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Political Propaganda in the Feature Film Industries of Nazi Germany and Maoist China

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Abstract

This interdisciplinary paper examines important similarities and differences in the way that Maoist China and Nazi Germany used political propaganda in their national feature-film industries. The first part of this paper examines the film industry in the People's Republic of China during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. The Chinese communist regime used the power of film to perpetuate communist themes and to educate the masses about the heroic nature of the Chinese revolutionaries and Marxism. Mao believed through popular film the Chinese Communist Party could educate, entertain, and indoctrinate the Chinese population and could ferret out capitalist and bourgeois elements which he believed were infiltrating Chinese society. The second case study examines how *Kolberg* (1945), the very last feature film released in Nazi Germany, communicates key elements of Nazi ideology: the Leadership Principle, the celebration of Blood and Soil, and the call for total war, especially as expressed by Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels in his 1943 "Total War Address." *Kolberg* demonstrates both the power of Nazi political propaganda and its limitations as a political tool.

The twentieth century saw a marked increase in totalitarian states. These states, in seeking complete control of their populations, each deployed what the French Marxist Philosopher Louis Althusser has termed Repressive State Apparatuses and Ideological State Apparatuses. According to Althusser (1971/2009), a Repressive State Apparatus controls the populace through physical violence and threats. It contains such institutions as "the Army, the Police, the Courts, and the Prisons" (p. 302). The Ideological State Apparatus controls the populace through ideology. It relies on private institutions, such as family structures, churches, political parties, and communications industries, to represent "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser, 1971/2009, p. 304). The boundaries between the Repressive State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatus are somewhat porous. The Repressive State Apparatus relies on some form of ideology for its structure, and the Ideological State Apparatus relies on some form of violence for its implementation. Still, it is the Ideological State Apparatus that offers citizens a sense of belonging and purpose. It recruits the people's active participation in the state's goals by constructing and proposing imaginary relationships between them and the state. In the twentieth century, an important tool of any state's Ideological State Apparatus was its film industry. This paper will examine how two of twentieth century's most repressive totalitarian regimes, Maoist China and the Third Reich, deployed their national feature film industries as

propaganda tools, which aimed to spur their citizens to support the state's ideological goals.

Maoist China

In May of 1966, Chairman Mao Zedong launched The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Its stated goal was to enforce communism in the country by removing capitalist, traditional and cultural elements from Chinese society, and to impose Maoist orthodoxy within the Chinese Communist Party. During the years from 1966 to 1976, this movement became the biggest non-wartime concentrated social and political upheaval in world history. Following Mao's edicts, a nation of over 800 million responded to the whims of one man to purge the country of noncommunist, revisionist thought and art (Clark, 2008).

The revolution marked the return of Mao Zedong to a position of power after the failed Great Leap Forward. The movement paralyzed China politically and significantly affected the country economically and socially. Millions of people were persecuted in the violent factional struggles that ensued across the country, and suffered a wide range of abuses including public humiliation, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, sustained harassment, and seizure of property. A large segment of the population was forcibly displaced, most notably the transfer of urban youth to rural regions during the Down to the Countryside Movement. Historical relics and artifacts were destroyed. Cultural and religious sites were ransacked (Tsou, 1986; Dreyer, 2000).

The success or failure of communist regimes to transform the attitudes and behavior of populations is an apt example of the use of propaganda within the wider application of political culture theory. Gabriel A. Almond (1983) proposed that political culture theory ascribes some importance to political attitudes, beliefs, values, and emotions in the explanation of political, structural, and behavioral phenomena such as national cohesion, patterns of mass cleavage, modes of dealing with political conflict, the extent and level of political participation, and the compliance with authority. The communist experience has been particularly important as an approach to studying propaganda and political culture theory application because from one point of view it represents a genuine effort to "falsify" it. The attitudes that communist regimes encounter where they seize power are often viewed as false consciousness, which may include nationalism, religious belief systems, ethnic subcultural propensities, or economic views. These attitudes have been viewed as the consequences of preexisting class structure and the underlying mode of production, which are transmitted by the associated agents of indoctrination. Communist movements/regimes seek to eliminate or to undermine the legitimacy of these preexisting processes and frameworks and replace them with a new and thoroughly penetrative set. The goal is to reshape the society and transform the thinking of its citizens toward a new paradigm of education and actions.

