauf, the myth appealed to all age groups, despite the fact that it mainly emphasized the youth of the soldiers concerned.<sup>66</sup> At the core of the myth was the idea that young war volunteers fought to the death for their country and died with patriotic songs such as ‘Deutschland, Deutschland über alles’ on their lips. George Mosse believed that the soldiers were not so much singing out of enthusiasm or fighting spirit, but to prevent being killed by friendly fire in the utter chaos of the battle.<sup>67</sup>

Hüppauf writes that the Langemarck myth was kept alive during the Weimar period through literature, mass media, education and memorial days. The myth served as the ‘herausragende Symbol nationaler Einigkeit: das Opfer des Lebens, der Nation von ihrer Jugend unter Gesang dargebracht, wurde als ein metaphysischer Bund interpretiert, dessen Macht alle politischen, sozialen und militaristischen Kräfte übertraf’.<sup>68</sup> The *WELTKRIEG* film contributed to the continuation of the myth in its own way. Though the youthfulness of the soldiers is not so striking in the film images, the grimness in the attacking soldiers’ faces is very clear in the scenes described above. Since the premiere featured a choir, it is not improbable that fragments of the ‘Deutschlandlied’ were sung during this scene.<sup>69</sup> The fast editing, the plumes of smoke and the many impacts of shells did, however, reflect the chaos on the battlefield and the disorientation of those involved. In addition, the images at

the end of this scene were a direct reference to the rituals commemorating the battle.

### **The battles at Verdun and the Somme**

While Langemarck, according to Hüppauf, was mainly associated with the myth of youth and nationalism, the battles at Verdun and the Somme symbolised the technological war machine and the genesis of new, modern man (i.e. the male).<sup>70</sup>

The battles that took place around fort Douaumont near Verdun and at the Somme were connected in a military and strategic sense, both were fought in 1916 and they partially overlapped. The plan to capture Douaumont, which was considered the strongest fortification in the world at that time, was a German stratagem meant to strike a heavy moral blow against the French. While the Germans, that is, general Von Falkenhayn, overestimated the status symbol of the French system of fortifications – fort Douaumont turned out to have only a minimal garrison and corresponding armament – the French, in the figure of general Joffre, underestimated the Germans and refused to believe that they would dare to strike at Verdun. However, Von Falkenhayn had devised a plan to entice the French into committing every soldier they had to an important sector at the front. In his ambition to capture the city of Verdun, his strategy was especially directed towards bleeding the French army dry, regardless whether his objectives would be realised or not.

Crown prince Wilhelm led the attack, which after having been put off because of bad weather, began on 21 February 1916. Already on 25 February, the fort fell to the Germans. Thousands of men had been killed, but the battle at Verdun continued. On 24 October, the fort was recaptured by the French, but the battle would not officially end until mid-December.<sup>71</sup> Although Von Falkenhayn's tactics of diversion had succeeded, the number of German casualties was so large that confidence in the general was lost again. He was replaced by Von Hindenburg and Ludendorff.

The strategy behind the allied summer offensive at the Somme was not only to force a breakthrough, but also to relieve the front at Verdun. This time, the French armies were supported by British armies, led by general Haig. On 24 June, the combined Anglo-French force took on the Second German Army, opening its offensive with a seven-day shelling of German positions. This bombardment caused an untold number of casualties but failed to produce the desired results. The battle would drag on until November 1916. In the end, when the Somme offensive ground to a halt, the allies had secured nothing more than a slight shift in the front line, at the cost of 500,000 British dead, 195,000 French dead and probably around 465,000 German dead.<sup>72</sup>

## Fort Douaumont at Verdun

The two sequences devoted to these battles were originally part of *DER WELTKRIEG II* and have also been preserved in the compilation film. The battle of Verdun takes up a sequence of approximately thirteen minutes in the film, with the emphasis on the fighting around fort Douaumont. The battle has been placed in a narrative framework, and it has been filmed from a German perspective. The sequence begins with the preparations for a shelling of enemy positions, then continues with the actual bombardment, advancing artillery and fierce man-to-man combat. It ends when the fort falls in German hands on 25 February through the 'Unerhörte Kühnheit kleiner Abteilungen unter Führung des Hauptmanns Haupt, Oberleutnant Von Brandis und Leutnant Radtke'.<sup>73</sup> The victors are rewarded, and would almost have cleared the fort had the French not taken the initiative to recapture Douaumont. The film makes clear that general Joffre is prepared to do anything to achieve this objective. His order is: 'Jeder Führer der einen Rückzugsbefehl gibt, wird vor ein Kriegsgericht gestellt!'

In the Douaumont sequence, the technological war machine that Hüppauf wrote about is expressed mainly through a one-minute scene that follows the text: 'Am 21. Februar 1916, 8.12 vorm. legten 1367 Geschütze zur Vorbereitung des Angriffs 9 Stunden lang ihr Feuer auf die feindlichen Stellungen.' Apart from the men who load the guns, there is no human life at all in the images. We only see firing guns and powerful explosions in various editing paces. Later, the soldiers themselves appear, especially in scenes that emphasise their relationship with machinery and technology, as, for example, in the scene that follows the text 'Nur wo Artillerie den Weg bahnt, geht es vorwärts.' Next, we see a series of fierce combat scenes edited at a high pace, with in between, in a split second, the image of a soldier mangled between the wheels of a gun carriage, his eyes filled with fear as he stares into the camera.<sup>74</sup>

While the First World War was characterised by its massive scale, both in terms of the number of soldiers and in terms of the number of dead and wounded, and while heroism had on the whole been stripped of its individuality, the capture of the fort is filmed from a traditional perspective, as if seizing Douaumont was the work of a small band of brave officers. This scene might very well have been a trailer for the feature-length documentary *DOUAUMONT* by Heinz Paul. Although they are not credited anywhere as 'actors', it is very likely that in *DER WELTKRIEG*, as was the case in *DOUAUMONT*, the officers Haupt, Radtke and Von Brandis have again re-enacted their own historical roles. Radtke, for example, can be recognised by his round glasses. Besides that, every officer carries a walking stick with which to urge the men to go over the top. The scene of the capture ends the same as the one in



DOUAUMONT: Hauptmann Haupt cordially but condescendingly offers a cigarette to one of the few French soldiers to be found and taken prisoner in the fort.

The film contains a number of unintentional intertextual references, as could be expected on the basis of the use of archival footage, part of which was constructed. In the combat scenes, for example, there are shots that derive from the German propaganda film *BEI UNSEREN HELDEN AN DER SOMME* (1917), which contains a constructed combat scene supposed to have taken place near the Saint-Pierre Vaast forest. Some shots from this scene reappeared in a sequence not about the battle at the Somme, but about the battle of Verdun!

Incidentally, the constructed scenes, in contrast to the archival footage in this film<sup>75</sup>, came in for a lot of criticism. While the right-wing press was usually very appreciative<sup>76</sup>, parts of the social-democrat and left-liberal press rejected these images for being too anecdotal, idyllic<sup>77</sup>, sentimental or uninteresting.<sup>78</sup> In the eyes of the communists, the film, like practically all war films from that time, was nothing more than imperialist propaganda.<sup>79</sup> Despite some interesting sequences, some critics found the *WELTKRIEG* films hopelessly outdated. One reason they gave, was the fact that the intervening titles had been presented in gothic typeface. The critics said this produced a bombastic effect and looked remarkably like 'die Phraseologie des Schullesebuchs'.<sup>80</sup> In the end, the film turned out to be far from consistent in its modes of expression. Simultaneously with the outdated way of addressing the viewer, the film used state-of-the-art cinematography, as for instance in the representation of the battle at the Somme.

### The battle at the Somme

Notwithstanding the criticism, there was one exceptional scene that was generally considered very impressive. This scene did not concern the filmic representation of the battles at Tannenberg, Ypres or Douaumont, but that of the battle at the Somme, which most critics considered the cinematographical high point and emotional epicentre of the film. Although the Somme sequence was practically equal in length to the Douaumont sequence (13 minutes), it turned out that most critics had not only experienced the Somme sequence as one of the longest parts but also as the most exceptional and impressive part of the entire film.<sup>81</sup> In this sequence, the film reached '... eine Intensivität, für die man kaum Vergleiche findet', wrote the *Film-Kurier*.<sup>82</sup> Other critics associated the Somme sequence with Erwin Piscator's theatre<sup>83</sup>, Walter Ruttmann's modernist film epic *BERLIN. DIE SYMPHONIE EINER GROSSSTADT*<sup>84</sup>, the approach to editing of Russian directors<sup>85</sup> and expressionism.<sup>86</sup> *Vorwärts* reports rotating images that take one's breath away, while the quick succession of images



confused the *Kreuz-Zeitung* critic.<sup>87</sup> The editing rhythm was apparently supported by the rhythm of the music. Adapting his score to the film's rhythm and mode of representation, film composer Marc Roland had produced atonal music especially for this sequence.<sup>88</sup>

Why was the Somme sequence so special? The images of combat and even the editing rhythm did not deviate too strongly from what had been done before in battlefield sequences. What was so striking about the sequence was not the images themselves, but the repetition in the texts. For example, the second intervening text of the sequence said: 'Sieben Tage und sieben Nächte raste ohne Unterbrechung das Vernichtungsfeuer der feindlichen Artillerie.' During the next six minutes, the opening line of this text – 'Sieben Tage und sieben Nächte' – is repeated five times in bold type. A second element of repetition consisted of rotating words appearing on the screen a number of times. After the first sequence text, the place-names 'Brussilow Verdun Somme Macedonia Isonzo' appear on the screen, which are then seen to tumble all over each other. Next, the word 'SOMME' is seen at the centre of the screen, held there, it seems, by a powerful centripetal force. The same effect is achieved several scenes later with the word 'MUNITION' and the exclamation 'SIE KOMMEN' (meaning the Entente). At the end, the place-names reappear in the same way as they did before.

A second remarkable deviation concerned the contents of some combat footage. Although a number of the images were very similar to earlier images, the *Materialschlacht* had not been shown in this way before. Besides the guns, we see aeroplanes, Zeppelins, clouds of poison gas (the film does not make clear that Germany was the first country to start using poison gas), flame-throwers and tanks. The scenes that had been re-enacted were quite an achievement, especially the one where a trench shelter full of soldiers caves in after an explosion, burying everyone in tons of mud. It is one of the last sequences in the film, ending with a text that emphasises the German perspective: 'Sie standen wie Stein und wie Stahl. Der Feinde Übermacht zerschellte an dem unbeugsamen Willen der deutschen Soldaten.'

The battles at the Somme and at Verdun/Douaumont were given considerable attention in *DER WELTKRIEG*, and they were clearly seen as two absolute low points in the war. No separate film has been made about the mythically sensitive and controversial battle at Langemarck, but the victory at Tannenberg and both the major battles of 1916, Somme and Verdun, were turned into film.

## SOMME and DOUAUMONT, monuments for the unknown soldier

Someone looking for the name of Heinz Paul in film chronicles on the Weimar era will search in vain. Nevertheless, this former officer was one of the most important directors of German war films.<sup>89</sup> As he was not included in the lists of artists of the Weimar era, the same fate awaited him as did his war films. Apart from a number of feature films on World War I, he also shot three war documentaries: *SOMME* (1930), *DOUAUMONT* (1931) and *TANNENBERG* (1932). *DOUAUMONT* is the most documentary film of the three films, because it consists almost entirely of archival footage and reconstructed scenes. The same applies to *SOMME*, be it that a fictional drama has been added to it. In view of the role of the fictional plot within the film, *TANNENBERG* is the least documentary film of the three.

The documentary on the Battle of the Somme was the first German war documentary following the *WELTKRIEG* films.<sup>90</sup> *SOMME* opened on April 29th, 1930 in the Ufa Palast am Zoo, one month before *WESTFRONT 1918*, the other remarkable war film of that year.<sup>91</sup> The film was dedicated to all those who 'stritten, litten und starben' at the river Somme. To emphasise this, its subtitle was *Das Grab der Millionen*.

Originally, *SOMME* was an English film; the pictures had been shot by Sidney Blythe and Frederick Young. Heinz Paul then adapted the film to be shown to German audiences. Apart from the fact that he added – mostly reconstructed – (German) images of Victor Gluck and Georg Bruckbauer to the film, Paul also wove a fictional story line through the film, for which he used professional German actors.<sup>92</sup> The protagonists in the fictional plot are three brothers. They are fighting at the front line and were killed in action, to the dismay of their mother. It is no real coincidence that Hermine Sterler played the role of the mother. In previous films, *VOLK IN NOT* (1925) and *DEUTSCHE FRAUEN-DEUTSCHE TREUE* (1928) she already played a German mother in times of war, and with great success (see chapter 6). In the fictional part, the recording tone of the documentary part is abandoned. Instead, the film pulls the audience to the emotions of the three brothers – their happiness when they accidentally meet at the front (two of the brothers have enlisted as volunteers), and grief and anger when the youngest witnesses how one of his brothers is killed in action. The last scene of the film shows how the mother bursts into tears just after she has received the message that her youngest son has been killed in action, too. The following shot shows Jesus at the cross. Suffering, sacrifice, sense and comfort for the surviving relatives are summarised with a reference to this

Christian symbol.<sup>93</sup> The last shot shows a war cemetery and the number of victims in figures.

Although, with their focus on individual adventures, the fictional scenes contrast with the archival footage and the reconstructed scenes, this hardly annoyed the critics at the time. In fact, these reconstructed scenes are not particularly remarkable, with the exception of the scenes that include the mother and are situated outside the world at the front. Some critics considered the fictional scenes superfluous, whereas others saw them as a welcome change. The highest appreciation went out to the intensity of the reconstructed scenes and the archival footage. Herbert Ihering even expressed the opinion that war films had taken a new direction with *SOMME*. His remark, which was quoted in the title of this section, refers to this film, which he saw as 'Ein neue Phase des Kriegsfilms: das Dokumentarische gewinnt die Oberhand, die Tendenz scheint unterdrückt, der Regisseur wird zum Reporter.'<sup>94</sup>

The film follows the chronological order and shows how the situation gradually progresses up to the first allied attacks. The three brothers clearly represent the German perspective. The first scenes show a relatively quiet situation at the front. On the German side, people are busy with all kinds of activities in and around the trenches, but there is also room for humour and a few people are listening to gramophone music. Others, including the oldest son, Karl, are writing letters. Karl is writing to his mother that his brother Willie is in the same battalion as he is and he asks her if the youngest brother, Hans, has enlisted as a volunteer. In the very same sequence, the first grenade explodes.

After this introduction, intervening titles are used to present a factual picture of the situation at the allied side. Through archival footage, we see the logistic preparations for the attack. The spying activities of the respective sides are carried out by reconnaissance airplanes (English) and Zeppelins (German). These scenes have been staged, like the ones showing nocturnal German patrols.

Some reconstructed scenes were designed by Heinz Paul as narrative sequences with clear openings and distinct conclusions. The third scene, for example, shows a German soldier observing enemy activities at the front from a Zeppelin. Suddenly English airplanes appear in the sky and start attacking the Zeppelin. Angled frontal medium shots of the pilot are succeeded by reverse shots of the soldier in the basket under the Zeppelin and frontal shots of the attacking airplane. When the airplane closes in on the Zeppelin, the German soldier jumps over the edge with his parachute. The Zeppelin is hit, catches fire and crashes. Next, the airplane is shot down by a German canon. Still, all Zeppelins are lost after renewed attacks.

Most of the attacks and battle scenes on the ground are reconstructed scenes. After having bombed the German positions for seven days on end,

from June 24th to July 1st 1916, the English start their attacks. This scene alone already shows how vast the English portion of the film is. The attacks are mainly filmed from the English perspective. The camera is positioned right behind the trenches of the attacking troops and it moves in a dolly parallel to the battle line. We see an over-the-top scene that has become a classic (it was also included in the English propaganda film *THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME* [1918]).<sup>95</sup> It is obvious that, in reality, the camera could never have been in such a position, i.e. within the shooting range of the enemy, let alone that there could have been a dolly on a parallel line. The same applies to the scene in which a camera is pointed frontally at a firing machine gun, or the battle scene in which the camera looks down on the trenches from above. As indicated before, it was technically impossible to shoot at night, which means that all night scenes are reconstructions as well. The same goes for the scenes in which a gas attack and a tank assault, respectively, are launched. In the former case the image only blurs. The tank assault, on the other hand, has been filmed in a captivating way. Again, the cameras move in on the firing muzzles of the tanks, or they are filming the threateningly approaching tanks from below.

Since Heinz Paul staged some reconstructed scenes as narratives, there is an almost constant succession of scenes dealing with the 'small-scale' personal element and scenes showing the overwhelming battle of equipment. As a result, the historical context of the battle fades into the background. Paul also hardly uses the didactic formula with which the makers of the *WELTKRIEG* films won praise. He probably was more interested in reducing the distance between viewer and spectacle. He seemed to be less interested in a history lesson, and more in the image of the war experience as such, be it from a 'documentary' perspective. Some critics, like Kesser, confirm this. He wrote in the *Berliner Börsen-Courier*: 'Man lernt die maschinelle Institution "Krieg" kennen, nicht die spezifische Form der Kämpfe an der Somme.'<sup>96</sup> A critic from *Germania* made a similar remark: 'einen Eindruck von der militärischen Bedeutung dieser Kämpfe vermittelt der Film kaum.'<sup>97</sup> Some reviews, on the other hand, called the film a 'Lehrfilm'. To this matter, the *Film-Kurier* remarked that the director had taken a very down-to-earth stance, as if he was shooting the manufacture of an industrial product.<sup>98</sup> Both opinions are found in the reviews – the film was both a detached survey and a gripping account of one of the bloodiest battles of World War I, probably because of its documentary strength. The film did not evoke controversial reactions and was received positively by almost all reviewers, particularly because of its neutral perspective, lacking pathos. Again, the communist newspaper, *Die Rote Fahne*, took exception, interpreting *SOMME* as a 'deutscher imperialistischer Kriegsfilm im Zeichen des Youngs-Plans'.<sup>99</sup>

After having shown some individual fates and adventures, the film closes with the images of a war cemetery and the number of people killed in action: 750,000 French and English and 500,000 German soldiers.

SOMME has few similarities with the sequence of the same name from the DER WELTKRIEG film and has nothing of the latter's modernist character regarding the use of cinematographic means. Heinz Paul chose a conventional approach and showed images of the war machine as well as scenes of recognisable human suffering.

One of the films to which SOMME was compared was the French war film VERDUN. VISION D'HISTOIRE (1927) by Léon Poirier, which had been released in the German cinemas two years previously.<sup>100</sup> A German interpretation of the same battle followed four years later, with Heinz Paul's DOUAUMONT. By then, cinematographic representations of life at the front were no longer exceptions, with realistic war films like WESTFRONT 1918 and ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT. DOUAUMONT opened on August 14th, 1931. The two theatres where it was first shown, the Ufa-Theater Universum and the Ufa Pavilion at Nollendorfplatz, opened the new film season with this film.<sup>101</sup> It was the same period as the one in which war films revived. One day after DOUAUMONT, the spy movie IM GEHEIMDIENST was released; September saw BERGE IN FLAMMEN, and after that other new war films appeared in the cinemas: DIE ANDERE SEITE, KAMERADSCHAFT, which referred to the war, and NIEMANDSLAND. In January 1931, the film 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND had already been released.

The relatively easy capture of the fort Douaumont, notwithstanding the giant losses, has already been discussed in the context of the Verdun scene in DER WELTKRIEG. The film follows the same narrative pattern as this sequence. Naturally, more attention is paid to the capture of the fort by the Germans than to the recapture by the French. The German capture is shown as an act of heroism – as the individual achievement of a small group of German soldiers –, whereas the recapture by the French seems to be more of a kind of fate, something that literally came out of the blue – in the shape of a grenade – as if no Frenchman was ever involved in it. Once the Germans enter the fort, the French surrender without putting up a fight. The Germans treat them correctly, be it somewhat condescendingly. Once the Germans are defeated themselves, one of the officers bravely admits defeat, stating: 'Das ist das Ende.' Just before that, a grenade had hit the sickbay, which led to loud moaning and soldiers calling for their mothers. The film mainly shows the German perspective, which becomes clear from the French version of the film that was released in the course of the same year. The French title of the film is DOUAUMONT VU PAR LES ALLEMANDS!<sup>102</sup>

The portrayal of both camps as pictured here is, in fact, not discussed in any of the reviews. The general opinion was that the film was made objectively and without pathos. This did not mean that the film lacked drama. The scene in which the Germans were driven out of the fort, for example, received much outside support. Behind the film screen was a male choir singing soldier songs. One reviewer described the effect of this as follows: 'Wie schliesslich die Reste der deutschen Besatzung das Fort verliessen und dazu hinter der Leinwand tränendrüsenreizerweise ein Männerchor das Lied vom guten Kameraden sang, schluchzte eine Frau laut auf.'<sup>103</sup>

The omission of a fictional story line not only made the film matter-of-fact, it also gave it a historic-didactic appearance. The text intermissions gave the actual course of the battle, while letters, aerial photography, sketches of the fort and animations of the geographical situation of the front were used as well. What has remained of the film shows that a large part of it consisted of reconstructed scenes. Only occasionally the situation of an individual soldier is spotlighted, but not in such a way that he is named or becomes a dramatic character. The soldiers literally remain unknown soldiers, except for the ones who had actually fought at the time. They were the 'real' characters of the film.

Because part of the footage originated from French archives, the French perspective and French victims received some attention, too.<sup>104</sup> The concept of the unknown soldier appeared to be of some help here. The final scenes, for instance, show the picture of a lone cross above the grave of an unknown soldier and a reference is made to the remembrance culture of the war cemeteries. The description of the contents of the advertising brochure ends with the following lines:

So endet dieses gewaltige Ringen mit den blutigsten Verlusten auf deutscher wie auf französischer Seite. Viele Hunderttausende von Gräbern geben Kunde von dem Heldenmut und der Treue, welche Männer beider Länder im Kampf für ihre Heimat bewiesen haben.<sup>105</sup>

Apart from the battle preparations and destroyed landscapes and villages, the archival footage in the film also shows shots of firing canons that were positioned behind the actual front line. The fact that reconstructed scenes dominated the film probably had to do with the co-operation of some retired servicemen, both soldiers and officers, who had fought in the Battle of Douaumont in 1916. Just like, in all probability, in the film *DER WELTKRIEG*, they played the same roles in the film that they had in the real situation. Thus, the makers wanted to increase the realistic and objective value of the film, which appears from the promotional campaign in which the names of Lieutenant Radtke and Captain Haupt – who helped to relieve the fort – featured prominently.<sup>106</sup> What the director overlooked – or simply chose to ignore – was

that both former soldiers had not only aged by fifteen years (and become much less agile) but they also had no acting talents whatsoever. Their presence did (and does!) not help the film, as appears from the remarks the press made about this.<sup>107</sup> While some critics were of the opinion that the co-operation of former servicemen enhanced the objectiveness, others said that the reconstructed scenes actually increased the difference with the archival footage in an irritating way. The *Deutsche Zeitung* remarked on the former aspect: 'Haupt und Radtke hätten nicht ihre Mitwirkung zugesagt, wenn sie nicht der Ueberzeugung gewesen wären, dass hier nach besten menschlichen Kräften (...) ein lebenswahres Stück Geschichte wiedergegeben würde.'<sup>108</sup> The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, on the other hand, remarked about the latter aspect: 'Die teilweise verwendeten echten Filmaufnahmen aus den Archiven lassen das Falsche an den gestellten Szenen in um so peinlicherer Deutlichkeit erscheinen.'<sup>109</sup>

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT and WESTFRONT 1918 were important references in the reviews of the film. In his article, under the header 'Hugenbergs Antikriegsfilm', the reviewer at *Vorwärts* wrote that he had expected to see a kind of militaristic and patriotic antidote to the two anti-war films, but that the opposite was true.<sup>110</sup> More critics recognised themselves in this view and they, too, labelled the film as relatively pacifist. However, their reasons for this view differed. To mention two examples: *Vorwärts* thought that the film did perhaps not emphasise the horrors of war enough, but what the film did show was horrifying enough, so the newspaper said. The *Kreuz-Zeitung* expressed the opinion that too many different images had been interwoven, which made the war look like a useless event, something which would serve pacifism too much.<sup>111</sup>

SOMME and DOUAUMONT showed battles that took place on enemy territory and did not take Germany closer to a possible victory. Also, a lot of foreign film material was used to make the films. Without this material the films would have consisted almost completely of reconstructed fabrications, which would not have helped to increase the realistic quality of the films, as the reconstructed scenes show. The foreign material also prevented that the films would show only the German perspective. The war cemeteries in the closing scenes of both films were international, too. In combination with the concept of the unknown soldier, an overly nationalistic perspective was avoided.



## TANNENBERG

In TANNENBERG, the 'universal' aspect is hardly mentioned. The battle had not only taken place on 'own' territory, Germany also came out as the undisputed victor. In fact, the greater part of the archival footage was of German origin. One of the subjects of the next section is whether these facts have resulted in a different film.

TANNENBERG was the last war documentary shot during the Weimar era. The film differs from previous documentaries in several ways. First of all, it shows a different kind of heroism. The battle in East Prussia was heroic, not so much because of the high number of victims – like in Somme and Douaumont – but because of the German victory on Russia. Secondly, the German heroism was not personified by the unknown soldier, but primarily by one man, general Paul von Hindenburg. Thirdly, the fictional story slightly dominates the film which, for the rest, consists of archival footage and reconstructed battle scenes (the historical story). A last characteristic is the special place taken by the Battle of Tannenberg in the remembrance rituals of the war. These aspects – plus the fact that this was the last documentary produced during the Weimar era – are sufficient reason to focus closely on TANNENBERG. It should be noted, though, that the 1932 version of TANNENBERG was not the first film made about this battle of the same name. In the year in which the hero of Tannenberg, Von Hindenburg, was elected president of the state, the feature film VOLK IN NOT (*Das Heldenlied von Tannenberg*) was released, while two years later, in 1927, a military instruction film, also named TANNENBERG, was shown for the first time. The central subject of the former film, by Wolfgang Neff, is the German home front. The story concentrates on the trials and tribulations at an East Prussian farm during the first days of the war (see Chapter 6). With the exception of some archival footage, the approach was in no way 'documentary' as such.<sup>112</sup>

Censors called the military instruction film TANNENBERG (1927), 'rein belehrend'.<sup>113</sup> This film was completed in the year in which Von Hindenburg, in his capacity as war hero and president of the state, unveiled the Tannenberg monument.<sup>114</sup> Pictures of this ceremony are shown at the end of the film. How much the figure of Von Hindenburg was associated with this battle appears from the fact that his state funeral in 1934 took place on virtually the same location. The 1927 film consists almost exclusively of animations and text boards explaining the military-strategic developments. It is doubtful whether the film ever reached the regular cinema, because no traces of any reviews of it have been found yet. Neither is there a programme. The reviews of the 1932 film do not mention this earlier film either. The only 'relationship' between both films

is that the 1932 TANNENBERG contains animations that seem to come from the 1927 film. Also, the opening scene of the later film – a silhouette of the Tannenberg monument – is identical to the final scene of the 1927 TANNENBERG. The later TANNENBERG obviously served as a national symbol, which is underlined by the fact that the film was re-released in 1936, during the Nazi regime.

### TANNENBERG **without Von Hindenburg**

An interesting event preceded the opening of TANNENBERG, which took place late September 1932. The film had been shot in the summer of that same year. Partly, it was shot at the Ufa Studios in Babelsberg, while the open air shooting took place in East Prussia and in the Masur Lakes area, the areas where the actual battle had been fought.<sup>115</sup> Originally, the film was due for release on 26 August 1932, the day on which the eighteenth anniversary of the Battle of Tannenberg was to take place. However, to the great disappointment of the makers and other Tannenberg worshippers, this was not to be.<sup>116</sup> Like every film to be released in Germany, TANNENBERG had to be shown to the censors first, something that took place on August 29th.<sup>117</sup> The members of the censorship committee had a problem with the role of the actor playing president Von Hindenburg, who closely resembled him. Apparently, Von Hindenburg was not happy with his 'mirror image' and ordered the censorship committee that the film could not be shown until a maximum number of Hindenburg scenes had been removed (in the end, not all scenes were removed).<sup>118</sup> For *Lichtbildbühne*, this was the most ludicrous reason for rejection in the history of censorship. Below is the complete report, which was printed in bold letters on the front page:

**'TANNENBERG'-FILM OHNE HINDENBURG**

**Die groteskeste Entscheidung in der Geschichte der Zensur**

Nach mehr als vierstündiger Dauer ist, wie wir bei Redaktionsschluss erfahren, heute bei der Filmprüfstelle Berlin über den "Tannenberg"-Film eine Entscheidung gefallen, die einigermaßen sensationell wirken muss. Der Film wurde *zugelassen*; es wurden aber sämtliche Szenen verboten, in denen der Sieger von Tannenberg, *Hindenburg*, auftritt.

Die Kammer hat ihre Entscheidung damit begründet, dass die Darstellung des amtierenden Reichspräsidenten im Film die öffentliche Ordnung und das deutsche Ansehen gefährde sowie lebenswichtige Interessen des Staates verletze! Die Firma hat dagegen sofort *Beschwerde* eingelegt.<sup>119</sup>

Here, again, like before with 1914. *DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEN WELBRAND*, multi-interpretable motives were used to prohibit particular scenes. Protests from the production company led to the opening date being postponed. The next day *Lichtbildbühne* rightly remarked that the *Lichtspiel Gesetz* did not allow in any way for a prohibition on the grounds of the fact that Von Hindenburg was played by an actor.<sup>120</sup> According to the magazine, it would have been better, had the members of the censorship committee considered whether the version was historically correct and whether it could damage the current president. It is not clear why the committee thought that both matters indeed applied. Nevertheless, far from everyone agreed with the protest of *Lichtbildbühne*. Not only did a number of right-wing newspapers applaud the censorship decision, the left-wing liberal *Vossische Zeitung* also wrote that it could comprehend the decision. The former were primarily afraid to see a myth being disturbed, whereas the latter was of the opinion that the army commands were pictured in such a commonplace way, that it could understand why the censors did not want to see Von Hindenburg associated with this.<sup>121</sup>

In the meantime, an uncut version of the film had premiered in Vienna on August 31st – the sensitivity regarding the way in which Von Hindenburg was pictured was clearly a German matter.<sup>122</sup> On September 8th, the Berlin Filmprüfstelle finally decided to pass the film after some scenes had been cut. The film was first released in the provinces. On September 27th, 1932, *TANNENBERG* finally opened in Berlin.<sup>123</sup>

The makers, of course, were of the opinion that the film – even with Von Hindenburg played an actor – was a correct representation of the historical reality. Like in the *DER WELTKRIEG* films, they had drawn maps of the front. They clearly showed how the Russian armies of *Rennenkampf* and *Samsonov* were being destroyed by the Germans, slowly but surely. This did not mean at all that *TANNENBERG* was a smear campaign film. The Russian army commanders were portrayed respectfully. It was obvious that the makers had intended to make a realistic and historically correct film.

The subtitle of the film, 'Ein dokumentarischer Film über die Schlacht bei Tannenberg', shows that, at the time, a film in which a fictional story was shown within a historical setting (with archival footage and reconstructed scenes) could be regarded a documentary without any problems.<sup>124</sup> It is possible that the choice to include a fictional story line was made to ensure that the film appealed to as large an audience as possible, although *DOUAUMONT* had already shown that films without a fictional plot could be successful. A drama revolving around personal tragedy might appeal more than a succession of battle scenes and pictures of officers meeting, which might become monotonous after a while. The description of the film contents in the promotional magazine, the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*, leaves no doubts as to this. Instead of de-

cribing the contents as a tragedy embedded within a predominantly historical documentary, it describes the film in exactly the opposite way. The description opens as follows: 'Ein ostpreussischer Gutshof im Wirkungsbereich der Schlacht von Tannenberg ist noch kaum geschildert worden. Es ist Ergreifenderes und Dramatischeres wohl nicht zu denken.'<sup>125</sup>

The closing sentences of the description of the contents are hardly less telling:

Heute schon sind diese Kämpfe an der Grenze ein Stück Geschichte geworden, das schlicht und phrasenlos der Film "Tannenberg" schildert. Er ist gleichzeitig die Darstellung der ergreifenden und spannenden Begebenheiten auf einem ostpreussischen Gutshof während der grossen Schlacht in August 1914.<sup>126</sup>

This description not only emphasises the individual emotional perspective of the film, it also stresses the sensational – 'mesmerising, entrancing and dramatic' – rather than the documentary element. How are both story lines presented in relation to one another?

## History and tragedy

The two story lines in TANNENBERG are closely interrelated. The first story paints the general historical picture of the Battle of Tannenberg at a macro-level, while the second story line is at micro-level, showing the events in and around the manor of landowner captain Von Arndt and his family and servants.<sup>127</sup>

The film opens with a reference to the current situation with images of the Tannenberg monument at dusk. With this reference, the film itself is incorporated into the commemoration cult, too, as it were. This was the makers' intention, something which also appeared from the intended – but exceeded – release date.

The credits appear against the background of the memorial. The film then switches to a landscape full of wheat fields under a clouded sky (compare these to the opening scene of DER WELTKRIEG I). With a calendar page and a grenade, the outbreak of the war on August 2nd, 1914 is pictured. The wheat fields refer to the agricultural landscape of East Prussia, Junkers' land, which is under threat of being invaded by the Russians. In the following scenes we are inside a manor, the Russian army headquarters, where the generals, including Samsonov (Sigurd Lohde), Postovsky (Karl Auen) and Martos (Ernst Pröckel) are discussing military strategy. The czar has ordered the Russian army to start its offensive at the (German) east front. After consulting one another, the army commanders decide to start the offensive in the north of East Prussia with Rennenkampf's (Begas-Sohn) First Army and in the south with

Samsonov's Second Army (between the two areas is the Masur Lake District). Over dinner, in turn, the German generals, including Ludendorff (Henry Pless) and Hoffmann (Hans Mühlhofer), are discussing the attack they are planning on the Russians. In the border area, there are already reconnaissance patrols and minor clashes. When the Russians cross the German border, a flow of German refugees starts moving. In the meanwhile, the German army advances towards the Russian front, has some successes, but is forced back again. To stop this situation, the retired general Von Hindenburg (Karl Koerner) who is staying in Hannover at that time, is asked on 22 August to take over the command of the 8th German Army. Ludendorff, who distinguished himself at the Battle of Liège, will assist him as a general-major. The German army staff then develops a new strategy, in which the armies of Von François, Scholtz, Mackensen and Below must corner Samsonov's army via siege tactics. In practice, this strategy proves to be successful. The situation among the Russians gradually deteriorates and particularly general Martos army needs reinforcement badly. Samsonov and Postovsky discuss the following day, which calls for a quick decision. During a German offensive the Russians increasingly have the worst of it. Postovsky then reports the defeat to Samsonov and the English general Knox (Otto Wagner), who is assisting the Russian army as an allied member. Samsonov cannot take this and commits suicide. Germany has gained a great victory.

Parallel to this military-strategic story line, we see how the battle is fought at a micro-level. After the explication at macro-level, the film switches to the events at the Von Arndt manor. We also see how Von Arndt (Hans Stüwe) takes up arms against the Russians as the leader of a 'band' of Uhlans. These scenes cut through the 'greater story' of the battle. Von Arndt is introduced as a man who is living a happy family life with his wife Grete (Käthe Haack) and little daughter, and who is respected by his domestics (his servant Puchheiten, played by Karl Klöckner). The other members of the household are: Puchheiten's wife (Franziska Kinz) and their son Fritz (Rudolf Klicks) and Von Arndt's two sisters-in-law, Lita (Erika Dannhof) and Sonja (Hertha von Walther), the latter of whom is of Russian descent. Von Arndt shows how big-hearted he is when, upon his departure, he tells Sonja that the doors of his house will always be open to her. When Von Arndt has left, his wife and sisters-in-law turn the manor into an aid post and field hospital. It does not take long before the first refugees pass the manor on their flight and ask for shelter. The first wounded are brought in, too, and nursed by Grete, Lita and Sonja. Then Russian officers raid the manor. They are looking for a German spy, who has to be executed at once. The spy has indeed found shelter in the manor, but the women protect him and allow him to be taken (by Fritz) to Von Arndt's



hide-out. One of the officers is someone Sonja knows. She manages to persuade him to stop the search for the fugitive. As the battle continues, the number of Russian wounded nursed in the manor also increases. In addition, a group of Russian officers occupy the manor and use it as base. When the going gets tough, the Russian wounded need to be transported elsewhere. Sonja now decides to take the side of her former homeland, which does not imply that she takes a stand against her German blood relatives, and she moves along with them.

Von Arndt receives the message that his manor is now a Russian battle post and he sends Fritz to the manor with a missive. The people there will have to

prepare for an attack. The young messenger narrowly escapes the Russians. Inside the manor, the people seek shelter in the basement. When Fritz runs after his escaped little dog during the battle, he is hit by a grenade. Von Arndt is mortally wounded, too. But, parallel to the general situation at the front, it does not take long before the Russians at the estate surrender, and it is returned to the Germans.

Basically, both storylines have similar structures, although the contents and cinematography differ substantially.<sup>128</sup> At the same time, they balance one another. The historical story adds context to the fictional story and the relatively boring context story is perked up by introducing the suspense elements of the fictional story (spy, Fritz as a messenger, battle) and the drama (the wounded, Sonja's dilemma, the deaths of Fritz and Von Arndt). Samsonov's (suggested) suicide is the only element that may give the historical story some dramatic tension for a moment. Thus, both storylines together combine the emotional and the historic. The latter is also supported and explained extensively with pictures of maps indicating where the armies are at particular moments.<sup>129</sup> This is also the only part in which documentary shots are shown.

Both stories constantly refer to one another. First we see the effects of the military policy on the population and how radically life changes for everyone, men and women, young and old. According to the critic of *Germania* the role of the young Fritz would make schoolchildren appreciate the film too.<sup>130</sup> The events at the Von Arndt manor – particularly the coming and going of refugees and the Russian soldiers, wounded or not – reflected the general state of affairs at the front. More astutely than the historical story, this story shows the sacrifices the German people made. In fact, no fewer than two of the protagonists lose their lives in the battle. This is in sharp contrast with the losses suffered at the 'great' front. There, the number of German victims is relatively small compared to the number of Russians killed in action.<sup>131</sup> Historical footage or reconstructed images of German victims are also exceedingly sparse in the film. By having victims primarily dominate the fictional story and having victors primarily dominate the historical story, both the sacrificial death and the victory are highlighted. This also relieved the makers of their 'task' to show too painfully realistic shots of 'real' Germans killed in action, which would not fit a victory chronicle like *TANNENBERG* either.

The historical story is the dominant framework and the key thrust of the film. Not until the situation at the army command has been explained does the film show shots of the situation in and around the manor – time and again. The absolute durations of both stories also differ. Roughly, the duration ratio of the historical story to the fictional story is 3:2.<sup>132</sup> This does not alter the fact that



there is stronger emotional involvement in the fictional story than in the fictional historical approach of the other story.

There is relatively little archival footage in the film and what archival footage there is, is shown exclusively in the historical story. Because of the sometimes big differences in image quality, they are easily recognisable as such for the viewer, particularly the images of advancing troops, reconnaissance airplanes, withdrawing German troops, ravaged villages and masses of Russian prisoners of war.

Another aspect of the film is the way in which the German and Russian parties have been pictured, this in connection with the question how the makers solved 'the Hindenburg problem' after the intervention of the censors. The presentations of the German and the Russian army commanders have been marked off accurately in the film by distinctive separate sequences which have a duration ratio of broadly 2:1. The Russian army commanders move around mainly within one space, a richly decorated ground-floor room in a manor where the official staff meetings are held.<sup>133</sup> Contrary to the German party, we never see the Russian staff operate at the front line. This gives the impression that the German army commanders are more involved in the battle and consequently have a better grip on the situation. The latter particularly appears from the number of scenes in which we see how high-ranking officers observe the situation from a hill top with field-glasses and ordnance survey maps as if it were a 17th or 18th century battle scene. The German officers also display a wider variety of activities. A few elements have been added to the normal meeting that is similar to that of the Russians: a dinner, studying the ordnance survey maps and observing the battle scenes. Although they are always serious, this makes the Germans look relaxed. Despite their limited mobility, the Russians are also depicted as being 'in control'. With regard to the army commanders, the picture is in no way biased in the sense that it is anti-Russian. Also, the scene in which Samsonov's suicide is suggested has been filmed in a subdued way and without any sensation. The same attitude can be seen in the fictional scenes in which the Russians attack Von Arndt's manor and in the shots of the Russian front line activities.

Only one scene puts the Russians in a less favourable light.<sup>134</sup> In its wooden condescending approach it strongly recalls the scene from *DOUAUMONT* in which a bunch of sullen French soldiers are treated by the Germans with superior goodwill, once the fort has been attacked. In the corresponding scene in *TANNENBERG* it involves the bravura that three low-ranking Russian officers show when they order a German publican to open up his pub and force him, after they have finished their meal and drunk vodka, to accept rubles from them:

Seht es Euch gut an, Alter, das wird jetzt Eure neue Währung. Überall gehen jetzt die deutschen Truppen zurück, nicht nur vor Rennenkampf. Verlass dich darauf, unser General Samsonow wird jetzt den Deutschen bald den Garaus machen.<sup>135</sup>

This scene also shows a shot in which a Russian announcement is stuck over the German mobilisation order, again as a mark of the Russian occupation. It occurs just before Paul von Hindenburg appears on the scene. It is in this scene that the viewer – after a shot of his photographic image – catches a glimpse of his live appearance, be it only from the back. The second time he clearly appears in the picture is in the scene in which general Hoffmann explains the strategic situation to Von Hindenburg and Ludendorff who are both taciturn. Finally, Von Hindenburg appears for the last time in a scene in which he follows the course of the battle from the ‘Feldherrnhügel’. In all other cases an actor without dialogue is shown whose activities are highly limited. The historical Von Hindenburg is only shown on a photograph and, in the last scene, through a signature under a letter in which he announces the victory. Consequently, he has not disappeared entirely from the film, but his appearance is minimised. However, he does not speak at all. As a result, all the attention is focused on the other generals, like Ludendorff, Hoffmann, Grünert, Waldersee, Fleischmann Von Theissrück, Von Scholtz and Hell, who are shown prominently.

The fact that Von Hindenburg only features in the film minimally does not mean that he was ‘obliterated’ from the story – to the contrary. First of all, his name is inextricably bound up with this battle, no matter how limited the number of scenes is in which he appears. Secondly, the publicity around the problems with the censorship have forever appended his name to this film. Thirdly, his image is prominently pictured on the front page of the programme. And fourthly, he may be rarely featured in person in the picture, he does feature in two scenes through various letter texts. Basically, Von Hindenburg was primarily referred to. His ‘indirect appearances’ only increased the distance to his actual human figure. The film, therefore, certainly contributed to the mythologising of this war hero.

During the period preceding the release of the *TANNENBERG* film, people reacted negatively to Von Hindenburg being played by an actor. Because of the intervention of the censors, this footage has disappeared almost completely. What is left, are only some pictures of Von Hindenburg himself; he had just been re-elected state president for the second time. The fact that it was disallowed to have Von Hindenburg played by an actor most likely had to do with the myth that had been built around this character, a myth that referred back directly to Tannenberg. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the voice of the world

of the rich, the anti-republicans and Foreign Affairs, explicitly connected the film to this myth. The reviewer of this newspaper also presented an interesting theory on the meaning of historical myths in general:

... ein Mythos [the myth of Tannenberg, BK] hätte zerstört werden können. Jeder Mythos ist Ergebnis der Gefühlsgeschichtsschreibung eines Volkes, mit der es, unabhängig von Daten, Tatsachen und Armeestärken, die historische Wahrheit ans Licht hebt und – sagen wir es ruhig so – sie als Heiligtum der Sage unangreifbar bewahrt.<sup>136</sup>

Slightly further on in the article, the author adds to his theory:

Der Mythos eines Volkes irrt sich niemals. Und so trifft er auch hier [in the film, BK] mit gleichsam geschlossenen Augen das Richtige, was nachdenkliche, mühsam-forschende, exakte Geschichtsschreibung erst beweisen muss...<sup>137</sup>

What still had to be proved was that Von Hindenburg and Ludendorff stood as a 'vereinigte Persönlichkeit' at the base of the battle. The author compares it to the Battle of Verdun, a battle that is not associated with, for instance, Von Falkenhayn but with the soldiers themselves. Verdun is simply referred to as 'Die Schlacht'. In the case of Tannenberg, on the other hand, victory, the liberation of East Prussia, the giant war booty and the great performance of the German army are not first and foremost, 'sondern der wertende Blick der gläubigen Begeisterung und Dankbarkeit trifft bei dieser Schlacht, wie sonst kaum je, die führenden Persönlichkeiten: Hindenburg und Ludendorff.'<sup>138</sup>

For the author, these basic elements are the criteria for his criticism. In other words: did the film succeed in representing the Battle of Tannenberg as a 'Sieg der Persönlichkeiten'?<sup>139</sup> The answer is: partly. Not, however, because Von Hindenburg was hardly present as a person; the author actually thought that this was justified.

Denn nicht die Tatsache, dass Hindenburg heute Staatsoberhaupt ist, sollte Anlass zu der Vermeidung der Verfilmerei seiner Persönlichkeit gewesen sein, sondern seine historische Rolle als Feldherr von Tannenberg verpflichtet zu dieser Unterlassung.<sup>140</sup>

Consequently, the author is surprised about the fact that Ludendorff is played by an actor, which embarrasses him highly. That is why he advocates a law '... zum Schutze des Mythos eines Volkes'.<sup>141</sup>

Such a theory on the role and the function of myths certainly was not new and, within a German context, can be traced back for instance to the ideas of Wagner, who also was of the opinion that the myth was a positive opposite of history and a better vehicle to tell the truth. The reason for this was, as the quoted author also indicates, the role of the irrational and the instinctive in the

myth. In this way, the myth would gain direct access to the subconscious of the viewer.<sup>142</sup> When applied to documentaries, this would mean that the essence of war would only be represented correctly when the films would appeal to emotion and the irrational. Not the facts mattered, but the 'Gefühls-Geschichtsschreibung eines Volkes', i.e. the myth. Viewed from this perspective, war films could well be an expression of this paradox of fact and myth. Perhaps this mythical argument plays a part in the assessments of war films, too, along with the political-ideological argument, since these films, in themselves, are almost always dualistic – never entirely negative or positive.

## 4 'Wenn wir Helden wären, wären wir schon längst daheim'<sup>1</sup>

### Realism and anti-war tendencies in four films

Films such as *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* (1925), *WESTFRONT 1918* (1930), *DIE ANDERE SEITE* (1931) and *NIEMANDSLAND* (1931), like the war documentaries, can be related to New Objectivity. *WESTFRONT 1918* especially showed 'striking similarities to the basic doctrine of the New Objectivity', according to Kracauer.<sup>2</sup> These four films represent another approach to the war than has been discussed so far. Lacking archival footage, or making only limited use of it – with the exception of *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*, which appeared to have quite a lot archival footage – these films tried to get as close as possible to the western front experience by focusing on the personal experiences shared by a small group of soldiers. The confrontation with the home front was also included in these films. None of these four films were so-called neutral history lessons but representations of different subjective worlds of experience. Another similarity between the films was their anti-war tendency.

If we compare these films to the 'documentary' war films, we may well ask ourselves whether they presented a different perspective on the war. To what degree, for example, were the films different in terms of narration and cinematography? In addition, we may ask whether these anti-war films, in contrast to the 'documentaries', which mostly represented the official perspective on the war, can be considered 'counter-histories', and whether they did, as such, fulfil a demythologizing role.<sup>3</sup>

### Literary context: war literature

New Objectivity is often thought to have reached its high point round about 1929, but *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*, *WESTFRONT 1918*, *DIE ANDERE SEITE* and *NIEMANDSLAND* were nevertheless part of this cultural context.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps only its tone of voice changed after 1929. While it was an aesthetic practice in principle, realism fulfilled a different function and gained prestige in a time of social, political and especially economic upheaval. According to some commentators, including Michael Gollbach and Modris Eksteins, the 1929 crisis prompted Germans from all walks of life to re-examine and come to terms with their war past for the first time.<sup>5</sup> In this process, Gollbach says, an impor-

tant role was played by war films and war novels, because of their mass appeal.<sup>6</sup>

In the period 1928-1933, the last phase of the Weimar Republic, a boom occurred in the production of war literature. In contrast to historical belletristic writing, these war novels were a form of 'historical literature of experience', although they had all the characteristics of the New Objectivity. Most war literature reflects the authors' experiences, and most of the directors of the above mentioned films had first-hand experience of the war. For example, *WESTFRONT 1918* was based on Ernst Johannsen's *Vier von der Infanterie* (1929) and *DIE ANDERE SEITE* on the play *Journey's End* by Robert C. Sheriff. Literature has also been the starting point for a number of other war films, which will be discussed later. Since the four films dealt with in this chapter are clearly anti-war films, it seems appropriate also to discuss the Weimar boom in war literature.

The wave of literature about the war is often said to have been caused by the success of Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues*. At the end of 1928, Remarque's book was serialised in the *Vossische Zeitung*. Encouraged by the many positive reactions, the author and his publisher decided to publish the work as a novel. The book was finally released on 31 January 1929.<sup>7</sup> In the wake of *Im Westen nichts Neues*, the genre experienced a huge upsurge of popularity. Between 1928 and 1933, more than 200 novels appeared in Germany that dealt with the First World War.<sup>8</sup> The first decade of the Republic saw the publication of no more than 100 books about the war, most of them memoirs and diaries by senior officers. Since in later years most attention was paid to anti-war literature – with the notable exception of the work of Ernst Jünger<sup>9</sup> – the impression may have been created that in the final period of the Weimar Republic, most war novels published had an anti-war tendency. The best known were *Der Streit um den Sergeanten Grischa* (1927) by Arnold Zweig, *Jahrgang 1902* (1928) by Ernst Gläser, *Krieg* (1928) by Ludwig Renn, *Vaterlandslose Gesellen* (1929) by Adam Scharrer, *Heeresbericht* (1930) by Edlef Köppen and *Des Kaisers Kulis* (1930) by Theodor Plevier. Although the number of anti-war books increased compared to previous years, it is very small set against the production of right-wing pro-war literature.<sup>10</sup>

Despite their relatively small number, the anti-war novels spoke in a voice that had not yet been heard so clearly in Germany. Michael Gollbach has described the characteristics of these novels in his study of German war literature of the Weimar period. He lists the following distinguishing features:

- War is pictured as a source of ugliness and disgust, as a perversion and loss of human dignity.
- War is not decreed by destiny, but coincidental and meaningless.

- Comradeship at the front is only a means of survival made inevitable by the war, while in principle, the individual is isolated.
- The front soldier's psyche is characterised by the following traits: disillusionment, indifference, anxiety, depression, desorientation, concern for the other, psychic deformity and lack of identity.
- The enemy is a human being of equal value, a comrade with whom there is a 'relation' of solidarity without hatred.
- The war itself is the main conflict.
- The future is either pacifist or pointless and without any perspective.<sup>11</sup>

Literature that glorified the war, on the other hand, was characterised by an emphasis on heroism and the willingness to sacrifice. War was a decree of fate that offered the soldier an opportunity to show his true nature. Comradeship at the front was the supreme ideal to be realised, and it was also a prefiguration of a new ideal of national community. The war itself was not the main conflict, most problems were caused by the treacherous Heimat, the home front. The enemy was an inferior creature, an object of aggression and hatred.<sup>12</sup>

The question is whether anti-war films had the same characteristics as anti-war literature and whether the cinematographical representation offered perspectives on the war that were different in terms of content.

## NAMENLOSE HELDEN

NAMENLOSE HELDEN (originally called 'Krieg') has probably been lost, and there is very little information about the film. The only sources are one programme that has been preserved, several reviews and an exchange of correspondence about a request that the film be banned. What we do know is that the producer, Vienna-based Prometheus-Film, assigned director Hans Szekeley to make the film. Mid-October 1925, the premiere took place in Berlin. NAMENLOSE HELDEN appears to have had an explicit anti-war tendency with communist leanings. This was the main reason for the Reichswehrminister to file a request for a ban with the censorship authorities. The film had already been banned for people under eighteen.<sup>13</sup> The request was denied, for the simple reason that according to the censorship law, 'die Zulassung wegen einer politischen, sozialen, religiösen, ethischen oder Weltanschauungstendenz als solcher nicht versagt werden darf'.<sup>14</sup> The film did not contain any elements that portrayed the Reichswehr as 'verächtlich'<sup>15</sup>, or that might cause a disruption of public order or damage German prestige abroad. The communist ten-



dency was thus left intact, making *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* the only German war film of the Weimar period to gain the approval of *Die Rote Fahne*.

The protagonists of the film narrative are the worker Scholz (Erwin Kaiser), his wife (Lili Schönborn) and their two children. The family is living a happy life until the outbreak of the war forces Scholz to join the army and leave his wife and children behind. At the front and at home there is nothing but misery. The woman is destitute and loses her son in a domestic fire. Scholz learns of his son's tragic fate just before an attack. Next, he is blinded in a mine explosion. Returning once the war has ended, he finds his wife dying. He is left with only his youngest son. One day, during the post-war period of revolts and streetfighting, Scholz, who is blind, ignores a warning sign saying trespassers will be shot. Scholz is shot dead, and his youngest son, who had gone to a soup kitchen to get food for his father, is now an orphan.<sup>16</sup>

Besides scenes with realistic acting, *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* was 'unterstützt durch Originalaufnahmen (die aus 10.000 m Kriegsaufnahmen der Kriegsarchive aller kriegsführenden Länder stammen, Aufnahmen, welche bisher noch nie gezeigt wurden)'.<sup>17</sup> Since the film has not been preserved, there is little to say about the cinematography, except to repeat what the critics wrote. Most critics focused on the political tendency in the film. The fact that *Die Rote Fahne* praised the film says much about that tendency. The communist critic also lambasted Von Hindenburg, the national war hero who 'desecrated' many a war memorial with his remembrance activities (a national war memorial did not yet exist), while also protesting against obscuring the misery of the war and middle-class pacifism:

Dieser Film ehrt das Andenken der Millionen Opfer des Imperialismus, indem er sich scharf und eindeutig gegen den imperialistischen Krieg und gegen seine Ursachen, den Kapitalismus, kehrt. Nur warum der Titel "Namenlose Helden" für die namenlos Ermordeten? Sie waren trotz ihrer Tapferkeit keine Helden, sie konnten keine Helden sein, da sie betört und betäubt für den Geldsack starben, ihre Brüder und Klassengenossen morden mussten.<sup>18</sup>

An important criterion for a favourable review in *Die Rote Fahne* was the attention paid to the (imperialist) causes of the war and the run-up to the conflict. How was this done in *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*? One method was placing the story of Scholz and his family in a broader historical context. According to the newspaper, the film began with the first Balkan war of 1912 and ended with the 1920 Kapp-putsch, preceded by footage of the revolts of the 1918 and 1919.<sup>19</sup> This procedure makes *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* one of the few films to have placed the war in a context that went further than the last 39 days before the war, as was the case with 1914. The use of archival footage played an important role in this contextualisation. *Die Rote Fahne* critic ascribed great value to these images:

‘unbedingte, kontrollierbar absolute Wahrheit’.<sup>20</sup> Another method used by director Hans Szekeley was contrast editing. The *Film-Kurier* reported that the film saw big business as the main instigator of the war: ‘Hierfür wird das luxuriöse Leben der Familie eines Munitionsfabrikanten während des Krieges im Gegensatz zu dem hungernden Volk gezeigt.’<sup>21</sup> To *Die Rote Fahne*, these images spelled the same interpretation of the causes of the war as the *Film-Kurier*, and the communist newspaper appreciated the film very much. It also remarked that the editing rhythm was very high: ‘Wie da schnell nacheinander in wuchtigen Kontrasten die Klassengegensätze immer wieder unwiderlegbar (...) dargestellt (...) werden.’<sup>22</sup> According to *Die Rote Fahne*, the emphasis on the class struggle was the main reason why the film showed an anti-war tendency rather than a pacifist tendency. After all, pacifism rejected the violence of the class struggle and the revolution and civil war that went with it.<sup>23</sup> Although the German communists – the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands had been established in 1918 – came out against an imperialist war at the end of the First World War, this did not mean that they rejected the violence they believed was necessary to overthrow capitalist society. This ran against the basic assumptions of organised pacifism.

The archival footage used by Szekeley was mostly of the battlefield. It was important that the director had apparently succeeded in showing not only ‘die furchtbare mechanisierte Eintönigkeit’ of the war, but also its ‘bestiale Dynamik’.<sup>24</sup> A review in the *Vossische Zeitung* indicates that the film did in fact contain horrendous images. The review also refers to Eisenstein and Piscator as precursors of this kind of realism.<sup>25</sup> However, the worst images had been banned by the censor. The censorship report about the trailer said that two fragments had been cut: that of a man being hurled into the air by the power of an explosion, and one of a wounded soldier writhing with pain behind barbed wire.<sup>26</sup>

NAMENLOSE HELDEN must have been unique in many respects, including its radical point of view, its extensive use of archival material, its uncompromising display of misery and by not only showing violence and explosions, but also the monotony of the war. Perhaps it was the most radical anti-war film of the entire Weimar period, which would have fitted Gollbach’s anti-war outline of characteristics very well. Five years later, WESTFRONT 1918 appeared in the cinemas. Although this was not a communist film, it was a worthy successor of NAMENLOSE HELDEN.

## WESTFRONT 1918<sup>27</sup>

The only war film Georg Wilhelm Pabst made, premiered on 23 May 1930.<sup>28</sup> The film was reasonably successful. In the commercial rankings for the 1930-

1931 season, the film came ninth – *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* by Lewis Milestone reached sixth place in the next season.<sup>29</sup> *WESTFRONT 1918* was also more successful than *DIE ANDERE SEITE* and *NIEMANDSLAND*. It has without any doubt become the best known German film about the First World War. Its fame, however, was overshadowed by the success of *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*. Dubbed in German, and under the German book title, this film went into circulation only months after *WESTFRONT 1918* had opened. While Pabst's film could be shown undisturbed, Lewis Milestone's film created such an outrage that it was banned temporarily.

Yet the films were very similar in tenor.<sup>30</sup> Much of the consternation was probably caused by the fact that the film had been made by an American director, a representative of the former enemy. There were fears that the film's successful international tour might smirch Germany's 'good' name abroad. Especially the right-wing press labelled the film as anti-German propaganda. This was not so strange, since a number of films had been made in the U.S. that touched a sore spot in Germany.<sup>31</sup> The question is whether the different reactions to the films also suggested that a German director could presume more than a foreign (or American) director. Incidentally, *WESTFRONT 1918* did not escape from the censor unscathed. Even though it was approved, it was banned for people under eighteen<sup>32</sup>, as had been the case with *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*, and although the National Socialist reaction to *WESTFRONT 1918* was more balanced than that to *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*, Pabst's film was nevertheless banned in April 1933 following the Nazi assumption of power in Germany.<sup>33</sup>

In the second half of the Weimar period, Pabst had built a reputation as a filmer of social-realistic themes. *WESTFRONT 1918* marked a new high point in his realistic film art. Some months before he began shooting the film in March 1930, Pabst spent some time in London, where he acquainted himself with sound technique for film. *WESTFRONT 1918* was the first result of Pabst's absorption of this new technique. If one reads the reactions and compares the film to other sound films of the period, one is led to conclude that the final result was not altogether positive. One of the main problems was the absence of any facility for mixing the sound. The bad reproduction certainly ruins some of the dialogues, which are barely audible.<sup>34</sup> However, the sound accompanying the war is rendered very well, which was an important contribution to the success of the film.

Pabst himself did not have any first-hand experience of the war. He was captured at the beginning of the war and only released from a French prison camp in 1918. However, a number of other participants in the project, including some of the actors, had actually fought at the front line. But the film was

factually based on the front experiences laid down by Ernst Johannsen in his book *Vier von der Infanterie. Ihre letzten Tagen an der Westfront 1918*.<sup>35</sup>

If we compare *WESTFRONT 1918* with other films from the Weimar period, we may call it radical from a number of perspectives. We will later discuss the particular scenes and sequences that betray this radicalism. Compared to the book, however, the film's point of view is fairly moderate. Without exaggeration, the tone of voice of the book is tough and cynical. As Michael Gollbach comments, Johannsen's book is 'von einem zynisch-aggressiven Nihilismus geprägt, der auf der ohnmächtigen Wut und dem grimmigen Hass des Autors auf den antihumanen Krieg beruht'.<sup>36</sup>

Pabst showed the experience of war from the perspective of the individual. Reading the credits, one is struck by the names given to the protagonists. Of the four infantrymen, only one is referred to by his proper name, Karl (Gustav Diessl)<sup>37</sup>, while the others are designated by intellectual, geographical and military names: the Student (H.J. Moebis), the Bavarian (Fritz Kampers) and the Lieutenant (Claus Clausen). With this choice of names, Pabst presents the viewer with a social cross-section of contemporary German society. This was a conscious choice on the part of the director, since in the book, most of the protagonists do have proper names. In other words, Pabst chose a socially exemplary approach.<sup>38</sup> Despite this strategy, the characters are less abstract than those in *NIEMANDSLAND*, where they represented national identities. In both cases, the central interest is the experience of the average infantryman at the western front.<sup>39</sup> This emphasis on ordinary characters is enhanced by the fact that most of the actors were unknown to the public.

Although the four characters are the starting point, much of *WESTFRONT 1918* focuses on two protagonists in particular: the Student and Karl. The structure of the film can be seen as the development of two separate trajectories. The first part of the film deals with the adventures of the Student, while the second part concentrates on Karl. Both parts have a nearly equal number of scenes/sequences, but in terms of duration, the emphasis is on the second part, which is one and a half times the length of the first part. Besides the fact that most of the attention in the film goes to Karl's personal life, the film narrative also ends with his death. This makes him the main protagonist, which explains why he is the only character to be called by his proper name.

The narrative hinge between the two parts is a cabaret sequence in which we see a singer and two comedians perform before an audience of German soldiers, which, incidentally, does not include the four infantrymen. In a brief scene that precedes this sequence, we see, as it were, how the narrative perspective is transferred from the Student to Karl. In a vast and empty landscape where everything has been shot to pieces, Karl, who is going home on leave,



Karl and the Student on the edge of a bomb crater

meets the Student, who is returning to his regiment. Just as, earlier, we followed the Student from the first sequence in his love affair with Yvette, we now follow the adventures of Karl and his wife. The front scenes of the two parts also indicate an analogy between the two characters. In the first part, we see how the student reports as a volunteer, which enables him to visit Yvette. In the second part, Karl is the one who volunteers. However, his motive is quite different from that of the Student. He seems bitter by his wife's adultery and the death of the Student, which makes his initiative look like a suicide mission. The relatively optimistic attitude to life that characterised the first part has changed into bitter pessimism in part two. After all, while the characters in the first part manage to survive the horror of the battlefield, death is their reward in the second part. The war wins in the end.

The two protagonists are the main starting point of the narrative, which means that the other characters are developed less. However, they do fulfil an important function in the narrative. The opening sequence introduces the Bavarian as a bon vivant who is fond of laughing, and throughout the film, he is the one who puts things into perspective, and even in the thick of the battle, the Bavar-

ian continues to be bright and breezy. Although he is fearless in battle, he is the one who remarks (spoken in a broad Bavarian dialect): ‘Dös, wenn wir Helden wären, täten wir längst scho dahoam sein.’<sup>40</sup> In contrast, the Lieutenant’s character is less stable. Having been incorporated into the structure of military hierarchy, he is responsible for his platoon and he owes those higher in rank unconditional obedience. To illustrate this, Pabst has him stand to attention in an almost comical way when he speaks to a senior officer on the telephone. His fit of madness is not only connected to the military hierarchy and the Lieutenant’s subservience to authority, it also marks the poignant contrast between the generals who pass orders while they are safely behind the front and the Lieutenant, who has to operate in the chaos of the firing line and witnesses his own platoon being hit by friendly fire.<sup>41</sup> As the sole survivor left standing after the battle, we see him amidst a pile of bodies in the penultimate scene, screaming ‘Zu Befehl, Majestät! Hurrah! Hurrah!’ While the Bavarian remains cool-headed, the Lieutenant is not equal to the situation. In the end, however, the Lieutenant survives, and the Bavarian, like Karl, dies.

The characters thus not only represent various social and geographical positions, they also stand for four different psychic conditions: depression (Karl); optimism (the Student); putting things in perspective/humour (the Bavarian); madness (the Lieutenant). They embody some of the psychological characteristics which Gollbach formulated on the basis of war literature.<sup>42</sup>

### The war scene

The enemy in *WESTFRONT 1918* is always portrayed as an anonymous figure. In the fighting scenes, we see him as a group. Sometimes we only hear the enemy, for example when a screaming French soldier is dying a slow and painful death on the barbed wire. While the image of a writhing soldier was cut from *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* by the censor, here sound can create the suggestion of the same image – an effect that is sometimes stronger than the actual image itself. In accordance with Gollbach’s anti-war characteristics, these images present the enemy as an individual of equal value who suffers as much from the war as his counterparts.

The second time the enemy appears as a comrade occurs in the last scene, when a dying Karl takes hold of a Frenchman’s hand. The French soldier says: ‘Moi, camarade, pas ennemie.’ The more poignant are the images in which we are confronted with an enemy who kills one of the protagonists. A French-African soldier attacks the Student from behind and after a fight, drowns him in a pool of watery mud in a bomb crater. This is cruel enough in itself – critics and audiences were shocked – but the scene in the book was even more cruel: ‘Then a tall negro appears behind him, grins and hurls a handgrenade into the





Karl with his wife and his mother

crater.<sup>43</sup> The grenade explodes in the hands of the soldier when he tries to throw it back over the edge of the crater. This is a character that does not appear in the film (in the film the Lieutenant is the fourth character, in the book a certain Job). The Student standing next to Job in the crater is also hit: 'The student cries out, spins around like a spinning top, stares at the heavens, stares into the negro's mug, who is bending over the edge of the crater and looks him in the eye. He closes his eyes. Death, yes, this is death.'<sup>44</sup>

According to Pabst, (and according to public opinion and the censor as well) many scenes in the book were apparently too horrific to be translated into film images.<sup>45</sup> His film would probably have gotten into trouble with the censor (and with public opinion), just like *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*. Nonetheless, he evidently did not have any problem with casting a French-African as the enemy and having him commit such a horrible act. Was it perhaps more acceptable, in this case, to portray the enemy as a 'foreigner', a soldier with whom feelings of solidarity would have been difficult anyway, because of his 'inferior' status? None of the critics say anything about racism, as we shall see later on. Perhaps a film such as *NIEMANDSLAND*, with its sympathetic if slightly ste-



reotypical portrait of its French-African protagonist, and the reviews it inspired offer more insight into this matter.

The war is shown as a succession of tribulations. At the front, there is the constant thunder of exploding shells and the staccato of bursts of machine-gun fire. All conceivable horrors of warfare are concentrated in 90 minutes, though there are several long interruptions (the cabaret scene and Karl's leave, for example). In most of the front scenes, at least one life-threatening situation occurs: being nearly hit by a bomb; the collapse of a trench; being shelled by friendly fire; carrying out highly dangerous patrols; a cruel murder from behind; an attack with tanks and gas; and the inevitable insanity and death of the last scenes. Scenes such as these are the dramatic high points of the film. The physical dangers to which the front soldiers are exposed have been concentrated at the beginning and end of the film. The rest of the film deals with the more subtle social and psychological effects of the war.

