The Big Lift (1950): Image and Identity in Blockaded Berlin

by Ralph Stern

Abstract: Addressing a film seldom granted critical attention, this essay examines George Seaton's semidocumentary The Big Lift *(1950), situating the film in relation to other postwar genres, Cold War politics, and a Berlin still largely in ruin. Entering a physically complex and ideologically contested terrain, this film unfolds as a surprisingly sophisticated foray into issues of identity, appearance, and deception in the blockaded city.*

Introduction. In less than fifteen years, Berlin traversed the path from Weimar Germany's great metropolis through the National Socialist dream of *Germania* to that of a postwar *Trümmerlandschaft*, a landscape of ruins marked by destruction and occupation as well as by cultural and economic isolation. Lying well within the Soviet zone of occupation, Berlin was further isolated by the policies of the western Allies, who insisted on decentralization as one of the five postwar "d's" to which Germany was subjected.[1] Ironically, this isolation increased in direct proportion to Berlin's rising geopolitical significance as a Cold War flash point with politicians and military strategists on both sides of the "iron curtain" believing that Berlin's future would determine not only the future of Germany, but of all of Europe. Intent on driving the western Allies from Berlin, the Soviets had since 1945 repeatedly placed restrictions on the manner and amount of supplies allowed into the western sectors. The total blockade of 1948–1949 by the Soviets brought this situation to a point of crisis, decisively splitting "west" from "east" and inaugurating Berlin's forty-year history as a divided city.[2]

The Big Lift (1950) is George Seaton's semidocumentary film about the Berlin Airlift (Operation Vittles) undertaken by the western Allies for the relief of the blockaded city.[3] Written and directed by Seaton in Berlin, *The Big Lift* was intended for American audiences and provides a uniquely American perspective on this brief period in Berlin's often tumultuous urban history. At times superfi-

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cially propagandist, the film gains depth as it negotiates a complex terrain of urban imagery and political representation.

True to its semidocumentary character, it has a supporting cast of military servicemen rather than professional actors. But by emphasizing the perspective of those in the lower ranks, the film avoids heroism and is at times critical of military bureaucracy. In combining documentary accounts of the organizational and technical issues of the airlift with a fictional narrative illustrative of America's changing attitudes towards the German population, *The Big Lift* shifts the "German" from the arena of a powerful fascist adversary to that of a weak Cold War ally in urgent need of assistance.

In terms of genres, *The Big Lift* is related to the German postwar *Trümmerfilme* (ruin films) depicting vast urban destruction often coupled with accounts of National Socialist culpability. It is also aligned with the newsreel tradition and *Fox Movietone News.* In a broad sense, its focus on the everyday and the urban milieu links it with the tradition of the German "city-film" associated with the *neue Sachlichkeit* (new objectivity) of the Weimar period. And, in terms of its depiction of the sufferings caused by war, it incorporates elements of neorealism, the Italian contribution to postwar cinema that at mid-century was at the height of its influence. Although *The Big Lift* does not rank with postwar "city" films such as Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City* or *Germania anno zero,* it is equal to many of the German *Trümmerfilme* as well as to the early postwar forays into German cities by such respected directors as Billy Wilder, Anatole Litvak, Carol Reed, and Fred Zinnemann.[4]

Considered on its own merits, *The Big Lift* is a valuable document of Berlin's rapidly shifting identities during this critical phase of the city's history, and it gives us varying perspectives on the city's infrastructure, monuments, and tourism as well as economic hardship. Seaton's role as both scriptwriter and director give the film an intentional coherence that, together with Seaton's familiarity with Berlin, allow for a close reading of the film with regard to issues of urban representation and identity construction. Unlike the abstract tools of planners and architects, cinema is closely related to popular culture and the "lived social realities" of urban culture.[5] Therefore, underlying the discussion of this specific film is the more general question concerning the effectiveness of cinema in constructing urban identities and, as a circulating medium, transporting them across international boundaries. As such, the paper is concerned with bridging the still unnecessarily great divide between urban and film studies.

For clarity of presentation and argument, the paper is divided into five sections with varying perspectives on *The Big Lift.* The first three examine the film in terms of its internal organization, and the last two situate it within the larger context of urban representation. The opening section "narrative construction and spatial organization" is followed by "politics of vision and blindness," which examines a recent argument concerning the film and Cold War identity construction together with the self-reflexive attitude of the film towards image construction. The short

Figure 1. *The Big Lift* (Twentieth Century Fox, 1950) with Montgomery Clift as an American in blockaded Berlin and Cornell Borchers as a German *Trümmerfrau* or "rubble woman." The figure of the *Trümmerfrau*, women undertaking the arduous task of clearing German cities of the literal (and figurative) ruins left by the Third Reich, was a mainstay of postwar representations of urban destruction in literature, photography, and film. Still courtesy of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek.

section "Berlin snapshots" examines the role of the single "photograph" within the film along with postcard views of Berlin. "Cinematic visions and *Movietone News*" places the film in the context of mid-century accommodation of and reaction to propaganda films and examines the use of urban locations to underscore a "realist" or documentary truth in postwar cinema. Finally, "tourists and 'islanders'" addresses the gaze of the tourist and the dystopian/utopian associations with the "island" of blockaded Berlin.

***The Big Lift:* Narrative Structure and Spatial Organization.** *The Big Lift*, a story about Berlin, begins in Hawaii. It is here that we are introduced to Danny MacCullough (Montgomery Clift) and Hank Kowalski (Paul Douglas) who, as part of a squadron of air force personnel, are ordered to leave for Berlin.[6] The aircraft stationed in Hawaii were larger than those in Europe and, together with those from many other U.S. air bases, have been requisitioned for the Berlin Airlift.

One senses the general mobilization underway as the flight of the Hawaii crew is tracked across a map stretching from the Pacific to the Rhine. Thus, in this early sequence, we understand that the narrative of the film will have a spatial counterpart that, to borrow a phrase from the film theorist Laura Mulvey, "underpins the story like a map."[7] After converging at Frankfurt-Rhein-Main (under American control), the various aircraft are immediately brought into service for the Berlin relief efforts. During the next many months, these and others shuttle between the Federal German Republic and Berlin delivering a myriad of supplies, but mostly coal.[8] The film focuses on the American effort and, at first, limits depictions of Berlin to its "air corridor" approach and the central airport in Tempelhof.

During the first thirty minutes of the film, a great deal of technical information is imparted and dramatic footage is shown of landings at Tempelhof. But it is the celebration accompanying the landing of the 100,000th relief flight, of which Danny is a crew member, that opens the door to Berlin and the film proper. In quick succession Danny and Hank are linked with two German women, Frederica Burkhardt (Cornell Borchers) and Gerda (Bruni Löbel).[9] The four principle characters are complemented by four others, all male, in subordinate but pivotal roles: an American journalist-photographer and three Germans who are, respectively, a spy for the Russians, an ex-prisoner-of-war guard, and a dealer in photography equipment (living in St. Louis). Delineations of minor characters are precise, and the descriptions of flight routines together with depictions of the Berlin milieu encompass a range of everyday situations moving from the comic to the tragic.

