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The battle for meaning: A cross-national film reception analysis of *The Battle Cry of Peace* in Switzerland and the Netherlands during World War I

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a cross-national analysis of the historical reception of the American war film *The Battle Cry of Peace* (J. Stuart Blackton and Wilfred North/Vitagraph, 1915) in the neutral countries of the Netherlands and Switzerland during World War I. Treating propaganda as a *mode de lecture*, the authors demonstrate how a fiction film that was originally intended as preparedness propaganda picked up very diverse and often conflicting meanings in cinema cultures outside the United States. In the eyes of its audiences, the film could have been qualified as ‘entertainment’ or ‘propaganda’, ‘fiction’ or ‘fact’ at the same time. When comparing the Dutch and Swiss reception contexts in more detail, it becomes clear that *The Battle Cry of Peace* was a popular film in both countries. However, the film made a different impact on its audiences on a national level. German propaganda officials in Switzerland considered the anti-German tendencies of the film highly problematic. This was hardly the case in the Netherlands. While *The Battle Cry of Peace* confronted Swiss audiences with their linguistic and cultural divide, here, the meaning of the film was generally tied into a unifying neutrality discourse. In both cases, however, a fact often neglected by contemporary (film) historians, cinema can be understood as an important agent in the public debate about the war outside the warring countries, as was acknowledged by individuals and institutions at the time.

KEYWORDS

World War I; reception; cross-national; war film; propaganda

Despite occasional calls to venture beyond strict national boundaries, cross-national methodologies in film-historical research seem to be largely unexplored. A rare but excellent example of what a cross-national reception analysis would imply is to be found in the comparative analysis of the historical reception and censorship of *Battleship Potemkin* (*Bronenosets Potjomkin*, USSR, Sergej Eisenstein/Mosfilm, 1925) by film historians Daniël Biltreyst and Thunnis van Oort. Here, the authors focus on ‘crossnational [our emphasis] differences in censorship modalities and disciplinary practices’, aiming to be ‘a modest instigator for more transnational [our emphasis] research within social media history’ (2011,

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55–56). Leaving aside the confusion of terms, the authors underscore the importance of comparing national case studies for a broader understanding of cinema culture. In response to this Belgo-Dutch plea for cross-cultural reception analyses – as well as the centennial memorial of World War I – this article explores the historical reception of the notorious American war film *The Battle Cry of Peace* (USA, J. Stuart Blackton and Wilfred North/Vitagraph, 1915) in the neutral countries of the Netherlands and Switzerland. Drawing on extensive archival research that is part of the authors' doctoral theses, the aim of this article is twofold. Firstly, we will outline how cinema functioned as an arena for public debate in neutral countries during World War I. Njall Ferguson, for instance, has claimed that World War I was the first 'media war' (Ferguson 2012, 273), but subsequent research has been generally limited to production histories of film propaganda. There have been very few reception histories, still fewer that have focused on the reception of films outside their countries of production.¹ As a consequence, little is known about the ways cinema allowed neutral audiences to witness the war within the walls of movie theatres, or how the film medium was used to reflect on notions of truthfulness, morality and identity within national war narratives. By means of a cross-national methodology, the case of *The Battle Cry of Peace* proves an excellent opportunity to gauge the impact of foreign films on public opinion within neutral countries. We cannot 'measure' the way films have downplayed or strengthened partisan beliefs. Still, it remains possible to shed light on film's *relative* effectiveness in this respect: in terms of popular appeal, as well as the acknowledgement (or rejection) of its alleged political intentions in the press. These findings are not without theoretical implications, for they contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the functioning of film propaganda, and its inherently chameleon-like nature.

Second, we aim to counter monolithic, origin-driven uses of the term 'propaganda' by focusing on the ways so-called 'propaganda films' were appropriated in different locales, by different audiences and for very different purposes. Traditionally, the focus within film propaganda studies often is an institutional one. According to German communication scholar Gerhard Maletzke for example, propaganda aims at 'influencing the opinion, attitudes and behaviour of target groups for political purposes' (Maletzke 1972, 157). It should be noted, however, that film could never be a matter of politics alone. Although *The Battle Cry of Peace* clearly offered a political message of preparedness in its original reception context (that is, the USA in 1915/1916) and could not be labelled 'neutral' in this respect, its intentions were fuelled first and foremost by a profit motive. Politicians and army officials played their part in the old boys' network surrounding the film's production: the US army was heavily involved in the film's production, as was armament manufacturer Hudson Maxim, who hoped to benefit from the preparedness plea the film propagated. On the other hand, as far as we have been able to determine, the US government did not commission the making of the film, nor did they intervene in its distribution. We thus find it very hard to define *The Battle Cry of Peace* as propaganda without running the risk of essentialising both the film *and* the concept. We therefore feel that the concept of propaganda, at least in this particular case, cannot be used as an unproblematic analytical category. We treat propaganda as a mode of reception instead, focusing on audience reactions towards and public discourses surrounding the film. We thus take a historical-pragmatic stance towards our subject – a view that, according to Frank Kessler, strongly influenced by Roger Odin's *sémio-pragmatique*, takes into account both the textual and contextual features that allow for different interpretations and uses of the film (Kessler 2002). In addressing propaganda

as a *mode de lecture*, we aim to show how the political intentions of the film were far from self-evident for contemporary viewers.

Inspired by Hudson Maxim's book *Defenceless America*, Vitagraph founder J. Stuart Blackton envisioned a grand patriotic spectacle to uplift the masses and – en passant – underscore the hegemony of Vitagraph as the most important provider of quality cinema. *The Battle Cry of Peace* tells the story of two American families stricken by misfortune: the Vandergriffs and the Harrisons. Being active in the Pacifist movement, millionaire T. Septimus Vandergriff is under the influence of the leader of the movement, named Emanon, who is in fact a foreign spy. After attending a lecture by Hudson Maxim (playing himself), John Harrison, the fiancée of Septimus' daughter, vainly warns his future father-in-law about the dangers of pacifist politics. While the latter attends an international Peace Conference, a foreign war fleet appears off the coast of New York. Left defenceless by its insufficient coastal guns, the city is shelled and forced to surrender. New York is invaded by herds of soldiers, destroying and killing at will, John Harrison being one of the victims. The remaining Vandergriffs choose their own fate. Desperately trying to save them from the brutal hands of drunken soldiers, Ms. Vandergriff shoots her two daughters. This tragic finale seems to have been followed by an allegorical scene, in which Peace is celebrated in a heavenly landscape.²