As Gollbach indicated in his dichotomy, comradeship is indeed a necessary means of survival. Despite the differences in place of origin, age, status and social background, not a cross word is spoken between the infantrymen and there is not even the slightest suggestion of a conflict between them. They support each other through thick and thin. For example, the Bavarian will not let Karl go alone on a dangerous patrol, they save each other's lives, they stick by each other. There are no conflicts between the comrades, nor between the German soldiers and the enemy (except for the murder of the Student). Besides the struggle of war itself, the film is dominated by the 'struggle' between the home front and the battle front. For example, when he comes home, Karl catches his wife in the act with the butcher's boy. Although his wife explains that she did it for the meat and because she was lonely, Karl will not budge and treats her with cold indifference throughout his leave. When he leaves home again, he does so with a powerful longing to see his comrades at the front.<sup>46</sup> While in many respects, Pabst knocks warfare off its pedestal, he leaves the myth of comradeship at the front intact.

At first sight, one might call Pabst's approach to heroism ambivalent. On the one hand, he does not present either of the four protagonists as depressed or anxious. They have a clean record and in combat they clearly prove their fearlessness. When volunteers are needed, they are the first to report. It is not they, but the other soldiers who fear most for their lives. The Bavarian's remark about heroism mentioned earlier is aimed at the companion of a recruit who is disgusted by a 'corpse' (the Student's hand sticking out of the mud) and to whom the companion says: 'Reiss dich zusammen, Mensch! Wir sind doch Helden!'<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, however, the motives for the protagonists' actions are not the motives of traditional heroism, that is, fighting for country

and honour. These more elevated motives are utterly lacking in our heroes. They are not fighting in the name of some national slogan, but to see their dearest, to forget their misery or to help their comrades-in-arms. They are all too human. Pabst has chosen to nuance heroism and anti-heroism in a subtle way, characterising the protagonists as both heroes and antiheroes. They are not clad in the armour of 'die-hards', but neither are they portrayed as scaredy-cats or cowards. This makes the chance of losing the viewer's sympathy for the characters very small.

Despite the strong antagonism between the fighting front and the home front, despite the racist portrayal of the enemy and despite a certain display of heroism, the film evokes and evoked pacifist connotations, if only for the fact that all protagonists die in the war, which leaves the viewer no option but to denounce it. In view of these aspects of the film, *WESTFRONT 1918* would have to be positioned somewhere between the two extremities of Gollbach's dichotomy. However, the end of the film does not leave any doubt about its ideological message. Not only is there a reconciliation between Karl and (the image of) his wife, but Pabst also shows the fate of death being shared by a German (Karl) and a Frenchman. The text that closes the film is quite remarkable. The word 'Ende' is followed by a question mark and an exclamation sign. This is an indirect reference to the contemporary social crisis, the economic misery and the political tensions. The film thus ends with a warning.<sup>48</sup>

## Cinematography

One of the first aspects Gollbach mentions in his classification is the way the war at the front is represented. In anti-war prose, war is presented as ugly and horrific. As we have seen, the same is true for the film, but the question remains how the front and the fighting itself were represented. Apart from the *mise en scène* and camera technique, editing and sound were the main filmic means that Pabst used to give expression to the front experience. The question is whether his use of these means is essentially different from the war documentaries discussed earlier, in which the experience of the front was conveyed through constructed scenes.

The first scene that actually shows us an image of the front is in the penultimate sequence, lasting eleven minutes in total. Earlier enemy attacks took place at night, this one during the day. Karl and the Bavarian join two other soldiers on patrol. The camera is positioned over the meandering trench which has partly been covered with barbed wire, and in a long take (36 seconds) follows the soldiers to their next shelter, a crater. The camera increases pace with the soldiers and in the end, its position gets lower and lower. Thin clouds of smoke seep across the edge of the crater and the muffled sound of explosions

can be heard in the distance. The four soldiers see a hand sticking out of the mud and the Bavarian vents his familiar remark about heroism. One minute later, a machine gun is put into position, and helmets can be seen rising above the crater. Next, we see the vast and empty landscape, and despite the fact that the horizon is very low, it is filmed only indirectly from the point of view of the soldiers. The camera is actually at a vantage point above the crater. Then the first explosions occur. In *DER WELTKRIEG*, showing explosions usually meant stepping up the editing pace, in which every shot showed columns of smoke and mud being lifted into the air. However, in *WESTFRONT 1918* we see at least ten explosions in only one shot, with the camera moving about in small jerks. The view is completely obscured. Next, we briefly see another sharp movement (a reframing) of Karl and the Bavarian. Karl shouts: 'Sie kommen.' In an extreme long shot from the front, from the indirect high point of view of the German soldiers, we see the French attack. We see them negotiating the obstacles in their way, we see explosions, craters which serve as shelters, we see the barbed wire and how many soldiers are shot. This is all shown in a long take of about twenty seconds. We see the Bavarian firing his rifle while Karl lobbs a handgrenade at the enemy. What follows is the longest take of this sequence (some 90 seconds), in which we see no man's land from a side view. The French run past the camera in profile. Both foreground and background are clearly visible. After some time, tanks emerge from the trails of smoke.

Again we see images of German soldiers firing a machine gun, followed by footage of a landscape in which the camera appears to have been closer to the action and in which the horizon appears to be higher. In the foreground, we see a fallen soldier lying on his belly, only his legs are visible. Next, we see a tank traversing the picture frontally at an angle, with French soldiers hiding behind it (long shot). The shot that follows is identical to an earlier one (the Bavarian firing his rifle and Karl throwing a hand grenade). Next, there are a number of 'shot-reverse-shots' between the Bavarian and Karl on the one hand and the advancing French soldiers on the other. The French are now also shown in close-up. The Bavarian prepares to attack, claspng a knife between his teeth, but is then hit, after which he moans and falls back into the crater. The French and Germans are now throwing hand grenades at each other. The other German soldiers are hit also. The tanks move up further until one of them passes the camera at no more than an arm's length. An infernal noise erupts and the horizon is darkened by a wall of explosions. In the end, there is also man-to-man fighting in a German trench bulging with dead bodies. Next, we see a thick cloud of smoke spreading through the trenches, and we hear a French soldier warn against poison gas. Germans wearing gas masks come running into shot. It is in this mass of dead bodies that we see the Lieutenant (filmed

from below, with the corpses visible in the foreground) get up and scream out his madness, after which he is taken away.

An answer to the question asked earlier, whether Pabst's representation of the battlefield is essentially different from the representations in films discussed earlier, must be both affirmative and negative. Films such as *DOUAUMONT*, *SOMME*, *TANNENBERG* and *DER WELTKRIEG* contain scenes with long takes and inconspicuous editing. Pabst also pays much attention to the landscape in no man's land by frequently using extreme long shots, as had been done before in many 'documentary' films. In one of the longest takes of this sequence, the camera actually leaves the characters to become a 'neutral' observer.

Pabst deviates in at least two respects. In the first place, he keeps his camera close to his characters. Although there is no direct point of view in the combat scenes, the camera's view is related to their view on no man's land. Such camera positions are less frequent in other films, where there are mostly anonymous protagonists, with the exception of some scenes in *SOMME*. Staying close to the characters enhances the identification and emotional involvement on the part of the viewer. Secondly, for the representation of the horrors of modern war Pabst has chosen a different form in stead of quick-paced editing and other cinematographical interventions (such as the rotating letters in the Somme scene in *DER WELTKRIEG*). Long takes and deep focus belong to cinematographical conventions that indicate a realistic approach. Not intervening through the editing is supposed to enhance the illusion of reality. Weighing one thing against the other, we must come to the conclusion that Pabst's approach bears close resemblance to the documentary style of filming. This has been confirmed by recent analyses.<sup>49</sup>

## DIE ANDERE SEITE

Nearly eighteen months after the premiere of *WESTFRONT 1918*, on 29 October 1931, *DIE ANDERE SEITE* opened. *DIE ANDERE SEITE* was an adaptation, like *WESTFRONT 1918*. The play *Journey's End* (1928), on which the film was based, marked British bank employee Robert C. Sheriff's debut. This author reaped much international fame in a short period of time, not least in German theatres, where *Journey's End* premiered in August 1929.<sup>50</sup> In England, the play was filmed by James Whale, and in Germany, it was adapted for the screen by Heinz Paul. On the whole, this director followed the gist of the original play, abridging the dialogue without damaging its essence.

As was indicated in the previous chapter, Paul served as an officer in the

German army during the war. Besides the three ‘documentaries’ discussed earlier, he also made feature films that dealt with the war. In addition to *DIE ANDERE SEITE*, he also directed the films *U 9 WEDDIGEN* (1927) and *DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD* (1929). The style of filming shows that creating the strongest possible illusion of objectivity was very important to Paul. At the same time, his films betray a preference for some of the more heroic episodes from Germany’s then recent war past. This aspect, combined with his attempt at (audio-)visual historiography ensured that his realistic style did not have the same ideological implications as that of Pabst, even though in the reception, some of his films were labelled as anti-war films. As will be shown in our discussion of the reviews, *DIE ANDERE SEITE* was a borderline case in this respect. Reactions to the film and the promotion campaign that preceded the premiere show the degree to which the success of the film was determined by the presence and acting performance of Conrad Veidt, an actor who enjoyed great popularity. On the posters announcing the film, his head was shown in a life-size representation. Like *WESTFRONT 1918*, *DIE ANDERE SEITE* was inadmissible for young people.

*WESTFRONT 1918* and *DIE ANDERE SEITE* are both set on the western front. Since the protagonists of *DIE ANDERE SEITE* belong to the British army, the front in this film must have been north of the Somme (from 1917 between Nieuport and Amiens). The film is more accurate with respect to dates. The opening text indicates that the film covers the period from 18 to 21 March 1918, the three days before the German spring offensive of 21 March. In a series of thrusts, the German army managed to seize large parts of France, pushing on to the Marne river for the second time since 1915, where the allies halted the German advance in mid-July. It was the last great convulsion of the war. In early August, the Germans were pushed back to their original positions.

There are more similarities between the two films. Besides the fact that they are set in the same region and in the same year, *DIE ANDERE SEITE* also concentrates on a small group of soldiers at the front. And, as was the case in *WESTFRONT 1918*, the war makes victims among the protagonists, while the lives of the leaders (Stanhope and the Lieutenant) are ‘spared’. In both films, the central concern is direct human experience, which is even explicitly mentioned in the opening text of *DIE ANDERE SEITE*. In this film, the psychology of individual personalities is featured more prominently than in *WESTFRONT 1918*, which also makes the film less exemplary.

Not surprisingly, the distinguishing feature of *DIE ANDERE SEITE* is its international perspective. As the title suggests, the film is set in a British camp, and nowhere does the film try to conceal this fact. National identity shines through everything. The names and uniforms are British, in the German dialogue the

protagonists address each other with 'sir', British authors are regularly cited or referred to (including Lewis Carroll), and the Germans are called 'Huns'. Heinz Paul has not changed anything in this perspective. He has also adopted British humour, which in this film is mainly related to food and sexuality. The former is guaranteed by the funny cook (Willy Trenk-Trebitsch) who attracts attention with his lap dog Kitty which he continuously addresses and spoils. The latter aspect is expressed in the erotic prints hanging everywhere in the trench shelter. One of the prints shows the body of a uniformed soldier being mounted and tugged by naked women. A comic effect is achieved when Raleigh repeatedly and without noticing himself is shown in one frame with the prints. The association between him and the prints underlines his (sexual) inexperience and innocence. Besides that, they are a clear reference to the male community which has a central position in this film. Indeed, it has no female characters at all. Incidentally, *DIE ANDERE SEITE* is the only German war film that contains references to eroticism. This must clearly be attributed to the British origin of the drama.

The only thing that really changed was the English title of the play, whose German version, *DIE ANDERE SEITE*, clearly indicates a German perspective. It is another title rather than a translation of the English title, *Journey's End*. Apparently, no one should get the idea that the psychological effects of the war also pertained to German officers. This begs the question whether, bearing in mind the so-called Dolchstoßlegende, such a film, from a German military perspective, could ever have been made in Germany. The officers' debacle at the end of the film would certainly have suggested that the German army was actually defeated in the field. This would have given the film a critical political tendency that would have been quite unthinkable in view of Heinz Paul's other work. Paul's other war films showed him to be an exponent of a more nationalistic approach to the war that was also endorsed officially.

The same is true for his view on heroism, even though, as Pabst had done, he chose two-dimensional heroes. By adding a prologue text to the film (lacking in the play), indicating that the film is about people 'die sich trotz Wirrniss und Qual in Pflichterfüllung aufrechterhalten wollen', he makes clear that the characters' actions are mainly motivated by a sense of duty. It goes without saying that they did their duty serving the fatherland and national honour, in spite of the fact that there is not much emphasis on this in the film narrative itself. Another and much stronger dimension of the film is the other side of traditional heroism. In contrast to *WESTFRONT 1918*, there is a strong emphasis on the psychological effects of the war. Not only because of this psychological approach, but also because of the emphasis on the dialogue, more attention is drawn to anti-heroism, which is thus more subtly rendered than it was in *WESTFRONT 1918*. On the one hand, the film (and Sheriff's play) corresponds to

Gollbach's typology of this particular anti-war aspect, but on the other hand, these tendencies are slightly weakened by Paul's added prologue text.

One could also say that the psychological 'weaknesses' displayed by the characters in *DIE ANDERE SEITE* are more sophisticated than those in *WESTFRONT 1918*, which is dominated by physical danger and discomforts such as makeshift shelters and lice. Also, there is a clear distinction between the two films in terms of class. The officers in *DIE ANDERE SEITE* are representatives of higher social strata, and as such, they suffer less deprivations at the front than the foot soldiers. Their shelters are more spacious and more comfortable, they have a cook at their disposal and their menu is considerably more varied (chicken besides the alleged rat's meat) and more luxurious, including considerable amounts of spirits. On the other hand, however, under certain circumstances, the psychological pressure on the officers is greater than on the ordinary soldiers, for example when they have to lead their soldiers into battle. The Lieutenant in *WESTFRONT 1918* also collapses under the responsibilities of his role, the more so since he does not have the luxury goods to ease the pressure. In *DIE ANDERE SEITE*, fear and the weight of responsibility are washed away with whiskey. Stanhope can only survive when he numbs himself with great amounts of alcohol. Hibbert complains of serious headaches (neuralgia) caused mainly by fear. No wonder one of the fiercest confrontations of the film takes place between these two men. Hibbert releases what Stanhope tries to repress. Hibbert is perhaps the only character in the film one could call a coward. The others may be weighed down by the situation, but in the end they all perform their duty as officers.

Finally, yet another difference between the films is the way the enemy has been portrayed. While the enemy is at least given a face in *WESTFRONT 1918*, he remains physically absent in *DIE ANDERE SEITE*. Perhaps this also played a part in the rather sympathetic reception the film was given in Germany.

The protagonists in *DIE ANDERE SEITE* are a group of five officers who balance each other in terms of character traits and who perform various functions in the narrative. However, they are not unequivocal characters. The most striking of them, captain Stanhope (Conrad Veidt) and Lieutenant Raleigh (Wolfgang Liebeneiner) are each other's opposites, but in due course, they also develop noble feelings for each other. Stanhope, the authoritarian leader who has become brutalized by alcohol and his long stay at the front, is contrasted with the young, well-mannered and naive Raleigh. In the end, the former also turns out to have a sensitive side, and the latter a brave one. In principle, each man has a distorted view of the other, which causes the necessary irritations. Stanhope sees Raleigh as a child who, in his letters home to his sister, tattles on the true nature of his future brother-in-law. He turns out to be wrong. In his turn, Raleigh sees Stanhope as the hero that he himself is not. The other three



characters, Osborne, Hibbert and Trotter, can be summarized as the cautious father figure, the neurotic and the grouser with a sense of humour.

The image that the protagonists have of each other is an essential fact in the film because it relates to the representation of the war in general and the antagonism between the home front and the battle front. While with Pabst, this aspect is not resolved until the very last moment of the film, the change to mutual acceptance between Raleigh and Stanhope in *DIE ANDERE SEITE* is much more gradual.

The development of the narrative takes place along two lines. The first one concerns the changes in the relationship between Stanhope and Raleigh. The second narrative line is related to the increase in tension about the upcoming attack. Both these developments interlock, and in successive scenes, there is a continuous interaction between 'inside' and 'outside', both literally and in a figurative sense, between the battle field and the shelter on the one hand, and behaviour and feelings on the other hand. While the relationship between Stanhope and Raleigh improves and moves from conflict to reconciliation, the battle field changes from a state of peace and quiet (which repeatedly surprises Raleigh) into a state of severe violence. At the end of the film, the relatively safe shelter receives a direct hit and collapses. This removes the distinction between interior and exterior. In the last scene, the war has not only conquered the psychological but also the physical.

In contrast to *NIEMANDSLAND* and, to a lesser degree, *WESTFRONT 1918*, there is no striking camera and editing technique. Heinz Paul made them both subservient to narrative continuity. The many medium shots alternating with several close-ups enhance the intimate character of the film and correspond with the narrative's emphasis on psychological stress and emotional relationships between the characters. Camera movement is tuned largely to the limited space of the trench shelter. The same is true for the lighting. The dark shelters are lit in such a way that a chiaroscuro effect is created. Candlelight appears to be the main source of light. However, contrast has in most cases been determined by strong artificial lighting of faces, while lighting of the direct surroundings is much weaker.

When the camera is outside the officers' shelter, the field of vision is kept very limited. Long shots of the battle field, which we saw frequently in *WESTFRONT 1918*, are hardly to be found in *DIE ANDERE SEITE*. Although the horizon is very low due to the trench perspective, the field of vision is often obstructed by earth spurting through the air because of the explosions. Only once is there an attack in the film that is launched by the British, and the Germans attack only in the last scene, when Raleigh is killed. The sequence of the British attack is composed of 47 shots lasting nearly three and a half minutes. The pace

is considerably lower than in the Langemark combat scene in *DER WELTKRIEG*, which compressed 59 shots into ninety seconds.<sup>51</sup> The emphasis in this sequence is on individual actions. We also recognize the characters on the battle field, even when they are shown only as a silhouette. This is also the case with *WESTFRONT 1918*, but not or hardly at all in the war ‘documentaries’. Also, the camera positions themselves are less independent from the characters. For example, the point of view during the attack scene is regularly determined by Stanhope’s look. In one of the last shots of this sequence (which was not described here), we see the body of his best friend Osborne through his eyes. Heinz Paul has not aspired to Pabst’s realism through long takes and extreme long shots. As a director, he serves the characters, which is in keeping with the rest of the film.

## NIEMANDSLAND

Only two months after the premiere of *DIE ANDERE SEITE*, on 10 December 1931, *NIEMANDSLAND* appeared in the cinemas. The film opened in Berlin’s Mozartsaal. *NIEMANDSLAND* was the first film by director Victor Trivas, who had begun his career as an architect. He wrote the script together with Leonhard Frank, the author of a popular war drama, *Karl und Anna* (1929), which served as the basis for the film *HEIMKEHR*, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. Victor Trivas gained experience as an assistant to the director Pabst while he was shooting *WESTFRONT 1918* and *KAMERADSCHAFT* (1931). *NIEMANDSLAND* was a very special debut film, and one that conveyed a message of pacifism, which is shown by the fact that it was awarded a prize by the League of Nations’ Peace League. Although the film deviated from other (war) films in terms of aesthetics, it did not receive the designation ‘künstlerisch’.<sup>52</sup>

*NIEMANDSLAND* is the most extreme of the four films discussed here, not only in a cinematographical sense, but also as far as its political ideology is concerned. The film is very explicit in its rejection of war and heroism. Its pacifist stance is also illustrated by the international perspective, with four protagonists from four different countries. One might also call the film socialist in its outlook, since the four protagonists together more or less represent the lower classes. The opening text already points in that direction: ‘Völkerstreit, Brüderstreit’. After all, it was the socialists who thought they could prevent the war, in 1914 and earlier as well, by appealing to the international solidarity between the members of the working classes. It is not strange, therefore, that *NIEMANDSLAND* is usually associated with socialism or a pacifist persuasion, even though – as came up in the discussion of *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* – these two

movements are incompatible. *Die Rote Fahne* called the film pacifist, without rejecting it for that reason.<sup>53</sup>

It is nevertheless true that as far as its political tendency is concerned, NIEMANDSLAND (after NAMENLOSE HELDEN) is one of the most outspoken anti-war films of the Weimar period. The representation of the war is very different from that in WESTFRONT 1918. While the latter emphasises the horrific aspects of the war, NIEMANDSLAND shows a process of realisation in which there is room for optimism and international fraternization. Combat scenes like we saw in the other films are not present in NIEMANDSLAND. Victor Trivas formulated his intention as follows: 'In NIEMANDSLAND ging es mir nicht darum, die Greuel des Krieges, sondern seine grausame Sinnlosigkeit bloss-zustellen.'<sup>54</sup>

NIEMANDSLAND is a film with a well-organised structure. The first part of the film shows the various (national) living conditions of the four protagonists on the eve of the First World War, the second part is mainly set at the front. In a rhythmical and parallel way, the first eleven scenes introduce the protagonists. Stereotypes play an important part. It is worth mentioning that in most cases, the nationality of the characters is the same as that of the actors. The Englishman (Hugh Stephens Douglas) is introduced via an image of the Thames, the Frenchman (George Péclet) via the Eiffel tower, and images of factory machines serve to introduce the German (Ernst Busch). The national origin of the other two characters is less relevant. One of them is introduced as someone from 'irgendwo in der Welt' (Wladimir Sokolow), but he is clearly meant as a personification of Jewry (in the Dutch version of the film he is called a Pole)<sup>55</sup>, while the other is a black actor (Lewis Douglas) of French-African extraction. We see them all in their everyday environment, plying their trade (Frenchman, African and German) or during an important private occasion (a son is born to the Englishman, the Jew marries).

The Frenchman and the Jew are portrayed in the most stereotypical fashion. The carefree Frenchman sports a thin moustache, wears a beret and flirts with an unknown girl. The Jew is shown at his wedding, which is celebrated in the traditional way. Also, there are numerous references to his profession (the sewing machine), so that we know that he practises the traditional (and again, stereotypically Jewish) trade of tailor.

In contrast to these outspoken characterisations, there is the relatively colourless figure of the Englishman. The German, a carpenter, is associated with the war industry when the image of a wooden toy gun he has made for his son rhymes with, and then changes into, the image of a real gun in an arms factory. Although the scene is a critical reference to Germany, this is redressed in a later scene when the German says that he wants his son to take violin les-

sons in the future rather than play with the instruments of war. What all the characters have in common (except for the African) is that they are the head of a family and that they belong to the lower social classes (the Englishman may be an exception). The African is without ties and works in a French cabaret theatre. As an international artist, he belongs to a class of people usually referred to as ‘freischwebend’.

After the introduction, whose images already refer to the threat of war, the various national war proclamations are dealt with in a symbolical way. Introduced by images of various national symbols, pamphlets appear in which we see, successively, the Russian czar, the German kaiser, the French president and the Austrian emperor call their peoples to war. The German part is considerably longer than the other three scenes, which take only seconds. Besides the text of the German proclamation, the scene also shows us loaves of bread, pies and food vouchers, by which it anticipates on the coming famine. In the next sequence, which shows the protagonists making preparations to leave for the front, the German part is again longer than the others. After a transitional scene showing the general euphoria about the war, this time with images of Great Britain, America and Japan, we see the protagonists saying goodbye to their loved ones. The German character is used to convey the way in which the soldiers are stirred up to show more fighting spirit. While the German initially shows a lack of enthusiasm when he joins his future comrades, his zest grows as he hears the marching music. The same is true for his wife, whose face first betrays sadness but later changes to an expression of pride. The initial walking pace also changes into a marching tempo. The images of a festive farewell ritual are not confined to Germany alone. Only the scene in which the Jewish man says goodbye has no cheerfulness at all.

After most of the characters have been given a festive send-off, the front appears. The film is far less fragmentary after that. While in the first part, the relatively short scenes followed each other at a high pace, focusing mainly on the various nationalities, in this part there is an interaction between longer scenes set at the front and short scenes that show the home front. The other scenes have an indicative or commentary function. The scenes at the home front show, in a much more general way than was the case in *WESTFRONT 1918*, that life at the home front was also dominated by the war. The ordinary civilian has also been subjected to military rule. A combination of endless lists of war victims, propaganda posters for war bonds and people queuing in front of a shop is used to convey the sacrifices that have to be made for the war. The next scene, showing a blind war veteran who has lost one leg, a bearer of the Iron Cross who sits begging underneath one of these propaganda posters, can only be understood as a cynical comment on the war. The other home front images mainly concern the fate suffered by the protagonists’ wives: a life of sorrow,

loneliness and hiding in a shelter. Although there is not much dialogue in the film anyway, it is striking that the women in the film should say nothing at all.

By accident, the five protagonists end up in the cellar of a deserted ruin which is right in the middle of no man's land and therefore belongs to none of the warring parties. While at first, they treat each other with suspicion, the African, who speaks more than one language, is the one to reconcile the others with each other. The Jew, however, has become deaf and dumb because of the violence and is unable to say where he is from. In addition, he has lost his uniform during the fighting, which makes him a figure without identity. According to the African, this is why the others all consider him their friend. For instance, no one accuses him when a quarrel breaks out about the causes of the war. During this discussion, the African breaks into laughter and takes off his uniform, which means he also distances himself from his national identity. The others follow his example. Like the Jew, the African's link with national identity is not as strong as that of the others. After all, he comes from a French colony. The next scene refers to this when a voice-over asks to whom Berlin, Paris and the colonies belong: 'Wem gehört die Welt?'

In the following front scenes, we see how the group adapts to the circumstances. Each member fulfils characteristic tasks: the Frenchman is cooking, the African is playing the mouth organ, the Jew is mending clothes, the German is building things and the Englishman, who has been injured, is being looked after by all of them. Gradually, however, the outside world begins to disturb the relative peace in the ruin. After all, no man's land is closely watched by the warring parties. First, there is a gas attack, next they are spotted by soldiers in nearby trenches who have seen the smoke rising from their cooking place. When they come under attack, the African bursts into a lament of madness. He challenges the war, saying that he wants to fight it and throws a hand grenade outside. In the final scene, all of them walk across no man's land, armed and in uniform, except for the Jew. They want to end the war and remove all obstacles that are blocking peace. In the end, they use their rifles to chop their way through the barbed wire and face their fate in the name of peace.

### **National identities**

The characterisation of the protagonists is much more abstract than in *WESTFRONT 1918* and *DIE ANDERE SEITE*. The protagonists are first of all exponents of nationalities, which lends the film a rather exemplary character. As was the case with *WESTFRONT 1918*, in whose credits the actors were only designated by characteristics, the programme brochure for *NIEMANDSLAND* gives the names of the actors in combination with the nationalities that they repre-

sent.<sup>56</sup> Remarkably, the name of the black actor Lewis Douglas is followed by the epithet African rather than French-African, despite the fact that he wears a French uniform. It is also remarkable that four of the characters in the film increasingly use their proper names as the narrative progresses – Brown, Durant, Köhler and Lewin – with the exception of the African, who remains without a proper name.<sup>57</sup> The presence of a black character in the narrative may also be connected to the fact that the colour of the skin is a characteristic that divides people but which, in contrast to the national symbols, cannot be ‘taken off’. It seems as if Trivas has tried to solve this problem by presenting the African as a superior human being, by which he tackles the false sense of superiority among white people, who are the most divided at the beginning of the film. In this way he levels the relationship between the races, not only white against black, but also Europe against Africa.

The Jew, who has also been placed at a distance from the other parties, may have been meant as the African’s counterpart. Both of them fulfil a reconciliatory function. The African bridges the gap between the parties because he speaks his languages, the Jew because he has no language at all. In the film, both of them represent those who are oppressed on the basis of racial characteristics or who are considered inferior. This would tally with the anti-imperialist stance shown in the rest of the film.<sup>58</sup> It is clear that Trivas has the African fulfil a role in his film that was the opposite of the African played in Pabst’s film.

Despite the stereotypical approach, the film emphasises the notion that the differences are only relative. Nowhere in the film are they contrasted, except for the moment when a discussion about the causes of the war develops. Above all, NIEMANDSLAND shows that national identity is a construction that manifests itself in exterior symbols. If one discards these manifest symbols, the ‘naked’ man will appear, differences will be erased and motives for waging war will disappear. Trivas solves the problem of language differences via the characters of the African and the Jew. In contrast to WESTFRONT 1918 and DIE ANDERE SEITE, NIEMANDSLAND shows us a group of soldiers which is not only composed of various nationalities, but which also actually turns against the war. This last aspect becomes visible especially towards the end of the film. It also becomes apparent in an earlier part of the film, in the ruin, when there is desertion, initially involuntary but later as a result of a conscious choice. The idea of an international brotherhood, the main leitmotif in the film, is connected with an act of pacifism, refusing military service (even though this occurs after they have actually joined the army). Their refusal to continue to take part in the war is motivated by the discovery that the similarities between them are greater than the differences. At the end of the film, the relative passiv-

ity that characterised the situation in the ruin changes into a certain aggression towards the war, which is presented as an abstract antagonist in the last scene.

We can say that *NIEMANDSLAND* is in fact a utopian treatise about war and peace. In this sense, the film is different from the other two films. Although the *mise en scène* is realistic, the narrative has more to do with fantasy than with reality. After all, the director has constructed a kind of model society – Kracauer mocks it as a ‘community that has all the traits of the lamasery of Shangri-La’<sup>59</sup> – in the middle of no man’s land, where all differences have been resolved to make room for solidarity. The stereotypical protagonists and the idealistic presentation induce a certain distance in the way one experiences the film.

This abstraction of reality is further amplified by the way the director has edited the images. Not only do the shots in the first part follow each other at a very high pace, the film is also characterised by a highly associative style of editing, including rhyming images: the rotating wheels of the horse-drawn tram change into rotating machines; the wooden toy gun changes into a real iron gun, an applause by one audience changes into an applause by another audience; and a ball of barbed wire changes into the road network on a map. In addition, the movement within the images themselves further enhances the impression of velocity and rhythm. They are the representation of life in the large cities that were the starting point for the characterisation of the protagonists. These modernistic forms of representation could also be seen in *DER WELTKRIEG*, while the images of city life evoke associations with Walter Ruttmann’s film *BERLIN, DIE SYMPHONIE EINER GROSSSTADT* (1928).

The images of the country, however, are an oasis of peace and quiet, loneliness and emptiness. Various kinds of associative editing can also be found in the shots that show a clouded sky or a vast landscape of fields. The former prefigures what is coming – after the proclamations, for example, follows a shot of the sun being obscured by clouds and in a later scene the sky is completely overcast – while the fields contrast both with the city and with the lifeless landscape of the battlefield.

Music also plays an important role in the film. The first part of the film is dominated by Hans Eissler’s modernistic music and by songs by Leo Hirsch and Günther Weisenborn. As was said before, dialogue is of secondary interest in the film. The first part of the film, however, makes use of a voice-over. A male voice speaking as if he were dictating a letter for example indicates in what country we are. It is especially this interaction between image, editing and music which reminds one very strongly of the Russian film school.



## The reviews

As shown in the analysis, the three front films represented the war experience in different ways.<sup>60</sup> In *WESTFRONT 1918*, the combat scenes have been represented realistically. The violence of war is less prominent in *DIE ANDERE SEITE*, which is characterised by a psychologically realistic approach, while *NIEMANDSLAND* shows us the war symbolically from a social, national and international perspective, with implicit violence. The question is whether this categorisation corresponds with contemporary reaction to the film. Did people react with more shock to *WESTFRONT 1918* than to *NIEMANDSLAND* and did that imply disapproval of explicit images of the violence of war?

Critics did not only give their arguments for or against a particular film, but also, in a few words, conveyed some of the reactions in the audience. A short outline of audience reactions to *WESTFRONT 1918* presents the following picture:

Während der Vorstellung (...) verliessen viele Zuschauer fluchtartig das Lokal. ‘Das ist ja nicht zum aushalten’, ertönte es hinter mir; und: ‘Wie darf man uns so etwas bieten!’<sup>61</sup>; ‘Wie kann man nur so etwas zeigen?’ Das ungefähr war der Text der empörten Kurfürstendammer;<sup>62</sup> ‘Das kann man nicht mehr sehen’, meinten manche.<sup>63</sup> Das Publikum war erschüttert.<sup>64</sup>

According to many critics, *WESTFRONT 1918* had gone beyond what was acceptable. What were the arguments, we may ask, for criticising the film, which, incidentally, also earned much praise? The explicit way of showing the violence of war enabled critics to indicate precisely in which scenes Pabst had overstepped the mark. Their arguments often also suggested by what means, and in what form, the war should be represented. In most cases, the critical appreciation of a film, and of its more violent scenes in particular, depended on the ideological perspective the critic used in his approach to the film. This does not mean, however, that the reactions can be categorised neatly in a left and right typology. Newspapers of the same political persuasion might not agree on some issues, and individual critics sometimes betray a lack of consistency in their reactions. As we will see, the right-wing press presents the best example of this.<sup>65</sup>

The scenes in which a French African kills the Student, in which the Lieutenant falls victim to madness and in which the sorry state in the field hospital is shown, provoked an outrage among the critics. Especially the first of these scenes was considered to go far beyond what was acceptable. According to the *Berliner Morgenpost*, this scene was even hissed at by the audience.<sup>66</sup> It was not the war of technology, in which the face of the enemy has disappeared and in

which soldiers have become machines, that caused indignation, but the most traditional, archetypical form of war, man-to-man combat. However horrific and visible the effects of modern warfare were, the fact that mechanical weaponry could cover large distances or make the enemy (as a human being) invisible (in tanks, submarines and aeroplanes), made it possible to present the war as a relatively 'clean' war, which was exactly what happened in most of the war films. This meant that the enemy as a human being could be kept out of the picture. More than Milestone did in *ALL QUIET AT THE WESTERN FRONT*, Pabst broke this taboo, at least in Germany. Pabst did personify the enemy in a dark-skinned French-African soldier. Incidentally, none of the critics found this objectionable. The discussion provoked by this scene was related to the acceptability of scenes that contained explicit violence in representations of the war.

A critic for the extremely right-wing *Kreuz-Zeitung* wrote the following about the murder scene after he had determined that it was

eine Geschmacklosigkeit sondergleichen: Kein Frontkämpfer wird es jemals bestreiten, dass der Krieg, das Ringen um Leben und Tod des Einzelnen gegen den einzelnen Gegner viele derartige Szenen aufweist. Es ist aber unerträglich und widerlich, hier die Grenzen der Realistik zu überschreiten. Kämpfen ist kein Kinderspiel.<sup>67</sup>

In the last two sentences, the *Kreuz-Zeitung* critic implicitly accuses Pabst of having failed to take the fighting at the front seriously because he wanted to place too much emphasis on his portrayal of the individual's death agony. This emphasis was said to indicate a certain love for sensation, an argument which was used more often to denounce the film, especially in the right-wing press.<sup>68</sup> However, the critic's attitude also testified to a certain ambivalence. For example, it is not entirely clear whether the author means that the scene came close to reality or that he believed that the scene did not approach reality at all. He appears to reject the explicitly violent scenes mainly on emotional grounds. At the end of his review, he says that many of the front scenes (and the cabaret scene) have been rendered true to life.<sup>69</sup>

This ambivalence recurs in other reviews in the right-wing press. Almost unanimously, they denounced the pacifism in the film, but as far as the representation of violence was concerned, opinions differed for various reasons. For example, the conservative *Deutsche Zeitung*, associated with Hugenberg's DNVP, rejected the 'Tendenz' of the film, but welcomed the way the front war had been portrayed: 'Soweit der Schützengraben, Trommelfeuer und Frontgeist zu Worte kommen, gelingt zum ersten Mal so etwas wie Erlebnis-Nähe der modernen Front.'<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, the film in general was thought to be

much too horrific and coarse. Pabst was said to have tried too much to represent the war as Dante’s hell.<sup>71</sup> A critic writing for the right-liberal *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* found that Pabst had made the war out to be worse than it had actually been. He said that he himself had fought as a front line soldier, and that he had never experienced anything like this.

Vielleicht wird noch einer von dem im Geiste Armen mir entgegenen, dass so etwas im Kriege ja tatsächlich vorgekommen sei. Aber da kann man nur darauf antworten, um so schlimmer, dass das Grausen vor diesen entsetzlichen Dingen diese Menschen nicht zurückschrecken lässt, so etwas auch noch zu reproduzieren, noch dazu, damit es in einem ‘erfolgreichen’ Film Effekt mache.<sup>72</sup>

Although it appears as if the critic admits that such things may have actually taken place, he discredits those who make this claim, or make a film out of it, respectively, by calling them, on the one hand, ‘mentally poor’ and immoral, and sensation-loving on the other. He then pressed home his argument by saying that there were fierce protests from the audience at this particular scene.<sup>73</sup>

The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*’s rejection of explicit violence in films was confirmed by the newspaper in a review of *DIE ANDERE SEITE*. This film was highly appreciated because, as the paper wrote, ‘seine Wirkung’ derived ‘absolut aus der geistigen Auseinandersetzung von Menschen mit Menschen’. While until then, the aim of war films had been to

die Wirklichkeit des Krieges nachzuahmen und je täuschender die Nachahmung wurde, um so stärker offenbarte sich nur die Unmöglichkeit, das “Erlebnis Krieg” durch naturalistische Filmkopie zu geben.<sup>74</sup>

It is clear that the last part of that remark referred to *WESTFRONT 1918*. This critic would have liked to have seen the few moments of explicit violence cut out. The newspaper was an exception in this matter, because hardly anyone got excited by the minimal violence, while the consensus was that this film, too, showed the other side of the war.

We saw in the previous chapter how one year later, when *TANNENBERG* appeared, this newspaper, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, reiterated its argument for a mythical, emotionally sensitive method of ‘historiography’. The emphasis on the spiritual and the idealistic already shows here. Other right-wing newspapers will also refer to this. The question is really whether and how the front experience should be represented. This was a recurring theme with other war films as well. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* found it reprehensible that a film such as *WESTFRONT 1918* should represent ‘Sakrosankten der Erinnerung an dieses grösste Ereignis in der Geschichte des Deutschen Volkes’.<sup>75</sup>

For the National Socialist newspaper *Der Angriff*, the representation of the war in *WESTFRONT 1918* was problematic for similar reasons. While the newspaper's rejection of the film is connected to its pacifist connotations (a theme not picked up by the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*), it also has to do with the question whether realism is an adequate means to reflect the 'higher purpose' of the war. According to *Der Angriff*, the war should be represented as a positive struggle for an 'idea': the National Socialists 'überwinden das Grauen, weil ihnen die Idee wichtiger ist als ihr Leben', or so its reaction to this 'unsittliche' film reads.<sup>76</sup>

... es ist der Gipfel der Unanständigkeit, das grösste und grauenhafteste Erlebnis eines Menschenalters, (...) mit allen möglichen Einzelheiten 'realistisch' *nur als Schaustück* vorzuführen und so zu erniedrigen, zu profanieren, zu entheiligen. (...) Es gibt grosse und heilige Dinge, die dürfen nur (...) als Schatten, als Verkörperung und Sinnbild einer Idee in ein Kunstwerk verarbeitet werden.<sup>77</sup>

The author stresses that the National Socialists do not in any way fear a true representation of reality, but '*sie wollen genau Bescheid*.'<sup>78</sup> This meant that they wanted to see things within the context of a definitive, higher truth; just showing things was not enough.<sup>79</sup> In similar words, *Der Tag*, linked to the DNVP in much the same way as the *Deutsche Zeitung*, summarized this point of view in its review:

Wer nur die grausigen und furchtbaren Geschehnisse des Krieges zusammenträgt, ohne auch nur den Versuch zu machen, der grossen Idee der Pflicht gerecht zu werden und den höheren Sinn eines so gewaltigen Schicksals zum Ausdruck zu bringen, der hat (...) gar nicht das Recht, etwas über den Krieg zu sagen.<sup>80</sup>

The ambivalence of the realistic on the one hand and the idealistic on the other is clearly there in the right-wing press. There is no fear of realism, but a desire to make it serve some higher purpose, which is clearly not pacifism, which considers war a useless affair that should be stripped of any kind of 'higher purpose'.

Als etwas Sinnloses soll der Krieg [by *WESTFRONT 1918*, BK], trotz höchster Mannesleistung, in den Köpfen der Zuschauer (und Zuhörer) fixiert werden (...) Nicht der Krieg wird mehr verfälscht (...) aber seine Deutung wird aufs falsche Gleis geschoben...,

writes the National Socialist *Völkischer Beobachter*.<sup>81</sup> The relatively favourable reception of a film such as *DIE ANDERE SEITE* by the right-wing press was not only due to the alleged objectivity of the film, but also to the emphasis it placed on the spiritual, the psychological and the inner self, which was supposed to do justice to the 'front line spirit'. The *Deutsche Filmzeitung* places realism and

idealism next to each other and asserts that, since the realistic war novels by Erich Maria Remarque and Ludwig Renn (*Krieg* and *Nachkrieg*), it is no longer possible to represent the war as

rein idealistisch [darzustellen], als Stahlbad, oder mit den Griechen und Nietzsche als ‘polemos pater panton’ zu feiern. (...) Augenblicklich kann also kein Film, der sich das Weltkriegsthema vorgenommen hat, in Idealismus machen. (sic)<sup>82</sup>

War films released after 1930 would prove this view all too optimistic.

Another attitude towards the representation of violence can be seen in newspaper with mostly leftist leanings. Some of the critics tolerate violent scenes because they believe they will support the film’s pacifist message. For example, Walter Redmann of the *Berliner Morgenpost* writes: “‘Nieder mit dem Krieg’ das ist die Tendenz dieser (...) Filme, und die Tendenz ist das einzige, das die Rekonstruktion des Grauensvollen und Entsetzlichen rechtfertigt.”<sup>83</sup> At the same time, however, this critic also found that the most horrific aspects of a war could not be conveyed by images. The murder of the Student was an example of this. This scene ‘überschreitet die Grenze und ist wohl das Gewaltigste dieser Art, was den Nerven des Filmpublikums zugemutet werden kann.’<sup>84</sup> Kurt Pinthus, writing for the *8-Uhr Abendblatt*, found that, for this reason, reading war literature might be better than exposing oneself to the horrors shown by the film.<sup>85</sup> However, in contrast to some of the reviews in the right-wing press mentioned earlier, the leftist newspapers did not reject realism because they believed it was unable to represent the war in a ‘right’ way. On the contrary, according to the critic of the social democratic *Vorwärts*, a documentary style was the best means of representing the war.<sup>86</sup> Three years earlier, when reviewing *DER WELTKRIEG I*, the same critic had written that a feature film was probably a more appropriate means of representing the war!<sup>87</sup>

In short, the leftist press, like the right-wing press, found the violence in the film nearly unbearable yet germane to what the film tried to convey. The fact that some critics were revolted by some of the scenes in the film probably not only says something about the unique character of the violence that was shown but also about the way it was shown. The critic of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Siegfried Kracauer, remarks that the misery of the war has been included in such a way ‘dass der Abstand, den sonst künstlerische Werke zwischen dem Publikum und dem ungeformten Geschehen setzen, (...) stellenweise aufgehoben ist.’<sup>88</sup>

The only newspaper that had no objections at all to the violence in the film was the communist daily *Die Rote Fahne*. Here, the opposite was true of what the *Berliner Morgenpost* remarked (showing the violence is justified because of

the pacifist message, see above), namely that, in spite of the pacifism in the film,

einige *Darstellungen* des Krieges, Schützengrabenszenen, Trommelfeuer, Nahkämpfe [the Student's murder, BK], die (...) doch *mit mutigem Realismus*, ohne Beschönigungen, ohne Sentimentalität, wirklichkeitsstark und eindrucksvoll gestaltet sind.<sup>89</sup>

As in *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*, the power of the film was contained only in these scenes, *Die Rote Fahne* wrote; the rest was weak, not real, timid.

### Comradeship, heroism and nationality

The representations of the violence of war inspired many critics to make political statements, and this was also true for the characters in the films. The analyses of the films showed that the characters, including their actions and motives, represented certain meanings and values. The three main categories of meaning in which these actions and motives were placed – by the critics as well – are comradeship, heroism and nationalism. How these were then judged often depended on the ideological perspective from which the film was viewed. Not all characters turned out to evoke ideological connotations. In the films, some characters were not profiled as sharply as others, and this was also true for the reviews. The reviews of *WESTFRONT 1918* were an exception, in that they commented on practically all the protagonists. Reviews of *DIE ANDERE SEITE* paid most attention to colonel Stanhope, and in reviews of *NIEMANDSLAND*, it was the German, the African and the Jew who were looked at most closely. The other protagonists and minor characters were usually mentioned briefly or perhaps evaluated in terms of their acting capabilities.

The analysis of *WESTFRONT 1918* showed that the characters represented social types. While none of the reviews pays any explicit attention to this point, the exemplary nature of the characters is nevertheless noticed. The critic of *Der Montag*, the only weekly newspaper of the right that wrote very favourably about *WESTFRONT 1918*, said the following: 'Vier Infanteristen, in denen sich das Schicksal von Millionen verkörpert. Vier Männer, in denen sich Hunderttausende von tapferen Volksgenossen widerspiegeln.'<sup>90</sup> Eugen Szatmari, writing for the left-liberal *Berliner Tageblatt*, remarks:

Vier Menschen verschiedener Abstammung, verschiedenen Charakters, zusammengeschmolzen im fürchterlichen Tiegel des Schützengrabens. Vier Schicksale und doch nur eines. Das Schicksal von 10 Millionen Menschen.<sup>91</sup>

The ideological difference between both reviews is expressed in the words 'tapferen Volksgenossen' with which *Der Montag* associates the four infantry-

men. The author refers to national heroism, which is not mentioned at all in the second review. I will return to the associations with heroism later.

The characters were not associated with their social origins, but with specific war or home front experiences. The Student with his death agony, Karl with his homecoming, the Lieutenant with his law-abiding attitude and his madness, and the Bavarian, finally, with his anti-heroic remark. The reactions to the scene with the Student have already been discussed extensively. It is therefore appropriate to discuss the reactions to some of the other characters.

If we are to believe the critics, the premiere of *WESTFRONT 1918* was a lively affair. The audience did not only react strongly to the film violence, but the sequence in which Karl catches his wife in the act provoked a strong response. Apparently, many people in the audience found the sequence hilarious.<sup>92</sup> According to the critics, the unintended comedy occurred because the scene was trivial<sup>93</sup>, kitschy<sup>94</sup>, superfluous, old-fashioned<sup>95</sup>, embarrassing and stupid<sup>96</sup>. This sequence was the only one in the film that was set on the home front. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the transition from the realistic and rough front scenes to the homecoming scene, with its overtones of the ‘Kammerspiel’, was felt to be a stylistic incongruity. The naturalistic acting performances by the front soldiers was a considerable contrast with the theatrical acting style ‘des albernen Dialogs, (...) des altmodischen-getragenen Spiels’<sup>97</sup> of those representing the home front.

Those parts of the sequence in which the food shortages were represented were much more appreciated. The realistic style fitted in much better with the front scenes. According to the critics Kracauer and Szatmari, however, the scene did no justice to the home front situation: ‘So bleibt doch insgesamt die Front in der Heimat unsichtbar.’<sup>98</sup> Bearing in mind the ‘Dolchstosslegende’, we need hardly be surprised that the *Völkischer Beobachter* found it hard to muster any ‘sympathy’ for the ‘Heimat, die zwischen Jammer und Genuss in Sicherheit dahinlebt’.<sup>99</sup>

Another character that caused resentment was the Lieutenant who fell victim to madness. While some critics found the scene exaggerated or unreal, Szatmari of the *Berliner Tageblatt* opened his review with an extensive description of this scene, which he considered the high point of the film.<sup>100</sup> The dramatic words that he chose to express his feelings leave little doubt as to his appreciation of this scene. What follows is part of a paragraph he devoted to the Lieutenant:

In dem zusammengeschossenen Graben, im Geschosshagel, im Nebelschleier der Explosionswolken der Handgranaten erhebt sich aus einem Haufen verstümmelter, blutender, zersetzter Menschenleiber ein Mann. Ein Leutnant. Greift sich an die Stirn, starrt mit irren Augen in die verpestete Luft, sein vom Grauen verschleierter Blick tastet die aufgewühlte, von Granaten zerpflegte Erde ab, er wirft die Arme in



die Luft, wie einer, der zu Tode getroffen wurde, und brüllt auf. 'Hurra' – schreit er – 'hurra, hurra!' – brüllt weiter, kein Mensch mehr, sondern ein verwundetes Tier, der Wahnsinn zittert in seinem Geheul.<sup>101</sup>

It was not often that a film elicited such dramatic, almost literary descriptions from a critic. In contrast, the *Kreuz-Zeitung* found this particular scene, as well as many others, the absolute low point of the film. 'Am unerhörtesten ist aber ohne Zweifel die Szene, wo der Leutnant und Kompagnieführer, wahnsinnig geworden durch einen Granateinschlag in Grossaufnahme gezeigt wird.'<sup>102</sup>

These are two contrasting interpretations of one and the same scene. While Szatmari explains the madness explicitly from the Lieutenant's view of the 'field of death', the *Kreuz-Zeitung* says the fit of madness is caused by an exploding shell. This assertion does not correspond with what the film actually shows, but it does fit in with what is described in the book.<sup>103</sup> No blood is seen streaming from the Lieutenant's head, nor is he hurt in his legs, or he would be unable to stand up, as Szatmari correctly describes. The *Völkischer Beobachter* adopted a middle course, saying the Lieutenant suffered a 'Nervenzusammenbruch' or 'Hirnverletzung'.<sup>104</sup> These are the only two reviews that refer to a physical wound, critics of newspapers that did not belong to the political right only speak of madness. The *Völkischer Beobachter* did not pay much attention to the madness scene, focusing instead on the way Pabst had represented the law-abiding side of the Lieutenant's character: 'Das ist natürlich auch Tendenz, gegen den "Kadavergehorsam" und so!<sup>105</sup> Although this critic says he is revealing Pabst's true intentions, the *Vossische Zeitung* says the officer in question is the type that would 'heute [be] irgendein rechtsradikaler Jugenderzieher (...) der seinen Jünglingen von einer "schrecklichen Schönheit" des Weltkrieges nicht genug erzählen konnte'.<sup>106</sup> It goes without saying, however, that the National Socialist movement would rather not have any officers with overstrained nerves among its rank and file.

The character of the Bavarian was in a number of cases also interpreted as an expression of the film's tendency. Of course, this pertained to his remark 'Dös, wenn wir Helden wären, täten wir längst daheim sein!'<sup>107</sup> Critics found this 'der beste Satz dieses Sprechfilms',<sup>108</sup> 'ganz verständlich',<sup>109</sup> 'damit sagt der Soldat das Wesentliche'<sup>110</sup> and 'höchst bedenklich'<sup>111</sup>. In the first three commentaries, derived from left-liberal newspapers, the remark is implicitly or explicitly associated with a pacifist tendency.<sup>112</sup> It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the right-wing *Kreuz-Zeitung* – the last quotation – should have rejected the remark. Despite the fact that the Bavarian implies that he and his comrades are not heroes, the film is not free from heroism, as I already pointed out in the analysis of the film. Pabst's ambivalence on this issue is borne out by the review in the *Völkischer Beobachter*. While it is true that the critic for this newspaper did not pay any attention to the Bavarian's remark – who, incidentally, was

one of his favorite characters – he closely examines the role of heroism in the film. In the third paragraph of his article, after referring to Remarque, even, the critic asserts that it is no longer possible to ridicule the front soldier or falsify the front experience.

Man muss Konzessionen machen. Selbst der Latrinenschreiber Remarque ist angewiesen worden, seine Zerrbilder mit etwas Heroismus zu vermengen, um eine gute Presse für die Reklame zu haben. So ist es auch hier.<sup>113</sup>

With any representation of the trench war, the intention will always be ‘die Widerstandskraft eines Volkes gegen das Schicksal zu zerstören, aber eine allzu tolle Verschiebung der Wirklichkeit kann man sich nicht mehr leisten’. In pacifist film propaganda, the important thing is the conclusion reached ‘während der Darstellung an sich in ihrer Realistik objektiv bleibt.’ WESTFRONT 1918 also gives an ‘im ganzen einwandfreie Wiedergabe der Wirklichkeit’. And in the next paragraph: ‘Die ganz unverhüllte pazifistische Schlussapothese dieses Films [wirkt, BK] grotesk und aufs tiefste unbefriedigend nach der Darstellung von soviel Heldentum!’<sup>114</sup>

Here, heroism is not ascribed to nationalist motives that are lacking in this film. The fact, for example, that Karl and the Student volunteer for reasons other than honour and patriotism is left out of consideration. Carrying out combat patrols and the courage this requires were enough to speak of heroism. It is striking how much the critic tries to rationalise his own enthusiasm for the film by discrediting Pabst. He is supposed to have made concessions in order to ingratiate himself with the press and the general public, and this means he cannot escape from representing the war in accordance with the views of the political right, meaning an emphasis on heroism. As became clear earlier, *Die Rote Fahne* was not particularly enthusiastic about the film. Here too, but this time in the opposite and very superficial way, the argument of heroism was deployed. The weakness of the film was mainly in the ‘ersten teil, wo ein bisschen in “Heldentum” gemacht wird’.<sup>115</sup> Nothing is said about how the film gives shape to this. Although it is impossible to deny, on the basis of the reviews, that Pabst’s attitude to heroism is ambivalent, both newspapers disregard the fact that what he shows in his film is a different kind of ‘heroism’. Remarkably enough, the two newspapers do not mention the Bavarian’s observation. This other kind of heroism was, however, noticed by the left-liberal *Berliner Morgenpost*: ‘Es geht um das Vaterland, um das Stückchen Graben, natürlich, aber das ist dem Frontsoldaten erst zweites Bewusstsein. Das erste ist: es gilt mein Leben, das muss ich verteidigen!’<sup>116</sup> The Bavarian’s remark is said to convey this “Wesentliche” (see earlier quotation). ‘Gewiss, man kann sich diesen Ausspruch auch anders auslegen, aber, wer das da mittgemacht hat, weiss genau, wie es gemeint ist.’<sup>117</sup> Not as cowardice, of course.

With a number of critics, *DIE ANDERE SEITE* evoked associations with heroism as well, usually through Conrad Veidt in his role as commander Stanhope. Analogous to the film poster, which features his head prominently, the film shows Veidt's face a number of times in close-up. As the *Vossische Zeitung* wrote, 'Man lernte Veidts Stirnadern kennen, Veidts Zähne, Veidts Halsmuskeln, Veidts Pupillen.' It is not surprising, therefore, that the character he played received the most attention. Besides, he had already achieved considerable fame as a screen actor. Critics praised his humanity as well as his valour. About the former quality, the *Berliner Morgenpost* writes: 'Ohne jede Pose, absolut menschlich, zeigt er sein Inneres, und er vermag diesen zerrissenen Mensch glaubwürdig zu gestalten.'<sup>118</sup> This humanity was also associated with the other side of heroism, as *Vorwärts* writes:

Der Engländer Sheriff untersucht, durch welche Mittel der Held seinen Mut erkaufte, er deckt die andere Seite des Heldentums auf. Die andere Seite des Helden ist 'Black and White'. Der fürchterliche Unfug des Krieges wird mit Hilfe von Alkohol ertragen.<sup>119</sup>

True enough, the right-wing *Der Tag* recognises Stanhope's fear ('Kleinmut'), but it stresses his heroic character:

Veidt ist nicht dämonisch, er ist besessen von dem Zwang zur Pflicht, von dem inneren nicht Zurückkönnen, vorwärts, gepeitscht von der Verehrung seiner Untergebenen, die nur das Heldische an ihm, nicht den immer und immer wieder unterdrückten Kleinmut sehen.<sup>120</sup>

In a similar vein, the right-wing confessional newspaper *Germania* describes Stanhope as someone who seems 'hart, brutal, gefühlsroh [erscheint], [but] der mit ganzer Liebe an seinen Kameraden hängt, und der nach dem letzten Schmerz aufrecht den Tod annimmt'.<sup>121</sup>

The approach of the communist newspaper *Welt am Abend* is interesting. Its critic compares the stage actor Wiemann, who played Stanhope on the stage, with Conrad Veidt, and notices that a change has occurred in the film character:

*Wiemann* (im Theater): ein erledigter Mensch, neurasthenisch geworden, mit letzter Energie und mit Schnaps nach Halt suchend. Veidt (im Film): der stahlharte Kämpfertyp, wie er ihn in Hugenbergs 'Letzter Kompanie' darstellte. Schneidig, forsch, gelegentliche Verzweiflung wird rasch überwunden. 'Ein Vorbild'. 'Ein Held'. Ein nationalistischer Propagandafilm also? Nicht ganz. Paul offenbart überhaupt keinen Standpunkt. Aber der Weg weist nach rechts.<sup>122</sup>

Reviews indicate that the way that Paul, through Conrad Veidt, gives shape to the heroic aspect did not provoke any negative reactions. Although *Die Welt*

*am Abend* more or less places the film in the right-wing camp, the reactions from social-democrats and left-liberals are not negative. There is an attitude of indecision towards the film. After all, while the film shows the other side of heroism and of the war, it is not unequivocal, as is already clear from the film’s motto. Besides the protagonists’ overstrained emotions, we see also ‘selbstverständlichen Willen zur Selbstbezwungung, zur Pflichterfüllung, zur Kameradschaftlichkeit’, as the left-liberal *Berliner Börsen-Courier* remarks.<sup>123</sup> Some see a positive side of heroism in this, a heroism in which is done with ‘der Erfreulichkeit des Stahlbades, mit den Segnungen des Heldentodes’, as the *Reichsfilmbblatt* writes.<sup>124</sup> This aspect is appreciated by the left and liberal press, while the right-wing press emphasises the heroic aspect. Due to this ambiguity, there are few newspaper critics who are enthusiastic about the film without harbouring any reservations (with the exception of the critics of the professional publications, *Germania* and the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the last two mainly because of the ‘spiritual-psychological’ aspect). It should be noted that the film clearly suffered from the success of the play.

In the reviews of *WESTFRONT 1918*, the violent scenes and the comradeship were the main starting points in the argumentation, while reviews of *DIE ANDERE SEITE* emphasised psychology, heroism and again, comradeship. This aspect returns in the discussions of *NIEMANDSLAND*. Less ambiguously than in reviews of the other two films, the critics reviewing *NIEMANDSLAND* are divided into two camps. The left (with the exception of the communists) and the left-liberals are favourably impressed, the right is mostly negative. The film itself is unequivocal in its stance against war and in the notion of fraternisation that is part of pacifism. It goes without saying that the right-wing critics were less than enthusiastic. The communist left rejected the film for the same reasons it denounced *WESTFRONT 1918*, namely that, even more so than in *WESTFRONT 1918*, pacifism is the dominant force in *NIEMANDSLAND*. It is self-evident that the arguments used by the extreme left differed from those used by the extreme right. Although *Die Rote Fahne* treats the film slightly more positively than other war films – among other things, because *NIEMANDSLAND* was clearly inspired by Russian film art – the newspaper believed that the imperialist causes were left out of the picture, which for the communists was always an important reason to reject a war film.<sup>125</sup>

In their appraisal of *NIEMANDSLAND*, the right-wing critics in particular aimed at the stereotypical characterisation of the protagonists. The most controversial reactions were evoked by the African and, to a lesser degree, by the German. The way this last character was represented was cause for excitement at Goebbels’ party paper, *Der Angriff*:

Der Deutsche ist ein *spiessiger Tischler*, der schmalzige Vereinslieder grölt und mit einer Kinderkanone seinen Jungen unterhält, der natürlich mit Soldaten spielt,

damit doch die Welt darüber aufgeklärt werde, wie sehr in Deutschland bereits die Jugend mit dem Ungeist des Militarismus infiziert wurde. Schliesslich schleicht er zur Kaserne wie zum Begräbnis, bis schmetternde Militärmusik aus ihm einen heroischen Hanswurst macht.<sup>126</sup>

The film was said to make Germans look 'verächtlich und lächerlich' and to falsify a 'grosses geschichtliches Geschehen zur Karikatur'. *Der Angriff* wanted a ban on the film on the basis of these arguments. In contrast to this newspaper, most other reviews praised the representation of the German character. The right-wing *Deutsche Zeitung*, however, did not waste any words at all on the issue.

While *Der Angriff* vilifies the representation of the German, the Jewish tailor and the African get off relatively lightly. The latter is accused of 'Albernheiten'<sup>127</sup> and held responsible for spreading his pacifist ideas to his fellows in misery<sup>127</sup>, but the only argument for rejecting the film is its pacifism. However, the *Deutsche Zeitung* does not mince words when it conveys its loathing for the African:

Und weil man eben ohne Verfälschung der historischen Wahrheit nicht auskommen kann, tritt ein Neger in französischer Uniform als Friedensengel zwischen die vier Versprengten. Nicht ein brutaler Halbwilder, wie ihn die Franzosen als 'Kulturträger' zum deutschen Rhein marschieren liessen, sondern ein richtiger kultivierter Negerartist, der auch in französischer Uniform während der tollsten Trommelfeuer jongliert und steppt und wegen seiner vielseitigen Sprachkenntnisse im Niemandsland zum Dolmetscher und Friedensmittler wird. (...) Ob die Franzosen diesem Film einen Friedenspreis versagt haben, weil ein schwarzer französischer 'Kulturträger' – wenn auch in ungefälschter, günstiger Form – gezeigt wird?<sup>128</sup>

The moment an African is represented in a positive light, racism rears its ugly head, followed by an implacable attitude towards the French. The same combination can be found in the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, which, curiously enough, refers to the African as Swiss, probably because of his linguistic capabilities:

Im Mittelpunkt der Handlung steht ein Schweizer Poilu, der von Menschlichkeit trieft – die nettoyeurs, die die Franzosen in unsere Gräben schickten, um deutsche Soldaten mit langen Messern abzuschlachten, stehen uns jedoch zu deutlich vor der Seele, als dass wir auf so plumpe und verlogene Propagandamätzchen hereinfliegen. Nach Schluss des Spiels umarmte der deutsche Hauptdarsteller den französischen [not the African, BK] zum Bruderkuss – man wird von uns nicht verlangen dürfen, dass wir uns an solchem Verbrüderungstheater erfreuen.<sup>129</sup>

The keywords in the right's arguments against the film are racism, hate against France and anti-pacifism. The war seems not to have ended, and resentment predominates. Old myths about 'semi-savages' and soldiers with long knives

are used to discredit the war methods of the French. In addition, the ancient thesis of attack – Germany waged a defensive war – also played a role. To the right, the enemy is only imaginable as a ‘real’ enemy, not as a potential comrade or companion in misfortune.

It is clear that the four films (included *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*) cannot be considered ‘counter-histories’ to the same extent. At any rate, this is suggested by the analyses of the films, as well as by the critical reviews. In both cases, *DIE ANDERE SEITE* turns out to be the most conventional film. Reactions were in keeping with the film, i.e. moderate and not very sensational. Due to its realistic style and because of its uncompromising representation of the violence of war, *WESTFRONT 1918* is the most radical film, provoking the fiercest reactions. The weaknesses that were identified in the analysis (heroic myths, battlefield versus home front, racism) hardly surface at all in these reactions. Some critics were clearly more comfortable with accepting an African character in a negative role than in a positive one.

We can also establish that there was no problem of representation. After all, while documentaries were criticised for failing to represent the reality of war in a sufficiently truthful way (see the previous chapter), the ‘fictive’ reality presented in anti-war films did not satisfy either, as critics found the onscreen violence too much. In addition, the violence in the films was much more moderate than the violence described in war literature, and it was nothing compared to photographic representations such as those by Ernst Friedrich.<sup>130</sup>





## 5 'Auf dem Meere, da ist der Mann noch etwas wert'<sup>1</sup>

### Films about the German navy during the First World War

The battle at sea was an important part of the war. After England had declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914 following the German army's violation of neutral Belgian territory, plans were afoot '(England) in die Knie zu zwingen', to force England to its knees. Two powerful weapons would be deployed to this end, the Zeppelin and the U-boat. Not surprisingly, expectations were high. Even before the war, the navy had gained a special place in the German consciousness. This national pride continued after the war, in spite of the disappointing results that the navy had achieved during the conflict. It should hardly come as a surprise, therefore, that films about the navy have an important place in the overall repertoire of German (post-)war films.

During the Weimar period, there were at least seven navy films that dealt with the First World War.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of 1928 and 1931, one film was released every year featuring the illustrious adventures of the German high seas fleet: *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE* (1926), *UNSERE EMDEN* (1926), *U9 WEDDIGEN* (1927), *DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD* (1929), *SCAPA FLOW* (1930), *KREUZER EMDEN* (1932) and *MORGENROT* (1933). In addition to German navy films, a number of foreign navy films were also released in Germany – the best known are *U-BOOT IN GEFAHR* (1926), *MARE NOSTRUM* (US 1926/27), *DIE SEESCHLACHTEN BEI CORONEL UND DEN FALKLANDINSELN* (GB 1928), *SUBMARINE* (US 1929) and *BLOCKADE ... UND U-BOOTKRIEG* (GB 1930).

The programme for the construction of a high seas fleet had been Kaiser Wilhelm II's showpiece and, as such, it played an important role in Germany's foreign policy. It was Germany's ambition to expand into a 'Weltmacht', a world power. Its arch-rivals were the British, who dominated the seas with their powerful fleet. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Bismarck's policy had mainly been geared towards consolidation of Germany's trading position on the global market. With the exception of a short flirtation in the period 1882-1885, Bismarck had exercised restraint in colonial expansion. Following his dismissal in 1890, Wilhelm II changed his course and began to build a strong fleet to equal or even surpass the British. It was rear admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, the head of the Kriegsmarine, who managed to persuade Wilhelm to acknowledge the importance of a strong fleet. It was not so much his inten-

tion to threaten Great Britain's supremacy as such but rather to force the British into concessions. The fleet should therefore be strong enough to overawe the British. Together with Foreign Minister Bernhard von Bülow, Tirpitz and the kaiser developed ambitious plans to fulfil Wilhelm's provocative pronouncement of 'Unsere Zukunft liegt auf dem Wasser'.<sup>3</sup> The resulting arms race between Great Britain and Germany proved to be one of the factors that increased international tensions during the first decade of the twentieth century.

In order to secure funds for a large and strong fleet, it was necessary to gain the support of the German people – i.e. the German taxpayer – for the naval plans devised by Wilhelm II and Tirpitz, as well as state support for new naval legislation. Without massive popular support, and because some political parties in the Reichstag (including the strong social democratic contingent) rejected the plans, various means had to be used in order to influence public opinion. Especially people from right-wing circles felt called upon to take up this task. This did not mean, however, that they did so without any concern for their own interest. For example, wealthy landowners, the so-called Junkers, would only support Tirpitz if they received subsidies for their farms, which had been badly hit by the economic crisis. Besides the Junkers, other representatives of the agricultural sector, captains of industry, senior civil servants and officers supported various propaganda activities. The year 1898 saw the founding of the Deutscher Flottenverein and the introduction of a monthly publication, *Die Flotte*. Membership steadily increased until the association reached a high-water mark in 1913 with more than one million members.<sup>4</sup>

Besides using the existing press channels, pamphlets, books, and lectures with slide shows, the association also recruited new members by organising special film screenings.<sup>5</sup> Footage of extraordinary sea voyages, exploits on large seagoing vessels, activities in the docks and naval pageants were standard fare at these screenings. Frigates, cruisers and submarines gained in prestige. In spite of the fact that four bills securing government funds for naval construction had been passed, the naval construction programme ran into major financial difficulties on the eve of the war. Some construction plans had to be shelved, which meant that the predicted positive economic effects failed to materialize.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the wartime efforts of the navy were not exactly successful. The British fleet proved far superior, especially strategically. The largest sea battle of the war, the Battle of Jutland (1916), was a defeat for both the British and the German navies, but the latter suffered most.<sup>7</sup> The naval blockade of Germany that was put up by the allies in 1915 could not be broken by the German fleet, which was one of the causes of the famine that struck the home front.<sup>8</sup> In its turn, Germany began an unconstrained submarine war against enemy shipping early on in the war. Initially, freighters and passenger

ships were given an early warning. If these ships, insofar as they were not sailing under a neutral flag, were armed with guns, the German navy torpedoed them without warning. From then on, the unconstrained submarine war also meant that neutral ships could be attacked. Such actions led to tragedies such as the *Lusitania* disaster in which large numbers of US passengers were killed. The German attack on the ship was one of the reasons why the United States became involved in the war against Germany in 1917. It goes without saying that every successful German navy action received much attention, which contributed greatly to the creation of myths around the German navy.

