

UC Berkeley

The Charles H. Percy Undergraduate Grant for Public Affairs Research Papers

Title

Films for a New Germany: British Documentaries and the Reeducation of West Germany

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55n912zd>

Author

August-Schmidt, Tatiana

Publication Date

2014-04-01

Undergraduate

Films for a New Germany:
British Documentaries and the Reeducation of West Germany

Tatiana August-Schmidt
Dr. James Vernon
Spring 2014

Films for a New Germany: British Documentaries and the Reeducation of West Germany¹

Well, a lot of Germany is dead. Our last bombing was directed against the communications; against convoys, trains, road and rail bridges; against goods-yards, stations, viaducts. We not only smashed up the towns but smashed up the links between the towns. And at the finish life in Germany just ran down, like a clock... Our Military Government – that is your husbands and sons – have to prod the Germans into putting their house in order. Why? We have an interest in Germany that is purely selfish – we cannot live next to a disease-ridden neighbor, and we must prevent not only starvation and epidemics but also diseases of the mind – new brands of Fascism – from springing up.

– Opening commentary from *A Defeated People* (1946)²

With a distraught and defeated populace, Germany was ripe to receive the reeducation efforts of the British government after the Second World War. A robust British documentary tradition combined with a scrapped German film industry presented a unique opportunity for the British to use the cinema to project their preferred German identity onto enthusiastic cinemagoers through films.³ Newsreels, documentaries, and atrocity films comprised a significant but often overlooked component of the British government's attempt to shape a new identity for postwar Germany through reeducation.

Studying the British policy of reeducation as a whole provides a lens to examine British political motivations in West Germany and to understand to what extent the British tried to shape postwar German identity. Analyzing this policy through film allows insight into not only what mediums the British saw were most effective, but also enables a study of the reception of

¹ The research on which this paper was based was made possible by the generous support of the Institute of International Studies, Regents' and Chancellor's Scholarship Association, and the Institute of Governmental Studies.

² "INF 6/374 A Defeated People, CC. E. 16 11 March 1946."

³ Within two months of the end of the war, the attendance rates for cinemas were higher than prewar years despite many of the theaters having been destroyed (Kelson, xviii).

reeducation programs through records of cinema attendance, the films' distribution, and surveys of public opinion. Films were a critical component of the "political experiment" of British reeducation of occupied Germany and were fundamental in informing, shaming, uniting, and educating both German and British audiences.⁴

There is surprisingly little English-language scholarship on British reeducation, let alone reeducation films. The majority of work on reeducation, including Henry Faulk's *Group Captives: The Re-education of German Prisoners of War in Britain 1945-1948*, revolves around the detailed records of reeducation of German prisoners of war in Britain, but this is only one part of the story. Atrocity films, documentaries, and newsreels were essential to spreading reeducation propaganda to civilians as well as prisoners of war. Other historians analyze the use of concentration camp atrocity imagery in photography and film or, like Heide Fehrenbach and Robert Shandley, discuss cinema's role in shaping German national identity postwar, but do not place their analyses within the context of reeducation.⁵

Alternatively, David Welch's article "British 'Re-Education' Policy in Germany after the Second World War" describes the goals of British reeducation to create a new German society and eventually embrace German sovereignty, but stresses the significance of print media over films for carrying out reeducation. The collection of essays by Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson in *The Political Re-education of Germany and Her Allies After World War II* is the most relevant academic study of British reeducation policies, however little attention is paid to the place of films in reeducation. Where historians discuss reeducation, they disregard film; and where historians discuss film, they disregard reeducation. This paper will offer an explicit

⁴ Welch, "Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British 'Re-Education' Policy in Germany after the Second World War," 215.

⁵ See Cornelia Brink's "Secular Icons: Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration Camps," Sharon Sliwinski's *Human Rights in Camera*, and Ulrike Weckel's "Disappointed Hopes for Spontaneous Mass Conversions: German Responses to Allied Atrocity Film Screenings, 1945-46."

explanation of the exceptional role of atrocity films, documentaries, and newsreels in British reeducation efforts to shape German national identity in the postwar period.

Reeducation Policy in Postwar Germany

Shortly after the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany and the end of World War II on May 19, 1945, Germany and Berlin were divided into four zones of occupation with France, the United States, and the United Kingdom in the West and the Soviet Union in the East.⁶ The United Kingdom established the military government Control Commission for Germany (British Element) (CCG(BE)) in their region of occupation. The British Ministry of Information (MOI), which became the Central Office of Information (COI) in 1946, headed publicity and propaganda and led the production of reeducation films.

Origins of the British reeducation program date to 1941 when British diplomat Robert Vansittart first introduced the term in a proposal regarding the treatment of the Germans after the war.⁷ Instead of harsh punitive measures like the Versailles Treaty after World War I, reeducation was intentionally “progressive” and designed to target the “heart and way of life of the German people.”⁸ The British created this “unique” and entirely novel policy to “change the political behaviour and social outlook of the German people by means of a fundamental restructuring of all the means of opinion and communication.”⁹ By specifically targeting the psychology of the German nation as a whole, reeducation policy intended to transform a nation.¹⁰

⁶ Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 1.

⁷ Michael Balfour, “In Retrospect,” 140.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 139; “FO 1049/525 Reeducation of Germany by Major-General P.M. Balfour INTR/4061/HQ 29 Jan 1946.”

⁹ Welch, “Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War,” 215.

¹⁰ There were initial attempts to have a coordinated reeducation policy between the British, Americans, and Soviets, but inevitably the tripartite committee failed (FO 945/294 Re-Education of Germany (1944-1946), Armistice and Post-War Committee, Control of German Education. Note by the Chairman of the ACAO Committee). Future studies of reeducation policy would benefit from looking at the differences between each reeducation program.

Reeducation was not a strict single policy of British occupation, but rather was composed of shared intentions across communication and education sectors under British control.¹¹ Reeducation consisted of long and short-term goals that formed an explicit attempt to influence the psychology of a nation to ultimately prepare Germans for a democratic future.¹² Immediately after the war, the reeducation program aimed to destroy all Nazi affiliation through denazification and the circulation of information about Nazi brutalities. In order to prevent an isolated and despondent Germany, the British worked to instill hope for a brighter future through reeducation propaganda and a transition to democracy. The British planned to replace Nazi sympathies with rosy portrayals of democratic freedoms in order to build a less-threatening psychology for the German nation.¹³

Reeducation was supposed to reestablish “objective facts” and effectively reverse the fascist indoctrination Germans endured under the Third Reich, but was also a continuation of the British psychological warfare of World War II (and in fact, it was initially a project of the Psychological Warfare Department).¹⁴ By providing “better food for thought” with international news reports and information about British occupation, reeducation would “foster interest in the ideas of popular demands such as freedom of opinion, speech, the press and religion” replacing Nazi ideals with British ones.¹⁵ Most immediately, however, reeducation was supposed to instill a “collective guilt” in the Germans for wartime misdeeds.¹⁶ A report from 1945 entitled

¹¹ Welch, “Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War,” 216; “FO 1049/525 Re-Education of Germany, JJG/DG.”

¹² “FO 1079/20 Propaganda and Re-Education, Proposals for the Establishment of Tripartite Anglo-American-Russian Control over Information and Propaganda in Germany during the Occupation Period 24 Apr 1944,” 20.

¹³ Targeting a nation’s “psychology” fits into a larger trend emerging during World War II and the postwar period of the “psychologization of the polity” in order to bridge public and private concerns and control all aspects of life from the factory to the battlefield (Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*). Scholars have linked the concern for the psychological to a contemporary renewed interest in Freud (Thomson, *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture, and Health in Twentieth Century Britain*, 21.).

¹⁴ “FO 1049/525 Re-Education of Germany, JJG/DG”; Welch, “Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War,” 218 (Cited: PRO/FO371/39095, 3 July 1944.); Pronay and Wilson, *The Political Re-Education of Germany & Her Allies After World War II*, 23–24.

