

The production of documentary and similar films in Germany

- A. Films for use outside Germany to produce an informed public opinion
- B. Films for use inside Germany, dealing with social and economic questions, and sponsored by some internal agency.
- C. Films for use in German education to be produced internally.
- D. Production methods and personnel.

A. Films for use outside Germany

It is possible to enumerate an almost indefinite series of subjects, and those which follow are a selection only. The coal situation requires separate study, and I should like to send someone to the Ruhr to make a special investigation. Further I believe it desirable to make a general film on the four zones, taken together, giving populations, natural resources, geographical qualities and methods of administration.

The purpose of the films would be to create an informed public opinion outside Germany on some of the outstanding problems facing the occupying authorities and the German population to-day, for there seems to be no question but that people outside Germany, in England no less than elsewhere, lack knowledge and so are likely to hamper rather than support any actions or expenditure found necessary by the British government.

Some films could be sponsored directly by the CO1 for monthly release, and in this case the cost would presumably be borne on the CO1 vote. In other cases, the films would be made as an "allied service" for the Control Commission. Both theatrical and non-theatrical circulation should be catered for. European and overseas release should be sought, particularly in those countries bordering on Germany. The co-operation of UNESCO would be valuable, if this is politically practical.

It is clear, that no one film can tell the whole story. Rather the attempting to produce generalised surveys of the food situation, the coal situation, industry, education, agriculture and so on, which might become dry sociological lectures, a series of personalised stories is proposed. Each film would centre round an individual or a group of individuals, and would illustrate a significant aspect of the German scene. The overall problems would be shown by implication in their effects on the daily lives of the people.

1. Industry

Germany's economic difficulties can be shown in miniature through the story of a small factory in the Ruhr. At the end of the war it was making small parts for the German Ministry of Supply. On the occupation, the factory was closed, and its staff investigated and denazified. The film would tell the story of the attempt to resume production, the struggle with forms, permits, licenses, regulations, the difficulties with manpower – including trade unions – with materials, fuel, taxation, transport,

absenteeism, accommodation, interzonal complications and so on. The frustrations overcome reflect a sense of achievement, and the story could be human, personal and told with humour.

2. Agriculture

The story of a German farmer. To a very large extent, Germany must rely on her farmers for increased food production. The film takes the case of one German farmer and shows the event of the past twenty years as they effect on the farm – the difficulties of the economic crises, the relative prosperity under the Hitler regime, and the present circumstances which make farmers the wealthiest section of the population. It would explain the attitude of the farmer towards political parties, the occupation and townsmen. He is conservative, strongly nationalist, suspicious of outsiders and all forms of control, grasping – yet, at the same time, hardworking, thrifty and capable of his job which he regards almost with a touch of mysticism. The present anti-social attitude of the German farmer is undeniable, but the film would also stress the good job they are doing under difficult conditions – lack of livestock, horses, fertilizers, seeds, agricultural implements, etc.

3. Local Government

Portrait of a German town. To show the changes which have taken place since the end of the war, the functional problems of civic administration, the reshaping of local government culminating in last year's elections. The story is told through the current problems of a burgomeister and would show his relations with the political parties, Military Government and the Länder. This film should end on a hopeful note, stressing the gradual devolution of responsibility of German administration. A human story, in which the problems facing a German town – billeting of refugees, rationing, clothing and fuel distribution rebuilding, social welfare, setting up and running of schools – are presented through individual cases.

4. Refugees

Little publicity has been given to the forced mass migrations which are beginning to equal those carried out by the Hitler regime. They are a constant irritant to Germans, and there are a few who can talk of "German" refugees without bitterness. It is time the facts, visually as dramatic as any, were clearly stated. This is NOT a horror story, or the story of the tragic odyssey of one family, but a factual representation of a policy agreed to by the Allies, namely, expulsion from Eastern Germany and transshipment and resettlement via camps in Western Zones. Highlights are the contrasts between the "havenots" from Eastern Germany and the "haves" in the West, their distrust and enmity towards each other, and the efforts made in this zone towards rehabilitation and resettlement. The problem is to get the Germans to accept this exodus as a fait accompli, and to cooperate towards an equitable solution. So far the contrary is the case.

