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"AMERIKA": THE STORY BEHIND THE AMERICAN TELEVISION SERIES THAT ONCE DIVIDED A NATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper will examine the history of the television series "Amerika". Upon its airing in 1987, the television project was regarded as one of the most controversial projects in American television history. Made in response to the television spectacular "The Day After" the series "Amerika" portrayed a fictional American town living under a Soviet occupation a decade after a nuclear war forced the American government to sue for peace. The emotional plotline follows the drama of a small Nebraska farming town attempting to survive under the boot of a despotic military occupation. The aim of this paper is to examine "Amerika" within the larger historical context of how the Soviet Union was portrayed in the American mass media and Hollywood television and film productions. This will involve a historical narrative that will challenge the notion of a perpetual "Red Scare" in Hollywood while providing a more subtle alternative view that in terms of cultural and entertainment it can be reasonably argued that the Soviet Union was perhaps given a more sympathetic portrayal than the unvarnished objective historical facts merited at the time.

Keywords: Amerika, Soviet Union, Nuclear Weapons, The Day After, television dramas

In the January of 1987 the major media outlets in the United States were engaged in an emotional debate. The topic was a controversial television mini-series entitled "Amerika." The ambitious project was "mini" in name only. It would span seven days and 14.5 hours of prime time television hours. It was three years in the making and cost the ABC television network a then staggering sum of $40 million.

The project entailed a fictional portrayal of a Soviet military occupation of the United States, with a specific focus on a small idyllic Nebraska farming town from

"Middle America" attempting to survive under the boot of a despotic military occupation in a country that is renamed "Amerika". The demoralized American president, having been reduced to a controlled political figurehead, explained how it all happened: "Totalitarianism doesn't need armies. It only needs to control a couple of things; the media, and the ability to dispense privilege to some, and withhold it from others. And of course, a weak and divided people helps".

There are few consumer goods and those citizens attempting to resist were sent to reeducation camps or disappear into grim psychiatric wards. The more polemical subplot was the premise that the American political and media elite had lost faith in the United States and thus actively cooperate with the invaders to install and operate this despotic system, with the complicity of international troops that wear uniforms that closely resemble those traditionally worn by United Nations peacekeeping forces.

The aim of this paper is to put the television series "Amerika" into historical perspective of how the Soviet Union has been historically portrayed in American media.

The Red October

The cultural division over the television series "Amerika" was one of the last controversies of the Cold War. It was thus another microcosm of the ideological civil war that had divided the world for most of the 20th century. This began with the "Great October" of 1917 that brought the Bolsheviks to power in Moscow. The opponents of the "Great October" revolution argued that this was something to fear, it was a conspiratorial *coup d'état* carried out by a ruthless one-party dictatorship that established the platform for the world's first truly totalitarian state. This was a direct concern to all nations of the world since the regime enforced its rule with a ruthless police state that systematically eliminated all forms of political opposition. This event was of direct concern to the United States since the founding mission of the Soviet Union insisted that this form of communism was historically destined to spread to every country in the world.

But this view was not shared by many thinkers and writers who saw the Soviet Union as an attractive alternative to the U.S. political system. John Reed, an idealistic American, outlined his views in his famous tract he called "Ten Days the Shook the World." Reed, and many of his fellow traveling intellectuals, argued that Vladimir Lenin had introduced a legitimate worker revolution as a first step in liberating the toiling masses from the cruel injustices of industrial capitalism. This was not an unreasonable assumption in a world where American laborers had no unions or any form of social safety net. At the same time, Stalin's Soviet Union remained closed to most media outlets and the theoretically "scientific" model of the Soviet Union appealed to many Western intellectuals. As the United States struggled through the Great Depression of the 1930s it was easier for these American writers and academics to insist that the Soviet Union had no unemployment and was

powered by the square-jawed heroic industrial workers in the propaganda posters that were said to labor selflessly for the collective good of the socialist paradise (Conquest 1993, p. 91–98).