According to Dittmer (1977), one of the main purposes of the Cultural Revolution was to change the people's ways of thinking and relating to one another, a pragmatic

objective concerning the trinary relationship among elites, masses, and the target to which considerations of political theory and propaganda were focused. By drawing attention of the masses to the target's deviation from the norm, and by dramatizing that deviation by means of exaggerated contentious symbolism, the elites sought to persuade the masses to embrace and incorporate the norms. Another benefit was to permit the masses to displace regressed negative emotions against the target. This allowed elites to seek enhancement of solidarity within the community and increase the masses' support and commitment to the societal norms. The implications of this propagandistic process for the target were that that he should rectify his deviation through self-criticism and reintegrate himself within society. In the end, the target may hope to atone for his sins and become a model of the type of moral transformation expected by the masses.

Film achieved new importance in the Cultural Revolution. During this period, film's function in the People's Republic of China was a main messenger of a new, mass culture to all areas of the country. Films were able to reach and influence many more Chinese than staged theatrical or ballet productions. Many of the films produced were based on Chinese revolutionary operas, which were originally performed onstage. Originally, eight revolutionary operas called "model operas" were produced, eighteen by the end of the period. Instead of the "emperors, kings, generals, chancellors, maidens, and beauties" of the traditional Peking Opera, which was banned as "feudalistic and bourgeois," they told stories from China's recent revolutionary struggles against foreign and class enemies. They glorified the People's Liberation Army and the bravery of the common people, and showed Mao Zedong and his thought as playing the central role in the victory of Marxism in China. Although they originated as operas, they soon appeared on LPs, in comic books, on posters, postcards, and stamps; on plates, teapots, wash basins, cigarette packages, vases, and calendars. They were performed or blasted from loudspeakers in schools, factories, and fields by special performing troupes (Clark, 1987).

The Eight Model Operas dominated the stage in all parts of the country during these years, many of them becoming feature films under the direction of Mao Zedong's spouse, Jian Qing, who was named the "Great Flag-carrier of the Proletarian Culture" (Mittler, 2010). Major examples of these propagandistic films during the period include *The East is Red* (1965), *The Red Detachment of Women* (1971), *The Red Lantern* (1970), *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* (1970), and *On the Docks* (1972). All of these films depict stories with the Chinese Communist Party as heroic and perpetuate ideas and virtues of communism.

Putting the "model operas" on celluloid offered an opportunity for Mao Zedong, Jian Qing and the Chinese Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution the means to standardize a version of each of the stories that could be seen throughout all of China. The result was the creation of a mythology surrounding the Chinese Communist revolution. God-like main character heroes are put into plots where they show the way to other heroes and sometimes die in the process. These films were intended to influence audiences and educate them about their place in the ongoing revolutionary enterprise (Clark, 2008).

The Chinese Communist Party used film as one of the methods for educating and indoctrinating the Chinese population in political myths surrounding the creation of the People's Republic of China. Symbols with a clear plot structure, serving a practical argument and appealing to a perennial or historically recurring constituency, are known as "political myths." Each type of political myth has its own epic hero and typical episodes. Some major themes of epic heroism include the birth and death of the hero, tests for the hero, descent into the underworld, and encounters with various antiheroes such as the trickster or the punished wanderer. There are foundation myths and eschatological myths, racist myths, and national revolutionary myths; common to all is a demand for a morally logical, meaningful world. Interestingly, the plots of recorded myth seem to be more finite than the plots of known history, although history is limited by human experience and myth only by human imagination. This reason probably has to do with the fact that myth is not actually free fantasy but a socially useful formula. The forms of myth are limited in their applicability in a structured political context., and throughout history the variety of political structures that have been created is actually quite small and recurrent (Cuthbertson, 1975; Tudor, 1972).

In the Chinese films produced during the Cultural Revolution, there are a number of symbolic binary oppositions that can be found. These can be grouped into major propagandistic categories of light/ darkness, and revealed/ concealed. Images and colors were used by artists, actors, and filmmakers to convey specific concepts, ideas, and beliefs to audiences (Dittmer, 1977).