5. Black Market and Barter

To show how deeply black market and barter has permeated in Germany, how this has come about and what hopes there are of stamping it out while the present extreme shortages persist. Everything can be bought on the black market, from a reel of cotton at 20 RM to a pound of butter at 200 RM. Every type and condition of person is involved. Transactions take place in offices and work places as well as in the streets. Farm produce is exchanged for bicycles, table utensils, spare parts for farm implements. Coal is exchanged for potatoes, household goods for fuel or food. Some well-known firms give employees goods in kind for barter and exchange – a pound of wool or one tyre a month. All kinds of petty cheating goes on – the pound of butter for which you have paid 200 RM, perhaps a whole month's salary, is found to be only mashed potatoes. The cigarette which cost 7 RM is filled with sawdust. The carefully wrapped Christmas goose turns out to be "a dead young dog". There are innumerable themes here, dramatic, pathetic, comic, which could perhaps be centred round the story of a big night raid in a city and its human haul.

6. Politics

To what extent are political parties a factor in Germany today? Which are the political parties – what do they stand for – what is their background – how do they influence German administration – how much support and respect do they command among the electorate? The film could show the development of party life in a big industrial town. It would trace the revival of independent political thought, show the weaknesses as well as the virtues of German parties – their irresponsibility, paucity in personnel, petty bickering and opportunism. It would point out how many Germans look with suspicion on "party politics" and political conflict, holding with Hitler that such things are a sign of national dissolution. On balance, it remains to be seen whether more executive authority will give the parties a maturer and more responsible outlook.

7. Living Conditions

How does a German family live – how much food do they get – how is the official ration supplemented – how much fuel, clothing, household goods are available? The individual's fight against shortages of every description, but above all against the basic lack of shelter, food, clothing and fuel, can be shown in the story of a city housewife and her family, in her daily problems and the initiative and improvisation which she uses to overcome them. Here again the facts need to be stated clearly and without prejudice, but the emphasis should lie in the effect of the wide social and economic problems on the day to day lives of ordinary people.

8. Social Background

It is felt that the extraordinary atmosphere in Germany of instability and isolation, doubt, suspicion, frustration, rumour and counter-rumour, lack of social purpose and hope for the future, can best be epitomized by a story of a group of young people in a destroyed German town. These young people – boys and girls

between 14 and 18, present one of the gravest problems in Germany to-day. Many of them are unemployed or delinquent, many drift from bombed town to bombed town. Their families are broken up, their homes destroyed. Present arrangements – youth clubs and movements, vocational training and other educational and social amenities seem inadequate, and often fail to command either enthusiasm or even respect. In any case they are insufficient in numbers.

9. Cultural Life

There is an excellent theme of initiative and improvisation in the story of the Hamburg Opera House. During the big fire raids, the opera house was burnt out, with the exception of the stage which was preserved by the safety curtain. When the occupying forces moved in, the opera company was playing in the Musikhalle. It was decided to turn the stage into an opera house. By means of the hydraulic lifts used for shifting scenery, a portion of the stage was lowered to form the orchestra pit, a portion raised to form a small stage, and the main body of the stage became the auditorium. The flies were hidden by an artificial ceiling from the set of Rosenkavalier. The back of the stage and the gap left by the safety curtain were bricked in. A high standard of performance has been reached and again much ingenuity displayed in the production of various operas in the limited space. This story is, in many ways, symptomatic of the revival of cultural life in spite of great material difficulties.

10. Coal

(To be investigated)

11. Economics

How and why we spend money in Germany.

12. Kreis Resident Officer

In preparation.

B. Films for use inside Germany, dealing with social and economic questions, and sponsored by some internal agency

In the films for countries outside Germany, the emphasis is on the effect of social and economic problems both on the day to day life of the people and on the policy of CCG. For Germans, already painfully aware of privations and local problems, such films would usually be unsuitable, though special versions with new commentaries and perhaps new visuals might sometimes be useful. Accordingly, the films most required in Germany are those which give the background to the personal problems of the people. Such films would show and explain the facts, and would thus help to correct the wild and distorted opinions held by many German people to-day. By stressing individual initiative and achievement, they might serve to give people encouragement to face their present troubles and to look forward to a better future. The German units which make them must be allowed to tell the facts, however unpalatable some of them may be both to the German and the British authorities, provided only that the general approach is positive, and self-pity and destructive criticism be avoided.