American readers of *The New York Times* could find this angle in the writings of Walter Duranty, the Anglo-American reporter who in 1932 received a Pulitzer Prize for his favorable reporting from the Soviet Union. Duranty consistently downplayed Stalin's domestic tyranny and famine in the Ukraine. He also insisted the victims of Stalin's purges were indeed guilty of conspiring against the state and were thus justly prosecuted. In the ensuing years, critics of Duranty led a campaign insisting *The New York Times* to return the Pulitzer Prize and disown the journalist that one author derisively referred to as *The New York Time*'s "Man in Moscow" (Taylor 1990).

"Uncle Joe" and World War II

But the United States' alliance with the Soviet Union in World War II raised some awkward questions. What exactly were American values-and was Joseph Stalin fighting for those same values? The U.S. government appointed the film director Frank Capra to create the famous "Why We Fight" series that extolled the virtues of American values in the war against Nazi Germany. President Roosevelt certainly implied that Joseph Stalin shared many of those same values. His casual references to "Uncle Joe" familiarized the Soviet dictator with the American public while the newspapers and major magazines generally portrayed the Soviet Union as a gallant and loyal ally fighting in the common cause against Nazi Germany.

In Hollywood the feature films "North Star" and "Song of Russia" portrayed Stalin as the beloved leader of a utopian peasant state. The film "Mission to Moscow," based on a book written by Ambassador Joseph E. Davies, was later seen as an obsequious tribute to Stalin that praised his wartime leadership and portrayed the infamous purges of the 1930s as a necessary attempt to root out agents that had been plotting against the Soviet Union.

After the war, this naïve viewpoint of the Soviet Union came into question and was at the heart of many of the charges in the "red scare" of the early Cold War. At the time the image of a benevolent Joseph Stalin was what most Americans saw in their newsreel films and newspapers. "It may be difficult for our contemporaries to believe it," Sidney Hook noted some years later, "but this crude and vulgar transformation was accepted at face value by the opinion makers of the United States, the newspapers and media, the Washington bureaucracy, and President Roosevelt himself" (Hook 1987, p. 312).

Poland was among the most immediate victims of this idealized portrayal of the Soviet Union. President Roosevelt, backed by the American media outlets, accepted Stalin's claim that the Polish officers in the Katyn Forest were the victims of another Nazi atrocity, even if the overwhelming forensic evidence at the time suggested the mass murder had occurred in the early months of 1940 when the officers had been

held in Soviet captivity. This naïve acceptance of the Soviet point of view, it has been argued, encouraged Stalin to take a firmer line at Yalta as the wartime leaders gathered to decide the postwar fate of Eastern Europe. President Roosevelt, ailing and close to death, accepted Stalin's vague assurances that he had no permanent aims in Poland. The American media, having heretofore generally supported Soviet war aims, echoed this sentiment. "Once the territorial demands on Poland had been accepted by Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill," wrote *The New York Times* reporter from Yalta. "Premier Stalin seems to have adopted a conciliatory line on the future Government, making it clear that he had no intention of interfering in the domestic affairs of the new Polish state" (Daniel 1945).

Hollywood and the Cold War

This conciliatory tone, of course, would change dramatically in the days after World War II. As Stalin consolidated his grip on Eastern Europe the fear grew that the Soviet Union together with China appeared intent on spreading communism around the world. The journalist Walter Lippmann used the term "Cold War" to describe the state of increasing tension between the former wartime allies. This provided the backdrop to the charges that American institutions were in danger of communist subversion from Moscow. It has been estimated that there were forty American films released between 1948 and 1954 "attacking communism and the Soviet Union" (Roffman and Purdy 1993, p. 199).