Within the film's overall narrative, each of the four principle characters represents a specific ideological position. Hank and Danny are situated in the postwar dualism of liberator and occupier but are divided by generation. Hank, older, belongs to the WWII generation and is haunted by memories of Berlin and what it represented, memories of which Danny is free. Hank is also of Polish descent, linking him symbolically with (but dividing him ideologically from) Frederica, whose mother is Polish. Frederica and Gerda are as separated by class, education, and experience as they are sharply differentiated by ideology and ethics. And whereas Gerda works in a lunch wagon serving the personnel at Tempelhof, Frederica works as a *Trümmerfrau*, a "rubble woman" responsible for clearing Berlin of the ruins of war and salvaging materials for its reconstruction. As such her figure is highly symbolic, and the images of her working in the ruins evoke a significant visual and literary legacy of German (and gendered) reconstruction efforts in the early postwar period.[10] Positioned in this manner, this character (and through her, Berlin) negotiates between the trope of "Europe as temptress" (exemplified in Wilder's *A Foreign Affair* by Marlene Dietrich as "painted, alluring, experienced and in the know about almost everything"), and the later Cold War trope of "Europe as orphan" [typified by Audrey Hepburn in *Sabrina* (1954)].[11]

Berlin is nonetheless sexualized as a city of "schatzies," circulating "treasures" whose availability is contrasted with that of American women, including those stationed in Berlin. The economic privation underlying this largess is alternately

depicted as profound or trivial: conditions in the city having improved between 1945 and the currency reform in the summer of 1948 that served to end the most venal forms of black market trade. Economic hardship is backgrounded by depictions of Berlin as a site of profound ideological and cultural competition, and the narrative includes a running exchange on the relative merits of democracy and communism. Ideological conflict is linked in turn to depictions of Berlin as a city of surveillance, one in which some twenty-five thousand spies are the counterpoint to the technologies of surveillance that facilitate the transport of supplies to the blockaded city. But, as we shall see, surveillance is linked less with tropes of "watchfulness" than with more subtle explorations of appearance, image, and identity construction. Many of the instances in which these issues arise are depicted with a great deal of humor, adding to the film's effectiveness. Lastly, Berlin is depicted as the city of amnesia: a city whose role as the source of destruction spanning from Coventry and Rotterdam to the death camps of eastern Europe has been displaced by its inhabitants to a time before history. In this narrative, memory is safeguarded by the American liberator/occupier whose vision of redemption for the "island" of Berlin, as for all of Europe, lies not with the island paradise of Hawaii but with the highly urbanized island of Manhattan. Thus all the narrative strands of the film are linked to a vision of the urban. In Berlin these are woven together with the sights of monuments and the sites of the everyday, including transportation systems (taxi, tram, and tube); places of work, shopping, and entertainment; housing (*Altbau* and *Reformbau*) as well as general depictions of West and East Berlin.

Most effectively negotiating the complex terrain of the occupied and divided city is Frederica, whose fluent English and straightforward manner present a fundamentally sympathetic character. Knowledgeable of the city's often invisible social and political boundaries, she repeatedly assists Danny in his various encounters with Berlin. But Frederica is finally exposed as a deceptive character, lying about both her past and her future. As she is a central figure in the film, Frederica's "false appearance" destabilizes our expectations of the narrative to a degree that a thorough questioning of the relationship between appearance, image, and identity is possible throughout the film. On the one hand, Frederica's dissimulations expose the lingering effects of National Socialism's profound moral corruption. On the other hand, within the political and spatial order of Cold War Berlin her deceptions are far from isolated and must be understood in connection with other incidents of deceptive appearance. Furthermore, insofar as Frederica and Berlin are symbolically linked through her work as a *Trümmerfrau*, questions raised in relation to her identity are projected onto the city, destabilizing its appearance in the "documentary" that this film claims to be. This destabilization, as I shall argue below, is intentionally self-reflexive.

Within the film's narrative, Frederica's dissimulations about her past and future also have specific and symbolic spatial associations that are "mapped" onto the city. Her past is localized in Berlin's *Siegesallee* (Victory Alley) and is thusly

associated with Prussian militarism and National Socialist aspirations.[12] It is here that her name, Frederica, is connected with that of Fredericus Rex (King Frederick II), Prussia's Enlightenment despot eulogized throughout Germany since the nineteenth century. The film codes the *Siegesallee* both as an historic site commemorating victory and as a contemporary site of defeat and revenge. Frederica's own stance is not one of defeat, and, significantly, the *Siegesallee* is the only site where she (or anyone) describes Berlin in terms of its prewar appearance. Here, in Berlin's Tiergarten, Frederica recalls not a city of buildings but a place that was once "full of trees where people would go walking," invoking a tradition of German identity constructions grounded in an idealized view of nature that resonated with both the Romantics and the National Socialists. This site, together with the *Siegessäule* (Victory Column) marking its northern terminus, are returned to on several occasions, thus serving as a physical counterpoint to the semicircular airfield at Tempelhof and as an ideologically problematic "center" in a physically, psychologically, and politically fragmented city.

With Frederica's past anchored in central Europe, her future is projected towards the central United States and the cities of St. Paul and St. Louis, each of which might be considered as a reflection of Berlin. St. Paul, the "twin" city of Minneapolis, echoes Berlin's division into east and west. St. Louis is considered as the gateway to the American west much like Berlin is considered as the gateway to the European east.[13] The American cites, bound together by the Mississippi River, are tied to Berlin through the figure of Danny who, after having flown in goods to relieve the hardships of the blockade, almost falls for a marriage swindle designed to bring Frederica to America. A paradoxical character, Frederica's complexity prevents both her and the film from falling victim to easy moralization and simplistic narrative closure.

***The Big Lift:* Politics of Vision and Blindness.** Little has been written about *The Big Lift,* but interest in the film has grown since its screening at the 1991 International Film Festival in Berlin. In 1997 the film scholar Rainer Rother gave the film serious consideration.[14] Placing the film firmly in the context of other representations of the Cold War, Rother argues that the film's anticommunist stance must be considered with other Cold War movies produced by Hollywood at a time when it was itself being investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee. He argues further that *The Big Lift* distinguishes itself from films such as *The Iron Curtain* (William Wellman, 1948) and *I Married a Communist* (Robert Stevenson, 1949) by not placing the communist threat at the center of the narrative. Rather, it locates the Soviets on the film's periphery, depicting them as either foolish or arbitrary and their danger residing in their incalculability. The intended purpose of this displacement, Rother argues, is the "re-orientation of an enemy image," Cold War politics requiring that the former (German) enemy be seen in a positive, if not altogether unproblematic, light. The rationale behind this, again as per Rother, is to prepare Americans for a confrontation with the new

Soviet enemy; the film is therefore concerned with a program of reeducation directed towards the American public.

The argument has merit, and Rother's examples illuminate many aspects of the film. On one level the film is clearly a plea for coming to terms with Germany's recent past and moving towards a more accommodating future, underscored by the dialogues concerning the relative merits of communism and democracy. Intended to memorialize the airlift, the film was also heavily dependent on U.S. military support for much of the filming, support that would have been withheld if the script had not met with official approval. And, indeed, the airlift itself is presented as the military victory that it was. However, Frederica's actions are not presented in terms of the heroic fighters and worthy opponents characterizing the recoding of Germans in other Cold War films of the period.[15] Frederica neither breaks with nor distances herself from her past, a past involving not only her political allegiance but a personal legacy including her apparent disavowal of her Polish mother and her marriage to a member of the German SS. And, as we have seen in the example of the *Siegesalle*, Frederica is coded throughout the film as representing values associated not only with Germany's recent past, but with its long-standing traditions, and she is explicitly tied to images of industriousness, resourcefulness, and culture.

Given this overall context, Frederica's character does little to reorient images of the enemy, even if Gerda's progressive enlightenment as to the virtues of American democracy serves as a foil to Frederica's failings. But Gerda lacks the authoritative stature of Frederica, and, as such, her closing plea for understanding must be seen more as a compromise with a viewing public's expectation of resolution than as a conclusion following the logic of the film. For Frederica, the film offers neither redemption nor doom, and this lack of narrative closure leaves disturbing questions about both the legacy of National Socialism and the fate of a woman (and the city she symbolizes) for whom we have other reasons to like and respect.[16]

Frederica's ultimate exposure through the efforts of a German working as a Russian spy casts further doubt on the comprehensiveness of Rother's thesis. This important character again links issues of appearance, image, and identity, and, as with Frederica, these are mapped onto the city with specific, spatial associations. Danny meets the congenial Herr Stieber (O.E. Hasse) in Frederica's apartment, one that she shares with Stieber. Danny has retreated here to shower after accidentally being covered with poster glue at one of Berlin's many advertising columns (*Litfaßsäule*). Frederica has left for the tailor/cleaner with Danny's uniform, and we see him attired first in Stieber's bathrobe and later in Stieber's suit, an unexpected change of appearance for an American flight engineer who risks certain demotion if caught out of uniform. Stieber is introduced while sitting in the apartment's former dining room, a room looking directly onto the landing field at Tempelhof. This remarkable juxtaposition of the domestic interior and the global exterior is not a Hollywood fantasy; in Tempelhof it was a Berlin reality.