The urgency of the film's message was strengthened by the presentation of an identifiable common enemy. Although the film foregrounded a fictive foreign foe, dressed in a costume of unknown design, there is little doubt their Wilhelmine moustaches and beer-drinking habits were supposed to connote Germany³ (Connolly-Smith 2009). By rhetorical means referred to today as 'othering', the portrayed pacifists and alleged Germans defined *true* Americans as vigilant and civilised. The anti-German and political aspects of the film did not go unnoticed by the American press after the film's release in August 1915. '*The Battle Cry for Peace* is done on a large scale but it represents no advance in the motion picture art, nor indeed, does it pretend to do so', the *New York Times* stated; 'that is not what it is for' (7 August 1915, n.p.). In the same article, the newspaper added tongue-in-cheek:

Avowedly the invading force is of no particular nationality and the leading spy is called 'Emanon', which you may spell backward if you wish. But it is difficult to escape the impression that you are expected to recognize the nationality. They are certainly not Portuguese, for instance.

Despite its neutral appearance, it seems that in the United States the film was generally recognised as propaganda by those who did not favour its pro-war sentiments, with some American viewers rejecting its manipulative features. Henry Ford, for example, as one of the most prominent pacifists at the time, vainly sued Vitagraph over the film in order to show that

The Battle Cry of Peace [...] was inspired by Hudson Maxim, a manufacturer of munitions of war, in the interest of munitions manufacturers for the personal and selfish gain and interest of said Maxim and others interested with him in the manufacture and sale of munitions. (*Moving Picture World*, 9 September 1916, n.p.)

The conscientious lobby against the film was supported by others too, although for different reasons. Psychologist and early film theorist Hugo Münsterberg fiercely condemned the film in his famous film esthetical treatise *The Photoplay*:

We leave the sphere of valuable art entirely when a unified action is ruined by mixing it with declamation, and propaganda which is not organically interwoven with the action itself. It

may be still fresh in memory what an esthetically intolerable helter-skelter performance was offered to the public in *The Battle Cry of Peace*. (Münsterberg 1916, 188)

Although this comment suggests that Münsterberg was appalled by the film's lack of unity, his national origin equally explains his disdain for this anti-German film. For Münsterberg's former friend Theodore Roosevelt, on the other hand, the film did represent a 'sublime experience toward American patriotic and masculine common sense' (Gerstner 2006, 82). No wonder then, the debate over this film put an end to their longstanding friendship, symbolically representing the growing political antagonism between Germany and the United States during World War I. From the viewpoint of historical reception, their interpretations of the film exemplify the diverse and often conflicting ways *The Battle Cry of Peace* was understood *nationally*, as we hope to demonstrate in the following analyses of the responses in the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Dutch public responses to *The Battle Cry of Peace*

Little is known about the distribution and reception of *The Battle Cry of Peace* outside the United States, but it seems the film made quite an impact on public reception abroad. In the Netherlands, contrary to common practice, almost all national newspapers commented in detail on *The Battle Cry of Peace*. These comments make clear, above all, that the film stood out for its representation of extreme violence. Although films that portrayed physical suffering and death were rarely seen on the cinema screen in the Netherlands, *The Battle Cry of Peace* catered to a sensationalist desire for graphic war imagery during the war years. Other fictional war films glorified their subject with patriotic pathos, lacking in gritty or convincingly realistic scenes. Actuality footage on the other hand, for reasons of safety, censorship or technological limitations, was rarely shot on the battlefield. Instead, cameramen often resorted to the filming of army exercises, war-related festivities or everyday army scenes more or less distant from the frontline trenches. Within a year, Dutch audiences grew weary of these war films, 'because it's annoying, to watch decorations, speeches, propaganda processions and festivities every single week' (*De Bioscoop-Courant*, 19 November 1915, n.p.). By contrast, the spectacular qualities of the famous British propaganda film *The Battle of the Somme* (British Topical Committee for War Films, 1916) had generated widespread interest in the Dutch public, and the film ran for three weeks as a continuous, single programme at the Cinema Palace in Amsterdam during September 1916. The film was advertised (and acclaimed) as the first to be shot 'in the firing line' (Figure 1) and the Dutch national press publicised it widely as a major media event, praising the film for its realism: 'It is inevitable, now and then the images will leave you in horror, but the film is not sensationalist. The war is told in a sober and truthful way' (*Het Vaderland*, 3 October 1916, n.p.). In addition, and in contrast to its original intentions, the film was predominantly understood as an anti-war plea, for it seemingly revealed the true face of war (Kristel 2007). These pacifist readings were firmly grounded in the conviction that the images shown were indexical in essence, thus non-manipulated and 'true'. Although a fiction film, as we shall see, *The Battle Cry of Peace* allowed for similar reactions in the Netherlands; on the other hand, however, the film was also recognised as 'false' propaganda by others.

The Battle Cry of Peace (distributed as *De Strijdkreet om Vrede*) premiered on 17 August 1917 in the Amsterdam cinema De Munt. In clear contrast to *The Battle of the Somme* and similar films, *The Battle Cry of Peace* was not distributed in the Netherlands as part of an

CINEMA PALACE

Men lette vooral er op, dat **ALLEEN** in
Cinema Palace onderstaande film
 vertoond wordt.

Vanaf Vrijdag 6 October 1916:

Wegens **VERDIENSTEN** met **VERSCHILLENDE**
STEDEN in ons land slechts

Eenige Speciale Verlooningen van:

HET GROOTE ENGELSCH
OFFENSIEF. 5 Acten. 5 Acten.

(Geautoriseerd d/h. Engelsche Government).

**Dit is de EENIGE FILM, welke tot nog toe
 in de EERSTE VUURLINIE werd opgenomen.**

Dinsdag 3 Oct. j.l. werd in Den Haag van **SPECIALE
 VOORSTELLING** gegeven, welke o.a. werd bijgewoond door: **Z.E.
 den Minister v. Oorlog, Z. E. den Minister v. Marine,
 Z. E. den Opperbevelhebber v. Land- en Zeemacht
 Generaal Snijders**, vergezeld van hunne staf; de Afge-
 zanten der Geallieerde Mogendheden, enz.

