

MLVS IN A CHANGING POLITICAL CLIMATE

UFA'S "NATIONAL FILM" *DIE INSEL* (1934): A CASE STUDY

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Over the last twenty-five years, the formulation of a European film policy and a reassessment of the concept of identity¹ have generated intense political and academic debates on national cinemas and film policies. "What the national means changes according to social, economic and political mutations and pressures"² as well as to the historical context in which national – and by implication, non-national – films are envisaged. Interchanges between Germany and France during the 1930s raise important "questions about the supposed specificity of national production systems."³ Making national films, like defining "the national," implies the enunciation of two fundamental concepts: identity and difference. In this respect, making national films with world-wide appeal seems a contradiction in terms. Yet, this is exactly what Ufa's directors set out to do, when, in early 1934, they agreed to make a "national film" of the play *Die Insel* (The Island). Their decision to produce it in a French and German version may be traced back to one of their annual surveys enquiring about audience preferences for the coming season, that (amongst others) had resulted in their distributors and cinema owners at home and abroad asking specifically for "at least one big national film [...] that should present the national element in a way that will fill national sections of the populations of all countries with enthusiasm."⁴

Having previously examined Ufa's policy towards popular multi-language film versions for the international market⁵ with reference to the hit film operetta *Congress Dances*, we shall concentrate this time on its managers' attempts to make their highly controversial and widely criticised *nationale Filme* (films deliberately made to boost a nation's morale from a conservative perspective) palatable for international audiences. In the process we shall try to define their understanding of "the national," examine their production policy within the context of the changing political climate in Germany of 1933/34, investigate the ideological position of the individuals responsible for the production programme, look at the experience of the French artists working in Babelsberg at the time and present the film's production history together with a brief comparative analysis of the original play and the film. Bearing in mind the set of questions and problems raised by Pierre Sorlin and other contributors to the first Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School⁶ – notably that versions are hypotheses that can always be disconfirmed and that comparisons may falsify the actual reception experience – we examine, in the second part, the similarities and differences between the German (*Die Insel*) and French (*Vers l'abîme*) versions of the film. To what extent do they confirm findings on MLVs so far? What does a close examination of the two versions reveal as far as national issues are concerned? What are the values that Ufa's directorate expected to appeal to "national audiences" in France and

Germany? Do these coincide in both versions? Do they reflect the same attitudes towards foreigners? To what extent do they tentatively touch upon relevant events or issues of the time?

Ufa's "National Film"

Ever since the media mogul and chairman of the ultra rightwing *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* Alfred Hugenberg took over *Universum Film AG* in spring 1927, its Board of Directors under the stewardship of the company's general manager Ludwig Klitzsch aimed to produce at least one *nationalen* or *vaterländischen* film a year, i.e. feature films, which would stand for and advance conservative "National" values that were deeply rooted in the thoughts, attitudes, and values of the forty odd years preceding World War I. Though the Board never seems to have attempted a definition of the genre's characteristics, minutes of its debates about possible subject matters to be filmed give an indication of what type of protagonist and human behaviour qualified for inclusion and what did not. A four-page note headed "Betrifft: nationalen Film" ("Concerning: National Film") offers an insight into the thinking and political stance of the men in charge of Europe's foremost film production company.⁷ It was written three days after the elections to the *Reichstag* of March 5, 1933, that had resulted in Hitler needing the support of the German Nationalist People's Party to continue his chancellorship. Its contents suggest that, with Hugenberg in the position of Minister for Agriculture and Industry, Ufa's managers expected the government to pursue a "National" (*not* National Socialist!) agenda in tune with their own ideological convictions. Looking for film topics to support it, they took four subjects from German History into consideration. Three centred on well-known historic personalities, Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia (1772-1806), and Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736). The fourth, with the general label *Kolonialfilm*, aimed to propagate the legitimacy of claims to the colonies Germany had been forced to surrender under the Treaty of Versailles. The reasons given for rejecting and accepting these topics reveal an intricate balancing act between political beliefs and commercial expediency.

Though the idea of making a film about Bismarck as the founder of the modern German *Reich* must have been extremely appealing, it was swiftly rejected on the grounds that the topic was too close to their own times. Too many people still alive would have personally known the "Iron Chancellor" and other well-known personalities of the period. Interestingly, concern that the Franco-German War of 1870/71 (which led to the proclamation in the Palace of Versailles of the King of Prussia as *Kaiser* of a unified Germany) might hinder the film's distribution in France, was not considered to be an obstacle. More revealing details about the managers' ideological thinking emerge from their discussions about the suitability of Frederick the Great's nephew Louis Ferdinand (1772-1806), whose dashing personality and heroics against the French during the late 18th and early 19th century had been used to spur on the fighting spirit of young volunteers eager to force France into submission during World War I. Fifteen years later, Ufa's directors – all of whom but one had been officers during that war – no longer considered him suitable for a role model. His love affairs – above all one with the estranged wife of a high ranking official within the Prussian military establishment –

and his close association with the renowned literary circle of the *Salon* run in Berlin by the intellectually brilliant Jewish authoress Rahel Levin now meant that the Prince had led a wasted life. Furthermore, in light of the virulent anti-Semitism in Germany, his links with Rahel Levin were felt to “contain dangers and risks for the film which, in view of the large financial investments, have to be avoided.” For Louis Ferdinand to set an example for contemporary audiences, the film script, in their opinion, would have to deviate from historical facts that were all too well known. From a prosaic business point of view the topic was thrown out because audiences in Southern Germany and abroad would be opposed to a distinctly Prussian hero. Furthermore, a recent survey amongst cinema owners had revealed that spectators rejected films with characters wearing costumes of the first decade of the 19th century.

In contrast to Louis Ferdinand, no affairs with married women or female Jewish intellectuals are known about Eugene of Savoy. The Board therefore emphasised to have qualified writers develop a script for a National Film that would celebrate the Prince's historic importance by presenting him “as the embodiment of the idea of the *Führer* whose crowning achievement was the liberation of Europe from the threat of a Muslim conquest. Thus two parallels with the present times offer themselves: the idea of the *Führer* and the repulsion of the danger of Bolshevism.” As the Prince was small, a cripple and his outer appearance unattractive, it was agreed that, instead of making him the central hero, the film would focus on one of his officers, whose life and fate would be shown within a broad, colourful panorama imbued with Eugene's spirit and actions. Though clearly a National Film, the topic would be of international appeal and would be made in two versions. As it would not necessarily have to be produced during the coming season (probably because of the scale of the undertaking), the Board, in the end, settled for the *Kolonialfilm*. Set in the years prior to World War I, it would demonstrate the extent to which the *Lebensraum* of their home country had become restricted and oppressive for young Germans, making them eager to seek their fortunes abroad with the ultimate aim to create a German homeland far from home and develop new links for the benefit of their fatherland's trade and industry. Intent to strengthen their *Wehrwillen* (readiness to defend and fight for themselves), the film would demonstrate how, “with the support of 500.000 bayonets and a strong navy, young Germans created new opportunities and *Lebensraum* for themselves.” Apart from its topicality for younger generations of many other nations, the subject would present opportunities for exciting images of foreign countries. Board members regarded the film's topic to be particularly significant as it deliberately advanced what to them was a “pioneering and forward-looking idea.” Their fervour of propagating nationalist convictions along party political lines of the German Nationalist People's Party found its expression on March 22, 1933, when they decided to make a documentary about the *Nationale Bewegung* (i.e. the “national” not “national socialist” movement). Compiled from actuality footage shot between January 31 and March 21, 1933, this would be a “historic document” shown as support programme and on special occasions. The film was never made by Ufa – possibly because the company's directors realised that their understanding of nationalism was not entirely in tune with that of Hitler and his party. This becomes particularly apparent in the Board's decisions concerning Ufa's business interests in France during the first half of 1933.

As committed nationalists and World War I veterans, Ufa's directors never had any qualms about expressing their strong anti-French feelings in their minutes.⁸ Such

emotions, however, did not affect their business decisions. By 1933 it was clear to them that it would be impossible for their productions to break into the North American distribution network. As the English cinema circuits were generally regarded as the “least important in Europe” for the German film industry,⁹ Ufa, by the end of 1932, had given up making English versions altogether. Concentrating entirely on French versions instead, France and the French-speaking world had become the company’s most important export-market. Though initially clearly delighted about possible influences and advantages to be gained from Hugenberg’s position within the government, Ufa’s managers soon shared the uncertainty of the rest of the industry over National Socialist attitudes and policies, which, by spring 1933, brought German film production to a virtual standstill. As for their business relations with France, they apparently were concerned that, following Hitler’s re-election as Chancellor, the new government not only shared their anti-French feelings, but would be prepared to translate these into political decisions and actions that would be detrimental to their business interests. Their Franco-phobia is reflected in the erratic way in which they handled their film-adaptation of the French boulevard comedy *Le Chien qui rapporte*. By the time they acquired the rights in 1932, the play had been a theatre hit throughout Germany for a number of years. Preparations for production began on January 1, 1933. The film’s budget was given its final approval during the week before the elections of March 5, with an immediate start of location work in Switzerland. Given the play’s popularity, it was to be released under the same title as the stage-version *Der kleine Kuppler* (*The Little Matchmaker*). Five days after the election, Ufa’s directors held the first of several discussions that dragged on until a month before the film’s release in June trying to find a new title.¹⁰ The reason for the difficulties they had in reaching a decision is revealed in a minute of April 11, which states that all references to the French source should be dropped from the film’s credits.¹¹ On another occasion they considered it necessary to justify the purchase of a machine for copying 35mm to 16 mm film stock by recording: “The meeting unanimously agreed that there were no objections to ordering the machine in France from the French company Debie as this is the only company that makes such a machine.”¹²

The French Experience at Babelsberg

The anti-French attitudes reflected in the minutes of the board meetings stand in stark contrast to the way working conditions were perceived by the large number of French artists employed at Ufa’s Babelsberg Studios. Ufa’s foreign language productions had a reputation for quality, as the company used established actors and apparently listened to advice and opinions of the French directors who assisted their German colleagues. Serge de Poligny, who, amongst others, worked on Karl Hartl’s film *Gold* (1934-35), recalled that, within every shot, he was allowed a certain degree of freedom as long as its beginning and end corresponded to that of the original.¹³ From March 1933 onwards, Ufa’s French versions were supervised by Raoul Ploquin, who previously had been Head of Publicity of the Paris-based L’Alliance Cinématographique Européenne (ACE), an Ufa-subsidary originally founded in 1926 in collaboration with Svenska and the support of French money for the purpose of making French-German-Swedish co-productions. Shortly after Ufa’s managers authorised his appointment on January 10,

1933 for 18.000 Francs per month,¹⁴ Marcel Colin-Reval, in *Cinématographie française*, welcomed his move to Berlin. Congratulating him in the most complimentary terms, Colin-Reval's article indicates that Ploquin was not appointed for artistic reasons alone:

Not only hardworking, [Raoul Ploquin] also has an in-depth knowledge of film production. [...] M. Ploquin knows how much income a film can generate in a particular region. He has a perfect knowledge of the French market's capacity. Furthermore, he knows the taste of French audiences. For years, he has followed the career of many films and, by just observing and analysing without criticising, he has reached his own conclusions and used them to advance his career. He knows film as an industry, a trade and an art.