The lack of success in battle resulted in important loss of prestige for the German navy. After the war, a slimmed-down fleet movement, now calling itself *Deutscher Seeverein*, made efforts to restore the navy's prestige.<sup>9</sup> Though the fleet movement did not appear to be directly involved in the post-war production of navy films, these films will hardly have hurt the image of the navy – to the contrary. Whatever the case may be, a scandal uncovered in 1927: the navy was actually stimulating the production of navy propaganda films, albeit indirectly. The outrage became known as the so-called *Phoebus scandal*.

*Phoebus Film A.G.* was the name of a film company established in 1923. It owned extensive facilities for production, distribution and screening. The firm quickly developed into one of Germany's largest production companies. The end came in 1927 when the press revealed illegal and subversive financial transactions. It turned out that captain Walter Lohman of the *Reichsmarine* had siphoned off around ten billion Reichsmark from secret funds to serve as capital for supporting clandestine re-armament and militarist-nationalist propaganda. As a matter of course that *Phoebus* was ordered to produce navy-friendly films. This strategy, however, met with little success. The story, which the government and the military tried to conceal, was covered extensively in the press. It led to heated Reichstag debates and finally brought about the fall of Reichswehrminister, Otto Gessler (DDP). Lohman died shortly thereafter, probably by suicide, while the former managing director of *Phoebus*, E.H. Correll, was appointed Head of Production at *Ufa*.<sup>10</sup>

The *Phoebus* affair may serve to illustrate the right's desire to rebuild an army and navy. Right-wing groups tried to circumvent the Versailles Treaty by using secret funds earmarked for re-armament. This often happened with the Reichstag's knowledge. After all, the treaty had allowed Germany to retain a strongly decimated army with limited equipment and no navy of its own. Especially the absence of a navy was a continual source of aggravation. The huge popular success of some of the navy films should therefore be explained mainly from this context.

## The surface ships

In the period from 1926 to 1933, three films were made about the role of battle-ships during or shortly after the war: *UNSERE EMDEN* (1926), *SCAPA FLOW* (1930), and *KREUZER EMDEN* (1932). For many people, these names had a mythical ring. While the historical ship Emden represented the triumphant advance of the German army at the beginning of the war, *SCAPA FLOW* called attention to the honourable defeat of the navy right after the war. These different moments captured on film provide interesting material for comparison. The same is true for the points in time at which the two *Emden* films were shot and screened, 1926 and 1932. They offer an excellent starting point for the comparison of both films and the contexts in which they were shown.

### UNSERE EMDEN and KREUZER EMDEN

The story of the German cruiser Emden is based on reality. At the beginning of the war, this ship was moored in the port of Tsingtau, which meant that the ship's wartime hunting grounds were the waters of the Chinese Sea. A programme brochure issued by the Emelka production company, which was responsible for the production of both films, reported the following acts of heroism: on 13 August 1914, the ship received orders to sail, after which it is said to have succeeded in sinking sixteen ships while seizing eight, and causing some 43 million marks worth of damage to the enemy in the three months between leaving port and going down, which was on 9 November of the same year. The Emden is said to have lost 124 of its crew in the last fight with the Anglo-Australian cruiser, *Sidney*. Sixty-five are said to have been wounded and 117 captured by the enemy.<sup>11</sup> Present figures deviate only slightly from the figures in the brochure. The Emden, a relatively small and fast cruiser, was pitched against an adversary who was much larger and much better equipped.

The David-and-Goliath-like associations prompted by this sea battle brought the Emden much glory. After the ship had gone down, a new ship was built and given the same name – a ship that would eventually be scuttled off Scapa Flow with the rest of the German navy. A third Emden was built in the mid-twenties, but this one had to be a passenger ship because of the restrictions on building warships. A short documentary, *EMDEN III*, was made about this ship, recording the time when it sailed around the world. The ship continued to catch people's imagination until well into the Nazi era. The director who had been responsible for the *EMDEN* films of 1926 and 1932, Louis Ralph, in 1934 produced the film *HELDENTUM UND TODESKAMPF UNSERER EMDEN*.<sup>12</sup> It

should be clear that the Emden story was the stuff of legends. This is actually confirmed in many contemporary reviews.

Louis Ralph was an important figure in the production of the EMDEN films. It seems that KREUZER EMDEN contains some of the footage that also appeared in UNSERE EMDEN (which is probably also true for the 1934 EMDEN film).<sup>13</sup> With the exception of Louis Ralph, who appeared as the Emden commander in both films, only the actors and actresses were different. The fact that some actors in UNSERE EMDEN had been members of the crew during the war gave the film special significance. An important contribution was made by Kapitän-Leutnant Von Mücke, who had been the Emden's first officer during the war.<sup>14</sup> The original captain of the Emden, Von Müller, had died in the ravages of the post-war influenza epidemic. His role was played by Louis Ralph himself.<sup>15</sup> Later, people with first-hand experience were used as actors in the documentaries, DER WELTKRIEG and DOUAUMONT, too. Another major difference between the two EMDEN films was the fact that KREUZER EMDEN was a sound-film, whereas UNSERE EMDEN was a silent movie.

UNSERE EMDEN, subtitled *Fliegende Holländer des Ozeans*, was one of the most successful navy films in the Weimar period.<sup>16</sup> It was promoted in a remarkable campaign during the summer months of 1926. Never before had so much attention been paid to a war film in the press. Reviews focused on its authenticity. *Lichtbildbühne* reported that several events in the film were based on a serious historical source, the *Admiralstabwerk 'Kreuzerkrieg', Band II*, von Vizeadmiral H.C. Raeder und Vizeadmiral H.C. von Mantey.<sup>17</sup> Von Mantey himself attended the special press screening, at which he also gave an introduction to the film.<sup>18</sup> In order to give UNSERE EMDEN an official seal of quality, and to underline its uniqueness, producer Emelka published a letter by Reichspräsident Von Hindenburg in *Lichtbildbühne* and *Kinematograph* saying that the Emelka film was the only EMDEN film that had the support of the navy.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the same film periodical published a series of original telegraph messages sent by the Emden and British ships that had made 'contact' with the German ship.<sup>20</sup>

The film was premiered in two Berlin film theatres on 22 December 1926. Several days earlier, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, the censorship authorities in Munich had announced that after a few minor alterations, the film had been approved and deemed suitable for young people.<sup>21</sup> UNSERE EMDEN eventually became one of the most popular movies of 1926. It also met with great success when it was released in Great Britain.<sup>22</sup>

The story of UNSERE EMDEN can only be reconstructed on the basis of the programme and censorship texts. The film was said to have opened with footage of the Chinese port of Tsingtau. The story then shifts to Germany, where the wife of an engineer posted in Tsingtau receives a letter asking her to join

him there. As she leaves on board an English vessel, war breaks out. The officers of the Emden and the other ships in the flotilla are ordered to mobilise. Preparations are made, the crew say goodbye to the port, and the Emden sails. A short while later, it is decided that the Emden shall be detached from the rest of the vessels. It is the most important order that a ship commander can receive, because from then on, the vessel will be his responsibility and his alone. Only the coal carrier Markomannia will accompany the Emden. After a few days, the two ships reach the Dutch-Indian island of Simaloer, and the crew hopes they will be able to enjoy a short period of rest. However, the stay on the island is short because a Dutch commander orders the German ship to leave the port, to keep Dutch neutrality intact. This is the beginning of the so-called 'Kaperkrieg'. The Emden sinks many an enemy ship, mostly traders. It so happens that on board of one of these vessels, a passenger ship this time, is the wife of the engineer mentioned earlier. She is transferred to the Emden, while the other passengers are taken on board by the accompanying coal carrier. One high point in the Emden's voyage is the night-time attack on a Russian ship in the port of Penang. This is also the last act of war carried out by the Emden. On 9 November, the captain plans to attack an island held by the British. A transmitting station on the island is the only means of communication the British have to reach either their own country or British ships stationed east. In the preparations for the attack, captain-lieutenant Von Mücke lands on the island and destroys the transmitter. However, the Germans are unable to prevent the British from warning their fleet. The result is a heavy shelling of the Emden by the larger and better-equipped Australian vessel 'Sydney'. To prevent things from going from bad to worse, the captain lets the Emden run aground, while the accompanying vessel is sunk by its own crew. The Germans are forced to surrender. The officers of the Sydney receive their German counterparts with military honour and allow them to hold on to their arms. The Australians and Germans watch the Emden go down from the deck of the Sydney.

The remarkable thing about the story is the fact that there is hardly any subplot besides the war narrative. As we will see later on with the early U-boat films, a story involving love or friendship is often a key element of the main plot. Judging from reviews and intervening titles from the censorship report, *UNSERE EMDEN* represented the war action in a historically objective way. Many intervening titles provide factual information about both the situation on the war-torn mainland and the feats performed by the Emden. The texts mostly consist of commands, historical facts, navigational and geographical indications, and information about the number of ships sunk by the Emden. Also, maps and newspaper reports are shown. Very few texts deal with human topics or adventures, and there is nothing at all suggesting a love story.<sup>23</sup> The

situation between the engineer and his wife is explained only briefly. In other words, it is clear that the director chose a detached perspective that was not defined by any of the characters in the story. This ensures an almost documentary-like approach.

Although *UNSERE EMDEN* is similar to *KREUZER EMDEN*, especially where the war action is concerned, Louis Ralph clearly decided on a more frivolous approach for *KREUZER EMDEN*. Having decided not to use any of the historical characters in the second version, he apparently felt he could also adopt a loose approach as far as historical objectivity was concerned. For example, he added two remarkable scenes. *KREUZER EMDEN* opens with quite an extensive scene in which we see three sailors getting drunk while a wedding is taking place in the adjoining room. When the sailors join the party, one of them discovers that the bride is in fact his lover. A fight erupts, and at that very moment, someone announces that war has broken out. Everyone runs outside, leaving the bride alone in the room. The sailor and the groom both turn out to be crew members of *Kreuzer Emden*. Only at the end of the film, on the eve of the final battle, is the groom prepared to make peace with the sailor.

The other addition is more malicious. Whereas in *UNSERE EMDEN* the enemy is probably never really shown, and whereas the British commanders of the *Sydney* are approached in a correct way, *KREUZER EMDEN* makes every effort to display the Russians in a very bad light. While the Russian ship is shelled in the harbour, its officers are shown living it up in a harbour brothel. The scene shows the men being thrilled to bits by a femme-fatale-like singer with a voice not unlike that of Marlene Dietrich's. The director clearly uses the stereotype of Russians as irresponsible drunkards and womanisers who are cheerful and melancholic at the same time.

The rest of the film follows the chronology and factual account of the war action seen by the *Emden*. Large chunks of the film begin almost systematically with a map showing the *Emden*'s position and charted course before actually cutting to the action. This approach was probably also used in *UNSERE EMDEN*.<sup>24</sup> Another similarity between the two films is that the chosen perspective can hardly have been connected to any one particular character. It is almost certain, in view of the objective approach, that this was also true for *UNSERE EMDEN*. Since there is hardly such a thing as a consistent narrative based on characters, the ship itself is the protagonist. In *KREUZER EMDEN* this can be seen from the repeated occurrence of footage where the camera has been placed on the side of the bow, producing the effect of an 'over-shoulder-shot'. In other words, we regularly get to see the sea from the *Emden*'s point of view.



There is no reference in the last version to the newly-built Emden ship. In all probability, *UNSERE EMDEN* ends with a shot of the new Emden (III). This is also mentioned by Kracauer in his review: 'Zum Schlusse läuft unter den Klängen des Deutschland-Liedes die neue 'Emden' aus.'<sup>25</sup> The last lines of the censor's report say: 'Aus Not und Tod ist sie / Uns neu erstanden / Und zieht hinaus / Ein Ehrenmal den toten Helden! Ende.'<sup>26</sup> In films of a more documentary nature, we saw that the historical line was continued in the contemporary present. *TANNENBERG*, shot six years later, ends with the unveiling of a monument with the same name, and *DOUAUMONT* (1931) ends with images of a war cemetery.

### Criticism, mythologisation and intertextuality

It should hardly come as a surprise that the critical appreciation of these films varied. This was not only due to the fact that the films were rather different, but also because of contextual aspects. *UNSERE EMDEN* received reasonably positive reviews. This was mainly due to the objective approach to the past, or because it was, as the *Film-Kurier* put it, 'ein sachlich verfilmter Admiralstabsbericht' produced by 'Fanatiker der Sachlichkeit'.<sup>27</sup> The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* also judged the film to be historically objective.<sup>28</sup> It said the film partly deserved this epithet because of the presence of former navy men in the film. The *Reichsfilmblatt* even opined that these people acted better than the professional actors taking part in the film.<sup>29</sup> The objective approach would also earn war movies that were shot later positive reviews.

Some critics did not share this positive view of the films, however. One of them, Siegfried Kracauer, criticized the choice of subject for the film:

Als die verdammenswerte Wirklichkeit dieses Krieges fällt die Episode der Emden heraus. Gerade darum hat man sie vermutlich verfilmt. Das Publikum, die Jugend zumal, soll den Eindruck erhalten, als ob es um den Krieg eine frisch-fröhliche Sache sei.<sup>30</sup>

From this perspective, he found the film a 'Schrittmacher glorreicher Kriegsstimmung'.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, Kracauer also wrote that the events themselves had been portrayed correctly and that the activities of the crew and the officers had been conveyed in a convincing manner.<sup>32</sup> The social-democrat publication, *Vorwärts*, undoubtedly concurred with the negative reviews, for its own verdict did not mince words: 'Unsere Emden is nichts weiter als eine langweilige Chronik für ein deutschnationales Heim.'<sup>33</sup> The moderate *Germania* opined that, while the film could indeed in no way be called pacifist, neither did it glorify the war.<sup>34</sup>

The sheer number of reactions made it clear that the first EMDEN film fulfilled a need to give the war a place among national myths, which, of course, included the heroic deeds of soldiers. Naturally, the story of the Emden, a small but swift vessel roaming the seas like a David, as some said, was excellently suited to become the stuff of myth.<sup>35</sup> The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, which later proved a powerful advocate of national myths (see also the discussion of TANNENBERG) considered UNSERE EMDEN the first historical war film and found that its production marked an 'entscheidender Schritt zur bildlichen Geschichtsschreibung des Krieges'.<sup>36</sup> And besides, the newspaper wrote,

Deutschland kennt keine Denkmäler des Krieges. Das Denkmal unserer Leistungen war unsichtbar bisher, stand nirgendwo und überall in den sachlichen Berichten des General- und Admiralstabes. Langsam wird es sichtbar: dieser Film legt den ersten Grundstein, um aus den unsichtbaren Denkmal unserer Mannestat im Krieg ein sichtbares zu machen. Es wird weiter gebaut werden müssen...<sup>37</sup>

This tied in with the motto of the film, which, like so many later war films, wanted to be a 'Denkmal'. The fact that this also meant the continuation of a myth was shown in much the same way by two reviews from different ideological positions, in the right-wing publication *Der Montag* and in the *Film-Kurier*, which had social democratic leanings. Both reviews compared the film to Fritz Lang's 1924 NIBELUNGEN film. *Der Montag* said the EMDEN film was a 'neuzeitliche Gestaltung' in expressing the 'Nibelungentreue' of Lang's film as well as the 'nordische Liebe zum Meer'.<sup>38</sup> The *Film-Kurier* wrote: 'Seit den "Nibelungen" wurde kein Stoff aufgegriffen, der das deutsche Volk (...) angeht'.<sup>39</sup> The author was clearly aware that the subject was very suitable for visual mythologizing: 'Der "Emden"-Krieg bewies: auf dem Meere, da ist der Mann noch was wert (dagegen unser Schützengraben- und Materialkrieg...)'.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the high degree of organisation in the navy was absent in the chaos of the western front. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the war at sea should have been more appealing for the visual representation of heroism than the war at the western front, where death had become almost anonymous because of the huge numbers of casualties.

The EMDEN film was compared not just to the mythological DIE NIBELUNGEN. For many people it also carried associations with Eisenstein's POTEMKIN,<sup>41</sup> which had gone into circulation six months earlier, in the summer of 1926. This Russian film was vilified because of its ideology but also praised for its cinematographic qualities. POTEMKIN was banned for some time because of its outright communist propaganda. Bearing in mind the commotion POTEMKIN had caused, it need hardly surprise us that critics compared German navy films from the same time, UNSERE EMDEN and the U-boat film DIE VERSUNKENE

FLOTTE, to Eisenstein's film. Some saw UNSERE EMDEN and DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE as ideological counterparts of POTEMKIN, while others pointed out the many similarities. Critical opinion was divided: 'Sie will ein deutsches Gegenstück zum "Potemkin" sein'<sup>42</sup>; the director has succeeded in

filmtechnisch die ganz gleichen Höhepunkte zu erreichen<sup>43</sup>; Ein Vergleich dieser Bildreportage mit 'Potemkin' ist freilich weder künstlerisch noch stofflich am Platze<sup>44</sup>; Der Vergleich mit 'Potemkin' liegt bei der Gleichartigkeit des Schiffsmilieus nahe. Aber was dort eine Idee war, ist hier nur 'Erinnerungsblatt'<sup>45</sup>; (...) im Hintergrund steht der Potemkinfilm. Keine Einzelfiguren, die Masse, die Besatzung ist Träger der Handlung. Maschinen spielen massgebend mit.<sup>46</sup>

Comparisons between UNSERE EMDEN and POTEMKIN were made mainly in terms of content, because the German film had nothing to do with the aesthetic modernism of its Russian precursor, with its revolutionary editing technique. This is borne out by the reviews, and it also seems a logical presumption looking at KREUZER EMDEN, in which conventional continuity editing is the dominant technique. After all, both EMDEN films were made by one and the same director. The only aspect that apparently corresponded to POTEMKIN is the careful attention to nautical technology, which also fascinated the makers of many other navy films. It is not unlikely that Eisenstein showed them how to bring life to what is essentially the utter lifelessness of modern technology – by creating images that are fascinating in cinematographic terms: moving wheels, pumping rods, steam.

Two interesting reports should be mentioned in connection with the relationship between EMDEN and POTEMKIN. According to the *Lichtbildbühne* and the *Film-Kurier*, rioting broke out between leftists and right-wing sympathisers during and after an evening screening of the film on 27 December.<sup>47</sup> The *Film-Kurier* said the disturbances were directly related to a Bavarian ban on POTEMKIN. Leftists were said to have taken their revenge on Emelka, the Bavarian production company of UNSERE EMDEN, thought to be behind the ban. The *Film-Kurier* said the rioting had not only been sparked by the obvious irritation caused in left-wing circles by the 'schwarz-weiss-rote Fahne', the 'Kaiserhoch', the 'Flaggenlied' and the 'Kadavergehorsamgesinnung'<sup>48</sup>, but also by a taste for revenge. However, the reporter who wrote the article said it was ridiculous to hold Emelka responsible. Still, he did not fail to appreciate why the 'Kaiserhoch' in the film should be rejected, regardless of its obvious authenticity: 'Selbst in Münchener Rechtskreisen (oder gerade da) wird man eine Ehrung Wilhelm II als deplaciert empfinden.'<sup>49</sup>

Curiously enough, the *Lichtbildbühne* report refers only very indirectly to the POTEMKIN ban.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, it extensively discusses the nature of the rioting surrounding UNSERE EMDEN. Right-wing sympathisers are said to have

expressed their support for the film in a loud voice which, in turn, sparked angry reactions from the leftists. Police then arrested ten persons, who were transferred to the station accompanied by huge crowds. There are no reports in the film periodicals indicating that such rioting ever occurred again. It does, however, prove the sensitive nature of representations of war in images with ideological connotations. Especially at this time, when many war films were made, discussions about the relationship between politics and film gained in importance. The rioting must be seen in this context. The mention of in some of the above quotations the black-white-red flag also appears to refer to the conflict about the new flag regulation pushed through by Von Hindenburg in May of that same year. This regulation required German agencies abroad to fly the imperial colours of black, white and red next to the official black-gold-red flag of the republic, much to the dismay of the social democrats. The issue would soon lead to the fall of the second Lutheran government.

KREUZER EMDEN was premiered in two Berlin theatres on 20 May 1932.<sup>51</sup> In this last stage of the republic, the film industry, like many other sectors of the German economy, suffered from the world-wide economic crisis. While the industry still produced two hundred films in 1931, production went down to 156 in 1932 and, in 1933, it decreased even further to 135.<sup>52</sup> For this reason, the industry was happy with any film that was thought to be a box-office hit. According to *Lichtbildbühne*, KREUZER EMDEN was such a crowd puller:

Die Bayerische bringt hier den Theaterbesitzern in schwerster, beklemmendster Zeit eine Gabe, für die sie ihr Dank wissen werden. (...) Mit der 'Emden' werden die Filmtheater siegreich durch des Sommers Untiefen kreuzen.<sup>53</sup>

Emelka's hope for a box-office hit is illustrated by the way it took the promotion of the premiere in Munich in hand. The edifice of the Emelka theatre, the Phoebus-Palast, was lit by powerful floodlights, the interior was decorated with memorabilia, flags and photographs, and a navy band played appropriate music ahead of the screening.<sup>54</sup> KREUZER EMDEN failed, however, to emulate or even equal the success of UNSERE EMDEN. After about six years, audiences had become very familiar with war films. They had seen objective 'documentaries', romantic war movies and realistic anti-war films. The year 1931 had been a prolific year for German war-film producers, as had 1926.<sup>55</sup> The question is whether reviews of KREUZER EMDEN were really very different from those of UNSERE EMDEN.

War films were generally reviewed with some measure of subtlety, but the inclusion of archival footage nearly always earned a film much praise. This was also the case with KREUZER EMDEN, where the archival footage mostly came from UNSERE EMDEN. The scenes of dramatic fiction that were added to

the historical images, whether constructed or not, failed to impress the critics. They were thought too much of a 'Hurrah-Geschichte' with 'Hurrahgebrüll'.<sup>56</sup> Especially the love scenes were considered intrusive, sentimental and superfluous.<sup>57</sup> In general, reactions in the leftist press were negative. The communist *Welt am Abend* wrote: 'Es hält schwer, sich über diesen Film nicht lustig zu machen. Das grausige, das Furchtbare des Seekrieges, das Absacken und Versaufen wird als Atelierkitsch serviert'<sup>58</sup>, while the left-liberal *Vossische Zeitung* found the film a 'trockenen, eintönigen Bilderbericht'<sup>59</sup>.

All the more surprising was the review in *Vorwärts*, whose critic wrote that the film was 'nicht immer genau aber eine wirksame Antikriegspropaganda'.<sup>60</sup> No other critic had managed to find grounds for such a statement in the film, and even the right-wing press did not use this argument in its sometimes negative verdict. The *Völkischer Beobachter* said that Louis Ralph should at least have consulted an advisor on military and technological matters. The author had noticed 'falsche Kommando-Reihenfolge, falsche Uniforme, falsche Aussprache usw.'<sup>61</sup> *Tempo* concurred, writing in a manner betraying irritation that war films should really only be shown to former participants in the war!<sup>62</sup>

Denn nur der Kriegsteilnehmer kann erkennen, was gut und schlecht, was falsch und echt, was nützlich und überflüssig, was klug und dumm ist. Die anderen bekommen falsche Zu- und Abneigungen.<sup>63</sup>

Whatever the different nuances in the various reviews, the general consensus was less positive than had been the case with *UNSERE EMDEN*. The addition of scenes of dramatic fiction was considered a serious intrusion. Reviews of *KREUZER EMDEN* also lacked the enthusiasm that had been there six years earlier, when making a film about the navy had almost been a novelty idea. The only difference was that, in contrast to the reviews of *UNSERE EMDEN*, criticism of *KREUZER EMDEN* showed an increase in political polarisation, barring a few remarkable exceptions.

### SCAPA FLOW and the navy rebellion

In 1930, the year in which *SOMME* and *WESTFRONT 1918* saw the light of day, the year also in which *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* caused such a stir, Leo Lasko made the silent film *SCAPA FLOW*. Two years earlier, he had taken part in the production of *DER WELTKRIEG II*. Leo Lasko worked both as a director and as a writer of screenplays.<sup>64</sup> At first sight, the title of *SCAPA FLOW* does not appear to give much cause for controversy. It is the name of the British naval base near the Scottish Orkney Isles, where most of the German fleet had been interned after the war. On 21 June 1919, German high command decided that it

would scuttle the fleet. This time, heroism did not spring from braveness in fighting a lost battle, but from an act of self-sacrifice meant to keep the ships from falling into the hands of the victorious allies. In short, an act of material suicide meant to preserve maritime honour. The scuttling of the fleet at Scapa Flow has therefore gone down in the annals of German war mythology as an act of heroism, something to be preserved in national memory.

A reinforcing factor in this mythology was Otto Gebühr's presence in the film. The many times that star actor Gebühr played the role of Frederick the Great in the *FRIDERICUS* films had caused his stature to reach almost mythical proportions. This meant that his presence in a film quickly evoked associations with notions of traditional Prussian morality. There was no question, therefore, that his role must be one of authority. In *SCAPA FLOW*, he played Von Klockow, the captain of a large ship of the line. A picture of Gebühr looking into the distance with an expression of pride and sternness was featured prominently on the front page of the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*.<sup>65</sup> Advertisements show his name in bigger print than the title of the film itself.<sup>66</sup> Claire Rommer – known from *VOLK IN NOT* of 1925 – cast as Marie, was the other star of the film, and Claus Clausen, who had been given the role of agitator, would, several months later, play the role of the lieutenant gone mad in *WESTFRONT 1918*.

Though the historical events at Scapa Flow should have been central to the film, Lasko did not start his film after the end of the war but just before. This meant he introduced a potentially controversial element into his story: the mutiny in Wilhelmshafen and the ensuing November Revolution of 1918. If we are to believe contemporary reviews, the film was not dominated by the events at Scapa Flow but by the outbreak of the revolution.

The following story can be derived from the description of the contents by the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* and the censorship text. The film begins in the summer of 1918. Nothing is known yet about the outcome of the war, and the fleet is languishing in port. Captain Von Klockow's son, serving under his father as a lieutenant, cannot stand it any longer and is granted permission to report for duty with a submarine unit. At that precise moment, the revolution breaks out. The censorship text at first creates the impression that the revolution is provoked by sheer boredom, monotony and the idea that there is no sense of purpose anymore to waging this war.<sup>67</sup> The bad living conditions on board the ships are not mentioned at all. In the third act, the intervening titles, and probably also the images, become much clearer about what caused the revolution. The text gives two quotations, one by Churchill ('Der Krieg hängt an einem seidenen Faden') and the other by Wilson ('Der Frieden ist die Frage kürzester Zeit'), both showing that the war is coming to an end. Then follows an executive order from the kaiser: 'Kommando der Hochsee-Flotte. S.M.S. Kaiser Wil-

helm II, den 24. Oktober 1918. Ganz geheim. O. Befehl. Vorstoss der gesamten Hochseeflotte gegen den Feind.<sup>168</sup> Follows a reaction that could only have come from the crew: 'Die Offiziere wollen mit der Flotte auslaufen!; der Krieg ist doch verloren – mann will die Schiffe vernichten!; Man schickt uns in den sicheren Tod!; Feuer aus!; Revolution!'<sup>169</sup> The rebel crew takes captain Von Klockow's 'Achselstücke' from him. The captain offers resistance, but he is unable to prevent the hoisting of the red flag on his ship. Von Klockow's son is also attacked, but he manages to escape and also saves his father from a suicidal action. After this, the revolution disappears from the scene. The text does not give any information about its outcome, but it does mention that a truce has been agreed. During the peace negotiations, Article 23 is drawn up, stipulating that German ships must be disarmed and interned in allied or neutral ports. 'Führen wir die Schiffe nicht selbst zur Internierung, holt sie der Engländer mit Waffengewalt und besetzt die Küste.'<sup>170</sup> For Von Klockow, this is the most humiliating order of his career, but 'Wir dürfen die Schiffe nicht in feindliche Hand fallen lassen – wir müssen unsere Pflicht tun!'<sup>171</sup> However, it is not Von Klockow but a revolutionary sailor who assumes command, 'Ich übernehme das Kommando! Zur Weltverbrüderung nach England! Am Sonntag spielen wir mit den Tommies Fussball!'<sup>172</sup> The German ships are thoroughly checked by British officers upon arrival in Scapa Flow: 'Wo ist nun deine Weltverbrüderung?'<sup>173</sup> For seven months, the German ships wait for the outcome of the peace negotiations. If these should fail, the Germans are resolved to scuttle their fleet. Then the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1919 comes along, the negotiations have failed as far as the Germans are concerned (the treaty, however, is not signed until June 28, exactly five years after the fatal shots rang out in Sarajevo). 'Ventile offen!; Die Kriegsflagge wird gesetzt – die Schiffe sollen versenkt werden!; Die Würfel sind gefallen. – Es lebe unser Vaterland!'<sup>174</sup> Von Klockow's son is at the last moment caught up in a fight with a revolutionary, but he can be saved in the end. The crew has gone into the lifeboats. The text in the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* indicates that the British are now shelling the Germans, injuring Von Klockow fatally.

The description of the story clearly shows that Von Klockow, and with him the actor Otto Gebühr, play a central role in the film. As was said before, the choice of Gebühr was an extreme case of typecasting. According to the social democratic *Der Abend*, Gebühr would certainly have refused the part if the navy officers, whose 'Rangälteste' he was, would have been anything short of 'flecklose Edelgestalten'.<sup>175</sup> The spectator was almost certainly encouraged to sympathise with the Von Klockow character. After all, it is the captain who is treated 'unfairly' by both the revolutionaries and the British in the film. He is humiliated by the former and killed by the latter.



The revolutionaries were the perfect foil for the so-called 'fleckelose Edelgestalten'. It is not quite clear from the text how exactly they were depicted. The reviews yield more information. According to the *Film-Kurier*, the rebel sailors were shown as a 'vergnügliche Horde bolschewistischer Gauner', as 'dumme Rohlinge'.<sup>76</sup> The *Vossische Zeitung* rejected the way this film presented the revolutionaries as a 'saufernde und die Frauen vergewaltigende Horde'.<sup>77</sup> In contrast, it is remarkable how little attention the right-wing press paid to the way the revolution was depicted. They tried to outdo each other in describing the German heroism at Scapa Flow. This meant that they did not criticise the clear tendencies that were discerned in the film by the leftist and moderate press.

It is clear from the reviews that this was the first time that the revolution had been used as the subject for a film. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that some reviewers refer to Reinhardt Goering's 1918 play *Seeschlacht* and Eisenstein's *POTEMKIN*.<sup>78</sup> With respect to content, there are some striking similarities between the play and film, while *POTEMKIN* appears to have inspired the filmmaker as far as cinematography is concerned. The *Vossische Zeitung* puts it most succinctly:

Es ist interessant zu sehen, wie mit den Mitteln der russischen Bildmontage, mit den Mitteln russischer Photographie und Filmdynamik eine konservative Tendenz durchgesetzt werden soll. Inhalt und Kunstniveau bekämpfen sich gegenseitig.<sup>79</sup>

This statement clearly shows the extent to which the modernistic editing technique was associated with left-wing or progressive ideology. We saw the same combination of conservative tendencies and modernism in *DER WELTKRIEG* (1927/28).

## The U-boat films

### DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE **and** U9 WEDDIGEN

*DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE* premiered on 8 December 1926 in Berlin, exactly two weeks before *UNSERE EMDEN*. It was brought into circulation in no less than fifteen Berlin cinemas, showing the kind of enthusiasm that the producers expected the film to generate with the general public.<sup>80</sup> Judging from reviews, the screenings were indeed a success. The *Tägliche Rundschau* had serialised the book with the same title on which the film was based in June of the same year.<sup>81</sup> This book by retired Lieutenant-Commander Helmut Lorenz was a heavily romanticised account of his wartime experiences in the Battle of Skagerrak, ex-



Captain Von Liers and two of his men in their submarine (MORGENROT)

pressed in an exciting narrative.<sup>82</sup> The form in which Lorenz cast this historic event may have inspired part of his readership to go and see the film as well. Besides, Lorenz joined the film's director, Manfred Noa, in the capacity of a technical adviser in navy matters.<sup>83</sup> This was not the first time Noa directed a war film, having earlier made the strongly romanticised *FELDGRAU*.<sup>84</sup>

A film similar to *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE*, at least as far as its theme was concerned, was *U9 WEDDIGEN*. This first war film by the then unknown director, Heinz Paul, was premiered one year later on 5 May 1927. The film also marked the debut of the production company Jofa-Produktion.<sup>85</sup> The *Berliner Tageblatt* reacted to the arrival of the new firm with a sarcastic yet telling comment:

Womit könnte eine neue Produktion besser und segensreicher beginnen als mit einem Kriegsfilm? Und als die 'Jofa' sich auf die Stoffsuche begab, da entdeckte sie, dass 'U9' dem Kino noch unerschlossen ist.<sup>86</sup>

Despite its strongly romanticised character, *U9 WEDDIGEN* did refer to the historical figure of Lieutenant-Commander Otto Weddigen (1882-1915). This hero fell in a sea battle against the British on 18 March 1915, when he was commander of the U29. He commanded the U9 for some time and was responsible

for sinking the British armour-clad cruisers 'Hogue', 'Cressy', and 'Aboukir' in September 1914, off Hook of Holland.<sup>87</sup> Though this act is depicted in the film, the figure of Weddigen as such is not central to the film. The narrative centres around the adventures of one of the protagonists who was 'on the bridge' under Weddigen's command. Nevertheless, Weddigen must have been the drawing factor, as is also indicated by the title. It is also the reason why the cover of the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* shows an image of Weddigen as portrayed by actor Carl de Vogt.<sup>88</sup>

The narratives of *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE* and *U9 WEDDIGEN* begin before the war. Both films refer to historical characters or facts. Both of them feature personal relationships between the British and the Germans, rivalry plays an important role in both films, and neither one has a happy ending. Nothing has remained of the silent movies except a few written sources from which an outline of the narrative can be derived. The censorship reports are again important as sources for all the intervening titles in the film, giving information about such aspects as structure, 'dialogue' and characterisation. Though both films begin at the same moment, just before the war, *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE* ends in 1919 with a reference to the scuttling of the fleet at Scapa Flow, while *U9 WEDDIGEN* ends in 1915, when the ship under Weddigen's command, the *U29*, is sunk by the British. Both films are chronological in structure and their first scenes, about the short period before the outbreak of war, serve as an introduction of the protagonists and the way they relate to each other. After this, the sea battles are shown, while the films come to a close when one or more characters lose their lives in the fighting. To illustrate this, a brief outline is given of the narrative of *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE*, the first war film to feature the navy, and one that covers the entire war.

In the first scene of *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE*, main characters captain Barnow (Bernhard Goetzke) and torpedo-officer Adenried (Nils Asther) prepare to meet the British fleet during the Kieler Woche festivities. Barnow is looking forward to seeing his British comrade Norton (Henry Stuart) again. In this scene, however, several of the complications that are yet to come are already suggested. The very conscientious Barnow neglects his wife Erika (Agnes Esterhazy) – 'Erika Barnow, seine Gattin (...) im Eifer des Dienstes auch oft vergessen'<sup>89</sup> – and is not aware of the developing relationship between her and his torpedo-officer Adenried. Much the same complications are developing between some lower-ranking members of Barnow's crew. Petty officer Röwer (Heinrich George) and first engineer Kreuger (Hans Albers) are quite openly fighting for the love of Anna (Käthe Haack). She promises each of them, separately, to marry them if they leave the navy. Apart from being rivals in love, the

men also have entirely different views on politics: Röwer is a communist. One of the texts in a scene depicting the Jutland sea battle between the British and the Germans, probably spoken by Kreuger, says: 'Siehst Du, das ist Deine internationale Solidarität! – Der Engländer hustet Dir was!'<sup>90</sup> Anna's seeming freedom of choice is ultimately destroyed by the war when a fatally wounded Kreuger asks Röwer to take good care of her. However, Röwer does not come out of the war unscathed either. He loses both legs.

Let us return to the main characters. The complications between them are certainly not just of a social or romantic nature. During the Kieler Woche festivities, Barnow greets his British friend Norton with the words 'Mein schönster Tag ist heute, Norton: ich sehe die Freundschaft zwischen unseren Ländern besiegelt.'<sup>91</sup> After this, the war breaks out. The subsequent intervening titles report the Sarajevo assassination and its consequences. The following exchange then occurs in a dialogue between Barnow and Norton: 'Krieg!'; 'Aber doch nicht mit England?'; 'Was auch geschieht, wir beide bleiben Freunde!'<sup>92</sup> When the British leave the port of Kiel, the text half-jokingly refers to the superiority of the German fleet: 'Treffst Ihr wirklich mit Euren neuen Geschützen auf 15 Kilometer?'; 'Wetten!'; 'Um eine Flasche Sekt, kredenzt von mir beim nächsten Wiedersehen!'<sup>93</sup> The farewell words of the British Admiralty are: 'Friends in past and friends for ever'; 'Freunde bisher und Freunde für immer'. Immediately after this, we see the lines: 'Am 4. August erfolgte die englische Kriegserklärung.'<sup>94</sup> The order in which these texts appear is crucial, indicating the changing attitude towards the British, who are now presented as breakers of a promise.<sup>95</sup> The reason behind the British declaration of war is not mentioned. And anyway, the film does not pay any attention to the land war. The slogan about Anglo-German friendship runs like a thread in the story, and it is 'pledged' again in the scene in which the Germans open fire on the British ships. The meaning has then become cynical, of course.<sup>96</sup> The next few scenes are very dramatic. Erika writes to her husband that she wants to share her life with Adenried. Though at first he considers duelling with Adenried, Barnow ultimately admits that he has indeed neglected her: '... darum wähle ich einen Weg, der Dich für immer von mir freimacht (...); Er opfert sich für mich!'<sup>97</sup> Barnow is killed, which prompts a guilt-ridden Erika to distance herself from Adenried. She advises him to report to the submarines leaving for Flanders, which he does. Meanwhile, in a Kiel military hospital, a fatally wounded Norton calls for Erika, saying he is the loser of the bet with Barnow. She nurses him back to health as a tribute to her fallen husband. Adenried and his submarine have meanwhile been interned in Spain. The war ends while revolution breaks out at the home front. The censorship text fails to report the causes and suggests that the revolution was not solely the navy men's initiative: 'Am Sonntag ist es in Kiel zu schweren Ausschreitungen

gekommen, an denen leider auch Mannschaften der Flotte sich beteiligt haben'; Das ist das Ende der deutschen Flotte'.<sup>98</sup> Subsequently, Article 23 of the Versailles Treaty requires the handover of the fleet to the enemy. Adenried, however, refuses to surrender his ship to France and scuttles it. He is killed in this action, the suggestion being that he has died as a result of a conscious choice. 'Besser Ehre ohne Schiffe, als Schiffe ohne Ehre'; Wir wollen dem Beispiel von Scapa Flow folgen, und unser Boot versenken'; (...) 'Klar zum Versenken!'; 'Alle Mann an Bord'; 'Adenried! Adenried!'<sup>99</sup> At the end of the film, Norton tries in vain to reconcile with Erika. Again the slogan says 'Freunde bisher, Freunde für immer!'<sup>100</sup> However, she has grown very bitter after Adenried's death, which makes reconciliation quite impossible. Norton does not abandon hope, however, and wishes her 'wohl'.

DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE undoubtedly owed its success to the complexity and excitement of the story. Some reviewers said there was 'atemloser Spannung' which made 'Die Nerven des Zuschauers vibrieren', giving them 'Stunden der Erhebung, der Erschütterung und des Schmerzes.'<sup>101</sup> Historical events and personal fortunes are always closely intertwined. First and foremost, the characters embody high-minded ideals and suffer tremendous trials and tribulations: duty, sacrifice, honour and reconciliation, patriotism, the agony of death and political struggle. The central ideals that dominate the story, however, are romantic love and friendship. The fact that these are not only shown in a positive light but go hand in hand with rivalry is one of the main ingredients of classic melodrama. It is hardly surprisingly, of course, that rivalry plays an important role in practically all war films.

Another recurring melodramatic motif is the remarkable role that women play in the male characters' death wish. It appears that the death of a male character would be more acceptable if he is a lonely, abandoned or rejected man to begin with. In MORGENROT (1933), we come across the same gesture to the audience; in that sense it is a kind of code. The so-called sacrifice for the fatherland is given an equivocal meaning. We saw this earlier in WESTFRONT 1918 (1930).

The relationship with Great Britain is remarkable. Nowhere is the enemy portrayed with so many nuances as in the navy films. The historical ties forged by royal families and, in a negative way, by the arms race at sea, were not only determined by jealousy and rivalry with respect to the strength of the British fleet, but also by secret admiration. In DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE, this admiration and the desire for reconciliation mainly come from the British side, which serves to lend the film a subtle expression of German superiority.

In UG WEDDIGEN, the above-mentioned themes also play an important role. Anglo-German relations are first defined in personal terms (a marriage and three sons) and then in terms of warfare. Here also, the British 'enemy' is first

shown to have a friendly face, after which amorous rivalry for a woman (Hella Moja) leaves two out of three rejected men (Gerd Briese, Ernst Hoffmann, Fred Solm) dead. In the end, the woman does not choose marriage but devotes herself to the infirm. As was the case with *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE*, there is no happy end in *U9 WEDDIGEN*.

### Critical reviews

The reviews of both films strongly focus on the romantic nature of the films. Reactions to the relations between England and Germany are woven into the reviews. The scenes of sea battles and their historical reliability are dealt with only indirectly. Neither was there much controversy where the political tendencies of the films were concerned.

Reactions in the press indicate that *U9 WEDDIGEN*, in particular, was a rather sentimental film.<sup>102</sup> The female roles especially, including Hella Moja who was married to Heinz Paul in real life, came in for much criticism.<sup>103</sup> According to one critic, the woman pursued by the three brothers has: 'Als sentimentale, verträumte Pflegeschwester (hätte sie) im Krieg kaum ihren Dienst erfüllen können.'<sup>104</sup> A critic writing for the *Kinematograph* said that films that mixed personal matters with historical events were, in fact, no more than a gesture towards the female part of the audience.<sup>105</sup> He also indicated that this mixture was developed under the influence of American movies.<sup>106</sup> Thanks to an observant critic, we know that the film had indeed moved the women in the audience: 'Am Schluss der Vorstellung weinten viele Frauen'.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that the female characters in both *U9 WEDDIGEN* and *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE* as well as the male characters sacrificed their lives went unnoticed. Except, however, by *Der Montag*, whose reviewer appreciated the fact that, at the end of *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE*, the woman lets the fatherland prevail over her own personal fate.<sup>108</sup> As far as the male heroes are concerned, only this newspaper made an observation that corresponds to the analysis of the film, namely that it was more than just patriotism that motivated the characters in their struggle and of death throes. The critic of this right-wing newspaper writes about *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE* that: 'Offiziere und Mannschaften erscheinen nicht nur als Seesoldaten, als Kämpfer, sondern sie entschleiern ihre Gefühle und deuten an, für wen sie die Kämpfe führen.'<sup>109</sup> Though the author does not immediately reject this attitude, he is glad that the film does not have a happy ending, or rather, a romantic reconciliation between the British and the Germans. Needless to say, he is full of admiration for the steadfastness displayed by German Erika, who does not give in to British Norton's wish and thus remains loyal to her humiliated people. The same critic writes that



Wenn der englische Schiffskommandant gleich nach dem Diktat von Versailles die Witwe des deutschen Marineoffiziers hätte heiraten können, so wäre dies den deutschen Zuschauern als Vergewaltigung der Wirklichkeit erschienen.<sup>110</sup>

No wonder he considers a happy ending a phenomenon typical of American movies!<sup>111</sup>

Other reviews also show that *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE* only half-heartedly propagated the tendency towards popular reconciliation. For example, the *Film-Kurier* writes that the director of the film chose a compromise for commercial reasons only<sup>112</sup> and that he had made a 'militaristischen Pazifistenfilm oder den pazifistischen Militärfilm'.<sup>113</sup> It is remarkable that critics are generally mild when it comes to the tendencies in both films. The *Film-Kurier*, which usually adopted a fairly critical attitude towards right-wing tendencies in war films, even found that the film shows 'Ehrlichkeit im besten Sinne nationaler Tendenz'.<sup>114</sup> On the other hand, a critic writing for the moderate and widely circulated *Berliner Morgenpost* disagreed completely. In his review, he did not refer to American films, but to the Russian film *POTEMKIN*, which he said had 'angeregt' the film. In his view, *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE* was nothing more than a propagandistic reaction to *POTEMKIN*.<sup>115</sup>

*U9 WEDDIGEN* also sparked mixed feelings with the critics. As we have seen before, most critics were displeased with the sentimental aspects of the film. However, there were different voices as well. The *Film-Kurier* found the film reasonably diplomatic, saying Heinz Paul had managed to position himself above the parties.<sup>116</sup> The *Vossische Zeitung* confirmed this, beginning its review as follows: 'Mit aufrichtiger Befriedigung sei festgestellt: Dies ist endlich mal ein in der Gesinnung sauberer, keinen Augenblick verletzend wirkender deutscher Kriegsfilm.'<sup>117</sup> Even some newspapers with strongly right-wing tendencies agreed with this view, especially where the battle scenes were concerned.<sup>118</sup> The only truly atypical voice could be heard in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, which called the film extremely undiplomatic:

Soldaten, die ins Feld ziehen, werden mit fröhlichen Gesichtern photographiert, und wir sollen das hinnehmen, heute, da wir wissen, mit welch' veränderten Gesichtern sie heimkehrten.<sup>119</sup>

## DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD

The film *DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD* takes us into the year 1930, the same year that saw the release of *WESTFRONT 1918* and *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*. On the one hand there was a light tendency towards films that were more critical of the war, while on the other hand, there were films with a



strongly realistic and documentary character. The war films also appear to become more radical, that is, there are no longer any sentimental love stories. This did not mean, however, that there were no more roles for women. *DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD*, 'subtitled *Aus dem Lochbuch des U.C.1.*', is a film in which war is mostly seen as an adventure.

There are no British characters in *DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD*, but there is a French girl (Jacky Monnier) in the film. After *U9 WEDDIGEN*, this is the second war film made by Heinz Paul. The role of commander is again played by Karl de Vogt with 'glaubhaften Führergesten'<sup>120</sup>, and again his image adorns the front page of the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*. Heinz Paul's wife, Hella Moja, was again involved in the film. She played a small part in *U9 WEDDIGEN*, but this time she wrote the script. She is thought to be responsible for the relatively light touch of the movie, or as critic Georg Herzberg wrote: 'Sie stellt das Lebensidyll neben den Heldentod, die Matrosenfopperei neben die drohende Minengefahr.'<sup>121</sup> The censorship text also shows that humour and seriousness were alternated in the film. Even so, the film was first and foremost meant to be exciting.

In contrast to the two previous films, the story does not begin before but ten years after the war, when a number of U-boat veterans gather to reminisce about their exciting life at sea. The better part of the film therefore consists of a flashback. *DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD* was an unconcealed tribute to heroic death. The content texts tell us that the film shows us twice how the lives of a U-boat crew are saved. The first time around by a young naval officer (Angelo Ferrari), who fires the last torpedo at the ship that threatens to ram the U-boat. After firing the shot that saves the U-boat, the officer drowns while the submarine dives to the safety of the deep. He leaves behind a wife and child. In short, a truly heroic deed. In the second action, a young, independent volunteer (Hans Tost) puts his life on the line: 'Ich bin noch jung und allein; auf viele warten Frauen und Kinder.'<sup>122</sup> He saves the lives of the crew by using a wire-cutter to cut a net of mines that had trapped the U-boat. These scenes of suspense are alternated with light-hearted scenes of a love affair between the German cook (Jack Mylong-Münz) and his maid, a French girl found after the sinking of an enemy ship. The friendly way in which the girl is treated, underlines the sympathetic nature of the Germans. After all, she had been led to believe that they were all savages: 'Hast Du Angst, Jeanette?', somebody asks, to which she replies: 'Man hat mir erzählt, dass die Deutschen Caballeros sind.'<sup>123</sup>

Generally speaking, the film received positive reviews. The critics especially appreciated the two scenes in which the crew were saved. The love story was generally considered less successful, but again, it was seen as a gesture towards the audience.<sup>124</sup> According to the *Film-Kurier*, the tendency of the film was in no way pacifist or reconciliatory; at best there was 'demokratisch

gedämpften Hurrahpatriotismus'.<sup>125</sup> At any rate, the film did not spark any sharp controversies. This would change with the next series of war films.

## MORGENROT

The last U-boat film of the Weimar period, *MORGENROT*, was made at the fault line between two periods.<sup>126</sup> The film shows the adventures of a submarine and its crew. It had been directed by Austrian Gustav Ucicky, who had been working in Germany since 1928. Ucicky had not made any war films before, but he had directed two popular historical films, *FLÖTENKONZERT VON SANSSOUCI* (1930) and *YORK* (1931). During the Nazi regime, he made only popular entertainment without any outspoken National Socialistic propaganda.<sup>127</sup> *MORGENROT* premiered in Essen on the day of Adolf Hitler's inauguration as German Chancellor.<sup>128</sup> Essen was the birthplace of Else Knott, who played the mayor's daughter and eventual lover of captain Liers. Knott, Rudolf Forster (Liers) and Ucicky were present at the Essen premiere, where they received a thunderous applause after the show.<sup>129</sup>

Two days later, on 2 February, the film was released in Berlin, where Hitler himself attended the premiere. He was accompanied by, among others, Von Papen, Goering, Frick and Hugenberg. They visited the nine o'clock screening. An earlier screening at seven o'clock was attended by representatives of the German and Finnish admiralities, senior Reichswehr officers, and by Hugenberg, who thus saw the film twice.<sup>130</sup> The prestigious Ufa Palast am Zoo was probably sold out. According to some reports, the film was received with great enthusiasm by the audience. The censorship board said the quality of the film was such that it could be assigned to the category 'künstlerisch'. In addition, it approved screenings before audiences of minors, despite protests from various reaches of society.<sup>131</sup> The historical context surrounding the production and screening of *MORGENROT* and the fact that Ufa, the largest German film production company, produced the film, contributed to the film's survival. *MORGENROT* sparked discussions of great historical interest.

Because of the ban on rearmament, Germany had a fleet of very limited strength, without any submarines. This meant that the producers had to borrow some submarines from Finland:

Die deutsche Reichsmarine hätte sicher gern ausser der 'Emden' und ein paar neuen Torpedoboote auch ein U-Boot zur Verfügung gestellt, wenn sie es schon gehabt hätte. So lieh das uns in Freundschaft verbundene Finland ein Schiff der 'Vesihisi'-Klasse, damit der Ehrenfilm für das deutsche U-Boot gedreht werden konnte.

Remarks such as the ones cited above lend the film an almost propagandistic tone, as if the film implicitly supported rearmament.

MORGENROT itself is not entirely based on historical events. Some critics did refer, however, directly or indirectly, to Lord Kitchener's death.<sup>132</sup> This British general was on his way to Russia carrying important military instructions when his ship, the armoured cruiser 'Hampshire', struck a mine and sank off the Orkney Islands. In MORGENROT, the U-boat crew sinks a ship carrying military advisers to Russia. However, there are no concrete indications. The *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* only writes that the ship carried 'bekanntesten Organisator und Führer der feindlichen Armeen', without mentioning Kitchener's name.<sup>133</sup> The reference is clear, however, without being historically true. In addition, the story, and its characters and locations are all fictitious.

Ucicky was assisted by Gerhart Menzel. This Silesia-born cinema-owner wrote many acclaimed pieces of drama – he received the *Kleist Prize* in 1927 – and was Ucicky's right-hand man for many years.<sup>134</sup> Menzel was responsible for the script of MORGENROT, while the original idea came from one Freiherr von Spiegel.<sup>135</sup>

The title of the film refers to a poem from the 19th century, the period of German Romanticism, by Wilhelm Hauff (1802-1827) whose first lines go as follows:

Morgenrot, Morgenrot,  
 Leuchtest mir zum frühen Tod?  
 Bald wird die Trompete blasen.  
 Dann muss ich mein Leben lassen,  
 Ich und mancher Kamerad.<sup>136</sup>

The death motif not only dominates in the poem but in the film, too. It is also one of the few times that a German war film deals with death in such an emphatic and reflective way. We have hardly discussed how this theme is worked out in the film, how it functions with respect to the other aspects and how it was received by the critics. Was the film in some way a tribute to German Romanticism and if so, how did this relate to the representation of modern warfare?

As has been mentioned before, the story of MORGENROT revolves around the crew of a U-boat. Not only their mutual relationships are important, but also, as in many other war films, their relationship with the home front. The main character is an elder son of an industrialist, captain Liers (Rudolf Forster), who lives in the northern German town of Meerskirchen with his mother, the Majorin (Adele Sandrock). She is a widow who has already lost two sons in the war. Liers is the hero of the town and takes his leave with two of his crew members to travel to his U-boat by train. During the parting, it becomes clear that the mayor's daughter (Else Knott) is not in love with young lieutenant Fips

(Fritz Genschow), as everyone thinks, but that she loves Liers. He does not find out, however, until in a moment of insight after the first confrontation with an enemy ship. Liers immediately communicates his insight to lieutenant Fips, who can hide his disappointment only with the greatest difficulty.

The first confrontation with an enemy ship involves a British destroyer on its way to Russia. On board are important British diplomats and military advisors. The submarine manages to sink the cruiser. A second confrontation is less successful. A British submarine trap manages to damage the submarine substantially. These 'bait-boats' were British ships sailing under a false flag, in this case the flag of neutral Denmark, in order to entice German submarines to surface, only to sink them. The ten crew members have to make do with eight life jackets. Two crew members, including Fips, decide to sacrifice themselves and commit suicide. The others are saved and given a hero's welcome in Meerskirchen. The film ends with another goodbye. Liers again goes into the battle, because the war has not ended yet. This is the basic story of the film.

One of the main differences with other U-boat films is the way in which the enemy is approached. The balanced attitude of other films is almost entirely absent in *MORGENROT*. As we shall see later on, the Majorin is the main embodiment of this nuance. In contrast to the other U-boat films, *MORGENROT* begins and ends while the war is in full swing. This means that no other situations than those arising directly from the war have to be shown. In this way, the film escapes the need for nuance.

The film is composed along conventional lines, with an alternation of battlefront and home front scenes. Though the emphasis is clearly on the activities at sea, the film also pays attention to the tensions and reactions among the civilian population. However, these scenes in themselves hardly constitute a parallel story line. All events in Meerskirchen revolve exclusively around the adventures of the U-boat crew. For example, we are told nothing about the famine which was ravaging the German home front, partly because of the war at sea. There are only passing references to the trench war in the west. Trains travelling to and from the front are meant to symbolise the ongoing war and the huge losses at the western front. The trains are transporting fresh recruits to the trenches, while at the same time, trainloads of wounded are returning home. The wounded themselves are not shown, we only see the Red Cross signs on the carriages, which is a clear image in itself. In contrast to those of the recruits arriving at the front, these images are not accompanied by cheerful battle songs. Several minutes before the end of the film, we are again shown these images of the trains. We then see the train taking Liers and his men to the war, and the film ends with the image of a U-boat and a last close-up of a flying German flag: another submarine goes to war. The film story ends before the

war has ended, which means that the defeat of the German fleet is left out of consideration.

The two battle scenes and their consequences have a central position in *MORGENROT*. The interaction between the war at sea and the home front brings together motifs of love and (heroic) death. After the long farewell sequence at the beginning of the film – an introduction of the characters and their mutual relationships – we alternately see two short scenes on board the submarine and in the town of Meerskirchen. The crew and the people of the town are in a similar position. The U-boat crew are waiting until they get the British cruiser in sight, while the people in the town are waiting for news from the submarine. Then follows the first successful U-boat action. The people of Meerskirchen are overjoyed at the news of the action. The scene with the U-boat also contains an important change in the love story. While, after the farewell scene, the audience is already aware of Helga's strong feelings for Liers rather than for Fips, the characters themselves only find out what is going on in this scene. At the same time, the scene implicitly prepares the audience for the eventual death of Fips. The fact that he has nothing to live for any more, and that he will leave no one behind, makes his voluntary death more acceptable (his companion Petersen is also alone in the world). Meanwhile in Meerskirchen, Helga tells Grete in veiled terms that she also has a potential marriage candidate on board. After this, less attention is paid to the home front, and the emphasis shifts to the most thrilling moments of the film: the attack on the U-boat, its sinking and the two suicides (which occur off camera).

In *MORGENROT*, the home front is also associated with other things beside love: women, tradition and religion. The worlds of the battle front and the home front are separated along lines of sex. Where Liers dominates the battle-front, the Majorin rules at home. Already at the beginning, during the first farewell, she makes herself count. She tells Liers that she would rather not see him leave for the front. He is the only son she has left and, besides, the factory needs a managing director. She has even gone behind his back and asked the military authorities for dispensation. Liers, however, rejects her efforts and reacts with the level-headed saying that she has always impressed upon him: 'Wie's kommt wird's gefressen.' The dialogue which then follows prompted a number of critics to write that *MORGENROT* has all the characteristics of a Nazi film. The often cited words of Liers testify to a strongly romantic attitude towards death: 'Was ist wichtig? Das Leben? Wir wissen es nicht. Das Unwichtige halten wir für wichtig. Und das Wichtigste sehen wir gar nicht. Vielleicht ist der Tod das einzige Erlebnis im Leben?' To this, his mother answers: 'Das ist wohl so'ne neumodische Religion?' Moments later, he answers his own question, when he says: 'Leben verstehen wir Deutschen vielleicht nicht, aber sterben, das können wir fabelhaft.'



Captain Van Liers and his mother

A statement such as this can be interpreted as a sign of the absolute ideal of sacrifice which was part of the front morality of German propaganda. However, since Liers refers to a general attitude towards life and death, which, in addition, is said to be typically German, his statements go beyond the context of the First World War. They completely tie in with the notion of ultimate sacrifice which was such an important part of the Nazi ideology.<sup>137</sup> In this respect, the Majorin's reaction is just as interesting. As becomes clear later on in the film, she, Liers's mother, is fully behind the idea that every soldier has a duty towards his fatherland, but she also very clearly rejects the contempt for life or 'Todessehnsucht' that her son embraces. Liers is a typical representative of the 'Stosstruppen'. He is the New Man, who fearlessly flings himself into the thick of the battle. His mother's question whether this is a 'new kind of religion' is telling. She does not call it an idea, ideal or point of view, but a religion, which indicates the perspective from which she looks at life and the world. The dialogue between her and Liers lends the war the significance of being a complete break with the old, with the Majorin representing the old order and Liers representing the new generation. It is a break with a world in which civil morality was based on religious beliefs.

As is shown by the ceremonious farewell, Liers and his mother are two of the most respected citizens of the town. Because of this, they take up a more

prominent position than the other characters. However, it is not so much their attitude towards the other characters that is interesting as the relationship between the two of them. The statements cited above show that both of them take up a certain position in the ideological spectrum. While Liers is committed to doing his utmost to achieve victory, his mother is the one who maintains that there is more to life than sacrificial death. In a scene later in the film, this is expressed again. When the people in Meerskirchen learn that Liers and his U-boat have sunk a British cruiser, they are overcome with joy. When the mayor, hardly able to contain his enthusiasm, brings the news to the Majorin, he is reprimanded by the widow, who says that there can be no triumph this time because it is certain that there must have been casualties on the other side. In her view, the preservation of human life, whether or not it belongs to the enemy, is of the greatest importance and priority. Almost as if the crowds gathering outside her house have heard her reprimand the mayor, they silently take off their hats and start singing 'Nun lobet alle Gott', stressing the religious aspect of the event.

The contrasting positions taken up by Liers and his mother are also expressed in the locations with which they are associated most. Land and sea are not only contrasts in a geographical sense. While the setting of the main location, the submarine, represents an image of modernity in every respect, that is, of technological progress, the small town of Meerskirchen is characterised by traditionalism partly inspired by religion. This image is not only evoked by the Majorin, but also by a scene at the beginning of the film showing a man telling his companion that the stars bode ill. This suggests a traditional society in which superstition still plays an important part. The cardboard sets of the town centre, the prominent church tower, the mayor's carriage, the central communicative function of the square, in short, the striking small-scale nature of a closed community typify a traditional *Volksgemeinschaft*. It is a romanticised world on a small scale. Images of snow falling in Meerskirchen evoke strong associations with the miniature world in a snow glass. The contrast with the interior and exterior of the U-boat could not be any greater. The interior of the submarine is characterised by a profusion of technical machinery to the point where it represents technology itself. The images are dominated by wiring, clocks, periscopes, wheels, torpedo casings, transmitting equipment and other technical devices. These pieces of machinery determine the organisation of space and the room to move which the crew enjoy. However, in contrast to the limited living space on board the submarine, there is the vast expanse of the sea. This landscape is also dominated by technology. There are no romantic images of the surf, rock formations, towering waves, faraway shore or the setting sun – there is only the German submarine and its enemies.



The stark contrast between the romantic motifs and modern phenomena is also noted by the characters themselves. In the farewell scene, showing Fips and Helga in a waiting room, Helga makes a remark about a painting on the wall showing a romantic picture of a ship at sea. When she asks whether life at sea is anything like the picture, Fips answers: 'O nein, gar nicht, viel mehr Dreck und Öl. Gar nicht romantisch.'<sup>138</sup> In reality, things are much dirtier and rougher. Yet the film does not fulfil its promise of giving a more realistic picture of life at sea. While Fips tells Helga of the oil and grease, the uniforms are never soiled, the engine-room and the cabins are perfectly clean, and the manners are not rough at all. In the same way as the wounded at the western front and the misery at the home front were kept out of shot, so is this reality kept from the audience as well.

The above leads to the conclusion that the film creates an unbalanced view of the enemy, supports radical heroism, subordinates romantic love, creates an ideological contrast between the 'old' and the 'new' in its views of man and the world, that is between tradition and modernity, and finally, that it propagates a pessimistic perspective on the future as being ordained by fate. In addition, most film historians consider Liers's statements as a key to unlock the (National Socialist) meaning of the film. Some critics have called it a typical Nazi film,<sup>139</sup> others say it is a key film in the period of transition just before the rise of national socialism.<sup>140</sup> Still others, including Kracauer, say the film should not be seen as a Nazi film.<sup>141</sup> Contemporary reviews present a somewhat more balanced view of the film.

## The press

On the basis of the above, one would expect the film to have sparked controversy in the press. This was not the case, however. Except for some minor points of criticism, the film was generally reviewed in positive terms. The critics unanimously agreed that the film had great technical and artistic merit. The performances by the actors were praised, especially those by Rudolf Forster and Adele Sandrock, and the camera work was also much appreciated. There was lavish praise from the *Völkischer Beobachter* for the fact that Forster finally played the role of a real man: 'Aber du sei willkommen, du Mensch, du Mann, du grosser Darsteller Forster!'<sup>142</sup> *Der Angriff* considered Forster to be 'einer der wenigen deutschen Schauspieler, die Kultur haben'.<sup>143</sup> Praise was also heaped on Sandrock in all sections of the press. It was remarkable how only the more moderate press reported the audience's applause of approval at her critical words.<sup>144</sup>

The combination of exterior shots and interior studio footage of front scenes also brought the makers of the film much praise:

Die Aussenaufnahmen atmen durchweg das Salz der ruhelosen See, die Atelierbilder sind von den vielen Marinemitarbeitern so gut beraten, dass wohl kaum jemand sachlich an ihnen mäkeln wird.<sup>145</sup>

There was not just praise for camera technique, the shots of technology also impressed the critics:

Besonders gut ausgearbeitet sind die technischen Dinge: das tauchende Boot, das Zusammenspiel der Menschen und Apparaten im Schiffsinne, der Vorgang der Zerstörungsstationen. Eine saubere, exakte Leistung, die einen durchaus glaubhaften Eindruck erweckt und ganz unsentimental durchgebildet ist.<sup>146</sup>

This last quotation is taken from the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which published the review on its front page. This did not mean that the film captured images of life at the battlefield, or those of life at the home front all that well. The same critic found that the film mainly created 'idealtypischer Bilder'.<sup>147</sup> Herbert Ihering agreed and called Meerskirchen a 'Märchenstadt'. 'Warum wird nicht die andere Heimat gezeigt, die Heimat, die Entbehrungen auf sich nimmt, die arbeitende, hungernde, "durchhaltende" Heimat?', he wondered. Denouncing 'Spiesserpatriotismus' would only enhance the contrast between 'Militär und Zivil', Ihering suggested, while the similarities in heroism between civilians and the military were actually greater than the film makes them.<sup>148</sup>

Critical voices were heard mostly, as could be expected, in the leftist press. However, even *Vorwärts* ended its review with the words 'es ist – zur angenehmen Überraschung – frei von jeder kriegshetzerischen Note'.<sup>149</sup> This review and many others like it indicate how much the role of the Majorin, played by Adele Sandrock, contributed to the film's positive reception in the leftist and moderate press. As *Vorwärts* wrote, it was thanks to her presence that 'dem Film jegliche nationalistische Tendenz genommen (wird)'.<sup>150</sup> Well aware of contemporary political developments, *Tempo* also wrote that the film did not present any danger: 'Diese Tage könnten leicht solchen Film missverständlich machen. Sein Kern wird dieser Gefahr widerstehen.'<sup>151</sup> The opposite, however, was true for the National Socialist critic of the *Völkischer Beobachter*. At the end of his review, he wished that "'Morgenrot" – möge es ein Symbol sein für den Anbruch einer neuen Zeit – auch in den Filmateliers'.<sup>152</sup>

For many reviewers, the possible danger presented by the film would have been rendered invalid not only by Sandrock's attitude, but also because the film did not display any cheap patriotism. This was confirmed by Herbert Ihering in the *Berliner Börsen-Courier*. He opined that the film steered well clear of 'Hurrahpatriotismus' and even that the film 'Der ganze Spiesserpatriotismus (...) ironisiert'.<sup>153</sup> Other film reviews had shown that the National Social-

ists did not like 'Hurrah'-patriotism either, and in the case of *MORGENROT*, the *Völkische Beobachter* praised the critical stance taken by the film.<sup>154</sup>

The attitudes expressed in the reviews are more negative when it came to Liers's statements about life and death. However, only *Der Film* clearly denounced the 'Todessehnsucht' radiated by the U-boat crew as well as the pessimistic tendencies in the film: 'Wenn das Leben nicht wichtig ist, was ist denn überhaupt wichtig? Und warum sollte man in Deutschland nicht lernen, zu leben, obwohl man so gut sterben KANN?'<sup>155</sup> A more cautious voice could be heard in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*:

Während nirgends ein Wort fällt, das dem Phänomen des Kriegs selber gilt, werden verschiedene Tendenzen geprägt, die den Geist heroischer Pflichterfüllung als einen Grundzug unseres Wesens ansprechen.