Men zie de persverklaring in de hierna volgende bladen:

Handelsblad 25/9	De Courant 20/9	Hangsche Cr. 4/9
Telegraaf 26/9	Het Volk 26/9	N. Rot. Cr. 26/9
Nieuws v/d Dag 26/9	Het Vaderland 8/10	Maatsch. 26/9

BORIS LENSKY

speelt IEDEREN MIDDAG EN IEDEREN AVOND
 met een **EXTRA VERSTERKT Orkest**

Extra nummers uit te voeren door **BORIS LENSKY**:

- a. „FUNERAL GLIDE“ (Danse caractéristique)
 Gecomposeerd door hemzelf.
- b. „NEARER MY GOD, TO THEE“ (Nader tot U, mijn God)

KALVERSTR. 224.

Zaterdag Aanvang **PRECIË 5 I EUR.**
 Zondag Aanvang **PRECIË 1 EUR.**

Figure 1. Advert for *Het groote Engelsche offensief* (*The Battle of the Somme*) from Cinema Palace (*Algemeen Handelsblad*, 6 October 1914). Translation of boxed text in the middle: 'This is the only film that has been shot in the firing line so far'.

institutionalised propaganda practice. This meant its distribution was strictly commercial, without any interference of diplomatic personnel or representatives of propaganda institutions such as the British Topical Committee, the French Section Photographique et Cinématographique des Armées (SPCA) or the German Bild- und Film-Amt (BUFA).⁴ The film was bought by an ambitious new player on the Dutch film distribution market, the HAP Film-Company, founded in 1915. During the war, given the German occupation of Belgium and the German sea blockade, it was very hard for Dutch distributors to obtain new films (Blom 2003). For the HAP Film-Company, *The Battle Cry of Peace* was a highly valuable commodity, as well as a marketing tool emphasising the film trade's growing prestige.



Figure 2. 'Prolonged by popular demand': Advert from De Munt (*De Telegraaf*, 23 July 1913).



Figure 3. A fictive foreign foe? Still frame from *The Battle Cry of Peace*, copy held by the Swedish Film Institute.

HAP's advertising strategy for the film was based on two premises. Firstly, the film was explicitly presented to its future clientele as a product of Vitagraph. Comparing the film with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (USA, J. Stuart Blackton/Vitagraph, 1910), for example, gave credence to the idea that *The Battle Cry of Peace* was another cinematic masterpiece (*De Bioscoop-Courant*, 24 August 1917, n.p.). The film was thus presented as a prestigious enterprise that could boost the reputation of the cinema trade, a significant claim during a period in which the anti-cinema lobby had gained ground. On the other hand, the film was marketed, in the jargon of the time, as a '*tendenzfilm*' (biased or propaganda film). It was considered a film with a clear 'message' that was of relevance for Dutch audiences as well: according to



Figure 4. 'An allegory of bayonets'. Still frame from *The Battle Cry of Peace*, copy held by the Swedish Film Institute.

the trade press, the film was 'as topical as *Lay Down Your Arms*' (*De Bioscoop-Courant*, 29 June 1917, n.p.).⁵ The HAP Film-Company added:

Never before a film of similar topical importance has been shown, as this call for battle against the war. *The Battle Cry of Peace* – directed against those propagandists, who would leave the country defenceless if they could – has shaken national conscience. (*De Bioscoop-Courant*, August 24, 1917, n.p.)

Both marketing strategies were echoed vaguely by advertisements in the cinemas that presented *The Battle Cry of Peace*, although cinema owners added a more sensationalist flavour. Their advertising rhetoric often focused on the high production value and spectacular scenery of the film. Cinema advertisements spoke of 'the greatest and most captivating drama the world had even seen' (*Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 10 November 1917, 12) and the Vitagraph Company, a brand well known by cinemagoers at the time, was generally praised for making that possible. Sometimes, catering to what Tom Gunning famously labelled 'an aesthetic of astonishment' (Gunning 1989), advertisements explicitly listed the most spectacular scenes of the film (*Het Centrum*, 15 January 1918, 4).

The 'topical trope', as formulated by the trade press, was hardly ever used by cinema owners to direct future customers their way: they seemed hesitant in framing the film within a political context. In accordance with the trade's official directives, as well as the government's guidelines, most Dutch cinemas did not show films within a marked partisan context. Obviously, this was primarily the result of pragmatic reasoning: cinema owners preferred to address their future clientele as a whole instead of dividing them along the fault-lines of political affiliation. In general, cinemas highlighted *The Battle Cry of Peace* as a spectacular attraction, not as a film that foregrounded a political message. The only concrete example of cinema advertisement that did attribute a topical message to the film was to be found in a rather original publicity stunt by cinema De Munt, which used a horse and carriage as a moving billboard device. The film was announced in gigantic letters on its sides, while on the carriage itself a demolished house was mounted, with life-size cardboard images of women and children begging for peace in the surrounding debris. The whole

scene was unmistakably set in Belgium (*Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 21 November 1917, 5). According to the newspaper report, war-weary crowds gathered around the carriage, growing in numbers to such an extent that mounted policemen had to disperse the crowd to avoid a traffic jam. In the vast majority of cases however, Dutch cinemas did not stress the topicality of *The Battle Cry of Peace* in any way and did not mention the anti-German ‘subtleties’ that were probably evident for many.⁶

There is some evidence that local authorities too, were worried about the instigating political features of certain films. In Arnhem for example, a medium-sized town close to the German border, the commander of the local garrison deemed *The Battle Cry of Peace* dangerous because it threatened morality and neutrality.⁷ In The Hague, where most foreign diplomatic corps were stationed, local authorities were very keen not to offend any of them,⁸ which became difficult in October 1917, when *The Battle Cry of Peace* was shown in two cinemas at the same time. The mayor of The Hague received a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, demanding an investigation into whether or not the film aroused hatred against the Germans in cinema audiences. This letter may have been the product of a German diplomatic complaint; but whereas acts of political censorship did occur in other cases, this time the municipality officials saw no reason to forbid or cut the film.⁹ As the police officer on duty reported:

I didn't notice anything that in my opinion could be interpreted as an instigation for hatred against Germany or any other nation. The uniforms of the soldiers do not resemble those of the warring parties, their helmets are of an unknown model.¹⁰

From a moral point of view, however, due to its excessively violent character as well as particular scenes that showed scantily dressed women, *The Battle Cry of Peace* was prone to censorship practices. The local cinema committee of Rotterdam therefore forbade the film for cinema attendees under the age of 16, a measure that probably only heightened their desire to go and (try to) see the film anyway. At the same time, the authoritative Catholic newspaper *De Tijd* declared the film inappropriate for its readers. Being a self-determined *witte* (white) cinema (that is, a cinema that willingly put itself to the test of Catholic censorship), the Witte Bioscoop was thus forced to give up its lucrative screenings of the film – much to the horror of its owner, who refused to accept this instruction. Arguing that the film was approved by other Catholic newspapers such as *De Maasbode* and *Het Centrum*, the cinema owner denounced the randomness of Catholic censorship practices. As one commentator put it in the trade journal *De Kinematograaf*: ‘Why, visitors ask, should these crimes against mankind be kept unseen, why are Catholics not allowed to see the horrors of this terrible war, the horrible atrocities, the shooting of decent, defenceless people?’ (29 February 2016, n.p.).