Films during the Chinese Cultural Revolution used the color red to symbolize light and goodness. Red denoted ideological legitimacy in such imagery as red lanterns, red flowers, and of course the Red Army (Dittmer, 1977). The word red is incorporated in many of the titles of films during this period including *The East is Red*, *The Red Lantern*, and *The Red Detachment of Women*. It should also be pointed out that the national flag on the People's Republic of China is red. In contrast, black was used as the color associated with bourgeois authorities and symbolized the debauchery of the west. Films also used fire as a symbol for the spreading of communism and revolutionary thought.

Imagery of revealed/concealed or the public and the private are also noticeable in the films made during the Cultural Revolution. Enemies of the people are referred to as tigers or snakes, which hide in their lairs. The Red Guards and the people are seen as exposing the counter revolutionaries from the places they hide. The quest for exposure is undertaken throughout the films of the Cultural Revolution. Red Guards also launch raids on the files of the Party itself and public offices to ferret out "black materials" produced by enemies of the people.

These symbolic transmutations of reality in film, while they involved huge oversimplification, nevertheless provided a highly effective inducement for mass mobilization. Common themes running throughout the films of the Chinese Cultural Revolution included the world of light whose moral dimension was heroism, whose psychological dimension was freedom, and whose social dimension was the populace. In contrast, the world of darkness depicted on film was defined by a moral dimension of evil, a

psychological dimension of repression, and the social dimension of the enemy(Dittmer, 1977). The film *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* (1970) is an excellent example. The story is based on a real life story during the Chinese Civil War. It tells of a communist reconnaissance soldier Yang Zirong, who disguised himself as a bandit to infiltrate a local gang of bandits. He helps the communist forces destroy the bandits. The hero defeats the evil bandits who threaten the supported communist regime.

The East is Red(1965)is another excellent example of the application of political propaganda based on Dittmer's dimensions of political symbolism. The musical depicts the history of the Communist Party of China under Mao Zedong from its founding in July 1921 to the establishment of "New China" in 1949. Detailed in the musical are several key events in Chinese Communist Party history such as the Northern Expedition -taken up by the Kuomintang National Revolutionary Army (KMT) with Chinese Communist and Soviet support, the KMT-led Shanghai massacre of 1927, the Nanchang Uprising and formation of the People's Liberation Army, the Long March, guerrilla warfare of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) during the Second United Front (during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression), the subsequent coup de grâce delivered to the Nationalist Republic of China administration of Mainland China by the PLA in the decisive phase of the Chinese Civil War, and the founding of the PRC on October 1, 1949 (Meng, 1987). The plot is played against a background of a world of light against a world of darkness. It is the quintessential "red versus black" Chinese story.

In *The Red Detachment of Women*(1971) during 1930s, Wu Qionghua is a housemaid of Nan-ba-tian, a cruel warlord of a village in Hainan Island, China. Often abused by her master, Qionghua is finally rescued by Hong Changqing, leader of the Red Detachment of Women - a troop of women soldiers. She joins the troop and becomes the Detachment leader after the death of Hong. The women capture and execute the warlord and liberate Qionghua's home village. In this story, the main hero is female. A major implication of this film is the depiction of a strong woman who can also be a communist revolutionary. Thus, gender is portrayed as a strength instead of an impediment to the Chinese masses(See Clark, 2008; Mittler, 2010).

Nazi Germany

In many ways, the Nazis were pioneers of political propaganda, especially in the realm of film. Leni Riefenstahl's documentary film of the 1934 Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg, Germany, *Triumph of the Will* (1935) has been studied many times over for its innovative use of cinema to communicate political ideas. The Nazi feature film industry was just as ideological as its documentary cinema. As Mary-Elizabeth O'Brien (2004) has explained, "As early as 1933, the National Socialist state began to institute measures to organize all aspects of the film industry . . . Joseph Goebbels [the Third Reich's powerful Minister of Propaganda] quickly established a complex bureaucracy to oversee the film industry. Within the propaganda ministry, the film department censored and rated films, while a separate entity, the Reich Film Chamber, regulated economic issues and membership in the profession" (p. 6). Because the Nazis assumed absolute control of all aspects of their

feature film industry, Nazi feature films offer some of the best examples of how thoroughly a fictional narrative film can be ideologically encoded. As the German film scholar Eric Rentschler(1996) has put it, “Film theorists have often speculated about the ideological effects of the ‘dominant cinema,’ proposing that classical narratives seek to mesmerize and mystify viewers by means of imaginary seductions. The Nazi cinema offers a strikingly concrete example of such a theoretical construct put into practice” (p. 16). A close study of one of the most carefully constructed and ideologically encoded Nazi feature films reveals the power and the limits of such propagandistic movie making.