¹⁵ “FO 1049/525 Re-Education of Germany, JJG/DG,” 1; Welch, “Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War,” 218.

¹⁶ Carruthers, “Compulsory Viewing,” 736.

“Character of German People, Psychological Reactions to Defeat” outlined the consequence of collective guilt:

Until an atmosphere of repentance pervades the length and breadth of the country, the truth about German political history, conduct of the war, atrocities and so on will not be believed, and the tendency to dissociation and other forms of psychological stone-walling increased.¹⁷

Until Germans embraced collective guilt, the British were prepared to occupy Germany.

Reeducation’s emphasis on reshaping national identity was not only considered a “humane” approach to a defeated country, but also seen as the final and lasting solution to the German problem.¹⁸

The British recognized that in order for their occupation to be successful and to prevent “chronic self-pity” in the Germans, reeducation policy must also embrace German autonomy and suggest a hopeful future.¹⁹ Through mass communication and the education system, the British hoped to create “useful apostles” with a “free and solid” democratic foundation for the future of Germany.²⁰ While the establishment of Law 191 of Military Government, Germany prohibited Germans from producing most types of media and gave the British control over the means of reeducation, the British encouraged Germans to reeducate themselves to the “greatest extent possible” by leading these programs.²¹ R.S. Crawford of the Education Branch of the CCG(BE) offered “advice and a certain amount of material help,” but stressed the importance of reeducation wisdom coming from Germans themselves.²² Colonel Rees agreed that the “Germans must work out their own salvation.”²³ Putting Germans in charge was also an attempt to avoid “direct political re-education.”²⁴ The British recognized that “direct approaches are

¹⁷ “FO 1049/45 Character of German People, Psychological Reactions to Defeat: A Discussion of Probably Modes of German Behaviour, By Lieut Col H B Dicks 4 June 1945.”

¹⁸ Pronay and Wilson, *The Political Re-Education of Germany & Her Allies After World War II*, 25.

¹⁹ “FO 1049/525 Reeducation of Germany by Major-General P.M. Balfour INTR/4061/HQ 29 Jan 1946.”

²⁰ Welch, “Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War,” 215; “FO 1049/525 Pol.B/465/1/46”; “FO 946/91 Films: Central Office of Information Film on German Education, ‘School Amongst the Ruins’ Treatment for a One-Reel Theatrical Film 27 Nov 1947.”

²¹ “FO 1049/525 Pol.B/465/1/46”; Shandley, *Rubble Films*, 16.

²² “FO 1049/525 Pol.B/465/1/46.”

²³ “FO 1049/84 Propaganda Policy - Control Commission. Colonel Rees to Mr Pink 12 June 1945.”

²⁴ “FO 1049/525 Re-Education of Germany, JJJ/DG.”

suspect, and that the only film which is likely to be effective is the honest German-speaking film without any obvious propaganda lesson.”²⁵ By the end of reeducation, the British hoped, Germans would have transformed into bullish stewards of democracy entirely by their own making.

From the beginning, the British realized that films were a highly effective way to carry out reeducation because of high cinema attendance and the ability of film to carry implicit messages.²⁶ Cinema attendance soared in the postwar period despite damage to the industry’s production and consumption infrastructure. Before the war, there were five thousand cinemas in Germany, many of which were destroyed after four years of bombing and invasions.²⁷ However, within two months of the end of the war, the German film industry “boasted more cinemas and higher attendance rates than the prewar Third Reich.”²⁸ Affordability and accessibility of the cinema made the screen a powerful mechanism to reach a variety of economic and social classes.²⁹ Cinema attendance rates soared between 1945 and 1956. Annual box-office sales rose from 150 to greater than 817 million tickets, equivalent to sixteen visits per year for each man, woman, and child living in West Berlin and West Germany.³⁰

The Control Commission for Germany (British Element) (CCG(BE)) understood “the great influence exercised by the cinema” and in the postwar period the cinema became a realm of social control.³¹ The British assumed full control over the German film industry in their zone, managing production, film censorship, and the theatrical distribution of films.³² The British

²⁵ Ibid. This is in part why foreign films shown in Germany were almost always dubbed instead of subtitled. Arthur Elton, head of *Welt im Film* and other film productions, stressed the importance of dubbing films (FO 946/69 Films: Policy, Report of Three Month’s Work from January 21st to April 21st 1947.).

²⁶ “FO 946/8 Films, Theaters, Books, Licensing of Newspapers, Development of Press in Germany.”

²⁷ Kelson, *Catalogue of Forbidden German Feature and Short Film Productions*, xviii.

²⁸ Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 2.

²⁹ Brown, “FO 946/8 Films, Theaters, Books, Licensing of Newspapers, Notes on Present Situation - Germany. 7 May 1946”; Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 2.

³⁰ Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 118.

³¹ “INF 1/178 Film Censorship Chapter VIII 1938.”; Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 2.

³² “FO 1036/196 Film Reorganisation Committee (FRC)/German Film Reorganisation Advisory Committee. Allied High Commission Minutes of the First Meeting Film Reorganisation Committee in Session with the German Film Reorganisation Advisory Committee Held at Petersberg on 30 January 1951.”

limited the number of prewar German films that could be shown and closed German film studios as part of the denazification procedure.³³ The British shut down one of the biggest film studios in the world, Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft (also known as Ufa), which was co-opted by Joseph Goebbels, the Reich Minister of Propaganda, during the Third Reich and became a fervent weapon of Nazi ideology.³⁴ The British were skeptical of a large centralized film studio and stripped Ufa of its power through denazification. After wiping out the domestic film industry, the British were able to rebuild a decentralized one in its place and simultaneously control the means of reeducation.

A constant shortage of raw materials for all media hampered the distribution of reeducation material, allowing film to rise as a potent medium. The lack of paper pulp for print publications meant shorter and less frequent newspapers.³⁵ The shortage of teachers as a result of denazification complicated spreading reeducation through schools.³⁶ Film was also challenged by a shortage of raw film stock, but one copy of a film could reach more people than one newspaper.³⁷ Films were also used in the classroom, making up for the lack of teachers, because British officials thought film was especially beneficial for communicating with young people.³⁸ Given the lack of materials in all mediums and the ability of one film to be shown again and again to a relatively large audience, film was fundamental to reeducation.

Despite the relative prevalence of reeducation films, the reeducation program as a whole has not been viewed as a success. Beginning in 1946 there was frustration about the willingness

³³ David Stewart Hull, *Film in the Third Reich: A Study of the German Cinema 1933-1945*, 20; Brig. Gen. Robert A. McClure, Director of Information Control of the Office of Military Government for Germany (US), "OMGUS 11-110, APO 742"; "FO 1036/196 Film Reorganisation Committee (FRC)/German Film Reorganisation Advisory Committee. Allied High Commission Minutes of the First Meeting Film Reorganisation Committee in Session with the German Film Reorganisation Advisory Committee Held at Petersberg on 30 January 1951."

³⁴ "FO 1036/196 Film Reorganisation Committee (FRC)/German Film Reorganisation Advisory Committee. Allied High Commission Minutes of the First Meeting Film Reorganisation Committee in Session with the German Film Reorganisation Advisory Committee Held at Petersberg on 30 January 1951."; Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 44; Shandley, *Rubble Films*, 9–10.

³⁵ "FO 946/8 Films, Theaters, Books, Licensing of Newspapers, Bercomb to Troopers 13 May 1946."

³⁶ "Unfair Attacks on the Control Commission: Frustration, Deprivations, and Insecurity."

³⁷ "FO 946/8 Films, Theaters, Books, Licensing of Newspapers, Major General WHA Bishop to Michael Balfour 20 Feb 1946."