Today, M. Ploquin is perfectly equipped and worthy of the difficult task ahead of him. It will not be easy to ensure that French preferences penetrate every detail of a film. But M. Ploquin will succeed. He has a healthy understanding of film, a rich cultural background, and a huge amount of experience. He is not a youngster to be taken on for a period of probation. M. Ploquin will make an impact, and in this will have the support of all his friends.¹⁵

Not everybody shared Marcel Colin-Reval's enthusiasm and confidence about Ploquin and other French artists working in Germany. Some, like the author of the propaganda pamphlet *Les Dessous du cinéma allemand* written in 1934, suspected German film industrialists of having the same sinister intentions as their American colleagues. Writing from the imagined perspective of a German producer, he stated:

France will never make fine films. The French government doesn't support it in any way. They don't have any idea of the effect a film can have abroad, or the influence it can exercise. So it's up to the Germans to make the French people's films for them. They will serve two ends: (1) counter French influence abroad, (2) replace it little by little by ours. [...] These great films will serve our propaganda and spread our ideas around the world... With our (limitless) money, we will seduce and keep in Germany all the good French film personnel, Boyer, Garat, Lemonnier, Blanchar, Murat, Gabin, Rosine, Deréan, Ferny, Françoise Rosay and others whom we'll pay highly. And the French producers, deprived of stars, will have to make do with the meagre residue we leave them until their industry packs up and French culture dies out.¹⁶

Ufa's managers certainly were interested in spreading their ideological beliefs as long as this did not interfere with their main business of making money. However, the record of their discussions reveals that, when it came to salaries, they definitely did not voluntarily squander their financial resources and would have been delighted had they been able to get away with employing fewer people for shorter periods of time. It was the demand for French performers in their native country that forced them to take entire ensembles under contract, as a minute of September 26, 1933, reveals: "In view of the difficulties experienced when it comes to signing up French performers for our films, due to the high demand for them on the French market and their contractual ties with French theatres and film producers, the Board agrees in principle to

take a number of male and female French actors under contract for 16 to 20 weeks per year with an option for renewal for a second year; salaries and other conditions to be negotiated.”

The presence of a hard-working French community of actors, directors, script-writers and language coaches in Babelsberg is widely acknowledged. On the other hand, film historians have noted that the least documented aspect of international exchanges in the 1930s is the French presence in Berlin. As Colin Crisp points out: “French filmmaking personnel, retrospectively self-conscious about their contributions to the enemy’s economy, were understandably reluctant in later years to elaborate on their work there.”¹⁷

No records seem to have survived about the experiences of French actors or co-director Serge Veber who worked on the French version of *Die Insel* in Babelsberg. However, André Beucler, who directed a number of films produced under the supervision of Raoul Ploquin at about the same time, gave a rare detailed account of working conditions in Berlin a few months after the completion of the film. Referring to his account published in *La Revue de Paris* in 1935, Colin Crisp notes that Beucler “underlines the technical sophistication of the German industry, which impressed French workers” and quotes him as saying: “The Berlin workshops do things well: the photography is clever and precise, the sound excellent, the editing sophisticated... In all technical matters, our neighbours make no compromises; near enough is not good enough. It’s substance that’s most lacking in their work.” Furthermore, Beucler “contrasts the amicable internationalism of the film personnel with the potentially intrusive nationalism pressing upon it:”

You hear the German language marry with the French, which shocks no one, since [UFA] is still the centre of Franco-German collaboration where a bilingual murmur is part of the house style... The atmosphere of camaraderie that reigns in this world of cousins germains is undeniable. It is based on a thousand little details of shared professional understanding; international – an understanding that allows a Danish actor to feel at ease with a Portuguese director, but which unquestionably creates deep bonds each year between 400 French and 400 Germans – sincere bonds, broken of course with the rapidity of cinematic images, but which recall wartime friendships and University relationships. To become a close friend, with the Germans – whether they’re secret liberals, Hitlerians, monarchists, or militants – all you have to do is confine yourself to a fictional world and not take too close an interest in the Third Reich... If as a Frenchman you commit the heresy of noticing what’s happening not in the studio but in the nearby arsenals or military camps... you immediately become an enemy of art, of the cinema and of Germany...

Crisp continues: “Describing the cinema as a sort of no-man’s land not altogether assimilated as yet to the Hitlerian ethic, [Beucler] speaks of listening to Hitler’s broadcasts alongside German personnel – themselves Nazi – who nevertheless observed quietly at the end, ‘that too is just cinema’.”¹⁸ The word “international” (underlined in the quotation of Beucler’s experiences) along with his description of the Babelsberg working environment as a sort of “no-man’s land” and his allusion to “wartime friendships” are interesting with regard to the plot and setting of our case study, *Die Insel*.

Ufa's "National Film" in Light of Hitler's Ascent to Power

Though they apparently tried to ignore it, none of those working for Ufa – whether French or German – could have missed what was happening around them. On March 28, 1933, in a well-known speech to the heads of the German film industry in the Berlin hotel *Kaiserhof*, Goebbels had tried to regain the confidence of these key people and rekindle production activities.¹⁹ Assuring them that the Hitler-government had no intention of interfering with their activities he insisted that film production had to be solidly rooted in the spirit of the times, i.e. in national socialist ideology. At the same time, he declared that Jewish directors were incapable of understanding German audiences. Accusing film managers of ignoring the problems and difficult times experienced throughout the country, he called for the production of films that would reflect the fate and drama of the German people. Ufa's directorate lost no time to fall in line. The following day, "in light of the drastically changed conditions," its members revamped their plans for 1933/34 by starting off with the production of two films of "an entirely German character" and deferred films with French versions to the end of the season. Using Goebbels' anti-Semitic remarks as a convenient excuse they also severed their links with employees and artists of Jewish descent – particularly those with expensive contracts.²⁰ As Goebbels worked at seizing control of the film industry Ufa's general manager, Ludwig Klitzsch revealed himself as a clever tactician who – in contrast to its owner Alfred Hugenberg and its artistic director Ernst-Hugo Correll – soon made himself indispensable to the new rulers while his company carefully tried to tread the thin line between its German-National orientation and National Socialism.

The vocabulary of the cautiously phrased speech with which Klitzsch had welcomed the Propaganda Minister in the *Kaiserhof* was that of the Hugenberg-Party. Blaming opportunists and rumour-mongers he never referred to, let alone criticised the National Socialists for being responsible for the current crisis within the German Film Industry. Outlining his vision of the film of the future, he insisted (in the language of German conservatives) that the industry was prepared "dem Vaterland zu geben, was des Vaterlandes ist" ("to give to the fatherland that what belongs to the fatherland").²¹ On May Day 1933, which Goebbels' propaganda machinery turned into a demonstration of unrelenting National Socialist strength and solidarity, Ufa displayed the Imperial black-white-and-red flag of the pre-World War I era with equal prominence as the new Swastika flag. In his official address as representative of the Board of Directors, Alexander Grau praised Ufa's National Films, the Hugenberg-Group's contributions and successes, and the national (not "national socialist") achievements made by Germany. In contrast to the NSDAP-representative who finished his speech with a triple "Sieg-Heil" to Adolf Hitler, Grau ended his with a triple "Heil" to the Fatherland, the *Reich's* President, and the *Reich's* Chancellor.²² A few weeks later, Klitzsch, in his function as Chairman of the Association of German Film Producers, bridged the ideological differences in a meeting with Joseph Goebbels during which both agreed on the founding of a "Film Bank" for the sole purpose of financing film projects.

The political climate of 1933 suggests that Ufa hired producer Karl Ritter because of his long-standing connections with the NSDAP, however, timing and the way he was brought into the company indicate that his professionalism and experience in the

industry were the deciding factors, his right-wing political views a mere bonus. A career officer and soldier “by inner conviction,” Ritter attributed his successful rise in the film industry to his military training that “had taught him organisational skills, disciplined thinking, and to be creatively active.” It also led him to make some of the most virulent militaristic films in cinema history. Throughout his life Ritter maintained that “He who wants to be leader first has to learn to obey, and subsequently has had to be led by others for years.”²³ Under the strong influence of his father-in-law, a “passionate National Socialist and fanatic anti-Semite,”²⁴ he had joined the Nazi-Party as early as 1925. A talented and effective organiser, from 1926 onwards, he worked his way up from publicity manager in the Berlin office of the Munich-based Südfilm distribution company to producer-in-chief of the Reichsliga-Film GmbH, gaining practical experience as scriptwriter, production assistant, director and producer en route. His first involvement with feature film production came in 1928 as co-author of a silent military comedy, *Das Spreewaldmädel* (*The Girl from the Forrest Along the River Spree*). The film’s director was Hans Steinhoff, a specialist for so-called *Mittelfilme*, i.e. films of any genre with medium-size budgets that represented the staple of popular entertainment, which kept German cinemas in business during the second half of the 1920s and early 1930s. A professional to the bone Steinhoff’s ability to deliver solidly made features with limited financial resources within a specified time had turned him into one of the busiest men of his trade. Following this, their first joint venture, they had made plans for further collaboration, which came to nothing as the production company, which had announced the picture, went bankrupt.