Figure 2 (*left*). Danny and Frederica in her apartment after he has been doused with glue at one of Berlin's many *Litfaßsäulen.* The need to have his uniform cleaned leads to his "going native" and, as "M.P. bait," ever greater dependence on Frederica. Figure 3 (*right*). The fence separating Tempelhof airport from the surrounding residential area separates Danny and Frederica in a symbolic image shortly before the conclusion of George Seaton's *The Big Lift* (Twentieth Century Fox, 1950). Still courtesy of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek.

Spyglasses in hand, Stieber is busily recording the military transports landing at Tempelhof. Both charming and disarming, he embodies ambiguity as we come to learn that his prewar career was that of an actor, a career preparing him well for his postwar role as a spy.[17] Although Stieber's role is not large, it is significant as he alone speaks for the German male, and his characterization as actor/spy lends a critical undertone to the film that is second only that of to Frederica's character.

Well informed, Stieber describes Berlin as a city with some twenty-five thousand spies, including spies working for both sides and those charged with watching other spies, which include family relations. As he explains, this is all very "good for the unemployment," but it also introduces the element of domestic surveillance that, finally, leads to Frederica's exposure. Alerted by the sound of approaching planes, Stieber is continually drawn back to his binoculars and window, reminding us of how Berlin came to be considered by Eisenhower as the "window to the west" and by the CIA as the "window on the east."[18] That Stieber spies for the Russians is well-known to the Americans, who have helped him with his job by fixing his phone. However, by deceiving both the Russians and Frederica, Stieber's character finally begs the question as to whether he is also deceiving the Americans

(and the viewers). All this is underscored by the punch line in the dialogue between Danny and Stieber. Danny asks about the purpose of Stieber's spying. Stieber's answer is short and direct: "Because Russians do not believe what they see, only what other Russians tell them."

On the surface Stieber's explanation reinforces the interpretation by Rother mentioned earlier: the film depicts Russians as foolish. But this misses the ironic symmetry this example has with another theme in the film's narrative: the story of radar or, more accurately, the technology of the "ground controlled approach" (GCA) system. This symmetry allows us to understand the discussion concerning GCA as something other than a trope for progress or even, as might be argued, a symbol of America's ability to penetrate the "fog" of Cold War intrigue. Presented as a significant and recurring theme in *The Big Lift*, one contemporary reviewer was prompted to quip that the "heroes of this movie are radar and democracy."[19] Developed by the MIT Radiation Laboratory in the early 1940s, this technology had been put into widespread use in Europe and the Pacific in early 1945. It was immensely popular, providing a "psychic lifeline" to pilots through their knowing that "someone else could see them, even when they could see nothing."[20]

In the film Hank's role is that of a GCA operator, and through him we learn how this technology assists landing in bad weather when pilots "land blind," relying instead on verbal instructions from the ground-based operator.[21] The surveillance central to the GCA system also enabled the compression of landing timetables that made the Berlin Airlift possible, an experience that became crucial to the growth of commercial aviation everywhere.[22]

The many instances in which radar is thematized constitute Rother's own blind spot, escaping mention in his otherwise observant analysis. But it is precisely here that the symmetry between Russians and Americans (as represented by the pilots) occurs: *neither* can trust what they see, and both must rely on what others tell them. Thus the narrative again expands its enquiry into the deceptive appearance of Frederica into a more general probing of the deceptiveness of appearances. It does so in a manner that establishes, at least as far as Berlin is concerned, a parity between Cold War rivals, a parity underscored in the film by the absence of heroic figures, including that of pilot. Even Hank, the most clear-sighted of the major characters and therefore the appropriate figure for operating the GCA system, has difficulty making visual identifications elsewhere in the narrative.[23] Thus, *The Big Lift* avoids the totalizing narrative of a "big picture," opting instead for a complex dynamic in which appearance and deception, evidence and authority are examined to a degree unusual for the black and white delineations drawn by Cold War Hollywood.

Rather than linking *The Big Lift* to the anticommunist films suggested by Rother, Seaton's subtle probing can be connected to the film for which he himself is most remembered: *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947). Here too Seaton engages a story anchored in a city through sites of symbolic spatial association. Instead of Cold War rivalries between Soviets and Americans, *Miracle* concerns the heated

Christmas season rivalries between Macy's and Gimbel's, two department stores vying for advantage on the north and south sides of Manhattan's 34th Street. The film revolves around a little girl's wishes for a home, represented for her by a house seen in an illustration, and an elderly gentleman who insists that he is Santa Claus. Winning an Academy Award and still popular today, the film offers a subtle take on desire, appearance, and authority. In an age of mechanical reproducibility, the paradigmatic nature of holiday-season Santas is readily apparent, authority conferred upon the serried ranks by uniform appearance and the social consensus that they are "not real." In Seaton's *Miracle,* the twist lies with the gentleman insisting that he is the "original," that he is, in fact, what he appears to be. Promptly, in a particularly Foucauldian manner, he is accused of madness and threatened with institutionalization. Eventually he is reprieved through a second legitimating discourse, the arbitrariness of which is made very apparent, and the little girl finds happiness when her wish for possessing the "original" of the picture is granted.[24]

In *The Big Lift* America itself plays the perennial Santa, distributing chocolates to children as it brings coal to Berlin, all the while struggling with a powerful opponent for the upper hand in establishing a new, legitimating discourse as articulated in the running dialogue between Hank and Gerda. The coherence of American discourse as social *praxis,* however, is most clearly demonstrated by the choreography of the airlift, which as we have seen revolves around a core blindness. In Berlin, America's discourse is at its most coherent within the confines of Tempelhof, its own outpost in the "outpost of the free world," and it is here that the choreography of the airlift is reflected in the celebratory performance of the honor guard.[25] Configuring and reconfiguring the blank tarmac of the airfield with their precision movements, they close their performance by aligning themselves in paired ranks forming a corridor emblematic of the air corridor leading from West Germany to Berlin. Moving along this trajectory from his plane to the podium in a manner explicitly referenced as a marriage ceremony, Danny (and America) is delivered to Frederica and, through her, to Berlin.

Leaving Tempelhof, however, is like leaving the privileged world of the New York department store, and Danny soon finds himself bereft of uniform—"gone native" as Hank remarks—and dependent upon Frederica. With this, Danny's authoritative voice dissipates, his practiced German abandoning him in a Berlin-specific rendition of "Chattanooga-Choo-Choo."[26] Moving ever further into the spatial complexities of the divided city, identity and voice are ceded altogether when, somewhat later in the film, Danny is (literally) asked to identify himself by the British military police at the same time that he is being held by Soviet authorities. Caught between the two, Frederica intervenes, insisting that "He's my husband. He was shot in the throat during the war. He can't speak," thus convincing everyone that Danny is a German war veteran. Out of uniform and refusing to speak in order to protect himself, the youthful, American Danny has in many respects assumed an identity similar to many Germans in the immediate postwar

Figure 4. "He's my husband. He was shot in the throat during the war; he can't speak." Danny and Frederica pulled back and forth by officers of various jurisdictions (British, American, West German, and "Ruskies") at the contested terrain of postwar Potsdamer Platz in George Seaton's *The Big Lift* (Twentieth Century Fox, 1950). Still courtesy of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek.

years. Certainly Danny's deception is as complete in this context as Frederica's is in others. For her part, Frederica also has a complementary figure. Like the little girl in *Miracle,* she wishes for a home, not in Berlin, but in America. And, like the little girl, she has a picture, but not of a house. Hers is a picture of a camera store; her home, the world of image-making.