³⁸ "FO 1049/525 Reeducation of Germany by Major-General P.M. Balfour INTR/4061/HQ 29 Jan 1946."

of Germans to embrace reeducation and a survey of public opinion noted a lack of cooperation with the CCG(BE). “The mood of the German people can be described as ‘querulous’. They do not seem to realise that there has been a major war and that someone has to pay for it.”³⁹ Only two years after the start of the program, British officials generally agreed, “the first phase of superimposing democracy on the Germans has failed disastrously.”⁴⁰ By 1948 reeducation was no longer an explicit part of CCG policy, although some films and *Welt im Film* continued after that date.⁴¹

Films for a New Germany

Reeducation films had four main functions: to shame, inform, educate, and unite West Germans. The following discussion will explain the different roles of atrocity films, newsreels, and documentaries in the formation of a new identity for postwar Germany.

Atrocity Films: Guilt Mobilization

British occupational government believed that guilt mobilization was the first component of reeducation.⁴² Films about concentration camps and war atrocities were shown to prisoners of war and later civilians to guarantee the psychological defeat of the German people. Atrocity films paved the way for later reeducation films and gave film a new role in presenting authentic and momentous events.

³⁹ “FO 1056/93 Survey of German Public Opinion No. 10, Period Covered July 21 to August 25, 1946.”

⁴⁰ “Unfair Attacks on the Control Commission: Frustration, Deprivations, and Insecurity.”

⁴¹ Welch, “Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War,” 233.

⁴² “FO 1049/45 Character of German People, Psychological Reactions to Defeat: A Discussion of Probably Modes of German Behaviour, By Lieut Col H B Dicks 4 June 1945.”

Of the ten atrocity films made by the Allies after the war, the British commissioned two: the documentary *Konzentrationslager (Death Camp)* more commonly known as *KZ* and another film that never reached completion.⁴³ The Ministry of Information first commissioned the atrocity films to be made before the end of the war to showcase Nazi war atrocities, expose concentration camps, and induce a “genuine and lasting renunciation” of future German domination attempts.⁴⁴ Davidson Taylor, Chief of Film, Theater, and Music Control Section, wanted to ensure that Germans would no longer be able to “refuse to recognise that they have any responsibility for [the war atrocities]” and rectify the lack of “political conscience.”⁴⁵ Anglo reeducators worked as though the Germans were “neither as ignorant nor as innocent of Nazi atrocities as they often insisted” and worked to forcefully instill guilt in the Germans.⁴⁶ British atrocity footage reached several hundred thousand Germans through civilian cinemas and prisoner of war screenings.⁴⁷

A joint Anglo-American team produced *KZ*, which was first shown to German prisoners of war.⁴⁸ The prisoners were categorized into three stratifications of Nazi supporter: people opposed to the Nazis were “white,” those who were apolitical were labeled “grey,” and “black” was used to describe ardent Nazi supporters.⁴⁹ “Whites,” “greys,” and “blacks” were separated into different parts of prisoner of war camps and were given varying amounts of responsibility relative to their renouncement of National Socialism.⁵⁰ German prisoners were forced to watch

⁴³ Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*, 61; Carruthers, “Compulsory Viewing,” 737.

⁴⁴ “INF 1/636, Films for Liberated Territories: Investigation of War Atrocities - Factual Film Report on German Concentration Camps with Catalogue of Films for Liberated Territories (1945). Nolbandov to Archibald 22 February 1945.”; “INF 1/636, Films for Liberated Territories. Patterson to Sidney 16 July 1945.” 19; “FO 1079/20 Propaganda and Re-Education, John G Winsnt to William Strang 5 May 1944.”

⁴⁵ “INF 1/636, Films for Liberated Territories. Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force - Psychological Warfare Division, Taylor to Bernstein 25 May 1945.” 25.

⁴⁶ Carruthers, “Compulsory Viewing,” 735.

⁴⁷ Weckel, “Disappointed Hopes for Spontaneous Mass Conversions: German Responses to Allied Atrocity Film Screenings, 1945-46,” 39; Welch, “Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War,” 218.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 737.

⁴⁹ “FO 1049/29 Re-Education of Germany, Draft Directive on the Re-Education of Germany.”

⁵⁰ “FO 939/371 Reactions of German Prisoners of War to Atrocity Film, Lt. Col. Sinclair to Wing Commander Hitch 15 June 1945.”

atrocities films about the horrors of concentration camps, while quite ironically, as historian David Welch notes, the prisoners were in camps of their own.⁵¹

Prisoners were meticulously screened before and after viewing the film about German concentration camps.⁵² Index cards on prisoners recorded whether an individual had seen the film or had been interviewed.⁵³ Collected responses from interviews and group discussions with prisoners of war demonstrated the ability of film to disseminate information and instigate emotional reactions in the prisoners.⁵⁴ The two most common reactions to the atrocity films were “shock and depression” and “self-exculpation.”⁵⁵ Polls were conducted to gauge prisoners’ opinions of the Nazi concentration camps as well as the extent to which they thought the film was propaganda.⁵⁶ While the British paid careful attention to make sure the events were portrayed objectively, some “black” prisoners believed the whole film was faked and compared it to an infamous Goebbels film called *Ohm Kreuger* that depicted alleged British “barbarities” in Boer concentration camps.⁵⁷

Some prisoners, however, reacted more positively to the atrocity films. Groups of prisoners in twelve different camps wrote manifestos articulating their disgust with the Nazi regime.⁵⁸ Others collected money for victims of the concentration camps, removed Nazi insignia from their uniforms, or went directly from the film to church.⁵⁹ Whether the response of the

⁵¹ David Welch discusses this in *Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British "Re-Education" Policy in Germany after the Second World War*.

⁵² “FO 939/371 Reactions of German Prisoners of War to Atrocity Film, Lt. Col. Sinclair to Wing Commander Hitch 15 June 1945”; *ibid.*

⁵³ “FO 939/371 Reactions of German Prisoners of War to Atrocity Film, Lt. Col. Sinclair to Wing Commander Hitch 15 June 1945.”

⁵⁴ “FO 939/72 Concentration Camp Film, Report on Individual PWs Reaction to Concentration Camp Film.,” 72.

⁵⁵ “FO 939/371 Reactions of German Prisoners of War to Atrocity Film, Reactions to German Prisoners of War to Concentration Camp Atrocity Film Ref: POW/1/F(G)956(s) 14 Aug 1945”; “FO 939/72 Concentration Camp Film, Report on Individual PWs Reaction to Concentration Camp Film.,” 72; Faulk, *Group Captives: The Re-Education of German Prisoners of War in Britain 1945-1948*, 121.

⁵⁶ “FO 939/371 Reactions of German Prisoners of War to Atrocity Film, Reactions to German Prisoners of War to Concentration Camp Atrocity Film Ref: POW/1/F(G)956(s) 14 Aug 1945.”

⁵⁷ “INF 1/636, Films for Liberated Territories: Investigation of War Atrocities - Factual Film Report on German Concentration Camps with Catalogue of Films for Liberated Territories (1945). Nolbandov to Archibald 22 February 1945.”; “FO 1079/20 Propaganda and Re-Education, John G Winsnt to William Strang 5 May 1944.”

⁵⁸ Faulk, *Group Captives: The Re-Education of German Prisoners of War in Britain 1945-1948*, 121.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*; “FO 939/371 Reactions of German Prisoners of War to Atrocity Film, Reactions to German Prisoners of War to Concentration Camp Atrocity Film Ref: POW/1/F(G)956(s) 14 Aug 1945.”

prisoners is an acceptance of guilt or an attempt to prove through sympathy that they could not have committed the crimes themselves, the reactions of the prisoners of war demonstrated that the atrocity films undoubtedly raised awareness about Nazi war atrocities. The British, reflecting on the effectiveness, remarked:

The general consensus of opinion among Commandants was that the film effectively brought home to the majority of prisoners the full horror of the concentration camps. As such it had a marked value in breaking down loyalty to the Nazi regime, and in increasing the prisoners' awareness of the responsibility placed in the whole German nation by civilized opinion. Much very useful guidance was given by several Commandants on the technical desiderata in films to be shown to Ps/W and on the relative value of the Concentration Camp Film and the special booklet on the same subject which preceded it.⁶⁰

When German prisoners of war were surveyed on their return to Germany, both prisoners and officials signified that they were hopeful about Germany's future.⁶¹ The overt reeducation tool was successful at enlightening prisoners and challenging Nazi loyalty, which was an important first step for later reeducation efforts.