At the time they joined Ufa independently from each other before the elections of March 5, 1933, Ritter and Steinhoff were given one-off contracts. Thus, it is unlikely that either of them was hired for political reasons. Indeed, it was not until they collaborated on *Hitler Youth Quex* that Steinhoff became involved in the production of films that subsequently established him as a leading propagandist of Third Reich Cinema. No hints, activities, or documents exist linking him with any political persuasion prior to the production of *Quex* during the summer of 1933. The reasons for their employment with Ufa were clearly their professional skills and, given the company’s money-saving efforts, the low salaries they commanded in comparison with producers and directors working under contract or regularly used by Ufa. At 1.500 Marks for one month and pro rata payments should the production last longer, Ritter’s remuneration was half that of the 3.000 Marks received for the same period of time by Max Pfeiffer, Ufa’s lowest paid salaried producer, while Bruno Duday, the company’s main producer of the kind of inexpensive *Mittelfilm* initially assigned to Ritter got 3.500 RM. Similarly, Steinhoff’s fee of 15.000 Marks as director amounted to half that given to established Ufa-directors like Karl Hartl or Reinhold Schünzel, not to mention star directors such as Ludwig Berger or Luis Trenker who could command sums in excess of 50.000 RM per film.²⁵ The budgets for the three films made by Steinhoff and Ritter between April 1933 and April 1934 all kept within the 250.000 mark-bracket allowed by Ufa for its *Mittelfilm*-productions (usually destined for the German-speaking market only). When, in late spring 1934, they eventually were assigned to the production of *Die Insel* as the first of two films belonging to the company’s *Superfilm*-category, the budget at their disposal was fixed below the target of 600.000 marks allowed for pictures in this class and usually made in two language versions.

Production Context

The film is based on a play of the same title, which opened in mid-January 1934 at the *Schauspielhaus* in the North German city of Bremen. It was probably discovered by a specialist unit set up within Ufa's script department towards the end of 1932 with a specific brief of scouring literary works and plays for their suitability as film subjects.²⁶ On January 30, Ufa's managers authorised payment of 1.500 marks in Austrian Shillings for a treatment to be written by the play's author Harald Bratt with a further 13.500 marks to be paid should they subsequently acquire the rights.²⁷ The decision was taken at short notice, as the topic does not appear amongst eight titles discussed on January 9, 1934, as potential subject for the next National Film. Following Correll's presentation of the project, it was approved on February 23 and finally given the go-ahead on March 9, after the script had been scrutinised by the pre-censorship office of the *Reichsfilmdramaturg* (which had no objections). As both, the Export Department and Ufa's supervisor for French language versions Raoul Ploquin,²⁸ were optimistic about the topic's audience appeal in France, the meeting also agreed to make a German and a French version.

Ploquin's and the Export Department's opinions were of particular importance as a few months earlier Serge de Poligny, while working as author and director on the French version of Karl Hartl's *Gold*, had seriously questioned that, in its present form, the project he had been assigned to would appeal to French audiences. In line with Ufa's German-National orientation and its directors' decision to concentrate for the first part of the 1933-34 season on films with a distinctly German character, *Gold* had originally been conceived as a National Film set in a German environment with a German hero. In a strongly phrased letter Poligny now pointed out to Correll that, for the film to be financially successful in France, it would have to be set in France with a French protagonist. His observations presented Ernst-Hugo Correll with a number of problems. If Poligny's recommendations were accepted, the script would have to be re-written as the plot (about the artificial creation of gold) relied on conditions that were typical for Germany, but did not apply to France. The film's *raison d'être* was Germany's lack of gold. France on the other hand had plenty of reserves of the precious metal. Production cost would increase, as location shots would have to be made in Germany as well as in France. Sets would have to be adapted to the different environments or be so neutral in appearance that the film's specifically German character would be lost. Above all, Correll was concerned that Ufa might be accused of having transferred the ethos of the new Germany as represented in the film to a French environment for purely economic and financial reasons. To him, in light of the political developments of 1933, this raised two fundamental questions affecting the production of language versions in general: Should Ufa continue to produce French versions of films with a "specifically national ethos?" and: Can French versions set in a German environment and reflecting a specifically German mentality still be exhibited in France without risk to their (financial) success?²⁹ In the case of *Gold*, the Board of Directors had decided to ignore Poligny's reservations and retain the film's German characters and settings in both versions.³⁰ However, upon receiving the preliminary budget for the production a week later, they seem to have changed their minds. Costed at almost 1.1 million marks, the film's budget exceeded its original allocation by 400.000 marks, a figure far too high to be put at risk. So, instead of advancing the German ethos of 1933, *Gold* became a utopian adven-

ture film – and a hit for Ufa. It allowed Germans to take pride in the defeat of a power crazy industrialist with the English name of John Wills at the hands of Werner Holk, *Assistant* to physicist *Professor* Achenbach, while French audiences cheered for François Berthier, *assistant* to *professeur* Lefèvre.

The change of character of *Gold* probably contributed to the speedy acceptance and production of *Die Insel* as Ufa's "National Film for national audiences of all countries" asked for by the respondents to the survey mentioned above: "Under no circumstances should such a film be simply heroic or tragic, as otherwise it would not be of anymore value outside Germany than an ordinary *Mittelfilm*. On the contrary, it should present the national element in such a way that it can excite nationally orientated classes of all countries. It should also contain a plot of general human interest heavily interspersed with humorous moments."³¹ Except possibly for the requirement of having to be "heavily interspersed with humorous moments," the play seemed to contain all the characteristics asked for by the respondents. Indeed, one critic reviewing the play for a number of provincial German newspapers expressed the opinion that its success would not be limited to Germany: "Already accepted by theatres in London and New York it will possibly leave an even stronger impression in English-speaking countries."³² Though there is no evidence that the play was ever produced outside German-speaking countries, it certainly contains most of the characteristics important to Ufa's managers in their considerations of topics for their National Film. From a practical point of view of the designer and the financial perspective of Ufa's accountants, all action takes place inside an Embassy in a foreign country and thus requires comparatively few sets. These are visually impressive and at the same time conveniently neutral so that they could be found in any country worldwide. The people inside are elegant, attractive, and imbued with authority. Their lives and actions are governed by a hierarchical structure and by strict codes of behaviour that allocate to everybody around a specific place in a mini society which adheres to pre-World War I social structures. It is a world of order dominated by traditional concepts of honour that are rooted in values derived from an aristocratic and military elite.

The Play

The play's title *Die Insel* refers to the Embassy in a foreign country. Representing an isolated piece of homeland, it is a refuge for its closed community whose members perceive it as a small island, surrounded by a strange and threatening environment. The two main characters are the military attaché Captain Rist and the Embassy's *Legationssekretär* (official representative for matters of trade) Raaz. Their everyday behaviour and attitude to life and work reflect the changes that have taken place in the diplomatic service as well as in society in general in the aftermath of the World War I. Once the privilege of the aristocracy represented by Rist and the senior diplomats of the Embassy, it is now "infiltrated" by educated and clever high flyers from the middle classes like Raaz, who are looked down upon by their traditionally orientated colleagues because, as hard working specialists, they are interested in trade figures for the good of their country rather than in lavish displays of grandeur. While Rist and Raaz are friends, the others are envious of the young upstart whose dedication to his job has just led to an important trade agreement. Furthermore, his wealthy family background

makes it easy for him to subsidise the comparatively low income of diplomats who traditionally are expected to finance part of the expenses involved in representing their country from personal resources.

As military attaché, Rist is a kind of officially accepted spy who frequently has to take on assignments the Ambassador, for reasons of diplomacy, is not allowed to be aware of. While trying to make contact with potential informers in a notorious bar owned by the seductive, but shady Silvia, Rist has fallen victim to impostors who turned out to be clever gamblers and have relieved him of \$ 6.000. Unable to settle the debt because he comes from an impoverished family, he had to accept Silvia's offer to lend him the money in exchange for an IOU. Under pressure not to reveal his true identity as military attaché and used to his friend helping him out in tight financial situations he has signed the document with Raaz's name. As the sum involved is substantial he cautiously asks Raaz how much money he could lend him. But this time it is too high even for Raaz, whose father's business is going through difficult times. When Silvia appears in the Embassy and learns that Rist has not been able to raise the money she threatens to go to the press. As exposing him would involve the Embassy in a scandal, Rist forges a cheque signing it with Raaz's name.

Informed by the director of his bank that a cheque has been presented which exceeds his financial resources, Raaz refuses to honour it. But Silvia insists on payment. As the signature, though easy to copy, appears to be that of Raaz, the director requests the Ambassador to act as mediator. The subsequent talk only reveals the rift that exists between the generations. In order to protect the reputation of the Embassy, its staff, and the country they represent, the Ambassador, though convinced that Raaz is innocent, demands that the cheque is accepted. Raaz, however, wants his name cleared and insists on justice. As neither side is prepared to give way, the Ambassador asks his niece Karin (with whom both, Rist and Raaz, are in love) to persuade Raaz to change his mind. In the course of their conversation Karin realises that Raaz is indeed innocent and encourages him in his stance. But Raaz, out of love for her, changes his mind and agrees to pay, on condition that the culprit reveals himself. When the Ambassador calls for the guilty man to admit to the crime, all senior diplomats step forward in solidarity, each claiming he did it. Unable to live in an environment that protects criminals, Raaz resigns. Following his exit from the room, the Ambassador calls for the unknown culprit to "resign" from the Embassy in a way that would allow those staying behind to remember him with honour. When Raaz learns of what is clearly a sentence of death for the culprit, he and Karin desperately try to prevent it. In a final conversation with Raaz the Ambassador expresses his opposition to a union between the young people. This makes Karin even more determined to go back to her home country, together with Raaz. When, to their horror, they realise that it was Rist who had forged the cheque, a shot resounds from the room next door.

