

# **American Cultural Diplomacy, the Cinema, and the Cold War in Central Europe**

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**"The easiest way to inject a propaganda idea into most people's minds is to let it go through the medium of an entertainment picture when they do not realize that they are being propagandized".**

**Elmer Davis, Director, Office of War Information quoted in C.R. Koopes and G.D. Black, "What to Show the World: The OWI and Hollywood, 1942-45" Journal of American History 64 (1977): 87-105.**

**"There has never been a more effective salesman for American products in foreign countries than the American motion picture."**

**Gerald M. Mayer, "American Motion Pictures in World Trade" Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences 254 (1947): 31-36.**

**"As we entered the world stage in the First World War, simultaneously we entered the world as conquerors through silent movies, something no one could have calculated or had ever happened before. Movies will be the only thing the United States will ever be remembered for. It was a lucky coincidence that as we became number one in the world militarily, the movies were there for us to use, to make propaganda with, to express ourselves, to sell the world a lot of bills of goods. We're still doing it. We fight our war in Vietnam which we then lose. And over a number of years, we now make movies about it, in which we are making back in the world box office what we lost during the war, naturally."**

**Gore Vidal in The San Francisco Bay Guardian July 11, 1990.**

**"The cultural market has thus sensitized entire populations to the "civilization" of the dominant state within the international system, subjecting it to a new universe of discourse, imprinting it with what William Appleman Williams in Empire as a Way of Life characterized as the "imperial confusion of an economically defined way of life with a culturally defined standard of living." "**

**Victoria de Grazia, "Mass Culture and Sovereignty: The American Challenge to European Cinemas, 1920-1960" Journal of Modern History 61 (March 1989): 53-87.**

"Let's start with the premise that America is a film with German subtitles." Cut! Second take: "Let's start with the premise that America is a film with German subtitles... This is America, made in Germany." These lines are part of a poem written by a (West) German poet of my generation, a generation, which, like no other before did not only experience the stupendous success of US popular culture in Europe but also actively **partook in creating** this success. This premise, furthermore, is perfectly encapsulated in a telegram which was sent by the Films Officer of the US occupation forces in Austria to his superiors in New York immediately after the end of World War II:

- 1) They're killing me with inquiries about Walt Disney films. FANTASIA is awaited with particular eagerness in a country where TOSCANINI can run as a feature.
- 2) SNOW WHITE was announced but, so they say, never released here. And they further say, the American occupation cannot be complete without Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck.
- 3) What about it?"<sup>(1)</sup>

Yes, what about it? In this paper I will not only try to analyze the impact of US-Cultural diplomacy in Germany and Austria during the Allied occupation after 1945, but I want to discuss the important political, social and economic role of this cultural **transformation**, a massive change achieved through the means of cultural penetration. In a wider context I want to substantiate the following thesis: the so-called Americanization of European culture was not a by-product of the political, military and economic successes of the United States in Cold War Europe but was actually at the **center** of that process. In a Europe that had been devastated, the USA became synonymous with **modernity**. By virtually representing the codes of modernity and material abundance, America signified the defeat of the old, the traditional, the small, the narrow--and the poor. To use semiotic terms: America became the sign of the new **and** the signifier of modernity.

In short: the American Dream--of the pursuit of happiness as the pursuit of consumption--became, more than ever before, a European Dream, especially for the young. Because, if ever there was a generation gap, a lost generation--not to mention the lost generations of the death camps and exiles--you can find it in Europe after World War II. With the fathers missing in the battlefields and Prisoner-of-War-camps, it was the grandfathers who tried to restore the old pre-war social systems--while the grandchildren turned into enthusiastic consumers. This domination of those "Made in America" cultural symbols, images and codes, this, to use Wim Wender's phrase, colonization of the European sub-conscious, was only possible because of the control of the most important channels of distribution of cultural capital by US-companies, with Hollywood at the center. There can be no doubt that this control of the capital of culture by the United States has been a phenomenon of utmost importance for (European) postwar history. The fact that European social sciences are mostly ignorant about its consequences--with a few exceptions, we usually are only confronted with rather stupid anti-American diatribes--this fact **alone** is further proof for the domination of our cultural capital by the USA.