On June 01, 1943, Joseph Goebbels issued an order to German film director Veit Harlan to begin work on a movie entitled *Kolberg* (1945). This film would tell the predominantly true story of the Prussian city of Kolberg’s die-hard resistance to Napoleonic forces in 1807. Goebbels hoped that the film would signal a turning point in what Goebbels called the Reich’s “intellectual war effort” (Abbott, 2004, p. 2). In the film’s allegorical structure, the besieged city of Kolberg can be seen to symbolize Germany under attack from the Allies, the town’s citizen army can be seen to represent the German people, and the town’s fight to the death can be seen to signify the Nazi commitment to total war. Goebbels was right: *Kolberg* did prove to be a standout Nazi propaganda film, but not always in the ways that he had envisioned. Between the film’s inception in the summer of 1943 and its release on January of 1945, the German war machine’s successes on the battlefield had waned and the German people’s standard of living on the home front had deteriorated. As a consequence, *Kolberg*’s story and imagery took on new potential meanings. On the one hand, *Kolberg* did celebrate the little town’s refusal to submit to Napoleon’s vast army, thus championing resolve in the face of overwhelming force. On the other hand, it also showed the catastrophic repercussions of such resolve.

It is important to remember that German film culture was a closed loop in 1943. In 1939, Warner Brothers had released an Edward G. Robinson movie entitled *Confession’s of a Nazi Spy* (1939). This film openly attacked Nazi ideals, and so enraged Goebbels that he first placed a ban on all Warner Brothers films and then on all American films in general. Thus, from 1939 until 1945, German cinema had no competition from Hollywood. All films screened in Germany conformed to Nazi ideals. Screenwriters, directors, actors, cinematographers, and even below-line crewmembers, had to swear allegiance to the Nazi party to work in the movies(O’ Brien, 2004). German film culture was truly a Nazi film culture.

Even in this strictly policed world of Nazi cinema, Reich minister Goebbels assumed an unusually active role in the making of *Kolberg*. During its production, he frequently exclaimed that *Kolberg* would be “the greatest film of all time” (Abbot, 2004, p. 7). In a bid to ensure its status as a Nazi masterpiece, he kept close control over all aspects of its production. The film would have access to practically unlimited resources. It would be made in Agfa-color, which was Germany’s response to Hollywood’s Technicolor. For its major roles, Goebbels hand-picked four of Germany’s leading stars: Heinrich George plays Nettelbeck, the film’s male citizen hero; Kristina Söderbaum plays Maria, the film’s female citizen heroine; Gustav Diessl plays Lt. Schill, the film’s military hero; and Paul Wegener plays Commander Loucadou, the film’s antagonist, who cautions

against resisting the French forces. Finally, Goebbels recruited Veit Harlan, Nazi Germany's most famous feature film director, to direct. Besides bringing their fame, actor Heinrich George and director Veit Harlan also brought ideological purity to the film's production. Heinrich George was one of the first celebrity actors to support Nazism, for which Goebbels awarded him control of the Schiller Theatre in Berlin. Veit Harlan was one of the first notable directors to join the Nazi party, for which Goebbels awarded him control of *Ufa* studios and the title of professor (Wistrich, 1984).

Such ideological purity was important to Goebbels because *Kolberg* was to be the ultimate cinematic expression of the Nazi commitment to total war. After Nazi forces surrendered to Stalin's Red Army in Stalingrad on February 02, 1943, the Nazi propaganda machine was in crisis. Previous Nazi military propaganda had focused on the strength of Nazism's will-to-power as evidenced by Germany's endless victories. This narrative could not account for a German loss. Goebbels quickly responded on February 13, 1943, with a speech that has come to be known as his "Total War Address."