Though the play seems to criticize the old order by showing two of the diplomats as arrogant cynics, Bratt does not entirely support the position and attitudes of the younger generation either. Like many of his generation in the political climate of the time, he remains sitting on a fence. Indeed, what probably made the play attractive to Ufa's directors was the inner strength and seeming understanding displayed by the Ambassador for the demands of the younger generation for change. A disciplined grand seigneur with perfect manners he always appears in command. All his decisions are taken in a selfless attitude with the aim of maintaining the honour of his staff, his

Embassy and, above all, his country. Always putting the interests of his nation first, he is the perfect civil servant, a leader whom everybody can trust. As a character and in his appearance, he dispels any call for the abolition and destruction of the encrusted, out-moded, hierarchical structures of pre-World War I European societies with their ideals of military order, in which a position in life usually depended on birthrights rather than ability and work.

While the Ambassador appears as an ideal representative of traditional values, it is difficult to accept Rist as a tragic hero who falls victim to criminals while working in the line of duty. The author provides no convincing justification why an experienced diplomat in a key position like Rist first signs an IOU and then forges a cheque using his friend's name. Furthermore, the circumstantial reasons offered as explanation for his inability to raise the money are rather spurious. Thus, changes made to the play when turning it into a film script probably started with the development of dramaturgical devices that would make his actions more plausible and honourable. In this, Bratt was assisted by Emil Hesse Burri, a former participant in the short-lived programme initiated by Ufa's Script Department in autumn 1932 for the development of new scriptwriters. To make the military attaché's action more convincing and let his character appear in a more positive light, they introduced an acquaintance of Silvia's, a sinister "Man Without a Name" ("Der Namenlose") who has seen better times. Once one of Rist's friends, he now threatens him with extortion. Unless he immediately receives \$ 6.000 he will jeopardise the signing of Raaz's trade agreement by handing over to the press plans of aggression against the country within which the Embassy is located, which Rist had developed as part of an exercise during his officer training. To add action and suspense to a play that relies mainly on dialogue, the Man Without a Name is wanted by the Police. The man in charge of hunting him down is an officer called Ascunto who in turn reports to the Minister responsible for signing the trade treaty. Unlike the play in which the characters only talk about Silvia's Bar, the scene in which Rist now is forced to lose money to make the handover appear legal is actually shown, giving the film the opportunity to incorporate a chanson sung by a French star and a dance routine presented by a girlie troupe. For relief from the mainly interior scenes, shots of Karin and Raaz – whose name is changed into Raak – driving along romantic coastlines in a sports car are interspersed, while Rist, in a dramatic climax, commits suicide by driving his car over a spectacular cliff into the sea instead of shooting himself with a gun.

Production History

In April 1934, Karl Ritter travelled to Paris to recruit the ensemble for the film's French version (which at this point was not yet called *Vers l'abîme*, but "Les isolés"). Amongst others, he signed up Françoise Rosay, who, aware of Ritter's reputation as an anti-Semite, took him for their negotiations to a café well known as a popular meeting place of Jewish émigrés and refugees. Sitting amongst German Jews she remarked: "I thought I'd take you to a restaurant where you'd feel comfortable amongst your countrymen."³³ Though Rosay is the biggest French star with whom Ritter returned to Berlin, the others were no unknowns either – with the exception of Roger Duchesne who made his first screen appearance in the part of Roll (Raak). The cast of the German

version is headed by two of Ufa's top stars, Willi Fritsch and Brigitte Helm. According to publicity announcements both were looking forward to playing roles that would differ from the standard images that had made them favourites not just with German audiences. Because of their presence, the film's budget was supported with 64.000 RM from the "Star Reserve", a fund established to ensure that expensive performers under exclusive contract to Ufa did not remain unused because low cost productions avoided them for fear of exceeding their budgets. Otto Treßler, a distinguished member of the Burgtheater-Ensemble, had previously played the part of the Ambassador when the play received its Austrian première on March 1, 1934, in the Vienna Akademie Theater. An actor, who made his film debut in *Die Insel* and went on to rise to considerable prominence in German radio, theatre, film, and television is Günter Lüders.

Set construction began shortly after the Board of Directors accepted the plans and authorised the film's budget of 565.000 RM on April 27. Shooting in the Babelsberg Studios started on May 7 and lasted until June 15. The next day, for the rest of the month, a small team went to Dalmatia carrying out location work near Split and Dubrovnik. Production reports appearing in the German trade press during this period were usually praising the impressive sets constructed for the film. Those that covered the picture's content reflected what right-wing ideologues were expecting of it. Seemingly trying to outdo each other in their praises of the ideological spirit of the chosen subject matter, their contributions exposed the closeness between the bombastic language of National Socialism and that of the similarly heavy patriotic fervour of the German Nationalists. In the trade paper *Film-Kurier*, one author enthused about Goebbels as "carrier of light of the German film industry" and praised the "old fighter for German film" Karl Ritter as being exactly the right man for this particular subject, before coming to the conclusion that *Die Insel* reflected the

*civil fight for one's own nation – presented from the perspectives of both [the host country's and the Embassy's] sides, it is ethically rooted in a military understanding of manhood, honour, esprit de corps, highest discipline, strict service. [...] The national concept of honour in general is anchored in the heart chamber of this film subject.*³⁴

In spirit and tone there is no difference between the hollowness of these overblown statements and those that appeared in the *Kinematograph*, which belonged to the Hugenberg concern and as such was close to Ufa:

*Like an island, the Embassy is surrounded by alien ideas, customs, different perceptions of race. [...] Sticking together is the highest duty of this Embassy. Personal experiences and feelings have to be subordinate to the thought and well-being of the nation, the state that is represented. No matter what conflicts arise amongst the Embassy personnel it is necessary to pull oneself together, the iron principle applies "Do nothing for yourself, everything for your country." The dramatic events of the film are the result of the clash between personal desire, still dominated by egotistical ideas, and the all-embracing idea of the home country's well-being that demands big, inner sacrifices.*³⁵

As Karl Ritter (who, in 1933, used to appear in SA uniform on the set) and designer

Benno von Arent (who, two years later, was awarded the title *Reichsbühnenbildner* – Set Designer of the *Reich*) were well-known, established members of the NSDAP, it is no surprise to find amongst official visitors of the production *Gruppenführer Sepp Dietrich* – the Commander of the *Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler* responsible for Hitler's personal protection.³⁶

The film's official opening took place on August 30, 1934, at Ufa's most prestigious cinema in Berlin, the Ufa-Palast am Zoo where it ran for sixteen days. The pompous right-wing vocabulary cited above is totally absent from the dozen reviews available for this analysis. With few exceptions, the critics praise the film but also note the implausible elements found in the plot and the character of Rist (all of which they attribute to the script and the original play). Several regard the dominance of the dialogue as an innovation to be welcomed; others criticize it for not being filmic enough. While there are mixed reactions to the two stars Brigitte Helm and Willi Fritsch, Otto Treßler and Françoise Rosay are generally showered with praise. During opening night, one of Rosay's scenes was spontaneously applauded. According to these reviews, the Berlin premiere was a great success. The same was reported about the film's openings in Paris ("Großer Erfolg 'Die Insel' in Paris")³⁷ and Vienna ("Die Insel' in Wien erfolgreich")³⁸ where it ran in six cinemas simultaneously. On the other hand, the film's title does not appear in an extended note about Ufa-successes, published in *Lichtbild-Bühne* on September 26. A day prior to this announcement, Ufa's directors had accepted a suggestion put forward by the Head of Distribution, to add a subtitle to the film's credits, "Der Fall des Hauptmann Rist" ("The Case of Captain Rist"). The idea to highlight the criminal and judicial elements of the plot signals an attempt to attract a wider audience to a film that had been deliberately marketed as a prestigious National Film, but as such was apparently not doing too well at the box office.

The Two Versions

In many ways, similarities between *Die Insel* and *Vers l'abîme* confirm the findings of other researchers who presented their findings on MLVs at the first Gradisca Film School.³⁹ The German and French versions have the same plot, same sets, same camera placement and movement, and (with a few minor exceptions) the same scene dissection. The timing is roughly the same with the exception of exterior shots. Three major parts are played by the same actors in the German and French versions. Brigitte Helm is Karin/Karine, the Ambassador's niece, Françoise Rosay the night-club singer Silvia/Sylvia, and Andrews Engelman a blackmailer, referred to in the script as "the Man with no Name" ("Der Namenlose" in German, "L'Inconnu" in French). With the exception of a card player in a smaller role, and a number of extras in walk-on parts, all other actors are different in the German and French versions. Ufa certainly adhered to its principle of trying to appeal to individual national tastes by casting well-known stars as well as established character actors not just in their German version. At the time they were signed up for *Vers l'abîme*, Raymond Rouleau, Thommy Bourdelle, Pierre Magnier and Henri Roussel were already well known theatre and/or film actors in France and popular with their French audiences.

However, the physical similarity between French and German actors in the same part is not as prominent as it is commonly assumed in MLVs. For instance, the senior diplo-

mat Squeelen (played by veteran French actor Pierre Magnier) presents an older and much wiser Counsel than his German counterpart played by the younger, arrogant Hubert von Meyerinck. On the other hand, there are no differences when it comes to the representation of the social position held by each character within the hierarchical structure of the diplomatic service. In their role of ambassador, both actors, Otto Treßler and Henri Roussel convey the idea of respectability. In their physical appearance as well as in their diction both are figures of authority. Heinz von Cleve and Raymond Rouleau play Captain Rist, the Military attaché, in the same way in the German and French versions, but there are minor variations in the script that shed a different light on their individual characters. For instance, when Karine talks to the Captain during the reception in the Embassy and tries to boost his morale, Rist's over-emotional response in the French version, makes him a whimpering character feeling sorry for himself. He seems to seek both comfort and reassurance by appearing extremely bitter about his lack of fortune, and by telling Karine that he has lost his parents (a line that is not in the German script) and does not have many friends. When Karine replies that, Roll in his shoes, would probably cheerfully say: "La fortune sourit aux audacieux" (Wealth comes to those who are bold), the morose Rist rather sullenly replies: "C'est ce que disent les gens qui ont de la fortune" (That's what rich people say). In *Vers l'abîme*, this rather cynical remarks about the rich and the weak are not the prerogative of the military attaché. Commenting on Karine's attraction to Rist, Squeelen had said earlier: "Se pencher sur les faibles est un luxe que les forts aiment à s'offrir" (Devoting oneself to the weak is a luxury only the powerful can afford). This line does not appear in the German version.