The British atrocity film designed for civilian audiences was never finished.⁶² The Psychological Warfare Division held practice viewings to study people's reaction to the film, but they decided the film did not induce collective guilt as readily as the British had hoped.⁶³ While they abandoned the atrocity film project, they continued atrocity footage in the newsreel *Welt im Film* and a widespread media campaign raising awareness about concentration camp atrocities.⁶⁴

Atrocity footage heralded film's new role in conveying truthful information. While some renounced the film as exaggerated propaganda, Allied concentration camp films were used as genuine proof and explanation of unimaginable past events. A concentration camp film was screened at the Nuremberg Tribunal, where prominent Nazi leaders were on trial, in place of

⁶⁰ "FO 939/371 Reactions of German Prisoners of War to Atrocity Film, Reactions to German Prisoners of War to Concentration Camp Atrocity Film Ref: POW/1/F(G)956(s) 14 Aug 1945."

⁶¹ "FO 1056/93 Survey of German Public Opinion No. 10, Special Survey on the Reactions of German POWs on Their Return to Germany."

⁶² Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*, 61.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 61–62.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

customary witness testimonials.⁶⁵ Films had previously been used for shaping national identity and influencing communities of people, but the use of film to circulate authentic and synecdochic images of what would be known as the Holocaust legitimized the image as a tool to bear witness on events.⁶⁶ To some extent, these images even became modern icons of authenticity and were ingrained in Western Europe's "collective visual memory."⁶⁷ Through the process of becoming emblems of concentration camps, these films became "an unambiguous reality" as opposed to only one interpretation of an event, signifying an important transformation of the role of film.⁶⁸

Overall, this mostly undisguised attempt at reeducation through atrocity films was an effective way to enlighten Germans about Nazi war atrocities, but was unpopular and not particularly successful at mass guilt mobilization. Atrocity films educated Germans about Nazi atrocities and likely spurred the process of collective guilt, but were in no way instant reeducation. The process of coming to terms with the past, or *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, was not an immediate reaction to atrocity films, but took years to develop.⁶⁹ The footage had high viewership, but reactions were mostly negative.⁷⁰ Due to the generally poor reception, British officials discussed as early as 1945 the danger of overemphasizing atrocity propaganda and especially atrocity films, which were likely to unfavorably produce "self-pity and destructive criticism."⁷¹ Atrocity images were continued for another two years until 1947 with the transition away from shaming films to more informative methods of reeducation.⁷²

⁶⁵ Douglas, "Film as Witness," 449–451.

⁶⁶ Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera*, 102.

⁶⁷ Brink, "Secular Icons," 135.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Kurt Jürgensen, "The Concept and Practice of 'Re-Education' in Germany 1945-50."

⁷⁰ Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 57.

⁷¹ "FO 1049/84 PR/ISC Group to USFET, Atrocity Propaganda"; Elton, "FO 946/69 Films: Policy, The Production of Documentary and Similar Films in Germany."

⁷² Elton, "FO 946/69 Films: Policy, The Production of Documentary and Similar Films in Germany."

Newsreels: Fighting “Intellectual Malnutrition”



Stills from *Welt im Film* issues #212 and #79.

Newsreels were a less direct method of spreading British reeducation doctrine while compensating for German “intellectual malnutrition” as a result of the Nazi regime.⁷³ *Welt im Film* (*The World in Film*) was a weekly ten-minute newsreel co-produced by British and American military governments in West Germany beginning in 1945. Immediately after the war the newsreel carried some of the same guilt-inducing footage as the atrocity films, but later developed into a “softer” approach to reeducation.⁷⁴ The reorientation of the newsreel under British control represented both the intentions of British reeducation policy and the challenges reeducation faced in postwar Germany.

Welt im Film was produced to inform Germans about contemporary issues while encouraging support of the British occupation. The British made sure *Welt im Film* portrayed international events to connect Germany with the rest of Western Europe by sharing information, preventing ignorance, and showing solidarity through common hardships. The British debuted the first newsreel only ten days after Victory Day in Europe and intended to screen *Welt im Film*

⁷³ “FO 1049/525 Re-Education of Germany, JJG/DG.”

⁷⁴ Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 56.

in weekly installments until the end of occupation.⁷⁵ The Information Services Branch outlined that *Welt im Film* was supposed to “contribute to the enlignement [*sic*] of Germans and Austrians by presenting news in pictures from throughout the world including the four zones of occupation in Germany, and from Austria; a fair balance should be maintained between world news and zonal news.”⁷⁶ By portraying international as well as domestic news, the British hoped to not only shed light on what the Germans were effectively unaware of, but also encourage support of the British occupation by explaining problems that Germans faced locally, such as food shortages, were worldwide issues. A British official said, “There is no harm in letting the Germans see that we have to queue too.”⁷⁷

A combination of British, American, and German support assembled *Welt im Film*. The Anglo-American team advised the newsreel and, as with the majority of reeducation films, German technicians produced *Welt im Film*, keeping with the intention of having Germans reeducate themselves.⁷⁸ Eagle-Lion Distributors handled the distribution of *Welt im Film* to cinemas in the British and American zones in West Germany and the newsreel was screened before feature films.⁷⁹ It was compulsory for a newsreel or short documentary to be shown with every feature film and because *Welt im Film* was the only newsreel in the British and American zones, *Welt im Film* had an effective monopoly.⁸⁰ Film crews in Berlin, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, and Munich, where production was headquartered since September of 1945, shot footage for *Welt im*

⁷⁵ “FO 946/73, ‘Welt Im Film’ Policy & Agreement. Distribution of ‘Welt Im Film’ 10 February 1948.”; German Education and Information Department, “Letter to the Chancery, British Embassy, Washington”; “FO 1020/629 Joint Newsreel Control Board (Anglo-American Supervision). Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Newsreel Control Board, Austria 26 May 1948.” 629.

⁷⁶ “FO 1020/628 ‘Welt Im Film’ Distribution Policy. Newsreel Agreement Ref. 7/6 (3035).” This equilibrium was not achieved. *Welt im Film* heavily favored international news over domestic news and viewers complained. This imbalance may have been a result of *Welt im Film*’s dependence on footage from the British Newsreel Companies who had footage mostly pertinent to British newsreel viewers and thus rarely had material about local West German happenings (“FO 946/74 Newsreel material: “Welt im Film”. Brown to Crawford 31 January 1948.”).

⁷⁷ Roger Smither, “‘Welt Im Film’: Anglo-American Newsreel Policy,” 156.

⁷⁸ “FO 946/74 Newsreel Material: ‘Welt Im Film’. Crawford to Tritton 2 February 1948.”

⁷⁹ “FO 1020/628 ‘Welt Im Film’ Distribution Policy. Eagle-Lion Distributors 19 March 1948.”

⁸⁰ “FO 946/73, ‘Welt Im Film’ Policy & Agreement. Distribution of ‘Welt Im Film’ 10 February 1948.”