Despite its obvious sensationalist appeal, it is difficult to tell if *The Battle Cry of Peace* was a box office success. Quantitative, comparable data is lacking in this respect, but several sources indicate that the film was popular among local movie-going audiences. Cinemas in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague showed the film for more than one week in a row, which was a relatively rare phenomenon in Dutch cinema culture at the time. From 4 January 1918 onwards, after the film had toured The Hague and Rotterdam for almost two months, the Witte Bioscoop became the second cinema in Amsterdam that screened *The Battle Cry of Peace*. Apparently, the film was still much in demand by then: ‘The Witte Bioscoop was sieged yesterday the entire day by thousands who jostled at the box office, trying to obtain a seat’, their ad in the *Algemeen Handelsblad* stated (7 January 1918, 8). Three days later, the

same cinema advertised that the film would be screened for another eight days to satisfy this huge demand (Het Volk, 10 January 1918; see also Figure 2). Alongside the boastful rhetoric of advertisements and the trade press, the popularity of the film had been noticed in the mainstream press as well. On 1 September 1917, the newspaper *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* writes that the film ‘attracts hundreds of spectators for evenings in a row’.

Mimicking the public’s fascination for the film, *The Battle Cry of Peace* was widely discussed in nearly all national newspapers. Dedicating an entire column to the film, on 28 August 1917 *De Telegraaf* (the country’s most popular newspaper) acknowledged the spectacular quality of the film: ‘From the viewpoint of scriptwriting and technology, this film outclasses everything that Vitagraph showed us so far – which means quite a lot! For the “real” *Quo Vadis* and some other big production films exceptions should be made.’ Then again, considering that *Quo Vadis* (Italy, Enrico Guazzoni/Cines, 1912) had not generated the same amount of attention in the Dutch press (far from it), the production values of *The Battle Cry of Peace* seem not to have been the only reason why newspapers were so eager and generous in commenting on the film. As *De Telegraaf* made unequivocally clear in the same article, it was its *topical* character that appealed to the public imagination:

When they set the unfortunate hostages against the wall, and mow them down by the dozens using a machine gun, one is under the impression of witnessing what we read about a certain army three years ago, that seemed to have written the phrase ‘Burn, destroy, shoot down!’ on their banner and more or less acted in the same way in Belgium.

In line with the general anti-German sentiment of *De Telegraaf*, which had been obliged to temper its partisanship by the Dutch government on several occasions, the author of this article embraced the opportunity to critique Dutch neutrality: ‘The film [...] deserves to be seen by those Dutchmen, who think the *summum* of wise policy and self-preservation resides in cowardice, servitude and senile weakness.’ This was a comment that more or less corresponded with the original intentions of the film, neatly fitting with the preparedness plea.¹¹

On the other side of the ideological spectrum, the pro-German literary magazine *De Toekomst*, on 29 September 1917, condemned this ‘American propaganda’ for its portrayal of barbaric German soldiers. See Figure 3.¹² In similar fashion, the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* warned the reader against this ‘instigating film’ and ‘allegory of bayonets’ that showed the opposite of ‘true culture and civilization’ (23 November 1917, 1, see Figure 4). In short, the newspaper declared the film ‘horrible American war propaganda, that we should never accept, but denounce’. The excessive exploitation of violence, the mocking of the Pacifist movement and the obvious involvement of the arms industry were all abject elements of the film, according to this newspaper. *Het Vaderland* added, cautiously:

To direct the public spirit in the desired direction, the directors of *The Battle Cry of Peace* made use of a very tendentious *mise-en-scène*, meaning this film could righteously be called non-neutral and we, who do not live in the United States, blame them for it. (11 October 1917, n.p.)

What is interesting in both comments is the fact that the origins of the film were explicitly acknowledged as ‘American’. Here, ‘Americans’ (instead of ‘Germans’) were ‘othered’ by the discourse, distinguishing an allegedly partisan ‘them’ from a neutral ‘us’.

The manipulative aspects of the film were discussed in detail in yet another front-page article of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* on 27 November 1917, sent in by an unidentified ‘expert’. In response to the earlier warning against the film, the author seized the

opportunity to create awareness of the threatening aspects of the cinema to the nation's moral health, a danger collectively labelled in the Netherlands as *Bioscoopgevaar* (cinema threat). In essence, the author stressed the need for film literacy, debunking the film as a lie: 'The drama is set in America, but the names of the enemies are invented [...] America never has been attacked or conquered, but the pictures, which give a true image of the city, point again at America.' In the rest of the article, the author lists many examples of the film's manipulative techniques, including the use of trick shots and actuality footage intended to reinforce a partisan message.

In clear contrast to this propaganda trope that apparently characterised some reactions in the press, stressing the manipulative techniques and political agenda of the film, it is interesting to note that *The Battle Cry of Peace* was equally praised by some contemporary viewers for its 'honesty' and 'authenticity'. *De Nieuwe Courant*, for instance, stated:

Neither illustrations, nor the written or even the spoken word, are capable of conjuring up the sensation of war violence inside us. This film has taught us that. We have rarely been closer to the misery of war. [...] The film deals with a more or less identifiable enemy. If one is of this opinion, that is because such horrible things have occurred in this World War. But that doesn't mean this American film is non-neutral in that respect. [...] Breath-taking scenes follow, while your cool reasoning says these things indeed can happen, because they have happened after all. (12 October 1917, n.p.)

A reviewer of *De Bioscoop-Courant* (the largest publication of the Dutch trade press at the time) wrote: 'This is not a phantasy, this is a piece of realism, such as we have never seen before in the cinema' (19 October 1917, n.p.). Again, roughly a year after *The Battle of the Somme* toured the Dutch cinemas, film was publicly hailed as a medium that allowed audiences to 'witness' the war, the battle and suffering, inside the safe walls of the cinema. And again, it was the gritty violence of the film that at least some viewers considered truthful and real. Although a fiction film, these two diametrically opposed readings – the truthfulness and propaganda tropes – co-existed in the reception of *The Battle Cry of Peace* in the Netherlands.