The anti-communist crusade was led by Joseph McCarthy, the Wisconsin senator who claimed communists had infiltrated various American institutions. In the spring of 1947 House of Un-American Activities Committee [HUAC] began the interrogation of actors and writers accused of having been associated with the communist movement. In this tense political atmosphere, the "Hollywood Ten" defiantly took the Fifth Amendment and refused to answer any questions which would subject them to the famous blacklist prohibiting the employment. McCarthy's reckless accusations would damage the personal lives and professional careers of many individuals. In 1954, McCarthy was finally formally censured by an overwhelming vote in the Senate. The fact that he was able to sustain his crusade for so long provided a warning that the American system of democratic liberties might one day fall if the country fell prey to the opportunistic whims of a political demagogue. At the same time the cartoonish and overzealous nature of the anti-communist crusade ironically provided a badge of honor for the "Hollywood Ten" and other victims harassed by the Wisconsin senator. Indeed, the literary critic Diana Trilling would later argue that McCarthy's crude anti-communist campaign was certainly heavy-handed, but many liberal anti-communist voices in the 1950s were too often conveniently grouped in with McCarthy. The more sophisticated opinion leaders in the American literary elite too often overlooked some of the very real charges against the Soviet Union (Trilling 1993).

As one commentator noted, the elites of Hollywood and Cambridge in the 1950s had little time "for bow-legged men with their American Legion caps and their fat wives, their yapping about Yalta and the Katyn Forest" (van Hoffman 1996). McCarthy's crude anti-communist crusade in the early 1950s was actually connected with a larger cultural war within the United States. The conflict stemmed from a smoldering resentment of what they perceived as the condescending tone of the "eastern establishment" that controlled many important institutions in the country. There was an element of populist opinion that accused the "elites" on the East Coast of treating the states in "Middle America" as it would a colonial empire.

The voice of Arizona senator Barry Goldwater spoke for many conservatives when he joked that the United States might be better off if the East Coast could just be sawed off from the rest of the country and floated out into the Atlantic Ocean. Goldwater sought to oust the United Nations from New York City and warned that the United States had been losing cold war to the Soviet Union because American diplomats were waging a "peace" campaign against an adversary that was seeking to spread its empire around the world. Moving into the 1960s Goldwater argued that the atomic "balance of terror" was "not a balance at all, but an instrument of blackmail". The Soviet Union, he insisted, was not a partner seeking peace but a hostile rival "that possesses not only the will to dominate absolutely every square mile of the globe, but increasingly the capacity to do so…controlled by a ruthless despotism". (Blum 1991, p. 157–158). At the same time the opinion leaders in the urbane cosmopolitan cities did not want to be associated with such simplistic sounding anti-communist views that had become associated with the small towns in America's heartland. This cultural divide would only widen in the course of the 1960s, providing the backdrop decades later for the fictional scenario in "Amerika" where these cultural elites actually cooperate with the Soviet occupation of a small Midwestern town.

The 1960s and the Challenge to Cold War Orthodoxy

President John Kennedy came to the White House vowing that the United States must "bear any burden" in the fight against communism around the world. Yet the tensions of the Cuban Missile Crisis led the American President to seek a reduction of tensions with the Soviet Union. This included early discussions on limiting strategic arms and a "hotline" teleprinter link to Moscow that would allow the superpowers to communicate in the event of a nuclear crisis.

This early version of détente created a new genre of Hollywood films suggesting the real danger in the Cold War was no longer the Soviet Union, but an underground cabal of right-wing American demagogues with their finger on the nuclear button. "Seven Days in May" was a 1964 political thriller about a right-wing military-political conspiracy to take over the U.S. government after the American president agrees to enter arms limitation negotiations with the Soviet Union. The film "Fail Safe" depicted an accidental nuclear war after a technical error mistakenly sends

a squadron of bombers to deliver a nuclear payload on the Soviet Union. This film received positive reviews but has historically been overshadowed by Stanley Kubrick's "Dr. Strangelove" that lampooned an accidental nuclear war. This film was so influential among opinion leaders that it was said to have helped bring an end to the political "liberal consensus" of the 1950s (Maland 1993, p. 252–264). For the remainder of the decade, the image of an innocent America engaged in a heroic fight against the Soviet Union seemed a distant memory.