Referring to Liers's statements, the author continues:

Damit stimmt überein, dass in dem Film jede Frage nach dem Sinn des furchtbaren Geschehens fehlt, das er zeigt. (...) Indem der Film so die heroische Weltanschauung verabsolutiert, entkräftet er sie aber zugleich. Denn echter Heroismus ist kein Selbstzweck, sondern steht im Dienst des von der Erkenntnis gesetzten Ziels.<sup>156</sup>

The author, therefore, thought it advisable to urge a rational attitude towards war rather than to emphasise the heroic.<sup>157</sup> The fact that *MORGENROT* indeed mainly stressed the latter prompted the critic for the *Völkischer Beobachter* to unfold a lyrical dialogue with the war, a dialogue which was devoid of any mind of rationalism:

Der Krieg [in the film, BK] blickt sie mit Medusenaugen an, und in diesem Blick liegt die Frage: Wie, du Mensch, stellst du dich zu mir? Du kannst mir nicht entrinnen! Du kannst mich weder mit pazifistischem Geschrei noch mit papiernen Konferenzen bannen! Ob du mich liebst oder hasst, ob du mich rufst oder ablehnst, das ist mir so gleich wie dem Mond, den ein Dorfköter anbellt. Ich bin ewig, wie das Schicksal; denn ich bin ein Teil des Schicksal selbst. Prüfe dein Herz, du Mensch, ob du reif bist, die Zerreißprobe zu bestehen, die ich für dich bedeute!

Both of the above quotations clearly put two ideological perspectives into words, one which rejects a critical attitude towards heroism and one which applauds such an attitude. Generally speaking, there was appreciation for the subject of the film, the U-boat war, and the technical mastery of those who made the film. But, at the same time, some critics were troubled by the ideological portent of the film. Yet the concern with ideological points of view seemed to be overcome by an admiration for cinematic technique and filmic representation.

The relationship between tradition and modernity is also expressed in the above. Ihering was the only critic to refer literally to the romantic aspect of *MORGENROT*. He believed this romanticism worked on two levels:

Der erfreulichen Abneigung gegen die Phrase steht eine neue Hinkehr zur Phrase, der Abkehr von der Romantik [he means a remark made by Fips to Helga about the painting, BK] steht das Hineingleiten in eine neue Romantik gegenüber, der Polemik gegen den Hurrahpatriotismus die neue Lesefibel.<sup>158</sup>

In other words: the new romantic rhetoric was pitched against the rhetoric of the traditional middle class. Ihering overlooked, however, that the Majorin in fact takes up a third position, a bridge function. She clearly belongs to the middleclass world of Meerskirchen, but at the same time she criticises the bourgeois and narrow-minded perspective propagated by her fellow citizens; she supports her son's sense of duty yet criticises his radicalism. Nearly every review notes that it was precisely Sandrock's contribution that enjoyed the massive support of the audiences. Even though her position is rather subordinate in the context of the entire film, and even if the film had been intended to usher in a new age, its reception still proves that it is dualistic and can certainly not be unconditionally branded as a Nazi film. The key position held by Sandrock in the formation of meaning around the film is confirmed by the fact that the National Socialists cut 'her' scene when they released the film in 1939.<sup>159</sup>

An analysis of the *MORGENROT* reviews makes it clear that this U-boat film was received differently than the other U-boat films. Not surprisingly, the film does not offer a strong subplot involving love stories or relationships with family and friends instead, it mainly concentrates on the front and those who have to fight at the front. This creates a certain intensity which is enhanced by dialogues in which the protagonists do not mince their words. The delineation of time also strengthens the concentration on war. There are no moments in the film in which the war is not in some way present. This all but precludes moments of reconciliation.

## 6 'Neid, Leid, Tränen – das ist der Krieg'

### Gender and war films

Although male characters such as soldiers or marines dominated war films in numbers, female characters also played a substantial role. One need only think of the respective spouses of czar Nicholas II, in 1914. *DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND*, of Karl in *WESTFRONT 1918* and of troop captain Von Arndt in *TANNENBERG*. Captain Liers's mother in *MORGENROT*, and the many lovers featured in nearly all war films either in the foreground or the background should not be forgotten. These characters often played a decisive role in the story. They represented not only the home front but also the female stereotype, that is, the pacifying, cherishing and romantic elements. These aspects were expected to make war films attractive to a female audience as well, for all these love stories and other matters of the heart were believed to appeal to them especially.

A sociological study carried out in 1914 proved that the percentage of women in an average film audience was remarkably high.<sup>1</sup> As the American film historian Patrice Petro remarked, there is little reason to assume that this had decreased in the course of ten years.<sup>2</sup> In view of the growing popularity of the cinema in the twenties and the more emancipated status of women after gaining the right to vote in 1919, it is not improbable that the number of women in the audience had actually increased. It was therefore commercially viable to create space for women in a film genre mostly associated with men. However, besides the possible role played by financial factors, directors could not hide the fact that women had actually been part of the realities of war. Besides representing the home front, in some films they also played a role at the war front as a Red Cross nurse or a soldier's lover. This meant the space that women could occupy was not limited to hearth and home. Nevertheless, only a small percentage of the films gave any attention to these 'front women'.

War films in which women played striking parts explored the limits of the 'genre'. Under the influence of the female aspect, the genre-specific characteristics change. When the female aspect is given a narrative position, such films become more 'melodramatic', the emotional and sentimental are brought into prominence. At the same time, it builds up tensions between the traditional, stereotypical poles of men/aggression/war and women/gentleness/peace. The question is not only how such tensions were given form in different war films, but also which solutions the narrative offered for reconciling these poles

in order to present the audience with a satisfying, psychologically motivated and coherent story. In short, how was femininity represented in some German war films? What functions did women have in the story? Also, what was the effect of war on men and women within the diegesis of the film?

Films with prominent roles for women included *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* (1926), *DEUTSCHE FRAUEN – DEUTSCHE TREUE* (1928)<sup>3</sup>, *VOLK IN NOT* (1925), *ICH HATT'EINEN KAMERADEN* (1926) and *HEIMKEHR* (1928). The titles of the first two films already indicate that they are 'women films', in which the mother role is central. This is also true for *VOLK IN NOT*. Only in *DEUTSCHE FRAUEN – DEUTSCHE TREUE* do women also have the function of front nurses. In the latter two films, the home front, i.e. lovers and/or spouses, plays an important role. This is also true for a male-dominated film such as *WESTFRONT 1918*, which contrasts the front experience with life at the home front.<sup>4</sup>

Of the four above mentioned 'women films', only the last two have been preserved. The descriptions of the contents of the other films have been based on the programme brochures.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, the emphasis will be on the content of the films. Critical reviews will be considered only indirectly because they hardly contain any comments on the gender aspect, as they focus primarily on dramaturgical aspects.

### *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* **and** *DEUTSCHE FRAUEN – DEUTSCHE TREUE*

Only two out of the more than thirty First World War films have a title that explicitly refers to roles played by women in the war: *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* and *DEUTSCHE FRAUEN – DEUTSCHE TREUE* (hereafter referred to as DFDT). An advertisement introducing *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* as a 'typischer Frauenfilm' already indicated the audience targeted by the film.<sup>6</sup> In the case of DFDT, this was mainly pointed out in the reviews. Besides the mother role, these films had several other elements in common, such as widowhood and the national connotations in the titles of the films.

*DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* belonged to the first group of Weimar films about the war, and premiered on 27 July 1926 in Munich. Perhaps the date was not coincidental, because it marked the beginning of the war twelve years earlier, within a day or so. The film premiered in Berlin one day later, at the Alhambra on the Kurfürstendamm as well as at a smaller venue, Schauburg. The film was produced by Emelka and directed by Geza von Bolvary.<sup>7</sup> This Hungarian-born director began his film career in Berlin in the first half of the twenties, achieving success mostly as a director of comedies. For *DAS*



DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ, which marked a new departure for the director, he used his experience as an officer in the First World War.<sup>8</sup> Incidentally, the film also marked the debut of Heinz Rühmann, who was later to become one of Germany's most successful actors. In this film, he played the role of Oskar, a criminal.<sup>9</sup> The role of the mother was played by Margarethe Kupfer, who had, until then, only been known for her roles in comedies. The story of the film begins before the war and ends in 1917.<sup>10</sup>



Frau Erdmann (Margarethe Kupfer), the key figure in the story of *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ*, is a widow and mother of five sons. The boys grow up to be model sons, except for one of them, and when the war breaks out, they all go to the front. The two older sons answer to an official call for duty, and two other sons report as volunteers. However, Oskar (Heinz Rühmann) is on the run because of a theft he has committed and, much to his mother's disappointment, shirks the war as a conscientious objector. After some time, he returns home but leaves again after a conflict with his mother. Eager for money, he accepts an assignment from a saboteur to blow up an ammunition depot. His mother, however, discovers the plans and attempts to foil them on the spot, at the dump site. Her attempt ends in a scuffle between mother and son. They are spotted by guards, who open fire. Oskar is injured and his mother dies. Meanwhile, two of her sons have been killed at the front. Despite all this, Frau Erdmann dies with a smile on her lips while, outside, marching soldiers are singing 'Deutsche Frauen – Deutsche Treue', so the last lines of the text in the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* read.

There is nothing on the front page of the illustrated programme brochure that suggests the tragic content of the film or the dramatic end that is in store for the protagonist. Margarethe Kupfer is shown as a buxom mother figure with a look of endearment in her eyes and a roguish face. This probably has to do with the kind of women characters that Kupfer was associated with because of her earlier roles in comedies. However, reviews of the film also suggested that the film was very sentimental, and that the audiences reacted accordingly: 'Tränenbäche im Parkett, gedämpfte Erregung während der Vorführung, Schluchzen und Weinen.'<sup>11</sup>

DFDT was not without sentiment either. According to the reviewer of the *Reichsfilmbblatt*, 'das Manuskript' oozed 'von Gemüt', while a reviewer of the *Film-Kurier* wrote about the women in the audience after a screening: 'Sie werden zu Tränen gerührt; kein Taschentuch, das nicht in Bewegung käme.'<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, the fate suffered by Regine Vollrath, the mother character in DFDT, is just as sad as that of Frau Erdmann.<sup>13</sup> Although she does not die, she has lost both her best friend and her only son at the end of the film. The sheer complexity of the story requires a slightly more extensive summary.

Regine Vollrath (Hermine Sterler) is a widow and mother of a son, Günther (C.W. Meyer), a young officer engaged to Gisela (Helga Thomas). Regine Vollrath has dedicated her life to the memory of her husband and the well-being of her only son. During an officers' ball, she meets colonel Wolfram (Eugen Neufeld), who develops a great liking for her and also becomes friends with her son. When Günther runs into financial difficulties through no fault of his own and almost kills himself in desperation, the colonel comes to the rescue.

Regine does not know anything about this, and Günther has asked her son not to tell her anything. Then the war breaks out. Wolfram and Günther join the army, and Regine and Gisela, who have both trained as nurses, report for duty with the Red Cross. About one year goes by. Günther sees action at the frontlines while his mother works in a front hospital on French territory, where she and Gisela take care of the displaced French women and children, defying looks of intense hatred. Here, they meet madame Viard (Adele Sandrock) and her granddaughter Marcelle (Solveig Hedengran). Since Marcelle's mother was killed by the Germans, madame Viard has turned bitter. Meanwhile, at the front, the situation is getting worse. At one point, Günther saves Wolfram's life during a French attack. Günther himself, however, is seriously wounded, losing both legs. Regine and Gisela hide their emotions, even when the colonel is brought in a little later. Regine then already knows, through a letter she found in Günther's uniform, what he did for her son. She expresses her gratitude and Wolfram dies thinking Regine will never forget him. A little while later, the French, led by madame Viard's son-in-law, enter the village. Upon hearing that his wife has died, Madame Viard's son-in-law is filled with hatred and prepares to remove the Germans from the hospital. At that moment, however, he learns what Regine has done for his family and sees the state that she is in now – fearing for the life of her only son. He allows her and Gisela to stay at Günther's bed. Outside the Marseillaise rings out, while, inside, Günther summons all his strength in a last attempt to sing 'Lieb Vaterland...'. The next morning, he is dead. As Madame Viard prepares to bring flowers, she learns of Günther's death. Both mothers have now gone through the same experience. Madame Viard brings the story to an end by saying that one has to learn to love the German women. This remark gives Regine the strength to carry on.

DFDT premiered on 2 February 1928. Like *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ*, the film was shown in Berlin's Schauburg. It was directed by Wolfgang Neff, the favourite director of Liddy Hegewald of (Hegewald-Film GmbH), who produced and distributed the film.<sup>14</sup> The screenplay had been written by Marie Luise Droop.<sup>15</sup> These three people had teamed up earlier to create the Tannenberg film *VOLK IN NOT*, which also starred Hermine Sterler. However, it was the actress playing the supporting role of madame Viard, Adele Sandrock, who received lavish praise from the press. In view of the contribution of women to the film, one might indeed call it a 'woman's film'. However, for a reviewer like Ernst Jäger of the *Film-Kurier*, this predicate did not have so much to do with the involvement of women, rather than the 'Appel ans Herz' characterising the film.<sup>16</sup>

## Motherhood and fatherland

Comparing the descriptions of the contents of *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* and *DFDT*, we can say that the character of Regine is much more complex than that of Frau Erdmann. The latter only had the role of mother, as is already indicated by the title, with no less than five children. The fact that Regine Vollrath has only one son leaves 'room' for other roles, such as that of friend (of the colonel) and nurse. The roles of these two women can also be taken as symbols, the more so since the titles of the films suggest that they represent German mothers and women in general. A striking similarity between the two women is the fact that they are both widows, as are the mother characters in *VOLK IN NOT*, *ICH HATT'EINEN KAMERADEN*, *MORGENROT*, *WESTFRONT 1918* and *SOMME*. This means that the women are free to devote themselves to their children, and indirectly, through them, to the fatherland. Although the women in all the films are basically free to start new relationships, none of them do. Widowhood seems primarily a 'function' to increase the characters' availability for family and fatherland. In a sense, they are married to the army, with which they share the responsibility for the children. The opposite is true for the men, who are supported by a woman (mother/wife/lover) in most cases. More about this, however, at a later stage.

Besides their status as widow, motherhood also appears to be an impediment to start new relationships for these women characters. This is certainly true of Frau Erdmann in *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ*, who is always referred to as 'die Mutter' in the programme text. But the same applies to Regine Vollrath, who is simply called by her first name. After all, being still relatively young, she is able to inspire the love of a man, the colonel. However, this relationship is not consummated. It remains an entirely platonic and one-sided affair. Nowhere does the text of the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* suggest that she requites his love, as she does his friendship. This only stimulates the colonel's noble feelings, of course. As the very image of true-heartedness that endures beyond death, Regine represents the ideal German woman. The *Film-Kurier* agreed when it wrote about the actress Hermine Sterler (Regine): 'Man könnte mit ihr wirklich – eine deutsche Frau filmen.'<sup>17</sup> Several years earlier, *Lichtbildbühne* had written the same about her with reference to her role in *VOLK IN NOT* (1925).<sup>18</sup> *DFDT* was advertised with the following words: 'Ein Denkmal für unseren Frauen! (...) Der Film zeigt in ergreifender Darstellung den wahren OPFERMUT unserer Frauen!'<sup>19</sup>

The relative versatility of the female main character goes beyond the relationships she has with the male characters. There is also a certain bond between the women. This is not only indicated by the photograph on the front page of the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*, but also by the story itself. Regine and

Gisela are not only in the same position because their respective son and fiancé have left to go and fight at the front, they also share the experience of women who work at the front: 'Auf ihren [Regine, BK] Gängen ist Gisela stets ihre treue Begleiterin.'<sup>20</sup> As front-line nurses, they have the legitimate opportunity to leave hearth and home to partake in the war experience. Also, the front nurse was able to acquire the status of heroine as 'Kameradin des Mannes'.<sup>21</sup> As we stated earlier, the fact that Regine has only one son and that Gisela has no children at all makes them suitable for the role of nurse, soldiers' mother, and mother of the fatherland. Motherhood was thus elevated to a higher, national, level, in a different way than was the case with Frau Erdmann, but with the same symbolic implications.

In his study of gender representations in Freikorps literature, Klaus Theweleit remarks that mothers, nurses and women from higher social classes have an unassailable status, especially when they are combined in only one character, as is the case with Regine Vollrath. According to the psycho-analytical framework Theweleit uses to analyse the representations, she is the one that does not castrate but protects.<sup>22</sup> In fact, she is 'sexless', which means that a love-relationship is out of the question. Although Regine is still young and has only one child, and even though a respectable marriage candidate is within reach, she remains faithful to her dead husband. These facts of life enable her to make an effort on behalf of the fatherland. By joining the Red Cross, she crosses national borders, for she also nurses French wounded. Not only is the Red Cross an international organisation, the apotheosis of the film story also shows us, on a more personal level, how Madame Viard and Regine Vollrath reach out to shake hands, reconciling across national borders. In addition, Viard's words give Regine the strength to carry on. The last lines of the programme text give us the following lesson:

Sie haben ja alle das gleiche Leid erlebt, ob es nun Franzosen oder Deutsche sind. 'Man muss euch lieben lernen ihr deutschen Frauen', sagt Frau Viard, und aus diesen Worten gewinnt Regine Kraft zum weiterleben.<sup>23</sup>

In this respect, the film betrays a certain ambivalence. While promotional texts for the film speak of a monument for German women, in the end the film itself transcends nationalist sentiments. This ambivalence was also noticed by a critic writing for the catholic *Germania*:

Frauen und ihre Treue spielen zwar eine Rolle, wieso aber deutsche Frauen und deutsche Treue? Im Mittelpunkt stehen zwei deutsche Krankenschwestern, die gut machen, was Männerhände zerstörten. An den anderen Fronten leisteten aber französische, englische Frauen dasselbe.<sup>24</sup>

The reasons for this ambivalence may have been both politically strategic and commercial. Politically strategic, because Germany, being involved in the Versailles negotiations, could hardly afford to offend the allies, even where cultural practice was concerned.<sup>25</sup> This is also one of the reasons why we rarely, if ever, find any negative stereotypes of the former enemy in German war films. It had to do with the commercial interests. Films that were antagonistic towards foreigners were unsuitable for export. This did not mean, however, that all German films were exported, but both sides kept a watchful eye on each other's 'activities', for example through foreign correspondents. This is shown by the reactions from German critics abroad who reported about Germany-unfriendly films shown there. Apparently, a compromise was chosen to satisfy a certain part of the German cinema audiences. The myth of German heroism is left intact without having to show the enemy in a bad light.

### **Suffering and love in other war films**

An extreme picture of reconciliation, this time between the Germans and the Russians, is painted in *VOLK IN NOT*, a film by the Neff-Droop-Hegewald trio. Nowhere is the aspect of reconciliation as prominent as in this film, a fact that is due to the female protagonist. The film premiered in December 1925, which makes it the earliest war film of the Weimar period with the exception of *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*. Incidentally, both films are lost. As indicated by the title, *VOLK IN NOT*, with the subtitle 'Das Heldenlied von Tannenberg', is focused on the battle for East Prussia and the ultimate German victory.

The central figure in the film is Frau Elisabeth (Hermine Sterler), widow and mother of Horst (Werner Pittschau), who is a lancer, a so-called Ulaan, in the German army. Together with Herta (Claire Rommer), who is living with them, mother and son manage an East Prussian estate. Herta and Horst are in love. They look forward to the coming war with great confidence in the German army. It goes without saying that Horst is drafted for active service, his mother and Herta refuse to flee, as they are determined to defend the estate. At first, the Russian army appears to be winning, and Horst also gets the worst of it when he gets seriously wounded. He is saved by a comrade, who brings him back to the estate. At the same moment, the Russian general, Samsonoff (Eduard von Winterstein), impounds the farm and prepares to settle in. Frau Elisabeth manages to keep her son hidden, persuading the humane Samsonoff to make his doctor (Carl Becker-Sachs) available to her son (she tells Samsonoff that it is her sick daughter). When the lie is discovered and she is confronted by one of Samsonoff's loyal officers, a Russian with one German parent (G.A.

Semmler), the woman threatens to shoot herself through the heart. The weapon is discharged in the ensuing scuffle and she is hit. The Russian officer generously declares he will not report the incident, if the son promises not to leave the estate. The fortunes of war then shift in favour of the Germans. Samsonoff's generous officer is brought to the estate, seriously wounded. When Frau Elisabeth bends over him to have a look at his wounds, he whispers: 'Du – deutsche Frau!' and dies. She cannot hold herself back from putting flowers at his grave. Here, she also meets Samsonoff, who is now dressed as a refugee. Several days later, his body is found. He has shot himself to avoid having to live through the defeat. A grave is dug for him, too, with a cross bearing the words: 'Hier ruht in Gott ein unbekannter russischer Soldat.'<sup>26</sup>

It is remarkable that, in contrast to other war films in which women played an important role, the fate of women seemed a little less tragic in this film. Even though Frau Elisabeth is worried about her son, comes to his rescue, and mourns the death of the Russian officer, she does not lose any relatives or her own life (she does, however, get wounded). The drama concentrates mainly on the personal relationships developing between the Russians and the Germans. According to the critics, the Russian officer's death scene was the dramatic climax of the film. Apart from that, the film does not appear to have been terribly sentimental. In connection with the death scene, a *Lichtbildbühne* critic writes about the part played by Hermine Sterler:

Sie war ganz die deutsche Frau, wie wir sie uns vorstellen, in jener Mischung von mütterlicher Liebe, Aufopferungskraft, Härte, Kühle und ihrer Fähigkeit, dennoch ganz tief im Herzen eine leidenschaftliche Liebe zu empfinden.<sup>27</sup>

Not surprisingly, Sterler was generally praised for her role, as was Claire Rommer.

Despite the somewhat milder treatment of the mother figure in *VOLK IN NOT*, and despite the connotations of pacifism, the German mother characters in German war films are characterized by one specific feature: suffering. It is a suffering that is not alleviated by anyone or anything, nor rewarded with medals. This was apparently the highest aim women could achieve in wartime, an aim for which they were admired very much.<sup>28</sup> As early as 1917, Marie Wehner wrote at the end of her *Kriegstagebuch einer Mutter*: 'Gegen aussen der Stolz auf die Heldensöhne, im Herzen die nie verlöschende Trauer um die Verlorenen.'<sup>29</sup> This was not only true for the Erdmann and Vollrath characters, but also for the mother figures in *ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN*, *SOMME* and *MORGENROT*. For example, *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* not only had the subtitle 'Die für die Heimat bluten',<sup>30</sup> but it was also given the following motto in an advertisement:

Nie war ein Herz der grössten Liebe werter  
 Als dies, das alle sieben Schwerter  
 Des Schmerzes trug...<sup>31</sup>

The suffering of these characters was shown emphatically in these films. Even the face of the powerful and generally respected Frau Liers in *MORGENROT* betrayed intense grief when she was talking about the sons whom she had lost earlier. It is no wonder that she is always dressed in mourning clothes. In short, tragedy was part and parcel of these films.

Though qualities such as the willingness to sacrifice oneself, care and courage were praised, critics generally failed to appreciate the grief or sentiment that was displayed in these films. Not surprisingly, *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* and *DFDT* did not receive positive reviews only. A critic writing for the *Berliner Tageblatt* summarized the tendency in *DFDT* as follows: 'Neid, Leid Tränen – das ist der Krieg'. He also found that the film did not surpass the level of the *Gartenlaube*.<sup>32</sup> The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote: 'Die Tendenz schwankte zwischen pathetischer Vaterlandsliebe und weinerlichem Pazifismus.'<sup>33</sup> Though specialist publications did not show much enthusiasm either, the *Lichtbildbühne* made an effort to defend the film by pointing out that there was no happy end, which meant that the film had managed to retain its seriousness. Interestingly, the review posits that the film apparently satisfied a certain need with the audience.<sup>34</sup> The reviews indicate that *DFDT* went even further than *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* where sentimentality was concerned.

In those days, a happy ending was one of the characteristics of the average Hollywood film from which the German film industry tried to distinguish itself. For example, promotional texts and features emphasised that German films were more realistic and less superficial. At the same time when *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* and *DFDT* were playing in the cinemas, a number of American films went into circulation as well. Some of these had been released earlier. It need not surprise us, therefore, that a number of reviews of these 'women's films' refer to certain American films. Even though the hundreds of American films that flooded the market every year were not valued any higher than national productions, and although US productions were generally approached with some scepticism, a number of critics found that these American films made a much better impression than their German counterparts.<sup>35</sup> For example, *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* was compared to *SOMEBODY'S MOTHER*, in which the lead role was played by the popular Mary Carr, as well as to *THE DARK ANGEL*.<sup>36</sup> The German film lost to the American movie. Similarly, *DFDT* was no match for *THE BIG PARADE* (1925), a film that was received very well when it had been released in the German cinemas one year earlier.<sup>37</sup> Incidentally, there was not much reason to compare this film with *DFDT*. *THE*



big PARADE was an American front film that contained quite a bit of humour and whose main characters were mostly men. While this film had a happy ending, it was considered less sentimental than DFDT.

It did not happen very often that there were no female characters at all in a war film. The only film to feature no women at all may possibly have been DOUAUMONT<sup>38</sup>, while DIE ANDERE SEITE had only a fleeting reference to a woman, Dennis's fiancée, Raleigh's sister, without her appearing on camera at all. Thus, male characters were rarely, if ever, without a wife, lover or mother. In those cases where a 'woman behind the man' was lacking, things usually ended badly for the character involved. We have already seen this with Fips and Petersen in MORGENROT, captain Barnow in DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE, the two German brothers in U9 WEDDIGEN, the young U-boat rescuer in DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD and Karl in WESTFRONT 1918. In these cases, the absence of a woman could also mean that the man had been rejected as in (WESTFRONT 1918). Whatever the case may be, the absence of a woman often caused men to behave so recklessly, or, translated into the terms of war, courageously, that they lost their lives.

Rejection by a woman often meant that there was a third party involved. This third person more often than not was a good friend or acquaintance of the deceived man. The theme of rivalry often crops up in war films. Images of life at the front may reinforce the myth of comradeship, as soon as the home front comes into view, the men are mainly rivals. After all, there are hardly any women at the front, but plenty at home. This contrast between the comradeship of the 'Männerbund' at the front and rivalry points up a certain measure of betrayal. Paul Monaco remarked that the theme of betrayal is the main feature of German popular films in the nineteen twenties.<sup>39</sup> The explanation offered by Monaco is very interesting. Although his method of analysis is debatable – partly following Kracauer, he takes as his starting point that the films are dreamlike reflections of the national, collective mentality, and that one should therefore analyse them as one would analyse dreams<sup>40</sup> – it is interesting that he explains the theme of betrayal from Germany's traumatic defeat in 1918.<sup>41</sup> The question is not whether or not this interpretation is correct, but what this theme means for the female characters in the films concerned. They do not appear in a very favourable light, that much is clear. The choice of a woman for another man robs men of their traditional predisposition towards power and control. The strength of this feeling of powerlessness is indicated by the subsequent fatalism and destructiveness of the rejected man's behaviour. Based on Monaco's interpretation, these men, 'robbed' of their power, represent the once all-powerful German empire.

Nowhere is this fatalism and destruction given a more prominent expression than in the navy films mentioned earlier and in *WESTFRONT 1918*. Especially in the latter film, this aspect is given much attention and, on top of that, the destructive element is not limited to the male character himself. Karl considers the behaviour of his wife, who beds the butcher's boy in exchange for a piece of meat, unforgivable.<sup>42</sup> He expresses his anger and disappointment by enveloping himself in bitter silence, which drives his wife to despair. Although she explains how harsh life at the home front is, he perseveres with his aloofness. Most critics were horrified by this scene, though not so much because of Karl's unreasonable attitude. Their dismay appears to have been caused by the female element in the film, represented by the emotional, sentimental or melodramatic aspects which none of them were able to appreciate. Critics were wont to vent their disapproval if war films contained some sentiment or drama.

Reactions to the adultery scene varied. The *Reichsfilmbblatt* was the only periodical to remark that adultery was a widely spread phenomenon in those days, and that Karl's attitude deserved some understanding. Surprisingly enough, considering the reviews in right-wing newspapers, this critic received support from an unexpected ally. The *Völkischer Beobachter* found the scene 'seelisch richtig', while it mainly stressed Karl's desire to return to the front.<sup>43</sup> The *Kreuz-Zeitung* opined:

Es wäre besser, wenn man schweigt über das, was dabei gezeigt wird. Männlich jedenfalls benimmt sich der Soldat in dieser Situation nicht, wenn er resigniert zu dem Schluss kommt, das seine Frau auch nur ein Opfer des Krieges sei.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, the critic writing for the catholic *Germania* believed that Karl at least punished his wife with 'feldgrauer Gefühlskalte'.<sup>45</sup> Finally, the conservative *Kinematograph* said it was a sequence which was 'nicht ein typisches Bild aus jenen Tagen'.<sup>46</sup> In short, the reactions in the press may be called somewhat ambivalent. One critic excuses Karl by referring to the effects which the war could have on people, while another considers Karl's attitude hard-hearted and the manly thing to do. Generally speaking, however, this sequence was not judged in terms of the actions taken by the characters, but in terms of the dramaturgy used to represent this episode of the film. It is not improbable that reviewers simply found the female element incompatible with the atmosphere of manliness that pervaded the film. The stage-like, domestic and emotional were no match for the 'Realistik' of the front scenes.

Yet Pabst does not exactly take up a position against the female character. This is not only indicated by the reconciliation scene at the end of the film – Karl admits that not just she but everyone involved bears some guilt for the situation – but also by the fact that Pabst has given a much milder interpretation

of the role played by women than Ernst Johannsen in the book that was the basis for the film. The book is soaking with misogyny. While the scenes in which the man (who is called Lornsen in the book) catches his wife are nearly identical in book and film, the continuation in the book is much more humiliating for the woman than it is in the film. In the book, Lornsen tells his comrades at the front what has happened during his leave:

'She did not know what to make of all this. She begged for forgiveness every day. As soon as she kept her mouth shut, I started talking again about indifferent things, as if she had said nothing at all.' 'Angry revenge', Müller remarked. Lornsen nodded. 'On the last day, she came up to me, crawling on her knees. I nearly forgot my role. I talked about my departure, as if she wasn't there before me on the floor. When I offered her my hand afterwards, she pretended to faint. Well, and after that, I wrote, and she wrote back, and there was the same thing in every one of her letters: "Please talk to me about it, forgive me, listen to my story". – I won't do it. And now it's your turn, isn't it?'<sup>47</sup>

One of the reactions to his account comes from the Student (who is much less sympathetic in the book than he is in the film):

'If we allow ourselves something, this does not mean that we allow the woman the same thing. (...) The wife and mother belongs in the home, not in parliament, not in the professor's chair. The prerogative of the woman is the vast province of the child, all other things will be left out of consideration.' (...) Lornsen: 'Whatever poets and writers have to say about this issue, in their novels and histories, men allow themselves to be deceived by women as if they were idiots, every silly goose who reads all this nonsense must think that she is worth quite a lot.'<sup>48</sup>

Compared to this text, Pabst's interpretation can only be called mild. The male protagonists in the book unequivocally settle the score with any female character that dares to transgress the boundaries of the domain she has been assigned to.

In connection with Johannsen's book, Michael Gollbach has made a legitimate remark about the antagonism between the war front (men) and the home front (women): 'Aufgrund der Gemeinsamkeit des soldatischen Schicksals verläuft für Johannsen die eigentliche Front nicht zwischen den feindlichen Armeen, sondern zwischen Front und Heimat.' Despite Pabst's milder interpretation, some of this could be found in the film as well. The lack of understanding between the front and the home front also appears when Karl returns from the front and arrives in his home town. The absence of any real knowledge about the front on the part of ordinary citizens is revealed when a stout man, the stereotypical German 'Spiessbürger', asks Karl: 'Wann seid ihr denn nun endlich in Paris?' This question implies a certain measure of impatience

and lack of insight in the real, stagnated situation at the front. After all, we are already in the last stage of the war. The same faulty communication can also be observed in *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*, which features a group of regulars discussing the best strategy to defeat the French.

After that, in *WESTFRONT 1918*, we see the effect of war in the form of food shortages. Long lines of women (among whom Karl's mother), children and old men – those who simply could not be sent to the front – queuing for a butcher's shop. Escorted by a police officer, the people are waiting for their turn, which may not be for hours. Once having made some advance in the queue, one does not relinquish one's place, even if a son (Karl) comes home after eighteen months. Besides, the people in the queue are giving no quarter, not even when a sobbing woman, who has just learnt that her son has fallen, tries to get hold of a place in front of the queue. Grief has become a general state of affairs, it is no longer any reason for privileges.

Just as the devastated landscape between the trenches belongs to the fixed idiom of images of films about the First World War, so does the representation of the home front usually involve images of people queuing for food. In nearly the same way can such a scene by Pabst be found in the earlier *WELTKRIEG* film. This scene also has people queuing, escorted by a police officer, and also features a woman trying to jump the queue. Incidentally, *DER WELTKRIEG* and *NIEMANDSLAND* were the only films presenting a realistic picture of the fate many women suffered during the war, namely, being integrated in the labour process. Both films have images of women working in a factory, their labour participation means working in the war and arms industry. The first part of *DER WELTKRIEG* also shows images of the famine at the home front. A *Germania* critic wrote about the emotions evoked by these images by contrasting the hungry women with the audience, who had apparently dressed up for a night out to the cinema:

Als das Leiden der deutschen Frau gezeigt wurde, als man die armen Weiber sah, wie sie Munition fabrizierten oder wie sie den letzten Happen Brot an ihre hungrigen Kinder verteilten, denn gerieten diese Hemdbrüste und Rücken-dekolletés in jubelnde Begeisterung. Das wirkt peinlich.<sup>49</sup>

## **Companionship and betrayal: ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN**

One film in which a complex of male-female relationships is worked out, which features a variety of female roles, and in which motives, rivalry and comradeship play important roles, is *ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN* (1926). The

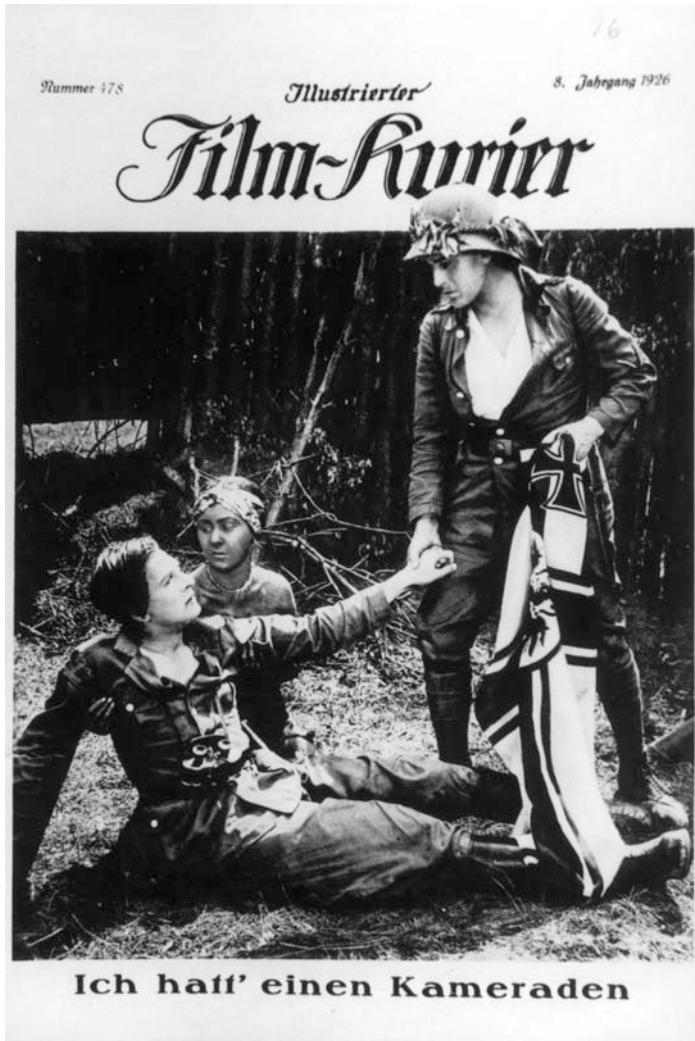
film was shot entirely in the studio (with the exception of the closing image) and does not contain any archive footage.

In *ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN*, a variant of the theme of rivalry is the central dramatic issue, one that also occurs in films such as *FELDGRAU* (1926) and *HEIMKEHR* (1929). This time, the story does not involve two men 'fighting' for the same woman, but two friends, one of whom is in love with the lover or wife of the other. This makes the betrayal motif stronger than in those films discussed earlier.

Ich hatt einen Kameraden,  
 einen bessern findst du nit.  
 Die Trommel schlug zum Streite,  
 er ging an meiner Seite in gleichem Schritt und Tritt,  
 in gleichem Schritt und Tritt.  
 Eine Kugel kam geflogen:  
 Gilt sie mir gilt sie dir?  
 Ihn hat es weggerissen,  
 er liegt für meinen Füßen,  
 als wärs ein Stück von mir.  
 Will mir die Hand noch reichen,  
 derweil ich eben lad'  
 Kann dir die Hand nicht geben,  
 bleib du im ew'gen Leben mein guter Kamerad!<sup>50</sup>

This old song by Ludwig Uhland, which can still be heard at funeral services in Germany, was the motto for the film with the same name. *ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN*, directed by Konrad Wiene, premiered in Berlin on 20 January 1926.<sup>51</sup> To mark the colonial film locations, palms had been positioned near the entrance to the cinema, while the theatre itself had been decked out in all kinds of exotic ornaments. The screening was accompanied by nationalist marching music.<sup>52</sup> *ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN* was the first motion picture about the war at the colonial front in Africa.

The story focuses on two young officers, who are also friends: Jürgen (Olaf Fjord) and Hellmuth (Carl de Vogt). The former is the very image of correctness: he is engaged, held in high esteem as an officer, and he still lives with his old, blind mother (Frida Richard), who is also a widow. The latter of the two men, however, has some obvious flaws: he apparently has no family and he has become addicted to playing card games, which forces him to retire from the army. Also, he falls in love with the wrong woman, Jürgen's fiancée, Maria (Grete Reinwald). She does not requite his love but because of an unfortunate misunderstanding Hellmuth is given hope, which he does not tell to his friend Jürgen. The misunderstanding involves a flower he receives when he leaves



for Africa. It was not sent by Maria, as he seems to think, but by her sister Hilde (Iwa Wanja) who is actually in love with him. However, he does not have any eyes for her yet. Hellmuth receives permission from the regimental commander to accompany Jürgen to Africa, where he will be given the chance to reinstate himself and earn back his military rank. Just before the men leave, Jürgen's loving mother adopts the 'black sheep' as a kind of foster son. The two sisters move in with the old woman to take care of her while Jürgen and Hellmuth are away.

After this first part of the film, in which the main characters and their relationships have been introduced, the scene moves to eastern Africa. Jürgen and

Hellmuth have been stationed in a small village, where they work with the indigenous people. Soon, the African girl Fatuma (Andja Zimowa) starts to feel attracted to Jürgen. He does not encourage her remaining friendly yet aloof. At that moment war breaks out and the two friends are ordered to secure a position in the jungle. On their way through the jungle, Fatuma saves Jürgen's life by warning Hellmuth that his friend is about to be killed by Mkalimoyo, a man who belongs to Fatuma's tribe yet refuses to bow to the white men. Mkalimoyo is then literally thrown before the crocodiles. Fatuma also proves a brave ally in war. When Jürgen is hit by a bullet, Hellmuth has to leave him to the care of Fatuma because he is the only one left to save the German flag. This also means that he honours Jürgen's (seeming) last wish. However, when Fatuma is sadly crouched over Jürgen's body she is shot. Meanwhile, peace has been restored, and after many trials and tribulations, Hellmuth finally reaches his Heimat, where he is welcomed by his foster family. He now discovers who gave him the rose and this finally awakens his love for Hilde. Maria and Hilde have, meanwhile, received notice of Jürgen's death but they have decided to keep this sad news from his ailing mother. However, Jürgen is not dead but turns out to be lying in hospital suffering from memory loss. When a nurse (Grete Pabst) reads to him from the bible, the name Maria triggers his memory. Meanwhile, as Hilde and Maria prepare to tell his mother that her son is dead, Jürgen suddenly comes home. Hellmuth then asks Hilde if she wants to join him to go to the colonies and the film ends with images of Hilde and Hellmuth on the deck of a ship taking them to Africa.

ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN illustrates and confirms, often in a literal sense, a number of issues discussed earlier. As far as the fatalism is concerned, Hellmuth throws away his life and quite literally blames this to the fact that he does not have 'a woman behind him'. When he is making his advances towards Maria he tells her: 'Ich bin ein einsamer Mensch, haltlos, unnütz – aber ich könnte noch etwas Ganzes werden, wenn eine Frau mir haltgeben wollt.'<sup>53</sup> However, when he finds out that Jürgen and Maria are engaged, and after he has been thrown out of the army for gambling, his world seriously collapses. When Jürgen invites him to visit him at home, Hellmuth pours out his soul to his friend's mother: 'Wenn ich eine Mutter hätte, wäre es mit mir nicht so weit gekommen!'<sup>54</sup> He then kisses the old woman's hand, which is meant to suggest that she 'adopts' him. Before he leaves for Africa, he tells her: 'Gnädige Frau, ich durfte sie Mutter nennen, als ich vor dem Abgrund stand – das hat mich gerettet!'<sup>55</sup> From that moment on, things are looking up for Hellmuth, and he manages to find a new purpose in life. With a 'mother' as a form of basic security, he also manages to prevail gloriously in the 'tests of manhood' that are in store for him in the African jungle. Despite this, he remains without a lover,



which means he is a potential candidate for actions of self-sacrifice. Indeed, when Jürgen is ordered to defend an outpost in Africa, Hellmuth tells him: 'Du darfst Dich nicht opfern – du hast eine Mutter, eine Braut...!'<sup>56</sup> However, Jürgen has made up his mind, so Hellmuth can only offer to accompany him.

The motif of rivalry is present in the film, but it is hardly made manifest. Only once in Africa does Hellmuth take out the rose with a look of love in his eyes, but he guiltily puts it away when Jürgen approaches. However, once he has returned home, there is nothing to suggest that he wants to take Jürgen's place with Maria. The film does not provide an answer to the question how and when the change, from Maria to Hilde, has occurred in Hellmuth. This narrative route, which is necessary because Jürgen will return, enhances the honourable character of both Hellmuth and Maria. In this way, the film also does right by its title. The friends' first loyalty is to each other, both at the front and at home.<sup>57</sup>

The mother is a widow, as are most mothers in war films. In order to limit the home front to one location, the three women – mother, Hilde and Maria – have been put together. The two young women take care of the old lady motivated by her blindness, which means she would have been lost without her son. In contrast to the mother figures discussed earlier, this woman is not strong and independent like Frau Liers or Regine Vollrath. She is helpless, weak and naive, blinded after the death of her husband. This suggests that she would possibly be unable to survive the death of her son.<sup>58</sup> Her main function in the narrative appears to be to keep Hellmuth from behaving in a destructive way.

Together with the two other women, the mother represents the home front. This home front has been localised in one place, the house of Jürgen's mother, the living room, more particularly. The interior tells us that we are dealing with middle-class people who do not suffer from poverty. There is no lack of food, nor is there any need to go out working. Realistic footage of people queuing before half-empty shops are lacking in this film.<sup>59</sup> The women spend their time doing needlework, drinking tea and waiting for news from the front. In this film, heroism is restricted to the male characters – the women are mainly passive – except for one, the African girl, Fatuma.

The passivity of the women at home is contrasted by the active support Hellmuth and Jürgen receive from Fatuma. She is part of the black community in a part of eastern Africa that has been colonised by the Germans. The role played by Fatuma, who is not unimportant in the film, cannot be seen apart from its contemporary colonial context. Besides Fatuma, there is one other indigenous character in the film. He does not have a name in the film, but on the cast list in the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* he is referred to as Mkalimoyo.<sup>60</sup> The two characters contrast strongly: Fatuma represents the 'good' native, Mkalimoyo

the 'bad'. This means that Fatuma devotes herself to the German cause, in keeping with her sex, for personal rather than for political reasons, and that Mkalimoyo offers resistance to the Germans, also in keeping with his sex, for political reasons. Fatuma obliges Jürgen in almost everything: 'Lass mich deine Dienerin sein!'<sup>61</sup> – and not only Jürgen. Without her, the two soldiers would not have survived. Mkalimoyo, on the other hand, represents anti-colonial resistance. He warns Fatuma, whom he considers to be collaborating with the German enemy: 'Hat Fatuma vergessen, dass sie die Tochter eines freien, stolzen Volkes ist?'<sup>62</sup> He seeks revenge: 'Es wird ein Tag kommen, da wird er den Kopf nicht mehr hoch tragen, der weisse Mann!'<sup>63</sup> While Hellmuth and Jürgen approach the indigenous people in a friendly manner, their predecessors have apparently been much less respectful. This is not clear from the film, of which a later version lacks the relevant passage, but from the text in the censorship report, which has an officer say: 'Das faule Gesindel will nicht arbeiten...'<sup>64</sup> With the exception of Georg Herzberg of the *Film-Kurier*, no other critic reacted to this assertion.

Mkalimoyo's attempt to kill Jürgen only places him in a worse light. His behaviour means that he is a traitor to the German people, and his death, which must be considered a form of punishment, must needs be cruel. Fatuma, on the other hand, dies a heroine on the battlefield.

It is remarkable how the description of the contents in the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* makes the role of the German women more combative than was actually the case in the film itself. By taking care of Jürgen's mother, Maria and Hilde took 'eine neue heilige Pflicht auf sich'.<sup>65</sup> And when Hellmuth learns how much 'aufopferndem Heldentum' it takes for Maria to keep Jürgen's supposed death from his mother, he is full of admiration.<sup>66</sup> The text only pays little attention to the true heroine of the story, Fatuma: 'Ein junges Negermädchen, Fatuma, schliesst sich besonders an Jürgen an (...) Sie liebt ihn.'<sup>67</sup> If Jürgen would have returned Fatuma's love in the film, a taboo would have been broken. This was impossible, however, for a film that was aimed to be propagandistic, winning back the colonies.<sup>68</sup> Fatuma has to die. With her love for Jürgen, she crossed a boundary, and besides, the fight would have ended quite differently for both Jürgen and Hellmuth, if Fatuma had failed to act at the right time. Recognising and honouring this would be a disgrace for the male heroes, whose struggle and ultimate victory are in the end the subject of the film. An active African woman on the battlefield could not expect the praise that was received by the passive-supportive German women at the home front.

Jürgen's mother saves Hellmuth, Fatuma saves both the soldiers in Africa, and 'Maria' saves Jürgen. Maria has here been placed in inverted commas, because Jürgen was not saved by his lover, but by the name of the Virgin Mary ('Da kam ein Engel zur Jungfrau Maria').<sup>69</sup> After all, he regains his memory be-

cause he hears people telling stories about her. It is hardly surprising that the religious association carried by Jürgen's lover is with the Virgin Mary, not with Mother Mary. She has resisted the temptation put to her by Hellmuth, and this means she has proved herself a worthy future wife for the hero of the story.

### **Husbands coming back home: FELDGRAU and HEIMKEHR**

On 11 November 1918, the armistice was signed, ending the war in strictly military terms. People began to get to terms with the economic, political and social misery into which the country had been plunged. For many people and in an almost literal sense, the war had not yet ended. One of the major problems that many families, relatives, wives and parents experienced was the uncertainty about whether their loved ones were still alive. Jay Winter devotes an entire chapter in his *Sites of memory, sites of mourning* to this uncertainty, the quests and the burial of the dead. One thing he does not mention in his book, or only indirectly, is the story of soldiers presumed dead who returned home long after the war had ended, after a long period of absence, for example because they were prisoners of war. This theme is broached by the films FELDGRAU and HEIMKEHR. Although the theme of the unexpected return is already dramatic in itself, an extra development has been added in the films which even enhances the drama. In both films, the 'waiting' wives have remarried or now live together with another man, that is to say, a man who was a friend of the husband presumed dead. Rivalry has here become (unconscious) betrayal. Since both these film stories mostly take place after the war, the critics did not define them as war films. They do, however, fall within my definition, because the war is not only taken as the starting point but has also clearly influenced the lives of the characters. The relationships between the men and their women will be briefly discussed on the basis of the descriptions of the contents.

The time of programming suggests that films that dealt with a period immediately after the war were in fact strongly associated with that war. The release was planned around the national Volkstrauertag, a day on which 'Das deutsche Volk (...) sich bewusst für 24 Stunden dem Gedenken der Kriegsoffer weihen (will)', as the *Lichtbildbühne* wrote.<sup>70</sup> This memorial day, 28 February, had been proclaimed in 1925 by the 'Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge', which had been organising activities to commemorate the war casualties since 1919.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, the 28th of February was the anniversary of Friedrich Ebert's death. Friedrich Ebert, the first president of the Weimar Republic, had died one year earlier.<sup>72</sup> Indiscreet programming, which had apparently occurred in the past, according to the same report, would create too much consternation, and compromise the cinema.<sup>73</sup> FELDGRAU was the kind of

film that should not hurt any feelings and, according to the critics, it suited the atmosphere of the moment.<sup>74</sup> The film premiered in Berlin's Tauentzientheater on 27 February 1926. It had been directed by Manfred Noa, the same man who would have a lot of success at the end of that year with *DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE*. *FELDGRAU* was expected to be a success, if only because of the star-studded cast.

In *FELDGRAU*<sup>75</sup>, Paul Wegener plays the role of Martin Römer, who has great trouble following the attacking orders from his lieutenant, Tautenberg (Anton Pointner). He is afraid he will not see his lovely wife again. After a fierce battle, Römer is reported missing, and Tautenberg decides to tell his wife Maria (Olga Tschschowa). This decision has future consequences: they marry seven years later. In 1925, Römer suddenly surfaces again, but Maria does not want any reunion. After a failed suicide attempt, Römer accuses his rival of having inflicted the wounds. Tautenberg disappears behind bars, and Römer leaves for Brazil with Maria. He confesses his perjury in a letter, Tautenberg is released, follows them to Brazil and manages to win Maria back. Römer finally accepts his loss and kills himself.

It may seem strange that it is the lawful husband who gets the worst of it. However, this had been made plausible for the contemporary audience by the choice of Paul Wegener as the husband. The press in no uncertain words called the actor the 'bestialisierten Paul Wegener'<sup>76</sup>; 'Die Verkörperung des brutalen, urwelthaften Martin Römer'<sup>77</sup> and 'Der Triebmensch Wegener. In der Maske, im Ausdruck halbasiatisch; schreiendes Blut im brutalsten Machtsbewusstsein.'<sup>78</sup> Wegener was a star who had gained fame by participating in artistic, expressionistic film productions such as *DER STUDENT VON PRAG* (1914), *DER GOLEM* (1914/1920), *SUMURUN* (1921) and *VANINA* (1921). For this reason alone, he evoked associations with the mysterious and bizarre.<sup>79</sup> His lesser known antagonist Anton Pointner, on the other hand, was the paragon of civilisation in this film, although he had played some more shady characters in earlier films. Critics called him: 'Der Mensch des Herzens, der geraden, offenen, durch Kultur temperierten Linie.'<sup>80</sup> In short, the film worked out the dichotomy of Nature versus Culture. Naturally, the representative of Culture achieved the final victory. Judging from the description of the 'halbasiatische' which Wegener apparently radiated, the film also emphasises an opposition between the German and the Foreign. The fact that the character played by Wegener was the loser in the story was in line with the expectations created by the makers of the film. Römer also proved to be a bad soldier in the story, one who had been robbed of his manly strength by the fact that his wife had fallen in love with someone else.<sup>81</sup> This state of mind, which in times of war could easily be confused with cowardice, hardly deserved to be rewarded. According to the descriptions, the special qualities shown by the woman involved, Olga

Tschechowa, were beauty, strength, mildness and detachment.<sup>82</sup> *Lichtbildbühne* said about this later Hollywood star that, 'mit feiner Zurückhaltung und knappen Mitteln', she gave 'eine ausserordentlich sympatische und kultivierte' performance.<sup>83</sup> Given these qualities, this character was clearly more congruent with that played by Anton Pointner than that by Paul Wegener.

Both George Mosse and Jay Winter pay attention to the theme of soldiers returning from war. Winter extensively discusses the quests which relatives undertook to find their loved ones and lets them 'return' to a last resting-place in the Heimat. Metaphorically speaking, the dead soldiers returned to literature, art, films and monuments. There are reports of spiritistic séances in which people tried to bring back their loved ones.<sup>84</sup> Mosse emphasises the function of commemorating in bringing about the resurrection of 'Volk' and the fallen nation.

The official Republican guide to German war memorials stated that the fallen had risen from their graves and visited Germans in the dead of night to exhort them to resurrect the fatherland. Familiar ghost stories were infused with themes of Christian resurrections to explain away the finality of death on the battlefield and to give hope to a defeated country.<sup>85</sup>

In this case, they were fallen soldiers who gained the status of heroes by their deaths. In *FELDGRAU* and *HEIMKEHR*, the protagonists are not heroes, but men who were missing and presumed dead, and who appeared to have risen from the dead by returning home. The fact that both are 'punished' in the film stories may be connected with their longing for their wives, which is represented as bordering on the pathological.

According to the reviews, 'the return' was a popular theme. Its origin, however, was not the First World War but nineteenth-century English literature. Nearly all reviews of *FELDGRAU* referred to the so-called Enoch Arden theme, which was derived from the prose poem of the same name written by Lord Alfred Tennyson in 1861. Although the stories of the film and the poem differ in the way they have been elaborated, the theme is similar. Two men love the same woman, one man, Enoch Arden, leaves, while the other takes his place. The lawful husbands in both the poem and the film are presumed dead, and get the worst of it once they have returned. Another important similarity is that in both cases, the man who left and then returns has changed for the worse. Römer is presented as almost animal-like, and so is Tennyson's Enoch Arden. In both cases, the rival is a gentle and civilised man.<sup>86</sup>

*HEIMKEHR* also features two men who love the same woman, and in this film too, one of them takes the place of the other. The protagonists are two soldiers in Russian captivity, Richard and Karl. During the period they are to-

gether, Richard tells Karl all about his wife Anna, with whom he is still very much in love. 'Wir haben doch seit 729 Tagen immer das gleiche Gesprächsthema!; Deine Frau, Deine Wohnung, Dein Tisch, Dein Bett, den Stuhl mit dem wackligen Bein...', says Karl to Richard in one of the intervening texts.<sup>87</sup> Longing to see his wife again, Richard persuades Karl to flee with him. During the hard journey home from Siberia, Richard is caught again by the Russians. Karl continues on his own and, after two years, he finally arrives at Anna's home. The film represents the journey rather creatively by images of Karl's moving feet, with his shoes going from bad to worse to rags, shot by shot. Then the war is over, and Richard has been pardoned by the Russians. Karl, meanwhile, has moved in with Anna. They get closer and closer and finally fall in love. In the film they are not shown to do anything inappropriate, but their growing desire is visualised by a split screen which shows them spending a restless time on either side of a wall. At long last, Karl and Anna give up their belief that Richard will return. One day, however, Richard returns and threatens to kill Karl. Since Karl once saved his life, Richard is unable to pull the trigger. Instead, he decides to leave them, seeing that his wife is now clearly in love with Karl. Richard chooses to go to sea, and says goodbye to his friend in a spirit of comradeship: 'Lass gut sein, mein Junge, was soll ich mit einer Frau deren Herzen mir nicht mehr gehört!; Sei gut zu ihr!'<sup>88</sup>

It should not come as a surprise that critics also referred to the Enoch Arden theme in their reviews of *HEIMKEHR*.<sup>89</sup> In this film also, the returning Richard, with a stubby beard, looks a little bit rougher than Karl, although the contrast between the two men is much less extreme than in *FELDGRAU* or the original Enoch Arden story.<sup>90</sup> Several critics pointed out that the theme had been filmed many times before. As far as I have been able to establish, only these two films related to the war. This theme was so suitable for treatment in a war film because there were so many soldiers who came home changed men, sometimes literally changed into unrecognisable strangers. The representation of the Enoch Arden theme is a variant of the no less confronting homecoming scenes in *WESTFRONT 1918* and *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT*. These films show that it was not only the soldiers who had experienced a profound change, but also the society of which they had once been part and which they now no longer understood.

In spite of the Enoch Arden theme mentioned above, neither of the films was actually based on Tennyson's poem, but on much more recent literature. *Feldgrau* was based on the novel *Der Mann aus dem Jenseits* by Fred Nelius, and *HEIMKEHR* was based on the novel *Karl und Anna* by Leonhard Frank.<sup>91</sup> Three years later, the pacifist Frank, who was known for his 1918 anti-war novel *Der Mensch ist gut*, would write the screenplay for Victor Trivas' anti-war film

NIEMANDSLAND. His novel *Karl und Anna* was very popular in 1926. It was not only filmed but also successfully adapted for the stage in 1929. The film version was produced in 1928 by Ufa producer Erich Pommer, who had returned from the US several months earlier.<sup>92</sup> He brought in Joe May as the director. May was known for monumental films such as *DIE HERRIN DER WELT* (1919) and *DAS INDISCHE GRABMAL* (1921)<sup>93</sup>, a co-operation with Fritz Lang. Just like in *FELDGRAU*, most actors were familiar to the audience. Lars Hanson, who played the role of Richard, was popular for his role in *GÖSTA BERLING*, and Gustav Fröhlich (Karl) was known for his portrayal of Freder in *METROPOLIS* (Fritz Lang 1927). For Dita Parlo as Anna, the film marked her debut. Ufa naturally presented her as a promising young actress.<sup>94</sup> Finally, Pommer himself was one of Germany's best-known producers. He produced three films that were directed by Fritz Lang, *DER MÜDE TOD* (1921), *DR. MABUSE* (1922) and *NIBELUNGEN* (1924), as well as Murnau's *DER LETZTE MANN* (1924). It is not surprising, therefore, that his name evoked associations with film as art. *HEIMKEHR* was meant to appeal to the broadest possible audience, both at home and abroad. As a 'Weltfilm', an export product, it was meant to meet international, that is American, standards. In the words of Ernst Jäger, this meant:

weg vom ungelösten experimentell-kamerakünstelnden Vorstoss-Film (...) es wird ein entschlossener, geschlossener Film auf die Leinwand geworfen, für Millionen, ungezählte, gleichbeseelte, die der Film umfassen will.<sup>95</sup>

In short, no striking camera movements, and actors and actresses who 'illusionistisch-reproduktiv-realistische spielen'.<sup>96</sup> The same was true for the theme, which was at least recognisable in all countries that had been involved in the war.

It goes without saying that Leonhard Frank's original story should also fall within this 'pattern'. Basically, it was Frank himself who had been asked to write the screenplay for the film. So he did, but Ufa turned down his manuscript. Subsequently, Joe May donned the pseudonym Fred Mayo and, together with Fritz Wendhausen, re-worked the novel into a film script. This time, it was accepted. The changes in comparison with the book were quite substantial. To name a few: in the book, Karl pretends to be Richard when he returns. Anna has her doubts but in the end she accepts him. Anna gets pregnant by Karl; and when he arrives home, Richard picks a fight with Karl, after which Anna and Karl go away, leaving Richard behind.<sup>97</sup> This is a sadder and much more negative end, and therefore commercially less attractive, than the end of the film. In a letter to Ufa, Frank reacts strongly to the maltreatment of his novel: 'Meine Herren, ich protestiere dagegen, dass diese total misslungene, unfreiwillige Verulkung meiner Novelle gedreht wird...'.<sup>98</sup> It was



clear that the novel's most controversial issues had been ironed out in the film. In short, we see the same kind of reduction of quality as with the film version of Ernst Johannsen's book, *WESTFRONT 1918*.

Criticism was divided. Especially the critics on the right, including the one writing for *Vorwärts*, gave a positive judgement. They found the film beautiful and moving, without seeing much reason to complain about too much sentiment.<sup>99</sup> On the left, however, as well as in moderate newspapers, reviews were much more critical. The story itself was received with much enthusiasm, but the way in which some of the roles were acted was the subject of serious criticism. Especially debutante Dita Parlo was put through the hoop. The *Berliner Morgenpost* had this to say about her so-called anachronistic appearance: 'Man erwartet eine Frau, blutwarm, lebendig, voll Saft und Kraft, eine Vollnatur. Statt dessen kommt eine ondulierte Debütantin, eine Kriegerfrau im Jahre 1918 mit Bubikopf und Jumper...'.<sup>100</sup> Ernst Jäger also recognised the phenomenon of the 'New Woman'<sup>101</sup> in Dita Parlo: 'Der deutlichste Bruch mit dem gestrigen Deutschen wird durch diese Frauenwahl angekündigt.'<sup>102</sup> It is clear from their reviews what the male critics thought about this new actress. Some of them compared her to an image of the ideal woman, and she clearly failed to make much of an impression. She was considered 'kein deutscher Typ'<sup>103</sup>; not beefy enough: 'Schade ist auch, das Anna mehr Weibchen als Weib ist'<sup>104</sup>; or she was thought to act in an unnatural way: 'ein natürlicher Zug war an ihr nicht zu entdecken'. In other words, she was said not to justify the male characters' desires. Ernst Jäger was one of the few critics to write about her positively, in words betraying his appreciation of what drove men to love this woman. In his eyes, Parlo was 'so flink und so blank'; 'ein Luluchen (...) unschuldig und lasterhaft (...) sehr nervös und wach. Gar nicht gebildet, ein Plattmädel, mit sauberem begehrliehen Fleisch.'<sup>105</sup>

Although the 'genre' of the war film was dominated mainly by male perspectives, the role played by female characters was not altogether insignificant. Several possible reasons can be mentioned for this. We may assume that the significance of female roles in war films was commercial, to increase the appeal of war films for the female part of the audience. Another reason was simply that women could not be ignored when it came to the representation of the home front. However, the main reason must be sought in the narration itself, and the possibilities created by adding some female characters. The films could be made more romantic, more sensitive and more exciting, sometimes even more realistic. Themes like betrayal, rivalry and the return from the front (including the Enoch Arden motif) could only be elaborated when a female character was featured in the film. Nevertheless, the way in which women were represented in these war films was usually far from positive. In some

cases, women seemed to operate mainly as an obstruction to the comradeship between men, and as references to the gap between the war front and the home front. Representations of women contributing to the war economy are hard to find. The starting point was positive, however, in the only two 'women's films' made about the war. In these films, female characters were part of the heroism usually reserved for the male characters on the battlefield. They completely devoted themselves to the fatherland. As was clear from earlier reviews of war films, the critics did not like overly emotional or sentimental sequences in war films.

## Epilogue

Most of the German films about the First World War that were made during the Weimar Republic have been discussed in this study. Twenty-five of the more than thirty war films have been extensively reviewed, all of them films in which the fates of the individual characters are influenced by the war in a very explicit way. All of the films that have been dealt with in this study, except for one, were made in the period 1925-1933.

One of the starting points for this book was the premise that the films contributed to Germany's efforts to come to terms with the First World War. This premise was based on the assumption that, generally speaking, telling or representing narratives is a condition for or means of coming to terms with traumatic events. Narratives create meaning, and they are therefore able to make the war past a subject of discussion, to make it bearable and digestible. The question of the moral implications of this process of ascribing meaning to traumatic events has not been asked, and it figures only very implicitly in this study. The films have been considered in their own contexts as much as possible, and not, as was done in earlier research (Kracauer) in the light of the later rise of Nazism.

The above begs the question how, that is, in what different ways, the war was represented in the twenty-five films. In order to answer this question, it was necessary to analyse the films that have been preserved and to collect as much background information about them as possible. Besides that, it was important to listen to the 'voices' of contemporary German society. The only direct and verifiable statements that have been made about the war films come from film critics. The broadness of the political spectrum which they represented through their specialist or daily publications gave me the opportunity to present the various perspectives on the war films.

The analysis of the twenty-five films has not led to the conclusion that, in fact, twenty-five different narratives were constructed. Although all the films have their own special characteristics, their uniqueness is only relative. It proved possible to arrange the films into a number of groups based on thematic or stylistic similarities. Each chapter covers a certain theme, and within this thematic approach, the differences between the films are discussed. These lie mainly in the contexts in which each film functioned. For example, the anti-war movie *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* (1925) went into circulation in a different socio-cultural context than its (probable) equal *WESTFRONT 1918* five years later, in 1930. In accordance with their varying contexts, these films were also ascribed different meanings.

As a community of experts who form people's opinions, critics functioned as a hinge between films and society. Their reviews contain important points of reference that have in this study been taken as points of departure for placing the war films in various contexts, such as the debate about the war guilt, international relations, national mourning (film as 'monument'), the discussions about re-armament, colonialism, national historiography, war literature, the theatre, and domestic and foreign military films.

### **The various narratives**

Films about the events preceding the war offered the public a simplified synthesis and a romanticised understanding of the documents that were supposed to prove that Germany was not guilty of the outbreak of the First World War. The complex of factors surrounding the origins of the war was reduced to a drama of nobility, a spy story or a narrative of diplomacy. Using these perspectives, history was personified, while 'abstract' causes were literally kept off the screen. Especially in 1914. *DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND*, the whole narrative focused on the weak personality of one man, the Russian czar. If the blame could be put on a former enemy, Germany had at the very least waged a justified war, because it had been defending itself. If there was consensus about this, and if other countries might also be persuaded to look at things from this perspective, Germany could possibly attain its goal of putting this part of the past behind it. In reality, however, there hardly was any consensus on the issue. Although people agreed about the need for a review of the Treaty of Versailles, they differed about where to put the blame. There were two options: Germany was either entirely innocent or partly guilty. In both cases, there usually was the suggestion that Russia was the source of all evil. The narrative about the causes of the war was dictated by foreign policy, but, mainly because of the many simplifications, failed to be convincing. Those countries which many Germans believed to be the real culprits, Great Britain and France, could not be accused openly because of the political interests at stake for Germany.

Films about the war at the front can be subdivided into 'documentary' films and realistic fiction films. The former emphasised the objective, 'neutral' and historical-didactic perspective, while in the latter, the evocative aspect of the front experience was the main focus. An important similarity between the two categories was the exemplary approach. In the 'documentary' films, this approach resulted in an interplay between archival footage and reconstructed scenes on the one hand, and an individual's account on the other (with the exception of *DER WELTKRIEG* and *DOUAUMONT*). Realistic front films such as

WESTFRONT 1918 and NIEMANDSLAND were exemplary because of the abstraction of their characters: they were not only part of a group, they had also been typified or constructed as social and national identities. From this point of view, the front experience was a communal experience, in which the positive aspect was embodied by the comradeship between the men, and the negative aspect by violence and death. As a matter of course, these films all ended with the victory of death. Heroism was put into perspective. The characters are not typical heroes who, as in tragedy or romance, manage to rise above their environment. They are not stronger or braver than others, and certainly not more idealistic. They are driven by very human and banal motives, not by honour and patriotism, as war propaganda insisted. Only in this sense – WESTFRONT 1918 and NIEMANDSLAND were a very small minority – was Eksteins right with his contention that traditional notions had all lost their meaning.