Interestingly, in the German version the remarks made by the Minister of the foreign country and the tone in which he addresses the police inspector Acunto are far less authoritarian than in French. The Ambassador of the former seeks advice from his Embassy staff, and even offers the trade attaché money to cover the cheque, something his French counterpart does not do. The German Bank Manager is also more understanding and far less sombre than his black-cladded French colleague. All this contributes to the impression that the higher ranked people in the German version are more likely to consult their subordinates when making decisions than those holding power in the French version – an observation that goes against stereotype conceptions of the "authoritarian German."

Among the minor variations that may be attributed to national differences are the physical postures adopted by a particular group of people. Recalling *Congress Dances* and the contrast between the disciplined Germans in the servants' headquarters and the more relaxed and motley group in that film's French version,⁴⁰ the members of the Embassy staff in *Die Insel* appear also to be far more disciplined in the German than in the French version. The posture of the Germans is considerably stiffer, their attitude more formal than that of the French staff. This is particularly evident in the scene in which the Ambassador confronts his senior colleagues with the forged cheque. Even though the French and German actors occupy exactly the same position as the group enters the room, the body language is different. The French diplomats move their hands and heads, and their Ambassador even folds his arms in the course of his stern address, while the upright Germans remain almost motionless.

French directors working in Berlin have played down their role in adapting German versions, but a close examination of *Die Insel* and *Vers l'abîme* reveals interesting vari-

ations showing that the work Serge Veber and his team did on the French version is far from negligible. Extreme attention to the dialogues is not all that surprising considering that, in France, Thommy Bourdelle, Henri Roussel (alias Henry Russell) and Raymond Rouleau were not only famous actors in both, theatre and film, but also enjoyed careers as film director and/or as stage director as well as scriptwriter. The use of puns and play on words in the French dialogues of MLVs has often been commented upon. *Vers l'abîme* is no exception. In a scene reminiscent of the playful flirtation between Christel, the glove-seller and Pepi, her admirer in *Congress Dances*, Roll (the trade attaché) and Karine seem to be play-acting with each other through language. Roll hopes that, by speaking in proverbs, he will successfully find his way to Karine's heart. When she does not reply to his offer to go for a ride in his brand new car, he says: "Qui ne dit mot consent." In their next scene together, he returns to the same linguistic device, saying: "Un bonheur n'arrive jamais seul," to which she replies: "Encore un proverbe!" (Another proverb!). Roll, happily continues with a third proverb: "Jamais deux sans trois." His manner not only seems to have the desired effect on Karine but she also begins to use proverbs when she talks to Rist a little later: "Votre ami Roll ne manquerait pas de dire: 'La fortune sourit aux audacieux'."

These verbal exchanges with their emphasis on puns and play on words demonstrate the extent to which *Vers l'abîme* makes use of and relies on characteristics of the French language. This becomes particularly evident in the scenes featuring Françoise Rosay. Whether in French, German or any other language, Rosay outclassed the most beautiful actresses of her time with her wit. By recruiting her, Ritter could be sure of a performance full of heart and wisecracks. The night-club hostess' part of Silvia/Sylvia gives her a golden opportunity to display her full talent through her skills in the use of language. The most striking example is the scene in which she exercises her wit at the expense of the police inspector Asunto. The film also gives her the opportunity to show her talent as a singer.⁴¹ Curiously, the *chansons* she sings in *Die Insel* and *Vers l'abîme* are different. In the French version, the lyrics give Françoise Rosay the opportunity to play – sensually – the part of the big-hearted night-club hostess to the full, as she sings "Je donne tout ce que j'ai" (I give everything I've got).⁴² For love, the singer is prepared to give body, heart and soul. To the "gentlemen" in the audience, she seductively sings "I'll give all my kisses for nothing." Even though the music is the same in the two versions, in German, the lyrics and the theme of the song are different. While the French lyrics suggest promiscuity, the German song "Was weisst du von mir?" (What do you know about me?) focuses on a woman's pains of being in love with someone unaware of her love. Yet, Rosay delivers them in the same provocative manner.

Whether in the German or French version there can be no doubt about the significance of Rosay's contribution to her part. Already in her forties, Rosay had the talent to impose herself as a humorous and seductive presence both on and off screen.⁴³ Arguably, her strength of character is more evident in the French than in the German version. This becomes apparent in her exchange with the Bank Manager when she insists that he honours the cheque for \$6.000 and threatens to go to the press if she does not get what she wants. After answering the telephone call from the Embassy, the Bank Manager tells her that the Ambassador has asked to see her. She immediately turns all smiles (same response in the German version) but quickly changes her attitude again and says: "Si vous croyez qu'il me fait peur" (If you think I am scared of him...). The

added repartee (not found in the German script) is short but her body language speaks even louder than words. When it comes to body language and repartee Rosay is certainly in a class of her own.

While some performances and interactions between characters may be traced back to strong individuals, language characteristics and national temperament, others are rooted in the personality of the actors or actresses, in age, appearance, physical attraction or can even be influenced by the costume they are wearing. As has already been mentioned, the Minister of the German version is not as arrogant as his counterpart in *Vers l'abîme* when dealing with the police inspector (who incidentally smokes cigarettes while his German colleague prefers cigars). He listens to him and even asks for his advice. This understanding between them and reliance on each other, however, stands in sharp contrast to the physical appearance and the traits the actor brings to the character. Played by Ernst Rotmund, the Minister in the German version looks like a Latin American gangster boss. Dark, scheming, with a shifty look, he even goes so far as to suggest that "the disreputable character who may be threatening the trade agreement should be eliminated." No such threats are made by Henri Bosc who plays the Minister in the French version. He may be more authoritative during his exchange with the police inspector, but in all other scenes, he is much more relaxed than Rotmund. He always smiles even in the most serious circumstances, when, for example, the relationship between the two countries is threatened because circumstances may force him to refuse to sign the trade agreement.

Roger Duchesne and Willi Fritsch (who play the trade attaché under the name of Roll in the French and Raak in the German version) may look alike but interact differently with Brigitte Helm. Driving along a magnificent coastline in an open car Roll/Raak interrupts the ride at a beauty spot where he intends to declare his love for Karine/Karin. In this sequence (taken in one long panning shot) Brigitte Helm reveals a slightly different attitude towards her two partners. At the opening of the French version, Duchesne helps her to climb up and across a rock overlooking the sea, then follows her to a spot where she leans against a rock face and they both talk about their relationship. In the course of the conversation she moves towards an open space. When she tells him that she does not love Rist, he passionately tries to embrace her, but, after a brief hesitation, she rejects him. Freeing herself she pushes him away and runs off screen, leaving him standing isolated against the background of the sea. The German version uses exactly the same locations, but starts with a view of the open sea with Helm calling from off screen (from the spot by the rock face) for Fritsch to join her. He enters the frame from the same direction from where Duchesne had helped her climbing across the rock, stops, and – after a short pause and a verbal exchange – joins her where they have the same conversation she had with Duchesne. Learning that Karin/Helm does not love Rist, Raak/Fritsch also moves forward to embrace her. This time the embrace appears to be more intimate and ends before she rejects him. The pristine print analysed does not contain a splice between this and the next shot that might indicate that the cut at this point was not in the original release print. The personal relationship between Brigitte Helm and her German and French partners seems to have been similar to that between Lilian Harvey (as Christel) and Willi Fritsch and Henri Garat (as Tsar Alexander) in the German and French versions of *Congress Dances*. In both cases the leading lady seems to have had a stronger rapport with Fritsch than with her French colleague.

Different interpretations of the roles
or
Variations in personal relationships between an actress and her partners?

1. Shot opening

French version
(Brigitte Helm & Roger Duchesne)



Roll gives Karine a helping hand



Karine & Roll heading for a serious talk

German version
(Brigitte Helm & Willy Fritsch)



The sea



Raak follows Karin's call to join her

2. Bodylanguage and Personal Relationships





3. End of shot



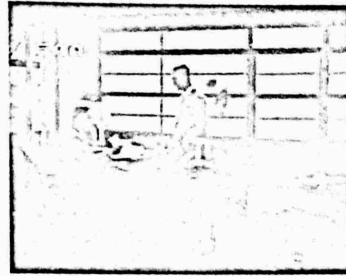
Resistance



Final frame: An embrace



Karine turning and running away



(Next shot: Bank Manager's office)



Final frame: Roll left alone

End or beginning of an intimate relationship between Karine/Karin and Roll/Raak?

Ginette Vincendeau's assertion that "the ideal actor in MLVs [is] an unknown, someone who [can] be easily moulded"⁴⁴ does not apply to Roger Duchesne in this film. Although the part of Roll represents Duchesne's screen debut and Pierre Cadars describes him as "a dynamic young sporty actor in the Willi Fritsch tradition,"⁴⁵ his performance is quite different from that of his more famous German alter-ego. His interpretation of the character in the first part of the film (where he plays a seductive light-hearted playboy) is quite at odds with the tragic persona he becomes after making his decision to leave the Embassy. At first, his constant use of proverbs reinforces the impression that the trade attaché is a joyful and carefree character. Roll openly admits to Karine that he is "léger," someone who does not take things seriously. That his relationship with Karine starts on such a light tone makes it particularly difficult to accept his complete change of character by the end of the film.