Film.⁸¹ A relationship between the Joint Newsreel Control Board, which oversaw the production of *Welt im Film*, and the British Newsreel Companies, an organization that compiled footage to be used in newsreels in the United Kingdom, meant that a significant portion of the footage for *Welt im Film* came from British material.⁸² American newsreels *News of the Day*, *Paramount News*, *Universal News*, and *Pathé* also supplied material to *Welt im Film*.⁸³ Since much of the footage for *Welt im Film* came from British and American sources, *Welt im Film* tended to favor international over domestic news. London cinemas also regularly screened *Welt im Film*, which created an additional incentive to have an internationally focused newsreel.⁸⁴

For the first years of its existence, *Welt im Film* enjoyed a monopoly in the region and, like the atrocity films, initially intended to shame Germans. The first episodes of the newsreel showcased the Nuremberg trials and war atrocities as part of an “Allied view of world events.”⁸⁵ The entire issue shown on June 15, 1945 was dedicated to “the most horrifying footage of the camps.”⁸⁶ Because *Welt im Film* held a monopoly in the region, cinema owners and cinemagoers could do little to avoid seeing the newsreel. However, the guilt-laden newsreels were not very well received.⁸⁷ The first couple years of the newsreel mirrored an attempt to fulfill reeducation policy in much the same way atrocity films did.

When the effective monopoly ended in 1947 with the expansion of *Welt im Film* into quadripartite-controlled Austria, the newsreel faced new competition from French and Russian newsreels and the British redirected the newsreel from shaming Germans to guiding them.⁸⁸ The Joint Newsreel Control Board wanted to ensure that the newsreel did not turn into “an obvious

⁸¹ Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 57.

⁸² “FO 946/74 Newsreel Material: ‘Welt Im Film’.” Crawford to Tritton 2 February 1948.” In reality the exchange of newsreel was highly unequal with *Welt im Film* using much more of the British Newsreel Companies’ footage than the British Newsreel Companies used of *Welt im Film*, which becomes a point of contention later.

⁸³ Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 57.

⁸⁴ Elton, “FO 946/69 Films: Policy, Report of Three Month’s Work from January 21st to April 21st 1947.”

⁸⁵ “FO 1020/628 ‘Welt Im Film’ Distribution Policy. Newsreel Agreement Ref. 7/6 (3035).”

⁸⁶ Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*, 61.

⁸⁷ Ibid.; Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 57; “INF 1/636, Films for Liberated Territories. Patterson to Sidney 16 July 1945.”

⁸⁸ “FO 1020/582, ‘Welt Im Film’ (Newsreel). Braydon to Beauclerk 15 Dec 1947.”

instrument of propaganda, as were the newsreels in Nazi-days” in order to not only emphasize the difference between the current military government and the prior one, but also recover from the unfavorable reaction to the first phase of atrocity footage.⁸⁹ The British used *Welt im Film* to present a unified Allied cause and were reluctant to allow the blatant anti-Soviet propaganda their American counterparts encouraged in the newsreel.⁹⁰ The Information Services Control (ISC) stated “though the Soviet Military Administration is by no means reticent in making attacks [*sic*] upon ‘Western Capitalism,’ ‘Anglo-U.S. Imperialists,’ etc. it is not considered that they should at this time be paid in their own coin.”⁹¹ The British prioritized making Germany part of the West more than supporting a rift with the East.⁹² By spreading anti-communist propaganda, the British realized the effect that would have on German national identity and hopes for a united Europe. This policy was embodied by *Welt im Film* and was also the basis of reeducation to encourage unity and democracy.

By September 1949 the British no longer controlled film licenses in the Bizone and *Welt im Film*’s monopoly ended there as well.⁹³ Increased competition and an insufficient number of copies of *Welt im Film* due to raw film stock shortages brought an end to British support of *Welt im Film*.⁹⁴ Cinema owners complained that the newsreel was often so delayed and irrelevant that audience members arrived at the cinema late just to avoid watching the newsreel.⁹⁵ As soon as the newsreel stopped being profitable for the British in December of 1949, they withdrew

⁸⁹ “FO 946/73, ‘Welt Im Film’ Policy & Agreement. Decisions Taken at the Meeting of the Joint Newsreel Control Board at Munich 21 and 22 July 1947.”; Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 57.

⁹⁰ “FO 946/73 ‘Welt Im Film’ Policy & Agreement. Anti-Communist Propaganda 5 November 1947.”

⁹¹ “FO 946/73 ‘Welt Im Film’ Policy & Agreement. Anti-Communist Propaganda 5 November 1947.”

⁹² Tony Judt, *Postwar*, 109–110.

⁹³ G. Buckland-Smith, “FO 1056/261 Future of Welt Im Film, Ref. ISZO/Film/205.” The British and American zones of West Germany, united by the Marshall Plan, were called the Bizone.

⁹⁴ Brig. Gen. Robert A. McClure, Director of Information Control of the Office of Military Government for Germany (US), “OMGUS 11-110, APO 742.”

⁹⁵ “FO 1020/628 ‘Welt Im Film’ Distribution Policy. Newsreel Agreement Ref. 7/6 (3035).”

financial support and officially left the newsreel in May 1950, at which point reeducation as a whole had mostly disappeared from British policy.⁹⁶

The fact that the British decided to leave the newsreel when it stopped being profitable demonstrated that by the late 1940s the British were less concerned with reeducation, especially considering that the newsreel was reasonably widespread. Throughout the three zones in West Germany, *Welt im Film* reached nearly ten million people each week.⁹⁷ Eighty percent of people who had been to the cinema had seen the newsreel.⁹⁸ Despite complaints by cinema owners, two surveys conducted by the American occupational government suggested that in general *Welt im Film* was well received. Two thirds of the people polled who had seen *Welt im Film* thought that the newsreel was “good, all right, or interesting.”⁹⁹ People liked *Welt im Film* because it brought news from outside Germany.¹⁰⁰ Two years later, in 1948, eight percent more people who had been to the cinema had seen *Welt im Film*, demonstrating that the newsreel was expanding its distribution despite foreign competition.¹⁰¹ On the whole, *Welt im Film* was a far-reaching and positively received newsreel that was successful at bringing in international news and education Germans about current events. However, the decision to leave the newsreel indicated that by the end of the decade the British were no longer pursuing reeducation.

⁹⁶ German Education and Information Department, “Letter to the Chancery, British Embassy, Washington”; “FO 1056/261 ‘Welt Im Film’ Future Policy. Press Release 4 May 1950.”; Welch, “Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War,” 233.

⁹⁷ G. Buckland-Smith, “FO 1056/261 Future of Welt Im Film, Ref. ISZO/Film/205.”

⁹⁸ “OMGUS Surveys Report No. 20 Preliminary Study of Motion Picture Attendance and Attitudes.”

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*; German Education and Information Department, “Letter to the Chancery, British Embassy, Washington.”

¹⁰¹ “OMGUS Surveys Report No. 116 The Moving Picture Audience in AMZON.”

Documentaries: Bridging the GapStills from *A Defeated People* (1946).

Along with newsreels and atrocity films, the British government commissioned short documentaries to help alleviate the shortage of teachers, encourage support of British occupation and democracy, and connect Germany to the rest of Europe.

Reeducation policies prioritized the denazification of schools because of the vulnerability of children and young adults.¹⁰² Denazification decimated the number of teachers in German schools.¹⁰³ In order to make up for the shortage and simultaneously teach children about democracy, the Central Office of Information (COI) commissioned short films to be used as educational aids, which often included propaganda in support of the British occupation.¹⁰⁴ COI also commissioned non-educational and non-theatrical release documentary films shown in schools to illustrate how the British helped Germans transition postwar.¹⁰⁵ One documentary

¹⁰² "FO 1049/525 Reeducation of Germany by Major-General P.M. Balfour INTR/4061/HQ 29 Jan 1946."

¹⁰³ Puaca, *Learning Democracy*, 34.

¹⁰⁴ "FO 1049/29 Re-Education of Germany, Draft Directive on the Re-Education of Germany"; "FO 946/91 Central Office of Information: Film on German Education. 1947-8."