Although death was the final destination in both the 'documentary' and the realistic films, it was mainly in films of the former category that a connection between the past and the present was forged. The 'documentaries' were part of a broader process of social mourning, and they were clearly meant to try and make some sense of the war experience. This was expressed in the closing images, which showed war monuments and military cemeteries.

If the films themselves did not in this sense make a connection between the present and the past, then the critics did. This was certainly true for the films that were made before Germany had erected a national monument of commemoration. Before the monument at Tannenberg was unveiled in 1927, some critics had already labelled certain war films 'monuments'. These films were given a place in the national remembrance of the war.

It was not without reason that the films with an anti-war attitude were mostly set at the land front, and particularly at the western front. Misery and suffering were the greatest here, the lists of casualties were the longest, and this was also where the real 'Materialschlacht' was conducted. The geographical and military-strategic conditions dictated a narrative approach that was very different from the one used in the navy films. A ship was a well-organised and orderly space shared by commanders and crews. Although they lived apart, they were very much in the same boat, both in a literal and in a figurative sense. Things were different at the land front, where most senior officers were well behind the firing line. The relatively clean environment of the ship also contrasted sharply with the inhumane conditions in the trenches. The hardships were of a different nature.

Within the fleet itself, there were different types of ships, the submarine and the surface ship, with different physical spaces that evoked different connotations and also prompted distinctive types of narrative. On the one hand, death seemed much closer in a submarine than in a surface ship, while, on the other

hand, the submarine seemed less vulnerable because it was invisible to the enemy. On both the submarines and the surface ships, the physical space and room to move for the crew were so limited that there was ample opportunity for individual heroism. There was no exemplary approach in a social sense. However, the films did show the adventures of crew members of different ranks, sailors as well as commanding officers.

Another specific aspect of the navy films was the attention for Anglo-German relations. The British were hardly portrayed as enemies at all. In the films about the land front, on the other hand, the enemy, if he was shown at all, appeared mostly in the guise of a Frenchman. Americans were absent as enemies. It was an obvious choice to have the two main rivals at sea also represent the war at sea. It is striking how much respect towards each other was shown by the British and German naval officers. There were feelings of mutual friendship, marriages and pleasant and respectful manners. When war broke out in the films, the characters were forced, much to their regret, to suspend these manners.

In nearly all war films, a prominent role was played by the home front. It goes without saying that there were huge differences between the home front and the battle front. There was a nearly unbridgeable gap between the two worlds of experience, which was probably widened further by the fact that the war was conducted mainly on foreign territory. In this respect, one would probably have to say that Eksteins is right when he says that traditional narratives and notions were absolutely insufficient to make people feel that, somehow, they were part of the front experience. It is a telling moment when the veteran takes his wife to see *WESTFRONT 1918*, twelve years after the war, in order to make her understand at least something of what he had lived through. No film conveys the gap between the home front and the battle front in such a harrowing way as *WESTFRONT 1918*.

Generally speaking, the war films showed two different relations between the home front and the battle front. On the one hand, there were films in which the women at the home front had a supporting role, behaving just as heroically as the men 'outside', which also meant that they paid for their behaviour with their lives or at least suffered a great loss. On the other hand, the relation between both worlds also meant alienation and 'betrayal', the fighting men suffering alienation and degeneration and the women betraying the men, for example by engaging in an extramarital affair. The positive traits and qualities associated with the women that had been left behind were motherhood, widowhood, suffering and courage. Apparently, these were the only qualities that made women useful and available for the fatherland. This seemed impossible for women who were active or potential partners in love. They were shown in

a much more negative light, as if they were the real enemy instead of the opposing armies at the front. Conversely, male characters almost only risked their lives if they were unattached and had nothing to lose. As far as life at the home front was concerned, little, if any, attention was paid to matters such as famine or brutal working conditions. The suffering of the women was limited to sadness at the loss of a husband or son. Some of the films also showed that solidarity that existed among the comrades at the battle front was missing at the home front.

## Myths

The question whether the war films offered a reliable perspective on the war was not the central issue in this study, but it has been discussed implicitly. For example, the themes of the films were placed in their historical or historiographical contexts. The aspect of historical reliability was mostly discussed by allowing the contemporary critics to speak for themselves.

Among the film narratives about the war, there were those in which the war was mythologised. In historical myths, controversial issues are ironed out, painful paradoxes are resolved, and the lines between fact and fiction are blurred. Historical myths make certain historical events more palatable, more coherent or more exciting. The actions carried out by certain persons and the significance of certain historical events are blown up, or played down and even denied.

In the German films of the Weimar period discussed here, at least three contentions are made, explicitly or implicitly, that may be considered characteristic for contemporary German modes of interpreting the First World War: Germany is not responsible for the outbreak of the war; Germany has not fought against a recognisable national enemy (after all, there was no clear representation of any one enemy); the German army has, as a matter of fact, not suffered any defeat. In the main, these were myths in which Germany's role in the war was distorted or, with respect to some issues, denied. It goes without saying that these contentions were meant to serve political purposes.

On the basis of the above, we can say that, as far as the causes of the war and the treatment of the enemy were concerned, there was, in a sense, a 'master narrative'. By 'letting critics speak for themselves', it has been possible to show that this dominant (film) perspective on the war did not immediately find general acceptance. Some film critics adopted a position as criticasters of the dominant discourse. It is not surprising that these were mostly the reviewers of the communist, social democratic and left-liberal daily newspapers. They made distinctions, and they exposed the representation of history directed by the government and by (self-)censorship. Thanks to a free and varied press, there



was an opportunity to discuss matters that were not discussed in the political arena. These reviews indirectly, and often unintentionally, contributed to an increase in the attention that was paid to the less heroic aspects of the war past. This study has confirmed the contention that a number of critics not only commented on films but also offered an account of the social contexts. Critics who propagated myths were mostly working for the conservative press, especially the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the mouthpiece for the Foreign Ministry.

Although the films dealt with many aspects of the war, they did not give a complete picture of the war. Matters that were neglected often concerned the less spectacular aspects of trench warfare: boredom, drills, rebelling against representatives of the senior ranks, and sexuality (with the exception of *DIE ANDERE SEITE*). Showing military weaknesses was as yet also a taboo. The films tell us almost nothing about insubordination, desertion, violation of international military conventions by the German army, the occupation of Belgium, ill-treatment of the civilian population in enemy territory, wrong strategic decisions or disastrously wrong assessments by army command. Nor did the economic activities carried out by women receive much attention. Only films that emphatically opposed the war, such as *NIEMANDSLAND* and *WESTFRONT 1918*, indirectly paid some attention to these matters. Another taboo was the filmic representation, be it by an actor or by means of archival footage, of Germany's former kaiser Wilhelm II, who had fled to Holland even before the armistice was signed. Not only was he associated with a humiliating defeat – he had fled his own country – but his prestige had also been eclipsed by that of the military heroes Von Hindenburg and Ludendorff. The ban on portrayal by an actor also extended to Von Hindenburg. Whenever he can be seen in a film, it is the general/statesman himself, not some actor. This contributed significantly to his legendary status of war hero.

### **Critical assessment**

The question of when a film performance about the war was considered successful by the reviewers was an important starting point for this study. An analysis of the reviews showed that at least three criteria decided whether a film was appreciated or not: it should be historically reliable and stylistically consistent, and it should contain documentary footage. As we have seen, the establishment of what constituted historical reliability depended largely on what *Weltanschauung* the critic adhered to. In spite of this, the various world views could not always be clearly distinguished from each other when it came to the assessment of war films. Critics of different political persuasions often

agreed, and critics subscribing to the same political ideas had different opinions about war films.

The communists turned out to be the most consistent critics. For them, practically all war films were in effect propaganda vehicles for capitalism and imperialism, and as such, gross falsifications of history. The social democrats were more subtle in their assessment and only complained when the films were not critical enough of the war or if they presented things in too positive a light. The left-liberals had a similar attitude towards the war films. Both the social democrats and the left-liberals proved they had an insight in the historical course of the war and the role played by Germany. They showed appreciation when this role was not presented differently or more positively than it had been in reality, which occurred only rarely in war films.

Critics of the right-wing newspapers were always positive when a film showed heroism and patriotism and did not approach the phenomenon of war too critically. In their reviews, they spread and defended historical myths in which Germany played a glorious role.

It was true for all critics, however, that outspoken tendencies in films were not appreciated, unless they happened to corresponded with the critic's own political persuasion. I would like to point out that this very broad summary fails to do complete justice to the many subtle distinctions that presented themselves in the analysis of the reviews. Nor is it possible to speak in anything but the broadest sense about what the critics said in the period between 1925 and 1933. If we compare the reviews from 1926 with those from the period between 1930 and 1932, we can establish that in those later years, the judgements were more fierce, more critical and more politically charged than at the beginning of the period. This tallies with the increased political polarisation at the end of the Weimar Republic.

### **Complex representations**

Another criterion for critical appreciation was consequence of style. Most of these war films, however, were stylistic hybrids, containing all kinds of footage: archive material, constructions and fiction. When the filmmakers combined these images, the aim was usually to create as realistic an effect as possible. In accordance with the notion of New Objectivity, realism was highly appreciated by the critics, if it was not too revealing. The use of different kinds of footage, however, often disturbed the verisimilitude, which critics deplored. For this study, a simple dichotomy between the 'factually' oriented 'documentary' and the 'fictional' nature of the motion picture is made problematic by the relationship between stylistic consistency (or lack of it) and verisimilitude. We saw this, for example, with respect to the 'documentary' DER

WELTKRIEG on the one hand and the 'fiction' film WESTFRONT 1918 on the other. Although they are classified as belonging to different styles, both managed to create a convincing verisimilitude.

The filmmakers' pursuit of as much realism as possible or of the greatest possible illusion of historical authenticity elicited statements about reliability from the critics. A substantial part of every review was therefore dedicated to the tension between fact and fiction, sometimes focusing on content, sometimes on style.

One opinion in particular always featured prominently, namely the almost absolute faith in the reliability of archival footage. Critics considered this footage an authentic representation of life as it had been at the front, failing to take into account, or at least to mention, that most of the scenes were reconstructions. Only very rarely did the critics ask questions about the origin and selection of the archival images. The status ascribed to archival footage was similar to the status of primary sources in historical research. It is striking that even today, this footage is unquestioningly included in documentaries about the First World War.

# Notes

## Notes to Introduction

- 1 Eric John Leed, *No Man's Land. Combat and identity in World War I* (Cambridge, etc. 1981, orig. 1979) x.
- 2 Please note, the object of study is films that were made after the First World War. For German films made during the First World War, see, among others: Karel Dibbets & Bert Hogenkamp (ed.), *Film and the First World War* (Amsterdam 1995); Hans Barkhausen, *Filmpropaganda für Deutschland im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 1982); however, this is mainly an institutional history and analysis.
- 3 Michael Salewski, 'Das Weimarer Revisionssyndrom', in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B2/80 12 January 1980, 14-25. See also: Peter Krüger, *Versailles, Deutsche Aussenpolitik zwischen Revisionismus und Friedenssicherung* (Munich 1986); Ulrich Heinemann, *Die verdrängte Niederlage, Politische Öffentlichkeit und Kriegsschuldfrage in der Weimarer Republik* (Göttingen 1983); Wolfgang Jäger, *Historische Forschung und politische Kultur in Deutschland: Die Debatte 1914-1980 über den Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen 1984).
- 4 Jost Hermand & Frank Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt am Main 1989; orig. Munich 1978); Walter Lacqueur, *Weimar. A Cultural history 1918-1933* (New York 1980); John Willett, *The new sobriety. Art and politics in the Weimar period 1917-1933* (London 1970); Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture. The outsider as insider* (New York, London, etc. 1970; orig. 1968).
- 5 Modris Eksteins, *Rites of spring. The Great War and the birth of modern age* (New York, London, Toronto, etc. 1989) 256-258.
- 6 Hans Binneveld, *From shell shock to combat stress* (Amsterdam, 1997). This theme was recently used in the trilogy by the British novelist Pat Barker, in *Regeneration; The eye in the door, The ghost road*.
- 7 '... behavioral expectations such as "courage" or "manliness" resulted simply in getting maimed or killed to no military effect.' Leonard V. Smith, 'Masculinity, memory, and the French First World War Novel. Henri Barbusse and Roland Dorgelès', in Franz Coetzee & Maralin Shevin-Coetzee (ed.), *Authority, identity, and the social history of the Great War* (Providence, Oxford 1995) 251-52.
- 8 Walter Flex, *Der Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten. Ein Kriegserlebnis* (Munich 1916). Ernst Jünger, *In Stahlgewittern* (Berlin 1922; private edition 1920). The body of thought in which the inspiring and regenerative powers of war are defended has existed for a long time. In connection with the First World War, it also played a role in France. See: H.L. Wesseling, *Soldaat en krijger. Franse opvattingen over leger en oorlog aan de vooravond van de eerste wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam 1988) 219-225.
- 9 Frits Boterman, *Moderne geschiedenis van Duitsland 1800-1990* (Amsterdam, Antwerpen 1996) 191.
- 10 This term refers both to 'an ideological position and mentality within German conservatism' as 'the variety of organisations, clubs and publications that had been

- established as an act of resistance against the Weimar Republic.' (transl.) Frits Boterman, *Oswald Spengler. 'Der Untergang des Abendlandes'. Cultuurpessimist en politiek activist* (Assen, Maastricht 1992) 187. Also see, among others: Stefan Breuer *Anatomie der konservatieve Revolution* (Darmstadt 1993) and Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary modernism. Technology, culture, and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge, London, New York, etc. 1984).
- 11 Eelco Runia, 'De emotie van het congruente', *Feit & Fictie* 2 (Summer 1993) 81-85. See also the introduction to his dissertation: *De pathologie van de veldslag. Geschiedenis en geschiedschrijving in Tolstoj's 'Oorlog en vrede'* (Amsterdam 1995) 11-25, especially p. 19; see also Gottfried Niedhart & Dieter Riseberger (ed.), *Lernen aus dem Krieg? Deutsche Nachkriegszeit 1918-1945* (Munich 1992) 12-13. Niedhart distinguishes two levels of coming to terms in a post-war period: one on the 'Wahrnehmungsebene' and the other on the 'Handlungsebene'. The first level refers to a process in which 'dem Krieg in unterschiedlicher Weise verarbeitet (oder auch nicht verarbeitet) und dargestellt wurde.' The second level is connected with 'gesellschaftliches Handeln (...) das durch den Krieg und Kriegsfolgen beeinflusst und – in welcher Form auch immer – auf Überwindung der Nachkriegszeit und auf Rückkehr zu einem Zustand der Normalität – alter oder neuer Prägung – gerichtet ist.'
  - 12 Abram de Swaan, 'De maatschappelijke verwerking van oorlogsverledens', in J. Dane (ed.), *Keerzijde van de berijding. Opstellen over de maatschappelijke, psycho-sociale en medische aspecten van de problematiek van oorlogsgetroffenen* (Deventer 1984) 54. He also writes: 'To go even further, some of these ideas are forced upon someone by others, he must cope with them in his version of his fate, however painful or unwelcome they may be for him.' (transl.) See also: B.P.R. Gersons, "Post-traumatische stress-stoornis: de geschiedenis van een recent begrip" *Maandblad geestelijke volksgezondheid* 9 (1990) (sixth and seventh page of the article).
  - 13 Idem. De Swaan.
  - 14 Cf. Frank van Vree, *In de schaduw van Auschwitz. Herinneringen, beelden, geschiedenis* (Groningen 1995) 57-88.
  - 15 See also: Thomas Elsaesser, 'Subject positions, speaking positions: from Holocaust, Our Hitler, and Heimat to Shoah and Schindler's List', in Vivian Sobchack (ed.), *The persistence of history. Cinema and television and the modern event* (New York, London 1996) 145-183; Saul Friedländer (ed.), *Probing the limits of representation. Nazism and the "final solution"* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London 1992); Eric L. Santner, *Stranded Objects. Mourning, memory and film in postwar Germany* (Ithaca 1990). And: G. Goossens and H.J. Pott, 'Syberbergs oorlog. Cinema als geschiedschrijving,' in F.R. Ankersmit, M. van Nierop. H.J. Pott (ed.), *Hermeneutiek en cultuur. Interpretatie in de kunst- en cultuurwetenschappen* (Amsterdam, Meppel 1995) 157-179.
  - 16 Hayden White, 'The modernist event' in Sobchack (ed.), *The persistence of history*, 20.
  - 17 Modris Eksteins, *Rites of spring. The Great War and the birth of modern age* (New York, London, Toronto etc. 1989) 218. See also: Samuel Hynes, *A war imagined. The Great War and English Culture* (London 1991) 108.
  - 18 See the collection of annotated letters from the front collected by Bernd Ulrich & Benjamin Ziemann, in *Frontalltag im Ersten Weltkrieg. Wahn in Wirklichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main 1994); Idem., *Krieg im Frieden. Die umkämpfte Erinnerung an den Ersten*

- Weltkrieg. Quellen und Dokumente (Frankfurt am Main 1997); and Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien* (2 vol., Frankfurt am Main 1977).
- 19 Robert Weldon Whalen, *Bitter Wounds. German victims of the Great War, 1914-1939* (London 1984) 31.
- 20 Ibidem, 32.
- 21 Two recent studies are: Hugh Cecil & Peter Liddle (ed.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War experienced* (London 1996); Rainer Rother (ed.), *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Bilder des Ersten Weltkrieges* (cat. Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin 1994).
- 22 A selection: Thomas Elsaesser, 'Germany the Weimar years', in Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (ed.), *The Oxford history of world cinema* (Oxford 1996) 136-151; Thomas Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin. American Cinema and Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1994); Anton Kaes & Wolfgang Jacobsen & Hans Helmut Prinzler (ed.), *Geschichte des deutschen Films* (Stuttgart 1993) 39-100; Holger Schettler, *Arbeiter und Angestellte im Film. Die Darstellung der sozialen Lage von Arbeitern und Angestellten im deutschen Spielfilm 1919-1939* (Bielefeld 1992); Uli Jung & Werner Schatzberg (ed.), *Filmkultur zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik* (Munich 1992); Thomas Saunders, 'History in the making. Weimar cinema and national identity', in Bruce Murray & Ch. Wickham (ed.), *Framing the past. The historiography of German cinema and television* (Carbondale/Illinois 1992) 42-67; Wolfgang Jacobsen, Karl Prümm und Benno Wenz (ed.), *Willy Haas als Mitproduzent. Texte zum Film 1920-1933* (Berlin 1991); Bruce Murray, *Film and the German left in the Weimar Republic. From Caligari to Kuhle Wampe* (Austin, Texas 1990); Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets. Women and melodramatic representation in Weimar Germany* (Princeton/New Jersey 1989); Knut Hickethier (ed.), *Grenzgänger zwischen Theater und Kino. Schauspielerporträts aus dem Berlin der zwanziger Jahre* (Berlin 1996); Thomas Elsaesser, 'Film history and visual pleasure: Weimar cinema', in Patricia Mellencamp & Philip Rosen (ed.), *Cinema histories/cinema practices* (Los Angeles 1984) 47-84; Rainer Berg, *Zur Geschichte der realistischen Stummfilmkunst in Deutschland - 1919 bis 1929. Ein Beitrag zur historischen und systematischen Filmforschung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Problemen der öffentlichen Meinung* (diss. Berlin 1982); Thomas Plummer, Bruce Murray et al (ed.), *Film and politics in the Weimar Republic* (New York, London 1982); Helmut Korte (ed.), *Film und Realität in der Weimarer Republik. Mit Analysen von "Kuhle Wampe" und "Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück"* (Munich, Vienna 1978; Frankfurt am Main 1980); Paul Monaco, *Cinema & Society. France and Germany during the twenties* (New York, Oxford, Amsterdam 1976); Lotte Eisner, *Die dämonische Leinwand* (Frankfurt am Main 1980; orig. *L'écran démoniaque*, 1952); Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler. A psychological history of the German film* (Princeton 1974, 5<sup>th</sup> edition; orig. 1947).
- 23 I mean studies by: Garth Montgomery, *Learning from war films: the German viewer as historical subject in theories of Bildung, mass communications, and propaganda, 1918-1945* (diss. Ann Arbor/Michigan, Buffalo/Texas 1992); see also his article: "'Realistic" war films in Weimar Germany; entertainment as education', *Historical journal of film, radio and television* 2 1989, 115-133; Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus, 'Der erste Weltkrieg in den Medien zur Zeit der Weltwirtschaftskrise', in Ursula Heukenkamp (ed.), *Militärische und zivile Mentalität. Ein literaturkritischer Report* (Berlin 1991) 120-133; Thomas Saunders, 'Politics, the cinema, and early revisita-



- tions of the war in Weimar Germany', *Canadian Journal of History* XXIII, April 1988, 25-48.
- 24 Bärbel Schrader (ed.), *Der Fall Remarque*. Im Westen nichts Neues. Eine Dokumentation (Leipzig 1992). See also: Andrew Kelly, *Cinema and the Great War* (London, New York 1997) 43-57; John W. Chambers II, 'All quiet on the Western Front (1930): The antiwar film and the image of the First World War', *Historical journal of film, radio and television* 4 1994, 377-411; Modris Eksteins, 'The fate of the film *All quiet on the Western Front*'. *Central European History* vol. 13 1980, 345-366.
- 25 Mike Budd (ed.), *The cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Texts, contexts, histories (New Brunswick, London 1990).
- 26 R. Berg, *Zur Geschichte der realistischen Stummfilmkunst* (1982).
- 27 'Chronik 1895-1930', in Ilona Brennicke & Joe Hembus, *Klassiker des deutschen Stummfilms 1910-1930* (Munich 1983) 236-258.
- 28 This 'complaint' can also be found in the introduction to the book by Axel Marquardt & Heinz Rathsack (ed.), *Preussen im Film* (part 5 of the catalogue *Preussen Versuch einer Bilanz*. Eine Ausstellung der Berliner Festspiele GmbH) (Hamburg, Berlin 1981) 7. The films that belonged to the canon were probably the most interesting, but the public turned out to be more interested in films about, for example, figures from Prussia's past, such as Frederick II and Queen Luise.
- 29 Robert Sklar, *Movie-made America. A social history of American movies* (New York 1975). Sklar was one of the first to concentrate on the 'interaction' between matters such as film technology, audiences, cinema architecture, cinema management, organisation of the film industry, the social and professional life of people who work in the film industry, governmental policy in connection with films, censorship strategies and the cultural influence of film in America and elsewhere; Douglas Gomery, *Movie history: A survey* (Belmont/California 1991); Garth Jowett, *Film: the democratic art* (Boston 1976).
- 30 David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson & Janet Staiger, *The classical Hollywood cinema. Film style & mode of production to 1960* (London 1985).
- 31 Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *Early cinema*. Space, frame, narrative (London 1990). Cf. Anton Kaes, *Filmkultur der Weimarer Republik* (Munich 1992) 62. 'Die Rekonstruktion der historischen diskursiven Zusammenhänge, in denen sich auch die grossen kanonisierten Filme (...) befunden haben, macht es möglich diese klassischen Filme mit gleichzeitigen, heute meist unbekanntem (...) Texten zu "vernetzen", um sie wieder mit jenen Bedeutungen aufzuladen, die durch den Kanonisierungsprozess, d.h. durch die unvermeidliche selektive Überlieferung, verlorengegangen sind.' See the same passage quoted and commented upon in an article by Ulrich Kriest: "Gespenstergeschichten" von Texten, die Texten umstellen. "New historicism" und Filmgeschichtsschreibung', *Montage/AV* 5.1 (1996) 105.
- 32 A recent result of this is David Bordwell, *On the history of film style* (Cambridge/Massachusetts, etc. 1997).
- 33 Examples of this method can be found in Robert Rosenstone (ed.), *Revisioning history. Film and the construction of a new past* (Princeton/New Jersey 1995).
- 34 Eberhard Baier, *Der Kriegsfilm*. Eine Dokumentation (Aachen 1980). Baier's list of German (Weimar) films about the First World War contains only five films (DIE ANDERE SEITE, BERGE IN FLAMMEN, DOUAUMONT, NIEMANDSLAND, WESTFRONT



- 1918 and *Die SOMME*) and concludes: 'Es gibt eigentlich nur wenige Filme über den 1. Weltkrieg, wenn man das Angebot der in Deutschland gezeigten Filme betrachtet. Ausserdem fällt auf, dass (...) vor allem kritische Filme gedreht wurden.' (27-28). To be absolutely clear on this: more than thirty German First World War films were made, among them no more than three convincing anti-war movies. See also: Ivan Butler, *The war film* (South Brunswick/New York, London 1974).
- 35 Andrew Kelly, *Cinema and the Great War* (London, New York 1997); Michael T. Isenberg, *War on film. The American cinema and World War I, 1914-1941* (London, Toronto 1981). Jack Spears, *Hollywood: The golden era* (London 1971) 11-76.
- 36 To name two standard works: Jerzy Toeplitz, *Geschichte des Films 1895-1928* (transl. from Polish; Berlin 1972); *Geschichte des Films 1928-1933* (Berlin 1976). Toeplitz remarks in the first five lines that navy films about the First World War were popular around 1926. He mentions *Emden* (1926) (the correct title is UNSERE EMDEN) and *U9 Weddigen* (1927) (the correct title is U9 WEDDIGEN) (423). In the second part, he devotes some attention to two German anti-war films WESTFRONT 1918 (208-9) and NIEMANDSLAND (219-220). The same is true for the films, 1914 (full title: 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND) (220) and MORGENROT (202), which is mentioned under the heading of the so-called national films, and also includes the films about Frederick II's Prussia; Ulrich Gregor & Enno Patalas, *Geschichte des Films 1895-1939* (Munich, etc. 1984, orig. 1973): besides WESTFRONT 1918, these authors only mention BERGE IN FLAMMEN and MORGENROT (143).
- 37 To give some examples: DIE FREUDLOSE GASSE (1925); GEHEIMNISSE EINER SEELE (1926); DIE LIEBE DER JEANNE NEY (1927); DIE BÜCHSE DER PANDORA (1929); DAS TAGEBUCH EINER VERLORENEN (1929); DIE WEISSE HÖLLE VOM PIZ PALU (1929); WESTFRONT 1918 (1930); DIE DREIGROSCHENOPER (1931); KAMERADSCHAF (1931).
- 38 Siegfried Kracauer, *From Hitler to Caligari. A psychological history of the German film* (Princeton/New Jersey 1974, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, orig. 1947) v.
- 39 Ibidem, 11-12.
- 40 Siegfried Kracauer, 'Die kleinen Ladenmädchen gehen ins Kino', *Das Ornament der Masse, Essays* (Frankfurt am Main 1977; orig. 1963) 279-280. (italics by Kracauer).
- 41 Kracauer concludes his consideration as follows: 'Irretrievably sunk into retrogression, the bulk of the German people could not help submitting to Hitler. Since Germany thus carried out what had been anticipated by her cinema from its very beginning, conspicuous screen characters now came true in life itself (...) many motifs known from the screen turned into actual events.' in *From Caligari to Hitler* (1974) 272.
- 42 DER WELTKRIEG (1927), *Der Emden* (1926; correct title: UNSERE EMDEN), KREUZER EMDEN (1932), U9 WEDDIGEN (1927), HEIMKEHR (1928), 1914 (1931), WESTFRONT 1918 (1930), NIEMANDSLAND 1931), BERGE IN FLAMMEN (1931), MORGENROT (1933), in Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (1974). Incidentally, Toeplitz's wrong or incomplete reproduction of titles shows that he probably used Kracauer's work, as would many after him.
- 43 Ibidem, 137.
- 44 Idem.

- 45 According to Kracauer, these very popular films were an expression of escapism, and too short-lived to be considered typical of its time.
- 46 Ibidem, 156. In this, they were similar to the many (popular) films about Frederick II's Prussia. Kracauer also included the films *HEIMKEHR* (1928), a film about two German soldiers coming home after years in Russian captivity, and the film *1914* in the category of 'paralysis' films. (p. 191, 207). In 1927, Kracauer only wrote: 'Die geschätzten Szenen aus dem Weltkrieg sind keine Flucht ins Jenseits der Geschichte, sondern die unmittelbare Willenskundgabe der Gesellschaft.' From: 'Die Ladenmädchen gehen ins Kino' (1927), in *Das Ornament der Masse, Essays* (Frankfurt am Main 1977/1963) 281, see also 286-87.
- 47 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 232-236.
- 48 Ibidem, 269 (*BERGE IN FLAMMEN*); 269-70 (*MORGENROT*). Kracauer also includes films about the Napoleonic wars in this category, such as *DIE LETZTE KOMPAGNIE* (Kurt Bernhardt, 1930), *YORK* (Gustav Ucicky, 1931) and *DER REBELL* (Luis Trenker, 1933) (261-265). For an account of the representation of Prussia in film, see: Marquardt & Rathsack (ed.), *Preussen im Film* (1981).
- 49 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 271.
- 50 The following studies, among others, appeared on German film criticism in the Weimar Republic: Sabine Hake, 'Filmpublizistik der Weimarer Jahre', Hans-Michael Bock & Wolfgang Jacobsen (ed.), *Recherche: Film. Quellen und Methoden der Filmforschung* (Hamburg 1997) 25-36; Sabine Hake, *The cinema's third machine: writing on film in Germany, 1907-1933* (Lincoln, London 1993); Heinz-B. Heller, *Literarische Intelligenz und Film. Zu Veränderungen der ästhetischen Theorie und Praxis unter dem Eindruck des Films 1910-1930 in Deutschland* (Tübingen 1985); Linda Schulte-Sasse, 'Film criticism in the Weimar Press', Thomas G. Plummer, Bruce A. Murray et al (ed.), *Film politics in the Weimar Republic* (New York, London 1982) 47-59; Anton Kaes (ed.), *Kino-Debatte. Texte zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Film 1909-1929* (Tübingen 1978).
- 51 Jay Winter, *Sites of memory sites of mourning. The Great War in European cultural history* (Cambridge 1995); George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the memory of the world wars* (Oxford etc. 1990); Modris Eksteins, *Rites of spring. The Great War and the birth of modern age* (New York etc. 1989).
- 52 See for example: Gerhard Hirschfeld & Gerd Krumeich & Irina Renz (ed.), 'Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als Mensch...'. Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkrieges (Essen 1993); Klaus Vondung (ed.), *Kriegserlebnis. Der Erste Weltkrieg in der literarischen Gestaltung und symbolischen Deutung der Nationen* (Göttingen 1980).
- 53 Eksteins, *Rites of spring*, xvi. In Germany, according to Eksteins, the war was considered 'as the supreme test of spirit, and as such, a test of vitality, culture, and life.' (90); 'For the Germans this was a war to change the world; for the British this was a war to preserve the world.' (119). Cf. Hynes, *A war imagined* (1991) ix-xi.
- 54 Ibidem, (Eksteins) 258-9.
- 55 Two publications appeared of the latter two films which analyse them within the context of Weimar's modernist culture: Sabine Hake, 'Urban spectacle in Walter Rutmann's *Berlin, Symphony of the big city*' (127-137) and Dietrich Neumann, 'The urbanistic vision in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*' (143-154), both in Thomas W. Knieche

- & Stephen Brockmann (ed.), *Dancing on the Volcano. Essays on the culture of the Weimar Republic* (Columbia 1994).
- 56 Eksteins, *Rites of spring*, 223.
- 57 Eksteins, 'All quiet on the Western Front and the fate of a war', *Journal of contemporary history*, XV 2 (april 1980) 345-366.
- 58 Ibidem, 277.
- 59 Ibidem, 282. Eksteins bases his conclusion on statements Remarque made in several interviews, including the one with Axel Eggebrecht for *Die literarische Welt* (14 June 1929). See also: Thomas E. Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque. Ein militanter Pazifist. Texte und Interviews 1929-1966* (Cologne 1994).
- 60 Ibidem, 290.
- 61 After all, Eksteins writes at the beginning of his argument: 'What provoked the sudden revival of interest in the war at the end of the twenties? And what did the war boom reveal? A look at the motivations of Remarque in writing his novel may yield some clues.' Ibidem, 277.
- 62 'Der Kultursektor der Weimarer Zeit darf nicht reduziert werden auf die künstlerische Avantgarde und das Aufkommen einer Massenkultur. (...)Die "Moderne" beherrschte nicht unangefochten die Kulturszene, die neue Kunst war keineswegs populär und allgemein akzeptiert: traditionelle Kunstrichtungen und die hergebrachte Formensprache blieben weiterhin einflussreich, und eine mächtige kulturpessimistische und zivilisationskritische Strömung setzte dem Vordringen der Moderne entschiedenen Widerstand entgegen.' Eberhard Kolb, *Die Weimarer Republik* (3<sup>rd</sup> revised (ed.), Munich 1993).
- 63 Eksteins, *Rites of spring*, 215. Hynes, in his study *A war imagined* (1990) agreed: 'They [writers, BK] saw that the war was not an adventure or a crusade, but a valueless, formless experience that could not be rendered in the language, the images, and the conventions that existed. To represent the war in the traditional ways was necessarily to mis-represent it, to give it meaning, dignity, order, greatness – an essential and inevitable place in the human soul. But there was as yet no other way to represent it.' (108).
- 64 Winter, *Sites of memory*, 3. In the next paragraph, he writes: 'What is at issue is both whether such a distinction is accurate and whether it contributes to an understanding of the cultural consequences of the Great War. On both counts, I dissent from the "modernist" school.'
- 65 Ibidem, 227. 'What we have called traditional language of loss, in the visual arts, in prose and poetry, and inscribed in social forms of mourning, thereby contributed to the process of healing (...)' According to Winter, a true break with this tradition did not occur until after the Second World War (228).
- 66 Ibidem, 132.
- 67 Ibidem, 132-133. J'ACCUSE was made in 1919 by Abel Gance; *Verdun* in 1928. For the last film, however, Winter gives the year 1932. The original silent version of the film is from 1928, the 1932 version was re-edited and provided with new sound. See Richard Abel, *French cinema. The first wave, 1915-1929* (Princeton/New Jersey, 1987, orig. 1984) 204. Together with LA GRANDE ILLUSION (1937) by Jean Renoir, these were the most important films made in France about the First World War.

- 68 Ibidem, 15-18, 133-144, 139-149. Winter gives an extensive analysis of *J'accuse* and briefly discusses the American war film *THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE* (Rex Ingram, 1920).
- 69 In the light of Mosse's earlier work on nationalism, it is not so strange that he chose this perspective (see his *Nationalization of the masses* [New York 1981]). The theme of the relationship between nationalism and the experience of war was earlier discussed in a chapter called: 'Das Kriegserlebnis des Ersten Weltkrieges' in Kurt Sontheimer's *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik. Die politische Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 und 1933* (1992 3rd edition, abridged textbook edition 1968; orig. 1962) 93-111.
- 70 Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, 7.
- 71 Ibidem, 8, 10. See also Bernd Hüppauf, 'Schlachtenmythen und die Konstruktion des "Neuen Menschen"', Hirschfeld et al (ed.), *Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als Mensch...* (1983) 43-79.
- 72 Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, 7-9.
- 73 Ibidem, 107-125. Mosse has devoted a separate chapter to nature symbolism. An important role was played by the book by Walter Flex, *Der Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten* (Munich 1916).
- 74 Ibidem, 152-5.
- 75 Ibidem, 247 note 16. The quotation that follows can be found on page 59 of Buchner's book.
- 76 Ibidem, 187. For a critical discussion of this genre, see: Eric Rentschler, 'Mountains and modernity: Relocating the *Bergfilm*', *New German Critique* 51 (1990) 137-161.
- 77 Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, 201-225.
- 78 They are the following films: *BERGE IN FLAMMEN*, *IN DER HEIMAT DA GIBT'S EIN WIEDERSEH'N*, *DIE UNSICHTBARE FRONT* and *IM GEHEIMDIENST*. All these films, except for the first one, have been lost.
- 79 Hans-Harald Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller. Der Kriegsroman der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart 1986); Margrit Stickelberger-Eder, *Aufbruch 1914. Kriegsromane der späten Weimarer Republik* (Zürich, Munich 1983); Martin Patrick & Anthony Travers, *German novels on the First World War and their ideological implications* (Stuttgart 1982); Michael Gollbach, *Die Wiederkehr des Weltkrieges in der Literatur. Zu den Frontromanen der späten Zwanziger Jahre* (Kronberg/Ts. 1978); Karl Prümm, *Die Literatur des soldatischen Nationalismus der 20er Jahre (1918-1933)* (Kronberg 1974).
- 80 See for example in Irmgard Wilharm, 'Krieg in deutschen Nachkriegsspielfilmen', Niedhart & Riesenberger (ed.), *Lernen aus dem Krieg?* (1992) 281-299 (especially p.284); P. Monaco, *Cinema & Society* (1976). Both use a psychological 'method' to derive latent meanings from films.
- 81 This term derives from Stanley Fish. See William Uricchio & Roberta Pearson, *Reframing culture. The case of quality films* (Princeton, New Jersey 1993) 207 n.15.
- 82 Egon Larsen, 'Die Dreckschleuder gegen die Wahrheit', Bärbel Schrader (ed.), *Der Fall Remarque. Im Westen nichts Neues. Eine Dokumentation* (Leipzig 1992) 125.
- 83 About both newspapers see: Walther G. Oschilewski, *Zeitungen in Berlin. Im Spiegel der Jahrhunderte* (Berlin 1975) 148-153; Heinz-Dietrich Fischer, *Handbuch der politischen Presse in Deutschland 1480-1980* (Düsseldorf 1981) 237, 464. The circu-

- lation of both newspapers in 1932 was: 180,000 (WaA) and 130,000 (RF), see Fischer, *idem*.
- 84 Edwin Hoernle, 'So sehen die deutschen Parteien den Film. KPD. Kampf – nicht gegen den Film', *Film-Kurier* 1/2 1 January 1929.
- 85 Linda Schulte-Sasse remarks: 'Generally speaking (...) the attitude toward film in the socialist press was relatively uniform: it judged films according to the degree to which they demonstrated the principles of Marxism.' (p.47) 'The nonsocialist press displayed the exact opposite of this emphasis on the "general" and intellectual. (...)These more conservative critics parised "pure" formal qualities of film and simultaneously disparaged politically oriented works as "less artistic". (p.51). See her: 'Film criticism in the Weimar press', in Th. G. Plummer, Murray et al (ed.), *Film politics in the Weimar Republic* (1982).
- 86 Dr Julius Moses, 'So sehen die deutschen Parteien den Film. SPD. Wir bekämpfen daher (...)', *Film-Kurier* 1/2 1 January 1929.
- 87 Oschilewski writes that this newspaper converted to right-wing liberalism in the period after 1918, that is the right wing of the Deutsche Demokratische Partei, but that it adopted an explicitly progressive attitude in cultural and social matters. Important critics were Herbert Ihering and Alfred Kerr: *Zeitungen in Berlin* (1975) 81.
- 88 Dieter Fricke (ed.), *Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland. Handbuch der Geschichte der bürgerlichen Parteien und anderer bürgerlicher Interessenorganisationen vom Vormärz bis zum Jahre 1945* (Bd.1) (Leipzig 1968) 303.
- 89 Circulation figures: *Berliner Morgenpost*: 492,000 in 1925 and 607,000 in 1928; *Berliner Tageblatt*, 25,000 in 1923. The circulation of the *Vossische Zeitung* was 36,000 in 1925 and 57,000 in 1933. See: *idem*.
- 90 This was the headline of a contribution by a DDP representative 'So sehen die deutschen Parteien den Film. DDP. Demokratisches Bildungsmittel', *Film-Kurier* 1/2 1 January 1929.
- 91 About these specialist publications see a.o.: Fritz Olimsky, *Tendenzen der Filmwirtschaft und deren Auswirkung auf die Filmpresse* (inaugural diss., Berlin 1931) 40-42.
- 92 Fricke (ed.), *Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland* (Bd.1) (1968). On page 657, Fricke writes: 'Die Partei erklärte, das Schicksal der Nation werde durch die Aussenpolitik bestimmt.'
- 93 Admiral Brüninghaus, in 'So sehen die deutschen Parteien den Film. DVP. Die ungeheure Suggestivkraft', *Film-Kurier* 1/2 1 January 1929.
- 94 ('Universitätsprofessor') Dr. Georg Schreiber, in 'So sehen die deutschen Parteien den Film. Zentrum. Auf Kulturpolitik kommt es an', *Film-Kurier* 1/2 I January 1929.
- 95 Oschilewski, *Zeitungen in Berlin* (1975) 163.
- 96 Circulation figures: *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*: 25,000 in 1928 (Oschilewski, 216).
- 97 G.R. Treviranus, in 'So sehen die deutschen Parteien den Film. DNVP. Ausdruck des nationalen Willens', *Film-Kurier* 1/2 1 January 1929.
- 98 Other publications will occasionally be referred to in this study. These are *Tempo* (1928-1933), a neutral illustrated magazine that appeared in the afternoon, published by Ullstein, circulation 145,000, (Oschilewski, 171); *Der Abend* (1928-1933), an evening supplement with *Vorwärts* sold only in the street, (Oschilewski, 136); *Die literarische Welt*, a left-liberal literary magazine published by Ernst Rowohlt;

*Deutsche Filmzeitung*, a specialist film publication oriented towards southern Germany. For surveys of newspapers, periodicals and political parties see, besides the above mentioned Hans-Dietrich Fischer (ed.), *Deutsche Zeitungen des 17. bis 20. Jahrhunderts* (Pullach bei München 1972); K. Koszyk, *Deutsche Presse 1914-1945. Geschichte der deutschen Presse Teil III* (Berlin 1972); Sigmund Neumann, *Die Parteien der Weimarer Republik* (1965, orig. 1932); John Hiden, *Republican and fascist Germany. Themes and variations in the history of Weimar and the Third Reich*, (London, New York 1995) 47-80.

## Notes to Chapter I

- 1 Quoted in Fritz Olimsky, *Tendenzen der Filmwissenschaft und deren Auswirkung auf die Filmpresse* (inaugural diss., Berlin 1931) 20. The quote is the title of an article about the first German film screening, in the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* of 5 November 1895.
- 2 Thomas Elsaesser, (ed. with Michael Wedel), *A second life. German cinema's first decades* (Amsterdam 1996); Corinna Müller, *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie. Formale, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklungen 1907-1912* (Stuttgart, Weimar 1994); Uli Jung (ed.), *Der deutsche Film. Aspekte seiner Geschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Trier 1993); Michael Hanisch, *Auf den Spuren der Filmgeschichte. Berliner Schauplätze* (Berlin 1991); Heide Schlüppmann, *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks. Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos* (Basel, Frankfurt am Main 1990). The yearbook: *Kintop. Jahrbuch zur Erforschung des frühen Films*, (ed.): Frank Kessler, Sabine Lenk, Martin Loiperdinger (Basel, Frankfurt am Main). Although this yearbook has an international orientation, much attention is of course given to early German film history, see especially nrs 1 (1992) and 3 (1994).
- 3 C. Müller, *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie* (1994) 11. In this respect, developments in Germany did not differ from those in other countries. In other words, there was an 'exhibition-led industry' (see: Thomas Elsaesser 'Early German cinema: a second life?', in Elsaesser and Wedel (ed.), *A second life* (1996) 15.
- 4 Quoted in F. Olimsky, *Tendenzen der Filmwissenschaft* (Berlin 1931) 20. This was the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* of 5 November 1895. Another newspaper, the *Berliner Tageblatt* of 3 November 1895, said it was '(...) ein höchst amüsantest Schattenspiel (...)'. The *Vossische Zeitung* reporter did not write anything about the new phenomenon, probably because, as Olimsky writes, he left the venue early and missed the last part of the programme, the 'Bioskop'. For an extensive description of the Skladanowsky brothers, their invention and their first screening, see: Michael Hanisch, *Auf den Spuren der Filmgeschichte*. 14-59.
- 5 Müller, *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie*, 23-27; Schlüppmann, *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks* 13. Emilie Altenloh, *Zur Soziologie des Kino. Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher* (diss. Jena 1914).
- 6 Martin Loiperdinger, 'Kaiser Wilhelm II. Der erste deutsche Filmstar', in Thomas Koebner (ed.), *Idole des deutschen Film* (Munich 1997) 41-53.



- 7 Müller, *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie*, 31 April, 44. Müller disposes of the myth that says that the changing taste and expectations on the part of the audience should be seen as the central motor of early German cinema and film history. According to Müller, the increase in number and size of cinemas is in the first place the result of aggressive competition. The number of seats exceeded demand in such numbers that managers sought other ways of luring spectators into their cinemas: bigger and cleaner venues, richer decoration, lower admission fees and quick changes in the selections of films on offer. For this initial period, also see: Gary D. Stark, 'Cinema, society and the state: policing the film industry in imperial Germany', in G. Stark & B.K. Lackner (ed.), *Essays on Culture and society in modern Germany* (Arlington/Texas 1982).
- 8 Tom Gunning calls this phase 'the cinema of attractions', which slowly changes into 'the cinema of narrative integration'. See his: 'The cinema of attractions: Early film, its spectator and the avant-garde', in Elsaesser & Barker (ed.), *Early cinema. Space, frame, narrative* (1990) 56-62. Gunning does not pay any attention to the first period but focuses on the American context.
- 9 Schlüpmann, *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks*, 247-249.
- 10 Gertraude Bub says 88% were foreign films in *Der deutsche Film im Weltkrieg und seine publizistische Einsatz* (diss. Berlin 1938) 10.
- 11 Frank Kessler & Sabine Lenk, 'The French connection: Franco-German film relations before World War I', in Elsaesser (ed.), *A second life*, 63. See for American expansion: Kristin Thompson, *Exporting entertainment: America in the world film market, 1907-1934* (London 1985).
- 12 Evelyn Hampicke, 'The Danish influence: David Oliver and Nordisk in Germany', in Elsaesser & Wedel (ed.), *A second life*, 72-78.
- 13 Müller, *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie*, 77-79.
- 14 G. Bub, *Der deutsche Film im Weltkrieg* (1938) 6: Messter Projektion, Deutsche Bioscop, Deutsche Mutoskop und Biograph-Gesellschaft, Vitascope, Duskes Kinematograph und Filmfabrik, Continental Kunstfilm, Eiko, Komet-Film (the last three from 1912). An important producer who also focused on the distribution and screening sectors was Paul Davidson's Projektions-AG Union (PAGU). This firm joined Nordisk and Messter in Ufa which was established in 1917. For a concise overview of the main economic and organisational developments in German film industry during and after the war, see: Thomas Elsaesser, 'Kunst und Krise. Die Ufa in den 20er Jahre', in Hans-Michael Bock & Michael Töteberg (ed.), *Das Ufa-Buch. Kunst und Krisen. Stars und Regisseure. Wirtschaft und Politik* (Frankfurt am Main 1992) 96-105.
- 15 *Kintop* 'Oskar Messter, Erfinder und Geschäftsmann' 3 (1994) including among others: Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus, 'Oskar Messters Beitrag zum Ersten Weltkrieg', 103-115.
- 16 Peter Bächlin, *Ekonomische geschiedenis van de film* (Nijmegen 1977) 21-22 (transl. Of: *Der Film als Ware* [diss. Basel, 1945]); Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 20, 22; Altenloh, *Zur Soziologie des Kino* (1914) 10. George Sadoul, *Histoire générale du cinéma. Le cinéma devient un art 1909-1920* (Paris 1952/1974) 456.
- 17 This figure derives from Helmut H. Diederichs, *Anfänge deutscher Filmkritik* (Stuttgart 1986) 37.



- 18 Ibidem 36-8. According to Diederichs, the first serious film review was written in the autumn of 1909 by Paul Lenz-Levy in *Lichtbildbühne*. He edited this magazine, which did not stop him from writing for *Kinematograph* as well. The editors-in-chief of these three magazines were, respectively, Emil Perlmann, Willi Böcker and Arthur Mellini. People were also more and more writing serious considerations about the medium of film in a more general sense. See: Jörg Schweinitz (ed.), *Prolog vor dem Film. Nachdenken über ein neues Medium 1909-1914* (Leipzig 1992).
- 19 The first 'Autorenfilm' was *DER ANDERE*, starring the celebrated stage actor Albert Bassermann (in 1931, Bassermann would play the role of Bethman-Holweg in 1914. *Die letzten Tage vor dem Weltkrieg*, see chapter 3). It opened on 21 January in Berlin. It was directed by Max Mack and was based on a play by Paul Lindau. See: Diederichs, *Anfänge deutscher Filmkritik*, 55-63.
- 20 Sabine Hake, *The third machine. Writing on film in Germany 1907-1933* (Lincoln, London 1993) 7. The source used by Hake – Ewald Sattig, *Die deutsche Filmpresse* (diss. Leipzig 1937) - should be approached with some caution where the facts are concerned. The same is true for a dissertation written during the Nazi era by Gertraude Bub, which I used earlier as a source.
- 21 Lotte H. Eisner, *Die dämonische Leinwand* (Frankfurt am Main) 1980 (originally: *L'écran démoniaque*, 1952); Siegfried Kracauer, *Kino. Essays, Studien, Glossen zum Film* (Frankfurt am Main 1979/2nd); Kracauer, *Der verbotene Blick*. Beobachtungen, Analysen, Kritiken (Leipzig 1992); Helmut H. Diederichs (ed.), *Rudolf Arnheim. Kritiken und Aufsätze zum Film* (Munich, Vienna 1977); Johan Zonneveld, *Erich Kästner als Rezensent* (1991); Wolfgang Jacobson, Karl Prümm and Benno Wenz (ed.), *Willy Haas als Mitproduzent. Texte zum Film 1920-1930* (Berlin 1991); Hans Sahl, *Memoiren eines Moralisten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990). This autobiography does not contain any reviews. Studies about the development of film criticism in the Weimar period are: Sabine Hake, 'Filmpublizistik der Weimarer Jahre', in Hans-Michael Bock & Wolfgang Jacobson, *Recherche: Film. Quellen und Methoden der Filmforschung* (Hamburg, 1997) 25-36; S. Hake, *The third machine* (1993); Gero Gandert (ed.), 1929. *Der Film der Weimarer Republik. Ein Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Kritik* (Berlin/New York, 1993). Heinz-B Heller, *Literarische Intelligenz und Film. Zu Veränderungen der ästhetischen Theorie und Praxis unter dem Eindruck des Films 1910-1930 in Deutschland* (Tübingen 1985); Linda Schulte-Sasse, 'Film criticism in the Weimar press', in Thomas G. Plummer, Bruce A. Murray. (ed.), *Film Politics in the Weimar Republic* (New York, London 1982) 47-59; Fritz Olinsky, *Tendenzen der Filmwirtschaft und deren Auswirkung auf die Filmpresse* (diss. Berlin 1931).
- 22 Heide Schlüpmann, 'Die Erziehung des Publikums – auch eine Vorgeschichte des Weimarer Kinos', in *Kintop 'Aufführungsgeschichten'*, 5 (1996), p.133-134.
- 23 Foreign films that were allowed to be screened until the end of 1915 were films made before 1914 which had already been bought by German distributors, or films which had been made during the war but did not have any political or military content. See: Rainer Rother, 'Vom Kriegssofa zum Flug an die Front', in Rother (ed.), *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Bilder des Ersten Weltkrieges* (cat. Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin 1994) 197.
- 24 'Mars regiert die Stunde', *Kinematograph* 397 5 August 1914.: The article had been written on August 2.

- 25 M. Hanisch, *Auf den Spuren der Filmgeschichte*. (1991) 98. Auch 'Der Verband zur Wahrung gemeinsamer Interessen der Kinematographie' in 1914 issued a call not to screen films any more from countries hostile to Germany. Bub, *Der deutsche Film*, 48.
- 26 Bub, *Der deutsche Film*, 47-48. The Zentralverband der Filmverleiher Deutschlands also issued a statement warning against films smuggled into Germany.
- 27 Ibidem, 48.
- 28 *Kinematograph* 399 19 August 1914 (letter to the editor entitled 'Fort mit fremdländischem Tand'). The next issue published a reaction written by a certain F.P. on behalf of the editors, saying he disagreed with the negative tone used by the writer of the letter. The author said one should not complain about foreign films, Germany should learn to prove itself in the field of cinematography under the slogan 'Deutschland alle voran!' (*Kinematograph* 400 26 August 1914. See also: Horst Emscher, 'Der Krieg und die deutsche Filmindustrie', *Kinematograph* 404 23 September 1914.
- 29 For other national film industries' reactions to the war, see: William Uricchio, 'The First World War and the crisis in Europe', in Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (ed.), *The Oxford history of world cinema* (Oxford 1996) 62-70.
- 30 It is hard to establish the exact figures, since different authors give different figures. The source material used by Gertraude Bub appears to be the most reliable (including police records, dissertations from the 1920s and address books): Bub, *Der deutsche Film*, 53; Olinsky (*Tendenzen der Filmwirtschaft*, 24): 1913-28; 1919-245. Olinsky took the data concerning 1913 from the *Jahrbuch der Filmindustrie* (1923); Hans Wollenberg (*Fifty years of German film*, 16): 1911-11; 1918-131; 1920-230.
- 31 'Bilanz und Ausblick', *Kinematograph* 627 8 January 1919.
- 32 Ramona Curry, 'How early German film stars helped sell the war(es)', in Karel Dibbets & Bert Hogenkamp (ed.), *Film and the First World War* (Amsterdam 1995) 143-144.
- 33 Wilfried von Bredow & R. Zurek (ed.), *Film und Gesellschaft in Deutschland* (Hamburg 1975) 74.
- 34 One month after DLG had been established, the Balkan-Orient-Filmgesellschaft was set up to bring German films to the Balkan and Eastern European markets dominated by France. H. Barkhausen, *Filmpropaganda* 60, 79. See also: Manfred Behn, 'Krieg der Propagandisten. Die Deutsche Lichtspiel-Gesellschaft', in Bock & Töteberg (ed.), *Das Ufa-Buch* (1992) 28-29. In October 1920, DLG changed its name to Deulig-Film GmbH.
- 35 It was Hugenberg who offered Klitsch a job at DLG, and he did the same when he gained control of Ufa. The fact that Hugenberg was a powerful man is clear from the posts that he occupied: Chairman of the Board of Commissioners at Friedrich Krupp A.G.; from 1911 onwards, member of the Board of Directors at the Zentralverband der Industriellen (CDI); he wielded great influence in extremely nationalist organisations such as the Deutsche Ueberseedienst Transocean GmbH, the Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland and the Alldeutsche Verband. From March 1916 onwards, he also controlled the August Scherl newspaper concern, which published the film periodical *Kinematograph*. Barkhausen, *Filmpropaganda*, 79, 82.

- 36 In 1917, DLG produced 21 films in commission, in 1918 the number was 129, see: Ibidem 3.
- 37 Quoted in Manfred Behn, 'Krieg der Propagandisten' in Bock & Töteberg, *Das Ufa-Buch* (1992) 29.
- 38 Quoted in Barkhausen, *Filmpropaganda*, 1.
- 39 Bock & Töteberg, *Das Ufa-Buch*, 31. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (Princeton 1974) 36.
- 40 'Bild- und Filmamt: Der Propagandafilm und seine Bedingungen, Ziele und Wege', in Bredow & Zurek (ed.), *Film und Gesellschaft in Deutschland* (1975) 75.
- 41 Bock & Töteberg, *Das Ufa-Buch*, 32-3.
- 42 Bub, *Der deutsche Film*, 85.
- 43 Quoted in ibidem, 64, 85-6.
- 44 Ibidem, 66.
- 45 Klaus Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story. Geschichten eines Filmkonzerns* (Munich, Vienna 1992) 41.
- 46 Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, *Reel patriotism: the movies and World War I* (Madison, Wisconsin, London 1997); Spears, *The golden era* (1971) 11-23.
- 47 Lewis Jacobs, *The rise of the American film. A critical history* (New York 1968, 4th edition, originally 1939) 257-8. Spears, *Hollywood: The golden era*, 23 ff.
- 48 Bock & Töteberg, *Das Ufa-Buch*, 32.
- 49 Ibidem, 34.
- 50 He later directed and produced HEIMKEHR (see chapter 6).
- 51 He later composed the soundtrack for BERGE IN FLAMMEN (1931), see Appendix.
- 52 In 1931, Schünzel played the Russian czar in 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND (see chapter 2).
- 53 She later played a leading part in DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ (1926), see chapter 6.
- 54 She later acted in DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE (1926) (see chapter 5) and in TANNENBERG (1932) (see chapter 3).
- 55 This brief slump, which forced a number of important theatres to close their doors, was the result of stricter censorship and an increase in entertainment tax. This meant that the number of visits by the general public decreased temporarily. However, it also meant an impulse for people within the film sector to focus more on the new situation and what the general public wanted. Friedrich Zglinicki, *Der Weg des Films: Die Geschichte der Kinematographie und ihrer Vorläufer* (Berlin 1956) 327. See also: *Kinematograph* 29 July 1914.
- 56 This is shown for example by the text which appeared for several weeks on the frontpage of the *Kinematograph* from 5 August onwards. The editors indicate that the periodical will continue to appear regularly in spite of heavy pressures, not only in order to function as a labour mediator for the film sector, but also '(...) weil zweifellos die furchtbaren Ereignisse, deren Zeugen wir sind, auch im Film ihren historischen Schilderer finden werden.'
- 57 'Krieg und Kino', *Kinematograph* 5 August 1914. The *Berliner Tageblatt* of 8 August 1914 also carries an article which reports the increased business at the box office. People are said to lack the patience to sit through a theatrical performance due to all the excitement, which is why they opt for the cinema instead. See: Hanisch, *Auf den Spuren der Filmgeschichte* (Berlin 1991) 97-98.

- 58 Josef Aubinger, 'Die Kinematographie in Kriegszeiten', *Kinematograph* 12 August 1914. These tactics were applied more often, as for example in the composition of the Pathé Journal.
- 59 *Kinematograph* 22 April 1914 (advertisement); 397 5 August 1914 (advertisement); Aubinger, 'Die Kinematographie in Kriegszeiten', 12 August 1914. According to the advertisement in nr 397, the film had been made by the US Express-Films Compaign commissioned by the king of Greece. It was first shown in the cinemas late July 1914.
- 60 *Kinematograph* 2 September 1914; 391 24 June 1914. Bub, *Der deutsche Film*, 60-61.
- 61 Bub, *Der deutsche Film*, 59.
- 62 Idem. Because of their work in the war industry, women had more money to spend. In addition, leisure time had increased since the men had left for the front. See also: Schlüpmann, 'Die Erziehung des Publikums...' *Kintop* 5 1996, 139.
- 63 Ibidem, 74.
- 64 Idem.
- 65 Barkhausen, *Filmpropaganda*, 12.
- 66 Hanisch, *Auf den Spuren der Filmgeschichte* (1991) 97. In the *Kinematograph* (26 August 1914) the film was recommended with the words: 'In den ernsten Kriegstagen ist der geeignetste und erfolgreichste Film nur Bismarck'. Other film titles with their respective slogans were: DAS VOLK STEHT AUF! (Episoden aus der Zeit der Freiheitskriege 1806-1813) (*Kinematograph* 29 July 1914); DAS TREUE DEUTSCHE HERZ (Patriotistisches Drama aus Preussens schwerer Zeit) (*Kinematograph*, 2 September 1914); DER UEBERFALL AUF SCHLOSS BONCOURT (Heldentaten eines deutschen Garde-Offizier 1870/71) (*Kinematograph* 19 August 1914).
- 67 Hanisch, *Auf den Spuren der Filmgeschichte*, 97. Production company: Deutsche Mutoskop- und Biograph GmbH. *Theodor Körner* was directed by Franz Porten.
- 68 *Kinematograph* 29 July 1914.
- 69 Oskar Kalbus, *Vom Werden deutscher Filmkunst. Teil I: Der Stumme Film* (Altona-Bahrenfeld 1935) 18.
- 70 Ibidem, 18-19.
- 71 *Kinematograph* 14 October 1914.
- 72 Barkhausen, 22.
- 73 Quoted in Barkhausen, 22; statement by cameraman Martin Kopp.
- 74 Ibidem, 22, 24.
- 75 Ibidem, 22.
- 76 Kalbus, *Vom Werden*, 23.
- 77 Knut Hickethier, 'Schauspieler zwischen Theater und Kino in der Stummfilmzeit', in K. Hickethier (ed.), *Grenzgänger zwischen Theater und Kino*. Schauspielerporträts aus dem Berlin der Zwanziger Jahre (Berlin 1986) 11-42.
- 78 Curry, 'How early German film stars...' in Dibbets & Hogenkamp, *Film and the First World War*, 143; Felix Bucher, *Germany* (Screen series; London, New York 1970) 119, 166.
- 79 Ibidem, 145. Porten would be the symbol of ideal German womanhood after the war as well. See: Hickethier, *Grenzgänger zwischen Theater und Kino*, 33, 55-72.
- 80 Many studies have appeared on the relationship between film and Weimar culture (for an overview see note 23 of the Introduction). In this paragraph, I will focus on *historical* representations in Weimar films.

- 81 One indication of the popularity of the film medium is the increase of the number of cinemas in Germany from 2,836 in 1,919 to 5,267 in 1,929. See: Zglinicki, *Der Weg des Films* (1956) 328.
- 82 Paul Monaco, *Cinema & society. France and Germany during the twenties* (New York etc. 1976) 17, 34.
- 83 Ibidem, 18.
- 84 Peter Boeger, *Architektur der Lichtspieltheater in Berlin. Bauten und Projekte 1919-1930* (Berlin 1993). Among other things, Boeger gives an overview of cinemas with a capacity of more than 1,000 seats. (27-28).
- 85 Monaco, *Cinema & Society*. 20.
- 86 *Reichsfilmbblatt* 1925, 16. There were 328 cinemas in Berlin, which had 3,804,048 inhabitants. Hamburg, with 985,093 inhabitants, had 54 cinemas. To compare, London had 7,419,704 inhabitants and 360 cinemas.
- 87 Joseph Garnarcz, 'Hollywood in Germany. The Role of American Films in Germany 1925-1990', in D.W. Ellwood & R. Kroes (ed.), *Hollywood in Europe. Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony* (Amsterdam 1994) 122-23. On the basis of questionnaires which the *Film-Kurier* sent to cinema managers, Garnarcz has made Top Ten lists of the most popular films per season. Popular films which had meanwhile made it into the canon were: *Die Frau im Mond* (Fritz Lang, 1929), *Die weiße Hölle von Pitz Palü* (Georg Wilhelm Pabst, 1929), *Die drei von der Tankstelle* (Wilhelm Thiele, 1930), *Der Kongress tanzt* (Eric Charell, 1931).
- 88 Idem.
- 89 The influence of enormously popular American films should not be underestimated. See: Thomas J. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin. American Cinema and Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1994).
- 90 FRIDERICUS REX resp.: STURM UND DRANG; VATER UND SOHN, SANSSOUCI and SCHICKSALSWENDE. The first two parts are two films, as are the last two parts. The first was premiered on 31 January 1922 (Berlin, Ufa-Palast am Zoo), the second in March 1923 in the same cinema. Both films were directed by Arzen von Cserepy. He based his work on Walter von Molo's fiction trilogy. In January 1928, two film parts followed, directed by Gerhard Lamprecht, about the last phase of Frederick the Second's life, respectively: DER ALTE FRITZ pt.1 'Friede' and DER ALTE FRITZ, pt.2 'Ausklang'. These were also premiered in Berlin's Ufa-Palast. The figure of Frederick the Great was a popular character in films of the Nazi period as well. See: Axel Marquardt & Heinz Rathsack (ed.), *Preussen im Film* (pt. 5 of the catalogue *Preussen Versuch einer Bilanz. Eine Ausstellung der Berliner Festspiele GmbH* (Hamburg/Berlin 1981) 237-244; Klaus Kreimeier, 'Fridericus Rex', *Ufa Magazin* nr 3 *Fridericus Rex* (part of the catalogue for the exhibition 'Die Ufa 1917-1945. Das deutsche Bilderimperium', Berlin 1992/93) 1; Michael Töteberg, 'Preussen als Filmthema – Eine Uebersicht', *ibidem*, 2-11; Gerhard Schoenberner, 'Ein Herrenvolk aus Untertanen'. 50 Jahre Preussen im Film – Geschichte und Ideologie', *Film und Fernsehen* 8 1987 41-44.
- 91 Marquardt & Rathsack, *Preussen im Film* (1981), 237-255. Kreimeier mentions 27 Prussia films during the Weimar period (in *Die Ufa-Story*, 111).
- 92 *Vorwärts* 15 July 1922; *Der Film* 33 13 August 1922 (DrFdm.); 'Hohe Politik und Oberprüfstelle', *Der Film* 35 27 August 1922.