Themes

1. Industry

The story of the reactivation of a factory in the Ruhr. Similar to A.1. above, but with special emphasis on the initiative and achievements of the individuals concerned.

2. Food

- (a) A film relating the food shortage in Germany to the world food shortage and giving the factual story of food imports – where the food comes from, how it is paid for, what types and quantities of food are received from other countries and from other zones, the proportion of imported food to food produced in Germany.
- (b) The story of food distribution. This is now the responsibility of the German authorities, and the film could show what stocks of food are available, the machinery of distribution, the difficulties of transport and storage, the leakage to the Black Market and the allocation of food to the various categories of consumers.

(These two films would help to correct some of the wilder ideas about food that are held by a large part of the German population – that there is no world food shortage, that the British alone are responsible for the food shortage in their Zone, that it is a punitive measure, that food is being exported etc.)

3. Local Government

- (a) How a committee works.
- (b) A film to show the handing over of responsibility to the German authorities in one or more fields of public administration. What new powers the German administration holds and what use is made of them. (c.f. A.3. above. The present film might be adapted from it, or at least made on the same location).

4. Refugees

A.4. above might be adapted. Though the theme is a difficult and dangerous one, it should certainly be tackled.

5. Black Market and Barter

A.5. will probably be unsuitable for Germany, and the theme should be tackled afresh for internal use. The Black Market is considered a necessity in Germany, for although most people condemn it, they argue that life could not be maintained without it. (See Hamburg reaction report for March, 1947). At the same time, the Black Market constantly undermines the already seriously unbalanced economy in the Zone and is the main factor behind the development of a two-class society – a few extremely ‘wealthy’ groups and the mass of the people which includes most of the previous middle and professional classes – who have to go even shorter than is necessary. Only a concerted effort by the mass of the people will enable the Black Market to be stamped out and an equitable distribution to be organised of what goods and food are available.

6. Politics

An adaptation of A.6., but with the emphasis placed on the need for German parties to show a greater sense of responsibility and to free themselves from parochialism and on the need for a more active participation in elections by the electorate in their own interests.

7. Living conditions

An adaptation of A.7. is not recommended for internal German use, unless such a film could be of use for exhibition exclusively to German agricultural communities in the hopes of gaining readier cooperation from the farmers.

Where a narrow foreground film on living conditions would be unsuitable, a broader film on public health would be invaluable. It would deal with the fight against the dreadful living conditions in a blitzed city – the struggle to maintain the ration, fuel problems, the shortage of medical facilities, hospitals and drugs. This subject might be combined with B.3. (b) above.

8. Social Background

An adaptation of A.8. A personal story centred round a group of young people, but with stronger emphasis placed on the fact that they are the responsibility of the community. Their welfare should be a community charge.

9. Cultural Life

It might be possible to use A.9. as it stands.

10. Coal

This subject requires special investigation. Any film made should underline the fact that shortage of coal lies behind any other shortage in Germany – behind shortages of steel and metals. Shortages of transport, food, chemicals and paints, textiles and shoes. Germany's health itself is depended on coal.

11. Economics

- (a) A film on exports and imports to show the economic background in the zone – what policy has been laid down – what machinery set up to deal with it – what are the main exports and imports – what is classed as reparations – the chief effects of this policy on industry and the life of the people.
- (b) The story of the bipartite fusion – what are its aims and objectives – how is it likely to effect the mainly industrial population in the North and the mainly agricultural population in the South, both immediately and as a long-term plan.

12. Kreis Resident Officer

A.12. will probably be unsuitable for use in Germany.

13. Town and Country

To-day a relatively prosperous Amt or Land (e. g. Bavaria) holds back its food supplies for fear that it in turn will presently go short. Individual farmers hold all they can and let only their surplus find its way to the towns. Other farmers are so short of fertilizers and cattle food that their farms are collapsing under their eyes. In the cities and coal fields, production of coal and commodities is slowing down for lack of food. Lack of coal and such things as fertilizers and spare parts for farm machinery reacts on farming economy. Town and country are complimentary parts of the same economy. If they worked together fully, Germany's troubles would be reduced.

14. Commodities

A number of films are suggested on such themes as **Textiles and Shoes, Transport and Canals, Paper and Books** and **Housing**.