The question is: how did this happen? Although English became the Lingua Franca in post-war Europe, US visitors again and again were confronted with a phenomenon which remained a continuous handicap for all US endeavors in the area of high culture. As Henry Nash Smith noted in Austria, "no one could stay there without realizing that the conceptions of the American character held even by cultivated Europeans are vastly oversimplified if not downright misleading."<sup>(2)</sup> I would go further than Henry Nash Smith and insist that this was not only true even for cultivated Europeans; no, it was **especially** true for cultivated Europeans.

To overcome these traditional European prejudices and to impress Europeans with the achievements of US high culture, the US Army and the State Department established massive cultural propaganda agencies in the occupied territories, which focussed on one goal: fostering the integration of the European "élites" into the **One World** of the American Century and winning them for the Pax Americana by impressing them with a never-ending demonstration of the United States as a cultural equal of Europe, as a standardbearer of European culture in the New World. Immediately after the war these agencies of the US Army in Austria and in Germany did not only exert absolute control over theatres, cinemas, operas, concerts, newspapers, journals, books, pamphlets, news

agencies, advertisements, radio stations, schools and universities, but also over circus performances, balls, religious processions and even puppet-shows and street-markets. This tremendous power certainly involved the paradox of enforcing democracy with potentially un-democratic methods and, at least in Austria, went far beyond the fairly liberal cultural policies of the Soviet occupation forces.

The US impact on the media scene, on the press and news agencies, on photography and comics, on advertisements and public opinion research, on radio and television, on literature and publishers, on education and the public discourse in general, and on the strengthening of the position of English and American studies in particular, is undisputed. Yet, the high culture programs, the nucleus of the whole propaganda effort, were crowned with much less success. American cultural officers who promoted US drama and particularly "serious" US music usually had to endure the rather humiliating question: What? There's serious music in America?

But, what a contrast, if we look at the triumph of US popular culture, especially US movies. Cinema history is world history and since the end of World War I this history has been dominated by the US film industry.<sup>(3)</sup> In our context, Hollywood can therefore be interpreted as a text (and taste?) of power. It is the foremost signifier, symbol and vanguard of 20th century capitalist culture industry. While Hollywood's most powerful European competitors had been nearly destroyed by the effects of World War I, the U.S. film industry after 1918 invaded European markets with vigorous US governmental support. The precedent for Hollywood's role as a persuasive (un-)official propaganda instrument of the US government had been set by George Creel's Committee on Public Information, which effectively preached the **Gospel of Americanism**. Gore Vidal's fictional scene from his latest novel Hollywood might have well occurred: "Yes!" Creel's eyes shone. "The audience for the movies is the largest there is for anything in the world. So if we can influence what Hollywood produces, we can control world opinion. Hollywood is the key to just about everything."<sup>(4)</sup>

Hollywood's success story, therefore, can only be understood in the context of the general crisis of European culture(s) **and** the concomitant world-wide economic thrust of the United States. In our context--cultural, social, economic, and political--it is of major significance that these movies were not only a profitable series of products within this general export offensive. They also represented the premium medium of advertisement not only because they acted as publicity for all other films but also as sales promotion for the U.S. itself--and for all its products. And there was yet another side to this: while on the one hand, Hollywood films now became one of the most threatening forces, which eroded the power of traditional customs and mores, they also were the most powerful guardians of the new cultural parameters and the vanguard of the consumers' heaven, which all of a sudden seemed to be located somewhere between the beaches of Southern California, Texas ranches, Chicago bars and New York skyscrapers.

Nothing seemed to be able to prevent the invasion and triumph of American movies in Europe: not even the depression caused long-range damages. Only the German industry became a formidable adversary, already before 1939. After the German aggression

against most of Europe (and the Japanese advances in Asia), Hollywood was suddenly cut off from some of its most vital markets. And the cinema empire struck back by forming an unbeatable alliance with its most natural ally: Washington. The rest is history, and this typical Hollywood jargon cannot disguise the fact that "during the war 'millimeter' referred not only to the size of guns, but also to the gauge of a new weapon--the motion picture."<sup>(5)</sup>