- 93 *Der Film*, ibidem; Vera Bern, 'Parteipolitik im Film', *Kinematograph* 824 3 December 1922.
- 94 Ibidem (Bern).
- 95 Inspection of theatre practice was carried out via the so-called 'Schund- und Schmutzgesetz' which took effect in 1926. Veiled censorship was also applied via the playing licenses issued by the police.
- 96 After the war, there was a short period without (film) censorship. This led to a boom in so-called educational films ('Aufklärungsfilme') which were sometimes serious, but sometimes also deliberately daring in sexual matters. Richard Oswald was one of these 'Aufklärungs-directors'. (In 1931, he would make 1914. *DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND*.) New legislation against these semi-pornographical films was inevitable. Without much ado, the film bill, with article 17 providing for censorship, was passed by a parliament dominated by social democrats and liberals. For an extensive description of the voting and the way the bill came about, see: Th. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin* 27-31; See also: Jan-Pieter Barbian, 'Filme mit Lücken. Die Lichtspielzensur in der Weimarer Republik: von den sozialetischen Schutzmassnahmen zum politischen Instrument', in Uli Jung (ed.), *Der deutsche Film. Aspekte seiner geschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Trier 1993) 51-78. For the film bill itself, see: Ulrich J. Klaus, *Deutsche Tonfilme 1931* (Appendix: 'Das Lichtspielgesetz vom 12.05.1920 in der Fassung vom 06.10.1931') (1989) 288-91.
- 97 Klaus, ibid. 289; Barbian, ibid. 59; Saunders, ibid. 29.
- 98 Idem (Barbian).
- 99 Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin*, 29.
- 100 Ibidem 55-57.
- 101 One example of such a film that was banned because of the displeasure it might cause abroad was: *LEIDENDES LAND* (see: 'Ein neues Verbot' *Kinematograph* 825 10 December 1922 [W. St.: correspondent from Leipzig]).
- 102 The *Reichsfilmbblatt* (34 21 August 1926) ran an article by Dr Sievers (probably employed by the Foreign Ministry) entitled 'Film und Aussenpolitik'. A quote: 'Deutschland kann es sich unter dem Drucke der Kriegsfolgen einfach nicht leisten, tiefgehende Verstimmungen fremder Völker durch Bildstreifen oder Szenen hervorzurufen, die in irgendeiner Form das Nationalgefühl anderer Volksgemeinschaften antasten. Man kann wohl ruhig behaupten, dass den Verfassern solche Absichten in den allermeisten Fällen fernliegen – massgebend ist einzig der Effekt und diesen gilt es auszuschalten.'
- 103 *THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE* appeared in Germany as *DIE VIER APOKALYPTISCHEN REITER* or *WELTENWAHN*. Jay Winter, *Sites of memory sites of mourning. The Great War in European cultural History* (Cambridge 1995) 138-40. *THE FOUR HORSEMEN* and *MARE NOSTRUM* and their reception in Germany have been dealt with by Thomas Saunders in 'German diplomacy and the war film in the 1920s', in Dibbets & Hogenkamp (ed.), *Film and the First World War* (1995) 213-222.
- 104 Examples: 'In Sachen der "Vier apokalyptischen Reiter"', *Der Film* 28 15 October 1926; 'Die "Vier apokalyptischen Reiter" in Berlin', *Lichtbildbühne* 266 8 November 1926; 'Gerichtstag über die "Apokalyptischen Reiter"', *Lichtbildbühne* 10 November 1926; 'Aktion des Reichsverbandes gegen die "Apokalyptischen Reiter"',



- Lichtbildbühne* 29 November 1926 (about a screening in London); 'Die vier Reiter in Konstantinopel', *Lichtbildbühne* 21 April 1927; 'Hetzfilm in Rom', *Berliner Tageblatt* 2 March 1930 (H.K.); 'Spitzenorganisation gegen Hetzfilme. Der Fall "Mare Nostrum"', *Lichtbildbühne* 10 March 1927; 'In New York läuft ein Film...', *Vossische Zeitung* 28 February 1926 (about *Mare Nostrum*).
- 105 A plea for exporting NIBELUNGEN (Fritz Lang, 1924) in the interest of reconciliation between the nations: 'Der Aussenminister über den deutschen Film', *Kinematograph* 17 February 1924; Dr Paul Fleischer, 'Film und politische Propaganda' *Kinematograph* 6 May 1923; 'Deutsche Filmpropaganda im Ausland', *Kinematograph* 29 July 1923 (letter to the editor from a German living in South Africa).
- 106 It should be stressed that these were feature films, because it was said that archival footage about the war was already circulating among private gatherings. 'Wir verlangen Aufklärung', *Lichtbildbühne* 30 October 1926. See also further on in this chapter.
- 107 Ilse Zerbe, 'Deutschland marschiert', *Der Film* 12 1925.
- 108 Adriaan et al., 'Die nationalistische Kinoparade', *Berliner Tageblatt* 12 September 1926.
- 109 Ibidem. It was also clear from which direction the wind was blowing at the *Berliner Tageblatt*. The closing sentence reads: 'Auch Filmgesellschaften sollten wissen, dass es seit acht Jahren eine deutsche Republik gibt.' Military advisors at the films will be dealt with in other chapters.
- 110 Aros, 'Politisches Kino', *Kinematograph* 10 May 1925.
- 111 Ilse Zerbe, 'Deutschland marschiert', *Der Film* 12 1925.
- 112 'Schluss mit den Militärfilme!', *Kinematograph* 3 May 1925. This contained a quoted call from the Zentralverband der Filmverleiher Deutschlands.
- 113 'Die Politisierung im Film', *Der Film* 18 (May) 1925. In the same period, the *Reichsfilmblatt* wrote in an article entitled 'Film und Politik': 'Die deutsche Filmindustrie hat mit Recht bisher jede Politisierung des Films abgelehnt, und auch den Militärfilmen liegt eine politische Tendenz durschau fern.'
- 114 Aros, 'Politisches Kino', *Kinematograph* 10 May 1925. It was especially members of the Zentralverband der Filmverleiher who issued this call. See also: Rainer Berg, *Zur Geschichte der realistischen Stummfilmkunst in Deutschland – 1919 bis 1929. Ein Beitrag zur historischen und systematischen Filmforschung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Problemen der öffentlichen Meinung* (diss. Berlin 1982) 156. ADGB is short for Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund.
- 115 'Die Politisierung im Film', *Der Film* 18 (May) 1925.
- 116 The guideline read as follows: films could not be banned 'wegen einer politischen, sozialen, religiösen, ethischen oder Weltanschauungstendenz als solcher'. This paragraph had been included in the bill after pressure from SPD and DDP. See Jan-Pieter Barbian, 'Filme mit Lücken', 54-55; see for the original: Ulrich J. Klaus, *Deutsche Tonfilme 1931; Filmlexikon der abendfüllenden deutschen und deutschsprachigen Tonfilme nach ihren deutschen Uraufführungen*. Vol. 2 Jahrgang 1931 (Berlin, 1989) 288.
- 117 'Die Politisierung im Film', *Der Film* 18 (May) 1925; 'Film und Politik', *Reichsfilmblatt* 20 1925.



- 118 The issue with this so-called Fürstenenteignung was whether or not, and if so, to what degree the former ruling monarchies had a right to compensation for the sums they had lost during the revolution of 1918-1919. The bourgeois parties that comprised the third Marx cabinet failed to reach agreement about the issue. The KPD then invoked a constitutional provision in order to settle the issue via a popular initiative or 'Volksbegehren'. This also failed, but the KPD managed to gain much sympathy among traditional SPD voters. For political reasons, the SPD had advised its voters not to vote.
- 119 'In den Tagen des Volksentscheid', *Film-Kurier* 17 June 1926.
- 120 See for an overview of the reactions to both (no longer existing) films: Gerd Meier, 'Ein unbekannter Regisseur: Martin Berger', in Uli Jung & Werner Schatzberg (ed.), *Filmkultur zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik* (München 1992) 97-105; Bruce Murray, *Film and the German left in the Weimarer Republic from Caligari to Kuhle Wampe* (Austin, Texas 1990) 98-101. Berg, *Zur Geschichte der realistischen Stummfilmkunst in Deutschland – 1919 bis 1929*, 111-113. The authors differ in the information they provide about the films' financiers. Without naming a source, Meier writes that Schmiede was supported financially by the ADGB. Murray writes that the production of both films was financed by both the ADGB trade union and the SPD. He bases this claim on a secondary source from 1977 (Peter Schumann in *Erobert den Film! Proletariat und Film in der Weimarer Republik*). Berg, however, bases his claim on contemporary sources, that is, the then professional periodicals, and describes a reaction by the SPD in the *Film-Kurier* (4 November 1926) in which the socialist party emphatically denies giving financial support.
- 121 As a matter of fact, *Freies Volk* lets the war end because of a massive strike!
- 122 'Politik im Film', *Lichtbildbühne* 29 June 1926. The film will be dealt with more extensively in chapter six.
- 123 'Politisierendes Kino', *Kinematograph* 16 January 1931.
- 124 *Lichtbildbühne* 259 30 October 1926. Several months earlier, the *Film-Kurier* (15 July) had published a small article under the telling heading 'Der Film in Dienste der Friedenspropaganda' which announced that 'Der Stahlhelm' organised a private screening of 'die zweite Folge der Weltkriegsfilme' (the report cannot have meant the second part of DER WELTKRIEG: the first part did not appear before 1927, the second was released in 1928). The author claimed in fierce language that this was not political propaganda but that the images served the cause of peace. This may possibly have been one of the reports which prompted the *Lichtbildbühne* to carry out further investigations.
- 125 Rainer Rother wrote an article about this film: 'Bei unsere Helden an der SOMME (1917); the creation of a 'social event', *Historical journal of film, radio and television* 4 (1995) 525-542.
- 126 *Lichtbildbühne* 30 October 1926.
- 127 Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story* (1992).
- 128 Kurt Sontheimer distinguishes old and new nationalists, where the Vereinigung der Vaterländischen Verbände Deutschlands comprised organisations of which most belonged to the old nationalists, that is, having been founded in the period before 1918. The head of these conservative (Wilhelminisch) and anti-democratic association was Rüdiger von der Goltz. Politically, the various organisations supported the DNVP and DVP. (*Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*.)

- Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 und 1933, [Munich 1992; originally 1962]) 27-8.
- 129 'Missbrauch mit Kriegsfilmen', *Lichtbildbühne* 7 November 1926 (authors: S-é and Foreign Minister dr Külz respectively). This contribution shows that the films were banned by a state commission after Walther Rathenau had fallen victim to a political assassination.
- 130 'Protest von Kriegsteilnehmer', *Lichtbildbühne* 2 November 1926.
- 131 'Missbrauch mit Kriegsfilmen', *Vossische Zeitung* 7 November 1926. Besides the letter from Külz that has been quoted, the report contained information based entirely on the cited article in *Lichtbildbühne*. This seemed to end the matter. In *Lichtbildbühne* (8 december 1926; Ueberall Heeresfilme') someone from Pommeren reported that the screenings continued to take place in his region.
- 132 See for the German reception of ПОТЕМКИН: Berg, Zur Geschichte der realistischen Stummfilmkunst in Deutschland, 159-66
- 133 If one includes the espionage film IM GEHEIMDIENST, which is not discussed here, and the film IN DER HEIMAT DA GIBT'S EIN WIEDERSEH'N (see appendix: credits), the number of war films directly produced by Ufa is six. It should be said, however, that the increasing concentration in the film industry meant that some smaller production firms (such as Gloria-Film, which released the film FELDGRAU) merged with the larger firms. In 1941, Ufa would release another film entitled HEIMKEHR. This film by director Gustav Ucicky (the director of MORGENROT) had nothing to do with the First World War.
- 134 *Die literarische Welt* 16 March 1928 ('Film und Politik'). '... militaristische und reaktionär-sentimentale Kitschfilme nicht schweigend herunterzuschlucken, sondern durch Boykott des Theaters und deutlichen Protest abzulehnen.' (ibidem.) The name would later be changed into Volksfilmverband. Bruce Murray, *Film and the German left in the Weimar Republic*, 139-142. A magazine linked to the organisation was *Film und Volk*. A less recent but concise overview of leftist activities in film can be found in Lauri Loomis Perry, 'A survey of leftist film activity in the Weimar Republic', in Thomas G. Plummer (ed.), *Film and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (New York 1982) 35-45.
- 135 Brandman & Hembus, *Klassiker des deutschen Tonfilms 1930-1960* (1980) 250.
- 136 Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story* (1992) 228.
- 137 The Tonbild-Syndikat AG (Tobis) was established on 30 August 1928. Its competitor is established on 8 October 1928, Klang-Film GmbH. The ensuing war of patents leads to a merger between the two firms on 13 March 1929, Tobis-Klangfilm. See: Hans-Michael Bock, 'Keine dramatischen Maggiwürfel. Die Entführung des Tonfilms', in Bock & Töteberg, *Das Ufa-Buch*, 256-57; Karel Dibbets, *Sprekende films. De komst van de geluidsfilm in Nederland 1928-1933* (Amsterdam 1993) 141.
- 138 For reactions to both the novel by Erich Maria Remarque (*Im Westen nichts Neues*, 1929) and the American film version (which in Germany appeared with a German title and in a dubbed version): Bärbel Schrader (ed.), *Der Fall Remarque*. Im Westen nichts Neues. Eine Dokumentation (Leipzig 1992).
- 139 Günther Rühle, *Theater für die Republik 1917-1933 im Spiegel der Kritik* (Frankfurt am Main 1967) 951.
- 140 Hans-Harald Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller. Der Kriegsroman der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart 1986) 2.

- 141 Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring. The Great War and the birth of modern age* (New York, etc. 1989) among others 290; Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus, 'Der erste Weltkrieg in den Medien zur Zeit der Weltwirtschaftskrise', in Ursula Heukenkamp (ed.), *Militärische und Zivile Mentalität. Ein literaturkritischer Report* (Berlin 1991) 128. Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller*, 2.

## Notes to Chapter 2

- 1 Part of the subtitle over the review of 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND, in *Welt am Abend* 21 January 1931.
- 2 The only earlier publications devoted to this film are: Bernadette Kester, 'Context en betekenisgeving: Duitse oorlogsfilm in de periode 1926-1933', *Opossum. Tijdschrift voor historische en kunstwetenschappen*, 16 (1995) 42-48; Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus, '1914. Die letzten Tage vor dem Weltbrand', in Helga Belach & Wolfgang Jacobsen (ed.), *Richard Oswald. Regisseur und Produzent* (Munich 1990) 107-112.
- 3 Simultaneously and also later on, the film premiered in a number of other large cities, including Leipzig, Frankfurt am Main, Cologne and Stuttgart (*Kinematograph* 20 January 1931; 31 January 1931; *Lichtbildbühne* 3 February 1931). The film was a success wherever it was screened, according to the *Kinematograph* (29 January 1931). The film was said to have been shown in Berlin for sixteen days (*Lichtbildbühne* 14 February 1931).
- 4 After the First World War, Richard Oswald had produced and directed numerous talked-about films which were very diverse in character. He was one of the first to have broken through various sexual taboos with his ('Aufklärungs'-)films during the brief censorless period (1918 until May 1920): *ES WERDE LICHT* (1918 about venereal diseases); *DIDA IBSENS GESCHICHTE* (1918, sadomasochism); *ANDERS ALS DIE ANDERN* (1918/19, about homosexuality). Just before making *1914*, he had produced and directed the film *DREYFUS* (1930), which brought him favourable reviews. See among others: Klaus Kreimeier, 'Aufklärung, Kommerzialisierung und Demokratie oder: der Bankrott des deutschen Mannes', in Belach & Jacobsen (ed.), *Richard Oswald* (1990) 9-18.
- 5 *Film-Kurier* 21 January 1931. This 'report' concerned a special preview.
- 6 *Idem*.
- 7 *Der Vertrag von Versailles* (including contributions from Sebastian Haffner, Gregory Bateson and others) (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin 1988) 238.
- 8 This department also included two 'Frontorganisationen': the Arbeitsausschuss Deutscher Verbände (1921-1937) led by Hans Draeger, an umbrella organisation of hundreds of smaller propaganda groups; and the Zentralstelle für Erforschung der Kriegsursachen (1921-1937) which was responsible for the scholarly basis of the campaign (officially led by Alfred von Wegerer from 1923); Eugen Fischer, secretary of the Parlamentarischer Untersuchungsausschuss für die Schuldfragen des Weltkrieges, was also a member of the board of directors. Ulrich Heinemann, *Die verdrängte Niederlage. Politische Öffentlichkeit und Kriegsschuldfrage in der*

- Weimarer Republik* (Göttingen 1983), 16, 120, 96, respectively. In 1937, both organisations were disbanded after Hitler proclaimed the end of the 'Kriegsschuldlüge' in a Reichstag address on 30 January 1937. (Ibidem, 301 note 141).
- 9 This monthly publication, established in 1923, served as a publicity medium for the Zentralstelle für Erforschung der Kriegsschuldfrage. In 1929, it was renamed *Berliner Monatshefte für internationale Aufklärung* (Heinemann, *Die verdrängte Niederlage*, 98).
  - 10 This periodical, which was established in 1921 and initially appeared only irregularly, was originally the newsletter of the *Arbeitsausschuss Deutscher Verbände*. It appeared bimonthly from 1926 onwards, and only once a month after 1931 until it was discontinued in 1937 (idem.).
  - 11 This publication reached its completion in 1927. The editors responsible for the periodical were Friedrich Thimme, Johannes Lepsius and Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. According to Heinemann, this was the most important 'weapon' that Germany deployed against the war guilt (ibidem, 16).
  - 12 Ernst Schraepler, 'Die Forschung über den Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges im Wandel des Geschichtsbildes 1919-1969', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, Bd. 23 1972, 327; Wolfgang Jäger, *Historische Forschung und politische Kultur in Deutschland: Die Debatte 1914-1980 über den Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen 1984) 52-3.
  - 13 Michael Salewski, 'Das Weimarer Revisionssyndrom', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B2/80 12 January 1980, 14-25.
  - 14 Eberhard Kolb, *Die Weimarer Republik* (3rd rev. (ed.) Munich 1993) 93; Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture. The outsider as insider* (New York, London, etc. 1970; orig. 1968).
  - 15 Jäger, *Historische Forschung*, 45.
  - 16 Ibidem, 46. The most recent survey of studies of the guilt debate can be found in Holger H. Herwig, 'Clio deceived: patriotic self-censorship in Germany after the Great War', in Keith Wilson (ed.), *Forging the collective memory. Government and international historians through two World Wars* (Providence, Oxford 1996) 87-127.
  - 17 Viewed in the Bundesarchiv/Filmarchiv Berlin. Length of the registered film: 2,733 meters. According to the censor (9 January 1931), the film originally had a length of 3,057 meters. (Censorship report "1914". *Die Letzten Tage vor dem Weltbrand*, Filmprüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 27853, 9 January 1931). See also: U.J. Klaus, *Deutsche Tonfilme 1931*, (1990) 222.
  - 18 The aspect of sound is presented in a number of advertisements. (*Lichtbildbühne* 215 8 September 1930; other advertisements, without acknowledgement of the source, in Bundesarchiv/Filmarchiv Berlin).
  - 19 'Querstreife durchs Atelier', *Film-Kurier* 1 November 1930.
  - 20 Karel Dibbets indicates that, although film historians have often said that sound technology limits the actors' freedom to move on the set, the opposite turns out to be true: 'Reframings, panning, trackings, and a quicker succession of scenes compensated for a slackening of the tempo caused by the spoken word.' See: Dibbets, 'The introduction of sound' in Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (ed.), *The Oxford history of world cinema* (Oxford 1996) 218. Nothing much of these dynamics could be discerned in 1914.
  - 21 These lines have been quoted from the film. The speech, including some irrelevant deviations, was printed in its entirety in *Film-Kurier* 7 January 1931.

- 22 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 21 January 1931.
- 23 He should not be confused with the national-socialist racial theorist Eugen Fischer. In order to avoid confusion, Fischer added the name of his birthplace to his name after 1945. See: Heinemann, *Die verdrängte Niederlage* (1983) 276 note 50. Besides his function at the Untersuchungsausschuss des deutschen Reichstags für die Kriegsschuldfrage, he was also the director of the Reichstag library. At the time of the outbreak of the First World War, he was a lecturer in history at the University of Berlin. See also: *Film-Kurier* 7 January 1931.
- 24 Eugen Fischer, *Die kritischen 39 Tage. Von Sarajewo bis zum Weltbrand* (Berlin 1928). In the *Vossische Zeitung* (30 November 1929), he had disclosed his views on the causes of the war in a more concise form. Fischer found that both Germany and the Entente countries were engaging in 'Demaskierung' of 'Der wirkliche Kriegsgrund' (as was the title of the article concerned). Instead of blaming Germany (as did the Entente) or blaming the Entente (as did Germany) Fischer proposed to consider another causal factor, such as the international organisational situation before 1914, with its treaties and interests ensuring that the enemy of one also became the enemy of another in case of a conflict.
- 25 *Film-Kurier*, 21 January 1931.
- 26 The term diegesis derives from Etienne Souriau (*L'univers filmique*, Paris 1952) and signifies the universe or the world within the film, or: 'Everything that belongs to the narrated history, to the world that is presupposed or represented by the fiction of the film (...).' See Paul Verstraeten, 'Diëgese', *Versus. Tijdschrift voor film en opvoeringskunsten*, 1 1989, p. 59, 61.
- 27 In November 1927, Wilhelm II managed to arrange, from his residence in the Dutch village of Doorn, his place of exile, a ban on the use of his effigy and statements he had made which Erwin Piscator had meant to use in a play. With this action, he may also have prevented further use of his effigy. See: Manfred Overesch & Friedrich Wilhelm Saal, *Die Weimarer Republik. Eine Tageschronik der Politik, Wirtschaft. Kultur* (Augsburg 1992; orig. Düsseldorf 1982) 353-354.
- 28 Advertisements of unknown origin (yet from the time of the film) proclaimed in bold headlines: 'Ein flammendes Fanal gegen die Kriegsschuldflüge' and 'Die Wahrheit über de Kriegsschuld!' (Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin).
- 29 In both cases, there are one or two minutes of film. Even Serbia receives more screening time in the film, namely three minutes. Incidentally, France, like Germany and Austria-Hungary, got ten minutes in the film. Bosnia was also allotted ten minutes, though all of the time was taken up with the the first scenes showing Franz Ferdinand's assassination.
- 30 The film DREYFUS premiered on 16 August 1930 and was quite successful. (*Lichtbildbühne* 18 August 1930). Screenplay writers Wendhausen and Goldberg also participated in this film, as did the actors Basserman, Homolka and Kampers.
- 31 A report about the film that appeared in 1961 said the Soviet Union had protested against the film in 1931, forcing the censors to take action. However, this was after the premiere of the film (*Der Kurier* [Berlin] 22 June 1961).
- 32 This was the title of an article in the *Film-Kurier* (24 December 1930) about the ban on 1914.
- 33 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 21 January 1931. Quotation: '(...) denn als sich die Filmleute ans Auswärtige Amt wandten (...) war der einzige Erfolg, dass monatelang ein

- blutjunger Attaché die Rolle eines aussenpolitischen und historischen Beraters übernahm.'
- 34 According to reports in the *Kinematograph*, the shooting of 1914 must have been finished around 7 December (*Kinematograph* 8 December 1930).
- 35 Representing the Foreign Ministry were Geheimrat Sievers, consul Hoffman-Völkeram, envoy Meyer, Dr Schwindemann, Dr von Wegerer and Dr Katzenberger. The meeting was chaired by the senior civil servant Zimmermann. Other participants were the cinema-owner Siegfried, the lawyer Freyhan, W. Barfaut, Dresden and Mrs Badick. Representing the production firm were the retired magistrate Dr Ludwig Hertz, Dr Friedmann and the lawyer Dr Wenzel Goldbaum (*Film-Kurier* 23 December 1931). See also: *Lichtbildbühne* 24 December 1930.
- 36 *Film-Kurier* 23 December 1930. *Lichtbildbühne* (27 December 1930) wrote that it was the first time the press had not been allowed to attend the proceedings. 'Die neuerliche Übung der Filmoberprüfstelle und der Filmprüfstelle, die Presse von ihren Sitzungen auszuschliessen, rächt sich (von anderen Bedenken abgesehen) in diesem Falle bereits durch widersprechende Meldungen.' This measure, which was apparently new, may have been decided by the Brüning cabinet, inaugurated in March 1930, which did not excel at governing according to the principles of democracy. The report in the specialist publications that the press was not allowed to attend the meeting this one time is in contrast with what Jan-Pieter Barbian writes in his article, namely that the meetings were never open to the public and that those present were sworn to secrecy concerning the outcome of the proceedings (Barbian, 'Filme mit Lücken. Die Lichtspielzensur in der Weimarer Republik: von der sozialetischen Schutzmassname zum politischen Instrument', in Jung [ed.], *Der deutsche Film* [1993] 60). Incidentally, a number of reviews written after the premiere show that the critics had actually had the opportunity to see the film in an uncensored version. (*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 January 1931; Dr R. D.; *Vossische Zeitung* 22 January 1931; Heinz Pol). The American film *All quiet on the Western Front* (1930, Lewis Milestone) went into circulation in Germany in December 1930 under the German (book) title *Im Westen nichts neues*.
- 37 *Lichtbildbühne* 24 December 1930; 308 27 December 1930.
- 38 *Lichtbildbühne* 27 December 1930.
- 39 Idem.
- 40 *Lichtbildbühne* 29 December 1930.
- 41 *Lichtbildbühne* 24 December 1930. The lawyer was Freiban, the other Wilhelm Siegfried.
- 42 *Film-Kurier* 7 January 1931.
- 43 Censorship report "1914". *Die letzten Tage vor dem Weltbrand*, Filmprüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 27853, 9 January 1931; Film length 3057 meters.
- 44 *Reichsfilmblatt* 2 10 January 1931; *Lichtbildbühne* 10 January 1930. Those present were Zimmermann (chairman), L.H. Döscher, Martin Borchardt, Ignaz Jezewer and Toepper (chaplain). Representing the Foreign Ministry: Prof. Sievers (Geheimrat), König (Geheimrat), Dr von Wegener, Schwendemann (Legationsrat) and Hoffmann-Völkersam (consul). (cf. U.J. Klaus, *Deutsche Tonfilme* 1931 [1989] 223). The production company was represented by Dr Eugen Fischer, Dr Wenzel Goldbaum and Dr Walther Friedmann; a certain student Amrehn was also present, strongly advocating the admission of the young, which was granted.



- 45 *Film-Kurier* 10 January 1931.
- 46 *Lichtbildbühne* 10 January 1931; *Reichsfilmbblatt* 2 10 January 1931.
- 47 *Reichsfilmbblatt* 10 January 1931; *Kinematograph* 8 10 January 1931.
- 48 Eugen Fischer, *Die kritischen 39 Tage. Von Sarajewo bis zum Weltbrand* (Berlin 1928). Reports which refer to one or both books: *Deutsche Filmzeitung* 25 July 1930 (Dr R.V. or B.); *Tempo* 21 January 1931 (Manfred Georg); *Vossische Zeitung* 22 January 1931 (Heinz Pol); *Germania* 22 January 1931 (gr.); *Lichtbildbühne* 21 January 1931 (Hans Wollenberg); *8 Uhr Abendblatt* (Kurt Pinthus).
- 49 Besides Oswald's production company, Nero-Film was also interested in producing the film version of the book, according to the same report. In advertisements, Nero announced a film called *Europa 1914* (*Lichtbildbühne* 1 and 27 September 1930, respectively). This film was to be directed by Georg Wilhelm Pabst. This project was cancelled, but Ernst Johannsen's novel *Vier von der Infanterie* (1928) was filmed by Pabst under the title *WESTFRONT 1918* (1930).
- 50 Christoph Gradmann, *Historische Belletristik, Populäre historische Biographien in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt New York) 137.
- 51 It has been established that Ludwig wrote his text in 1921; whether he had finished a complete version or only part of the manuscript remains open to debate. When interviewed, Ludwig himself provided different answers on two occasions (see: Gradmann, *Historische Belletristik*, 141 note 242). In his preface, Ludwig wrote that while some changes had been made in the later version of the book, the basic premise had remained the same. Emil Ludwig, *July 14* (Berlin 1929) 10.
- 52 Following Germany's example of publishing *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, other countries, including Great Britain, France and Austria, also began collecting and publishing national documents pertaining to the period immediately preceding the First World War.
- 53 In the second edition of the authorised Dutch translation, a list has been included of '...documents, from which the quotations in the text have been taken'. Editions that appeared after 1921, on which Ludwig based his book, are: *Britische Dokumente über den Ursprung des Weltkrieges* (Berlin 1926); M. Paléologue (French ambassador to Russia), *Am Zarenhof während des Weltkrieges* (1925); Pourtalès (German ambassador to Russia), *Meine letzten Verhandlungen in Petersburg* (Berlin 1927) and *Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette* (not all editions give dates). Emil Ludwig, *Juli 1914* (Arnhem 1929, Dutch translation Titia Jelgersma). This list was not included in the first edition of the German publication.
- 54 Gradmann, *Historische Belletristik*, 15 and note 25. Ludwig did so in the *Neue Rundschau* 40/1 1929 358-81.
- 55 Wilhelm Mommsen, 'Legitime' und 'illegitime' Geschichtsschreibung. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Emil Ludwig (Munich, Berlin 1930; orig. *Zeitwende* 5/2 1929, 302-14). As a member of the DDP, Mommsen belonged to the left-liberals. Other opponents of Ludwig were historians like Wilhelm Schüssler, Oskar von Wertheimer, Alfred von Wegerer and Friedrich Thimme. The latter two were intensively involved in research of the Kriegsschuldfrage.
- 56 Ludwig, *Juli 1914*, 9. The preface is lacking from the 1929 Dutch translation.
- 57 Idem.
- 58 Gradmann, *Historische Belletristik*, 140. Other historians in this camp were Ludwig Quidde and Walter Schücking. Gradmann: 'Bei diesen, wie bei Ludwig, verband



- sich eine Schuldanklage gegen das politische System der Vorkriegszeit mit einer ebenso dezidierten Ablehnung der Schuldthesen des Versailler Vertrages.'
- 59 Ibidem, 9.
- 60 Ibidem, 11.
- 61 Cited ibidem, 147 (orig. 'Juli 1914', *Die Weltbühne* 25 February 1929).
- 62 Gradmann mentions two reviews in particular, one by Wilhelm Schüssler in the *Münchener Neuesten Nachrichten* (28 July 1929) and one by Oskar von Wertheimer in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (13 July 1929). Ibidem, 145. For other reviews see Gradmann's note 261 p.146.
- 63 See for example Erich Eyck's essay in the *Vossische Zeitung* ('Wie es kam...', 161 7 July 1919) and Rudolf Olden in the *Berliner Tageblatt* ('Emil Ludwig: "Juli 14."', 3 July 1929). Idem.
- 64 Ibidem, 143. Tucholsky's (writing as Ignaz Wrobel) review in *Die Weltbühne* 25 February 1929.
- 65 Ibidem, 147.
- 66 Ibidem, 223.
- 67 *Vorwärts* 20 September 1930 (Dgr.); 'Geschichtliches Panoptikum', *Der Abend* 2 September 1930 (Dgr.); *Berliner Tageblatt* 2 September 1930 (Fritz Engel); *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 2 September 1930 (Herbert Ihering); *Vossische Zeitung* 3 September 1930 (Monty Jacobs); *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 2 September 1930 (Fechter); Junghans, 'Theatralischer Geschichtsunterricht' *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 3 September 1930; *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* 2 September 1930 (F.S-s.).
- 68 It is not known whether this is the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*. I was able to find the year of the film's premiere from the biographical data of one of the actors, Paul Graetz. Hans-Michael Bock (ed.), *Cinegraph. Reclams deutsches Filmlexikon* (Munich 1984), lemma: Paul Graetz.
- 69 It is remarkable that it says here that the film offers a contribution to the lie, while the film was of course meant to offer a contribution against the 'Kriegschuldlüge'.
- 70 The original subtitle was 'Die Schüsse von Sarajewo', according to a report in *Kinematograph* 18-9-30. This subtitle was changed later on. On 15 November, an advertisement containing the new abovementioned title appeared in the same issue (268) of the magazine.
- 71 Both the 'trailer' ('Vorspannfilm') and the film itself were banned for people under eighteen. See *Lichtbildbühne* 4 August 1926 and 205 28 August 1926, respectively.
- 72 Barbian, 'Filme mit Lücken' in Jung (ed.), *Der deutsche Film* (1993) 58. It was absolutely nothing special when a film was banned for people under eighteen.
- 73 *Lichtbildbühne* 10 August 1926; *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1926.
- 74 *Lichtbildbühne* 8 September 1930; 15 November 1930.
- 75 Gravilo Princip, who carried out the assassination, was a member of Young Bosnia, a secret nationalist organisation. The weapons for the assassination were provided by the Black Hand, a terrorist organisation in Serbia. A film was made in 1990 about the preparations, the assassination and Princip's time in prison, under the title GRAVE PRINCIP, HIMMEL UNTER STEINEN (OR: DEATH OF A SCHOOLBOY). It was made by Peter Patzak in a co-production by Austria, Germany and Yugoslavia. The film mainly offers a contribution to the mythologising around Princip.
- 76 The subtitle of the film, as described on the credit sheet, was: 'Die Schuld am Weltkrieg in 5 Kapiteln'. The various 'chapters' have the following titles:

1. Kapitel: Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand d'Este
  2. Kapitel: Gräfin Sophie Chotek
  3. Kapitel: Die Narodna Odbrana
  4. Kapitel: Gravilo Princip
  5. Kapitel: Die Verschwörung
  6. Kapitel: Das Attentat
- Programme brochure DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO, date unknown (Bundesarchiv/Filmarchiv Berlin).
- 77 Ibidem, fifth page.
- 78 Idem.
- 79 Ibidem, sixth and seventh page.
- 80 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1926, fourth page.
- 81 This information does not derive from the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*, but from the review in the *Kinematograph* 19 September 1926.
- 82 *Kinematograph* 19 September 1926.
- 83 *Reichsfilmblatt* 18 September 1926.
- 84 Idem.
- 85 Idem.
- 86 *Film-Kurier* 18 September 1926.
- 87 *Germania* 18 September 1926.
- 88 *Vorwärts* 19 September 1926.
- 89 *Der Montag* 20 September 1926.
- 90 *Der Deutsche* 22 January 1931 (Erwin Gephard); *Germania* 22 January 1931 (gr.).
- 91 *Lichtbildbühne* 21 January 1931.
- 92 Idem.
- 93 Idem.
- 94 *Der Film* 24 January 1931 (Betz).
- 95 *Reichsfilmblatt* 24 January 1931 (-i-).
- 96 *Film-Kurier* 21 January 1931 (Hans Feld).
- 97 The *Kinematograph* (17 21 January 1931) paid more attention to the historical content, however, without explaining how 1914 differed from other films.
- 98 *8-Uhr Abendblatt* (January 1931; Kurt Pinthus). The brackets are mine. The complete quotation reads as follows: 'Ist dieser Film als dokumentarischer-historische, wahrheitenthüllende Arbeit zu werten? Ist er ein Filmwerk, das, abgesehen von seinen aktuellen und erregenden Momenten, ein Filmkunstwerk ist?' He thought the film failed to live up to both (and simply could not live up to them). As far as the historical aspect is concerned, he thought that the film had already been surrounded by all kinds of political and social restrictions during the production process, that there could hardly be any completeness and objectivity.
- 99 *Die Rote Fahne* (Berlin) 27 January 1931 (D.).
- 100 *Welt am Abend* 17 21 January 1931 (Ku.).
- 101 *Vorwärts* 21 January 1931 (Erich Kuttner).
- 102 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 21 January 1931 [R or BK].
- 103 *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 21 January 1931 (-le.).
- 104 *Der Angriff* 21 January 1931 (Flimmermann).
- 105 U.J. Klaus, *Deutsche Tonfilme 1931* (1989) 288-91; Barbian, 'Filme mit Lücken', 60.
- 106 *Der Angriff* 20 January 1931; *12-Uhr Zeitung* 19 January 1931.

- 107 *Welt am Abend* (17 21 January 1931; K.) found it impossible to understand that the film was banned because 'nicht alles bis aufs I-Tipfelchen mit der kindischen Kriegsschuldlegende übereinstimmte'. Kurt Pinthus of the *8-Uhr-Abendblatt* (January 1931) wrote: 'Erst das Verbot, dann die Bedingungen für die Freigabe erwiesen Unmöglichkeit und Lächerlichkeit heutiger Filmzensur'; *Frankfurter Zeitung* [21 January 1931; R or BK] failed to appreciate the ministry's actions and said that chaos reigned. Heinz Pol of the *Vossische Zeitung* (22 January 1931) opposed censorship in general and more or less accused the ministry of cowardice. Erich Kuttner of *Vorwärts* (21 January 1931) agreed: 'Als dann die Rechtspresse behauptete, der Film verfälsche die historischen Tatsachen, in dem er Deutschland ein grosses Mass an Schuld zuweise, die anderen Nationen aber entlaste, fiel das Auswärtige Amt um, ähnlich wie kurz vorher im Falle des Kriegsfilms "Im Westen nichts Neues".'
- 108 *Vorwärts* 21 January 1931.
- 109 *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 21 January 1931 (-le.).
- 110 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 24 January 1931.
- 111 *Lichtbildbühne* 10 January 1931; *Reichsfilmbblatt* 10 January 1931.
- 112 *Vossische Zeitung* 19 January 1931; *Die Weltbühne* 27 January 1931.
- 113 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 21 January 1931.
- 114 *Die Rote Fahne* 27 January 1931 (D.); *Welt am Abend* 21 January 1931 (K.).
- 115 *Der Film* 24 January 1931 (Betz); *Film-Kurier* 21 January 1931 (Hans Feld).
- 116 Except for the catholic *Germania* (22 January 1931; gr.) which in general terms agreed with the film. The other review from the confessional press derived from the protestant *Der Deutsche* (22 January 1931; Erwin Gephard).
- 117 *Vorwärts* 21 January 1931; *Berliner Tageblatt* 25 January 1931 (Hermann Sinsheimer); *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 21 January 1931 (Herbert Ihering); *8-Uhr-Abendblatt* January 1931 (Kurt Pinthus); *Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin) 22 January 1931 (Heinz Pol); *Frankfurter Zeitung* 21 January 1931 [R or BK]; *Tempo* 21 January 1931 (Manfred Georg).
- 118 *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 21 January 1931 (-le.); *Der Montag* 26 January 1931; *Der Tag* 22 January 1931 (-n.); *Der Angriff* 21 January 1931 (Flimmermann).
- 119 Von Wegerer had been head of the Zentralstelle für Erforschung der Kriegsursachen since 1921.
- 120 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 January 1931 (Dr R.D.); *Kinematograph* 21 January 1931.

## Notes to Chapter 3

- 1 Part of a quotation from Herbert Ihering on the occasion of the film *SOMME* (*Berliner Börsen-Courier* 200 30 April 1930).
- 2 A film such as *UNSERE EMDEN* could also be put into the category of the 'documentary'. It is a mixture of archival footage and constructed scenes. Some of the non-professional actors playing an important part in the film are people who themselves fought on the Emden. Since this film was the first navy film to become very

- popular, I have included it in the fifth chapter, which deals with navy films. The film *NAMENLOSE HELDEN* also appeared to consist mainly of archival footage. The film has probably been lost. I have included it in the next chapter because of its clear anti-war character. I have left *BLOCKADE UND U-BOOTKRIEG* out of consideration. This film, originally English (by George Barkas and Karl Halden), was actually released in Germany – the Berlin premiere took place on 14 April 1930 – but it was not adapted for German audiences except for the translation of intervening titles. *SOMME*, in contrast, containing a lot of British material, was adapted for German audiences by a German director.
- 3 These films can be compared to the present compilation films, especially those that fit the description by Hans Beller, which he based on the film-historical compilation film. Beller distinguishes the following aspects: fragments of films, interviews with eyewitnesses, contemporary footage of, for example, historical sites and buildings; inserts of letters, diagrams and so on; reproductions such as posters, photographs and drawings, image manipulations such as dissolves and frozen frames; archival footage. See Beller, 'Filmgeschichte im Fernsehen – Erzählen und Zeichnen', in Knut Hiekethier (ed.), *Filmgeschichte schreiben. Ansätze, Entwürfe und Methoden* (Berlin 1989) 182.
  - 4 Brian Winston, *Claiming the real. The documentary film revisited* (London 1995) 8-9. Winston indicates that the term itself was already used in 1914 by the photographer and filmer of ethnographical subjects, Edward Sheriff Curtis.
  - 5 The intervening titles in silent films can also be interpreted as a form of written voice-over. The interview used in many modern documentaries did not become common until the nineteen fifties. The eyewitnesses that are now asked to tell their stories may be compared to the people that were given a role in the 'documentaries' because of their first-hand experience.
  - 6 I will limit myself to the long 'documentary' film. In his article 'The *Kulturfilm*: a brief history of an early discursive practice', William Uricchio writes: 'Thus, terms such as Unterrichtsfilm, Lehrfilm, Industriefilm, Forschungsfilm, Populärwissenschaftlicher Film, Dokumentarfilm, and even Werbefilm and Propagandafilm, all make historical claim to inclusion within the overarching *Kulturfilm*', in Paolo Cherchi Usai & Lorenz Codelli (ed.), *Before Caligari. German cinema 1895-1920 / Prima di Caligari. Cinema tedesco, 1895-1920* (Pordenone 1990) 356. I believe, however, that the term *Kulturfilm* is mostly associated with the non-feature shorter film, although there are of course clear exceptions. I only came across the term 'Kulturfilm' once in connection with war 'documentaries'. See also: Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*. 1974, 142; E. Beyfuss & A. Kossowsky, *Das Kulturfilmbuch* (Berlin 1924).
  - 7 Michael Geisler, 'The battleground of modernity *WESTFRONT 1918* (1930)', in Erich Rentschler (ed.), *The films of G.W. Pabst. An extraterritorial cinema* (New Brunswick, London 1990) 97. Geisler indicates that in later reviews and accounts of the film, one could always read the term 'documentary'. The examples he gives all come from contemporary literature. According to my sources (see chapter 4), critics in the thirties hardly used this term: they did however, use the term 'realistic'.
  - 8 'Die Neue Sachlichkeit' wurde trotz ihres Eindringens in weite Bereiche der künstlerischen Wirklichkeitserfassung (...) und Formgestaltung doch kein wirklich durchgreifender Stil, ja nicht einmal die absolut dominierende Strömung

- innerhalb der Stabilisierungsperiode zwischen 1923 und 1929.' Jost Hermand & Frank Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik*, (Frankfurt am Main 1989) 119.
- 9 Jost Hermand, 'Unity within diversity? The history of the concept "Neue Sachlichkeit"', in Keith Bullivant (ed.), *Culture and society in the Weimar Republic* (Manchester 1977) 166. The translated quotation is from a newsletter of 18 May 1923 written by Hartlaub. The exhibition itself took place in the summer of 1925. The concept was associated with work by, among others, Otto Dix.
  - 10 Art historian Wieland Schmied distinguishes five different movements in pictorial art, which are also different per location: Berlin realism could be defined as socially critical verism; Cologne realism consisted of a formal constructivist style; Munich realism was oriented towards classicism; and Hannover realism was naive and poetic. See: Brigid S. Barton, *Otto Dix and "Die Neue Sachlichkeit", 1918-1925* (diss. London 1976) 125.
  - 11 Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (1989) 116-120.
  - 12 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 165; Gay, *Weimar culture* (1970) 120.
  - 13 Thomas J. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin. American Cinema and Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1994) 117-118.
  - 14 'Sie ist lediglich der ästhetische und ideologische Ausdruck jener im liberalen Sinne republikbezogenen Kreise, die sich von der fortschreitenden Rationalisierung der Industrie und ihrem eigenen künstlerischen Einsatz eine Stärkung der Republik versprochen.' From: Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik*, 119.
  - 15 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 166. Helmut Korte also distinguishes two direction (in film, among other things): 'einerseits eine objektivistische, rational-sachliche, "unsentimentale" und andererseits eine die Oberfläche tendenziell durchbrechende Strömung mit sozialkritischem Engagement und (...) realistischer Zielsetzung.' in Helmut Korte (ed.), *Film und Realität in der Weimarer Republik*. Mit Analysen der Filme "Kuhle Wampe" und "Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück" (Frankfurt am Main 1980; orig. Munich, Vienna 1978) 86.
  - 16 'Die Neue Sachlichkeit blieb daher trotz ihres guten Willens nicht nur widersprüchlich, sondern auch isoliert.' in Hermand & Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik*, 120.
  - 17 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 166.
  - 18 Helmut Lethen, *Neue Sachlichkeit 1924-1932*. Studien zur Literatur des "Weissen Sozialismus" (Stuttgart 1970); Peter Sloterdijk, *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* (1983).
  - 19 Andrew Kelly's contention that a third part was screened in America must be based on a misunderstanding. His source is a *Variety* reviewer. See: Kelly, *Cinema and the Great War* (London, New York 1997) 87.
  - 20 Ernst Krieger, 'Wozu ein Weltkriegsfilm?', *Ufa-Magazin* (Sondernummer. 'Der Weltkrieg. Ein historischer Film') 1927, page thirteen. 'Es war um die Jahreswende 1923/24, als wir die Absicht äussersten, unser sorgfältig sortiertes, registriertes und katalogisiertes Archivmaterial, durch bewegliche Zeichenbilder und einige Nachaufnahmen ergänzt, zu einem historischen Film über den Weltkrieg zusammenzustellen.'
  - 21 Michael Töteberg 'Vermintes Gelände. Geschäft und Politik: Der Weltkrieg', in Hans-Michael Bock & M. Töteberg (ed.), *Das Ufa-Buch*. Kunst und Krisen. Stars und Regisseure. Wirtschaft und Politik (Frankfurt am Main 1992) 204. In the *Ufa-*

- Magazin (Sondernummer. Der Weltkrieg. Ein historischer Film) 1927, the first sentence of director Leo Lasko's contribution ('Meine Mitarbeit') reads: "Wollen Sie unseren Heeresfilm inszenieren?!". The fact that the whole period was spent on making the film is also shown by a statement by Svend Noldan in an article in the *Kreuz-Zeitung* (187a 22 April 1927) about his animation technique. He writes that he began recording these animations in 1925. (This article was published the day before WELTKRIEG I premiered.)
- 22 It seems that Stresemann only wanted to have a scene cut in which President Wilson appeared. Idem.
- 23 This was especially true for the first part. *Vorwärts* 98a 24 April 1927 (D.); *Welt am Abend* 94 23 April 1927 (Kurt Agberg); *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 188 23 April 1927 (Herbert Ihering); *Vossische Zeitung* 98 24 April 1927 (Heinz Pol).
- 24 *Welt am Abend* 94 23 April 1927; *Vorwärts* 98a 24 April 1927.
- 25 Such as the images of bare trees while it was summer at the relevant historical moment. This was also noticed by a critic writing for *Der Bildwart* 6 June 1927 (H.P.).
- 26 Leo Lasko, 'Meine Mitarbeit', *Ufa-Magazin* 1927 (tenth page).
- 27 George Soldan, 'Wie der Weltkriegs-film entstand', *Ufa-Magazin* 1927 (fifth page).
- 28 Idem.
- 29 In classic film theory, realistic and 'formalistic' cinematography are represented by the ideas of André Bazin and Sergei Eisenstein, respectively. In a film the realistic representation is characterized by long takes and deep focus. The director has, as it were, interfered as little as possible in representing reality, offering the viewers the space to explore the images for themselves. In formalism, on the other hand, the cinematographical means are used in a more self-conscious way and put in the foreground, for example by emphatic editing and use of the camera.
- 30 In principle, this seemed to be the ambition of every director who wanted to be taken seriously in filming the war. I will nevertheless mention such statements explicitly because, as we saw in the previous chapter, Eugen Fischer saw the feature film as a medium in which one could be liberal with the 'truth'.
- 31 Ernst Krieger, 'Wozu ein Weltkriegs-film?', *Ufa-Magazin* 1927 (thirteenth page). Earlier in the article, he writes: 'Wir wollten ohne jede Tendenz nach irgendeiner Richtung hin eine einwandfreie, sachliche Darstellung der historischen Tatsachen geben.'
- 32 This was the last paragraph of Soldan's contribution: 'Man möge das Streben nach geschichtlicher Wahrheit in unserer Arbeit erkennen. Ein historischer Film- und als solcher stehe er über allen Niederungen kleiner Parteisucht und ausserhalb von Weltanschauungen!', *Ufa-Magazin* 1927 (fifth page).
- 33 The use of the word 'animation' is an anachronism. The term used at the time was 'Trickfilme'.
- 34 An article appeared in the *Neue Preussische (Kreuz-)Zeitung* (187a 22 April 1927) one day before the premiere, written by Svend Noldan himself to explain his methods. He said the film contained 600 meters of drawn material, consisting of 31,200 frames. Since most frames had been exposed five or six times on top of each other, the total number was 150 thousand frames.
- 35 'During the Weimar period, teachers and academic administrators working in its Film Office were charged, by the republican government, with the task of selecting films which were of particular 'educational' or 'artistic' value'. In Garth Mont-



- gomery, "‘Realistic’ war films in Weimar Germany: entertainment as education’, *Historical journal for film, radio and television*, 2 1989, 119. (Orig. Source: *Ufa-Magazin* (Sondernummer. ‘Der Weltkrieg’) 1927. The ZEU had been established during the First World War by the Prussian Ministry of Culture.
- 36 The fact that there were reduced prices for the young can also be seen from an advertisement: ‘*Die Jugend hat nachmittags Zutritt zu halben Preisen.*’ (advertisement from Braunberg’s publication, name and date unknown; Bundesarchiv / Filmarchiv). In other advertisements, it only said: ‘*Jugendliche haben Zutritt!*’ (*Lichtbildbühne* 109 7-5-1927; *Kinematograph* 1055 8-5-1927.
- 37 *Deutsche Zeitung* 95a 24 April 1927 (Hans Grudzinski). And the *Kinematograph* (1052 17 April 1927) wrote, before the film had opened: ‘Es wird hier zum erstenmal für viele Deutsche die Möglichkeit geboten, sich einen wirklichen Begriff von dem ungeheuren grossen Völkerringen zu verschaffen, und es wird sich auch bei vielen zum erstenmal ein klares Bild entwickeln von dem, was damals war und was sich damals entwickelte.’
- 38 *Kreuz-Zeitung* 189 23 April 1927 (Klaus-Ulrich Henning).
- 39 *Germania* 271 29 September 1932 (H. Ba.)
- 40 A report in the *Berliner Zeitung* (7 October 1933) opens as follows: ‘Schon vor einigen Jahren wurde dieser von der Ufa hergestellte Film “Der Weltkrieg” gezeigt. Aber nun ist er umgebaut, seine Wirkung verstärkt durch eine Anzahl lebenswahrer Originalaufnahmen und durch Untermahlung mit Musik und Geräusch.’ The *Film-Kurier* (236 7 October 1933) writes that in the compilation film, the three original parts have been put together. However, it is probable that a third part was never made. Yet the compilation film contains footage and scenes that are lacking in WELTKRIEG II and which are not derived from part I for reasons of chronology. To further complicate matters, Michael Töteberg writes that the compilation film is based exclusively on the first part. This is unlikely, since the archive compilation is 1400 meters longer than part I (see below) (M. Töteberg, ‘Vermintes Gelände’, in Bock & Töteberg, (1992) 205. The uncertainty surrounding the origin of the compilation film in the Berlin archive is also connected with the presence of sound and music in the original (compiled) version, while this is lacking in the archive compilation. See: *Film-Kurier* 236 7 October 1933 (Be.We.): ‘Die Tonuntermalung beschränkt sich im wesentlichen auf die realistische Darstellung des Geschützfeuers, der wahren Kriegsmusik. Daneben Beethovensche, Wagnersche und – wenn möglich – auch Mozartsche Motive. Verschiedentlich erreicht der Film durch den unterlegten Ton eine dramatische Höhe.’ Töteberg also confirms this (*Ufa-Buch* 205). As far as the length of the film is concerned, it almost goes without saying that the compiled version is shorter than the original WELTKRIEG I and WELTKRIEG II together. These were 2,346 and 2,637 meters in length, respectively, while the compiled version in the archives is 3,779 meters. According to the data in the *Reichsfilmblatt* (17 30 April 1927; c-c.) WELTKRIEG I was 2,346 meters in length (appr. 1.5 hrs.). The censorship report of DER WELTKRIEG II says the film was 2,637 meters (appr. 100 minutes): (Film-prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 18052, 30 January 1928 (issued on 1 May 1928). The Filmarchiv / Bundesarchiv Berlin possesses a compilation copy of 3,779 meters (appr. 135 minutes); the film copies are 35 mm.
- 41 The film order described in the programme for WELTKRIEG II and the texts in the censorship report are identical. I will use the order as described in the programme



- brochure for WELTKRIEG I as a starting point for a comparison with the compilation film, since it is likely no censorship report has been preserved for this film. The programme brochure is from the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* (1927, number unknown). The description of the contents is the same as the one in the *Ufa-Magazin* (1927).
- 42 This is shown by a comparison between the censorship report of Weltkrieg II and the compilation film. Some intervening titles have been added or deleted in the compilation version.
- 43 M. Töteberg, 'Vermintes Gelände', 205.
- 44 *Berliner Morgenpost* 36 11 February 1928 (Walter Redmann).
- 45 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1927 (number unknown).
- 46 Idem.
- 47 *Vorwärts* 192 24 April 1927; *Berliner Morgenpost* 98 24 April 1927 (Walter Redmann).
- 48 *Vossische Zeitung* 98 24 April 1927 (Heinz Pol); *Berliner Morgenpost* 98 24 April 1927 (Walter Redmann).
- 49 Robert Asprey, *The German High Command at war. Hindenburg and Ludendorff conduct World War I* (New York 1991) 99-106.
- 50 *Vorwärts* 192 24 April 1927 (D.).
- 51 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 188 23 April 1927 (Herbert Ihering).
- 52 *Berliner Morgenpost* (98 24 April 1927).
- 53 *Vossische Zeitung* (98 24 April 1927; Carl Misch); see also: *Neue Preussische (Kreuz-) Zeitung* 189 23 April 1927 Klaus-Ulrich Henning); *Der Bildwart* 6 June 1927 (H.P.).
- 54 Robert Asprey, *The German High Command at war* (1991) 104-106.
- 55 *Lichtbildbühne* 98 25 April 1927. The critic at the *Neue Preussische (Kreuz-)Zeitung* (189 23 April 1927;s) also voiced his admiration for the scene.
- 56 Bernd Hüppauf, 'Schlachtenmythen und die Konstruktion des "Neuen Menschen"', in Gerhard Hirschfeld, Gerd Krumeich & Irina Renz (ed.), '*Keiner fühlt sich heir mehr als Mensch ...*' Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkriegs (Essen 1993) 45.
- 57 It is possible that this symbol was inspired by the American war film *THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE* (1921, Rex Ingram).
- 58 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 188 23 April 1927 (Herbert Ihering). These lines directly followed the lines mentioned in an earlier note concerning the Marne Battle.
- 59 *Berliner Morgenpost* 98 24 April 1927 (Walter Redmann).
- 60 *Vossische Zeitung* 98 24 April 1927 (Heinz Pol and Carl Misch).
- 61 *Der Bildwart* 6 June 1927 (H.P.) Other reviews that differed with this method of representation can be found in *Germania* 188 a 23 April 1927 (s.).
- 62 *Lichtbildbühne* 98 25 April 1927. The *Neue Preussische (Kreuz-)Zeitung* (189 23 April 1927; s.) concurred.
- 63 B. Hüppauf, 'Schlachtenmythen und die Konstruktion des "Neuen Menschen"' in Hirschfeld etc., (1993) 47.
- 64 Asprey, *The German High Command at war* (1991) 124. The British lost around 50,000 soldiers, while French losses were probably even higher.
- 65 Ibidem.
- 66 Idem, 43.
- 67 George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the memory of the world wars* (Oxford, New York, Toronto et al 1990) 71.
- 68 Hüppauf, 'Schlachtenmythen' 47.

- 69 About the music, Hans-Walter Betz of *Der Film* (8 1 May 1927) writes the following: 'Zuvor Oratoriummusik von Hugo Kaun. Der Berliner Beethoven-Chor sang das "Heimatgebet" (Text Ernst Krengel). Dann die ersten, leisen Takte der Originalmusik von Marc Roland. Alte Schule, die moderne Kontrapunktführung scheu verriet und mählich ins Geleise einer gewaltigen Fuge kam. Im führenden Bass wechselnd Soldatenlieder, Schlachtgesang, einzelne, *fanfarenartig herausgearbeitete Takte des Deutschlandliedes.*' [italics BK].
- 70 Hüppauf, *Schlachtenmythen*, 60-61.
- 71 Asprey, *The German High Command at war* (1991) 220-225.
- 72 Ibidem. 243-246.
- 73 Censorship report DER WELTKRIEG II, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 18052, 30 January 1928 (issued 1 May 1928); Act 4, text 12.
- 74 This image was the starting point of my article: 'Het ongewapende oog. Modernisme en realisme in DER WELTKRIEG en WESTFRONT 1918, in *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis* nr.0 1998, p.5-25.
- 75 This shown by the positive reactions to DER WELTKRIEG II, which contained considerably more archival footage than the first part. See among others: *Vorwärts* 371 12 February 1928 (H.Sch.); *Frankfurter Zeitung* 112 11 February 1928 (B.Rg.).
- 76 *Neue Preussische (Kreuz-)Zeitung* 189 23 April 1927 (Klaus Ulrich-Henning); *Der Tag* 98 24 April 1927 (Medem.); *Der Montag* 7 13 February 1928; *Preussische Zeitung* 70 10 February 1928.
- 77 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 112 11 February 1928 (B.Rg.).
- 78 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 69 10 February 1928 (-ma); *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 188 23 April 1927 (Herebert Ihering).
- 79 *Die Rote Fahne* 96 24 April 1927 (Otto Steinicke).
- 80 *Vossische Zeitung* 98 24 April 1927 (Heinz Pol) and *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 188 23 April 1927 (Herbert Ihering) respectively. Incidentally, the texts in the compilation film have also been written in gothic typeface.
- 81 *Reichsfilmbblatt* 7 18 February 1928 (Hans Erdmann). In an article about the music score, Erdmann writes: (nach)'Meinem Empfinden dauerte diese Filmszene nahezu zehn Minuten: immerfort Schlacht.' The *Berliner Morgenpost* (36 11 February 1928; Erwin Gepard spoke of 'eine Viertelminute'. For some, this proved too long; Hans Wollenberg of the *Lichtbildbühne* (36 10 February 1928) wrote: '... das siebentägige Trommelfeuer wird allzu ausführlich gezeigt und dabei vergessen, dass es rein als Bildeindruck zu monoton wirkt ...' In the compilation film, this sequence opens with the text: 'Nach einem gross angelegten Plan begann Anfang Juni 1916 von allen Seiten der Ansturm gegen die Festung Mittlemächte.'
- 82 *Film-Kurier* 36 10 February 1928 (Ernst Jäger).
- 83 *Vorwärts* 37a 12 February 1928 (H.Sch.).
- 84 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 72 11 February 1928 (Herbert Ihering).
- 85 *Lichtbildbühne* 36 10 February 1928 (Hans Wollenberg).
- 86 *Berliner Morgenpost* 36 11 February 1928. (Walter Redmann). *Der Deutsche* 36 11 February 1928 (Erwin Gepard).
- 87 *Vorwärts* 37a 12 February 1928; *Preussische Zeitung* 70 10 February 1928: 'Auch tritt allmählich eine gewisse Verwirrung ein, die noch gesteigert wird durch eine übertriebene Schnelligkeit der Bildvorführung und durch ein oft phantastisches Durcheinanderwerfen der einzelnen Aufnahmen.'

- 88 *Reichsfilmblatt* 7 18 February 1928 (Hans Erdmann). Incidentally, Erdmann did not think the modernist approach was entirely successful. 'Nun eine solche moderne Materialschlacht musikalisch zu erfassen, ist ein Problem, lösbar natürlich nur dann, wenn hier der Film auf *sich selbst* und damit die *Musik Rücksicht* nimmt. Eine solche Szene kann nur unter Gesichtspunkten künstlerischer Wirkung szenisch und musikalisch, also musik-dramaturgisch, komponiert werden; das wurde versäumt ... Roland half sich mit atonalen Mitteln, die ihm wohl nicht ganz kongenial sind.' The article from which this quotation is derived, was devoted entirely to the music score and appeared on its own. A critic of the film journal *Deutsche Filmzeitung* (27 4 July 1930), published in Munich, opined that the music was very modest in relation to the film. The film was said to have been introduced with Massenet's *Phèdre* overture, and once during the film, the melody of 'Ich hatt' einen Kameraden' could be heard. There was no mention of any atonal music. The orchestra may have used a different score for the Munich premiere.
- 89 *Glenzdorfs Internationales Film-Lexikon. Biographisches Handbuch für das gesamte Filmwesen* (Bad Münden [Deister], 1961) 1263.
- 90 The firm Cando Film – the name had been derived from director Joseph Candolini – was responsible for the production. One year later, Candolini and Paul would again cooperate in the production of the war film *DIE ANDERE SEITE*.
- 91 Since *SOMME* apparently premiered two months later in Munich, the critic for the southern German *Deutsche Filmzeitung* was able to compare the two films, which was favorable for *SOMME*: 'Man kann sagen, dass dieser stumme Film die Realistik von "Westfront 1918" in vielem übertrifft.'
- 92 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1392 1930; *Film-Kurier* 105 30 April 1930 (Georg Herzberg); *Lichtbildbühne* 103 30 April 1930 (n.); *Der Deutsche* 101 1 May 1930 (T.C.).
- 93 Both George Mosse and Jay Winter have pointed out the use of Christian symbols in the process of coming to terms with the war.
- 94 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 200 30 April (A. Kesser).
- 95 For an extensive analysis of the film (with the primary aim of finding out which scenes are real and which are constructed) see Roger Smither, "'A wonderful idea of the fighting": the question of fakes in "The battle of the Somme"', *Historical journal of film, radio and television* 2 1993, 149-168.
- 96 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 200 30 April 1930. (A. Kesser).
- 97 *Germania* 202 2 May 1930 (D.).
- 98 *Film-Kurier* 105 30 April 1930 (Georg Herzberg).
- 99 *Die Rote Fahne* 103 4 May 1930 (Ka.).
- 100 *Berliner Morgenpost* 104 1 May 1930 (Walter Redmann); *Germania* 202 2 May 1930 (D.); *Lichtbildbühne* 103 20 April 1930 (n); *Film-Kurier* 105 30 April 1930 (Georg Herzberg). In general, *VERDUN* was reviewed favourably in the German press. It seems the French version of *VERDUN* was slightly adapted for the German audiences; the tendency of the film is said to be less pacifistic and a series of symbolic scenes disappeared from the German version (*Der Film* 24 15 June 1929; Dr F Kaul); besides that, a German actor is said to have been included in the German version (Hans Brausewetter) (*Der Film* idem; *Germania* 275 16 June 1929; H. Behm).
- 101 Karl Günther Panter was responsible for production. He ran a small production firm in Görlitz near Dresden.

- 102 Ulrich J. Klaus, *Deutsche Tonfilme: Filmlexikon der abendfüllenden und deutschsprachigen Tonfilme nach ihren deutschen Uraufführungen*. Vol. 2 Jahrgang 1931 (Berlin, 1990) 49. Directed by Charles der Rochefort.
- 103 *Der Film* 33 15 August 1931. Ernst Erich Buder was in charge of the music; the choir was called Chorgruppe der Berliner Liedertafel (see: *Der Tag* 196 august 1931).
- 104 Other parts came from the German archives. See: Werberatschlag Douaumont. *Die Hölle vor Verdun*, 1931 (Bundesarchiv/Filmarchiv Berlin) and *Lichtbildbühne* 194 14 August 1931 (Wbg.).
- 105 Werberatschlag DOUAUMONT. *Die Hölle vor Verdun*, 1931 (Bundesarchiv/Filmarchiv, Berlin).
- 106 Chrisje and Kees Brants, *Velden van Weleer. Reisgids naar de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam, Antwerpen 1993) 217. Fort Douaumont was taken on two separate occasions, in quick succession, by two different German commanders, without them being aware of each other. The first was sergeant Kunze, the second lieutenant Radtke. Several hours later, they were followed by Hauptmann Haupt and Oberleutnant Von Brandis. Von Brandis relayed the report to German headquarters, which made him the bringer of glad tidings as well as the hero of Douaumont. Only Haupt and Von Brandis received decorations (Pour le Mérite), Kunze and Radtke received nothing at all. Protests against this unjust treatment, from Haupt, among others, failed to achieve anything. Radtke's contribution may perhaps be seen as a kind of rehabilitation arranged by Heinz Paul. The following text was presented in a separate box in the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* (1618): 'Dieser Film ist eine Rekonstruktion des wechsellvollen Kampfes um das Fort Douaumont vom Februar bis Oktober 1916 im Rahmen des Angriffes auf Verdun. In diesem Sinne will er kein Spielfilm sein. Er wurde ohne jede Tendenz geschaffen unter Verwendung authentischer Aufnahmen und unter persönlicher Mitwirkung ehemaliger Mitkämpfer, unter ihnen die Erstürmer Haupt und Leutnant d. Res. Radtke.'
- 107 *Germania* 189a 15 August 1931 (D.): 'Zweifellos wird ihrem Mittun der Film wertvolle Anregungen und eine bestmögliche Annäherung an die Wirklichkeit verdanken. Trotzdem wird man den Eindruck nicht los, dass Hauptmann Haupt doch den versteifenden Einflüssen der Filmkamera nicht entgangen ist.' And the *Neue Preussische (Kreuz-)Zeitung* (226a 14 August 1931; D.) wrote: '15 Jahre sind zu lang, um den Hauptmann Haupt heute noch einmal das tun zu lassen (im Schauspiel!), was er damals tat ...'. And finally, *Vorwärts* (190A 14 August 1931; E.K-r = Erich Kästner): 'Über die Mitwirkung gewonnener "Original" Erstürmer des Douaumont lasst mich schweigen. Sie waren sicher seinerzeit viel zu tüchtige Offiziere, um jetzt gute Filmdarsteller zu sein.'
- 108 *Deutsche Zeitung* 189a 14 August 1931 (C.C.). And in an article that appeared later, the paper wrote: 'Die Objektivität wird verstärkt durch Verwendung authentischer Aufnahmen und die persönliche Mitwirkung ehemaliger Mitkämpfer, unter ihnen Hauptmann Haupt.' (*Deutsche Zeitung* 21 23 August 1931).
- 109 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 371 15 August 1931 (Dr.E.).
- 110 *Vorwärts* 190a 14 Augst 1931 (E.K-r): 'dass hier ein militaristisch-patriotisches Gegengift gegen die Filme "Im Westen nichts Neues" und "Vier von der Infanterie" [WESTFRONT 1918, BK] verabfolgt werden soll. (...) Aber dann kommt die Wirklichkeit des Krieges und – ist alles fortgeblasen.' The same opinion was put

- forward by the *Vossische Zeitung* 194 15 August 1931 (Heinz Pol): 'zweifellos hergestellt als eine Art Anti-Remarque.'
- 111 *Vorwärts* 190a 14 August 1931 (E.K-r.); *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 226a 14 August 1931 (D.).
- 112 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 583 13 December 1925 (w.h.).
- 113 'T.-Wirtschaftsfilm GmbH Berlin – 7 Akte – 2626 mtr. 19-10-27 G.-B.169632 (Rein belehrend) (*Lichtbildbühne* 265 5 November 1927); 'Filme mit ermässiger Lustbarkeitssteuer: Tannenberg. Ein Kriegsgeschichtlicher Lehrfilm. ... 2626 mtr.' (*Lichtbildbühne* 301 17 December 1927).
- 114 For history and 'use' of the monument, see: G. Mosse, *The nationalization of the masses* (Ithaca, London 1975), 69-71.
- 115 'Drehzeit: 17.06.-Juli 1932.' The film was produced by the Swiss-German film company Heinz-Paul-Film der Praesens (or Praesens-Film GmbH). See: Klaus, *Deutsche Tonfilme. Vol.3 Jahrgang 1932* (Berlin 1990) 225.
- 116 On 26 August 1932, a report appeared on the front page of the *Lichtbildbühne* (200) under the title: 'Tannenberg-Tag ohne Tannenbergfilm'. The report announced that the film could not open due to unknown reasons ('... durch Umstände für die uns das Verständnis fehlt.').
- 117 Censorship report: '29.08.1932 – B.31997 – 2891 m.; nach Kürzung 2761,72 m – 12 Akte – Jf.' The second assessment: '08.09.1932 – B.32090 – 2806 m – 12 Akte – Jf. (Doppelprüfung).' in Klaus, *Deutsche Tonfilme 1932* (1990) 225.
- 118 In the 1927 Tannenberg film, there is only archival footage of Von Hindenburg, which was no problem.
- 119 *Lichtbildbühne* 202 29 August 1932. The next day, the magazine announced that the film had only been banned because of German prestige and national interest, not because the film would be a danger to public order. See also: *Lichtbildbühne* 203 30 August 1932.
- 120 In the *Kinematograph* (169 30 August 1932) a report appeared about the issue which quoted a letter by Dr Friedmann, who had appealed against the decision with the Oberprüfstelle as a representative of the Praesens production company. He invoked the 'Kunstschutzgesetz' of 9 January 1907, which said that it was impossible to ban a picture with historical persons, except if the relevant person was damaged by it. In addition, delegates of the Interior Ministry and the Reichswehr Ministry were said to have stated that the acted Von Hindenburg did not in any way detract from the real Von Hindenburg. According to a follow-up report in the *Lichtbildbühne* (204 31 August 1932), the shots concerned were in the sixth and seventh acts.
- 121 *Vossische Zeitung* 465 28 September 1932 (Wyr.): 'die Szenen in den Hauptquartieren (blieben) ... matte Schablone, so dass man den nachträglichen Einspruch der Filmprüfstelle gegen diese Darstellung Hindenburgs durchaus verstehen kann.'
- 122 When news of the German censorship vicissitudes reached Austria, cinema-owners rebelled against the distributor and refused to show a censored version of the film. Besides, there was no censorship legislation in Austria (*Lichtbildbühne* 204 31 August 1932 [front page]; *Kreuz-Zeitung* 271 29 September 1932; -th.). The fact that there were indeed political ways of getting a film banned, is shown by the ban on ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT, on the grounds of disturbing the peace (espe-

- cially by National Socialists), see: B. Schrader (ed.), *Der Fall Remarque*. Im Westen nichts Neues. Eine Dokumentation (Leipzig 1992) 253.
- 123 *Lichtbildbühne* 212 9 September 1932. As late as 22 September, the film had been submitted to the Film-Oberprüfstelle for approval. Censorship report Film-Oberprüfstelle Nr.5318 (Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde, Frankfurt am Main).
- 124 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1806 1932.
- 125 Idem.
- 126 Idem.
- 127 In its list of actors and characters, respectively, the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* (idem) also makes a distinction between 'I. Historische Handlung' (in which a further subdivision is made into 'Die Deutschen' and 'Die Russen') and 'II. Spielhandlung'.
- 128 A classic narrative structure has the following pattern: 1. introduction of main characters; 2. Exposition of the conflict; 3. conflict situation intensifies; 4. turning point; 5. reversal of conflict situation/resolution of the conflict.
- 129 They are the same kind of maps that could be seen in the *Weltkrieg* films, without there being any involvement, incidentally, from Svend Noldan, who had put together the maps for this series of films. They are the same maps that could be seen in the 1927 TANNENBERG version.
- 130 *Germania* 271 29 September 1932 (H.Ba.): 'Ein kleiner Junge ... wird dafür sorgen, dass auch die Schuljugend sich an dem Stoff begeistert.'
- 131 The last scenes take stock: the number of Russian dead and prisoners of war is 142,000, while there were said to be 'only' 12,000 wounded and dead on the German side.
- 132 The duration of the story lines is 52 and 40 minutes.
- 133 The fact that the mansion itself is quite modest in size can be seen from the scene in which Samsonov is followed by his staff, rides off alone, after which a gunshot is heard, upon which we see his horse return without its rider.
- 134 Concurring, *Der Tag* remarks: 'Der russische Gegner wird so ohne jeden Hass, so ritterlich gezeichnet, wie es wohl, leider, nur in einem deutschen Filmwerk möglich ist.' The scene which I believe portrayed the Russians in a slightly mocking way is not mentioned anywhere in the reviews.
- 135 Quoted from the censorship report TANNENBERG, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 41900, 3 April 1936, '1. Rolle. 3. Teil' text 22-24. ('jemand den Garaus machen' = to kill someone, to give someone the coup de grace).
- 136 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 155 28 September 1932 (-ma).
- 137 Ibidem.
- 138 Idem.
- 139 Idem. 'Wollte er [the film, BK] den innersten menschlichen und geistigen Kern dieses Geschehens erfassen, so müsste der Versuch gewagt werden, die Doppelpersönlichkeit der sieggestaltenden Feldherren hier darzustellen und gegenüber der Niederlagedrohung durch Rennenkampfs Nordarmee [a Russian army, BK] menschlich in der Grösse ihres Entschlusses und ihres Wagnisses begreiflich zu machen.'
- 140 Idem.