In his speech, Goebbels (1943/2004) asserted, "the most powerful ally in the world, the people itself, is determined, led by the Führer, to wrest victory regardless of the cost." *Kolberg* metaphorically visualizes Goebbels's claim. The film opens with a framing story in which an incredibly well organized throng made up of hundreds of citizens marches through the streets of Breslau, demanding that Frederick William III lead them in war against France. This opening sequence takes place in 1813, six years after the siege of Kolberg, and it features a scene in which General Gneisenau, a survivor of Kolberg, implores the reluctant king to take not only his armies, but also his citizens, into war. As if this parallel to Goebbels's call for total war were not already obvious enough, the citizens of Breslau beseech the king by singing "People arise, the storm breaks loose," an echo of the concluding words of Goebbels's "Total War Address." In the film's closing sequence, Frederick William III does indeed agree to lead his citizens into total war.

The majority of the film, however, takes place in a very long flashback, which is bracketed by these short opening and closing sequences. This flashback dramatizes the city of Kolberg's refusal to surrender to Napoleon's army in 1807. This part of the film not only calls for total war, but also demonstrates total war in action. As in the framing story, the story of Kolberg features citizens giving voice to their desire to fight the enemy directly. Nettelbeck, the town's mayor, most frequently calls for such civilian resistance, but so do his nephew Friedrich, his niece Maria, and his brother Werner.

Nettelbeck is presented as a man of the people. He is a brewer, not an officer; yet, he, and not the town's military leader, Commander Loucadou, prompts the townspeople to confront Napoleon's army. The film takes considerable care in how it presents his assumption of authority. He does not simply disobey or revolt against Commander Loucadou. After all, that might give the German audience unwelcome ideas. Instead, he secretly appeals to Commander Loucadou's master, the King of Pomerania, to replace Commander Loucadou with the more militaristic General Gneisenau. In this way, Nettelbeck, a representative of the people, is able to instigate total war without disobeying orders or flouting state authority.

The characters Friedrich, Lt. Schill, and Maria all serve as Nettelbeck's helpers, each rallying different parts of the citizenry to join the war effort. Friedrich is a Prussian soldier who acts as a liaison between Nettelbeck and the regular army. He has recently returned to Kolberg with ten injured soldiers and his injured commander, Lt. Schill. Friedrich, Lt. Schill, and the injured soldiers give the citizens of Kolberg a crash course in war tactics. Lt. Schill does double duty in the film by also serving as Maria's love interest. Lt. Schill, through his romance with Maria, allows the movie to highlight the attraction of martial virtues. Meanwhile, Maria demonstrates the important contributions that domestic industries make to the war effort. We see her working the fields, caring for livestock, nursing the wounded, and at one point, working a loom with her bare feet. In the blood and soil ideology of Nazism, which dictates that ethnic purity comes from two factors— blood (or attachment through descent) and soil (or attachment to the earth)— Maria incarnates the power of blood. She is Nettelbeck's youngest descendent, the life-blood of her family, and by extension, the life-blood of the entire town.

Werner and Klaus, who appear less often in the film than Nettelbeck, Friedrich, Lt. Schill, or Maria, are nonetheless ideologically important characters. Werner is father to Maria, Friedrich, and Klaus. Klaus is the only one of Nettelbeck's relatives who does not take up the call for total war. Instead, he announces himself to be "a citizen of the world," much to everyone's chagrin, and the movie generally depicts him as a decadent, violin-playing weakling. At a pivotal point in the film, Klaus pledges loyalty to Napoleon in the family home as his father Werner watches. If Maria incarnates blood in Nazism's blood and soil ideology, Werner, as the owner of the family farm, incarnates soil, or a deep connection to the land. His fate is tied to the farm, just as Maria's is tied to her family. Soon after he witnesses Klaus's pledge, Werner burns down the family farm, and because he is so closely identified with the farm, Werner incinerates himself as well. In this way, Werner embodies total war's scorched earth policy, which accepts surrender only after destroying all contested resources. He would rather see the farm destroyed than let it stand as a reminder of Klaus's disgrace and serve as a resource for the invading French army.

Nettelbeck, like the singing horde in the framing story, also calls for "the people to rise and the storm to break loose." Unlike the crowds in Breslau, however, he actually makes it happen. When Napoleon's armies move toward Kolberg from the south, Nettelbeck mobilizes the townspeople, whom he addresses as "citizen soldiers," to dig trenches and destroy their farmland by opening the town's floodgates. The film presents this self-destructive act as an opportunity for mass celebration. The film's "citizen soldiers" are not only willing to ruin their fields and homes in the service of total war, but they do so with what Goebbels (1943/2004) might call "ecstatic determination." They cheer on the rushing water, fervently waving their arms. Two townspeople appear to be so enraptured that they break into dance upon their flooded farmland. This flood sequence further serves Goebbels's ideology of total war by showing how the "loosened storm" of a rising populace clears away the decadent and the frail, as embodied in the film by Klaus. Announcing himself a coward, Klaus drowns in this same flood as he tries to

save his violin. Here, the film suggest that he dies as wantonly and uselessly as he has lived, leaving Maria simultaneously saddened by his death and outraged by his weakness.