Hollywood's massive war contributions finally institutionalized its relations with the government and both partners did not have to look back. Washington desperately needed the cooperation of the US film industry for propaganda purposes and the raising of morale abroad and at home, whereas Hollywood totally depended on the US government for the reconquest and extension of its former markets. And Hollywood's singular importance for the war effort was repaid by more than one governmental favor. Most important, the Bureau of Motion Pictures already in 1942 prepared the future export offensive by allowing dozens of carefully selected synchronized movies to follow in the tracks of the US Army. These movies established the first bridgeheads in North Africa, Italy and France and even the trade paper Variety (10 May 1943) mused that "the motion picture industry is the only commercial setup that has been permitted to operate in the North African and European war zones."<sup>(6)</sup> Victoria de Grazia correctly observed that "Germany's defeat paved the way for the European states to accede to an American peace premised on free trade of goods and ideas and thereby relinquish a conception of nationhood that presumed sovereignty over culture."<sup>(7)</sup> Seen through this particular lens, the Operation Overlord may not only be called "The Longest Day" but, without much ado, may be shot as a sequel named "The Longest Day, Part 2: Operation Celluloid."

Not even in far away Southern California was it a secret that the reconquered markets were extremely vulnerable. Still, the powerful position of the USA made it quite clear that Hollywood would be freed from any real quotas--and that was tremendously important, especially in the case of the German market. On the other hand, the stabilization of the European economies and especially the balance of payment problems actually allowed no other solution than to enforce import quotas for US movies. But this was quite unacceptable for the US studios, because they now really needed the European market. By now production costs had doubled, compared with pre-war costs, and as the US market was shrinking, real profits after costs from now on could only be achieved outside the United States.

To meet these new challenges, the nine major film companies (Allied Artists, Columbia Pictures, Metro Goldwyn Mayer, Paramount Pictures, RKO Pictures, 20th Century Fox, United Artists, Universal International, Warner Brothers) founded the export cartel Motion Picture Export Association (MPEA) immediately after the end of the war. This classic cartel did not only collect all foreign profits and distribute them to its members according to their annual shares of the percentage of their gross income in the U.S. From now on, the cartel members avoided competition by never placing expensive films at the same place at the same time. In addition, distribution costs were diminished and production risks lowered as each member now participated in foreign earnings even if it did not have **one** box-office hit outside the U.S. This coordination of talent and market

research, and a pool of more than 2,000 films since 1940, which already had accrued profits in the United States but had never been shown in Europe, made the MPEA a formidable force. Against any concerted attack by this oligopolistic superpower, which was directly supported by Washington, no foreign government and no foreign film industry was a real match.

It soon became clear that any European state hoping for U.S. aid or credits had no chance in maintaining film import quotas. The war was hardly over and friend and foe was presented with the Hollywood ticket: either no quotas, no import duties, no concentration or nationalization of the local film industries--or no US money. And it did not really matter whether the country under attack had fought on the side of the USA or against it, as France and Great Britain were to find out immediately after the war. Massive US pressure forced the French government to accept the reduction of the French quotas from 55 to 30 per cent as a result of the Blum-Byrnes Accord (May 28, 1946)--and the French film production was halved within a year.<sup>(8)</sup>

Not even Britain escaped. The austerity measures of the Labour government, which raised the quotas and introduced import duties of 75% for new U.S.-films in August 1947, attempted to reserve scarce dollars for vital imports. Yet His Majesty's Government had not reckoned with the majesties of Hollywood--who reacted with a total boycott of the British screens--as well as the taste of the majority of the British audiences, which demanded Hollywood products and flocked to see the old U.S. films, which had been exempted. Soon the British Prime Minister had to admit total defeat. This Second Battle for Britain (Clement Attlee, 6 August 1947) was lost and already by March 1948 the Attlee-Government finally capitulated to Hollywood's demands. This reduced the-- aptly named--Pinewood to its state of artistic subservience and financial colony. The new power relations were beautifully reflected by the title of the new agreement: "Memorandum of Agreement Between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Motion Picture Industry of the United States dated 1st October 1950."<sup>(9)</sup>

Obviously the former enemies did not fare better. The liberation and occupation of Italy, Germany and Austria offered Hollywood a singular chance. In Italy, the massive pressure of the Department of State did not only prevent the introduction of import quotas and the economically necessary centralization and nationalization of the Italian industry. Hollywood also achieved tremendous advantages by a deal, which allowed the US Embassy in Rome to bloc any piece of film-legislation even **before** it had been introduced to parliament."<sup>(10)</sup>

But Hollywood was not only strong enough to put European governments in their place: if need be it could even pressure its own government into subservience. This is clearly exemplified by the German case, where the Information Services Division (ISD) of the US Army established total control over all cinema matters, from censorship to production, allocation of raw materials (and German patents) to distribution. Still, all these measures were meant only to last until the end of the denazification phase. Any

longer control, so the political rationale of Washington, would only mean further destabilization and strengthen the communists.