¹⁰⁵ "FO 946/91 Central Office of Information: Film on German Education. 1947-8." Films for non-theatrical release were financed through the Institut für Film und Bild (FO 946/91 Central Office of Information: Film on German Education. 1947-8.)

showed the British setting up new German schools.¹⁰⁶ Michael Balfour's report on reeducation further encouraged the use of films in schools to target the youngest age group of Germans who had grown up entirely under the Third Reich.¹⁰⁷ The documentary *School Amongst the Ruins* explained problems faced by the juvenile education system and demonstrated the ongoing reorientation and reeducation of the whole education system.¹⁰⁸ The incorporation of films into school curriculum to target young students demonstrated the widespread and persuasive nature of reeducation documentaries.

Through documentaries the British also hoped to reverse and prevent German self-pity and build a closer relationship between Germany and the United Kingdom. The British attempted to impede cynical and resentful German behavior as a result of Germans believing that Allied war atrocities were "no better" than their own.¹⁰⁹ Films were produced with the explicit intention to justify British occupation to Germans and connect Germany to the European community. Preventing a reclusive Germany by bringing it closer to Britain, the British hoped to forge a new national identity for Germany that was receptive to democracy and other Western values. The attempt to accomplish this culture change demonstrated the agency that the British gave films to influence public opinion.

Other theatrical reeducation documentaries focused on building unity between Germany and Europe, but excluded the Soviet Union. Arthur Elton, a supervisor of films for COI, called for films like *Children of the Ruins* (1948), which supported UNESCO, that would connect

¹⁰⁶ "FO 946/91 Central Office of Information: Film on German Education Ref G.8/820/3 Crawford to Ococks."

¹⁰⁷ "FO 1049/525 Reeducation of Germany by Major-General P.M. Balfour INTR/4061/HQ 29 Jan 1946."

¹⁰⁸ "FO 946/91 Films: Central Office of Information Film on German Education, 'School Amongst the Ruins' Treatment for a One-Reel Theatrical Film 27 Nov 1947."

¹⁰⁹ "FO 1049/45 Character of German People, Psychological Reactions to Defeat: A Discussion of Probable Modes of German Behaviour, By Lieut Col H B Dicks 4 June 1945."

Germany to the international community.¹¹⁰ The British hoped that a German identity that was linked to a European identity would prevent an isolated Germany in Europe.¹¹¹ However, this unity only went so far to include Western Europe and in fact worked to prevent solidarity between Germany and the Soviet Union. A British ambassador to the Soviet Union, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, proposed the British should be “prudent” in passing on to public opinion “what is distasteful to us in some aspects of Russian democracy” and documentary films filled this role.¹¹² The British Information Services Division even saw this as an opportunity to float some of their reeducation propaganda into the Russian Zone.¹¹³ Because recovery in the British Zone was still ongoing, the British were especially motivated to stop the Germans from thinking the Soviet Zone might be better.

But it is certain that if the people become convinced that the Russians will help them in solving gigantic problems and particularly feed them on a fairly livable basis, the people will turn to the Russians – much on the principle that a drowning man (read hungry) will cling to a straw.¹¹⁴

If the British were to thwart the threat of Germans allying with the Soviet Union, they had to be sure to include efforts to persuade Germany to the British occupation. Documentaries produced about the economic state of the German people and world food crisis were just as much intended to inform the Germans about widespread problems as they were to excuse the British for not solving them.¹¹⁵

However, as with *Welt im Film*, the British recognized the possibility of going too far with anti-Soviet propaganda. The primary concern was to not fracture a broader European identity and to “retain a Germany that is not divided east from west.”¹¹⁶ Film policy continued to

¹¹⁰ Elton, “FO 946/69 Films: Policy, Report of Three Month’s Work from January 21st to April 21st 1947.”

¹¹¹ “FO 1049/525 Re-Education of Germany, JJG/DG.”

¹¹² “FO 1049/253 Anglo-Soviet Relations, Concluding Passage of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr’s Despatch to Mr Anthony Eden 10 July 1945.”

¹¹³ “FO 946/44 Proposed Improvements in British Information Services in Germany, G W Houghton to Duncan Wilson 1 Jan 1947.”

¹¹⁴ “FO 1049/84 Letter from Harry A. Schneiders.”

¹¹⁵ Welch, “Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British ‘Re-Education’ Policy in Germany after the Second World War,” 232; “FO 1049/525 Re-Education of Germany, JJG/DG.”

¹¹⁶ “FO 1049/253 Anglo-Soviet Relations to Mr Steel.”

stress a less obvious attack on Soviets, but as tensions between East and West grew, the films continued with anti-Soviet overtones.¹¹⁷

The British also made documentaries specifically for British and foreign audiences to report on conditions in Germany and the progress of the occupation.¹¹⁸ These films were made in Germany by German technicians and served a specific public relations purpose, which involved “something more than simply describing conditions in Germany.”¹¹⁹ The British wanted to inform people how the CCG(BE) functioned, the “special problems” that existed in Germany, and how the British aimed to solve them.¹²⁰ Films like *Why We Spend Money in Germany* and *A Defeated People* were produced to recount hardships in Germany and explain to British citizens why the British cannot leave Germans to simply “stew in their own juice.”¹²¹ These documentaries brought “weight and dignity” to the screen in ten to twenty minute segments shown in cinemas before feature films.¹²² Most films produced by the Crown Film Unit were well received both critically and publically.¹²³ One documentary, *Kreis Resident Officer* (1947), used the point of view a British civilian officer who was supposed to “observe and report on local affairs” to paint a broad picture of conditions in Germany.¹²⁴ Films about the German coal industry, volunteer organizations, police service, and British justice were all meant to defend the British position in Germany.¹²⁵ Even an animated film called “‘Charlie’ in Germany” that focused on “various aspects of planning and economics” was proposed.¹²⁶ As much as these films reported on hardships in Germany, they focused on the positive effects of

¹¹⁷ August-Schmidt, “American Hypnosis: The Anglo Angle of *Welt im Film*.”

¹¹⁸ Elton, “FO 946/69 Films: Policy, Report of Three Month’s Work from January 21st to April 21st 1947.”

¹¹⁹ “FO 946/92 Films on Conditions in Germany To Be Made By Central Office of Information, Crawford to Elton ISC/ZEO/4485/1 15 Dec 1947.”

¹²⁰ “FO 946/69 Films: Policy, Telegram from Armstrong to Crawford 15 Sept 1947”; Elton, “FO 946/69 Films: Policy, The Production of Documentary and Similar Films in Germany.”

¹²¹ “INF 6/374 A Defeated People, CC. E. 16 11 March 1946.”

¹²² Ibid.; Knowles, “A Defeated People - What the Film Reviews Said in 1946.”

¹²³ Knowles, “A Defeated People - What the Film Reviews Said in 1946.”

¹²⁴ “FO 946/92 Films on Conditions in Germany To Be Made By Central Office of Information, Proposed Programme of Films to Be Sponsored by Control Commission, London through COI HQ. PR/ISC.”

¹²⁵ “FO 946/92 Films on Conditions in Germany To Be Made By Central Office of Information, Memorandum from Arthur Elton ISC/ZEO/4482/4 19 Jan 1948.”

¹²⁶ Ibid.

the British occupation and avoided encouraging “the Germans to feel pity for themselves, and the British to feel sorry for the Germans” in order to create a positive and aligned bond between the two nations.¹²⁷ The quantity of films produced and their success illustrated the public interest in Germany and that these documentaries were enjoyed by the masses.

