

News Letter

Published by News Research Service, Inc.
727 W. Seventh Street, Los Angeles, California

Vol. 5 No. 147

May 21, 1941

PROPAGANDA PICTURES PROMOTED HERE BY UNREGISTERED REICHSTERS

Let the world learn to look upon our film as a herald of the German way and a messenger of our ideology. There can be no art but that which has firm roots in our ideology.

---Hans Steinbach, Press Chief in Reich Chamber of Films, in "Völkischer Beobachter", March 19, 1937.

For failure to register as agents of the German Government, as provided by the Foreign Agent Registration Act of 1938, Dr. Manfred Zapp, editor of Transocean News Service, and Guenther Tonn, his assistant, were indicted by a Special Grand Jury in Washington last March 11th. They had distributed, throughout the Americas, German propaganda in the form of news stories.

Observers, familiar with the activities of Nazi propagandists, wonder why the U. S. Government has failed to take action under this statute, against the individuals and organizations who distribute and exhibit German-made propaganda motion pictures in this country.



The German Library of Information, an adjunct of the Reich Propaganda Ministry, which leaves no stone unturned to promote and distribute German films in the United States, is already registered. However, records of the State Department fail to show that agents of this German agent, who act as distributors and exhibitors of these pictures, have registered.

The extent to which the German Library of Information promotes the presentation of pictures, produced in Germany and shown in America, is clearly illustrated by an examination of the May 5, 1941 issue of "Facts in Review", the Library's mouthpiece, which is sent gratis, each week, to thousands of people all

Still from Motion Picture, "Otto von Bismarck", plugged by the German Library of Information. Scene shows Bismarck's greatest triumph, the establishment of the German Empire in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.

over the country. In an article entitled "Film History and Historical Films", the directors of the Library wax enthusiastic over gains made by the German film industry, during the last year. Says "Facts in Review":

Exports in the last 12-month have increased from 1,773 prints to 3,683. In addition, no fewer than 1,000 news reel prints were sent abroad each week.

Liberal sprinkled among film productions, purely for entertainment, are pictures dealing with "documentary" topics. In all cases, these effusions, on the part of German picture producers, make the most of spreading propaganda on behalf of the Reich. The important part played by these particular pictures is pointed out in the article, as follows:

As in the previous season, particular emphasis was placed this year on historical, documentary and scientific pictures, which assume an ever-more important part in Germany's film fare....News releases, frequently more than double the length they used to be, naturally command tremendous interest, since the news reel men in uniform, who are part of the military machine and can be found wherever anything of importance occurs, are registering events of the greatest historical importance, no longer as mere spectators but as actual participants.

This statement again demonstrates that Nazi propaganda leaves nothing to chance. If prospective adherents to the German cause cannot be lassoed or influenced by the printed word of Reich-financed journalists working for Trans-ocean, then they are to be "captured" by the recorded activities of camera reporters who wear the Nazi military uniform. Overlapping of these activities represents virtually a journalistic pincer movement.

A Matter of "No Importance"

Supplementing these news reels, the German Library of Information boosts films dealing with events of pre-Hitler history, all presented from the up-to-date Nazi point of view. To justify the production of such historical pictures, attempts are made to point out parallels which exist between the eras depicted in the films, and the present time, with emphasis on the need for a New Europe, united under a strong -- i.e., totalitarian -- movement. The Library's own statement would have it that historical accuracy is of no importance, as long as the desired message is effectively conveyed to the public. In speaking of one such historical release, entitled *Otto von Bismarck* (illustration on page 1), the article has this to say:

Seeing this picture, even the usual questions about the historical accuracy of the play need not be asked. For the burning actuality of today is so close to Bismarck's own titanic struggle for unity, that the spectator no longer coolly measures the hero with the yardstick of historical distance. Uncannily, time and space are eliminated, the dead past becomes the living today, and Bismarck himself appears as much a part of it and a part of tomorrow as he is of history. This is sufficient justification for its makers to refuse to engage in detailed miniature work and to paint the picture rather in the bold strokes of the great "mythos". (Underscoring by NRS)

These historical films and "documentary" news reels are not the only propaganda weapons used by German master-minds in the war of nerves. No subject is overlooked, which lends itself even remotely to propagandistic exploitation and stimulation of disunity. Typical of this strategy is a picture entitled "Irish Tragedy", released by the Tobis Film Company and designed to bolster anti-British feeling among the large American populace of Irish de-

scent. A painstaking review of this film appears in the April 2, 1941 issue of "Facts in Review". Reproduced on page 6 is a still from the movie, emphasizing "atrocities" in Ireland.

A cursory glance at titles of other releases indicates the trend of productions offered by the German Library of Information. Included are *Über alles in der Welt* (Above All Else in the World), *Stukas* (dealing with Germany's latest weapon), *Reitet für Deutschland* (Ride for Germany), *Anschlag auf Baku* (Plot Against Baku), and *Unterseeboote Westwärts* (U-Boats Westward).