***The Big Lift:* Berlin Snapshots.** The German title for *The Big Lift* is the incongruous *Es Begann mit einem Kuß* (*It Began with a Kiss*) released to the West German market in an altered version in the spring of 1953, three years after its premier in the United States and Great Britain. The film carried the subtitle *Die viergeteilte Stadt* (literally, *The Four-Divided City*). This title may have been added by the film's German distributor in order to capitalize on the success of *Vier im Jeep* (*Four in a Jeep,* Leopold Lindtberg and Elizabeth Montagu, 1951), a film about occupied and divided Vienna. *Vier im Jeep* premiered to much acclaim at Berlin's first International Film Festival in June 1951. Whether or not there was an intended connection between the two films and their respective "four-divided cities," it is surprising though that the German release of *The Big Lift* makes no mention of either the blockade or the airlift (*Luftbrücke*) in the film's title. The

"kiss" referred to in the title occurs between Frederica and Danny when they first meet at Tempelhof, prompting Danny's entré into Frederica's Berlin. But *It Began with a Kiss* is a misnomer as the kiss is staged by a photographer seeking an image for his newspaper. Intended for mass circulation, this image will presumably be accompanied by a story about the grateful women of Berlin. In this context, the film might more aptly have been entitled "it began with a photograph."

In *The Big Lift* there are four instances in which a single, photographic image appears, either as a literal picture or as a picture in the making. There are no other instances of photographs in the film, and they serve as a counterpoint to the two newsreels that open the film, a topic I shall return to below. This exclusion of even incidental photographic imagery within the film leads us to attend to those few instances in which photographs do appear and, in each case the image is presented with distinctly negative connotations. The first, as just described, involves a staged event, displaced once again as the "photographer" reveals that he is not a photographer but a journalist who does not usually work "with this box," the camera. His real interest is in a story following a shipment of flour from the time it leaves Rhein-Main until it is a loaf of bread in the arms of a Berlin child, a human-interest story designed to "give the Air Force some publicity." When it has been organized, we see the concluding moment of this particular sequence as it too is photographed with the journalist instructing a little girl to "turn a little bit towards me, not into the camera, look pleasant, that's fine." This second instance is as staged as the first. In Berlin the locations may be real, but the events depicted, at least those for popular consumption, are very much constructed, placing into question the documentary authority of the film itself.

Photographs, however, are also used to initiate movement from one realm to another, marking moments of transition. These first two instances bracket Danny's transition from Tempelhof to Berlin, functioning in a manner similar to the newsreels at the beginning of the film that, as we shall see below, initiate the airlift mobilization. The first two examples also gain in importance in relation to the last two. Photographs are introduced again as Danny and Frederica flee the British patrol. Passing through the Brandenburg Gate, the point of transition between West and East Berlin, the two are watched by a figure literally covered with images: a postcard seller blanketed with images on his coat and holding a further stack in his left hand. Outstretched in his right are yet more photographs. The topmost of these, clearly visible, is of Berlin's *Siegessäule,* seen a moment before framed between the columns of the Brandenburg Gate. This center of questionable ideological provenance discussed earlier has, like Berlin itself, been decentered, completing a transition from west to east, real to the image, and present to past. It is the last time we see the *Siegessäule.* Eyes averted, the postcard seller also appears as an apparition, a "ghost" of Berlin, and as Danny and Frederica move off, he immediately follows. Here the photographs may be real, but their presentation is staged, for this postcard seller is (like Stieber) a spy (indeed, a "spook") who, following the pair, alerts the East German police.

The final depiction of a photograph leads to Frederica's own exposure. Receiving an envelope from St. Louis, which in the film has been mentioned twice before as a city in which she has friends, Frederica finds the photograph of the camera store. At the bottom of a large showcase window we see a serried sequence of photographs reminiscent of a filmstrip. The note at the bottom says simply, "Darling, this is the new store" and is signed "Ernst" (whom we gather is the man standing in front of the store). Frederica's response is one of excitement. Clearly for her this is real and not staged—like her relationship with Danny. All this is not lost on Stieber, who quietly observes the observer and devises a simple plan leading to Frederica's exposure. And, by completing this act of domestic surveillance, Stieber exposes himself as someone who is perhaps a far more serious spy than we have been led to believe.

Contemporary reviewers have ascribed Ernst's being in America to various circumstances, one insisting that he was in a prisoner-of-war camp, another that he had reached America through a marriage swindle of his own.[27] His ambiguity serves well as a focus for the projections of others, prompting us to speculate whether this might also not be the case with Frederica. Within the logic of the film, it seems clear that Ernst and Frederica are plotting together, but the film is never conclusive about this. Perhaps she too is caught by an image that, in the end, is not real.

***The Big Lift:* Cinematic Visions and Movietone News.** Berlin's postwar image was created through representations of the city in published photographs, in the countless snapshots made by servicemen, and in newsreels. Already on May 1, 1945, as the final battle for the city was still raging, the *New York Times* published images of the collapsing enemy capital with the headline "Rubble of Berlin Furnishes Background for Russian Photographer." Berlin's most frequently depicted sites were those with the greatest historical and political resonance. The damaged Brandenburg Gate, the burned-out Reichstag, and the ravaged *Reichskanzlei* were popular sights and were incorporated into many early postwar films made for non-German audiences, such as Roberto Rossellini's *Germania anno zero* (1946) and Billy Wilder's *A Foreign Affair* (1948). In *Germania,* which had the working title of *Berlin anno zero,* Rossellini reflects on the tourism of urban destruction by filming a group of British soldiers being photographed in front of Hitler's bunker. This is followed by a scene of a gramophone playing a recorded speech by Hitler while Rossellini's camera pans across the desolation of the *Reichskanzlei* and an adjoining roofscape. It is an odd three-way juxtaposition. Clearly the scene of empty devastation is contrasted with the grand promises made in the speech, the cold clarity of the image providing a sobering counterpoint to fascism's inflammatory rhetoric. But by grouping this scene with that of the snapshot-shooting soldiers carefully getting into frame, Rossellini also refers to the constructed nature of the photograph and to the rhetoric of the image, implicating, or at least questioning, his own activities as director.

In the mid-1940s Rossellini was working against the legacy of fascism, which had linked verbal and visual excess with spectacular effectiveness. In Berlin, through the efforts of Hitler and his chief architect Albert Speer, propagandist excessiveness was to have been inscribed into the very fabric of the city. As a film director, Leni Riefenstahl effectively captured these intentions in her *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* films. But such films were the exception, and most of the 1094 films premiering from 1933–1945 were not overtly propagandist, consisting instead of the so-called "cheerful" (*heitere*) films that were produced until the very end of the war. These films, which included situation comedies, operettas, and revues, had propaganda value, but their message was implicit rather than explicit. The interrelationship between entertainment and propaganda is complex; suffice it here to emphasize that this confluence was confined neither to National Socialism nor to Germany. It is also worth remembering that Joseph Goebbels, the Third Reich's Minister of Propaganda, had insisted that, "At the moment that propaganda is recognized as such it becomes ineffective. However, the moment that propaganda, message, bent or attitude as such stay in the background and appear to people only as storyline, action, or side-effect, then they will become effective in every respect."[28] This form of seamless unity could function only with narratives that were already familiar to the German population, narratives often incorporating literary traditions of the German Enlightenment and figures such as Fredericus Rex.

Following directives such as this, films defined social and gender roles within the framework of Nazi ideology, thereby successfully establishing the identity of "*das Volk*" in an "UFA-style characterized by smoothed faces and problems, social inexactitude, timelessness and the inclination towards an attractive *milieu*, to clischee-figures."[29] In the most general terms, these were films intended to create a good mood amongst German moviegoers, who by 1942 already numbered one billion.[30] Maintaining a collective cheerfulness in this vast public was deemed essential to the Nazi war effort, and it was only the destruction of Germany's movie houses in the closing years of the war that effectively reduced public attendance. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of these unremarkable films is their adamant avoidance of any reference to the destruction occurring throughout Germany.[31]

To the characteristic of timelessness one must add that of placelessness. As German cities disappeared under Allied bombing, references to specific locations disappeared as well, and filming was confined to the studio or cities such as Prague that were still under German control but not targets of Allied bombing. Perhaps the final irony of National Socialism's cinematic endeavors was that towards the end of the war Germany, even for the Germans, existed only as a celluloid projection.