Versions in the Political and Social Context of Their Time

As far as national issues are concerned, both, the French and German versions, offer the same general perspective and stand for the same moral and social values as the play, despite slight differences in emphasis and presentation between the German and French versions. Most prominent are the military standards and ideals of honour, self sacrifice and solidarity as expressed by the Ambassador in his long address to his senior staff (in which he asks the guilty individual to step forward) and in their response to it (as they, one after another, come forward to express their solidarity). Concerns about

war and peace are articulated from a conservative perceptive. The scene when the Ambassador and the Minister of the foreign country discuss the urgency of signing the trade agreement is particularly interesting as the two men insist on alternating the words “peace” and “war” in their conversation. Other shared values and concerns include a combined sense of isolation and superiority in the small – and stifled – community of the Embassy, the mistrust and even fear of foreigners along with a low esteem for people from a non-aristocratic background. Talking about Raak not adhering to the Embassy’s rules of etiquette Squeelen, one of the senior diplomats, condescendingly remarks to his colleague Hollen: “What do you expect? He comes from a merchant background. Thirty years ago, his father was serving behind a counter.” The fact that, through hard work, the trade attaché and his father are financially far better off and have managed to reach a higher social position does not alter the aristocrats’ low opinion of people who cannot point to a long and established family background.

Given the time of the production, any reference to financial scandal must have had a deep resonance with the French team before and at the time of shooting *Vers l’abîme*. 1934 is a year of political and financial scandals in France. Among them, the Stavisky affair brings about a real paranoia against Jews and foreigners in general. Anti-Semitism raises its ugly head not just in Germany. In the world of cinema with its small production companies and its various (often illegal) ways of raising money it is fuelled by the bankruptcy of Bernard Natan. Several companies stop production (Osso) or go bankrupt (Jacques Haïk’s company); with debts to the BNC, the group Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert (GFFA) finally goes into liquidation in July 1934.⁴⁶ Following the February riots when right-wing extremists walked on the French Parliament, French exhibitors received a note from the Police (dated February 17, 1934) instructing them to stop immediately any projections portraying politicians or civil servants in a manner likely to provoke disorderly behaviour.⁴⁷ In *Die Insel*, there is a line when the blackmailer says to Rist: “Charakter und gesunde Finanzen vertragen sich ausgezeichnet” (Bad character and solid finances go well together). It is probably not by accident that this line does not appear in the French version. On the other hand, *Vers l’abîme*, contains a short tirade with which the money-lender reacts to Rist’s request for a loan of \$6.000, displaying a mixture of bitterness and self-pity that are absent from the German version.⁴⁸ In physical appearance and acting Lucien Dayle and Aribert Wäscher as money-lender are quite different, but, in the way the former explains his position, he almost seems to ask for compassion: perhaps a nod to social and political events in France at the time.

Such minor differences do not affect the films’ general point of view. All foreigners – including the Minister, the Inspector, the Banker and the Money-Lender – are not defined enough to attract sympathy. Even when the slight variations between the German and French scripts are taken into account, the mistrust of foreigners is clearly established right from the beginning. Introducing his niece to her first big, official reception the Ambassador expresses strong feelings about the Embassy being an isolated piece of home land in a foreign environment:

Für mich haben solche Abende nichts Neues. Ich fühle an ihnen nur stärker, dass wir nicht in der Heimat sind. Alle Leute, die heute kommen, sind Fremde. Fremd, wie das Land in dem wir leben. Wie auf einer Insel im Meer.

(For me, these evenings are nothing new. On these occasions I realise even more

strongly that we are not in our home country. All the people coming today will be foreigners. They will be as foreign, as the country we live in. Like an island in the sea.)

In the French script he says:

De pareilles réceptions sont plus délicates que l'on ne pense. Tous ces gens-là nous observent, nous épient, aux aguets de la moindre faute que nous pourrions commettre. Isolés parmi eux sur cette terre étrangère, nous devons veiller à ne prêter le flanc à aucune critique.

(These receptions are not as simple as they seem to be. All these people are watching us, waiting for us to make the slightest mistake. Isolated among those people in a foreign land, we must be careful not to do anything that could lead to criticism.)

The offensive reference to foreigners in the context of the reception may be unexpected, but the message is clear. This blatant dislike of foreigners brings to mind French attitudes of the period. With a rapid deterioration of France's economic situation, a phenomenon of rejection had developed, encouraged by right-extremists and occasionally as well by the left. "The pejorative term *métèque* (designating vaguely people of Mediterranean origins) begins to appear more frequently in written articles, along with the potent suggestion of a 'foreign invasion'."⁴⁹ Film émigrés become the subject of increasingly organised hostility from the disenfranchised sections of the French film industry. In May 1934, the Minister of Justice Chéron gives instructions to reject any interventions in favour of giving French nationality to foreign filmmakers and Adrien Marquet, the Employment Minister, announces that work permits will no longer be issued to foreign filmmakers. Many decide to move to America. The grievance against this "foreign invasion" is economic but also, as Pierre Billard argues, "moral and cultural." Allowing foreign input into the creative process means that "the language, the ideas, the customs, the sensitivities of a nation are taken over by people who don't belong and do not share this national heritage."⁵⁰ In 1938, Serge Veber echoed these grievances in an article entitled "Le cinéma français aux Français" published in *Pour Vous* sneering: "Come in, please, do come in. Invade us. There is enough room for everybody. I know perfectly well that it is human to welcome émigrés, these poor devils, and that we cannot blame them for seeking to find a home. But, for goodness sake, let's look after the French first. We've got our own poor, let's not forget it."⁵¹ For the French author and co-director of the French version of *Die Insel* (who in 1930 had worked at the Paramount studios before moving on to Osso Films and, from 1932 to 1935, to Berlin) to express such an opinion without realizing the contradiction of his own position is not without irony. His public rejection of foreigners in these terms says much about the atmosphere in the French film industry on the eve of WWII. That the film historian Pierre Billard finds the tone Veber used to express his rejection "moderate" for the time, gives some indication of the rapid deterioration of French attitudes toward foreigners in the second half of the 1930s.

Xenophobia, of course, was not limited to France. In Germany (where German citizens of Jewish descent were viciously persecuted as aliens) it was rampant. Reacting to a highly visible political murder of the time, the film contains what appears to be a last-minute alteration and addition to justify the National Socialists' disregard for the legal

process as well as the ruthless brutality with which they were ready to eliminate even their own supporters if these were considered a threat to the regime. When Raak, towards the end of the film, says farewell to Rist while the two men walk amongst palm trees along a quayside before he returns to his home country by boat, the German version contains shots made with the help of background projection rather than on location. These are not found in the French version. Neither is a key statement with which Raak rejects Rist's attempt to justify the Ambassador's refusal to start an enquiry into the forgery of Raak's signature (and with it the possibility of a proper legal trial of the person responsible): "I don't see why [the Ambassador acted the way he did]. I want the truth. I don't want to be with people who hush up a crime and let others suffer. I expect of a superior that he exposes a crime with absolute candour, and is strong enough to deal with the consequences."

Location shot:

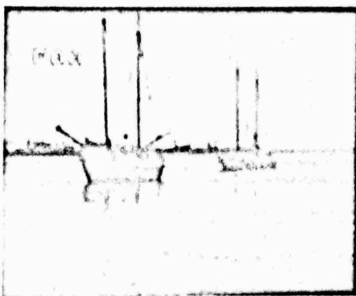


Raak: Jetzt wird mir der Abschied doch schwer, Rist.
(Saying good-bye is difficult after all, Rist.)



Rist: Ich habe noch eine Bitte, Raak. Denke nicht ungerecht über seine Excellenz. Er musste so handeln.
(One last request, Raak. Don't be unjust towards his Excellency. He did what he had to do.)

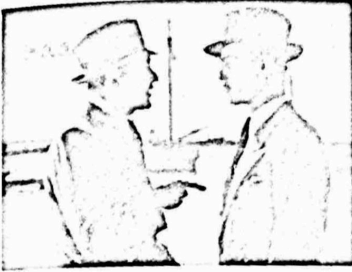
Back projections



Raak: Nein, Rist, das sehe ich nicht ein. Ich will Wahrheit.
(No, Rist, I don't see why. I want the truth.)



Ich will nicht da bleiben, wo man ein Verbrechen vertuscht und einen Unschuldigen büßen lässt.
(I don't want to be with people who hush up a crime and let others suffer for it.)



Ich verlange von einem Chef, dass er mit rückhaltloser Offenheit ein Verbrechen aufdeckt und dass er stark genug ist, die Folgen zu meistern.

(I expect of a superior that he exposes a crime with absolute candour, and is strong enough to deal with the consequences.)



Rist: Vielleicht war das Verbrechen gar kein Verbrechen.

(Perhaps the crime wasn't really a crime.)

Location shot



Raak: Das sagst du. Du nimmst einen Mann in Schutz, der einen Scheck fälscht, um seine Spielschulden zu bezahlen?

(Is this really you speaking? You are protecting a man who has forged a cheque in order to pay off his gambling debts?)



Rist: Ja, Raak. Vielleicht musste auch er so handeln, weil er etwas Gutes gewollt hat.

(Yes, Raak. Perhaps he too had to act in this way because he had good intentions.)