The problems concerning these would be related both to the individuals who suffer from their lack, and to the question of coal supplies and the Ruhr.

In addition to the above types of film, short informational films on specific problems urgently need to be made, both for Military Government and for the German authorities – films, for example, on public hygiene, prevention of epidemics, venereal disease, tuberculosis, diphtheria immunisation, road safety and labour recruiting. In this connection it is to be noted that Defa have already produced a number of such films for circulation in the Russian Zone. Two of them, on diphtheria and general hygiene have been viewed by Film Section and reach a high standard of production. The British zone might well take advantage of these, and joint production planning of such subjects should not be impossible.

C. Films for use in German education, to be produced internally

Mr. Buckland Smith of the Education Branch has planned a programme of educational films, to be undertaken partly by the production groups at present working under the *Institut für Film und Bild*, and partly by other units. A separate paper of his proposals will follow. In the mean time, it should be noted that he has placed orders through the *Institut* with Lotte Reiniger and Carl Haarcken.

It is clear, also, that training films of all kinds will be required – for miners, factory workers, agricultural workers, the police, etc.

Some educational and training films can be secured by adapting those already produced in Britain and elsewhere.

D. Production methods and personnel

1. Administration

The film subjects should be arranged in order of priority and a small number selected on which to make a start. Each should be made by a German unit, for a number of reasons:

- It is desirable that German units should take a part in publicising the German scene

- Films made by Germans are likely to be more authentic and convincing than films made by foreigners
- German units are likely to secure good cooperation from the German public and German authorities
- A bad impression would be created if the first batch of films to be made about Germany for overseas or local distribution were handled by British units
- German documentary production and distribution will be stimulated

The last point is of importance since existing units lack experience in the factual approach, are doubtful of what subjects they may or may not treat in films, and are inclined to fall back on escapist and pretty-pretty themes. (It is significant that few of the prospective short film producers have suggested making films on any of the big social or economic issues in Germany to-day).

Many of the films, particularly those for release outside Germany will require some measure of British supervision, although as much freedom as possible should be allowed in the treatment of the various themes. A British Associate Producer and the cooperation of members of Film Section will be required in order to work out details of finance, distribution, budgeting and organisation, to allocate the films to suitable companies to act as a liaison between the German units and CO1, CCG and Military Government for the vetting and approval of treatments and scripts to obtain necessary facilities (permits, recommendations for vehicles and petrol, accommodation, travel and so on) and, in consultation with a German Producer or Producers, to supervise the various stages of production of the films. It is hoped to group some German units round one or two Producers of experience – e. g. Karl Koch.

2. Equipment, Facilities and Raw Stock

Raw stock for films sponsored by CO1 or CCG must be supplied from Britain as must also almost certainly motor transport. Bulbs must be purchased with sterling as must also certain minor pieces of equipment such as filters. It seems likely that the other materials and facilities can be found within Germany.

3. Personnel

A list of prospective documentary units is attached. The first three have already been licensed; numbers 4 and 5 can be licensed immediately; the remainder are being vetted by intelligence. It is hoped that arrangements can be made for the weaker units to be absorbed by the stronger, so as to ensure a certain minimum standard of craftsmanship. There is a shortage of experienced producers (in the creative sense of that term). There is evidence that there are a number of experienced technicians who would like to work on such projects but who have not come forward because they do not see any economic basis for documentary film production and because of the difficulties of obtaining raw stock, equipment and facilities.

1. Junge Film Union (Hamburg)
2. Herold Film (Berlin)
3. Lotte Reiniger Film (Berlin)
4. Herbert Dreyer & Clarissa Dreyer Patrix (Düsseldorf)
5. Ostei Film (Hannover)
6. K.H.W. Filmproduktion (Mölln)
7. Dautert Films (Hamburg)
8. Lloyd Film Produktion (Hamburg)
9. Hans Georg Dammann (Hamburg)
10. Atlantis Film (Hamburg)
11. Kosmos Film (Hamburg)
12. Hans Joachim Tramm (Hamburg)
13. Pan Film (Hamburg)
14. Haakon Film (Berlin)

Arthur Elton
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(The above report has been drafted and written mainly by Mrs Graham in consultation with some of her colleagues. I have added or altered a few points.) A. E.