This certainly was not the rationale of the US film industry. Hollywood clearly wanted more than just a democratically rejuvenated German competition. Hence studio bosses like Darryl F. Zanuck demanded the total destruction and unlimited prohibition and elimination of their strongest rival, the German film industry. Although the US occupation authorities painstakingly assisted the US film industry--the ISD laid the whole groundwork for the reestablishment of Hollywood's power in Germany by preparing the complete infrastructure of the distribution network, preventing the nationalization of the German industry and forbidding the introduction of import quotas--they nevertheless opposed Hollywood's maximum demands of either destroying or taking over the German film sector. Not for nothing the Department of State characterized these attempts of looting, which fitted any Hollywood epic of biblical proportions, as "economic imperialism under the guise of wishing to assist in the reeducation of Germany."<sup>(11)</sup>

For the sake of the stabilization of the German economy, the US Army collected all the MPEA-revenues in blocked accounts. As the monies could not be transferred, the MPEA insisted to use them for buying up German cinemas. When the US government did not yield, Hollywood played its last card. It blackmailed Washington--which desperately needed US films not only for reeducation purposes, but, even more important, for raising German morale with "innocuous entertainment"--by blocking any further shipment of films to Germany. The ISD reacted with anger--and admitted defeat. Hollywood's position simply was much stronger than that of Washington. The US government needed the propaganda power of US films much more than the US film industry needed the German revenues.

Indeed, this calculation was quite correct. Now Washington was cornered and the US Army began its strategic retreat by handing over all film activities in Germany to the MPEA already by February 1948. As the MPEA still did not relent, Congress had to intervene. It tried to appease Hollywood with the creation of the Information Media Guaranty Program (IMGM). And this program, which was correctly called the informational side of the Marshall Plan, meant nothing else but a federal guaranty for Hollywood to get back all costs for the distribution and production of movies placed in difficult markets in US dollars from Marshall plan and Counterpart Funds. Still, even though the US Army's capitulation was near complete, Hollywood played its final card and once again threatened to stop all exports to Germany and Japan in mid-1949. And now, the US film industry had its way: in addition to the above, Washington now offered approximately \$25,000.00 for every film exported to these markets. This was more to Hollywood's taste and on German screens the changes were immediately visible. While only 170 US films had been shown in German cinemas between 1945-49, between January 1950 and March 1951 alone, already 278 films made it onto the German screens. By 1955, Hollywood already had collected 5.1 million IMGP-dollars, by 1966 16 million. The resulting position of the US studios in (West) Germany was not falling "short of virtual ownership of the studios and control of the film market in Germany".<sup>(12)</sup> As Thomas H. Guback correctly noted, the IMGP "implicitly... expanded the number of

markets which could be exploited by the American industry, and put an 'official' label on Hollywood's work. American film could then go forward with the rank of ambassador...The stimulus to release came from the availability of dollars, and the availability of dollars stemmed from a need for propaganda."<sup>(13)</sup>

In Austria, too, Hollywood's power and fascination became an immense asset for the cultural propaganda of the Information Services Branch (ISB) of the US Army. Before the war, the predominant position of US films in the Austrian market had been strongly contested by the German industry, especially after the introduction of the talkies. While in 1927 75% of all revenues in Austria came from Hollywood productions and only 18% from German films, the situation soon had changed drastically. In 1934 already 50% of the profits came from German and only 40% from US movies. The Austrian case was rather special: after the talkies had been introduced **no** single Austrian film could be produced, which did not bring in 80% of its revenues at **German** box-offices. This economic dependency obviously threw the door open for political blackmail in every single case of negotiating an export permit. This technical and financial dependency of the Austrian film industry on Germany, the political self-censorship and submission of Austrian film managers and politicians, the refusal to employ German emigrants and the firing of most Jewish artists and technicians already **before** the *Anschluss* nearly brought on the self-destruction of the Austrian film industry. While it is true, that Austria had to put up with two cinema imperialisms, the Hollywood and the UFA version, one point has to be made quite clear: the wretched situation of the Austrian movie industry after the massive emigration to Hollywood was as much a result of the submission of Austrian film managers and politicians and their not so unprofitable acquiescence in the German take-over, as it was an effect of National Socialist brutality. Furthermore, Austria's artistic and human losses were Hollywood's gain.