Critiques from British citizens likely motivated the decision to produce films that guided an “informed public opinion” about the CCG(BE). COI proposed *Why We Spend Money in Germany* so the British would not “be hampered by uninformed criticism.”¹²⁸ One notable campaign against the CCG(BE) was called “Get out of Germany” led by John Deane Potter, an investigative reporter who starkly criticized the CCG(BE) for being “corrupt” and “lazy.”¹²⁹ A series of newspaper articles about the scandal of “far too many maggots feeding on the corpse of defeated Germany” followed Potter’s report and likely spurred the production of films to inform people about the actual situation in Germany.¹³⁰

In 1946 the Central Office of Information and the British Council planned to deliver forty-eight documentary shorts in the year.¹³¹ Each film that was produced contributed to the manifestation of a new national identity for Germany through the messages it carried while garnering support for the British occupation from within and beyond their bounds of operation. As the British pushed for a peaceful Europe and a unified, less threatening Germany, they used documentary films to convey similarities between the Germany and the United Kingdom and Europe, educate young Germans, and inspire support of the British occupation.

¹²⁷ “FO 946/92 Films on Conditions in Germany To Be Made By Central Office of Information, Crawford to Elton ISC/ZEO/4485/1 15 Dec 1947.”

¹²⁸ “FO 946/92 Films on Conditions in Germany To Be Made By Central Office of Information, Proposed Programme of Films to Be Sponsored by Control Commission, London through COI HQ. PR/ISC.”

¹²⁹ “FO 946/62 Press Campaign: ‘Get out of Germany.’”

¹³⁰ “Disgrace to Britain”; Potter, “Germany: A Report on the British Zone: Bring Home These Men!”

¹³¹ Brown, “FO 946/8 Films, Theaters, Books, Licensing of Newspapers, Notes on Present Situation - Germany. 7 May 1946.”

Conclusion

Atrocity films, newsreels, and documentaries were central to the reeducation program to forge a new German identity in the nascent postwar period. In order for the British to bridge Germany with the West, they had to first carry out a stern campaign to make the Germans feel guilty for the war. Atrocity footage was screened around Germany and the British expunged Nazi supporters through denazification policies. Even though the British were unable to quell food shortages or make up for the lack of teachers in schools, films justified their occupation to their German and British constituents. Reeducation films ushered democracy through a medium that was itself democratic, widespread, and accessible, which made it even more powerful.

The reeducation program represented an unprecedented approach to a defeated country. Instead of destroying the economy with war reparations, the British used films to challenge the fundamental psychology of an entire nation. These films shamed, informed, educated, and united West Germans. Atrocity films shown to prisoners of war and civilians enlightened many about the harsh realities of the war while attempting to instill a sense of collective guilt. The British entrusted reeducation films to raise awareness about Nazi war atrocities and shame the Germans. Newsreels portrayed everyday domestic and international issues infused with pro-British and pro-Allied propaganda to further the British agenda. *Welt im Film* sought to fight the “intellectual malnutrition” of wartime Germany while building alliances between Germany and the broader European community. Documentaries supplemented German education, encouraged support for British occupation and democracy, and helped to unify Germany with the United Kingdom and Europe as a whole. Documentaries also targeted British audiences that depicted a Germany that was on the path to salvation and redemption in order to gain support for British occupation. These films targeted a wide variety of demographics and demonstrated the power

that the British gave film to support their occupation and shape German identity. When the British stopped producing reeducation films, so, too, ended their support for reeducation as a whole.

Reeducation represented a new place for governments and films to attempt to influence national psychologies. The British use of films to share information and both subtly and forcefully shape national identity and public opinion through propaganda demonstrated the importance of film as a powerful communication medium. Films targeting German psychology illustrated a new approach to a defeated nation. Through reeducation films it is possible to see the importance the British attached to creating a unified Europe and maintaining support of the British occupation both in Germany and on the home front. Together, reeducation policy and films were an entirely unprecedented endeavor to create a new German nation one reel at a time.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Brig. Gen. Robert A. McClure, Director of Information Control of the Office of Military Government for Germany (US). "OMGUS 11-110, APO 742," November 29, 1946. Office of Military Government, United States Papers Jan-Dec 1946.
- Brown, Alec. "FO 946/8 Films, Theaters, Books, Licensing of Newspapers, Notes on Present Situation - Germany. 7 May 1946," n.d.
- "Disgrace to Britain." *Daily Mail*, August 21, 1947.
- Elton, Arthur. "FO 946/69 Films: Policy, Report of Three Month's Work from January 21st to April 21st 1947," May 4, 1947.
- . "FO 946/69 Films: Policy, The Production of Documentary and Similar Films in Germany," May 12, 1947.
- "FO 1020/582, 'Welt Im Film' (Newsreel). Braydon to Beauclerk 15 Dec 1947.," n.d. The National Archives of the UK.
- "FO 1020/628 'Welt Im Film' Distribution Policy. Eagle-Lion Distributors 19 March 1948.," n.d. TNA.
- "FO 1020/628 'Welt Im Film' Distribution Policy. Newsreel Agreement Ref. 7/6 (3035).," n.d. TNA.
- "FO 1020/629 Joint Newsreel Control Board (Anglo-American Supervision). Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Newsreel Control Board, Austria 26 May 1948.," n.d. TNA.
- "FO 1036/196 Film Reorganisation Committee (FRC)/German Film Reorganisation Advisory Committee. Allied High Commission Minutes of the First Meeting Film Reorganisation Committee in Session with the German Film Reorganisation Advisory Committee Held at Petersberg on 30 January 1951.," n.d. TNA.
- "FO 1049/253 Anglo-Soviet Relations to Mr Steel.," n.d.
- "FO 1049/253 Anglo-Soviet Relations, Concluding Passage of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr's Despatch to Mr Anthony Eden 10 July 1945.," n.d.
- "FO 1049/29 Re-Education of Germany, Draft Directive on the Re-Education of Germany."
- "FO 1049/45 Character of German People, Psychological Reactions to Defeat: A Discussion of Probably Modes of German Behaviour, By Lieut Col H B Dicks 4 June 1945," n.d.
- "FO 1049/525 Pol.B/465/1/46," February 9, 1946.
- "FO 1049/525 Re-Education of Germany, JJG/DG," February 20, 1946.
- "FO 1049/525 Reeducation of Germany by Major-General P.M. Balfour INTR/4061/HQ 29 Jan 1946," January 29, 1946.
- "FO 1049/84 Letter from Harry A. Schneiders," June 1, 1945.

- “FO 1049/84 PR/ISC Group to USFET, Atrocity Propaganda,” August 31, 1945.
- “FO 1049/84 Propaganda Policy - Control Commission. Colonel Rees to Mr Pink 12 June 1945.”
- “FO 1056/261 ‘Welt Im Film’ Future Policy. Press Release 4 May 1950.,” n.d. TNA.
- “FO 1056/93 Survey of German Public Opinion No. 10, Period Covered July 21 to August 25, 1946.”
- “FO 1056/93 Survey of German Public Opinion No. 10, Special Survey on the Reactions of German POWs on Their Return to Germany,” n.d.
- “FO 1079/20 Propaganda and Re-Education, John G Winsnt to William Strang 5 May 1944.”
- “FO 1079/20 Propaganda and Re-Education, Proposals for the Establishment of Tripartite Anglo-American-Russian Control over Information and Propaganda in Germany during the Occupation Period 24 Apr 1944,” n.d.
- “FO 939/371 Reactions of German Prisoners of War to Atrocity Film, Lt. Col. Sinclair to Wing Commander Hitch 15 June 1945,” n.d.
- “FO 939/371 Reactions of German Prisoners of War to Atrocity Film, Reactions to German Prisoners of War to Concentration Camp Atrocity Film Ref: POW/1/F(G)956(s) 14 Aug 1945,” n.d.
- “FO 939/72 Concentration Camp Film, Report on Individual PWs Reaction to Concentration Camp Film.,” n.d.
- “FO 945/294 Re-Education of Germany (1944-1946), Armistice and Post-War Committee, Control of German Education. Note by the Chairman of the ACAO Committee,” n.d.
- “FO 946/44 Proposed Improvements in British Information Services in Germany, G W Houghton to Duncan Wilson 1 Jan 1947,” n.d.
- “FO 946/62 Press Campaign: ‘Get out of Germany,’” n.d.
- “FO 946/69 Films: Policy, Telegram from Armstrong to Crawford 15 Sept 1947,” n.d.
- “FO 946/73 ‘Welt Im Film’ Policy & Agreement. Anti-Communist Propaganda 5 November 1947.,” n.d. TNA.
- “FO 946/73, ‘Welt Im Film’ Policy & Agreement. Decisions Taken at the Meeting of the Joint Newsreel Control Board at Munich 21 and 22 July 1947.,” n.d. TNA.
- “FO 946/73, ‘Welt Im Film’ Policy & Agreement. Distribution of ‘Welt Im Film’ 10 February 1948.,” n.d. TNA.
- “FO 946/74 Newsreel Material: ‘Welt Im Film’. Crawford to Tritton 2 February 1948.,” n.d. TNA.
- “FO 946/8 Films, Theaters, Books, Licensing of Newspapers, Bercomb to Troopers 13 May 1946,” n.d.