A most important "documentary" film making its propoganda march throughout the United States, and lauded most highly by the Library, is *Sieg im Westen* (Victory in the West). This is virtually the same picture which has been shown under the title *Blitzkrieg im Westen* (Lightning War in the West). According to the German Library of Information, this film has been produced in the midst of actual fighting, by order of Field Marshal von Brauchitsch. Most of its component parts were prepared by the reporter squadrons of German general headquarters.

Running for nearly two hours, *Sieg im Westen* opens peacefully enough with pastoral scenes along the frontier rivers where, according to the commentator, Germany has always had to defend herself against aggression. There are pictures of post-war Germany, and some isolated scenes from the Polish and Norwegian campaigns before the main part of the film begins.

By using captured British and French films, the picture intimates that the Allied troops began the attack in the low countries. Following this, reel after reel shows German tanks crashing through forests and ruins, airplanes diving to attack and dropping bombs, guns of all sizes being fired, shells exploding on distant hills, some scoring direct hits on nearby, stationary, enemy tanks. Soldiers paddle across rivers and streams in their inflated rubber boats. Engineers construct pontoon bridges and large trucks and trailers move up gasoline, munitions and food to the front lines.

Schwinn Still Leader of the Bund

In previous exposes of NRS, frequent references were made to F. K. Ferenz, exhibitor of German propoganda pictures in Southern California. Encountering many difficulties on all sides, Ferenz was evicted from one theatre after another. He recently announced to his cohorts that he would again show pictures, this time at the theatre in the Pacific Electric Building, 627 South Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles, starting on April 27th. The management of the theatre, realizing in the nick of time that Ferenz is the notorious Nazi film exhibitor, informed him that the theatre would not be available for such purposes.

But Nazi propoganda films are useless while in the film-can, and it was not long before arrangements were made to present a program for theatre-going Nazis and Nazi sympathizers. A handbill (illustration on page 6), announcing this latest venture, reads (translated):

Attention! Attention! Showing at the German House! From Thursday, the 1st, to Wednesday, the 7th of May (inclusive), each evening at 8 o'clock, the historical film-document of the break-through in the West, the much-discussed, actual sound film of the German Army, "Blitzkrieg im Westen". Also the latest UFA news reel.

Because Ferenz had been forced out, Hermann M. Schwinn, much-publicized ex-citizen, and leader of Bund activities in the Los Angeles area, announced that thenceforth films would be shown at "his" establishment -- i.e., the *Deutsches Haus*, 634 West 15th Street. Ever since the United States Supreme Court upheld the local Federal Court's decision, cancelling Schwinn's citizen-

ship, a demand has been raised for his deportation. Federal authorities aver that Schwinn's case does not come under deportation laws. Still, the showing of a German propaganda picture such as *Blitzkrieg im Westen* -- distributed by the German Library of Information, which is an adjunct of the German Government's Propaganda Ministry -- seems to be sufficient grounds upon which Schwinn may be investigated to determine his responsibility to register as agent of a foreign power.

Cross-Country Performance a la Nazi

Reports received from NRS correspondents, together with extended investigations, indicate that in many American cities, German propaganda pictures still maintain, as in Los Angeles, a prominent place in the entertainment of Nazis and their American dupes. Herewith are presented a few typical examples of such activities:

NEW YORK, N. Y.: *Sieg im Westen* was shown in the theatre at 96th Street and Third Avenue. An announcement of this attraction appeared in the *Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter* (illustration on page 6), official organ of the Bund. Members of the German-American Congress for Democracy, which strenuously opposes the tenets of the Bund, picketed the theatre at the time of this showing (illustration on page 6). In sharp contrast was the audience reaction within the theatre. Cheers greeted each appearance of Hitler. When *der Führer* was pictured stalking through Notre Dame in Paris to the tune of *Die Wacht am Rhein* (The Watch on the Rhine), most of the audience started singing that song.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.: *Sieg im Westen*, shown in New York, was prohibited in Pennsylvania. On April 17th, last, a German news reel was privately viewed in the Moose Hall at 1314 North Broad Street, for the benefit of the German Seamen's Home, 1402 East Moyamensing Avenue. Two romantic movies with German backgrounds shown on this occasion had been reviewed by the Board of Censors in Philadelphia, but the news reel was not checked. Peter Kreckmann, manager of a North German Lloyd office in this city, supplied the film. In the picture, many battle scenes were shown, and the swastika was prominently displayed. The showing, attended by 1500 persons, was sponsored by Carl P. Berger, 308 Cynwyd Avenue. In applying for a city permit for the show, Berger listed his address as 1510 Walnut Street. However, investigation revealed that he has not occupied an office at this address for a whole year.