Immediately after the liberation, the ISB Film Section of the US Army began its task of reopening the Austrian screens for the products from Hollywood. In contrast to Germany, Hollywood had not planned the destruction of the pitiful remnants of the Austrian industry. It never had been a match, anyway. Yet, the Hays Organization made it quite clear in its "Austrian Country Memorandum" of January 29, 1945, what it expected from the US Army on the spot: uncontrolled access to the market; most-favored nation treatment; no obligations to release Austrian films or print and dub US films in Austria; and the prohibition of the concentration and nationalization of the Austrian film industry.<sup>(14)</sup>

The history of the occupation of Austria is full of exceptional developments, indeed, but the ISB Film Section surely beat everything else. In the first two years of the occupation this US Army section did not only control the distribution of all American films and large parts of the Austrian film industry, but it also controlled the distribution of British, French and Russian films in all four occupation zones. It does sound quite unbelievable, but the US Army even had warehouses in the Russian occupation zone and its newsreel World in Film (a US-British coproduction) was shown in more than half the cinemas within the Soviet zone, while the US authorities refused the showing of a single Russian

film within their own zone and imprisoned two mayors in whose towns two Russian fairy tale movies had been shown to children.<sup>(15)</sup>

It may come as no surprise that the ISB used its distribution monopoly to entrench Hollywood's powerful position in Austria. But, how this was achieved is quite unprecedented--even in Hollywood's astonishing history. At the end of the war all German and Austrian films were requisitioned by the US Army. As practically all movable film equipment and funds had been evacuated from Vienna (and some even from Munich and Berlin) to the US zone in Austria, the ISB held most of the hardware and cash of the industry. And for more than two years all new revenues of German films in Austrian cinemas were not only used to pay for the distribution costs of US movies but also for the rebuilding of the whole infrastructure of the distribution network of the Hollywood cartel MPEA. "All expenses incurred by the Film Section were met from the income of German films."<sup>(16)</sup> It was no wonder that the ISB Film Section was proud of its achievements, informing Washington that: "Not one cent was ever charged against any American picture. We truly believe that this is the only operation in the history of motion pictures where business was done, and still is being done, for Uncle Sam and the American Motion Picture Industry without any expenses whatever."<sup>(17)</sup> And with massive profits, the telegram could have continued.

Because the US Army had never contemplated to stop the Austrian production, it was quite clear that the frozen monies and the trusteeship over the film production were only used as pawns for negotiations with the Austrian government, which was persuaded to accept Hollywood's demands. Finally, with the Agreement of 14 December, 1946, the Austrian government did not only comply with all of Hollywood's original wishes. In a secret protocol it even agreed to provide the ISB with detailed monthly reports about all developments of the Austrian film production as well as a codetermination in all matters of personnel. It may not come as a real surprise that already by 1948 Austrians preferred US films over all other foreign movies. And Hollywood's market exploded in the late 1940s--from 20% in 1947 to already 50% in 1950. Since then, German films never came even close to the revenues of US movies in Austria, the target had been fulfilled, the status quo ante was re-instituted. In addition, more than 2,000,000 people-- one third of the Austrian population--were reached by the USIS propaganda movies annually. And this US film propaganda was extremely successful. All polls indicated that they did the right thing the right way, because these movies did not **look** like propaganda.<sup>(18)</sup>

Just as the political struggle, the cultural Cold War was not quite free from irony. If this conflict had not been responsible for so many tragedies on all sides, one might be tempted to conceive McCarthyism as having been scripted by a cynical Hollywood author following the rules of the screwball comedy. While the ridiculous activities of the House Un-American Activities Committee damaged the reputation of the United States abroad like **no other** domestic development, it was exactly those artists and their movies the witch-hunt concentrated upon, that were the best propagandists of the American way of life **outside** the USA.

And this spiral of irony had further twists. Because in the case of jazz and rock'n'roll and Hollywood, the vast majority of the US cultural diplomats secretly was in cahoots with those European conservatives (from the right **and** the left) who simply despised **anything** that looked or sounded **American**--though, at least in public, they did not dare to refer to this "trash" as "nigger music", anymore. But one thing was certain: jazz, rock'n'roll and Hollywood did not need US cultural diplomacy--but US propaganda needed jazz, rock'n'roll and Hollywood desperately.