The Battle Cry of Peace and the Swiss public platform

Geographically situated amid warring nations, the small neutral country of Switzerland was not only a hub of diplomatic and intelligence activities, but also a kind of 'public [...] platform': the impact of the topics and opinions debated in Switzerland reached far beyond its borders (Hänggi 1918, 5).¹³ The propagandists of all warring parties were aware of this, and they made sure that plenty of propaganda material circulated in Germanophile, German-speaking Switzerland (with the urban centres Zurich, Basel and Berne) and also in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland (Geneva and Lausanne), which were sympathetic to the Entente (Kreis 1996). In order to control the distribution of their propaganda films, many warring powers established their own propaganda organisations in Switzerland between 1916 and 1918, often affiliating these with their respective diplomatic representatives. By the end of 1917, for example, the German Foreign Office had acquired a Zurich film distributor and numerous cinemas in German-speaking Switzerland through various front companies, with the help of its emissary Count Harry Kessler in Berne (Gerber 2014, forthcoming). In contrast to the Dutch case, it is fair to say that German propaganda activities were much more intense and varied in Switzerland during the First World War.



Figure 5. Advert for *The Battle Cry of Peace* in the Swiss trade press (*Kinema*, 14 October 1916).

Whereas the distribution and screening of *The Battle Cry of Peace* occurred outside such official structures, Kessler's propaganda office organised several counter-efforts against the film. *The Battle Cry of Peace* appeared in the distribution catalogue of the independent commercial World Films Office in Geneva, in a version shortened to 1600 metres, probably through the Paris film trading centre, and was distributed in Switzerland at elevated prices (Figure 5). From 22 September 1916 (and possibly into 1918), the film was initially screened at the Royal Biograph cinema in Lausanne, then in the Orient cinema in Zurich, and later in Geneva and other Swiss cities with titles such as *L'Invasion des Etats-Unis* (Invasion of the United States), *L'Amérique aux Américains* (America for the Americans), *Die Kriegsfackel in Amerika* (The Torch of War in America), *Der Einfall in Amerika* (Invasion of America) and *Der Kriegsschrei nach dem Frieden* (The Battle Cry of Peace). Inconsistently announced as a 'grand fantasy tableau', 'adventure drama', 'sensational and topical drama' or as a 'great topical drama', the trade and audience advertising in both French- and German-speaking Switzerland focused with relative consistency on the film's high production values and sensational visuals ('a city bombarded', 'panic in New York'), on the contribution of the American military forces, and on the film's endorsement by officers of the US Navy and former US

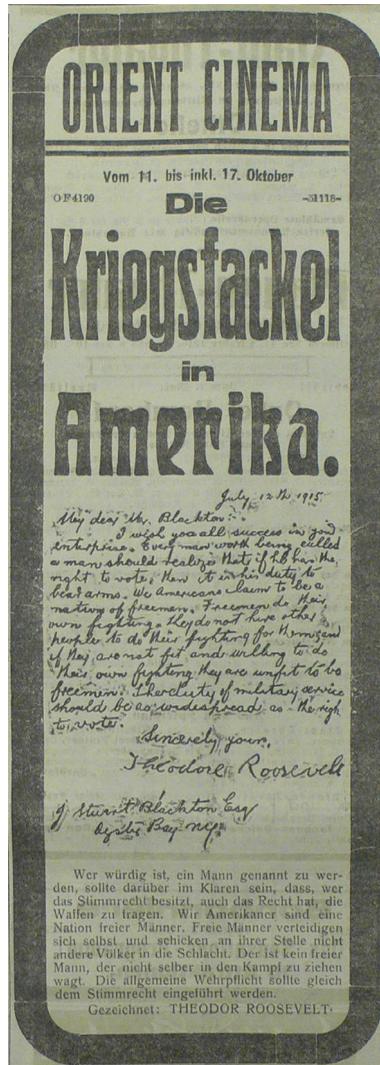


Figure 6. Advert for *The Battle Cry of Peace* in a Zurich newspaper (*Tagblatt der Stadt Zürich*, 11 October 1916).

President Theodore Roosevelt (Figure 6). Promotional material also made it quite clear that the film involved political matters, yet included no explicit reference to Switzerland, despite the obvious similarities between countries involved in the politics of armed neutrality. The heavily advertised production¹⁴ was well received by audiences in Switzerland (*La Tribune de Lausanne*, 11 October 1916, 3) – a fact not only claimed by the cinema advertising, but also reported by independent sources (*Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne*, 20 September 1916, 10; *Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne*, 26 September 1916, 10; *Tagblatt der Stadt Zürich*, 11 October 1916, 5; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 13 October 1916, n.p.; *Kinema* (Zurich), 14 October 1916, 8; *La Semaine à Genève*, 21 November 1916, 8; *Tagblatt der Stadt Zürich*, 19 April 1917, n.p.; *Kinema*, 27 August 1918, 13).¹⁵

The day after the Swiss premiere of *The Battle Cry of Peace* in French-speaking Lausanne, a private letter was received by the German envoy in Berne. A German national had attended a screening of the film and regretted to bother 'his Excellency again' with another complaint: the Royal Biograph cinema, operated by 'the "German" [Georges] Kolb' and his Belgian wife, was screening a film that would further goad 'local tempers that are already heated enough as it is':

[The film] showed everything our enemies accuse us of, all 'German atrocities', from the rape of defenceless women to the slaughter of masses of innocent citizens with machine guns and the burning down of their houses, emphasising each detail that could be exploited to great effect in our disfavour – such as the salacious expressions of the soldiers while murdering, and so on – so that I often hear exclamations of 'these dirty Boches' voiced around me.¹⁶

Patriotic Germans saw the film as a heinous example of atrocity propaganda (*Der Film*, 21 July 1917, 44–45). The Imperial German Embassy immediately contacted the Federal Political Department with a diplomatic complaint.¹⁷ That very same day the latter sent an informal request to the cantonal Department of Justice and Police in Lausanne stating 'that it should examine whether it wouldn't be desirable to ban the mentioned film.'¹⁸ Based on the legal foundation of the cantonal Decree concerning cinematographs, Article 10 of which prohibited 'spectacles contrary to morality or public order and, in particular, those that are of a nature to suggest or provoke crime or delinquency' (as quoted in Kaenel 2002, 161), on 25 September the film was cut by local police. Two days later, after editing had proven ineffective, *The Battle Cry of Peace* was banned throughout the entire canton.¹⁹

Following newspaper reports that this editing of the film had been stipulated by Berne and motivated by a policy of neutrality (*Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne*, 16 September 1916, 15), the cantonal police directorate issued a misleading denial: it claimed the film's excessive depictions of violence and sensationalist nature were responsible for censorship under cantonal law (*Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne*, 28 September 1916, 15). This governmental assertion was not convincing. Several days later, *La Tribune de Lausanne* ran a polemical column castigating the municipal leaders, claiming they had allowed ungrateful foreigners who benefited from Swiss hospitality to call the shots (11 October 1916, 3).