- 141 Idem. 'Wir haben zwar ein Gesetz "zum Schutze landschaftlich hervorragender Gegenden", aber leider noch keines zum Schutze des Mythos eines Volkes. Es wird sich demnächst herausstellen, dass dies bitter nötig ist.'
- 142 This explanation is based on the explanation Ben Hunningher gives of Wagner's views on art and music, as worded in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1850) and *Oper und Drama* (1851). (See Hunningher, *De opkomst van modern theater*, Amsterdam 1983, 18).

## Notes to Chapter 4

- 1 High German translation of a remark made in dialect by 'the Bavarian', a character in *WESTFRONT* 1918.
- 2 This statement was not made by Kracauer himself, but by the London Film Society. In an interview, Kracauer quotes the statement to support his own views. He goes on to say: 'This remark points at one of Pabst's basic intentions: in his new war picture, as well as in his previous films he endeavors to render the commonplace in real life with photographic veracity' in Gideon Bachmann, 'Six talks on G.W. Pabst. The man – the director – the artist', *Cinemages* 3 (New York 1955) 87. In *From Caligari to Hitler* (234) Kracauer wrote that the film was 'beyond the scope of New Objectivity' because of its direct pacifism.
- 3 This term derives from Amos Funkenstein, who describes it as follows: 'Their function is polemical. Their method consists of the systematic exploitation of the adversary's most trusted sources against their grain', from: 'History, counterhistory, and narrative', in Saul Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the limits of representation. Nazism and the "final solution"* (Cambridge/Massachusetts, London 1992) 69. The term is also mentioned by Michael Geisler in connection with anti-war literature (Geisler, 'The battleground of modernity' in Rentschler (ed.), *The films of G.W. Pabst*, 98).
- 4 This opinion is represented in three publications on the Weimar period which have long been considered authoritative: Jost Hermand & Frank Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt am Main 1989) 119; Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture. The outsider as insider* (New York, London, etc. 1970) 120; John Willet, *The new sobriety. Art and politics in the Weimar period 1917-1933* (London 1982) 95-176. In contrast to those: Helmuth Lethen, *Neue Sachlichkeit 1924-1932. Studien zur Literatur des 'Weissen Socialismus'* (Stuttgart 1970) and Helmut Gruber, 'Neue Sachlichkeit and the World War', in *German life and letters* 20 (1966-67) 138 believed that the Neue Sachlichkeit was at its high point in 1929 and '... of continuing importance until the end of the Weimar Republic.' Detlev Peukert also has a more subtle view on the period of the Neue Sachlichkeit: 'Hier ist nur festzuhalten, dass sich in der Krise Anfang der dreissiger Jahre die optimistischen Impulse der "Neuen Sachlichkeit" durch Kulturpessimismus und politische Radikalisierung verdrängt sahen.' (Peukert, *Die Weimarer Republik. Krisenjahre der klassischen Moderne*, [Frankfurt am Main 1987] 167-168).



- 5 'Offensichtlich bewirkte die politische, ökonomische und gesellschaftliche Krise in den späten 20er Jahren die Disposition der breiten Öffentlichkeit für die bisher ausgebliebene oder vernachlässigte Auseinandersetzung und Beschäftigung mit dem Ersten Weltkrieg, eine Situation, die sich besonders die nationalistische Rechte, aber auch die linke Kritik dadurch zunutze machte, dass sie die weitverbreitete Irritation über die Krise an dem "unbewältigten" Krieg als deren eigentliche Grundlage verwies.' Incidentally, Gollbach does not mean to suggest that there is a monocausal connection between social crisis and literature, in which politics or the socio-economic situation are determining factors. Michael Gollbach, *Die Wiederkehr des Weltkrieges in der Literatur* (1978) 203. Eksteins more or less agrees with this position (Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring* [1989] 290).
- 6 'Unbestritten ist jedoch, dass die Kriegsromane, (...) durch ihre massenhafte Produktion und die hohen Auflagen eine enorme Wirkung auf die Kriegsdiskussion und die damit verbundene allgemeine politische Polarisierung und Radikalisierung ausübten.' Ibidem.
- 7 *Im Westen nichts Neues* was published by the Berlin Propyläen-Verlag owned by Ullstein. 30,000 copies of the book were printed. After about eighteen months, more than one million copies had been sold in Germany alone. The book was translated into twelve foreign languages in the year of its publication. (Gollbach, [1978] 42). About the critical reception of the book and the film in Germany (and Austria), see: Bärbel Schrader, *Der Fall Remarque*; and Eksteins, 282-289.
- 8 H.H. Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller* (1986) 2.
- 9 During the Weimar period, the following books by Ernst Jünger were published: *In Stahlgewittern* (1920/22); *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* (1922); *Das Wäldchen 125* (1925); *Der Arbeiter* (1932).
- 10 Pro-war authors who enjoyed fame in their own time were: Werner Beumelberg with *Sperrfeuer um Deutschland* (1929) and *Die Gruppe Bosemüller* (1930), Franz Schauwecker with *Aufbruch der Nation* (1929) and Josef Magnus Wehner with *Sieben vor Verdun* (1930). Incidentally, Wehner wrote his book as a 'corrective' to Remarque's book. Other authors: Hans Zöberlein with *Der Glaube an Deutschland. Ein Kriegserleben von Verdun bis zum Umsturz* (1931). Zöberlein was also responsible for two war films: *STOSSTRUPP 1917* (1934) – which Kracauer considered a National Socialist answer to *WESTFRONT 1918* (*From Caligari to Hitler*, 235) – and *UM DAS MENSCHENRECHT* (1935), a film about the direct consequences of the war: the revolution of 1919. For an extensive bibliography of both anti-war and pro-war books, see, a.o.: Margrit Stickelberger-Eder, *Aufbruch 1914. Kriegsromane der späten Weimarer Republik* (Zürich, Munich 1983) 189-193.
- 11 Gollbach, *Die Wiederkehr* (1978) 245-46. I have only mentioned the most obvious differences. Gollbach also distinguishes (the first to be mentioned are the anti-war characteristics): reflection versus action; killing is self-defence or murder versus the lust to kill ('Tötungslust'); the leader is superior versus the leader has been chosen by nature; time is limited by the war versus the war as a mythical continuum of past and future.
- 12 Idem.
- 13 'Schreiben der Zensurbehörde', in Gertrandel Kühn, Karl Trümmler, Walter Wimmer (ed.), *Film und revolutionäre Arbeiterbewegung* (2 vol.) (Berlin/GDR 1978) 473.

- 14 Idem. This directive had been included in the law following pressure from SPD delegate Krüger, with the help of the DDP. See Jan-Pieter Barbian, 'Filme mit Lücken'. Jung (ed.), *Der deutsche Film* (1993) 54-55.
- 15 Ibidem, 474. The protest was mainly directed at the representation of the Kappputsch. The signatory (on behalf of the Interior Minister) assures the Reichswehrminister that 'die schiessende Truppe keine Formation der Reichswehr darstellt'.
- 16 This is a summary of the contents description in the programme for Alhambra-Film-Verleih GmbH in Berlin. (Bundesarchiv / Filmarchiv Berlin). Printed in its entirety in Kühn (ed.), *Film und revolutionäre Arbeiterbewegung* (1978) 468-470.
- 17 Ibidem, 469. See also a reference to a wealth of archive material in a letter to the editor by Szekely titled: 'Um ein guter Sänger zu werden', *Film-Kurier* 3 February 1927.
- 18 *Die Rote Fahne* 24 October 1925 (A.K.).
- 19 The first Balkan war took place in 1912-1913 between Turkey on one side, and Montenegro, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece on the other. Austria-Hungary and Russia were involved only indirectly.
- 20 *Die Rote Fahne* 24 October 1925 (A.K.).
- 21 *Film-Kurier* 22 October 1925 (-g.). *Die Rote Fahne* (idem) wrote: 'So sah es an der Front aus, so beim Generalstab, in der Etappe, so zu Hause bei den Proleten und so bei den Munitionsfabrikanten und Kriegsschiebern. Das müsst ihr Arbeiter alle wieder wissen...' (some months earlier, Georg Wilhelm Pabst, the director of *WESTFRONT 1918*, had used this form of editing, contrasting rich and poor environments in his film *DIE FREUDLOSE GASSE*).
- 22 *Die Rote Fahne* 24 October 1925 (A.K.). Earlier in the review, a film is mentioned that presents this historical episode in 'knappen, schnell aufeinanderfolgenden, kraftvoll herausgearbeiteten Bildergestalten'.
- 23 The communist dogmas of the KPD had been consolidated around 1925. One of them was: 'Alle Geschichte ist die Geschichte eines erbarmungslosen Klassenkampfes. Heute stehen sich Kapitalisten und Proletarier als Todfeinde gegenüber. Im Zeitalter des Monopolkapitalismus und Imperialismus führt der Klassenkampf unvermeidlich zur Revolution und Bürgerkrieg', in Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (1969) 328. See also: Helmut Donat & Karl Holl (ed.), *Die Friedensbewegung. Organisierter Pazifismus in Deutschland, Österreich und in der Schweiz* (Düsseldorf 1983) 261-266.
- 24 *Die Rote Fahne* 24 October 1925 (A.K.); *Vossische Zeitung* (exact date unknown / Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek Berlin) wrote the following: 'Hier wurde mehr als der stumpfsinnige, tierische Alltag des Frontlebens (...) sichtbar.'
- 25 Idem.
- 26 Censorship report at 'Vorspann' of: *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 11491, 16 October 1925. After the censor's intervention the 83 meters long trailer had been reduced to a 78.18 meters long version for public screening.
- 27 Literature about the film: Michel Geisler, 'The battleground of modernity: Westfront 1918 (1930)' in Eric Rentschler (ed.), *The films of G.W. Pabst* (1990) 91-101; Gerd Albrecht (ed.), "WESTFRONT 1918". *Dokumente, Materialien* (Cologne 1980); Lee Atwell, *G.W. Pabst* (Boston 1977); Yves Aubry & Jacques Pétat, *G.W. Pabst* (Paris 1968); Gideon Bachman, 'Six talks on G.W. Pabst. The man – the director –

- the artist', *Cinemages* 3 (New York 1955). Geisler's contribution is the most profound discussion of *WESTFRONT 1918*, and, in addition, he extensively involves the context and Pabst's other films in his analysis.
- 28 One year later, in 1931, Pabst made *KAMERADSCHAFT*, about a miners' conflict (which originally took place in 1906, but which Pabst moved to 1919) between France and Germany. The reason why I have not included this film in my research is the indirect, latent way in which the war plays a role in the film. The conflict takes place after the war, and the war is only referred to via a very short flashback.
- 29 Joseph Garncarz, 'Hollywood in Germany. The role of American Films in Germany 1925-1990', in D.W. Ellwood & R. Kroes (ed.), *Hollywood in Europe. Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony* (Amsterdam 1994) 94-138. Garncarz compiled his ranking for the period 1925-1932 on the basis of lists that were published in the *Film-Kurier*, which regularly asked cinema-owners what the season's five best films had been, in commercial terms.
- 30 See for the reactions to both the book and the film: Schrader (ed.), *Der Fall Remarque* (1992).
- 31 Some infamous American films were: *THE KAISER – BEAST OF BERLIN* (1918, Rupert Julian); *THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE* (1921, Rex Ingram) and *MARE NOSTRUM* (1926, Rex Ingram). American war films with a relatively positive view of the former German enemy always met with strong criticism in the press. See: Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, *Reel patriotism: the movies and World War I* (Madison etc. 1997) 159-194; Jack Spears, *Hollywood: the golden era* (London 1971) 11-76.
- 32 Censorship report *WESTFRONT 1918*, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 25961, 21 May 1930: 'Der Bildstreifen wird zur öffentlichen Vorführung im Deutschen Reiche zugelassen, darf jedoch vor Jugendlichen *nicht* vorgeführt werden.'
- 33 'Entscheidung der Oberprüfstelle, Berlin vom 27 April 1933, Nr. 6490: (...) die Darstellung, die der Krieg in dem Bildstreifen gefunden hat (ist) durchaus einseitig und wird in keiner Weise der Erinnerung des deutschen Volkes an die Heldentaten und die Opfer seiner Kämpfer gerecht. Indem der Bildstreifen die gebrachten Opfer als unnütz und den Krieg übertrieben realistisch darstellt, untergräbt er den Verteidigungswillen des Volkes und wirkt den Zielen der nationalen Regierung auf Ertüchtigung der Jugend und Wehrhaftmachung des Volkes entgegen.' in Albrecht, "WESTFRONT 1918" (1980) 4. Incidentally, Michael Geisler suggests, without naming any primary sources, that the premiere of *WESTFRONT 1918* was almost disturbed by Nazis. I did not come across anything of the kind in the reviews I selected. Geisler, 'The battleground of modernity' in Rentschler (1990) 96.
- 34 Walter Redmann wrote in the *Berliner Morgenpost* (124 25 May 1930): it is known 'dass die Tonfilm-Technik heute auf einem weit höheren Niveau steht, als sie dieser Film erkennen lässt. Das hätte anders gemacht werden müssen und können!' For the sound technique and its problems, see: *Six talks on G.W. Pabst* (1955) 50.
- 35 The book was published in Hamburg in 1929 in an edition of twenty thousand copies, and it was translated into thirteen languages. See Gollbach, *Die Wiederkehr*, p. 26 of the notes, note 3. In the Netherlands, the book appeared in 1929 with a preface by Rev. J.B.T. Hugenholtz and in a translation by R.H.G. Nahuys Esq. (J. Ploegsma publishers at Zeist).

- 36 Ibidem, 247 (Gollbach).
- 37 The other players are the actresses: Jackie Monnier (Jacqueline); Hanna Hoessrich (Karl's wife) and Else Heller (Karl's mother).
- 38 Behaviour and language of the protagonists suggest their social background. The Bavarian appears to be a representative of the working class. In addition, he is from southern Germany. Karl appears to be an exponent of the lower middle class, which is suggested by the spaciousness of his living quarters. Karl's hometown is in the north. The Student represents both youth and the intellectual segment of society. And finally, the Lieutenant belongs to the higher reaches of the military hierarchy when compared to the three infantrymen.
- 39 In an *LBB Kinoprogramm*, in which the actors are asked for a reaction, Claus Clausen (the Lieutenant) says: 'Dass es mir vergönnt war, in einer einzelnen Gestalt das Schicksal von hunderttausend Soldaten aufzuzeigen, das allein machte mir die Rolle wertvoll.' (Bundesarchiv/Filmarchiv)
- 40 Quotation from the censorship report WESTFRONT 1918: Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 25961, 21 May 1930: act 7, text 61. This report contains a literal transcription of almost the entire spoken dialogue. In the film itself, the dialogue is barely audible.
- 41 This situation, the incongruence between those who are at the front and an army command which issues orders far behind the front, is the starting point of Stanley Kubrick's film about the First World War, *PATHS OF GLORY* (1957). The film looks at the war from a French perspective and is set in 1916.
- 42 Gollbach (1978) 245-46.
- 43 Ernst Johannsen, *Vier van de Infanterie. Westfront 1918* (Dutch translation 1929) 111.
- 44 Idem.
- 45 Some examples that are not in the film but in the book, are: 'A young soldier, who is moving to the front line trenches for the first time, stares with bulging eyes at a mess of bones, earth, grass, blood and flesh.' (p.20). A description of a plane crashing: 'One can see the crew burn in the sky (...) Finally the skeleton of the plane dives down and crashes into the ground.' (p.23)
- 46 This scene will be discussed further in chapter six, which deals with the home front.
- 47 Censorship report WESTFRONT 1918, Act 7, text 60.
- 48 In an interview, Pabst's assistant director Paul Falkenberg says about this: (on the eve of the premiere, Pabst asks Jean Oser, the 'editor') 'Let's change the end title – can it be done?' and Oser said, 'Yeah, it's possible – what do you want?' He said: 'All I want is a question mark after the word "The End".' So the film ends not with the words: The End, but The End? – question mark – a final emphasis on the idiocy of wars: "have people learned the lesson?" "Will this ever end?" This was one of his little intellectual touches that he was sometimes able to translate into pictorial symbols, so to speak. The lesson was lost, as we all know, and unfortunately it was lost even on Pabst because you know that he went back to Germany at the eve of World War II?', in Bachman, 'Six talks on G.W. Pabst' (1955) 50-1. Nothing is said about an exclamation mark.
- 49 The documentary aspect is strongly emphasized by Geisler in his article 'Battlefield of modernity' (1990) 97, 252 note 31.

- 50 For reviews of the stage performance, see Günther Rühle, *Theater für die Republik 1917-1933 im Spiegel der Kritik* (Frankfurt am Main 1967) 952-955.
- 51 If we take as our starting point an average number of shots per minute, the attack sequence in *DIE ANDERE SEITE* has about one shot per four seconds, and *DER WELTKRIEG* about one shot per second.
- 52 The left-liberal film periodical *Lichtbildbühne* was angry about this and wrote: 'Der Voelger-Ausschuss [= censorship committee, BK] hat den Trivas-Film "Niemandsländ" nicht als künstlerisch erklären zu können geglaubt. Abseits der weltanschaulichen Stellungnahme wird über das Niveau und über die Qualitäten des Films eine Einmütigkeit herrschen, die im Kontrast zu dieser amtlichen Beurteilung steht. Es bestätigt sich, was wir seit Jahren feststellen; der Ausschuss ist nicht so zusammengesetzt, dass er zuverlässige filmästhetische Wertungen zu finden vermag.'
- 53 *Die Rote Fahne* 20 December 1931 (H.L.).
- 54 Quoted from Verleih Katalog Berlin (Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde & Stiftung Deutsche Kinematek) 213. The origin of this statement has not been indicated.
- 55 In one of the opening scenes, we see the living room of this character: on the floor behind the Jew's sewing machine is a sign on which the stereotypically Jewish name of Lewin can be seen. (Incidentally, Sokoloff played the role of Sasonow in the play *1914*, in September 1930).
- 56 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1703 (1931).
- 57 In the text of the censorship report, the African is only referred as 'Neger'. Censorship report NIEMANDSLAND, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 30455, 25 November 1931; see act 2, text 16; act 4, text 5 and 6, act 6, text 3.
- 58 If one looks at this from a politically correct point of view, there is a certain measure of racism in the film. Both the Jew and the African have no identity: 'Irgendwo in der Welt' is nearly as vague as 'Afrika'. Although the latter is still the name of a continent, the assertion is a denial of the fact that there are different nation states in Africa, and of the fact that during the First World War, much of Africa was divided by the European colonial powers and therefore involved in the war. Despite his French uniform, the African is never considered anyone's enemy. The fact that 'Irgendwo in der Welt' is associated with Jewishness is not just because of the Jewish wedding, his last name and his profession of tailor, but also because this text refers to the diaspora. Lewin is no-one's enemy, but only because he has lost the power of speech.
- 59 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (1974) 235.
- 60 There are very few reviews of *NAMENLOSE HELDEN*, so I will leave this film out of consideration.
- 61 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 27 May 1930 (Siegfried Kracauer). In *Der Deutsche* (25 May 1930; Erwin Gepard) a similar reaction could be read. Due to the noise the film produced, many women left the cinema.
- 62 *Die Rote Fahne* 27 May 1930.
- 63 *8-Uhr Abendblatt* 24 May 1930 (Kurt Pinthus). Pinthus added: 'Aber nicht so wie sie es meinen: nicht als zu oft gesehen. Sondern man kann es nicht einen ganzen Abend lang so sehen, wie es da zu sehen ist: als Rohstoff (in doppelter Bedeutung).'
- 64 *Berliner Tageblatt* 25 May 1930 (Eugen Szatmari).

- 65 The film journals hardly paid any attention at all to the violence in the film. In the analysis, the emphasis is therefore on the reactions in the daily press. It is possible that the critics writing for the film periodicals were afraid they might scare potential audiences if they described or criticised violent scenes.
- 66 *Berliner Morgenpost* 25 May 1930 (W.Rdm. = Walter Redmann): 'Es gab gerade an dieser Stelle bei der Premiere Pfiffe.'
- 67 *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 25 May 1930 (K.).
- 68 This occurred in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (24 May 1930; Dr. Emmrich) and in the *Deutsche Zeitung* (25 May 1930; - d -.).
- 69 *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* (25 May 1930): 'gerade die Szenen, wo er sich freihält von jeder Tendenz, sind ausgezeichnete Regieleistungen. Der Grabenkampf, das Verschüttetsein, der Handgranatengriff, die Truppen im Ruhequartier und im Unterstand und nicht zuletzt ein Frontkabarett, geben wahrheitsgetreu das Kampferlebnis und das Leben und Leiden des Frontsoldaten echt wieder.' The critic for *Der Tag* (25 May 1930; K.) shared this opinion.
- 70 *Deutsche Zeitung* 25 May 1995.
- 71 Idem. 'Ihm [Pabst, BK] träumt so etwas, neben das Inferno Dantes das des Weltkriegs zu stellen.'
- 72 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 24 May 1930 (Dr Emmrich). Besides, this critic believed that the film represented the situation worse than it had been. The second sentence in the piece reads: 'Sollen wir uns dagegen wehren, dass es Filme gibt, die in der Darstellung roher sind als es die grässlichsten Fakten des Krieges waren?'
- 73 'Zur Ehre der Zuschauer sei gesagt, dass sie bei der oben referierten Schlammtrichterszene heftig protestierten.' Ibidem.
- 74 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 31 October 1931 (F.H. Lehr).
- 75 Idem.
- 76 *Der Angriff* 29 May 1930. The headline over the article said: 'Der unsittliche Film'. In the article itself: 'Es gibt da Geschmacklosigkeiten, die einfach nicht zu überbieten sind. Aber sie verschwinden vor der Geschmacklosigkeit und Unsittlichkeit des Films als Ganzes.'
- 77 Idem.
- 78 Idem. This point of view was shared by the *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* (25 May 1930) whose critic wrote that the front scenes had been rendered true to life.
- 79 A film that met this requirement, according to *Der Angriff*, was *Die letzte Kompagnie* (Kurt Bernhardt, 1930; leading role: Conrad Veidt).
- 80 *Der Tag* 25 May 1930 (K.).
- 81 *Völkischer Beobachter* (Munich) 8 June 1930. The film opened later in southern Germany, which explains the later date of this review. Modris Eksteins observes the same thing in connection with reviews of Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues*: 'The fascist opposition to the novel blended often with that of the conservatives and presented many of the same arguments, but there was an essential difference in the reasoning. The fascists sanctified not so much the purpose of the war as the "experience" of the war, the very essence of the war (...) its ultimate ineffability in anything but mystical and spiritual terms. The war (...) gave meaning to fascism. Thus any suggestion that the war had been purposeless was a slur against the very existence of this form of extremism.' Eksteins, *Rites of spring*, 287.



- 82 *Deutsche Filmzeitung* 24 June 1930. The late appearance of this review, compared to others, was due to the fact that this periodical focused on southern Germany, where the film opened later.
- 83 *Berliner Morgenpost* 25 May 1930 (Walter Redmann).
- 84 Idem.
- 85 *8-Uhr Abendblatt* 24 May 1930, 'So wirkte das Grausige manchmal lächerlich, das Abschreckende grotesk. Der Krieg als Krieg lässt sich nicht verfilmen. Schon in der Wirklichkeit unvorstellbar, muss er als Film stets gestellt wirken. Den Krieg kann man so nur erleben (oder auch nicht) – oder man kann ihn lesen (...) Im Buch wirkt der Krieg realer, weil Wahrhaftigkeit des Schilderers und Phantasie des Lesers zusammenwirken, als in der nachgemachten Realität eines noch so gut gemachten Films.'
- 86 The filmmakers have: '... dokumentarischen Kriegsfilm geschaffen, die stärkste Waffe für alle, die nie wieder Krieg wollen.' *Vorwärts* 24 May 1930 (D.).
- 87 'Als Spielhandlung (...) wäre wohl ein starkes, unmittelbares Erleben gewährleistet', *Vorwärts* 24 April 1927 (D.).
- 88 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 27 May 1930.
- 89 *Die Rote Fahne* 27 May 1930.
- 90 *Der Montag* 26 May 1930. The newspaper praised the film in the following words: 'Für den, der draussen war, ist es schwer, das Lob dieses Films zu singen. Es wird wieder etwas aufgewühlt, was wir gern vergessen hätten. Aber es ist vielleicht gut, dass der Krieg noch einmal so naturgetreu vor uns tritt.'
- 91 *Berliner Tageblatt* 25 May 1930. (Tiegel = melting pot)
- 92 *Germania* 25 May 1930 (H. Bachmann).
- 93 *Vorwärts* 24 May 1930 (D.).
- 94 *Deutsche Zeitung* 25 May 1930 (-d-); *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 25 May 1930 (-K-).
- 95 *8-Uhr Abendblatt* 24 May 1930 (Kurt Pinthus).
- 96 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 31 October 1931 (Dr Emmrich).
- 97 *8-Uhr Abendblatt* 24 May 1930 (Kurt Pinthus).
- 98 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 27 May (Kracaueer ); Szatmari of the *Berliner Tageblatt* (25 May 1930) extensively discussed what Pabst and his screenplay writer Ladislaus Vajda had missed, and in the end reaches the same conclusion: 'Sie sind vorbeigegangen an der Front in der deutschen Heimat, an dieser Front der Frauen und Kinder, an der gewiss nicht weniger gelitten wurde als im Trommelfeuer der Somme.'
- 99 *Völkischer Beobachter* 8 June 1930.
- 100 *Berliner Morgenpost* (25 May 1930): 'Ganz und gar verfehlt ist der Leutnant Clausen [the actor's last name, BK] (...). So sah ein Frontoffizier an der "Westfront 1918" bestimmt nicht aus.'
- 101 *Berliner Tageblatt* 24 May 1930. In more modest words, the critic of *Vorwärts* (24 May 1930) also described this scene as moving. 'Wenn (...) der wahnsinnig gewordene Leutnant immer wieder sein "Hurra" anstimmt, dann packt einen tiefster Schauer.'
- 102 *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 25 May 1930 (K.).
- 103 "'What has happened to you, lieutenant?" The student asks. "Your helmet is full of blood".' In Ernst Johannsen, *Vier van de Infanterie. Westfront 1918* (1929) 91.
- 104 *Völkischer Beobachter* 8 June 1930.



- 105 Ibidem. This sentence is preceded by the following, after it has been established that he 'recht schauspielerisch wirkt und durchaus nicht dem *Typ* des jungen deutschen Frontführers in allem entspricht. Auch pflegte diese Art von Offizier keineswegs am Fernsprecher im Gespräch mit Exzellenzen die Hacken zusammenzuschlagen, wenn einige Meter über dem Kopf die Splitter schwirrten und auch sonst noch allerhand dicke Luft wehte.' *Vossische Zeitung* (25 May 1930; Heinz Pol) wrote similar things about the Lieutenant: 'Aber ich glaube nicht, dass es im Sommer 1918 an der Westfront im vordersten Graben viele Offiziere gegeben hat, die, wie dieser, am Telefon stramm standen, wenn ein höherer Offizier ihnen einen Befehl erteilte.'
- 106 *Vossische Zeitung* 25 May 1930 (Heinz Pol)
- 107 The High German translation of this sentence is the title of this chapter. See: Censorship report WESTFRONT 1918, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 25961, 21 May 1930; act 7, text 61.
- 108 *Vossische Zeitung* 25 May 1930 (Heinz Pol).
- 109 *8-Uhr Abendblatt* 24 May 1930 (Pinthus).
- 110 *Berliner Morgenpost* 25 May 1930 (Szatmari).
- 111 *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 25 May 1930 (K.).
- 112 Kurt Pinthus (*8-Uhr Abendblatt*) wrote: 'Wiewohl doppeldeutig, wurde dieser Satz pazifistisch aufgefasst und weckte stärksten Beifall.'
- 113 *Völkischer Beobachter* 8 June 1930. 'Gut getroffen ist der bayerische Infanterist mit seinem resignierten Humor bei unbedingt zuverlässiger Kameradentreue'. Incidentally, this was also true for the Student, because the sentence continues with 'ebenso der junge Student in seinem weichen Schwanken zwischen härtester Pflicht und Lebensdrang, der am Rande der Fahnenflucht vorbei schliesslich den Weg zur soldatischen Ehre zurückfindet und vom unerbittlichen Kampf halb verschlungen wird.'
- 114 *Völkischer Beobachter* 8 June 1930. Modris Eksteins makes a plausible suggestion that Remarque himself was inspired to write *Im Westen nichts Neues* by right-wing authors such as Ernst Jünger, Franz Schauwecker and Georg von der Vring. 'Many of the metaphors and images that Remarque used in his book are strikingly similar to those used by the authors he had discussed [in literary reviews for the *Sport im Bild* magazine of 28 June 1928, BK], Jünger in particular, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that he took many of his ideas from these sources.' (Eksteins, *Rites of spring*, 280).
- 115 *Die Rote Fahne* 27 May 1930.
- 116 *Berliner Morgenpost* 25 May 1930 (Szatmari).
- 117 Idem.
- 118 *Berliner Morgenpost* 1 November 1931 (Walter Redmann).
- 119 *Vorwärts* 30 October 1931 (F.Sch. = Felix Scherret).
- 120 *Der Tag* 1 November 1931 (- ee.).
- 121 *Germania* 31 October 1931 (j.).
- 122 *Die Welt am Abend* 30 October 1931 (M. Men.).
- 123 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 30 October 1931 (F.W.).
- 124 *Reichsfilmbblatt* 31 October 1931 (Felix Henseleit).
- 125 *Die Rote Fahne* 20 December 1931 (h.l.). The first sentences of the article read: 'Man muss an diesen neuesten Antikriegsfilm einen anderen Massstab anlegen als an

die üblichen "pazifistischen" Filme. Die Verfasser von "Niemandland" sind ohne Zweifel einen Schritt weiter gegangen, der sie bisweilen so nahe an die revolutionäre Lösung der Kriegsfrage heranführt, dass wir berechtigt sind, gerade von ihnen "ganze Arbeit" zu fordern. Die aber ist nicht geleistet worden: man erfährt nichts über die Ursachen des imperialistischen Krieges...'

- 126 *Der Angriff* 14 December 1931 (H. St.)  
 127 Idem. '... dass nur die *Albernheiten* eines Negers nötig sind, um Deutsche, Engländer und Franzosen zum Pazifismus zu belehren.'  
 128 *Deutsche Zeitung* 11 December 1931 (wh.)  
 129 *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 11 December 1931.  
 130 Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege* (Frankfurt 1981, orig. 1924). Friedrich has become known for the terrifying photography in which, for example, he shows faces from which essential parts have been knocked out by explosions or shrapnel.

## Notes to Chapter 5

- 1 *Film-Kurier* 23 December 1926 (-e-). From a review of UNSERE EMDEN. The line continues with: '(dagegen unser Schützengraben- und Materialkrieg)'
- 2 In this chapter, navy films are taken to mean those historical films that deal with the First World War, unless indicated otherwise. Comical navy films, the so-called 'Militärklamotten' such as DIE EISERNE BRAUT (Carl Boese, 1926) were also very popular.
- 3 Cited by: Michael Epkenhans, 'Die kaiserliche Marine im Ersten Weltkrieg: Weltmacht oder Untergang?', in Wolfgang Michalka (ed.), *Der Erste Weltkrieg. Wirkung, Wahrnehmung, Analyse* (Munich, Zürich 1994) 319.
- 4 In 1898, membership was 78,652 and in 1913 1,123,628. After that, membership decreased to 37,000 in 1925. The enormous increase in the first years was due to the many conservative organisations already in existence which joined the navy league with all members. The league continued to exist until 1934, from 1919-1931 under the name of Deutscher Seeverein. See: Dieter Fricke (ed.), *Die Bürgerlichen Parteien und anderer bürgerlicher Interessenorganisationen vom Vormärz bis zum Jahre 1945*. (Volume 1, Leipzig 1968) 432, 438.
- 5 Ibidem, 438-440. In Fricke's book, no explicit mention is made of film screenings but of presentations with slide shows, which apparently were very popular (440). Martin Loiperdinger has conducted research into the role of film screenings as a means propaganda for the Deutscher Flottenverein. See his 'Pre-war film propaganda in Germany: the Navy league as travelling exhibitor', presentation at 1993 IAMHIST conference in Amsterdam.
- 6 M. Epkenhans, 'Die kaiserliche Marine im Ersten Weltkrieg' in Michalka (ed.), *Der Erste Weltkrieg* (1994) 321.
- 7 Preceding this battle were two sea battles known as the Battle of the Doggersbank (January 1915) and the Battle of Skagerrak (May 1916). The latter was the starting point for the film DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE.

- 8 Another cause of the famine was the fact that German command had failed to properly organise food distribution at home while giving priority to the army over the civilian population. Besides that, crops failed in Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1916-1917. England and France had taken much better care of their food distribution. See Jay M. Winter, *The experience of World War I* (London 1988) 178-179.
- 9 Epkenhans, 'Die kaiserliche Marine im Ersten Weltkrieg', 319.
- 10 Klaus Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story. Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* (Munich, Vienna 1992) 199; Ilona Brennicke & Joe Hembus, *Klassiker des deutschen Stummfilms 1910-1930* (Munich 1983) 254; Hans H. Wollenberg, *Fifty years of German Film* (London 1948) 30-31. The history of this scandal as described in film-historical literature has been based mainly on secondary literature. Only Brennicke & Hembus refer to a report in *Die Weltbühne* (24 January 1928). An overview of press reactions can be found in 'Wie der Phoebus-Skandal vertuscht werden sollte', *Berliner Tageblatt* 22 January 1928. A study describing the scandal briefly on the basis of primary sources is F.L. Carsten, *The Reichswehr and politics 1918-1933* (London 1966) 284-5.
- 11 This factual information has been taken from an Emelka programme brochure (exact date unknown, published in 1932 on the occasion of the KREUZER EMDEN release; archives of Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin). It does not entirely tally with the present figures. In his *First World War* (London 1994; 109-110) Martin Gilbert, writing mainly from a British perspective, says the following about the Emden: 'On November 9, in the Indian Ocean, in the first wartime action ever fought by an Australian warship, the cruiser Sydney sank the German raider Emden. During her seven week voyage the Emden had captured eight unarmed Allied merchant ships and sunk fifteen, sending to the bottom cargoes of coal, tea, rubber, cattle and even racehorses. In Penang harbour she had sunk a Russian cruiser and a French destroyer. (...) In the engagement that destroyed the Emden, 134 of her crew were killed. Her captain, Karl von Müller, was praised in the British newspapers for having shown chivalry in his treatment of the crews and passengers of the captured ships. "If all the German people had fought as well as the Captain of the Emden," wrote *The Times*, "the German people would not today be reviled by the world.'"
- 12 Ulrich Klaus, *Deutsche Tonfilme 1934* (1993) 92-93. The film was put together using footage from UNSERE EMDEN and KREUZER EMDEN.
- 13 Idem.
- 14 Other former members of the crew who participated were 'Korvettenkapitän R. Witthoef, Kapitänleutnant A.D. Lauterbach, Oberleutnant A.D. Dietrich Benzler, Obnermaschinistenmaat Erfuhrt, Obermatrose Karl Werner, Obermatrose Alfred Bednors.' See: *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 564 1926; Censorship report UNSERE EMDEN, Filmprüfstelle Munich, Prüfungs-Nr.: 2363, 20 December 1926.
- 15 *Der Deutsche* 24 December 1926 (Erwin Gepard).
- 16 Joseph Garncarz, 'Hollywood in Germany. The role of American Films in Germany 1925-1990' in D.W. Ellwood & R. Kroes (ed.), *Hollywood in Europe. Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony* (Amsterdam 1994) 122. Garncarz bases his data on questionnaires organised by film periodicals and completed by cinema-owners. These were asked to name the five most commercial films. In this case, Garncarz bases himself on the *Film-Kurier*. In the top-ten that was put together, UNSERE

- Emden took up the sixth position. First came AN DER SCHÖNEN BLAUEN DONAU. See also: Paul Monaco, *Cinema and Society. France and Germany during the twenties* (New York, Oxford, Amsterdam 1976) 167.
- 17 *Lichtbildbühne* 31 July 1926. (In the same report, it said that shooting was completed at the end of July 1926).
  - 18 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Neue Preussische Zeitung* 23 December 1926.
  - 19 *Lichtbildbühne* 24 July 1926. The letter was addressed to Emelka (dated 16 July 1926) and read: 'Auf Ihre Anfrage betätigen wir Ihnen hiermit ausdrücklich: Der von Ihnen in der Aufnahme befindliche "Emden"-Film ist der einzige "Emden"-Film, den die Reichsmarine unterstützt und bei dem sie die Erlaubnis für die dazu nötigen Aufnahmen erteilt hat.' *Kinematograph* 25 July 1926.
  - 20 Some of these reports appeared in *Lichtbildbühne* 26 July 1926.
  - 21 A total 10.5 meters of film were cut and some intervening titles were altered. See censorship report UNSERE EMDEN Filmprüfstelle Munich, Prüfungs-Nr.: 2363, 20 December 1926. See also: *Lichtbildbühne* 21 and 22 December 1926.
  - 22 *Lichtbildbühne* 13 June 1927. A report with quotations from four British newspapers praising the film. According to the *Westminster Gazette*, this was the first German war film to be released in Great Britain.
  - 23 This is literally confirmed in the *Film-Kurier* 23 December 1926 (-e-): 'Die "Spielhandlung" ist so kurz hineingeschnitten, dass sie den Ablauf des Films nicht stört.'
  - 24 *Vorwärts* 24 December 1926; F.G. wrote that the emphasis in the film was mainly on the sinking of ships, all realized in the same kind of dramatic framework.
  - 25 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 13 April 1927 (Siegfried Kracauer),
  - 26 Censorship report UNSERE EMDEN, Film-Prüfstelle Munich, Prüf-Nr.: 2363, 20 December 1926; text 40-41.
  - 27 *Film-Kurier* 23 December 1926.
  - 28 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 December 1926 (-ma.-): 'Technisch vollkommen, von historischer Sachlichkeit und Konzentration fand das Bildwerk bei der Pressevorführung im Emelka Palast (...) den ungeteilten und begeisterten Beifall eines kritischen Fachpublikums.'
  - 29 *Reichsfilmblatt* 31 December 1926 (c-c.). 'Sonderbar ist, dass die Berufsdarsteller teilweise schwächer sind als die alten Seeleute, die man herangezogen hat.' Only *Vorwärts* (25 December 1926), did not agree and compared the latter to 'Opernchoristen'.
  - 30 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 13 April 1927.
  - 31 *Idem*.
  - 32 *Idem*. 'Die Vorgänge erscheinen aus richtigen, mitunter eigenartigen Perspektiven, die Mannschaftsszenen und die Ereignisse im Kommandoraum wirken im allgemeinen überzeugend.'
  - 33 *Vorwärts* 24 December 1926 (F.G.).
  - 34 *Germania* 24 December 1926 (M.R.J.): 'Der Film ist weder eine Glorifizierung des Krieges noch eine pazifistische Propaganda.'
  - 35 *Film-Kurier* 23 December 1926 (-e-). The reviewer praised the ship in this sense as follows: 'Die letzten Ritter der kriegerischen Romantik waren zugleich die verwegenen Schelme der Zeit, ihre Attentate gegen die Übermacht, ihre

- Angriffe auf Schiffe und Häfen, das waren Weltwitze im höchsten Sinne, Siege des kleinen Klaus gegen den grossen, des lustigen Davids gegen den Riesen Goliath.'
- 36 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 December 1926 (-ma.).
- 37 Idem.
- 38 *Der Montag* 27 December 1926 (the first sentence reads): 'Das Heldenlied von der Nibelungentreeue (sic), dessen filmische Gestaltung wir seit einigen Jahren als Kronschatz deutscher Filmdichtung in Ehren halten, hat jetzt seine neuzeitliche Gestaltung gefunden. Nicht mehr brauchen ritterliche Burgunden in das Land der Huenen ziehen, um alte Mären vom germanischen Heldenwesen zu singen, sondern aus unserem Erlebten selbst erwächst heroische Vaterlandsliebe, die sich der nordischen Liebe zum Meer verschwistert.'
- 39 *Film-Kurier* 23 December 1926 (-e-).
- 40 Idem.
- 41 For an overview of press reactions in Germany, see: Rainer Berg, *Zur Geschichte der realistischen Stummfilmkunst in Deutschland – 1919 bis 1929*. (1982) 159-166.
- 42 *Berliner Morgenpost* 24 December 1926 (K.Gl.).
- 43 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 December 1926 (-ma.). The author did not mean editing technique.
- 44 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 13 April 1927 (Siegfried Kracauer).
- 45 *Germania* 24 December 1926 (M.R.J.).
- 46 *Lichtbildbühne* 23 December 1926 (E.S.P.). A similar view was held by the *Kinematograph* (26 December 1926), which also mentioned that the tendencies in both films were opposite.
- 47 *Lichtbildbühne* 28 December 1926 (front page); *Film-Kurier* 29 December 1926 (front page).
- 48 *Film-Kurier* 29 December 1926.
- 49 Idem.
- 50 *Lichtbildbühne* 28 December 1926. The author could not help but indirectly admonish the Bavarian authorities and censorship board: 'Es ist ein erfreuliches Zeichen dafür, wie die *Berliner Polizei*, im Gegensatz zu gewissen süddeutschen Regierungsstellen, sich streng an die Vorschriften des Lichtspielgesetzes hält. Anderwärts hat man, wenn Ruhestörungen zu befürchten (noch nicht einmal eingetreten) waren, den betreffenden *Film* verboten; in Berlin wendet man sich nicht gegen den Film selbst, sondern gegen die Ruhestörer.'
- 51 In Primus Palast and in Titania Palast (Steglitz). See: *Lichtbildbühne* 21 May 1932 (-e-).
- 52 Brennicke & Hembus, *Klassiker des deutschen Stummfilms 1910-1930* (1983), 250-51.
- 53 *Lichtbildbühne* 21 May 1932 (-e-).
- 54 Idem. 'Die propagandistische Vorbereitung dieser Premiere war in einer bisher noch nicht erlebten Grosszügigkeit aufgezoogen.'
- 55 In 1931, the following German war films were released, in this order: 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND, DOUAUMONT, IM GEHEIMDIENST, BERGE IN FLAMMEN, DIE ANDERE SEITE AND NIEMANDSLAND.
- 56 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 21 May 1932 (Hermann Gressieker) and *Berliner Morgenpost* 22 May 1932 (R.M.), respectively.
- 57 *Vorwärts* 24 May 1932 (k.); *Berliner Morgenpost* 22 May 1932; *Vossische Zeitung* 21 May 1932 (-a p-); *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 21 May 1932 (Fse.); *Der Deutsche* 22

- May 1932 (T.); *Deutsche Zeitung* 22 May 1932 (C.); *Völkischer Beobachter* (Munich) 24 May 1932 (dl.); *Der Film* 21 May 1932 (Hassreiter).
- 58 *Welt am Abend* 21 May 1932 (St.)
- 59 *Vossische Zeitung* 21 May 1932.
- 60 *Vorwärts* 24 May 1932.
- 61 *Völkischer Beobachter* 24 May 1932 (dl.) Curiously enough, the author is the only one to ask the question why the film does not explain why the Emden should have gone down so quickly. He is right to remark that the Sydney was not only larger, faster, more modern and better equipped than the Emden but that she was also able to shell the Emden with her long-range guns whereas the German ship only had short-range guns with which it was impossible to hit the Sydney.
- 62 'Die Fehler, die militärisch, seemännisch, historisch und auch technisch, haften blieben, fallen dem Manuskript zur Last.' *Tempo* May 1932 (-erle-).
- 63 Idem.
- 64 *Glenzdorfs Internationales Film-Lexikon. Biographisches Handbuch für das gesamte Filmwesen* (Bad Münden [Deister], 1961).
- 65 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1329, 1930.
- 66 Two advertisements of unknown origin. Source: Bundesarchiv / Filmarchiv Berlin.
- 67 Censorship report SCAPA FLOW, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr. 24983, 3 February 1930 (act 2, text 3-9 and 12): 'und wir sitzen hier rum und kloppen Dienst (...) die Feldgrauen an der Front wissen wenigstens, warum sie draussen sind – wofür sie sterben!; (...) die da draussen wissen auch nicht, wofür sie sterben!; Evangelium, Soldaten aller Länder; Im Morgenrot der russischen Revolution (...)?!' And a bit further on in the text: 'Bei dem ewigen Einerlei des Dienstes müssen die Leute ja verrückt werden.' The *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* (1329, 1930) has the revolution come out of the blue. Without any introduction, the text reads: 'Über der Hochseeflotte flattern die roten Fahnen. Die November-Revolution! Kapitän v. Klockow wird von den Matrosen angegriffen und er erlebt, was Tausende erlitten: man reißt dem Offizier die Achselstücke und Orden herab.'
- 68 Censorship report SCAPA FLOW: act 3, texts 4-6. Text 6 is followed by: 'Nach Rückruf aller U-Boote, soll der Gegner zur Entlastung der schwerringenden Armee unter uns günstigen Bedingungen zur Schlacht gestellt werden.'
- 69 Ibidem, Act 3, texts 7-11.
- 70 Ibidem, Act 4, text 13.
- 71 Ibidem, Act 4, text 20.
- 72 Ibidem, Act 5, texts 5-7.
- 73 Ibidem, Act 6, text 4.
- 74 Ibidem, Act 7, texts 6-8.
- 75 *Der Abend* 26 February 1930.
- 76 *Film-Kurier* 21 February 1930 (E.J. = Ernst Jäger).
- 77 *Vossische Zeitung* 27 February 1930 (H.P. = Heinz Pol). Curiously enough, this newspaper ended the article by saying that German youths (the film had been declared 'Jugendfrei') were now finally able to see how the revolution had taken place. The critic for *Der Abend* (26 January 1930) also wrote that the rebel sailors in the film had 'natürlich' been portrayed as 'Schufte und Strolche'.
- 78 References to SEESCHLACHT in *Der Montag* 8, 24 February 1930, and in *Kinematograph* 21 February 1930. References to POTEMKIN in *Vossische Zeitung* 27



- February 1930; *Kinematograph* (ibidem.); *Berliner Morgenpost* 27 February 1930 (br.); *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 2 March 1930 (A.K.) and *Lichtbildbühne* February 1930.
- 79 *Vossische Zeitung* 27 February 1930 (Heinz Pol).
- 80 *Der Deutsche* 10 December 1926. An overview of press quotations in the *Reichsfilmbblatt* (49, 4 December 1926) and *Lichtbildbühne* (4 December 1926) suggests that the film was premiered in many other German cities either at the same time or earlier. There is mention of newspapers from: Munich, Hannover, Magdeburg, Breslau, Leipzig, Hannover, Düsseldorf. About one year later, the *Lichtbildbühne* (3 September 1927) reports that the film has been bought by 39 countries (including the Netherlands).
- 81 *Lichtbildbühne* 5 June 1926.
- 82 An advertisement for the film contains quotations (from 1921 and 1916) from two admirals (Schee and Von Trotha, respectively) saying Lorenz was a very 'tüchtiger Offizier' on the UC48 and on the 'Friedrich der Grosse' at the Battle of Skagerrak, respectively. (*Lichtbildbühne* 12 June 1926).
- 83 Ibidem (advertisement).
- 84 Manfred Noa was originally a painter (of posters) and worked in film from 1914 onwards. His learning period was spent with Richard Oswald (1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND). He directed very successful films, including GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG, NATHAN DER WEISE, and DER UNTERGANG TROJAS. He died in 1930 at the age of 37. (*Film-Kurier* 27 March 1926 [l.f.]; *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 6 December 1930.
- 85 Jofa-Produktion is an abbreviation of Johannisthaler Filmanstalten GmbH.
- 86 'Weiter nationalistische Kinoparade!' *Berliner Tageblatt* 27 August 1927.
- 87 *Deutsches Biographisches Jahrbuch* (ed.) Verbanne der deutschen Akademien, Band I 1914-1916; Stuttgart, Berlin, Leipzig 1925) 175-177.
- 88 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1927.
- 89 Censorship report DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr. 14271, 26 November 1926; Act 1, text 15.
- 90 Ibidem, Act 5, text 8.
- 91 Ibidem, Act 2, text 6.
- 92 Ibidem, Act 3, texts 16-18.
- 93 Ibidem, Act 3, texts 23-25.
- 94 Ibidem, Act 3, texts 27-29.
- 95 The same thing is noticed and mentioned by the critic writing for the *Film-Kurier* 9 December 1926 (-g.): 'Zwei Titel folgen ohne Bild hintereinander [see the quotations] (...) Na - da ist es doch also ganz klar, dass die Engländer gemeine Verbrecher sind.'
- 96 DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE: Act 5, texts 12-15: 'Unser Flaggschiff eröffnet das Feuer!' 'Feuerverteilung: Drittes Schiff von links!'; 'Freunde bisher und Freunde für immer!'; 'Auf das dritte Schiff von links!'
- 97 Ibidem, Act 5 text 2.
- 98 Ibidem, Act 7 texts 14-15. However, the revolution is not mentioned in the programme text.
- 99 Ibidem, Act 7 texts 20-22 and 28-30.
- 100 Ibidem, Act 7, text 33.



- 101 These quotations come from quoted press reactions from local newspapers included in an advertisement in *Lichtbildbühne* (4 December 1926). It goes without saying that the advertisement only contains the most favourable statements. At the same time, the advertisement makes clear how the producer wants to lure the crowds into the cinema. The quotations come from the *Hallesche Nachrichten*, the *Neues Wiener Journal*, and the *Niederdeutsche Zeitung*, 'Hannover', respectively, all undated.
- 102 *Vossische Zeitung* 8 May 1927 (Heinz Pol); *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 7 May 1927 (Franz Wald); *Preussische Zeitung* 6 May 1927; *Reichsfilmblatt* 7 May 1927 (C.Fr.)
- 103 *Germania* 7 May 1927 (J.).
- 104 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 7 May 1927.
- 105 'Namentlich der weibliche Teil des Kinopublikums sieht derart gestaltete Filme recht gern.' *Kinematograph* 15 May 1927.
- 106 Idem. 'Niemand soll wehegetan werden, historische Ereignisse erscheinen als Hintergrund von Liebesgeschichten, die auch ohne sie denkbar wären. Diese Technik ist amerikanischen Filmen geschickt entnommen und vermag auch in Deutschland zu fesseln.'
- 107 *Vossische Zeitung* 8 May 1927 (Heinz Pol).
- 108 *Der Montag* 13 December 1926.
- 109 Idem.
- 110 Idem. The conservative *Kinematograph* (12 December 1926) also agreed.
- 111 'Deshalb ist es erfreulich, dass dieser Film (...) nicht ein "glückliches Ende" an den Schluss setzt, die es von Amerika beeinflusste Mode für den heutigen Film erfordert.' Idem.
- 112 'Gibt es nicht auch so etwas wie Pazifisten in Deutschland? (...) Nur für diese Leute einen Film zu machen, dass wollte man anscheinend nicht recht wagen.' (*Film-Kurier* 9 December 1926; g.).
- 113 Idem. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (14 December 1926; Dr.T.) agrees that the film is about: 'das Zwiespältige der nationalen Freundes- und Feindesphrasen, das sich zwischen tiefer einander verbundene Menschen stellt.'
- 114 Idem.
- 115 *Berliner Morgenpost* 12 December 1926 (-ei-).
- 116 *Film-Kurier* 6 May 1927 (Haf.)
- 117 *Vossische Zeitung* (8 May 1927; Heinz Pol). The article proceeds: 'Nicht mehr das übliche Schema, keine Parademärsche, kein Hurrah-Patriotismus, vor allem nichts wie der makellose deutsche Held und da der böse, niederträchtige Feind.'
- 118 *Preussische Zeitung* (6 May 1927 [U.H. = probably Hans-Ulrich Henning]): 'Im grossen und ganzen ist diese Absicht [to make a film about the hero Weddigen, BK] auch verwirklicht worden.' *Der Montag* (9 May 1927): 'einer der besten Kriegsfilme'. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (7 May 27; Franz Wald.) The film has been 'auffallend gut photographiert. Die Regie von Heinz Paul ist gut, besonders in der Sinnfälligkeit der Schiffs- und Kampfaufnahmen.'
- 119 *Berliner Tageblatt* 8 May 1927 (Erich Burger).
- 120 *Film-Kurier* 2 January 1930 (Georg Herzberg).
- 121 Idem.
- 122 Censorship report DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf-Nr.: 24073, 6 November 1929; Act 6, texts 9-10.

- 123 Ibidem, Act 3, texts 2-3.
- 124 *Deutsche Filmzeitung* (Southern Germany) 22 August 1930: 'Daneben läuft noch eine harmlose Liebesgeschichte, denn dem Publikum zuliebe musste ein Mädels in die Handlung geschmuggelt werden.' *Der Montag* (6 January 1930): 'Packend die Schilderung der Gefahren, in die das U-Boot gerät und der Rettung daraus. Weniger geglückt die Szenen, die eine Liebesgeschichte und die Situationen zeigen, die sich ergeben, als ein von einem gekaperten Schiff übernommenes junges Mädchen Kombüsegast auf dem U-Boot wird.'
- 125 *Film-Kurier* 2 January 1930 (Georg Herzberg). This was confirmed by *Der Abend* 2 January 1930 (c.b.): 'Alle diejenigen aber, die für eine wahre Völkerverständigung eintreten, lehnen diesen technisch sehr gut gemachten Film energisch ab, weil er nicht die Tendenz hat "nie wieder Krieg" (...) Technisch ist der Film einwandfrei.'
- 126 The fact that there are two versions of the film is the subject of Michael Truppner's text-genetic study of *MORGENROT*. The film was shown again in an altered form in 1939 and 1940. The alterations Truppner discovered in the 1940 version are quite remarkable, all (dialogue) references to death have been removed from the film. M. Truppner, "Zeitgemässe Neuaufführungen". Eine textgenetische Untersuchung zum U-Boot-Drama *MORGENROT*, in Michael Schaudig (ed.), *Positionen deutscher Filmgeschichte. 100 Jahre Kinematographie: Strukturen, Diskurse, Kontexte* (Munich) 1996, 155-178. The version I have seen in the Berlin Bundesarchiv/Filmarchiv is the 1933 version.
- 127 Opinion on Ucicky was divided in National Socialist circles. The *Völkischer Beobachter* (3 February 1933; Stoffregen) was not very pleased with the choice of Gustav Ucicky: 'Konnte die Ufa, konnte der Produktionsleiter Günther Stapenhorst, der doch selbst alter Seeoffizier ist, gerade für diesen Film keinen anderen Regisseur als Ucicky finden?' And further on in the article: 'An den U-Bootszenen dürfte Ucicky nicht beteiligt sein. (Denn davon versteht er nichts!).' For the rest, reviews were mainly positive. Goebbels' *Der Angriff* (3 February 1933; Peter Hagen), however, only lavished praise on Ucicky, who 'hat Menzels Stoff mit technischer Vollendung in das Filmische übertragen und zeigt auch mit diesem Bildstreifen, dass er einer der wenigen Regisseure ist, die ihren eigenen Stil gefunden und folgerichtig entwickelt haben'. Having Goebbels as an early advocate, Ucicky will have had little trouble finding work in the Third Reich, despite the criticism in the *Völkischer Beobachter*.
- 128 A short report appeared about this in the *Film-Kurier* (1 February 1933): 'Schauburgdirektor Von Schenk hatte mit einer wirkungsvollen Reklame das Interesse an diesem Film so gesteigert, dass die Weltaufführung (die einzige bedeutende, die bisher in Essen stattfand) Stadgespräch wurde. Die Festvorstellung war seit Tagen vollständig ausverkauft. Hunderte telephonischer Bestellungen mussten zurückgewiesen werden, weitere Hunderte von Menschen fanden abends keinen Einlass mehr.'
- 129 Idem.
- 130 *Der Kinematograph* 3 February 1933.
- 131 *Film-Kurier* 3 February 1933 (Georg Herzberg).
- 132 Thus Herbert Ihering writes in the *Vossische Zeitung* (3 February 1933): 'Den Kommandanten des U-Bootes [in the film: captain Liers, BK], das nach der Versenkung der "Hampshire", die Kitchener nach Russland tragen sollte (recht

- frei erfunden, aber sehr spannend dargestellt)...’ And Hartmuth Merleker in *Tempo* (3 February 1933): ‘Es gelingt dem Boot den englischen Kreuzer “Hampshire”, der Kitchener nach Russland bringen sollte, hoch oben in der Nordsee zu torpedieren. Historisch kaum haltbar, aber technisch meisterhaft dargestellt.’ And finally, the *Film-Kurier* (3 February 1933): ‘hier findet der Tod von Lord Kitchener filmische Auswertung’.
- 133 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1920, 1933.
- 134 *Stuttgarter Zeitung* 5 May 1961; (the report appeared at his death). See also: Felix Bucher, Germany (Screen Series, London, New York 1970) 122. As a screenwriter, he was especially successful during the Nazi period.
- 135 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1920 1933.
- 136 Quoted from Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans* (London, New York, etc. 1982) 195.
- 137 Cf. The text-genetic analysis of *MORGENROT* carried out by Michael Truppner, which shows that all spoken references to death have been removed from the 1940 version. ‘Ranghöchste Norm ist nun der “Opfertod” für die Gemeinschaft, der nicht mehr durch Reflexionen oder Sinngebungsversuche der Figuren relativiert oder gebrochen wird.’ Truppner, ‘Zeitgemässe Neu-Aufführungen...’ in Schaudig (ed.), *Positionen deutscher Filmgeschichte* (1996) 176.
- 138 Quoted from *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 3 February 1933 (Herbert Ihering).
- 139 Brandmann & Hembus, *Klassiker des deutschen Tonfilms 1930-1960* (1980) 75-77; Dahlke & Karl, *Deutsche Spielfilme von den Anfängen bis 1933* (1988) 313-14.
- 140 Evelyn Hampicke, ‘Ist es so? – Der Erste Weltkrieg im Ufa-Film’ *Ufa Magazin nr. 10* ‘MORGENROT’ (series accompanying the exhibition ‘Die Ufa – Das deutsche Bildimperium’, Berlin 1992) 10.
- 141 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (1974) 270. Kracauer nevertheless considers captain Liers as a typical example of someone who subjects himself to the ‘Führer’.
- 142 *Völkischer Beobachter* 3 February 1933 (Stoffregen).
- 143 *Der Angriff* 3 February 1933 (Peter Hagen).
- 144 *Frankfurter Zeitung* (7 February 1933): ‘Ihre Worte [from Sandrock, BK] wurden bei der Uraufführung am lebhaftesten beklatscht.’ (probably at the premiere in Frankfurt). *Vossische Zeitung* (3 February 1933; -erle-): ‘Sie errang auch dann Beifall, als Sie an das Mutterleid auf der “anderen Seite” zu erinnern wagte.’ *Tempo* (3 February 1933; Hartmuth Merleker): ‘Eine Glanzrolle von Adele Sandrock, als Heldennutter, mit Tönen einer sympathischen Friedenssehnsucht, die ihr starken Beifall brachten’; *Berliner Morgenpost* 3 February 1933 (Walter Redmann).
- 145 *Tempo* 3 February 1933 (Hartmuth Merleker).
- 146 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 7 February 1933.
- 147 Idem.
- 148 Idem.149.
- 149 *Vorwärts* 3 February 1933 (Dr Helmut Klotz).
- 150 Idem.
- 151 *Tempo* 3 February 1933 (Hartmuth Merleker).
- 152 *Völkischer Beobachter* 3 February 1933 (Stoffregen).
- 153 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 3 February 1933 (Herbert Ihering). Ihering means especially those scenes in which the people of Meerskirchen, represented by the mayor, want to burst into boring speeches every time Liers and his men want to say good-

- bye. In the last farewell scene, Liers interrupts the mayor to hold a short and powerful speech himself.
- 154 *Völkischer Beobachter* (3 February; Stoffregen): 'Auch das langsame Aufdämmern der Erkenntnis, dass der Krieg etwas ganz anderes ist, als was sich diese Heimkehrer mit ihrem einfältig-törichtem Gewäsch und ihrer Hurrah-Freudigkeit darunter vorgestellt haben, holt der Film so überraschend gut heraus, dass sich die leise Wut des Frontsoldaten in ein nachsichtiges Lächeln verwandelt.'
- 155 *Der Film* 4 February 1933 (K.L.). *Welt am Morgen* (Feb. 1933) writes something similar: 'Was lehrt der Film? Aushalten, Hingabe, Pflichterfüllung im Kriege. Aber damit kann doch unmöglich der Begriff des Deutschtums erschöpft sein? Eine Nation muss eine höhere moralische und geistige Form der Menschheit sein.' And: 'schliesst aber Kriege und ihre Verherrlichung aus.'
- 156 *Frankfurter Zeitung* 7 February 1933.
- 157 Idem. 'Daher wäre es im nationalpädagogischen Interesse zweifellos ratsamer, auf die Notwendigkeit einer Regelung unserer Angelegenheiten durch die Vernunft hinzuweisen, statt dem Heroischen ohne weiteres den Primat zuzuerteilen.'
- 158 *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 3 February 1933.
- 159 Rainer Rother, 'Immer einsetzbar', *Ufa Magazin nr.10 'MORGENROT'* (series accompanying the exhibition 'Die Ufa – Das deutsche Bildimperium', Berlin 1992) 4-5.

## Notes to Chapter 6

- 1 Emilie Altenloh, *Zur Soziologie des Kino*. Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher (diss. Jena 1914).
- 2 Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets. Women and melodramatic representation in Weimar Germany* (Princeton New Jersey 1989) xx note 6.
- 3 In 1914, a film with the same name was made. The contents of this film differed substantially. The story takes place in East Prussia and is about a young woman who recognizes her lover in a young German officer captured by the Russians. She used to be the parlour maid at his parents' house. In order to liberate him, she pretends to be a spy, but is caught and ends up in prison with her lover. During a German attack, she manages to free him. No one had any objections to a marriage then. The film, a three-act production (the 1928 film had seven acts) was produced by the National-Film-Gesellschaft. See: *Kinematograph* 9 December 1914; *Briesetal-Bote* (Birkenwerder bei Berlin) February 1917 (from: archive of Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde, Frankfurt am Main). The last report also mentions the actors: Maria Angerstein and Karl Pasch.
- 4 Bernadette Kester, 'Frauentränen, Verzicht und Einsamkeit. Das ist Der Krieg. Mannelijkheid en vrouwelijkheid in Duitse films over de Eerste Wereldoorlog', in Mineke Bosch, Corrie van Eijl et al (ed.), *Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis 15*, special issue 'Sekse en geschiedenis' (Amsterdam 1995) 49-71.
- 5 Censorship reports of *DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ* and *DEUTSCHE FRAUEN – DEUTSCHE TREUE* have probably been lost.

- 6 Advertisement: *Lichtbilduhne* 7 August 1926: the statement continues: 'Was ein wichtiger Moment, wenn nicht das wichtigste überhaupt, für manchen Theaterbesitzer sein wird', which indicates how important the female part of the audience was commercially.
- 7 For biographical data about Geza von Bolvary-Zahn (his complete name), see: Hans-Michael Bock (ed.) *Cinegraph. Reclams deutsches Filmlexikon* (Munich 1984) 42-44; *Frankfurter Rundschau* 14 August 1961; *Hamburger Abendblatt* 12 August 1961. The German critic Oskar Kalbus wrote in his *Vom Werden deutscher Filmkunst. Der Tonfilm* (volume 2) (1935) that Bolvary made films 'mit viel Laune und Liebenswürdigkeit, mit viel Tempo und wundervoller Abrundung in Sujet und Darstellung.' (p.33).
- 8 In 1922/23, Bolvary made his first German film, *MUTTERHERZ*, which also appeared to take place during the war. See: *Cinegraph* under the headword 'Bolvary'. In 1928, Bolvary realized a breakthrough with his film *Der fesche Husar* (A German-Hungarian-English co-production).
- 9 In the biography *Heinz Rühmann und seine Filme* (1982) it says that his mother left the screening in tears because her son not only played a 'vaterlandsloser Geselle', but also caused the death of his own mother. See: Brennicke & Hembus, *Klassiker des deutschen Stummfilms 1910-1930* (Munich 1983), 180.
- 10 The description of the contents has been derived from the programme brochure *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 482/1926.
- 11 *Film-Kurier* 29 July 1926 (-e).
- 12 *Reichsfilmbblatt* 4 February 1928 (o.); *Film-Kurier* 3 February 1928 (Ernst Jäger).
- 13 The description of the contents has been derived from: *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 189/1928.
- 14 *Cinegraph* headword 'Liddy Hegewald'. DFDT was (from 1920) the 21st and last film Neff made for this producer.
- 15 *Cinegraph* headword 'Marie Luise Droop'. She wrote the screenplay together with Arthur Irrgang.
- 16 *Film-Kurier* 3 February 1928.
- 17 Idem.
- 18 *Lichtbildbühne* 11 December 1925.
- 19 *Lichtbildbühne* 2 February 1926.
- 20 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1926.
- 21 Henrick Stahr, 'Liebesgaben für den Ernstfall. Das Rote Kreuz in Deutschland zu Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs', in Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt (ed.), *August 1914. Ein Volk zieht in den Krieg* (Berlin 1989) 87-88.
- 22 'Mutter (Kranken)schwester, Gräfin in einer Person – das ist die heilige Dreieinigkeit der "guten" Frau, der Nicht-Hure. Sie kastriert nicht, sondern schützt. Sie hat keinen Penis, aber auch sonst kein Geschlecht.' Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien 1. Frauen, Fluten Körper, Geschichte* (Hamburg 1982; origin. 1977) 103-4.
- 23 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1926.
- 24 *Germania* 5 February 1928.
- 25 The film board always considered whether a particular film was likely to damage German interests abroad.