As especially gangster, western, "sex", and action movies proved extremely successful the US occupation armies all of a sudden began to fear the dissemination of an image of the United States, which seemed detrimental to US plans for reeducation and reorientation. Therefore, not only classics like "Key Largo" and "Casablanca" were deemed unsuitable for Austrian and German audiences. Even a US documentary about the era of Franklin Delano Roosevelt was prohibited. The reason: it contained- pictures about the depression and the cooperation with the USSR in World War II. In Austria this irony approached the absurd. There, the US occupation forces even began to suspect the Red Army of allowing many US films to be shown in their zone only for one reason: because the Russians hoped to impress Austrians with American crime and violence, perversity and depravity. It surely reads like a Hollywood comedy that the censorship of US films for the Soviet zone was not handled by the Red Army--**but by the US Army itself**. And so the ISB carefully screened and selected all films destined for showing in the Russian zone and excluded all material which did not "depict US life in its most favorable light."<sup>(19)</sup>

In any event, most of these fears were quite unfounded. In the long run the older generation's opposition to US pop music and Jazz; all the accusations against the civilization of the United States just being a thin veil for crass materialism and general lack of culture; all of this digging into the cultural trenches of pre-consumption parameters; all of this could not disguise one important fact: the majority of the European youngsters' fascination with American kitchens and cars, skyscrapers and canned food, pop music and Mickey Mouse, nylons and cigarettes, washing machines and combine harvesters, supermarkets and superhighways, Coca-Cola and whiskey, petticoats and hula hoop, bathrooms and cosmetics...to name but a few. Especially one age group tuned in to the United States more than any other: the teenage world became American--after all, it had been an American invention. And what other medium functioned as much as a never-ending and yet happy-ending advertisement for the American way of life and for American goods, if not the Hollywood movie. And hadn't these films even another additional advantage: the audiences were even willing to pay for this propaganda? The German essayist Michel Rutschky hit the nail on the head:

The Amis, beaming at the little guys, were the victors, and they were friendly, generous victors. The giant negro--in our small town we had never seen anything like that before--he smiled at the boys who had congregated around the wonderful American tank like a horde, ready for worship. He gave us chocolate, or chewing gum; and that we hadn't seen either before. And our conservative aunts hated to see us running around with ruminating

jaws. 'You look just like an Ami!' they said reprovingly. **And that was exactly how we wanted to look.**<sup>(20)</sup>

It is quite clear that this symbiosis between Washington and Hollywood was extremely advantageous for both parties, not only in the Cold War period. Hollywood now extracted guaranteed profits from difficult foreign markets. This privilege became increasingly important with the explosion of production costs and declining profits in the USA after World War II. On the other hand, Washington now had a direct control over the selection of film exports, as only movies with positive propaganda messages were subsidized. Furthermore, as films critical of the United States had no chance to pass, the Hollywood studios produced less "harmful" films in the first place because only foreign revenues allowed major profits. In return for this self-censorship Hollywood received further support through the net of information of US diplomatic missions and USIA stations, which--with more than 200 film libraries and 500 million visitors annually--itself constitutes by far the largest film propaganda organization globally. These experts provided Hollywood with vital market information, with all the necessary insights into local customs and tastes, national prejudices and cultural values which again helped to avoid producing films which were offensive to foreign audiences.

This concealed amalgamation of politics, economics and culture during the Cold War transformed the Hollywood movies into the main signifiers of Cold War culture. They became the semiofficial (and quite entertaining) propaganda video soundtrack of the American way of life in its struggle against communism, be it against red Eskimos (Red Snow, 1952) or under The Iron Petticoat (1956).

Hollywood's celluloid empire had many implications. It meant more than just economic domination over international entertainment. In Europe, these developments did not only indicate massive economic losses. They also signify a damaged EYE-identity; a lack of control over the creation and dissemination of cultural and symbolic capital; a loss of sovereignty over the production of those images and pictures, which have probably become the prime movers and media of cultural self-interpretation and self-definition in the 20th century.