The Battle Cry of Peace and the events accompanying its screening were interpreted in French-speaking Switzerland by the audience and press alike according to the 'us against them' mentality prevailing in foreign policy. Evidently, the film fitted neatly into the debate raging on invented and actual German war atrocities. In German-speaking Switzerland, reviewers saw *The Battle Cry of Peace* as a *tendenzfilm* and as an expression of the armament propaganda aiming at 'public opinion in America'; to the Swiss, however, the film made clear the 'magnificent beneficence of peace' and showed them the importance of military defence (*Neue Zürcher Nachrichten*, 14 October 1916, n.p.; *Zürcher Post*, 14 October 1916, n.p.). Even genuine pro-German Swiss newspapers (Montant 1988, 999), which were very vocal against German-bashing in other instances, soft-pedalled the central issue deliberately: they praised the 'technical [...] refinement of the most modern directing' of the film and did not mention the fact that the film could have been seen as blatantly anti-German (*Zürcher Post*, 14 October 1916, n.p.).

The respected *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, which was reasonably neutral on foreign policy issues, published a lengthy review of the film in the local news section. Film reviews in this newspaper were generally rather independent and unlike purely advertising reviews in other publications occasionally contained several critical comments – particularly on

dramas. They often tended to be too sensationalist for the taste of the editors, who themselves favoured the cinema reform movement (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 5 June 1917, n.p.). In his review, an anonymous author signing with the initials 'rr.' first linked *The Battle Cry of Peace* to its American origins, and then went on – cautiously – to see in it a political insight useful to the Swiss in their own country:

The idea of the entire movie appears to arise from the principle of armed peace and armament propaganda. If a Swiss soldier tired of duty sees the [...] devastating abomination of a well-planned invasion [...], he will guard the border with greater understanding. (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 14 October 1916, n.p.)

To the explicit depictions of violence in the film and the implied geopolitical localisation of evil, the critic of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* too, otherwise astute in such matters, surprisingly turned a blind eye (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23 January 1917, n.p.; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23 September 1917, n.p.; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 19 February 1918, n.p.). He made allowances for the filmmakers, saying that the 'representation of war scenes [...] was discreet and quite solemn', and that they had 'made every effort to create a neutral band of rampaging soldiers'. After all, the enemies were referred to in the intertitles as 'Puritarians'. This is an astonishing appraisal, as it is a clear departure from the journalistic guidelines of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* visible in other reviews. It is of course possible that a heavily edited version of *The Battle Cry of Peace* was screened in Zurich by mid-October 1916, in which indeed 'all abhorrent atrocities were avoided'. However, this possibility seems slight and almost narratively impossible for a film whose final act is characterised by a long series of violent scenes. It can instead be assumed that the reviewer was being intentionally deceptive, particularly as the review addresses and negates the film's problematic issues. Naturally, the motive for this interpretation of the film remains hidden. However, one might speculate as to whether the local news editors of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* had granted the Orient cinema, a regular advertising customer, a deliberate favour by taking this war film out of the line of fire of public dispute and censorship.

No further diplomatic complaints were made against the Zurich screenings or subsequent showings of *The Battle Cry of Peace*, but this did not mean the German side had abandoned efforts to stop the film. In the spring of 1917, official bodies acquired a copy of *The Battle Cry of Peace* on the Swiss market²⁰ to prevent further distribution of the film.²¹ Evidently this failed: the World Film Office continued to advertise the film in the trade press, perhaps because they possessed a second screening copy or were able to procure a replacement (*Kinema*, 23 March 1918, 11).

Vehement responses from the audience, arising out of a simple adversarial foreign policy, were frequently encountered in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland. In contrast, there is virtually no evidence of a comparable viewer reaction in German-speaking Switzerland (Gerber [forthcoming](#)). Silence reigned in cinema theatres in Berne and Zurich. Several foreign observers remarked with astonishment on the calm exhibited by German-speaking cinemagoers. The Berne correspondent of the *Berliner Tagblatt* noticed that German-speaking cinemagoers 'sit equanimous in the pit and never utter a word of what they think of it all', despite the screening of foreign war films (as quoted in *Kinema*, 22 June 1918, 6; see also Véray 1995, 60).

Cinemagoers in western Switzerland and Ticino were more willing to adopt the political content presented by commercial and propaganda films in addition to the entertainment and informational value of such works (Gerber [forthcoming](#)). By contrast, a *mode de lecture*

prevailed in German-speaking Switzerland that aimed primarily to satisfy entertainment and information needs and was not – in the cinema – interested in the political aspect of the war.²² This seems to have been the case with *The Battle Cry of Peace*, a film abounding in visual spectacles. Yet even the film review in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* included a longer passage that targeted, in exaggeratedly pacifist terms, the visual and entertainment values offered:

Diversely and magnificently executed, *The Torch of War in America* [...] is a truly marvellous film. All of New York, the army and the navy joined in. The peaceful, elegant American family life, nervous urban landscape of a bustling city, the glorious catalogue of buildings towering hundreds of floors high, the gay city illuminated at night, all is presented with equal beauty. In contrast an attacking army, fleeing people, panicked confusion, cannons and grenades, collapsing houses, sinking ships, death and fire. This is war at its most hateful. (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 14 October 1916, n.p.)