The argument presented and the resolute tone in which it is delivered echo Goebbels' and Hitler's attempts to justify the murder of one of the *Führer's* closest allies, the head of the SA Ernst Röhm. At the time the production team of *Die Insel* was working on location in Yugoslavia, long raging tensions between Hitler and Röhm (one of the few people with whom Hitler used the informal address "Du") were coming to a head because of the latter's insistence of having the Storm Troupers incorporated into the *Reichswehr* – a notion rigorously resisted by the military establishment. Anxious to win over the support of the generals in order to consolidate his power, Hitler tried to settle his disagreements with Röhm. When these attempts failed he decided to seize the opportunity and rid himself of the left-wing activists of his party. On June 30, 1934, he personally travelled to Bad Wiessee in Southern Germany where the SA leadership were on holiday and had his former comrade in arms arrested. Two days later a pistol was placed in Röhm's cell. Told to "do the honourable thing" he refused to commit suicide and was subsequently shot. During the purge that followed, a large number of lead-

ing SA men and people with (real or imagined) links to them were executed without trial. Goebbels immediately put his propaganda machinery into action claiming Hitler had come to Germany's rescue by ridding the country of dangerous Bolsheviks who had planned to overthrow the government. On July 3, the Cabinet passed a law stating that the measures taken on June 30 and July 1 and 2 against persons guilty of high treason constituted a response to a state of emergency and as such were in accordance with the law. At the time the events of the so-called "Röhm-Putsch" (also known as the "Night of the Long Knives") took place, the location-shots for *Die Insel* were already "in the can." Given that the call for strong leadership and decisive action resonated not just with Ufa's conservative Board of Directors and National Socialists like Karl Ritter on their payroll but also with wide sections of the German public, it is likely that these changes – minor as they may appear to be at first glance – were made in response to Hitler's speech to the *Reichstag* on July 13, in which he justified the murders by stating amongst others: "If someone wants to accuse me of not having followed the proper course of law, I can only say: In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German Nation, and therefore the German People's supreme judge."⁵²

Speculation about possible references to the political and social climate of the time apart, in a strange way, nor *Die Insel* neither *Vers l'abîme* present the joint departure of Raak/Roll and Karin/Karine for home as a conventional happy end for the lovers. Visually there is an atmosphere of doom hanging over them that raises questions about their future, not only about their life together but also about their prospects in the world they will live in. A certain degree of ambivalence in the film and the ambiguous ending may suggest a move, however hesitant, towards modernity. Ginette Vincendeau argues that "one aspect of French and German narrative plotting that would have meshed perfectly is 'the myth of departure,' the dream of escape from a harsh reality to an idealized elsewhere."⁵³ Three characters in *Die Insel* leave a past which has been exposed as morally or socially false. Rist, like so many fallen heroes of the period, commits suicide. For the trade attaché and Karin, the ambiguous ending does not suggest an escape to "an idealized world." The social reality is not harsh, not for them and not for the stifled community at the Embassy. Yet there is no happy ending for the two lovers. Going home is not a prospect they seem to relish.

No "happy end": Karine/Karin and Roll/Raak returning home

French version



Empty looks into an uncertain future

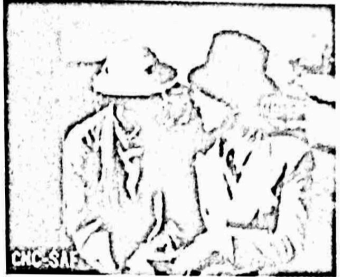
German version



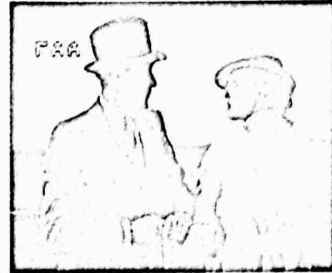
Lost in thought



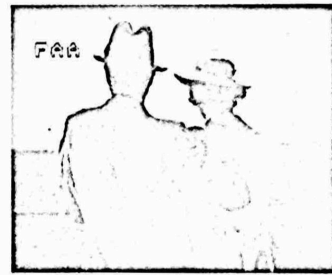
What is he thinking?



What are they thinking?



Holding hands, but avoiding his gaze



The touch of comfort

By the mid-1930s in France, many films featured high-society, exotic and cosmopolitan settings such as casinos but they also had scenes in cafés and *bal populaires*. Contrasting the former (and their upper-class perspective) with the latter (and their appeal to popular audiences), Ginette Vincendeau contends that “the presentation of night-club and casino scenes in the 1930s French films, whatever their genre (and whatever their narrative resolution) served to consolidate, by contrast, a sense of national identity for their popular audience.”⁵⁴ The popular milieu is totally absent from Ufa’s national film project *Die Insel*. For the French, economically, the MLVs may have filled a gap by providing employment for film personnel, but culturally, audiences needed more than films endorsing the values of the past. They needed something that conveyed a sense of identity. As noted by Pierre Sorlin, they soon found it in a newly emerging French national cinema more in touch with the issues of the day.⁵⁵ The film’s roots in pre-WW I values and ideals, its distance to ordinary everyday life as

well as its ambiguous ending almost certainly were the decisive factors why *Die Insel* did not “click” with German audiences either – in contrast to the production team’s earlier *Hitler Youth Quex* which successfully had captured the mood and appealed to the idealist imagination of wide sections of the German youth.

Conclusion

Assertions about what constitutes a “national film,” a “European film” or a “Hollywood film” can be “strengthened by nuanced micro-historical analysis which is as alert to the specificities of individual case studies as it is to the shifting institutionalised frameworks of industrial practice.”⁵⁶ Despite Ufa’s aim to make a “national film,” *Die Insel* is best described as a European film in two different language versions. Variations exist but their impact is not sufficient enough to affect the realisation that, notwithstanding the language and the nationality of the actors, *Die Insel* is not particularly German and *Vers l’abîme* not particularly French. It is difficult to see how either version can – as the term “national film” suggests – “function as a cultural articulation of a nation.”⁵⁷ When the film does construct a series of relations around the concepts of “the national,” the values it proposes are those of an imaginary historical past, imbued with nostalgia for military values and imperial grandeur.

In an essay on culture and class in France in the 1930s, Rosemary Chapman offers the following definition of national culture: “Culture as a guarded tomb, or culture as a temple to which only the *initiés* are admitted. The culture of the dominant class is a potent means of self-justification, demonstrating the rightfulness of power structures and the naturalness and necessity of bourgeois ideology.”⁵⁸ This definition perfectly fits the ethos of the Embassy, a community built on myths of grandeur and loyalty, the necessity of collective solidarity for the purpose of maintaining social order, a community steeped in the values of the late 19th century. It is only within these parameters that *Die Insel* fulfils Ufa’s intentions as “a national film for nationalists all over the world.”

Quoting the Czech film historian Karel Smrž, Petr Szczepanczik, argues that MLVs represent “the beginning of a new period of film internationality.”⁵⁹ In the same vein, Malte Hagener asserts that “MLVs [...] form a transnational and truly European film history which remains as yet to be written.”⁶⁰ That *Die Insel* belongs to a truly European tradition is beyond doubt, but it is a tradition deeply rooted in a mythical past. As far as *Die Insel* and *Vers l’abîme* are concerned, their internationality is one clinging onto an era gone by. If the two versions can be considered as a metaphor for Europe, it is that of a Europe built on values no longer applicable at the time of their making.

Acknowledgement

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- 1 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflecting on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
- 2 Susan Hayward, *French National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 8.
- 3 Colin Crisp, *The Classic French Cinema 1930-1960* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. xv.
- 4 "Einmütig erwünscht werden: [...] c) Wenigstens ein grosser Nationaler Film, der aber keineswegs nur heroisch und tragisch sein soll, da er sonst ausserhalb Deutschlands nicht mehr Wert hat als irgendein Mittelfilm. Er soll vielmehr das nationale Element so bringen, dass die nationalen Schichten aller Länder sich daran begeistern können und soll nebenbei eine allgemein menschlich Handlung, die auch stark mit lustigen Momenten durchsetzt sein soll, enthalten." Memo by Head of Distribution Wilhelm Meydam to Board of Directors (December 1, 1932). Ufa-file no. 129, former GDR Film Archive.
- 5 Horst Claus, Anne Jäckel, "Der Kongreß tanzt – Revisited," in *CINÉMA & Cie*, no. 6, Hans-Michael Bock, Simone Venturini (eds.), *Multiple and Multiple-language Versions II / Versions multiples II* (Spring 2005), pp. 76-95.
- 6 See *CINÉMA & Cie*, no. 4, Nataša Đurovičová, in collaboration with Hans-Michael Bock (eds.), *Multiple and Multiple-language Versions / Versions multiples* (Spring 2004), especially: Nataša Đurovičová, "Multiple and Multiple-Language Versions/Version Multiples," (pp. 7-16); Pierre Sorlin, "Multilingual Films, or What We Know about a Seemingly Bright Idea," (pp. 17-21).
- 7 Attachment to Ufa-minutes (March 10, 1933). Quotations from the Board of Director's decisions derive from the minutes held by the Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, Reference R 109 I/1029a and R 109 I/1029b.
- 8 Cf. Horst Claus, Anne Jäckel, "Ufa, Frankreich und Versionen," in Sybille M. Sturm, Arthur Wohlgemuth (eds.), *Hallo? Berlin? Ici Paris! Deutsch-französische Filmbeziehungen 1918-1939* (München: text+kritik/CineGraph, 1996), pp. 141-154.
- 9 Sa., "Die englisch-deutschen Filmbeziehungen," *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* (March 25, 1934), quoted in *LBB*, (April 5, 1934).
- 10 Minutes (March 10, 1933).
- 11 Minutes (April 11, 1933). Debates about the title culminated in a list of six titles on June 10: *Der Storch mit dem Halsband*, *Die Dame und ihr Hund*, *Lilli kann nichts dafür*, *Kind, ich freu mich auf Dein Kommen!*, *Der Storch hat sich geirrt*, *Als Lilli in die Großstadt kam*. On June 13, the Board decided on *Kind ich freu mich auf dein Kommen*.
- 12 Minutes (April 5, 1933).
- 13 Francis Courtade, "Die deutsch-französischen Koproduktionen," Heike Hurst, Heiner Gassen (eds.), *Kameradschaft – Querelle* (München: Institut Français, 1991), p. 170.
- 14 Ploquin was probably appointed at the initiative of Erich Pommer. His contract was renewed annually with an increase in salary and an option by Ufa to renew it. After returning to France in 1939, he headed the Comité d'Organisation des Industries Cinématographiques (COIC) (1940-42) before founding his own production company in 1943.
- 15 Marcel Colin-Reval, "M. Raoul Ploquin, Directeur de la Production Française A.C.E.," *Cinématographie française*, no. 744 (February 4, 1933).
- 16 Paris et Limoges, *Courrier du Centre* (n.d. 1934), pp. 9-10, quoted in C. Crisp, *op.cit.*, p. 179.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *La Revue de Paris*, no. 1 (1935) pp. 572-3, 588, quoted in *Ibid.*
- 19 Reprinted in: Gerd Albrecht, *Film im Dritten Reich* (Karlsruhe: Schauburg, 1979), pp. 26-31.
- 20 Minutes (March 29, 1933).