Hollywood had become the leitmotif, while all other national cinemas were demoted to the local production of variations of the theme. As a text of power, the story scripted in Hollywood functioned like the traditional novel vs. the unsuccessful Roman nouveaux of the foreign competition. The myths and ideology central to Hollywood's message--individualism, competition, the purifying power of the market and freedom of choice--function as the most powerful iconographic inventory of US capitalism and democracy in the 20th century. The most important triumph, the most significant mystification of Hollywood was the disguise of capitalist consumption ideologies with the seemingly natural insignia of universal truth.<sup>(21)</sup>

As the dominating center of image production and distribution, as the greatest information agency of the 20th century, Hollywood per definition also became one of the most powerful weapons of the anticommunist propaganda offensive. During the Cold

War, "the rifle the film industry had shouldered in World War II could not be put down; it had to keep marching to the drums of another martial conflict--the Cold War with international and domestic communism."<sup>(22)</sup> Most film genres of the 1950s reflected the anticommunist hysteria of the age--not all as obviously as the science fiction and monster movies--and in dozens of films with outright political messages the audiences were figuratively hit "over the head with a hammer and sickle."<sup>(23)</sup> But it is of the highest importance to realize: all available data show that the apparently unpolitical films were much more successful than any direct messages. INFO-TAINMENT works better than information.

Seeing is believing, and therefore, "reel" facts may become "real" facts. Hollywood's image empire did not only create a movie-made America, but a world view, a Weltanschauung (in the truest sense of the word) the focus, lighting, exposure and depth of vision of which was interpreted, transmitted and produced by the US cinema. And the nucleus of this Weltanschauung was the pursuit of happiness as the pursuit of consumption. Here, the democratic promise of the freedom of choice less and less signified political liberty but more and more the freedom to choose between several models of refrigerators. After the war many Europeans continued to live in dire straits, and yet the mirage in the west promised cars and mobility, an American kitchen and sex, a bathroom and affluence, action and luxury, good looks and a good life, fun and a Happy End. Wasn't Time Magazine right to the point, when it laconically defined our present cultural situation as "advanced capitalism with a beat you can dance to"?<sup>(24)</sup> And this ambivalence was especially true in the period of the Cold War, but certainly not restricted to it. Even if nowadays the Hollywood company may already be Australian, the advertised products Japanese, still, more often than not, the **image** produced is American. How many of us, after all, know how to write Walkman in Japanese?

The parallels must not be overlooked: the present transformations in Eastern Europe could remind us of the developments in Western Europe after World War II. As one of my friends, a former East German, quipped recently. "Before the Wall came down the CIA at least delivered American propaganda free to our door--now we have to pay for it." It is of utmost political significance that practically the whole population of East Germany chose to emigrate to the West every night--via TELEvision. The effects of such a temporary electronic emigration, the impact of this becoming quasi-Americans by tuning in to modern mass media should not be underrated. The Iron Curtain--isn't already its name symbolic for an "outdated" industrial sector, largely connotating the 19th century?--this Iron Curtain in the end was no match for the messages and images produced by the electronic consciousness industry in the West, the real heavy industry of the 20th century (Hans Magnus Enzensberger).

Even in Austria, I personally received my daily fix of US and British rock music throughout the sixties only by listening to the CIA-funded Radio Free Europe. Needless to say, that Radio Svobodna Evropa's political messages were directed at Czechoslovakian listeners and, as bait, therefore had by far and large the best music program of any European station. It really worked like a commercially sponsored program: only here the commercials were the news and the political commentaries. As

the reaction showed, the Czechoslovak and other Eastern European governments had not the least inkling of what was really going on. Otherwise they would not have distorted the news, **but the music**. So, around the clock there was rock around the bloc, and what other title could be more appropriate for a recent book about literature and politics, movies and jazz under the Czechoslovakian communist rule than Joseph Skvorecky's Talkin' Moscow Blues?<sup>(25)</sup>

The successes of the United States in Europe and other parts of the world are usually analyzed in terms of reference--political, military, economic--which are, in my opinion, totally insufficient. The strategy of containment was NOT quite simply a modernized version of the Monroe Doctrine. I would like to suggest a much more appropriate paradigm, which, with all due respect and reverence for Norma Jean Baker, I would like to call the MARILYN Monroe Doctrine.