At the time *The Battle Cry of Peace* was screened, the Orient cinema in Zurich was a subsidiary of Nordisk Films Co., which was registered in neutral Denmark. Nordisk was active in film production and distribution, and operated cinemas throughout Europe. The fact that the anti-German ‘Hetzfilm’ (hatred film) was screened in Zurich by a company that accumulated a large portion of its business profits in Germany and whose German branch manager David Oliver was involved in Count Harry Kessler’s official cinematic purchases in Switzerland was deemed ‘very peculiar’ in Berlin.²³ Nordisk appears to have merely considered *The Battle Cry of Peace* as a promising opportunity to make a profit. In no way can any political intention in favour of the entente be discerned from the Zurich cinema owner, particularly as the Orient would show *Graf Dohna und seine Möwe* (Germany, Bild- und Film-Amt, 1917), a prominent German propaganda film, several months later (*Kinema*, 12 May 1917, 7).²⁴

A cross-national comparison

There are several similarities in the historical reception of *The Battle Cry of Peace* in the Netherlands and in Switzerland. The film was distributed and exhibited within commercial structures and seems to have been very popular among movie-going audiences. Advertisements in both countries generally emphasised the sensationalist qualities of the film. This seems to suggest that most moviegoers, with the exception of heavily politicised portions of audiences in French- and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland, were not interested in the political aspects of the film. The main reason that the film appealed to the public imagination seems to have been its ‘attractional’ character. Most people flocked to the cinema to see a film that was announced as ‘exciting’, expecting to see something spectacular they hadn’t seen before. The film’s brutal characters, which lent themselves so effectively to film narration, as well as the narrative patterns focused on (sexualised) violence in a usually melodramatic setting, also served as cinematic entertainment that appealed widely to an international, sensation-seeking audience. More speculatively, it could also be argued that the context of war in non-warring countries catered to or even triggered a general desire amongst movie-going audiences to watch movies that somehow offered explicit violent imagery.

In both countries, when compared with other films, *The Battle Cry of Peace* was widely discussed in the press. Sometimes the film was acknowledged as anti-German preparedness

propaganda, but this seems to have been a minor trope in Dutch responses towards the film. Despite the coverage in *De Telegraaf*, the film was not used to stress the importance of Dutch preparedness. Swiss advertisements and reviews did locate the film in its original political context by mentioning the US preparedness movement; however, here too there was very little evidence that the film had been used to promote preparedness in the Swiss context. Some reviews mention that Switzerland could learn from the film, but there are no further ties to the Swiss neutrality discourse. In general, this discourse was not predominant anyway, because Switzerland was politically divided along linguistic borders and differences in press and audience reception here were based mainly on the language regions and their alliances to France and Germany, respectively. In the German-speaking part of Switzerland, the neutral and pro-German press simply ignored the 'Hate-the-Hun' aspects of the film, while audiences predominantly saw it as entertainment. In French-speaking Switzerland the film was met, instead, by a political *mode de lecture*.

It is obvious that the Germans were more concerned about the film's distribution in Switzerland than in the Netherlands, which strengthens the hypothesis that the country was considered, in Karl Hänggi's words, a 'public platform'. In Switzerland, the German diplomatic complaint against the film was successful (at least in the French-speaking canton of Vaud). Moreover, film copies were bought by the Germans in Switzerland in order to remove it from the market. Although there are some indications the Germans were worried about the film's distribution in the Netherlands, it seems this was considered less of a problem than in Switzerland. This lends support to the proposal that the film was generally not seen as anti-German propaganda in the Netherlands – or at least, not to the extent that this was deemed a 'problem'. In contrast to the Swiss case, neutrality discourses and the notion of national unity were dominant features of Dutch reactions to the film. All Dutch commentators used *The Battle Cry of Peace* as a rhetorical example through which the horrors of war were denounced. In doing so, as was the case with *The Battle of the Somme*, their reactions tacitly justified the neutral position that was part of an imagined Dutch commonality. Most Swiss were proud of the country's neutrality and ready to defend it; but the country was clearly divided by strong cultural and political sympathies (that didn't go as far as wishing for an annexation) to France and Germany. While *The Battle Cry of Peace* confronted Swiss audiences with their linguistic and cultural divide, addressing, as it were, two nations at the same time, the same film addressed Dutch audiences as a whole. Furthermore, the film offered Dutch audiences an idealist view of their neutrality, leaving out the pragmatic advantages that were obviously part of such a position. From the viewpoint of its anti-German message, the propagandistic 'success' of *The Battle Cry of Peace* seems to have been negligible.

Defining *The Battle Cry of Peace* as a propaganda film *per se* does not prove effective in understanding the manifold ways films were used to construct meaning. This cross-national reception analysis makes clear that negotiating the film's meaning offered multiple possibilities for cinema audiences to frame the war according to political preferences, or lack thereof. In conclusion, we would like to stress the role of the cinema as an important force in the public debate surrounding the war – not only within nations at war, but also in the neutral countries.