It was as much this subtler form of cinematic fantasy as that of the overtly rhetorical and propagandist film that directors such as Rossellini sought to debunk in their early postwar efforts. Rossellini's first postwar effort, *Rome Open City* (1945), is considered a founding example of cinematic neorealism. Little is "real" in neorealism and even *Rome Open City*, which used real locations for the

reenactment of real events, has been defined by Christopher Wagstaff in an essay on Rossellini and neorealism as a "collage of more or less true stories manipulated in such a way as to transform them into a legend."[32] Nonetheless, at the time of its release, the film and its approach to filmmaking had a profound international impact. After its opening in New York in February 1946 (as *Open City*), Bosley Crowther, the acerbic critic of the *New York Times,* was ecstatic. This was a film of "candid, overpowering realism" with "doubtless integrity." Furthermore,

> [...] Open City would not likely be made under normal and established conditions. In the first place, it has the windblown look of a film shot from actualities, with the camera providentially on the scene. All of its exterior action is in the streets and open places of Rome; the interior scenes are played quite obviously in actual buildings or modest sets. The stringent necessity for economy compelled the producers to make a film that has all the appearance and flavor of a straight documentary.[33]

Just as little is real in neorealism, documentaries are seldom straight. But Crowther's observation that *Rome Open City* had a veracity not found in other forms of scripted cinema expresses the belief held by many postwar directors and film critics. Returning, often for reasons of economic necessity, to urban sites and shunning studios for anything but interior sequences, Rossellini also augmented professional actors with nonprofessionals as sources of authenticity and spontaneity. What was essential for neorealism, however, was the depiction of suffering across social strata in which the "function of cinema became enquiry."[34] Such cinematic enquiry required substituting a "dramaturgy of 'givens'" with one of search and discovery, one in which traditional narrative polarities of right and wrong, progress and decline have little place.[35] Or, as the cultural historians Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner have phrased it,

> Rossellini's startlingly simple and direct images, rooted in the precise historical moment of their production, were pointing the way toward a cinema that was drawing closer than ever before to the real lives of its audiences—relaying around the world information about how things really stood in places one had only read about in the newspapers.[36]

Four years later, *The Big Lift* absorbed many of these characteristics. It is likely that Seaton was familiar with these two films and, although it cannot be considered as neorealist, *The Big Lift* does probe the veracity of images by linking sight with site and authenticity. Seaton explicitly makes this point in the short prelude to the film, presenting the following text:

> This picture was made in occupied Germany. All scenes were photographed in the exact locale associated with the story, including episodes in the American, French, British and Russian sectors of Berlin. With the exception of Montgomery Clift and Paul Douglas, all military personnel appearing in the film are actual members of the U.S. Armed Forces on duty in Germany.

This textual opening is immediately followed by the visual opening. In a move that both disorients yet fulfills the expectations of mid-century moviegoers, the visual opening is not the movie *per se,* but a newsreel, an "actuality" to use Crowther's

terminology. What we see is a *Fox Movietone News* sequence on the crisis looming in Berlin in the early summer of 1948, a montage that shows with quick effectiveness a series of images depicting the closure of Berlin's highways, railways, and waterways, the withdrawal of the Soviets from Berlin's four-power *Komandatura*, the massive demonstration held by West Berliners in front of the Reichstag protesting Soviet actions, and the arrival of the military commanders of the western allies. The narrative accompanying this visual display announces that:

> At *Komandatura* headquarters in Berlin, the Cold War reaches a new crisis. The Russians haul down the Red Flag, signaling withdrawal from the four-power command that has governed Berlin. [...] Taking no pains at disguising the fact that they want the western Allies out of Berlin, the Reds begin a blockade of the city. [...] Lucius D. Clay, speaking for the western Allies, announces their decision: "We have a right to be in Berlin and we intend to maintain that right" [...] "But how?" ask freedom loving people the world over and anxiously await the answer.

For the audiences of 1950, this question had already been answered, but embedding the newsreel underscores the claims of documentary-like authenticity already made in the opening text. What follows is therefore unexpected. As the camera slowly pulls back from the full frame of the newsreel, it reveals that we have been watching this newsreel from the rear of a cinema packed with servicemen. Like the spies watching spies mentioned by Herr Stieber later in the film, we are watching the men watching the screen, one that is suddenly filled by a bevy of bathing beauties who, like the Soviets, are taking no pains at disguise. The location is no longer Berlin, nor even Germany, but Atlantic City as the same narrating voice from the previous newsreel now asks us: "Can this be true, or is it just an alluring hot weather mirage to lead us on?" As the camera changes position again, swinging to the front of the cinema, we look back on a crowd of whistling and gesticulating men united in their attentiveness towards the seductive images on the screen. Suddenly the sound fails, the projector stops, the mirage vanishes, and an announcement calls the servicemen to duty.

Thus, in the first minutes of the film we have been led through a series of claims and counterclaims about site and sight, truth and mirage, as well as mimetic (the newsreel) and projected. The overall effect, certainly intended, is anything but ordered and authoritative: we are as disoriented as those depicted in the film's movie theater. The camera then focuses in on two individuals, distinguishing them from the crowd. It is in this manner that *The Big Lift* introduces us to its two stars, Clift and Douglas, and it is through their star recognition that we begin to find a cinematic foothold. Used in a traditional manner to attract and focus our attention, the camera follows Danny and Hank out of the movie theater where we encounter yet another twist: it is posted on a sign outside the cinema that we are neither in Berlin nor Atlantic City, but at Hickam Field, Hawaii. It is from this air base in the Pacific that the film's two male protagonists start their tour of Berlin.

This second displacement serves as both a symbolic as well as a structuring device. For a contemporary public Hickam Field would have been known as the

Air Force base adjacent to Pearl Harbor that also fell victim to the surprise Japanese attack of December 7, 1941. The photographs taken on that "day of infamy" belong to the most powerful images in the collective memory of the United States, images that would have been evoked for contemporary audiences. The propagandist function of this juxtaposition is also clear enough: Berlin may well become the Pearl Harbor of the Cold War if this war were to turn hot. And, by linking a site in the central Pacific with a city in central Europe, it demonstrated America's global reach and that Berlin's isolation is not total even if, as the newsreel informed us, all traditional transportation networks are severed. In turn, this establishes a series of island metaphors operating throughout the film, a topic that will be addressed below. Finally, however, there is yet another twist, one spoofing the claims of authenticity made just a few minutes before. Filmed at night and devoid of any recognizable landmarks, this sequence was most likely filmed not in Hawaii, but in Berlin. It is a neat reversal; having been surprised by a newsreel on Berlin being watched in Hawaii, we realize that we have been watching a sequence on Hawaii that had been filmed in Berlin. Thus, despite its claims regarding documentary realism, the film places the viewing public in the same position as that of the Russians and American pilots: within the politics of vision and blindness, we cannot believe what we see.