Despite its dramatic enactment of Goebbels's total war ideology, *Kolberg* proved to be a problematic propaganda vehicle for his ideas. Ironically, the film's production drew many physical resources away from the Nazi war effort. Veit Harlan claimed that as many as 187,000 much-needed Wehrmacht troops were taken from the warfront to serve as extras on the film (Schulte-Sasse, 1996). Some film scholars, such as John Abbot (2004), have examined the existing footage for this film and believe that Harlan's figure is exaggerated. Instead, Abbot sees evidence of roughly 20,000 Wehrmacht troops being siphoned from the battlefield (p. 7). Still, it is not so easy to arrive at a true number of diverted troops. *Kolberg* was exempted from wartime rationing, which dictated that Nazi films use a 2:1 shooting ratio for interior scenes and slightly more for exterior shooting. *Kolberg* instead used an unheard-of 45:1 shooting ratio. Almost ninety hours of footage was shot for this two-hour film, and Goebbels destroyed much of it (Welch, 1983). Consequently, the actual number of troops engaged in the film is unknowable. In any case, no less than 20,000 Nazi soldiers needed for real-life twentieth century combat were instead engaged in make-believe nineteenth century fighting.

Kolberg also drew other much-needed physical resources from the war effort. German factories were put on overtime to produce ordinance for the film's battle scenes. For Goebbels, only real shelling looked believable on film. These armaments, which were responsible for at least five reported deaths on the film set, would have been very welcome at the Eastern front, where the Wehrmacht suffered from a documented lack of sufficient munitions. The film also extracted garment workers, skilled craftsmen, and pyrotechnicians from the war effort. Garment workers created 10,000 costumes for the film instead of creating much-needed war gear. Hundreds of skilled craftsmen and no less than thirty pyrotechnicians were busy creating, bombing, and burning replicas of *Kolberg's* medieval buildings instead of rebuilding real bombarded German towns and managing the after-effects of authentic Allied firebombs(Welch, 1983).

Kolberg falters most as a vehicle for Goebbels's propaganda in its depiction of a German town's utter destruction. Here, *Kolberg*, in its desire for realism, unwittingly makes a case against total war. As Napoleon's cannons annihilate the town, the citizen army proves useless. Most of *Kolberg's* citizens merely panic under fire, running aimlessly to escape the crushing assault. And those who do stay to fight the flames make no headway. Harlan's initial final cut was even more troubling. It featured a scene in which a mother gives birth in a basement, only to have the bombed building fall in upon her and her newborn infant. Goebbels removed this scene, as well as others that he deemed demoralizing. Apparently, he did not remove enough. The film's graphic violence unsettled home-front audiences, most of whom had by the film's release, already experienced the kind of bombardment depicted in the movie first hand. In fact, during the film's Berlin premiere on January 30, 1945, the thirteenth anniversary of Hitler's rise to power, the Allies launched an air raid on Berlin. Thus, as the French were destroying *Kolberg's* buildings onscreen, the Allies were demolishing Berlin's buildings just outside the theatre. Later, Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda had trouble finding any place to

show its forty authorized prints of the movie: by the film's release, most German theatres had been reduced to rubble (Welch, 1983).

In any case, the film arrived much too late to boost the morale of German audiences, who had been suffering through total war for over a year. The real city of Kolberg, which the Nazis had held since their invasion of Poland in September of 1939, fell to the Russian army in March of 1945 (Welch, 1983). *Kolberg* proved to be the last film released in the Third Reich. This film, which was planned to tout the merits of total war, instead ended up representing its disastrous costs.

Conclusion

Maoist China and Nazi Germany each incorporated its national feature film industry into its Ideological State Apparatus. In each case, cinema proved to be a powerful tool for dictating "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser, 1971/2009, p. 304). Still, the material reality of the audience's lives could limit the propaganda power of even the most ideologically driven films.

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