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### Endnotes

1. Washington National Records Center (WNRC), RG 260/64/66. Eugene Sharin, Films Officer, United States Forces in Austria, Salzburg, to Office of War Information, New York, 14 August, 1945. This paper is an abstract of various parts of my Habilitationschrift, which has been published as Coca-Colonisation und Kalter Krieg: Die kulturelle Mission der USA in Österreich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1991). Cf. Reinhold Wagnleitner, "Propagating the American Dream: Cultural Policies as Means of Integration," American Studies International XXIV (April 1986) 1: 60-84; Reinhold Wagnleitner, "The Irony of American Culture Abroad: Austria and the Cold War" in Lary May (ed.), Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War (Chicago, London, 1989): 285-301. The poem "Monopoly" is by Wolf Wondratschek, Omnibus (Munich, 1972): 145-149.
2. Henry Nash Smith, "The Salzburg Seminar," American Quarterly (1949): 30-37.
3. Rudolf Oertel, Macht und Magie des Films (Vienna, 1959); cf. Victoria de Grazia, "Americanism for Export," Wedge (Winter-Spring 1985): 74-81; Douglas Gomery, "Economic Struggle and Hollywood Imperialism: Europe Converts to Sound," Yale French Studies 60 (Winter 1980): 80-93.
4. Gore Vidal, Hollywood: A Novel of America in the 1920s (New York, 1990): 89. Cf. Emily S. Rosenberg, Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945 (New York, 1982): 79-87.
5. Herbert T. Edwards, "Films in the U.S. Overseas Information Program," Educational Screen (May 1949).
6. Variety, September 9, 1943: 1,5.

7. Victoria de Grazia, "Mass Culture and Sovereignty: The American Challenge to European Cinemas, 1920-1960," Journal of Modern History 61 (March 1989): 53-87. Not without reason did the trade paper The Film Daily on May 10, 1945, greet the end of World War II in Europe with the headline: "Opening Europe for Film Reps."
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9. Cmd. 8113 (London, 1950); NA 862.4061 MP/6-1346; Paul Swann, The Hollywood Feature Film in Postwar Britain (London, Sydney 1987): 81-115.
10. NA 865.4061 MP/11-2748: Dunn, Rome, to Department of State, November 27, 1948; NA 865.4061 MP/1-1945: Kirk, Rome, to Department of State, January 19, 1945; Enrico Giannelli, Economia Cinematografica (Rome, 1956).
11. NA 862.4061 MP/1-3046: Memorandum: Anderson to Begg, Washington, February 7, 1946; *ibid.*, Galbraith to Berstein, March 27, 1946.
12. Albert Norman, Our German Policy: Propaganda and Culture (New York, 1951): 61.
13. Thomas H. Guback, The International Film Industry: Western Europe and American Film since 1945 (Bloomington, Ind., 1969): 132-133; cf. Thomas H. Guback, "Cultural Identity and Film in the European Economic Community," Cinema Journal 14 (1974): 2-17.
14. NA 863.4061: Memorandum: Hays Organization, Austria. Market for American Motion Pictures, January 29, 1945.
15. WNRC 260/65/93: Film Division, Semi-Monthly Activities Report, 15-30 November, 1945, Vienna, November 3, 1945.
16. WNRC 260/35/Film Committee. Financial Report on the Liquidation of ISB Film Section, Vienna, October 3, 1947.
17. WNRC 260/64/FILMS. Sharin; Vienna, to Smith and Lefebvre, OWI, Motion Pictures Bureau, New York, October 11, 1945. Underlined in original.
18. NA 863.4061 MP/2-2747. Annex A to Agreement 16 July 1946. (Transferring German Assets in Austria to Federal Government of Austria Trustees). Cf Guback, International Film Industry, 48.
19. WNRC 260/42/52: Headquarters Zone Command Austria, Salzburg, to Commanding General, USFA, Vienna, January 12, 1948.

20. Michael Rutschky, Reise durch das Ungeschick (Zurich, 1990), 176-177. My translation.
21. Cf. Robert Sklar, Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies (New York, 1975); Bart Testa, "Sorting Out the Muddle of Modern Cinema," The Globe and Mail September 27, 1983; Keith Reader, Cultures on Celluloid (London, Melbourne, New York, 1981).
22. Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community 1930-1960 (Garden City, 1980), 249.
23. Daniel J. Leab, "How Red Was My Valley: Hollywood, the Cold War Film, and I Married a Communist," Journal of Contemporary History 19 (1984) 1: 59-88.
24. Cobbett Steinberg, Reel Facts: The Movie Book of Records (New York, 1978); Time, June 16, 1986: 53.
25. Joseph Skvorecky, Talkin' Moscow Blues (Ecco, 1990).