***The Big Lift:* Tourists and "Islanders."** Prior to the rise of National Socialism, Berlin had been one of Europe's most visited cities, and, as early as 1878, Karl Baedeker dedicated a volume to the city. After the rise of the Nazis, more specific audiences were addressed, and in 1937 members of the National Socialist SA published a 275-page guide to the city entitled *We Wander through National Socialist Berlin* (*Wir wandern durch das nationalsozialistische Berlin*), a guidebook portraying Berlin as the front line in the battle between Communism and Nazism.[37] Following the cessation of hostilities in 1945, Allied military officials began to issue travel guides for the servicemen stationed in the city. Often schematic, they noted important sites, including those that were damaged. For their part, the French projected a plan of Paris into Berlin to assist in orientation.[38] In 1947 Baedeker again ventured to Berlin. Arriving from Leipzig, he insisted that Berlin would once again become a destination for *Fremdenverkehr* (tourists).[39] The blockade interrupted tourist travel, but it was initiated again as soon as the blockade ended. In 1950 Berlin's *Verkhersamt* published a tourist brochure asking "How about a picture?" (of the Russian war memorial) and picturing a Miss Berlin, clothed in the flags of the occupying powers, above the caption "The International City Behind the Iron Curtain." But it was not until the success of the International Building Exhibition (*Internationale Bauausstellung* or *Interbau*) of 1957 that Berlin returned to the map of civilian tourist destinations.[40] During the intervening years, a number of initiatives were undertaken in the city's western sectors to return it to positive international attention. One of the most important of these was Berlin's International Film Festival (the *Berlinale*) that in the

late 1950s reached a status equal to Cannes and Venice. But given the city's notoriety as a political hot spot, "tourists" in Berlin throughout this period were primarily the men and women serving with the armed forces of the occupying powers.

As much as Danny and Hank function in their roles as liberator and occupier, they must also be considered as tourists, or "non-natives" in Hank's terminology. This perspective is maintained by delimiting the action in Berlin to moments in which either Danny or Hank is present. There are only three brief sequences in the film in which both are absent. Importantly, Frederica is the central figure in these sequences, and all three have negative connotations, prompting the audience to question what significance the absence of the American perspective entails.[41]

A double reading is suggested: the uninitiated are not able to grasp the everyday life of Berlin, or, more bleakly, what occurs beyond the controlling gaze of the liberator/occupier is nefarious. Given his experiences in a prisoner-of-war camp, Hank has been initiated into the dark side of Germany's past. Better equipped with language skills and cultural knowledge to engage Berlin, his past experiences prevent him from doing so until the end of the film. Thus, it is left to Danny to map the city in three distinct sequences that can be described as follows: (1) a network of the "everyday," (2) a landscape of memory and monuments, and (3) a topography of social destitution.

The network of the everyday begins as Danny leaves the bakery (in front of which he has been photographed with the little girl and her loaf of bread). Taking a taxi to Frederica's workplace, Danny arrives to find that everything has been destroyed. This is the first depiction of a Berlin in which the everyday has acquired an extraordinary dimension: Berlin is a vanished city that can only be negotiated with the knowledge of what it had been before the war. Guidebooks are of little use in such a situation; a guide is needed, and this function is fulfilled by Frederica. Danny first sees her in this no-man's-land framed through the window of the taxi, an extremely important shot because it is one of two instances in which Danny's subjective point of view is made visible.[42] With Frederica as a guide, we follow Danny through a series of encounters with the city, including the incident with the glue at the *Litfaßsäule*, a longer sequence in the *U-Bahn* (subway) traversing the Soviet sector and involving blackmarketeers as well as a Russian control, a further neighborhood (*Charlottenburg*) in ruins, the first passage of Danny and Frederica through the *Siegesallee*, and a final ride on a trolley to the club *Savarin*.

Throughout Frederica mediates and explains the city to Danny and, through him, to us. We become as dependent upon her as we are actively pulled into the tourist role ourselves. With the notable exception of the *Siegesallee*, the film is circumspect in depicting Berlin's many landmarks; even for members of a contemporary viewing public that might have had a prewar familiarity with Berlin, the sites depicted offer no orientation. Street scenes dominate, but the street names are without particular resonance, and U-Bahn entrances and stations,

such as they occur, are filmed so as to obscure specific names. Berlin is presented almost exclusively as a city of the everyday, albeit an everyday of exceptional circumstances.

The second sequence begins where the first ends, in the *Savarin.* It is initiated by Hank who recognizes, through his manner of walking, the prison guard who had tortured him in a prisoner-of-war camp. Leaving the club in slow pursuit, Hank is framed against the *Gedächtniskirche* (Memorial Church) before following the guard into the *Siegesallee* and thus linking both the church and the alley to issues of history and memory, national and personal, victory and defeat. The guard, who is dressed in a manner similar to Danny and who insists that he is the victim of mistaken identity, is subjected to a brutal and exacting punishment that is interrupted only by Danny's equally brutal intervention. At this juncture Danny and Frederica again become the primary protagonists as they flee the pursuit of British military police across the vast expanse of the Tiergarten. The depiction of monuments, begun with the *Gedächtniskirche,* accelerates, and in rapid, panoramic succession we see Berlin's *Siegessäule,* the great Tiergarten bunker, the Kroll Opera, the Swiss embassy, the Reichstag, and the Brandenburg Gate. Passing through the Gate, the camera is angled such that the Gate's Doric columns appear extremely massive, blocking out two-thirds of the screen in dark shadow and framing the two fleeing figures of Danny and Frederica, the oncoming jeep, and again, distant but precisely marked in the limited opening, the *Siegessäule.* This visual circuit is continued almost immediately as the camera (and the couple) move across Pariser Platz, depicting the ruins of the American embassy, the Akademie der Künste (where Albert Speer had his offices), the Hotel Adlon, and the axial direction of Unter den Linden. Finally, this remarkable tour of monuments concludes at the famous Potsdamer Platz where the "three sectors come together."

The third and final sequence begins after Frederica, exposed for the first time, explains her motivation to deceive in order to "escape all this, if only for a moment." Leaving her framed in front of a building set with an explosive demolition charge, Danny walks off alone, penetrating the city from the *Gedächtniskirche* into a working-class neighborhood, and encounters a city of social destitution marked by children dealing on the black market or playing in ruins, adults diseased and injured, others housed in shacks, and still others searching for food in garbage cans. The scenes are pitiful and most closely follow the depictions of social suffering associated with neorealism and the politics of the left. The camera does not adopt Danny's own point of view, but follows his movements closely. Focusing again on the plight of women and children in the city, the scenes are even more striking insofar as they contradict the general rhetorical trajectory of a successful "big lift." This sequence is the most "documentary" of the film and least like a tourist's encounter with the city, reminding us of the progressive identification of the American occupiers with the Italian population in Rossellini's *Paisà* (1946).

Danny has moved through three progressive phases of urban encounter: the first as a true tourist in which he appears as an American in uniform, the second

in which he appears as, but does not identify with, the postwar German populace, and the third in which he reappears in American uniform but establishes a psychological connection to the sufferings of the Berliners. It is this sequence that prompts Danny to return to Frederica with an offer of marriage and escape to America. One is primed for a happy end that will never take place; Danny may have come to understand Berliners, but has been fooled by Frederica. Thus, the symbolic linkages prevailing throughout the film become destabilized. Frederica, who through her occupation as *Trümmerfrau* and guide was identified with Berlin, is now recoded as an outcast not wanted in either Berlin or America. Her concluding predicament is in many regards similar to that of the primary character in Carol Reed's *The Man Between* (1955) who, caught between past and future, east and west, meets his demise in the no-man's-land between the Soviet and British sectors of occupied Berlin. Having reasserted a normative moral stance, the film loses much of its self-reflexive critical distance even if, as mentioned earlier, this seems geared more towards audience expectations than the logic of the film.

What, then, does the film have to say at this critical historical juncture for Berlin and its future? The film's opening with its pairing of Berlin and Hawaii underscores the fact that the Berlin of the Cold War was no longer understood as a "four-divided" city, but as an island in a hostile ideological sea. Berliners, at least those in the west, had come to refer to themselves as islanders, and many of the illustrations of Berlin in magazines and journals depicted this condition with a mix of humor and bitterness. At the midpoint of *The Big Lift* the U.S. Air Force is shown being assisted by (and competing with) another branch of the armed forces. Rather than the army or Marines, as might be expected given Berlin's landlocked situation, it is the Navy that is brought to bear on the relief efforts for the city. And, in the closing dialogue between Hank and Gerda, it is the island of Manhattan that is presented as the ideal city in which ethnic, social, and ideological conflicts are resolved into a workable, if not entirely harmonious, collective whole.