Notes

1. There are some exceptions to this rule, in particular with regard to the film historical scholarship of Nicholas Reeves (1983, 1997).
2. It remains unclear what was actually seen here. The allegorical scene probably functioned to secure semantic closure. The Dutch newspaper *Het Vaderland* (11 October 1917, n.p.) explained: ‘Then the peacepalms and -trumpets appear from the worked soil by the thousands, and the endless row of their young carriers starts its victorious peace march around the world.’
3. This early example of Hate-the-Hun rhetorics in American cinema was soon followed by other Germanophobic films, culminating in Rupert Julian’s *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin* (USA, Rupert Julian/Renowned Pictures Company, 1918).
4. Although their successes in distributing their films on the Dutch film market differed highly, all these propaganda institutions were active within the Dutch cinema culture of the time.
5. In comparing *The Battle Cry of Peace* with *Lay Down Your Arms* (Ned Med Vaabnene, Danmark, Holger-Madsen/Nordisk, 1915), the latter being the filmic equivalent of Bertha van Süttner’s written plea, even a pacifist message is suggested.
6. The only other example found was an advert from the Rotterdam Cinema Americain that screened the film by the end of the war. ‘Peace is near’, the advert states, and the film was programmed again ‘to show the honourable visitor an image of this awful war’ (*Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 18 October 1918). Here, the film was used as a call for peace negotiations, not as a call to arms.
7. Letter from the Garrison Commander, Arnhem to the Mayor, Arnhem, n.d., Gelders Archief, Arnhem, 2138 05 1916–1918 566.
8. This meant that the French film *Le Passeur de l’Yser* (France, M. Honoré/Pathé, 1915), for example, was forbidden by local authorities (*De Bioscoop-Courant*, 25 May 1917, n.p.).
9. It is clear that the screening of the film did not go unnoticed by German propaganda personnel in the Netherlands: ‘Erster [The Battle Cry of Peace, KdZ] ist ein amerikanischer Film, der das Elend des Krieges schildern soll und bei dem die Gewalttätigkeiten und Grausamkeiten eines Krieges durch die Vorführung von Greuelthaten durch Truppen, die in ihrer Uniformierung den Deutschen ähnlich sehen veranschaulicht werden.’ (German Federal Archives, Berlin, R 901, 71,961).
10. Letter from Head of Police Versteeg, The Hague, to the Mayor, The Hague, 23 October 1917. Haags gemeentearchief, The Hague, 0353–01 2408–2414.
11. Cinema screenings could be used as an excuse to sidestep the official norm of neutrality. *De Telegraaf* often discussed the screenings in the Pathé Cinema in Amsterdam, using the films as ‘evidence’ for the inferiority of German military and morality.
12. There is no evidence that suggests *De Telegraaf* was institutionally supported by the French. *De Toekomst*, however, did receive funding from the German government (Tames 2006, 64).
13. Swiss newspapers circulated in the neighbour countries. And Switzerland was thronged with foreigners, such as diplomats, spies, businessmen, (political) refugees and deserters. Some of them brought home the ideas they grasped in the Swiss press or in a cinema theatre. Therefore, for George Creel, head of the American Committee on Public Information, Switzerland was ‘a “first-line trench” in our drive against the morale of the German people’ (Creel 1920, 320).
14. ‘An abundance of promotional materials’ was available (*Kinema*, 14 October 1916, n.p.). And on the occasion of the film’s premiere in Lausanne, the cinema owner went so far as to place anonymous newspaper advertisements consisting only of the words ‘The Invasion of the United States’ to arouse interest (*Gazette de Lausanne*, 20 September 1916, 5).
15. We are grateful to Pierre-Emmanuel Jaques for calling our attention to the Geneva source.
16. Letter from Fr. Gerok, Lausanne, to Imperial German Embassy, Berne, 2 September 1916 [transcription], Swiss Federal Archives, Berne, E2001A 1000/45 798.
17. Letter from Imperial German Embassy, Berne, to Federal Political Department, Berne, 23 September 1916, Swiss Federal Archives, Berne, E2001A 1000/45 798.

18. Telegram from Federal Political Department, Berne, to Department of Justice and Police of the Canton of Vaud, Lausanne, 23 September 1916, Swiss Federal Archives, Berne, E2001A 1000/45 798.
19. Letter from Department of Justice and Police of the Canton of Vaud, Lausanne, to Federal Political Department, Berne, 28 September 1916, Swiss Federal Archives, Berne, E2001A 1000/45 798.
20. Apart from diplomatic complaints, another classic means to counter enemy propaganda lay in making films disappear. The circumstances surrounding the German acquisition of *The Battle Cry of Peace* are not unambiguous. In many other cases, enemy films found their way illegally into German or American hands at horrendous prices (Letter from Bild- und Film-Amt, Berlin, to Foreign Office, Berlin, 12 June 1917, German Federal Archives, Berlin, R 901, 71,948; Gerber 2014).
21. Letter from Foreign Office, Berlin, to Harry Kessler, Berne, 24 May 1917, German Federal Archives, Berlin, R 901, 71,198.
 In the summer of 1917, discussions were held in Berlin offices on whether or not to publicly screen the captured copy of *The Battle Cry of Peace* in Germany and critically discuss it in newspapers 'in order to illustrate the methods employed by the enemy' (Letter from Hans von Haefen, Berlin, to Foreign Office, Berlin, 2 July 1917, German Federal Archives, Berlin, R 901, 71,948). *The Battle Cry of Peace* was ultimately screened to officials. Its qualities were recognised, as well as a double shortcoming in Germany's own official film production: firstly, German film propaganda lacked 'the major [...] first-class Tendenz-Film that, made on a massive budget, presents an idea absolutely certain to create an impact', as was the case with *The Battle Cry of Peace*. Secondly, it lacked 'the entertaining moment, whereas the instructive, intended purpose was too apparent'. Enemy films, on the other hand, 'entertain the audience, who only subconsciously take home the impression of an alleged culturally and morally superior entente' (Letter from Foreign Office, Berlin, to Bild- und Film-Amt, Berlin, 4 September 1917, German Federal Archives, Berlin, R 901, 71,949). This is one of the first times German officials debated the effect of 'hidden' propaganda in fiction films. However, this new concept of motion picture propaganda only became broadly established in the changed political landscape of the 1930s (Stiasny 2009, 32–34, 44–48, 83–88).
22. In the case of *Maciste Alpino* (Italy, Luigi Maggi, Romano Luigi Borgnetto/Itala-Film, 1916), the Austrian-Hungarian embassy was worried about possible 'disturbances' of the screenings in Italian-speaking Switzerland (Proceedings of Federal Press Control Commission, Berne, 25 April 1917, Swiss Federal Archives, Berne, E27 1000/721 13,586). Contrarily, Count Kessler, referring to the German-speaking part expressed the opinion that this Italian comedy depicting Austrian-Hungarian military in a quite derogatory way resulted 'in humour rather than in propaganda' (Kessler 1918).
23. Letter and enclosures from Bild- und Film-Amt, Berlin, to Foreign Office, Berlin, 24 July 1917, German Federal Archives, Berlin, R 901, 71,949.
24. The outrage over the Zurich screening of *The Battle Cry of Peace*, also voiced publicly in Germany (*Der Film*, 21 July 1917, 44–45), contributed to German distrust of Nordisk as apparent in the famous Ludendorff letter of 4 July 1917 (Barkhausen 1982, 259–261). This distrust ultimately resulted in the takeover of the German, Austrian-Hungarian, Swiss and Dutch parts of Nordisk on the occasion of the formation of the Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft (UFA) in December 1917. By the summer of 1918, this acquisition brought the Zurich Orient (and in a further takeover all propaganda cinemas operated by Count Kessler in Switzerland, as well as the Zurich film distributor) into the hands of the UFA, which was partly controlled by the German state through a silent partnership and a trusted person on the board of the company (Letter from Harry Kessler, Zürich, to UFA, Berlin, 3 March 1918, German Federal Archives, Berlin, R 901, 71,975; Universum-Film-Verleih GmbH., Bericht über Revision, 30 November 1918, German Federal Archives, Berlin, R 109I, 639; Thorsen 2010, Mühl-Benninghaus 2004, 275–292).

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