By 1965, a new lifestyle among the youth began to challenge the previously accepted American social norms. The term *hippie* was used to describe a rebellious generation that rejected the small-town social norms of what they derisively referred to as *Middle America*. An increasingly radicalized generation of antiwar protesters were seen on television burning American flags and quoting Mao Zedong or waving North Vietnamese flags. To these young people the primary enemy was no longer the Soviet Union, but politicians like Richard Nixon who were responsible for the increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam. This rhetoric symbolized an unofficial cultural civil war developing between the coastal elites and those occupying the center of the country. This set the tone for what years later became known as "red" and "blue" states that symbolized the divisions within the United States.

The 1970s. America and Its Decade of "Malaise"

In January of 1969 President Richard Nixon came to the White House seeking support from what he called "silent majority" of Americans who did not accept the values of the counterculture (Kuś 2016, p. 93). Vice President Spiro Agnew used even stronger language in an early speech. "The great question for all of us," he said "…is becoming clearer and clearer. Will America be led by a President elected by a majority of the American people, or will we be intimidated…by a disruptive, radical, and militant minority-the pampered prodigies of the radical liberals in the United States Senate?" (Blum 1991, p. 372).

In 1972, only months before Nixon rolled to re-election, Americans associated with the "silent majority" voiced their objections when Hollywood film star Jane Fonda's highly publicized tour of North Vietnam where she took to the airwaves of Radio Hanoi to scold American pilots and referred to President Nixon as a "cynic, liar and murderer" (Newsmakers 1972, p. 40). The Soviet Union, in contrast, began to argue that the world's "correlation of forces" were moving in the direction of communism. By 1975 the scenario of the Soviet invasion of the United States later depicted in "Amerika" seemed more than just speculative fiction of a paranoid fringe groups.

One highly publicized scenario speculated that the Soviet Union had developed a plan that would allow them to 'win" a nuclear war. In 1976 George Bush, then head of the CIA, headed a group called "Team B" that issued public warnings that the Soviet Union was preparing for offensive "first strike" nuclear war against the United States. That image still seemed too terrifying for American television viewers,

but in the ensuing decade the dramatic scenario of a Soviet military invasion of the United States began to take shape in the mind of film and television writers. "For us the question is not whether the Russians are coming, but whether it is feasible for them to get here and how soon," warned one analyst. "That comes back to the question of United States will and determination. If we don't have it, then there is superiority" (Binder 1976, p. 1). But did the United States still have the "will and determination" to compete with an increasingly confident Soviet Union? That was a prominent question as Jimmy Carter came to office warning that the nation was suffering from a "crisis of confidence".

President Jimmy Carter came into office in January of 1977 promising an end to the "Imperial Presidency" and assuring that Americans would never become involved in a military adventure like Vietnam. A sustained energy crisis and American hostages taken in Iran added to the impression that the country had been reduced to a "pitiful helpless giant." Carter, attempting to heal a divided nation, gave his famous "Malaise Speech" that only confirmed the impression that the country had lost faith in itself. This led some conservative opinion leaders to speculate that the Soviet Union could now simply wait for the United States to fall apart as a result of its own internal demoralization. This was theme of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's fiery commencement speech at Harvard University, where the Russian novelist, speaking through a translator, castigated the United States for a "spiritual exhaustion" and a "decline in courage." These unfortunate trends, he insisted, were particularly evident "among the ruling groups and the intellectual elite" (Shenker 1978, p. 8).

In December of 1979 the Soviet Union sent 50,000 troops across its southern border into Afghanistan. This marked the first time since World War II that Soviet Union had invaded a country which was not a member of the Warsaw Pact. More alarmist voices began to speculate that the incursion into Afghanistan was only the first step in Moscow's attempt to expand its empire around the world. Some commentators even began to speculate what America and Western Europe might look like under a Soviet military occupation.