Conclusion. Manhattan is an unexpected stopping point for a film on Berlin that begins in Hawaii, but, as I hope to have demonstrated, *The Big Lift* gives us a multifaceted example of urban representation in one of the most highly contested terrains of the mid-twentieth century. What is perhaps even more remarkable is that the film is not the product of a European avant-garde, but of the Hollywood mainstream, and this at a time when Hollywood was itself closely scrutinized for any trace of ideological deviation. In its depiction of Berlin, *The Big Lift* gives us a tantalizing picture of the power of film in imaging foreign culture and in constructing urban identities. At the same time, the film provides a self-reflexive critique of the rhetorical power of the image, a critique imparting an antipropagandist message even at a time when Berlin was becoming the center of Cold War rivalries.

Notes

1. In addition to decentralization, these included demilitarization, denazification, deindustrialization, and democratization.
2. The Soviets departed from the four-power *Kommandatura* on June 16, 1947 (waiting until July 1 to declare it nonexistent) in protest against, among other factors, the political and economic reconfiguration of those areas of Germany (excluding Berlin) under the control of the western Allies. This included the expansion of the "Bi-Zone" (American and British sectors) into the "Tri-Zone" (including France), which was the fundamental step towards the establishment of West German self-government. The Soviets rejected this, insisting on either four-power control of the *Ruhrgebiet* or immense monetary compensation. These issues were coupled with the need for currency reform throughout Germany, as the *Reichsmark* was still the official, if worthless, currency. The Soviets created the "Ostmark," and, on June 18th, the western Allies announced the "Westmark," printed in the United States. A central factor leading directly to the blockade involved the currency in Berlin: should the city use only the Ostmark (upon which the Soviets insisted) or should it have two, parallel currencies? Not wishing to provoke a conflict over currency reform, the western Allies were initially willing to compromise on this issue. When the Soviets extended their demands of controlling not only the currency, but all institutions associated with currency-related administration, the western Allies balked. On June 23 the western Allies announced that the Ostmark would be valid only in Berlin's Soviet sector. In the night of June 23–24 the Soviets began the complete blockage of all personnel and supplies traveling to and from the western sectors of the city. They also stopped delivery of electricity to Berlin's western sectors (the city's power plants were located mostly in the east) as well as shipments of food. Thus the Berlin blockade directly followed the announced currency reform. However, as the Soviet General Sokolowski indicated to the U.S. Military Governor Lucius D. Clay on July 3, the fundamental issue revolved around the Soviet rejection of an independent West Germany. If the Soviets were unable to prevent this, then they wanted total control of Berlin as compensation. Officially, the Soviets never admitted to a "blockade." Nonetheless, the western Allies reacted quickly: already on June 24 they stopped shipments of coal and steel from areas of "West Germany" to the east. On June 25 General Clay decided to supply the 2.5 million inhabitants of Berlin's western sectors by plane, thus initiating the Airlift. On July 7 the first air transport of coal arrived in Berlin. According to a schedule determined before the blockade, elections were held on December 5 in the western sectors, thereby securing Ernst Reuter the office of mayor (denied him the previous summer by the Soviets) and effectively creating two city administrations. After the winter months, having seen that Berlin could be supplied indefinitely by air, the Soviets agreed to end the Berlin blockade in exchange for the cessation of the "counterblockade" of coal and steel shipments by the west. On May 12, 1949 the Berlin blockade was officially ended.
3. This paper addresses only the original, English language version of the film. The film was first released in Germany in 1953 with the title *Es begann mit einem Kuß* (*It Began with a Kiss*). Like many films in the early postwar and cold war years, it was altered to avoid reference to politically and historically sensitive topics. The running time of one hundred and twenty minutes was also shortened by twenty-five minutes, and the film was given a "happy end."
4. The films of note include the following: Roberto Rossellini, *Germania anno zero* (1946); Billy Wilder, *A Foreign Affair* (1948); Fred Zinnemann, *The Search* (1948); Jacques Tourneur, *Berlin Express* (1948); Anatole Litvak, *Decision Before Dawn* (1951); Carol Reed, *The Man Between* (1953).

5. Mark Shiel, "Cinema and the City in History and Theory," in Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice, *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 1–18, especially 2.
6. The luminary of the two was Montgomery Clift. This was only his third film, but his qualities had already been recognized in the first of his films released, Fred Zinnemann's *The Search* (1947). A Swiss/American coproduction, *The Search* is a story about a victim of the Holocaust, a traumatized young boy who has become separated from his mother. Clift plays the part of a young U.S. Army corporal who befriends and cares for the boy. The film is shot on location in the towns of southern Germany under American control. Although not a "Berlin" film, the ruined landscapes in *The Search* convey both the destruction of German cities as well as the desperate plight of the many orphans of the war who, in this film, are prepared by various agencies for their journey to Palestine and a new homeland. A poignant and often wrenching film, *The Search* received much attention at the 1948 Academy Awards. For contemporary moviegoers, Clift may have had clear associations with Germany and the United States armed forces.
7. Laura Mulvey, "Vesuvian Topographies: The Eruption of the Past in *Journey to Italy*," in *Roberto Rossellini: Magician of the Real,* ed. David Forgacs, Sarah Lutton, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London: British Film Institute, 2000), 95–111, especially 97.
8. Coal comprised sixty-five percent of the total tonnage flown into Berlin, a total of 1.5 million tons of coal. To protect the pilots and planes from coal dust, the coal was carried in army surplus duffel bags. Source: USAF Museum.
9. The role of Frederica Burkhardt had originally been intended for Hildegard Knef, Germany's best-known postwar actress. In addition to a very convincing discussion of sexual identity, the German "Fräulein," and fraternization with American servicemen in occupied Germany, Annette Brauerhoch has addressed the significance of the replacement of Knef by Cornell Borchers for the film. See Annette Brauerhoch, *Fräuleins and GIs* (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 2006), 336–67.
10. It is worth noting that throughout the film the camera is positioned such that it accompanies the action rather than depicting the action through the eyes of one of the characters. Aside from a few close-ups in which the need to present information necessarily implicates the point of view of the character rather than the camera, there are only two instances in which a scene is depicted through the eyes of a character. These occur in quick succession when Danny first sees Frederica working as a *Trümmerfrau* and, shortly thereafter, when he is waiting for her to finish work and observes another woman, more middle-aged and matronly, also working at cleaning bricks. Thus the importance of Frederica as *Trümmerfrau* and the *Trümmerfrau* as a primary figure in postwar Berlin are underscored.
11. Emily Rosenberg, "'Foreign Affairs' after World War II: Connecting Sexual and International Politics," *Diplomatic History* 18, no. 1 (1994): 59–70, especially 61; and Dina M. Smith, "Global Cinderella: *Sabrina* (1954), Hollywood, and Postwar Internationalism," *Cinema Journal* 41, no. 4 (2002): 27–51. Further, see Geoffrey S. Smith, "Commentary: Security, Gender, and the Historical Process," *Diplomatic History* 18, no. 1 (1994): 79–90.
12. Frederica is specific about the allusion, stating that "these are all the military heroes." For a history of the *Siegesallee*, see Uta Lehnert, *Der Kaiser und die Siegesallee* (Berlin: Reimer, 1998).
13. In the context of the film and Frederica's seeking a husband, it is worth mentioning that in late 1946 St. Louis was the well-publicized destination of the first German War Bride. See John Willoughby, "The Sexual Behavior of American GIs during the Early Years of the Occupation of Germany," *The Journal of Military History* 62, no. 1 (1998): 155–74, 173n50. See also Raingard Esser, "'Language no Obstacle':

War Brides in the German Press, 1945–49," *Women's History Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 577–603, especially 587.