- “FO 946/8 Films, Theaters, Books, Licensing of Newspapers, Development of Press in Germany,” n.d.
- “FO 946/8 Films, Theaters, Books, Licensing of Newspapers, Major General WHA Bishop to Michael Balfour 20 Feb 1946,” n.d.
- “FO 946/91 Central Office of Information: Film on German Education Ref G.8/820/3 Crawford to Ococks.,” September 25, 1947. The National Archives of the UK.
- “FO 946/91 Central Office of Information: Film on German Education. 1947-8.,” n.d. The National Archives of the UK.
- “FO 946/91 Films: Central Office of Information Film on German Education, Education in Germany (ISC/ZEO/4482/6) Elton to Brown 9 Mar 1948.,” n.d.
- “FO 946/91 Films: Central Office of Information Film on German Education, ‘School Amongst the Ruins’ Treatment for a One-Reel Theatrical Film 27 Nov 1947.,” n.d.
- “FO 946/92 Films on Conditions in Germany To Be Made By Central Office of Information, Crawford to Elton ISC/ZEO/4485/1 15 Dec 1947.,” n.d.
- “FO 946/92 Films on Conditions in Germany To Be Made By Central Office of Information, Crawford to Helen de Moulpied 26 Aug 1947.,” n.d.
- “FO 946/92 Films on Conditions in Germany To Be Made By Central Office of Information, Memorandum from Arthur Elton ISC/ZEO/4482/4 19 Jan 1948.,” n.d.
- “FO 946/92 Films on Conditions in Germany To Be Made By Central Office of Information, Proposed Programme of Films to Be Sponsored by Control Commission, London through COI HQ. PR/ISC.”
- G. Buckland-Smith. “FO 1056/261 Future of Welt Im Film, Ref. ISZO/Film/205,” March 20, 1950. The National Archives of the UK.
- German Education and Information Department. “Letter to the Chancery, British Embassy, Washington,” February 18, 1950. The National Archives of the UK.
- “INF 1/178 Film Censorship Chapter VIII 1938.,” TNA.
- “INF 1/636, Films for Liberated Territories: Investigation of War Atrocities - Factual Film Report on German Concentration Camps with Catalogue of Films for Liberated Territories (1945). Nolbandov to Archibald 22 February 1945.,” TNA.
- “INF 1/636, Films for Liberated Territories. Patterson to Sidney 16 July 1945.,” TNA.
- “INF 1/636, Films for Liberated Territories. Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force - Psychological Warfare Division, Taylor to Bernstein 25 May 1945.,” TNA.
- “INF 6/374 A Defeated People, CC. E. 16 11 March 1946,” n.d.
- “OMGUS Surveys Report No. 116 The Moving Picture Audience in AMZON,” April 28, 1948. Office of Military Government, United States Papers 1948.

“OMGUS Surveys Report No. 20 Preliminary Study of Motion Picture Attendance and Attitudes,” August 27, 1946. Office of Military Government, United States Papers Jan-Dec 1946.

Potter, John Deane. “Germany: A Report on the British Zone: Bring Home These Men!” *Daily Express*, September 4, 1947.

“Unfair Attacks on the Control Commission: Frustration, Deprivations, and Insecurity.” *The Guardian*, October 31, 1947.

Secondary Sources

Brink, Cornelia. “Secular Icons: Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration Camps.” *History & Memory* 12, no. 1 (2000): 135–50.

Carruthers, Susan L. “Compulsory Viewing: Concentration Camp Film and German Re-Education.” *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (December 1, 2001): 733–59. doi:10.1177/03058298010300030601.

David Stewart Hull. *Film in the Third Reich: A Study of the German Cinema 1933-1945*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.

Douglas, Lawrence. “Film as Witness: Screening Nazi Concentration Camps before the Nuremberg Tribunal.” *The Yale Law Journal* 105, no. 2 (November 1, 1995): 449–81. doi:10.2307/797126.

Faulk, Henry. *Group Captives: The Re-Education of German Prisoners of War in Britain 1945-1948*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1977.

Fehrenbach, Heide. *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing of National Identity After Hitler*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 1995.

George Lachmann Mosse. *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Kelson, John Frank. *Catalogue of Forbidden German Feature and Short Film Productions*. Edited by K.R.M. Short. Hamburg, Germany, 1996.

Knowles, Christopher. “A Defeated People - What the Film Reviews Said in 1946.” *How It Really Was*, October 14, 2006.

http://howitreallywas.typepad.com/how_it_really_was/2006/10/a_defeated_peop.html.

Kurt Jürgensen. “The Concept and Practice of ‘Re-Education’ in Germany 1945-50.” In *The Political Re-Education of Germany and Her Allies After World War II*, edited by Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson, 83–96. Kent: Croom Helm Australia, 1985.

Logan, Philip C. *Humphrey Jennings and British Documentary Film: A Re-Assessment*. Abingdon: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2011.

- Marcuse, Harold. *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Michael Balfour. "In Retrospect: Britain's Policy of 'Re-Education.'" In *The Political Re-Education of Germany and Her Allies After World War II*, edited by Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson, 139–50. Kent: Croom Helm Australia, 1985.
- Petley, Julian. "BFI Screenonline: Jennings, Humphrey (1907-1950) Biography." *British Film Institute*, 2013. <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/453623/>.
- Pronay, Nicholas, and Keith Malcolm Wilson. *The Political Re-Education of Germany & Her Allies After World War II*. Croom Helm, 1985.
- Puaca, Brian. *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965*. Berghahn Books, 2009.
- Roger Smither. "'Welt Im Film': Anglo-American Newsreel Policy." In *The Political Re-Education of Germany and Her Allies After World War II*, edited by Nicholas Pronay and Keith Wilson, 151–72. Kent: Croom Helm Australia, 1985.
- Rose, Nikolas. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Russell, Patrick. "BFI Screenonline: Elton, Arthur (1906-1973) Biography." *British Film Institute*, 2013. <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/513790/>.
- Shandley, Robert R. *Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001.
- Sliwinski, Sharon. *Human Rights in Camera*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 2011.
- Sussex, Elizabeth. *The Rise and Fall of British Documentary: The Story of the Film Movement Founded by John Grierson*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.
- Thomson, Mathew. *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture, and Health in Twentieth Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Tony Judt. *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2005.
- Weckel, Ulrike. "Disappointed Hopes for Spontaneous Mass Conversions: German Responses to Allied Atrocity Film Screenings, 1945-46." *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 2012, 39–53.
- Welch, David. "Priming the Pump of German Democracy: British 'Re-Education' Policy in Germany after the Second World War." In *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany: British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones, 1945-55*, edited by Ian Turner. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.