1980s "Amerika" and the "Evil Empire"

In 1980 Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter largely on the impression that America was no longer respected in the world. The new American president famously referred to the Soviet Union as "evil empire" as he called for a dramatic increase in American nuclear capability. This included the controversial decision to import American nuclear weapons into Western Europe. Reagan's bellicose rhetoric led to the development of a "nuclear freeze" campaign that warned of the dangers of nuclear war. The group, generally associated with the political left, renewed the old antiwar refrain "better red than dead" suggesting it was better to live under a communist system than to risk a nuclear war.

This was the atmosphere in November of 1983 when millions of American television viewers tuned in to watch "The Day After", a widely publicized film

that portrayed the terrifying scenario of how a nuclear war might impact a state located in the nations' "heartland". The depressing narrative of the film seemed to bolster the views of the "nuclear freeze" movement. In the ensuing months "The Day After" was shown in more than 30 countries-including the Soviet Union and Poland whose leaders saw the film as verifying their claim that the United States was responsible for the dramatic escalation in global tensions (Smith 1983, p. 3).

At the same time conservative voices in the United States supporting Ronald Reagan argued that the message of "The Day After" was one-sided and overly defeatist. Ben Stein, a former speechwriter for Richard Nixon, sardonically suggested the anti-nuclear film be followed with a depressing sequel that might be called "In Red America" portraying what life in a small town might look like if the United States ever succumbed to a Soviet military occupation. There was in fact already a commercial film in production that revolved around this precise theme. In September of 1984 President Reagan was shown an early copy of the new adventure film called "Red Dawn" that glorified a group of American high school students that took to the hills to fight a guerilla war against a Soviet invasion into Colorado (Hoberman 2019, p. 213–214).

"Red Dawn" was popular at the box office but, not surprisingly met with negative reviews from those who dismissed it as light-weight patriotic pulp fiction. But the theme of a Soviet invasion of the United States heartland had touched a nerve in what was turning into a decade marked with patriotic films that seemed a deliberate attempt to reverse the mood of the defeat in Vietnam. Stein's critique of "The Day After" became the partial inspiration for an ambitious television miniseries exploring what the United States might look like if it were ever invaded by the Soviet Union. The film series was originally titled "Topeka, Kansas, USSR" in an obvious reference to the state of Kansas that had been the focal point of the Soviet nuclear strike in "The Day After".

It late 1985 the project was renamed "Amerika" and in the ensuing two years it would generate more controversy than any show in modern television history. The controversial project had once been canceled after Soviet Union threatened to close the ABC News bureau in Moscow. The series was revived, it was said, because ABC wanted to avoid the appearance of caving into crude political pressure from America's cold war adversary (Belkin 1987a, p. 51).

Pravda, the official Communist Party newspaper in Moscow, called the project "a deliberate act of psychological warfare" designed to "whip up hatred for the Soviet people and the Soviet Union" (Keller 1987, p. 17). Indeed, many of the critics suggested that the motivation behind "Amerika" was already outdated. In 1985, the year the series went into production, Mikhail Gorbachev had come to power in Moscow. The new Soviet leader came from a younger generation and seemed determined to move beyond the overly militarized and bureaucratic ossification within the Soviet Union.

By the time "Amerika" was set to air in 1987 Reagan and Gorbachev had established a cordial personal relationship and cold war tensions that marked the era of "The Day After" already seemed like a distant memory (Scher 2017). Indeed

as "Amerika" was set to air many left-leaning organizations in the United States demanded ABC to provide equal airtime to those opposing what they saw as the crude and antiquated Cold War theme of the television series. Kris Kristofferson, the lead actor in the series, sought to fend off criticism for taking the lead in the series that appeared to depict the United Nations peacekeeping force as enforcing the Soviet occupation of the United States. In the days before the series went to air Kristofferson agreed to visit the United Nations to film a series of public-service announcements praising United Nations peacekeeping forces and emphasize the fact that 700 United Nations soldiers have "given their lives for peace" (Belkin 1987b, p. 26).