14. Rainer Rother, "Der Film *The Big Lift* und die Umorientierung eines Feindbildes," in *Der Film in der Geschichte,* ed. Knut Hickethier, Eggo Müller, and Rainer Rother (Berlin: Sigma, 1997), 211–19. In 1991 the film was presented as part of the series "Cold War: 50 Films from the East and West." It was screened in Berlin again in 2005 at the German Historical Museum in conjunction with the 56th Berlin International Film Festival. It was in a section entitled "Selling Democracy—Winning the Peace," part of a larger series addressing the Marshall Plan.
15. Frances S. Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 1999), 287. Saunders cites *The Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel* (1951), *The Sea Chase* (1955), and *The Enemy Below* (1957).
16. It is worth noting that when the author and *New Yorker Magazine* correspondent Janet Flanner visited Berlin in July 1947, she reported that, despite the suffering that they were experiencing as a result of the war, the majority of the population still thought "brown." See Hans Magnus Enzensberger, ed., *Europa in Ruinen: Augenzeugenberichte aus den Jahren* 1944–48 (Frankfurt am Main: Eichhorn, 1990), 250–57.
17. In the film, Stieber's activities during the war years are not probed, but there is a twist in O.E. Hasse's own identity worth mentioning. Whereas Cornell Borchers (Frederica) was new to the screen and Bruni Löbel (Gerda) had only minor roles until the postwar period, O.E. Hasse was a well-known figure in the cinema of the Third Reich, playing in over two dozen films. While most of these were relatively "harmless," a topic addressed in the next section, he did play in *Stukas* (1941), a propagandistic glorification of German dive bombers. His first postwar role was in the very popular *Berliner Ballade* (1948), a black comedy about life in the ruins of Berlin in which he plays a reactionary. Knowledge of this would have been beyond English-speaking audiences, but would have been apparent to the film's German public, giving Hasse's (Stieber's) assertion of having been an actor a double meaning, one in which continuity rather than reorientation plays the leading role.
18. The term "free world's outpost" was used by James B. Conant, the new U.S. High commissioner of the incoming Eisenhower administration, on February 9, 1953. See David G. Coleman, "Eisenhower and the Berlin Problem, 1953–54," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2, no. 1 (2000): 3–34, especially 7. Other terms that would be used included "showplace of freedom," the "beacon of hope," and the "window to the west." Ibid., 8. Under the CIA, Berlin also became the "window on the east." Ibid., 11.
19. From the library archives of the Filmmuseum Berlin and the *Freunde der deutschen Kinemathek,* Berlin.
20. Eric M. Conway, "The Politics of Landing Blind," *Technology and Culture* 42 (2001): 81–106, especially 94.
21. Despite the technical advances of GCA, pilots unused to flying such heavily loaded planes were first trained on a replica of Tempelhof's approach and departure runways. The mock-up was built at the Great Falls Air Force Base, Montana. See Manfred Rexin, *Die Jahre 1945–1949,* 4th ed. (Hannover: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen, 1962), 53.
22. Conway, "The Politics of Landing Blind," 81–106, especially 104.
23. Hank is shown closing his own eyes during a dangerous Tempelhof landing. More importantly, when he encounters his former prison guard, he finally recognizes his tormentor not by sight, but by his gait. After "waiting seven years to pound in that face," the face has escaped his recognition.
24. George Seaton's interest in appearance and deception surfaces again in his espionage thriller *The Counterfeit Traitor* (1962).

25. The honor guard, with its striking similarity to the chorus line, evokes the "teamwork" (as opposed to the individualism) that Hollywood films portrayed during the war. As Thomas Doherty has written, "the chorus, not the matinee idol, was to take center stage." See Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 124.
26. "Chatanooga-Cho-Cho" (words by Mack Gordon, music by Harry Warren, 1941) was a hit song for Glenn Miller and his Orchestra, which had featured the song in *Sun Valley Serenade,* a 1941 film starring the Norwegian skating champion and war refugee Sonja Henie. A WWII standard, the tune was given a new text in postwar Berlin, where it was retitled "The Kötzschenbroda Express." After the Allied bombing of Dresden in February 1945, Kötzschenbroda remained the only functioning railway station in the vicinity of this once thriving Baroque city. The song, written by the Berliner Bully (Hans Joachim) Buhlan, is about the difficulty of postwar train travel between Berlin and Dresden:

    Verzeihn Sie, mein Herr,
    Fährt dieser Zug nach Kötzschenbroda?
    Er schafft's vielleicht,
    Wenn's mit der Kohle noch reicht.
    Ist hier noch Platz,
    In diesem Zug nach Kötzschenbroda?
    Das ist nicht schwer,
    Wer nicht mehr stehn kann, liegt quer.

    Ja, für Geübte ist das Reisen heute gar kein Problem.
    Auf dem Puffer oder Trittbrett steht man bequem.
    Und dich trifft kein' Fußtritt,
    Fährst du auf dem Dach mit,
    Obendrein bekommst du dort noch frische Luft mit!

    Morgens fährt der Zug an Papestraße vorbei,
    Mittags ist die Fahrt nach Halensee noch nicht frei.
    Nachts in Wusterhausen
    Läßt du dich entlausen
    Und verlierst die Koffer auch noch leider dabei.

    So fährt man heut
    Von Groß-Berlin nach Kötzschenbroda
    Und dann und wann
    Kommt man auch wirklich dort an.
    Nun stehn wir da,
    Der schöne Traum vom Reisen ist jetzt aus.
    Glück auf nach Kötzschenbroda!
    –aber ich bleib zuhaus.

27. These comments are taken from a series of often very short notices clipped from British and German papers, held in the library archives of the Filmmuseum Berlin.
28. Quoted in Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich,* 33. From a speech delivered by Goebbels at Berlin's Krolloper on the occasion of the Jahrestagung der Reichsfilmkammer, March 5, 1937. Also quoted by Schulte-Sasse is Goebbel's assertion that "This is the really great art—to educate without revealing the purpose of education, so that one fulfills an educational function without the object of that education being in any way aware that it is being educated, which is also the real purpose of propaganda. The best propaganda is not that which is openly revealing itself; the best propaganda is that which, as it works invisibly, penetrates the whole of life without the

public having any knowledge at all of the propagandist initiative." Both this quote and the one above are originally from Gerd Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik: Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilm des dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1969).

29. Christiane Mückenberger and Günter Jordan, *"Sie sehen selbst, Sie hören selbst..." Die DEFA von irhen Anfängen bis 1949* (Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1994), 14.
30. Ibid., 13.
31. As late as March 20, 1945, Goebbels noted in his diary that "Ich will dafür sorgen, dass die Räumung von Kolberg nicht im OKW-Bericht verzeichnet wird. Wir können das angesichts der starken psychologischen Folgen für den Kolberg-Film augenblicklich nicht gebrauchen." Quoted in *Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945.* Die letzten Aufzeichnungen (Berlin: Koch, n.d.), 255.
32. Christopher Wagstaff, "Rossellini and Neo-realism," in *Roberto Rossellini: Magician of the Real,* ed. David Forgacs et al. (London: British Film Institute, 2000), 36–49, especially 37.
33. Bosley Crowther, "How Italy Resisted," *New York Times,* February 26, 1946, 32.
34. Wagstaff, "Rossellini and Neo-realism," 36–49, especially 40.
35. Some critics supporting rightist politics in America condemned neorealism in general and Rossellini in particular on the grounds that its neutrality represented a yearning to be independent of both Soviet and American foreign policy interests. See Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner, *The Hollywood Blacklistees in Film and Television 1950–2002* (New York: Pallgrave MacMillon, 2003), 99.
36. Ibid., 98.
37. Rudy Koshar, *German Travel Cultures* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 136.
38. Ibid., 169.
39. Ilse Wolff, "Die Reise nach Berlin: Errinerungen an die Wegstrecke nach 1945," in *Die Resie nach Berlin,* ed. Berliner Festspiele GmbH (Berlin: Siedler, 1987), 313–17, especially 313. The first "postwar" edition appeared in 1954.
40. Ibid., 313–17, especially 315.
41. The first occurs when Frederica is told that the Russians have arrested the son of the tailor, and the second two occur when she receives and then replies to the letter from St. Louis.
42. The second instance follows as Danny waits for Frederica to finish work while watching another *Trümmerfrau* cleaning bricks. In this manner Frederica is linked to the iconic image of the *Trümmerfrau.*