- 21 *Lichtbildbühne* (March 29, 1933).
- 22 *Lichtbildbühne* (May 3, 1933).
- 23 “Was ich geworden bin, verdanke ich der militärischen Erziehung zu diszipliniertem Denken, zur Tätigkeit, zur Organisation [...] Wer im Leben einmal Führer werden will, muß unbedingt gelernt haben, zu gehorchen, muß jahrelang Geführter gewesen sein.” Quoted by Peter Hagemann, *Karl Ritter*, Magisterarbeit, Institut für Publizistik (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, n.d.), p. 8.
- 24 Kurt Hölger, *Karl Ritter* (Berlin: Karl Curtius, 1940), p. 7.
- 25 The sums referred are derived from Ufa minutes of (July 1, 1932), (October 7, 1932), (November 22, 1932), (January 13, 1933), (February 28, 1933).
- 26 Minutes (September 27, 1932).
- 27 Minutes (January 30, 1934).
- 28 Ploquin was first appointed at the beginning of 1933, receiving a monthly salary of 18.000 Francs. His contract was renewed in September 1934 with a salary of 24.000 Francs per month, and an option for Ufa to renew his contract for a further year. Minutes (January 10, 1933), (September 25, 1934).
- 29 “[...] Es ergibt sich die Generalfrage, a) ob man Filme mit einem betont nationalen Ethos noch in französischer Fassung machen kann, b) ob man in der französischen Version noch Filme mit betont deutschem Schauplatz und zwangsläufig ebenso betonter deutscher Mentalität in Frankreich herausbringen kann, ohne den Erfolg in Frage zu stellen.” Memo Correll to Ufa’s Board of Directors (October 2, 1933), attached to minutes (October 3, 1933).
- 30 Minutes, *ibid.*
- 31 See footnote 4.
- 32 “[...] Denn der ungemein starke Erfolg, den die Uraufführung errang, wird nicht an den Grenzen unsers Vaterlandes haltmachen – London und Neuyork haben das Stück bereits angenommen –, sondern wird sich in den angelsächsischen Ländern womöglich noch stärker wiederholen.” Lindemann, “Uraufführung in Bremen,” *Kölnische Zeitung* (January 26, 1934).
- 33 “Ich wollte Sie gern in ein Lokal bringen, wo Sie sich unter Ihren Landsleuten heimisch fühlen können.” Jobst von Reih-Zenthier, *Sie machten uns glücklich* (München: 1967), p. 167, quoted by P. Hagemann, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- 34 The material “behandelt den Geist einer Botschaft auf ferner Insel, den zivilen Kampf für die eigene Nation – von beiden Seiten gesehen und ethisch aufgebaut auf den soldatischen Begriffen von Mannestum, Ehre, Korpsgeist, höchster Disziplin, strengstens Dienstes. [...] Der nationale Ehrbegriff schlechthin liegt in der Herzkammer dieses Filmstoffs verankert.” “Die Botschaft der Insel,” *Film-Kurier* (May 12, 1934).
- 35 “Wirklich wie auf einer Insel lebt diese Gesandtschaft in dem fremden Land. Außerstes Zusammenhalten aller Mitglieder dieser Gesandtschaft ist oberste Pflicht, das persönliche Erleben und Empfinden muß untergeordnet sein dem Gedanken an das Wohl der eigenen Nation, des Staates, den man vertritt. Was sich auch im Personalgefüge der Gesandtschaft an Konflikten ergibt, es gilt sich zusammenzureißen, es gilt eisern der Grundsatz ‘Nichts für sich selbst, alles zum Wohle des eigenen Landes.’ Das dramatische Geschehen des Films ergibt sich aus dem Zusammenprall persönlichen Wollens, das noch in eigensüchtigen Ideen befangen ist, und eben der großen, inneren Opfer fordernden Gesamtidee des Wohles der Heimat.” “Die Insel,” *Kinematograph* (June 1, 1934).
- 36 Note in *Kinematograph* (June 7, 1934).
- 37 *Kinematograph* (September 4, 1934).

- 38 *Der Film* (September 15, 1934).
- 39 See Joseph Garncarz, "Making Films Comprehensible and Popular Abroad," *CINÉMA & Cie*, no. 4, cit., pp. 72-79; Malte Hagener, "Prix de beauté as a Multiple Intersection," *Ibidem*, pp. 102-115; Petr Szczepanik, "Undoing the National: Representing International Space in 1930s Czechoslovak Multi-Language Versions," *Ibidem*, pp. 55-65.
- 40 H. Claus, A. Jäckel, "Der Kongress tanzt: Revisited", cit., p. 87.
- 41 Early in her career, when interesting parts did not come her way in the silent era because of her physique, she took singing lessons at the Paris Conservatoire; following which, she was immediately signed on by the Opéra manager. See: Françoise Rosay, *La Traversée de ma vie* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1974); "Françoise Rosay," *Stars*, no. 19 (Spring 1994), p. 40.
- 42 "Je donne tout ce que j'ai. [...] L'argent, moi j'm'en fous. Quand on aime à l'extrême, Il faut tout donner. [...] On donne avec sa peau, sa chemise. [...] Je donne tout ce que j'ai. [...] Mon coeur est à prendre. [...] Tous mes baisers sont, Messieurs, pour rien..."
- 43 Evidence of the latter can be found in an anecdote the French actress recounts in her autobiography when she writes about a meeting with Dr. Goebbels on the first night of *La Kermesse héroïque* at the Capitol in Berlin on January 15, 1936. She apparently told Goebbels how angry she had been eighteen months earlier, when, taking a break from the shooting of *Die Insel*, she went on a shopping trip to Kaufhaus des Westens. Intending to buy tin soldiers for her sons, to her dismay she discovered that all French soldiers looked wounded and defeated while the German tin soldiers were fit and triumphant. On hearing this, Goebbels apparently gave orders for the disposition of the boxes containing the defeated French tin soldiers! See F. Rosay, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-3.
- 44 Ginette Vincendeau, "Les Films en versions multiples: un échec édifiant" (Paper presented at the Festival d'Avignon, 1988) *Positif*, no. 323 (January 1988), p. 43.
- 45 Pierre Cadars, *Les Séducteurs du cinéma français 1928-1958* (Paris: Henri Veyrier, 1982), p. 103.
- 46 Cf. Francis Courtade, *Les Malédiction du cinéma français* (Paris: Alain Moreau, 1978); C. Crisp, *op. cit.*, p. 29; Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, *15 années d'années trente. Le cinéma des français 1929-1944* (Paris: Stock, 1983); Paul Légliše, *Histoire de la politique du cinéma parlant* (Paris: Pichon, 1970).
- 47 F. Courtade, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
- 48 The French dialogue is as follows: "L'usurier: 'Ah! Ah! On fait des bêtises, on se laisse entraîner dans des histoires plus ou moins propres, mais qu'est-ce que ça peut faire? [Le prêteur] est là! Ce bon prêteur: on ne lui montrera pas de papiers. Il ne vous demandera même pas votre nom, et il vous amènera tout l'argent que vous voulez. Après... après, Ben, voyons, on me traitera de vieil usurier... 6000 Dollars. ... Et comptant!'" (Money-lender: Ah! Ah! You've been a fool, you've been dragged into rather sordid affairs. But this does not matter! I am here! This good old money-lender. You won't have to show him any papers. He won't even ask for your name and he will bring you all the money you want. ... And later, later... Well, of course, he will be called an old loan shark... 6000 Dollars... and cash!).
- 49 Alastair Phillips, "People 1930-60: Migration and Exile in the Classical Period," in Michael Temple, Michael Witt (eds.), *The French Cinema Book* (London: BFI, 2003), p. 108.
- 50 Pierre Billard, *L'Age classique du cinéma français. Du cinéma parlant à la Nouvelle Vague* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), p. 204.
- 51 *Pour Vous* (March 29, 1938), quoted in *Ibidem*, p. 202; also in Raymond Chirat, *Le Cinéma des années trente* (Paris: Hatier, 1983).
- 52 The emergency legislation of July 3 consisted of one paragraph only: "Die zur

Niederschlagung hoch- und landesverräterischer Angriffe am 30. Juni, 1. und 2. Juli 1934 vol-
lzogenen Maßnahmen sind als Staatsnotwehr rechts." Original wording from Hitler's state-
ment of July 13: "Wenn mir jemand den Vorwurf entgegenhält, weshalb wir nicht die
ordentlichen Gerichte zur Aburteilung herangezogen hätten, dann kann ich nur sagen: In
dieser Stunde war ich verantwortlich für das Schicksal der deutschen Nation und damit des
deutschen Volkes oberster Gerichtsherr!" Quoted after: Susan Hügli, Barbar Ischi, Daniel
Schärer, Markus Fischer, *Der Nationalsozialismus. Eine Dokumentation über die zwölf dun-
klen Jahre deutscher Geschichte* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1979), p. 88.

53 G. Vincendeau, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

54 Ginette Vincendeau, "From the *Bal Populaire* to the Casino: Class and Leisure in French Films
of the 1930s," *Nottingham French Studies*, Vol. 31, no. 2, Rosemary Chapman (ed.), *Culture
and Class in France in the 1930s* (Autumn 1992) p. 68.

55 Pierre Sorlin, "Multiple versions: A Threat to National Cinemas?" Paper presented to the
Gradisca International Film Studies Spring School, III Edition, Moving Pictures - Moving
People Film and Other Media, March 10-19 2005. See the revised version in the present issue
of *CINÉMA & Cie*.

56 A. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

57 S. Hayward, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

58 Rosemary Chapman, "Autodidacticism and the Desire for Culture," *Nottingham French
Studies*, cit., p. 101.

59 P. Szczepanczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

60 M. Hagener, *op. cit.*, p. 113.