Of more concern to ABC network officials were the threats of a "divestment movement" and a consumer boycott against the Chrysler automobile company. Lee Iacocca, the famed automotive executive who in the 1980s was viewed as a possible Democratic Presidential candidate, agreed to pull the Chrysler advertisements only weeks before "Amerika" was set to air. "We have no personal quarrel with what we have seen, and we believe the mini-series will attract a huge audience," the statement from Chrysler said. "Nevertheless, we have concluded that the subject matter and its portrayal are so intense and emotional that our upbeat product commercials would be both inappropriate and of diminished effectiveness in that environment" (Boyer 1987, p. 26). ABC executives accused Iacocca and the automobile company of caving into pressure from groups that favored the censoring of controversial ideas, nevertheless the network vowed the project would move forward. "We'll absolutely go ahead," assured the President of ABC. "It will not cripple us. It'll hurt us. But we're going to run that program come rain, blood, or horse manure" (Belkin 1987a, p. 51).

"Amerika": a Fictional Melodrama on ABC Television

On the evening of February 15, 1987, the first two-hour segment of "Amerika" appeared on ABC television. The early screenplay revolved around the concept of the Soviet Union unleashing a number of "first strike" nuclear weapons that hit the United States. The powerful electromagnetic pulse takes out the American communication networks. The United States, which had become increasingly divided after Vietnam and complaisantly reliant on sophisticated computer technology, chooses to sue for peace. Over the ensuing decade the United States was carved up into twelve "administrative areas" and absorbed into the growing Soviet empire.

The series opens as the hero Devin Milford, a dissident and Vietnam veteran, is being released from a grim reeducation prison camp, and returns to his small town farmhouse in Milford, Nebraska. He is dismayed to find the formally idyllic small town under military occupation. He is restrained by an internal passport law in what is now called a "Central Administrative Area". The small town in Nebraska faces a martial law curfew and constant patrols by the occupation forces. All the hallmarks of the Soviet system are on display from a censored and corrupt political

system to constant food shortages. Those attempting to actively resist are sent to reeducation camps or disappear into psychiatric wards. The ever-present image of Abraham Lincoln has been bizarrely elevated onto the icon communist pantheon alongside that of Lenin and Marx.

Milford emerges as the hero of the series as the active dissident resisting the occupation. Milford's life after Vietnam is shown in flashback including old news clip of an unsuccessful independent third-party candidacy in the1988 American election. He is depicted as the only honest candidate in that campaign as he seeks to heal the nation from its painful ordeal in Vietnam. But this message falls on deaf ears, and as the film returns to the present day the country faces a murky future under communist occupation. In a candid moment Milford tells his sister, that Americans had become too self-absorbed to stand up for democracy and the culture had long ago lost its purpose. The implication is clear: Milford was a loyal and honest Vietnam veteran critical of the cultural elites that had grown increasingly corrupt and when war came, they put more faith in America's communist enemies rather than the citizens of small-town America.

The most unlikable characters in the series are the American collaborators portrayed as petty bureaucrats who willingly do the bidding of the occupation forces. Milford's ex-wife plays the most villainous role of an active collaborator, an obvious caricature of an elite cosmopolitan 1980s liberal, living the life of luxury as she cohabitates with one of the Soviet military officials administering the occupation. Her youngest son is shown being dutifully absorbed into the communist educational system that focuses on America's historical crimes such as the genocide against Native Americans and the capitalist system that exploited workers.