- 26 Description of contents based on an Austrian programme brochure *Danub-Film* nr. 2431 (archive Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek Berlin).
- 27 *Lichtbildbühne* 11 December 1925. *Kinematograph* (13 December 1925) says: 'Durch die opferwillige, heldenmütige Liebe seiner Mutter und seiner Braut wird er jedoch vor schmachvoller Gefangenschaft gerettet.'
- 28 The mothers 'erhalten (sie) ihren Heroismus aus der ihnen zugeschriebenen Haltung beim Verlust von Söhnen (...); auffällig daran ist: niemand macht Anstalten, ihr Leiden etwas zu mindern. Es wird nicht hingegenommen, es wird ausdrücklich bewundert.' Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien* 1. (1982) 110.
- 29 Quoted at Angelika Tramitz, 'Vom Umgang mit Helden. Kriegsvorschriften und Benimmregeln für deutsche Frauen im Ersten Weltkrieg', in Peter Knoch (ed.) *Kriegsalltag. Die Rekonstruktion des Kriegsalltags als Aufgabe der historischen Forschung und der Friedenserziehung* (Stuttgart 1989).
- 30 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 1926.
- 31 From an advertisement in *Lichtbildbühne* 17 July 1926. The following lines from this advertisement also betray the necessary pathos: 'Was Millionen von Mutterherzen bebend miterlebt haben, ist hier zu einer gewaltigen Symphonie der Empfindungen gestaltet (...) vom lächelnden Idyll der Kindheitsjahre bis zur schlachtenlärmdurchdröhnten Eroica des söhnmordenden Krieges!...'
- 32 *Berliner Tageblatt* 5 February 1928. The *Gartenlaube* was a very popular magazine for women.
- 33 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 9 February 1928 (efs.).
- 34 *Lichtbildbühne* 3 February 1928: '... der Schluss, der ein billiges Happy end mit Doppelhochzeit vermeidet [after all, the potential wedding candidates, Regine's son and the colonel, both die in the hospital, BK] zeigt deutlich, dass man einer Verkitschung ausgewichen ist und einen würdigen ernsten Stil gewahrt hat.'
- 35 For the appreciation of American films in Germany, 1919-1933, see: Thomas J. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin. American Cinema and Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, etc. 1994).
- 36 In reviews, the films were referred to under their German title MUTTER and DIE SCHWARZE ENGEL, respectively. *Berliner Tageblatt* 1 August 1926 (-r), and *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 31 July 1926 (ofr.). It is not entirely clear whether the German title MUTTER corresponds to SOMEBODY'S MOTHER. This film was released in 1926, Carr plays the leading part. (Ephraim Katz, *The international film encyclopaedia*, [London 1979] 210). The dark angel is mentioned in Jack Spears, *Hollywood: The golden era* (London 1971) 66.
- 37 *Berliner Tageblatt* 5 February 1928; *Vossische Zeitung* 5 February 1928 (-tz.). THE BIG PARADE (1925 King Vidor) went into circulation in Germany 1927 as *Die grosse Parade*. Another big American war movie, WHAT PRICE GLORY? (Raoul Walsh 1926) was released in the same time (1927) under the title WAS KOSTET RUHM OR RIVALEN.
- 38 A striking moment is when wounded soldiers, whose sick bay is in the fort that receives a direct hit, cry out loudly 'Mutter'.
- 39 Paul Monaco, *Cinema & Society. France and Germany during the twenties* (New York, etc. 1976) 122, 166-168. According to Monaco's computation, war films could not be considered the most popular films. This is in contrast to an assertion made by Joseph Garnarz, based on the same source material, but including foreign films popular in Germany. He writes that war films were 'extremely popular' in the pe-



- riod 1925-1932. Joseph Garncarz, 'Hollywood in Germany. The role of American Films in Germany 1925-1990', in Ellwood & Kroes, *Hollywood in Europe* (1994) 105.
- 40 Ibidem, 11.
- 41 Monaco sees confirmation of his explanation in other motifs that occur in 'his' films, such as the clock (said to represent the approach of danger); the fact that despite the presence of violent scenes, there is never any blood in the films; and the motif of 'the other', the stranger, often in the figure of the Jew. Ibidem, 128-33.
- 42 The character of the butcher who persuades poor women to commit adultery in exchange for a piece of meat also occurs in Pabst's *DIE FREUDLOSE GASSE* (1924). In *WESTFRONT 1918*, it is the war that women suffer from, in *DIE FREUDLOSE GASSE*, it is the economic crisis after the war.
- 43 *Völkischer Beobachter* 8 June 1930. 'Seelisch richtig gesehen ist auch der Fronturlauber, der seine Frau in den Armen eines anderen findet (wofür der Film allerhand beschönigende Erklärungen sucht) und den es schliesslich, (...) unverstanden und angewidert vom Treiben der Heimat, die zwischen Jammer und Genuss in Sicherheit dahinlebt, wieder zu seinen Kameraden an die Front zurücktreibt.'
- 44 *Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung* 25 May 1930.
- 45 *Germania* 25 May 1930.
- 46 *Kinematograph* 24 May 1930. This specialist film periodical was published by one of Hugenberg's publishing companies, the Scherl-Verlag.
- 47 The quotation comes from a Dutch translation of the book. Ernst Johannsen, *Vier van de Infanterie. Westfront 1918* (orig. *Vier von der Infanterie*, 1928) 25.
- 48 Ibid. 26.
- 49 *Germania* 23 April 1927 (s.).
- 50 *Deutsche Lieder*. Texte und Melodien ausgewählt und eingeleitet von Ernst Klusen (Frankfurt am Main 1980) 509. Italics BK.
- 51 At the beginning of the month, the film had already been given an advance premiere, as the opening film within the framework of the so-called 'Kolonialwoche' in Hamburg. (*Der Montag* 29 August 1926).
- 52 *Vossische Zeitung* and *Berliner Tageblatt* 22 August 1926.
- 53 Censorship report ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN, Film-Prüfstelle Berlin, Prüf. Nr. 13239, 12 July 1926; Act 1, text 17.
- 54 Ibidem, Act 2, text 11.
- 55 Ibidem, Act 3, text 2.
- 56 Ibidem, Act 5, text 13.
- 57 Two occurrences symbolize their eventual equality. Being an officer, Jürgen is reliable, but he still has to prove that he is reliable in love. He passes this 'test' by not responding to the Fatuma's infatuation. Hellmuth has to prove his status as an officer, which he does by catching an indigenous thief.
- 58 'Der Tod meines Mannes hat mir das Augenlicht geraubt – wenn meinem Kind etwas geschieht (...) ich könnte es nicht überleben (...)'. ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN, Act 6, text 17.
- 59 The only realistic footage are documentary or reconstructed images of the western front (barbed wire, airplanes and cruisers) These are shown once in the film.
- 60 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 478 1926.
- 61 ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN, Act 4, text 3.



- 62 Ibidem, Act 3, text 18.
- 63 Ibidem, Act 3, text 19.
- 64 Ibidem, Act 4, text 10. The text continues: ' (...) aber ich habe mich an die Station um einen tüchtigen Aufseher [=Hellmuth, BK] gewandt (...); Lupus in fabula – der neue Aufseher!; Hast Du Zeugnisse?; Viel Glück auf Ihren Weg!; Verbrenne sofort die Zeugnisse, sonst kommt der Mann eines Tages dahinter, dass sie gefälscht sind!' In short, besides the racist remark, the forgery of Hellmuth's papers was also lacking in the later version (text 17-19 is lacking in the film!) The fact that the racist remark was then part of the film is also proved by a statement from Georg Herzberg (*Film-Kurier* 195 21 August 1926): 'Die "faulen Hunde", wie die Neger in einem Titel genannt werden, sind sicher begeistert.'
- 65 *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 478 1926.
- 66 Ibidem, 7.
- 67 Ibidem, 4.
- 68 If this film had not been a piece of propaganda for the colonies, it would not have been shown at the national colonies' day held in Hamburg that summer, which was also the occasion for its premiere. See *Der Montag* 2 August 1926. In addition, the film ends with the text: 'Wird es wieder unsere Heimat?; In friedlicher Arbeit wollen wir es zurückgewinnen – denn es war deutsch (...) und soll wieder deutsch werden!' (says Hellmuth to Hilde): censorship report ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN Act 8, text 23-24. Several critics have also reviewed the film in propagandistic terms. The right-wing *Kinematograph* (22 August 1926) wrote: 'Jedem Deutschen liegt es am Herzen, dass Deutschland wieder ein Land mit Kolonien wird, in denen Deutsche wirken können zum Wohle des Vaterlandes.' The liberal *Lichtbildbühne* (21 August 1926; Hans Wollenberg): 'Wenn das alte deutsche Soldatenlied von der Treue bis in den Tod erklingt, dann klingen unsere Herzen mit, dann sind wir innerlich bereit, uns der schlichten Handlung dieses Films hinzugeben, der ein hohes Lied der Kameradschaft und zugleich eine mahnende Erinnerung daran sein will, dass auch im fernen Afrika für deutsches Land edles Blut geflossen hat.'
- 69 Censorship report ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN, Act 7, text 6.
- 70 *Lichtbildbühne* 22 February 1926.
- 71 G. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers* (1990) 82.
- 72 Volker Ackermann, *Nationale Totenfeiern in Deutschland. Von Wilhelm I. Bis Franz Josef Strauss. Eine Studie zur politischen Semiotik* (Stuttgart 1990) 78, 84. 'Zwar herrschte "Volkstrauer" in dem Sinn, dass Eberts Totenfeier nur drei Tage nach dem erstmals reichsweit durchgeführten Volkstrauertag stattfand.'
- 73 *Lichtbildbühne* 22 February 1926. 'Das Kino steht eben in der breitesten Öffentlichkeit, bietet viele Angriffsflächen und muss sich daher noch stärker schützen wie jedes andere Gewerbe. Am kommenden Volkstrauertag (28 February) ist wieder reichlich Gelegenheit gegeben, Fehler zu machen, die dem ganzen Gewerbe später wieder zur Last gelegt werden.'
- 74 *Kinematograph* (28 February 1926) referred to the memorial character: 'Kein Film zu hurtigem Zeitvertreib, aber in eindringlichem Ernst zu allen sprechend, die nicht stumpf an dem Erleben schicksalsschwerer Zeit vorüberzugehen willens sind.'

- 75 The description of the contents is based on a press report from Südfilm A.G. (Bundesarchiv / Filmarchiv Berlin) and the various critical reviews.
- 76 *Die Filmwoche* 10 March 1926.
- 77 *Kinematograph* 28 February 1926.
- 78 *Der Film* 28 February 1926 (S-r).
- 79 Incidentally, Paul Wegener himself had also fought in the First World War. In 1933 he wrote a book about his war experiences, *Flandrisches Tagebuch* 1914 (Berlin).
- 80 *Der Film* 28 February 1926.
- 81 *Kinematograph* 28 February 1926. 'Martin Römer, ein Mann der doch für Sentimentalitäten wenig übrig hat, ist kaum imstande, den Befehl zum Sturmangriff richtig in sich auf zu nehmen, der Gedanke an Maria, seine Frau, hat ihm an diesem Tage alle Entschlusskraft beraubt.'
- 82 *Der Film* (28 February 1926): 'Stark, ganz stark das Weib der Tschechowa.' *Kinematograph* (28 February 1926): 'Eine edle duldende Frauengestalt: Olga Tschechowa'. The *Berliner Morgenpost* (28 February 1926; -1-) was less impressed with Tschechowa: '... kalt, starr, ausdruckslos. Von den seelischen Kämpfen merkte man in ihrem Gesicht nicht eine Spur.' (This critic did not like the film at all, nor any of the other actors). The *Film-Kurier* (27 February 1926) also found Tschechowa not expressive enough: 'Im Mienen- und Körperspiel noch immer nicht ganz gelöst.'
- 83 *Lichtbildbühne* 27 February 1926 (Pr.).
- 84 Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning*. (1995) 15-28, 204-222.
- 85 G. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 78-79.
- 86 A similar theme is worked out in contemporary historical films such as *LE RETOUR DE MARTIN GUERRE* and *SOMMERSBY*.
- 87 *ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN*, Act 1, text 12-13.
- 88 Censorship report *HEIMKEHR*, Act 6, text 5-6. Incidentally, the protagonist in the eponymous Enoch Arden poem is also a sailor.
- 89 Only Herbert Ihering referred to another novel with a similar theme: *Landwehrmanns Rückreise* (1871) by Rudolf Herzog, meaning to indicate the traditional standards by which the film was made.
- 90 This not only becomes evident after comparing the film *HEIMKEHR* and the contents descriptions of *FELDGRAU*, but it was also pointed out in reviews: 'Ein neuer Zug im Film ist da auch die Gleichwertigkeit der Männercharakter; da steht nicht Schwarz gegen Weiss, Leichtsinng gegen Edelmut; mit feiner Nuancierung wurde der Hellere gegen den Dunkleren abgetönt.' (*Film-Kurier* 30 August 1928; Ernst Jäger).
- 91 Instead of the film title *FELDGRAU*, some reviews (not those in the specialist periodicals) used the title of the novel. Even the alphabetical catalogue at the Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde in Frankfurt has information about the film under the title of the book.
- 92 Pommer had worked for Ufa in Germany since November 1927. In America, where he had lived since January 1926, he had been offered few opportunities to develop himself further. Ludwig Klitsch, who had been an authorized representative since the take-over by Alfred Hugenberg's Scherl Group, had travelled to Hollywood in the summer of 1927 to negotiate about several Ufa interests concerning the Parufamet Treaty (an agreement Ufa made at the end of 1925 with Paramount,

- Metro-Goldwyn and Universal). At the same time, Ufa made an effort to get Erich Pommer and Ernst Lubitsch back to Germany, which failed as far as Lubitsch was concerned. Klaus Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story*. (1992) 202.
- 93 HEIMKEHR was presented as a 'Joe May-Film der Erich Pommer-Produktion der Ufa'; *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 'HEIMKEHR', 1928.
- 94 Ufa did this in a programme booklet especially devoted to her. It was sold to theater-owners. (archive: Deutsche Kinemathek Berlin)
- 95 *Film-Kurier* 30 August 1928. About this issue, see also: Leonardo Quaresima, 'Geheimnis dreier Seelen. Joe Mays "Heimkehr"', in Bock & Töteberg, *Das Ufa-Buch* (1992) 230-33.
- 96 Idem.
- 97 Leonhard Frank, *Karl und Anna*. Erzählung (Leipzig 1954, orig. 1926). The play follows the novel more closely: *Anna und Karl*, Schauspiel in vier Akten (Leipzig 1929).
- 98 Quoted from a letter by Frank (23 February 1928) in Bock & Töteberg., *Das Ufa-Buch*. 233.
- 99 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 31 August 1928 (-ma.); *Deutsche Zeitung* 30 August 1928 (l.g.); *Der Montag* 3 September 1928); *Der Tag* 2 September 1928 (g.); *Vorwärts* 30 August 1928 (D.) By the way, it was clear from some reviews whether or not the critics had actually read Frank's novel. Only the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* (30 August 1928; Herbert Ihering) and the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* (2 August 1928) deplored the changes that had been made with respect to the novel.
- 100 *Berliner Morgenpost* 2 September 1928, Dr. K. Glück).
- 101 Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets*. (1989).
- 102 *Film-Kurier* 30 August 1928.
- 103 *Berliner Tageblatt* 2 September 1928 (Ernst Blass).
- 104 *Germania* 4 September 1928 (j.).
- 105 *Film-Kurier* 30 August 1928.



## Credits Weimar War Films

- D = director
- P = production company
- Dis = distribution firm
- S = scenario
- B = book
- MA = military adviser
- C = camera
- Sc = scenery
- M = music (mostly at the premiere)
- Pr = premiere
- MC = main characters
- L = length
- Syn = synopsis
- \* = seen by the author in the Bundesarchiv/Filmarchiv Berlin (BAB).

The credits are based on the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*, censorship reports (= cr) and film journals, in particular *Reichfilmblatt* (Rfb) and *Kinematograph* (Kin). Missing credits are due to the fact that the information could not be found in these (or other) sources. Besides the distribution firms mentioned other company's also distributed these films.

### 1914. DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND\*

- D : Richard Oswald
- P : Richard Oswald Filmproduktion
- Dis : Atlas Film Verleih
- S : Heinz Goldberg, Fritz Wendhausen (introduction: Eugen Fischer)
- B : (Emil Ludwig)
- C : Mutz Greenbaum (under direction of: Walter Zeiske)
- Sc : Franz Schroedter
- Pr : 20 January 1931; Tauentzien-Palast (Berlin)
- MC : Albert Bassermann, Reinhold Schünzel, Lucie Höflich, Ferdinand Hart, Oskar Homolka, Eugen Klopfer, Alfred Abel
- L : 3,057 mtrs. (10 acts) (cr); BAB-copy 2,730 mtrs.

### DIE ANDERE SEITE\*

- D : Heinz Paul
- P : Candofilm (under direction of: Joseph Candolini)
- Dis : Candofilm Verleih

- S : Translated into German by Hans Reisiger  
 B : (and play) *Journey's End* by R.C. Sheriff  
 C : Victor Gluck (under direction of: Harry Dettmann)  
 Sc : Robert Dietrich  
 Pr : 29 October 1931; Atrium (Berlin)  
 MC : Conrad Veidt, Theodor Loos, Friedrich Ettl, Victor de Kowa, Wolfgang Liebeneiner (debuut), Jack Mylong-Münz  
 L : 2,933 mtrs. (6 acts) (U.J. Klaus/cr); BAB-copy 2,754 mtrs.

#### BERGE IN FLAMMEN\*

- D : Karl Hartl & Luis Trenker  
 P : Marcel Vandal & Charles Delac-Produktion (under direction of: Pierre O'Connell)  
 Dis : idem  
 S : Luis Trenker & Karl Hartl  
 B : *Berge im Flammen* by Luis Trenker (published after the release of the film)  
 C : Sepp Allgeier, Albert Benitz, Giovanni Vitrotti (under direction of: Rudolf Strobl)  
 Sc : Leopold Blonder  
 M : Giuseppe Becce (song texts: Edi Knorr)  
 Pr : 28 September 1931; Ufa-Palast am Zoo (Berlin)  
 MC : Luis Trenker, Lissi Arna, Luigi Serventi, Claus Clausen  
 L : 2,994 mtrs. (11 acts) (cr)  
 Syn : Two friends, Trenker (Austrian) and Serventi (Italian), conquer a mountain top in the Dolomites. The war breaks out and after a companionable farewell they hurry to the front. In 1915 Italy declares war to Austria. Because of the occupation of Trenker's hometown by the Italians – Serventi is among them – it is impossible for the Austrian to see his wife. Not far from the village the Italians are making preparations to blow up a mountain. Trenker manages to thwart this plan. In 1931 both men again are climbing a mountain. The Italian cites a proverb: 'Die Menschen kommen und gehen, aber ewig stehen die Berge.'

#### BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS. EIN BEITRAG ZUR KRIEGSSCHULD LÜGE

- D : Max Neufeld  
 P : Ifuk-Film, Wenen  
 Dis : Filmhaus Bruckmann & Co. A.-G.  
 S : Jacques Bachrach  
 C : Eduard Hüsck

Sc : Arthur Berger  
 Pr : 17 September 1926; Ufa-Theater Friedrichstrasse (Berlin)  
 MC : Heinz Hanus, Margit Thuman-Miller, Eugen Neufeld, Renate Renée,  
 Max Neufeld, Robert Valberg, Albert Kersten  
 L : 2,162 mtrs. (6 acts) (Rfb)

#### DAS DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ. DIE FÜR DIE HEIMAT BLUTEN

D : Geza von Bolvary  
 P : Ewe-Film GmbH  
 Dis : Südfilm A.-G. (Emelka)  
 S : Margarete Maria Langen, Karl Bolwag  
 C : Hans Otto Gottschalk  
 Pr : 28 July 1926; Alhambra (Berlin). (27 July Munich)  
 MC : Margarethe Kupfer, Ellen Kürti, Vera Veronina, Helene von Bolvary,  
 Julius Messaros, Carl W. Mayer, Heinz Rühmann, Leon Epp  
 L : 2,418 mtrs. (6 acts) (Brennicke&Hembus, 1983)

#### DEUTSCHE FRAUEN – DEUTSCHE TREUE

D : Wolfgang Neff  
 P : Hegewald-Film (under direction of: Liddy Hegewald)  
 Dis : Hegewald-Film  
 S : Marie Luise Droop, Dr Arthur Irrgang  
 MA : Lieutenant-Colonel (ret.), Graf Moltke  
 C : Eduard Hoesch (under direction of: Kurt Heinz)  
 Sc : Arthur Günther  
 Pr : 2 February 1928; Schauburg (Berlin)  
 MC : Hermine Sterler, Helga Thomas, C.W. Meyer, Eugen Neufeld, Phi-  
 lipp Manning  
 L : 2,679 mtrs. (7 acts) (Rfb)

#### DER DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO. DIE SCHULD AM WELTKRIEG

D : Rolf Randolph  
 P : Süddeutsche Central-Film-Gesellschaft mbH (Nürnberg)  
 Dis : Georg Homann  
 S : Rolf Randolph  
 C : Ernst Krohn  
 MC : Niels Jensen, Rolf Randolph, Ernst Pittschau, Rudolf Hilpert, Viktor  
 Senger, Paul Graetz, Marga Köhler, Lys Andersen, Ela Elaar, Sigrid  
 Olsen



## DOUAUMONT. DIE HÖLLE VON VERDUN\*

- D : Heinz Paul  
 P : Karl Günter Panter-Filmproduktion  
 Dis : Candofilm Verleih  
 S : Karl Günter Panter, Heinz Paul, Richard Hutter  
 MA : Major (ret.) Freiherr von Forstner  
 C : Viktor Gluck, Georg Bruckbauer, Siegfried Weinman (under direction of: Harry Dettmann)  
 Sc : Robert Dietrich, Bruno Lutz  
 M : Ernst Erich Buder  
 Pr : 13 August 1931; Universum, Ufa Pavillon (Berlin)  
 MC : (as themselves:) Captain Haupt, 2nd Lieutenant Radtke  
 L : 2,444 mtrs. (10 acts) (Kin)

## DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND TOD. AUS DEM LOCHBUCH DES U.C.1

- D : Heinz Paul (assistant: Richard Royce)  
 P : Cinéma Film-Vertriebs-Ges. m.b.H., Berlin  
 Dis : Idem  
 S : Hella Moja  
 MA : Lieutenant-Commander Hermann Rohne  
 C : Viktor Gluck, Carl Blumenberg (under direction of: Harry Dettmann)  
 Sc : Carl Machus  
 Pr : about 1 January 1930  
 MC : Carl de Vogt, Angelo Ferrari, C.W. Meyer, Fritz Kampers, Jack Mylong-Münz, Jacky Monnier  
 L : 2,217 (6 acts) (cr)

## FELDGRAU. DAS SCHICKSAL EINES HEIMGEKEHRTEN (DER MANN AUS DEM JENSEITS)

- D : Manfred Noa  
 P : Gloria-Film (Ufa)  
 Dis : Südfilm A.G.  
 S : Fritz Podehl  
 B : *Der Mann aus dem Jenseits* by Fred Nelius  
 C : Gustav Preiss  
 Pr : 27 February 1926; Tauentzien-Palast (Ufa) (Berlin)  
 MC : Olga Tschechowa, Paul Wegener, Anton Pointner, Hans Albers, E.S. Schnell, Bruno Ziener  
 L : 2,084 mtrs. (6 acts) (Kin)

## HEIMKEHR\*

D : Joe May  
 P : Erich Pommer-Produktion der Ufa  
 Dis : Ufaleih  
 S : Fred Majo, Fritz Wendhausen  
 B : *Karl und Anna* by Leonhard Frank  
 C : Günther Rittau  
 Sc : Julius Borsody (design), Arthur Schwarz  
 Pr : 29 August 1928; Gloria Palast (Berlin)  
 MC : Lars Hanson, Gustav Fröhlich, Dita Parlo  
 L : 3,101 mtrs. (F-K)

## ICH HATT' EINEN KAMERADEN\*

D : Konrad Wiene  
 P : Konrad Wiene-Produktion der Ifco  
 Dis : Arthur Ziehm  
 S : Johannes Brandt  
 C : Julius Balting (under direction of: Heinz Sander)  
 Sc : Robert Dietrich  
 Pr : 20 August 1926; Nollendorfplatz (Berlin); (in Hamburg: 30 July 1926)  
 MC : Carl de Vogt, Olaf Fjord, Grete Reinwald, Iwa Wanja, Frida Richard, Andja Zimowa  
 L : BAB-copy 2,044 mtrs.

## IM GEHEIMDIENST (spy film)

D : Gustav Ucicky  
 P : Ufa (under direction of: Gregor Rabinowitsch)  
 Dis : Ufaleih  
 S : Walter Reisch  
 C : Carl Hoffmann  
 Sc : Robert Herlth & Walter Röhrig  
 M : Schmidt-Boelcke  
 Pr : 14 August 1931; Ufa-Palast am Zoo (Berlin)  
 MC : Ferdinand Bonn, Friedrich Kayssler, Willy Fritsch, Oskar Homolka, Brigitte Helm, Theodor Loos  
 L : 2,909 mtrs. (11 acts) (cr)

## IN DER HEIMAT DA GIBT'S EIN WIEDERSEH'N

D : Leo Mittler, (Under direction of: Reinhold Schünzel)  
 P : Reinhold Schünzel-Film GmbH (Ufa)  
 Dis : Universum-Film-Verleih GmbH (Ufa)

- S : Bobby E. Lüthge, Heinz Gordon  
 C : Ludwig Lippert (under direction of: Fritz Grossmann)  
 Sc : Fritz Kränke en Karl Machus  
 Pr : 23 December 1926; Mozartsaal (Berlin)  
 MC : Reinhold Schünzel, Johannes Riemann, Siegfried Arno, Fritz Kampers, Jakob Tiedke, Paul Morgan, Margit Barnay, Margo Walter  
 L : 2,014 mtrs. (7 acts) (Rfb)  
 Syn : A humorous film with a serious and pacifistic undertone about three soldiers at the front who become close comrades. Afterwards one of them marries a French girl.

#### KREUZER EMDEN\*

- D : Louis Ralph  
 P : Emelka  
 Dis : Verleih der Bayerischen Filmgesellschaft mbH (Emelka)  
 S : Alfred Halm, Louis Ralph  
 C : Franz Koch, Josef Wirsching  
 Sc : Willy Reiber  
 M : Friedrich Jung  
 Pr : 20 May 1932 (München in Phoebus-Palast; Berlin in Primus-Palast en Titania-Palast)  
 MC : Louis Ralph, Werner Fuetterer, Renée Stobrowa, Fritz Greiner, Hans Schlenck, Willy Kaiser-Heyl  
 L : 2,674 mtrs. (10 acts) (U.J.Klaus/cr)

#### MORGENROT\*

- D : Gustav Ucicky  
 P : Ufa (under direction of: Günther Stapenhorst)  
 Dis : Ufaleih  
 S : Gerhard Menzel (after an idea of E. Freiherr von Spiegel)  
 C : Carl Hoffmann (under direction of: Erich von Neuser)  
 Sc : Robert Hertl, Walther Röhrig  
 M : Herbert Windt  
 Pr : 31 January 1933 (Essen); 1 February 1933 (Düsseldorf); 2 February 1933 in Ufa-Palast am Zoo (Berlin)  
 MC : Rudof Forster, Adele Sandrock, Fritz Genschow, Camilla Spira, Gerhard Bienert, Friedrich Gnass, Franz Niklisch  
 L : 2,338 mtrs. (9 acts); BAB-copy 2,298 mtrs.

## NAMENLOSE HELDEN

- D : Hans Szekely  
 P : Prometheus-Film, Kliwa & Co. Wien  
 Dis : Alhambra-Film-Verleih (Berlin)  
 Pr : Oktober 1925; Filmpalast Hansa, Marienbad-Kino, Prinzenpalast (Berlin)  
 MC : Erwin Kaiser, Lilly Schönborn, Hermann Hoffmann, Max Grünberg

## NIEMANDSLAND\*

- D : Victor Trivas  
 P : Resco-Film (under direction of: Anton Resch)  
 Dis : Central-Film Fett & Co.  
 S : Victor Trivas & Leonhard Frank  
 MA : Von Rutke, Major von Erkert  
 C : Alexander Lagorio, Georg Stilianudis (under direction of: Conny Carstensen)  
 Sc : Arthur Schwarz  
 M : Hanns Eisler (under direction of: Kurt Schröder); songs: Leo Hirsch  
 Pr : 10 December 1931; Mozartsaal (Berlin)  
 MC : Ernst Busch, Hugh Stephens Douglass, Lewis Douglas, George Pécelet, Wladimir Sokoloff, Renée Stobrowa, Zoe Frank, Rose Mai, Elisabeth Lennartz  
 L : 2,556 mtrs. (9 acts) (Kin); (video NFM)

## SCAPA FLOW. DER DEUTSCHEN FLOTTE LETZTE TAT

- D : Leo Lasko  
 P : Ludwig Gottschalk, Olympia Film GmbH  
 Dis : Olympia Film GmbH, Ludwig Gottschalk Film  
 S : Leo de Laforgue, Leo lasko  
 C : Edgar S. Ziesemer  
 Sc : Heinrich Richter  
 Pr : 20 February, 1930; Schauburg (Berlin)  
 MC : Otto Gebühr, Clair Rommer, Erna Morena, Heinz Klockow, Claus Clausen  
 L : 2,309 mtrs. (7 acts) (cr)

## SOMME. DAS GRAB DER MILLIONEN\*

- D : Heinz Paul  
 P : Cando-Film (under direction of: Joseph Candolini)  
 Dis : Cando-Film-Verleih  
 S : Heinz Paul (adapted for Germany)

- C : Viktor Gluck, Georg Bruckbauer, Sydney Blythe, Frederick Young  
(under direction of: Harry Dettmann)  
Pr. : 29 April 1930; Ufa Palast am Zoo (Berlin)  
MC : Hermine Sterler, Oscar Marion, Hans Tost, Walter Edthofer  
M : Pflugmacher  
L : 2,230 mtrs. (Film); (6 acts) (Rfb); BAB-copy 2153 mtrs.

## TANNENBERG\*

- D : Heinz Paul  
P : H.P.-Film der Praessens (under direction of: Harry Dettmann);  
Deutsch Schweizerische Gemeinschaftsproduktion  
Dis : Praessens-Film GmbH; Nietzsche A.G.; Union-Tonfilm-Produktion  
S : Heinz Paul, Oskar Hócker, Major a.D. Georg von Viebahn  
MA : Major (ret.) Georg von Viebahn  
C : Victor Gluck, Georg Bruckbauer (under direction of: Willi Habantz)  
Sc : Robert Dietrich  
Pr : 27 September 1932; Berlin Primus-Palast, Titania-Palast (Berlin); 31  
August 1932 (Wenen)  
MC : Hans Stüwe, Käthe Haack, Hertha von Walther, Erika Dannhoff,  
Rudolf Klicks a.o.  
M : Ernst Erich Buder  
L : 2,806 mtrs. (12 acts) (cr); BAB-copy 2,153 mtrs.

## Ug WEDDIGEN. EIN HELDENSCHICKSAL

- D : Heinz Paul  
P : Jofa-Produktion (under direction of:Hanns Otto)  
Dis : Werner-Film  
Sc : Willy Rath  
MA : Lieutenant-Commander (ret.). Hermann Rohne  
C : Willy Goldberger (under direction of:Hermann Grund)  
Sc : Karl Machus (ship-building: Franz Schroedter)  
Pr : 5 May 1927; Schauburg (Berlin)  
MC : Carl de Vogt, Mathilde Sussin, Fritz Alberti, Fred Solm, Gerd Briese,  
Ernst Hofmann, Hans Mierendorff, Hella Moja  
L : 2,448 mtrs. (6 acts) (cr)

## UNSERE EMDEN. FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER DES INDISCHEN OZEANS

- D : Louis Ralph  
P : Münchener Lichtspielkunst A.-G. (Emelka)  
Dis : Bayerische Filmgesellschaft (Emelka)  
S : Lieutenant-Commander (ret.) Von Werner

- B : Vice-Admiral H.C. Raeder en Vice-Admiral H.C. von Mantey, *Admiralstabwerk 'Kreuzerkrieg', Band II*
- C : Ewald Daub, Werner Bohne, Von Schwertführer, Georg Schmidt, Joseph Wirsching
- Sc : Willy Reiber, Botho Höfer
- Pr : 22 December 1926; Schauburg, Emelka Palast (Berlin)
- MC : (as himself:) Lieutenant-Commander Hellmuth von Mücke, Lieutenant-Commander (ret.) Lauterbach, Commander R.Witthoef, Lieutenant-Colonel (ret.) Dietrich Benzler, Louis Ralph
- L : 2,851 mtrs. (6 acts) (Rfb)

## DIE UNSICHTBARE FRONT (spy film)

- D : Richard Eichberg
- P : Richard Eichberg-Film GmbH
- Dis : Deutsche Universal-Film A.-G. Berlin
- S : Robert A.Stemmle, Max Kimmich; after an idea of M.Kimmich en Harry Anspach
- MA : Lieutenant-Commander Horst Obermüller
- C : Bruno Mondt (under direction of: Willy Melas)
- Sc : W.A.Herrmann, A.Günther
- M : Hans May (song text: Kurt Schwabach)
- Pr : 23 December 1932; Capitol (Berlin)
- MC : Trude von Molo, Jack Mylong-Münz, Theodor Loos, Karl Ludwig Diehl, Helmuth Kionka
- L : 2,509 mtrs. (6 acts) (cr)

## UNTER FALSCHER FLAGGE (spy film)

- D : Johannes Meyer
- P : Universal-Tobis-Gemeinschaftsproduktion (under direction of: Hans von Wolzogen, Max Wogritsch)
- Dis : Deutsche Universal-Film A.-G. Berlin
- S : Johannes Brandt, Josef Than, Max Kimmich
- B : after a short story by Max Kimmich
- C : Otto Kanturek (under direction of: Erich Frisch)
- Sc : Otto Hunte
- M : Giuseppe Becce
- Pr : 12 February 1932; Ufa-Palast am Zoo (Berlin)
- MC : Charlotte Susa, Gustav Fröhlich, Friedrich Kayssler, Hermann Speelmanns
- L : 2,628 mtrs. (5 acts) (cr)

## DIE VERSUNKENE FLOTTE

- D : Manfred Noa  
 P : Lothar Stark GmbH Berlin  
 Dis : Lothar Stark GmbH  
 S : Willy Rath, Margarethe Maria Langen  
 MA : Lieutenant-Commander Helmut Lorenz (navy technical aspects)  
 B : *Die versunkene Flotte* by Helmut Lorenz  
 C : Otto Kanturek  
 Sc : Gustav A. Knauer  
 Pr : 8 December 1926; Primus-Palast (Berlin)  
 MC : Bernard Goetzke, Agnes Esterhazy, Henry Stuart, Hans Merendorff,  
 Werner Pittschau (Heinrich George, Hans Albers, Käthe Hack)  
 L : 2,756 mtrs. (7 acts) (Kin)

## VOLK IN NOT

- D : Wolfgang Neff  
 P : Hegewald-Film  
 S : Marie Luise Droop  
 C : Willy Goldberger  
 Sc : W.A. Hermanns  
 Pr : December. 1925; Schauburg (Berlin)  
 MC : Hermine Sterler, Claire Rommer, Werner Pittschau, G.A. Semmler,  
 Eduard von Winterstein  
 L : 2,276 mtrs. (7 acts) (cr)

## DER WELTKRIEG I. TEIL. DES VOLKES HELDENGANG

- D : Leo Lasko (organisation: Ernst Krieger)  
 P : Ufa  
 Dis : Ufa  
 S : George Soldan, Erich Otto Volkmann  
 C : Fritz Arno Wagner, Hans Scholz (trickery: Svend Noldan)  
 Sc : Carl Ludwig Kirmse  
 Pr : 22 April 1927; Ufa Palast am Zoo (Berlin)  
 M : Marc Roland  
 L : 2,346 mtrs. (7 acts) (Bock, *Ufa-Buch*)

## DER WELTKRIEG II. TEIL. DES VOLKES NOT

- D : Leo Lasko (organisation: Ernst Krieger)  
 P : Ufa  
 Dis : Ufa  
 S : George Soldan, Erich Otto Volkmann



C : E. Daub, Hans Scholz, K. Tschetwerikoff (trickery: S. Noldan)  
Sc : Carl Ludwig Kirmse  
Pr : 9 February 1928; Ufa Palast am Zoo (Berlin)  
M : Marc Roland  
L : 2,639 mtrs. (6 acts) (Bock, *Ufa-Buch*)

DER WELTKRIEG\* (compilation)

P : Ufa  
Pr : 6 October 1933; Ufa-Pavillon Nollendorffplatz (*Film-Kurier* 7 October 1933)  
L : BAB-copy: 3,779 mtrs. (+ video)

WESTFRONT 1918\*

D : Georg Wilhelm Pabst (assistant: Paul Falkenberg)  
P : Nero-Film A.G. (under direction of: Leo Meyer)  
Dis : Ver. Star-Film GmbH  
S : Ladislaus Vajda  
B : *Vier von der Infanterie* by Ernst Johannsen (1928)  
C : Fritz Arno Wagner, Ch. Métain  
Sc : Ernö Metzner  
Pr : 23 May 1930; Capitol (Berlin)  
MC : Fritz Kampers, Gustav Diessl, Hans Joachim Moebis, Claus Clausen, Jackie Monnier, Hanna Hoessrich, Else Heller  
L : 2,672 mtrs. (8 acts) (cr); (video NFM)



## **Archives and Libraries**

Akademie der Künste (Berlin)

Amerika-Gedenkbibliothek (Berlin)

Bundesarchiv / Filmarchiv Berlin

Bundesarchiv Koblenz

Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie (Berlin)

Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde (Frankfurt am Main)

Deutsche Kinemathek (Berlin)

Institut für Publizistik (Freie Universität, Berlin)

Landesarchiv Berlin

Netherlands Film Museum (Amsterdam)

Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Potsdamerplatz (Berlin)

Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Unter den Linden (Berlin)

Universitätsbibliothek Humboldt-Universität (Berlin)



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*Germania*  
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*Der Montag*  
*Die Rote Fahne*  
*Der Tag*  
*Tempo*  
*Völkischer Beobachter*  
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# Index of Names

- Abel, A. 291  
Albers, H. 177, 294  
Alberti, F. 67, 298  
Allen, R. 17  
Andersen, L. 293  
Andra, F. 45  
Arna, L. 292  
Arnheim, R. 36  
Arno, S. 296  
Asther, N. 177  
Auen, K. 115
- Balasz, B. 36, 54  
Barnay, M. 296  
Bassermann, A. 65, 291  
Bayern, R. von 98  
Becce, G. 40, 292, 299  
Becker-Sachs, C. 200  
Begas-Sohn 115  
Benjamin, W. 19  
Benzler, D. 299  
Berchtold, L. 71, 85  
Berger, M. 51  
Bethmann-Hollweg, T. 65, 68, 70-71  
Betz, H-W. 36, 82  
Bienert, G. 296  
Bismarck, O. von 42, 47, 161  
Blasco Ibañez, V. 49  
Bloch, E. 19  
Blythe, S. 106  
Bolvary, G. von 194  
Bolvary, H. von 293  
Bonn, F. 295
- Bordwell, D. 17  
Bottomore, S. 18  
Brecht, B. 89  
Briese, G. 180, 298  
Bruckbauer, G. 106  
Brüning, H. 56, 62, 83  
Buchanan, G. 67  
Buchner, H. 24  
Bülow, B. von 162  
Busch, E. 142, 297
- Chotek, S. von 77  
Churchill, W. 173  
Clausen, C. 129, 173, 292, 297, 301  
Clemenceau, G. 61  
Correll, E.H. 163
- Dannhof, E. 116, 298  
Diehl, K.L. 299  
Diessl, G. 129, 301  
Dix, O. 91  
Douglas, H.S. 142, 297  
Douglas, L. 142, 145, 297  
Dreyfus, A. 69  
Droop, M.L. 197, 200, 293, 300
- Ebert, F. 53, 212  
Edthofer, W. 298  
Eisenstein, S. 22, 53, 127, 169-170, 175  
Eisner, L. 36  
Eissler, H. 146, 297  
Eksteins, M. 12, 15, 21-25, 123, 221-222

- Elaar, E. 293  
 Epp, L. 293  
 Erzberger, M. 38  
 Esterhazy, A. 177, 300  
 Ettel, F. 292  
  
 Falkenhayn, E. von 68, 100-102,  
 121  
 Ferrari, A. 182, 294  
 Fischer, E. 63-64, 70-71, 74, 84-85,  
 291  
 Fischer, F. 72  
 Fjord, O. 207, 295  
 Flex, W. 13  
 Forster, R. 183-184, 189, 296  
 Frank, L. 54, 141, 215-216, 295, 297  
 Franz Ferdinand 64, 75-78, 95  
 Franz Joseph 64-65, 71, 85  
 Frederick II (the Great) 29, 47, 173  
 Freund, K. 40, 54  
 Frick, W. 183  
 Friedrich, E. 91, 159  
 Fritsch, W. 295  
 Fröhlich, G. 216, 295  
 Fuetterer, W. 296  
  
 Gebühr, O. 173-174, 297  
 Genschow, F. 185, 296  
 George, H. 66, 177  
 Gephard, E. 36  
 Gessler, O. 163  
 Gläser, E. 124  
 Gluck, V. 106  
 Gnass, F. 296  
 Goebbels, J. 30, 56, 83, 157  
 Goering, R. 175, 183  
 Goetzke, B. 177, 300  
 Goldbaum, W. 70  
 Goldberg, H. 71, 291  
 Gollbach, M. 123-124, 127, 129,  
 131, 133-134, 205  
 Gomery, D. 17  
  
 Gradmann, C. 73-74  
 Graetz, P. 293  
 Greiner, F. 296  
 Grey, E. 72, 86  
 Grierson, J. 88  
 Grosz, G. 91  
 Grünberg, M. 297  
 Gründgens, G. 74  
 Gunning, T. 18  
  
 Haack, K. 40, 116, 177, 298  
 Haas, W. 36  
 Hansen, M. 18  
 Hanson, L. 216, 295  
 Hanus, H. 293  
 Hart, F. 66-67, 291  
 Hartlaub, G.F. 89  
 Hauff, W. 184  
 Haupt, captain 294  
 Hedengran, S. 197  
 Hegewald, L. 197, 200  
 Heiling, H. 67  
 Heinz, K. 293  
 Helm, B. 295  
 Henning, H-U. 36  
 Hermand, J. 89  
 Herzberg, G. 36, 182, 211  
 Hilpert, R. 293  
 Hindenburg, P. von 47, 53, 56, 97-  
 98, 102, 112-114, 116, 120-121,  
 126, 171, 224  
 Hirsch, L. 146, 297  
 Hitler, A. 56, 101, 183  
 Hoffmann, C. 295, 296  
 Hoffmann, E. 180, 298  
 Hoffmann, H. 297  
 Höflich, L. 66-67, 291  
 Homolka, O. 65, 67, 291  
 Hugenberg, A. 29-30, 38, 54, 148,  
 183  
 Huizinga, J. 21  
 Hüppauf, B. 101-103

- Ihering, H. 36, 98, 107, 190, 192  
 Ingram, R. 49
- Jäger, E. 36, 197, 216-217  
 Jäger, W. 62  
 Jagow, G. von 60  
 Jannings, E. 40  
 Jaurès, J. 66, 68-69, 85  
 Jensen, N. 293  
 Johannsen, E. 124, 129, 205, 301  
 Jowett, G. 17  
 Jünger, E. 13, 89, 124
- Kaiser, E. 126, 297  
 Kaiser-Heyl, W. 296  
 Kalbus, O. 43  
 Kalsar, E. 297  
 Kampers, F. 129, 294, 296, 301  
 Karel (King) 85  
 Kästner, E. 36  
 Kayssler, F. 299  
 Kerr, A. 36  
 Kersten, A. 293  
 Kersten, K. 36  
 Kesser, A. 108  
 Kinz, F. 116  
 Kionka, H. 299  
 Klicks, R. 116, 298  
 Klitzsch, L. 38, 54  
 Klöckner, K. 116  
 Klopfer, E. 64, 291  
 Knott, E. 183-184  
 Koerner, K. 116  
 Köhler, M. 293  
 Kollwitz, K. 54  
 Köppen, E. 124  
 Korner, T. 42  
 Kortner, F. 40  
 Kowa, V. de 292  
 Kracauer, S. 19-20, 22, 26, 36, 90,  
 123, 146, 151, 153, 168, 189, 203,  
 219
- Krieger, P. 90, 92  
 Kühnberg, L. 45  
 Külz, W. 53  
 Kupfer, M. 40, 195-196, 293  
 Kürti, E. 293
- Landa, M. 45  
 Lang, F. 22, 54, 169, 216  
 Larsen, V. 40  
 Lasalle, F. 47  
 Lasko, L. 40, 91, 92, 172, 173, 297,  
 300  
 Leed, E.J. 11  
 Lenin, V.I. 78-79  
 Lennartz, E. 297  
 Lethen, H. 90  
 Licho, E. A. 67  
 Liebeneiner, W. 139, 292  
 Liedtke, H. 40, 45  
 Lloyd George, D. 61, 72  
 Lohde, S. 115  
 Lohman, W. 163  
 Loos, T. 292  
 Lorenz, H. 175-176, 300  
 Lubitsch, E. 40, 45, 47  
 Ludendorff, E. 39-40, 97-98, 102,  
 116, 120-121, 224  
 Ludwig, E. 47, 71-74, 291  
 Luise (Queen) 47
- Mai, R. 297  
 Mann, H. 54  
 Manning, P. 293  
 Marion, O. 298  
 May, H. 299  
 May, J. 40, 45, 216, 295  
 May, M. 40, 45  
 Mayer, C.W. 293  
 Menzel, G. 184, 296  
 Merendorff, H. 300  
 Messaros, J. 293  
 Messter, O. 35



- Métain, C. 63, 301  
 Meyer, C.W. 196, 293, 294, 299  
 Mierendorff, H. 298  
 Milestone, L. 16, 56, 128, 148  
 Misch, G. 99  
 Moebis, H.J. 129, 301  
 Moja, H. 180, 182, 294, 298  
 Molo, T. von 299  
 Moltke, H. von 68, 97-98  
 Mommsen, W. 72  
 Monaco, P. 203  
 Monnier, J. 182, 294, 301  
 Morena, E. 45, 297  
 Morgan, P. 296  
 Mosse, G. 21, 23-25, 101, 214  
 Mühlhofer, H. 116  
 Müller, G.W. 74  
 Müller, H.H. 57  
 Müller, L. 67  
 Müller-Franken, H. 60  
 Münzenberg, W. 28  
 Murnau, F.W. 54, 216  
 Musser, C. 18  
 Mylong-Münz, J. 182, 292, 294  
  
 Napoleon 42-43, 47, 65  
 Neff, W. 112, 197, 200, 293, 300  
 Negri, P. 40  
 Nelius, F. 215, 294  
 Neufeld, E. 196, 293  
 Neufeld, M. 292, 293  
 Nicholas II 47, 65, 67-68, 71, 85, 193  
 Nicolai (Grand duke) 66-67, 78, 85  
 Nielsen, A. 34-35, 45  
 Niklisch, F. 296  
 Noa, M. 67, 176, 294, 300  
 Noldan, S. 92, 300-301  
  
 Olsen, S. 293  
 Oswald, R. 59-60, 64, 68-71, 74, 81, 84, 291  
 Oswald, O. 40  
  
 Pabst, G. 209  
 Pabst, G.W. 18, 54, 127-129, 131-134, 136-138, 140-141, 145, 147-149, 154-155, 204-206, 301  
 Papen, F. von 56, 183  
 Parlo, D. 216-217, 295  
 Paul, H. 55, 103, 106-109, 136-141, 156, 176, 180-182, 291, 294, 297-298  
 Pearson, R. 18  
 Pécelet, G. 142, 297  
 Peppler, H. 67  
 Petro, P. 193  
 Piel, H. 40  
 Pinthus, K. 151  
 Piscator, E. 54, 104, 127  
 Pittschau, E. 293  
 Pittschau, W. 200, 300  
 Pless, H. 116  
 Plevier, T. 124  
 Poincaré, R., 86, 96  
 Pointner, A. 213-214, 294  
 Poirier, L. 46, 109  
 Pol, H. 36  
 Pommer, E. 54, 216, 295  
 Porten, H. 34, 40, 43, 45  
 Pourtales, F. 67, 85  
 Princip, G. 64, 77  
 Pröckel, E. 115  
  
 Radtke, lieutenant 294  
 Ralph, L. 164-165, 167, 172, 296, 298, 299  
 Rasputin, G. 77-78  
 Redl, A. 47, 50, 77, 79  
 Redmann, W. 36, 95, 97, 151  
 Reicher, E. 45  
 Reinhardt, M. 74  
 Reinwald, G. 207, 295  
 Remarque, E.M. 16, 22, 73, 83, 124, 151, 155  
 Renée, R. 293

- Renn, L. 124, 151  
Richard, F. 207, 295  
Riemann, J. 296  
Roland, M. 105, 300-301  
Rommer, C. 173, 200-201, 297, 300  
Rühmann, H. 195-196, 293  
Runia, E. 13-14  
Ruttmann, W. 22, 104, 146
- Sahl, H. 36  
Salewski, M. 11, 62  
Sandrock, A. 184, 189-190, 192,  
197, 296  
Sasonow, S.D. 65, 67, 70, 72  
Scharrer, A. 124  
Scheidemann, P. 60  
Schleicher, K. von 55  
Schlenck, H. 296  
Schnell, E.S. 294  
Schönborn, L. 126, 297  
Schrader, B. 16  
Schünzel, R. 40, 65, 67, 291, 295-  
296  
Schwind, W. von 68  
Semmler, G.A. 201, 300  
Senger, V. 293  
Serventi, L. 292  
Sheriff, R.C. 124, 136, 139, 292  
Skladanowsky, E. 33  
Skladanowsky, M. 33  
Sklar, R. 17  
Sloterdijk, P. 90  
Sokoloff, W. 142, 297  
Soldan, G. 40, 90, 95, 300  
Solm, F. 180, 298  
Speelmanns, H. 299  
Spier Irwing, 39  
Spira, C. 296  
Staiger, J. 17  
Stausz, E.G. 40  
Sterler, H. 106, 196-198, 200-201,  
293, 298, 300
- Stinnes, H. 29  
Stobrowa, R. 296-297  
Stresemann, G. 29, 38, 54, 61-62, 90  
Stuart, H. 177, 300  
Stüwe, H. 116, 298  
Suchomlinow, V. 67  
Susa, C. 299  
Sussin, M. 298  
Swaan, A. de 13-14  
Szatmari, E. 152-154  
Szekely, H. 125, 127, 297
- Tschechowa, O. 213-214, 294  
Tennyson, A. 214-215  
Theweleit, K. 199  
Thomas, H. 196, 293  
Thompson, K. 17  
Thuman-Miller, M. 293  
Tiedke, J. 296  
Tost, H. 182, 298  
Trenker, L. 292  
Trenk-Trebitsch, W. 138  
Treumann, W. 45  
Trivas, V. 141-142, 145, 215, 297  
Tucholsky, K. 73
- Ucicky, G. 183-184, 295-296  
Uhland, L. 207  
Uricchio, W. 18
- Valberg, R. 293  
Veidt, C. 137, 139, 156, 292  
Veronina, V. 293  
Vogt, C. de 177, 182, 207, 294-295,  
298  
Volkman, E.O. 90, 300
- Wagner, O. 116  
Walter, M. 296  
Walther, H. von 116, 298  
Wanja, I. 208, 295  
Weddigen, O. 176-177

- Wegener, A. von 86  
Wegener, P. 213-214, 294  
Weisenborn, G. 146  
Weldon Whalen, R. 15, 24  
Wendhausen, F. 71, 216, 291, 295  
Whale, J. 136  
White, H. 14  
Wiemann, M. 156  
Wiene, K. 207, 295  
Wiene, R. 16, 40  
Wilhelm II 47, 67-68, 71, 85, 102, 161-  
162, 170, 224  
Wilson, W. 60-61, 173  
Winter, J. 21, 23-25, 212, 214  
Winterstein, E. von 200, 300  
Wollenberg, E. 36  
Wollenberg, H. 36, 81  
Young, F. 106  
Zerbe, I. 50-51  
Ziener, B. 294  
Zimowa, A. 209, 295  
Zweig, A. 124

# Index of Subjects

- 12-Uhr Blatt* 83  
1914, DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM  
WELTBRAND (1914) 55, 57, 59-60, 63-  
64, 68-69, 71, 74-76, 78, 80-83, 85, 87, 109,  
114, 126, 193, 220, 291  
*8-Uhr Abendblatt* 151
- Abend, Der* 174  
*Alhambra* 46, 194  
ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT  
(ALL QUIET) 16, 18, 23, 46, 56, 69,  
82-83, 109, 111, 128, 148, 172, 181,  
206, 215  
Alldeutscher Verband 30  
Allgemeiner Deutscher  
Gewerkschaftsbund (ADGB) 51  
AN DER SCHÖNEN BLAUEN  
Donau 46  
*andere Seite, Die* 57  
ANDERE SEITE, DIE 55, 57, 88, 109,  
123-124, 128, 136-141, 144-145,  
147, 149-150, 152, 156-157, 159,  
203, 224, 291  
*Angriff, Der* 30, 82-83, 85-86, 150,  
157-158, 189  
ANNEMARIE UND IHR UHLAN 50  
anti-war film(s) 23  
ASCHERMITTWOCH 30  
Autorenfilm(e) 34-35
- Babelsberg 37, 113  
Battle of Jutland 162  
Battle of Liège 97, 116  
Battle of the Marne 95, 97-98  
Battle of Skagerrak 175  
Battle of the Somme 95, 102, 104  
BATTLE OF THE SOMME, THE 106,  
108  
Battle of Tannenberg 95, 97, 113,  
115, 121  
Battle of Verdun  
(Douaumont) 102, 103, 110  
Battle of Ypres/Langemarck 95,  
99, 101  
Bauhaus 22  
BEI UNSEREN HELDEN AN DER  
SOMME 104  
BERGE IN FLAMMEN 20, 46, 57, 109,  
292  
BERLIN, SYMPHONIE EINER  
GROSSSTADT 22, 104, 146  
*Berliner Börsen-Courier* 28-29, 98-  
100, 108, 157, 190  
*Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* 29  
*Berliner Morgenpost* 28-29, 36, 95,  
97-98, 151, 155-156, 181, 217  
*Berliner Tageblatt* 28-29, 50-51, 152-  
153, 176, 181  
BIG PARADE, THE 202  
Bild- und Filmamt (Bufa) 39-40, 44,  
52-53  
*Bildwart, Der* 101  
Bismarck 42, 47, 161  
BISMARCK 42  
BLOCKADE... UND U-BOOTKRIEG 161  
BOMBEN AUF MONTE CARLO 46  
BRANDSTIFTER EUROPAS 26, 49, 59,  
75-79, 84, 91, 292

- CABINET DES DR. CALIGARI,  
Das 16
- Censorship 46-49, 51, 69, 113-114,  
173, 177-178, 182-183
- DARK ANGEL, THE 202
- Dawes plan 53, 62
- DEUTSCHE MUTTERHERZ, DAS 49,  
91, 194-198, 201-202, 293
- DEUTSCHE FRAUEN-DEUTSCHE TREUE  
(DFDT) 43, 106, 194-198, 202-203,  
293
- Deutsche, Der* 29, 36, 81
- Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 29, 84,  
86, 111, 120, 149-150, 157, 168-  
169, 202, 224
- Deutsche Demokratische Partei  
(DDP) 28-29, 53, 56, 163
- Deutsche Filmzeitung* 150
- Deutsche Lichtbild-Gesellschaft  
(DLG) 38-39
- Deutsche Lichtspiel-Syndicat 55
- Deutsche Volkspartei (DVP) 29, 56,  
83
- Deutsche Zeitung* 30, 111, 148, 150,  
158
- Deutscher Flottenverein 162
- Deutscher Seeverein 163
- Deutschnationale Volkspartei  
(DNVP) 29-30, 54-56, 83, 148, 150
- Deutschtum im Bilde 52
- DOPPELMORD VON SARAJEWO,  
Der 59, 75-77, 293
- Douaumont* 57
- DOUAUMONT 57, 88, 103, 104, 106,  
109, 111, 114, 119, 136, 165, 168,  
203, 220, 294
- DOUAUMONT VU PAR LES  
ALLEMANDS 109
- DREI TAGE AUF LEBEN UND  
Tod 137, 161, 181-182, 203
- Éclairé 34
- Eiko-Film 43
- EIN ÜBERFALL IN FEINDESLAND 43
- EMDEN III 164, 168
- Emelka 55, 164-165, 170-171, 194
- Enoch Arden 214, 217
- Erste Internationale Film-  
Zeitung 35
- ES BRAUST EIN RUF WIE  
DONNERHALL 43
- expressionism 213
- FAUST 54
- FELDGRAU (DER MANN AUS DEM  
JENSEITS) 49, 67, 91, 176, 207, 212-  
216, 294
- Film, Der* 29, 35-36, 38, 50-51, 81-  
82, 191
- Film Act (Lichtspielgesetz) 48
- Film-Kurier* 29, 35-36, 51, 60, 79, 81,  
104, 108, 127, 168-169, 175, 181-  
182, 196-198, 211
- Filmprüfstelle 48, 69, 114
- FLÖTENKONZERT VON  
SANSSOUCI 183
- Flotte, Die* 162
- FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCA-  
LYPSE, THE 49
- Frankfurter Zeitung* 19, 28-29, 69,  
82, 151, 190-191
- Freideutsche Jugend 13
- FREIES VOLK 51
- FRIDERICUS REX (Fridericus) 21, 47,  
50, 52-53, 173
- FÜRS VATERLAND 43
- Gaumont 34
- Germania* 29, 79, 81, 93, 108, 118,  
156, 168, 199, 204, 206
- GOLEM, DER 213
- GÖSTA BERLING 216

- Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914, Die* 61  
*Heeresbericht* 124  
 Hegewald-Film 197  
 HEILIGE UND IHR NARR, DIE 46  
 HEIMKEHR 46, 54, 141, 194, 207, 212, 214-216, 295  
 HELDEN AN DER SOMME 52  
 HELDENTUM UND TODESKAMPF UNSERER EMDEN 164  
 HERRIN DER WELT, DIE 216  
 Hetzfilm(e) 37, 49  
 HÖLLENKAMPF AN DER AISNE 52  
  
 ICH HATT' EINE(n) KAMERADEN 49, 52, 91, 194, 198, 201, 206-209, 295  
*Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 76-78, 114, 173-174, 177, 182, 184, 196, 198, 210-211  
 IM GEHEIMDIENST 57, 109, 295  
 IM SCHATTEN DES GROSSEN KRIEGES 43  
*Im Westen nichts neues* 16, 20, 22, 124  
 IN DER HEIMAT DA GIBT'S EIN WIEDERSEH'N 67  
 INDISCHE GRABMÄLER, DAS 216  
  
*Jahrgang 1902* 124  
 Jofa-Produktion 176  
*Journey's end* 124, 136, 138  
*Juli* 14 71, 74  
  
*Kaisers Külies, Des* 124  
 KAMERADENSCHAFT 109, 141  
*Karl und Anna* 141, 215-216  
 KEINEN PFENNIG DER FÜRSTEN 51  
*Kinematograph* 29, 35-37, 41, 48, 50, 52, 69, 78-79, 81, 84, 86, 165, 180  
 KOLBERG 47  
  
 Kommunistische Partei Deutschland (KPD) 28, 56, 83  
*Kreuz-Zeitung* 30, 36, 82, 84-86, 93, 104, 111, 148, 154, 158, 204  
 KREUZER EMDEN 30, 161, 164, 165, 167, 170-172, 296  
*Krieg* 124-125, 151  
 KRIEGSGETRAUT 43  
 Kriegsschulddebat 60  
*Kriegsschuldfrage, die* 61  
 Kriegsschuldlüge 15, 62  
 Kriegsschuldreferat 61  
*Kriegstagebuch einer Mutter* 201  
*kritischen 39 Tage, Die* 71  
  
*L'Humanité* 66  
 LAND DES LÄCHELNS, DAS 46  
 LETZTE MANN, DER 216  
*Lichtbildbühne* 29, 35-36, 41, 52, 70-71, 76, 81, 99, 101, 113-114, 165, 170-171, 198, 201, 212, 214  
*literarische Welt, Die* 54  
  
 MABUSE, DR. 216  
 MADAM DUBARRY 47  
*Mann aus der Jenseits, der* 67, 215  
 MARE NOSTRUM 49, 161  
 Marmorhaus 46  
*Marneschlacht, Die* 57  
 MELDEHUNDE IM FEINDLICHEN FEUER 52  
 Messter Projektion 35  
 Messter-Film 40-41, 44  
 METROPOLIS 22, 54, 216  
 Militärfilm(e) 49  
 Militärklamotten 51  
 MIT DER KAMERA IN DER SCHLACHTFRONT 42, 191-193  
*Montag, Der* 30, 79-80, 85, 152, 169, 180  
 MORGENROT 20, 54, 57, 161, 179, 183-186, 191-193, 198, 201-203, 296

- MÜDE TOD, DER 216
- Nachkrieg* 151
- NAMENLOSE HELDEN 24, 26, 49, 88,  
91, 123-128, 132, 141-142, 152,  
159, 200, 219, 297
- National Film 55
- National Socialism 19-20, 28, 30,  
56, 90, 128, 150, 154, 183, 189-190
- Nationalsozialistische Deutsche  
Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) 30, 56,  
83
- Nero-Film 55
- Neue Sachlichkeit 17, 89
- New Film History 18
- New Objectivity 17-19, 88-90, 123-  
124, 225
- NIBELUNGEN 169, 216
- NIEMANDSLAND 20, 55, 57, 88, 109,  
123, 128-129, 132, 140-142, 144-  
147, 152, 157, 206, 216, 221, 224,  
297
- No man's land 11
- Nordisk 34, 40, 44
- Oberfilmprüfstelle 47-48, 70
- Pathé Frères 34
- Phoebus 52-53, 163
- Phoebus-Palast 171
- POTEMKIN 22, 53, 169-170, 175, 181
- Primus-Palast 46
- Prometheus-Film 125
- Reformbewegung 34
- Reichsfilmbblatt* 29, 35, 51, 78-79, 81,  
84, 157, 168, 196, 204
- Reichsverband deutscher  
Lichtspieltheaterbesitzer 49
- REVEILLE 50
- Rohwolt 71
- ROSENMTAG 50
- Rote Fahne, Die* 28, 82, 85, 108, 126-  
127, 142, 151, 155, 157
- ROTE KREUZ, DAS 43
- SCAPA FLOW 57, 161, 164, 172-173,  
297
- Schauburg 194, 197
- Scherlverlag 29
- SCHMIEDE 51
- Second World War 16, 19
- Seeschlacht* 175
- SEESCHLACHTEN BEI CORONEL UND  
DEN FALKLANDINSELN, DIE 161
- SOMEBODY'S MOTHER 202
- SOMME 57, 88, 106-109, 111, 136,  
172, 198, 201, 297
- Sozialdemokratische Partei  
Deutschlands (SPD) 28, 56
- Spitzenorganisation der deutschen  
Filmindustrie 49
- Stahlhelm 30, 52, 55
- Streit um den Sergeanten Grischa,  
Der* 124
- STUDENT VON PRAG, DER 213
- Sturmabteilung (SA) 56
- SUBMARINE 161
- Südfilm 55
- SUMURUN 213
- Tag, Der* 29, 85-86, 150, 156
- Tägliche Rundschau* 175
- TANNENBERG 88, 95-96, 106, 112-  
115, 118-120, 136, 149, 168-169,  
193, 298
- TANZENDE WIEN, DAS 46
- Tempelhof 41
- Tempo* 172, 190
- Terra 54
- Tobis 55
- Tobis-Klangfilm 55
- TOTENGRÄBER EINES KAISERREICHS,  
DER 50



- U 9 WEDDIGEN 20, 137, 161, 175-177, 179-182, 182, 203, 298  
 U-BOOT IN GEFAHR 161  
 Ufa Palast am Zoo 45, 106, 183  
 Ufa Pavilion 109  
 Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (USPD) 28  
 Union Film 40  
 Union-Theater 34  
 Universum 109  
 Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft (Ufa) 29, 38-40, 54-55, 69, 90-91, 94, 109, 113, 163, 183, 216  
 UNSERE EMDEN 20, 30, 46, 49, 91, 161, 164-172, 175, 298  
  
 VANINA 213  
 VATERLAND RUFT, DAS 43  
 Vaterländischen Film-Gesellschaft 52  
*Vaterlandslose Gesellen* 124  
 VERDUN. VISION D'HISTOIRE (Verdun) 23, 46, 109  
 Versailles Treaty (Versailles) 11, 49, 54-55, 59-62, 73, 75, 86, 163, 220  
 VERSUNKENE FLOTTE, DIE 49, 91, 161, 169-170, 175-177, 179-181, 203, 213, 300  
*Vier von der Infanterie* 124, 129  
 VOGESENWACHT 52  
 VOLK IN NOT 49, 106, 112, 173, 194, 197-198, 200-201, 300  
*Völkischer Beobachter* 30, 153-154, 172, 189-191, 204  
 Volksverband für Filmkunst 54-55  
*Vorwärts* 28, 79-80, 82-84, 97, 104, 111, 151, 156, 168, 172, 190, 217  
*Vossische Zeitung* 20, 28-29, 36, 53, 84, 99, 101, 114, 127, 154, 156, 172, 175, 181  
  
*Weg zur Freiheit, Der* 61  
 Weimarer Koalition 53  
 Weimarer Revisionsyndrom 11, 62  
*Welt am Abend, Die* 28, 36, 82, 85, 156-157, 172  
 WELTKRIEG, DER 20, 24, 54, 90-94, 100-101, 103-104, 109-110, 114, 135-136, 141, 146, 165, 175, 206, 220, 226  
 WELTKRIEG I, DER 40, 46, 88, 94, 115, 151  
 WELTKRIEG II, DER 40, 88, 94, 172  
 WENN DIE HEIMAT RUFT 42  
 WESTFRONT 1918 18, 20, 23, 46, 55, 57, 88, 106, 109, 111, 123-124, 127-129, 131, 134-143, 145, 147, 149, 150, 152, 153, 155, 157, 159, 172-173, 179, 181, 193-194, 198, 203-204, 206, 215, 217, 219, 221-222, 226, 301  
*Wie es zum grossen Kriege kam* 86  
  
 YORK 183  
 Youngplan 55, 108  
  
 Zentrum 29, 55-56, 83