In an ironic turn, a pair of eloquent [English speaking] Soviet military leaders are depicted as generally sympathetic and reluctant occupiers who privately express their quiet admiration for what America used to be. "The Soviet coup worked because you lost your country before we ever got here," said one Soviet occupier to an American official. "You had political freedom, but you lost your passion. How could we not win?". One of the Soviet military officers tells an American the story of his grandfather perishing in Stalin's gulag. But America's unwillingness to defend its freedoms and its political system made the Soviet takeover relatively risk free. He notes that personally he hoped to "salvage as much as possible" of the old American system but he must nevertheless follow orders from political superiors and begin the dismantling of the once great country.

Unlike the uplifting defiance seen in "Red Dawn" the series "Amerika" ends on a somber and sobering note. In the final episode of the series Devin Milford is seen trying to instigate an underground movement. He reunites with his family and is seen as the one charismatic voice who could lead a "Second American Revolution" to prevent "Amerika" from being dismantled into several autonomous units. Milford is shown about to make a dramatic pirate radio speech urging the underground organizations to rise against occupation forces. The downbeat theme of the series continues to the very end, as Milford is seen being shot to death off camera. The

nebulous ending leaves the television audience unsure if Milford had been able make his speech that could save the country from being summarily dismantled.

Modern Day "America"

"Amerika" marked one of the last cultural debates of the Cold War. The series came and went and within a few weeks the entire debate was largely forgotten as Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan continued their diplomatic attempt to bring an end to the tensions that provided to the entire grim scenario laid out by the scriptwriters in the middle of the 1980s. By the end of 1987 Gorbachev visited Washington and Reagan returned the favor by visiting Moscow in May of 1988. By 1991 the Soviet Union was itself dismantled in a non-violent revolt of its constituent parts.

But in recent years it can be argued that modern day "America" remains even more divided than the fictional "Amerika" that appeared on television in the winter of 1987. The emotional debates portrayed in the late1980s has only been replaced by divisions over contested elections, immigration, how to define history and culture, the environment, and a health epidemic that has impacted the United States even more directly than the Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union.

"Amerika" was essentially a fictional melodrama that outlined for two weeks the image of a foreign adversary conquering the United States with a military occupation. But there was a more subtle message contained the controversial television mini-series that has persisted long after the end of the Cold War. As Abraham Lincoln, the ironic image portrayed as a Marxist hero of the occupying forces in "Amerika", once said, a nation divided itself cannot stand. As the Soviet Union found out, only a few years after "Amerika" aired, the demise of a once seemingly all-powerful military "superpower" need not require an external enemy if its internal divisions cannot be solved in a civil and peaceful manner.

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STRESZCZENIE

„Amerika": Historia amerykańskiego serialu, który kiedyś podzielił naród

Artykuł dotyczy historii serialu telewizyjnego „Amerika". Po premierze w 1987 r. był on uważany za jeden z najbardziej kontrowersyjnych projektów w historii telewizji amerykańskiej. Stworzony w odpowiedzi na telewizyjną superprodukcję „Dzień po" serial „Amerika" przedstawiał fikcyjne amerykańskie miasteczko pod radziecką okupacją, dekadę po tym, jak wojna nuklearna zmusiła rząd amerykański do kapitulacji. Celem artykułu jest ukazanie serialu „Amerika" w szerszym historycznym kontekście tego, jak Związek Radziecki był przedstawiany w amerykańskich mediach masowych oraz hollywoodzkich produkcjach telewizyjnych i filmowych. Obejmuje to narrację historyczną podważającą tezę o nieustannej „czerwonej panice" w Hollywood, przy jednoczesnym wskazaniu bardziej zniuansowanego poglądu, że jeżeli chodzi o kulturę i rozrywkę, można zasadnie argumentować, że Związek Radziecki był przedstawiany w bardziej pozytywnych barwach, niż wynikało to z nieupiększonych faktów historycznych w tym okresie.

Słowa kluczowe: „Amerika", Związek radziecki, broń jądrowa, „Dzień po", seriale telewizyjne