Two days later, under the sponsorship of the *Kyffhäuser Bund*, a Nazi organization exposed in earlier issues of NEWS LETTER, a program was presented in honor of Adolf Hitler's birthday. The presentation opened with a travelogue provided by North German Lloyd, of 1711 Walnut Street. During the showing, the audience sang German songs. The movie itself was devoted largely to scenes aboard the *Europa*. Pictures of British vessels, including an aircraft carrier, made from the deck of the *Europa*, were greeted by silence or subdued boos. Shots of the German flag atop the mast brought loud applause. Both cheers and jeers were heard when a picture of the Statue of Liberty, fading into the mists of New York Harbor, was thrown on the screen. Present at this gathering were Heinrich Schaufhausen, German Vice Consul, and Eric Windels, former German Minister to Canada and now in charge of German Consulate activities in this area.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.: German patrons in this city are regularly treated to the showing of films at the Princess Theatre, 28th and Church Streets, owned and operated by Mario Parisi. During the first week in May, Parisi leased another theatre, the Tivoli, and began showing *Blitzkrieg im Westen*, which had a long run at the Princess Theatre some months ago. Parisi extended his activities to Oakland, across the bay from San Francisco, where he rented the Franklyn Theatre for a three-day showing of the same film. However, when the owners of the property received vigorous complaints from the American Legion and other organizations, they suggested to Parisi that he close up, rather than become

embroiled in a long and bitter controversy. To this Parisi consented, although his lease had not yet expired. The *California Demokrat*, a German-language newspaper published in San Francisco, announced on May 2nd that *Blitzkrieg im Westen* would be shown at the Tivoli Theatre, starting May 9th.

A week before *Blitzkrieg im Westen* opened at the Tivoli Theatre, Nazis in San Francisco went to the Princess Theatre to witness "The Heroic Fight for the Home Country". This picture, laid in the time of the Napoleonic wars, "is just now of especial interest because it helps to understand present developments in Europe", according to the *California Demokrat*. It is noteworthy that this statement is in the same tenor as those made by the German Library of Information.

ST. PAUL, MINN.: The Bluebird Theatre, 900 Rice Street, is the only one in these parts which has been showing Nazi-made films. Hillard Hoffman, owner of the theatre, is doing a landoffice business by showing German-made pictures, sandwiched in between regular programs. The Germans in this neighborhood, who attend these movies, stand up and cheer after each such performance.

CLEVELAND, OHIO: Private showings, at paid admissions, have been held from time to time in local halls. Three of the more prominent propaganda pictures shown were *Blitzkrieg im Westen*, "The Capture of Norway" and "Conquest of Poland".

CHICAGO, ILL.: Beginning Sunday, May 10, *Steg im Westen* was shown nightly at the Little German Theatre, 2153 Lincoln Avenue. An announcement of this program (illustration on page 6) appeared in the Bund paper, *Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter*.

MILWAUKEE, WIS.: The German Kino, a neighborhood house in the northwest part of the city, exhibits all Nazi pictures forwarded from the Reich. Propaganda films run much longer than is customarily profitable, which leads to the suspicion that the theatre is receiving subsidies from abroad or from Nazi groups in this city.

BOSTON, MASS.: *Blitzkrieg im Westen* was shown to some 2,000 students in the New Lecture Hall on the Harvard campus. The occasion was a mass psychology test conducted by the Harvard Student Liberal Union, a staunch advocate of Aid-to-England. Dr. Gordon Willard Allport, professor of Psychology, was asked to comment to the assembled student body, upon the propaganda techniques involved in the showing of the film. Says Dr. Allport:

The theme of the film is one of irresistible on-rush shots taken from dive bombers and tanks, actual battle scenes, but never, never a dead body. One sees always German successes, and the moral that resistance is hopeless. In the final scenes of the armistice, every ounce of melodramatic revenge is wrung from the scene. Nazi flags are displayed with great flamboyance. In a dictatorship, the whole man is not appealed to, only the excitable part. In psychology, this is called "segmental excitement". Of the reactions experienced, i.e., nausea, disgust, fear, anger and thrill, the "anger pattern" was the most dominant.

In many cities, locals of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Moving Picture Machine Operators are planning to enact legislation forbidding members of its union to project Reich-made films before audiences in this country. Nazi strategists intend to circumvent this decision by showing their films in German halls and operating the projecting machines themselves. Nothing will stop the showing of these pictures, they say, until the Government starts prosecuting the responsible foreign agents for failure to register in accordance with the Foreign Agent Registration Act; and then, with characteristic defiance, they aver, "some other way will be found".



Left: Pickets of German-American Congress for Democracy, parading before 96th Street Theater in New York City, protesting showing of "Sieg im Westen". Right: Still from Motion Picture, "Irish Tragedy", showing Irish peasant being dragged from his home by English bobbies.

LITTLE GERMAN THEATRE Chicago, Ill.

2153 LINCOLN AVENUE

Nahe Larrabee Strasse Tel.: Diversey 9250
Every Night at 6:00 p. m. — Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p. m.

Ab Samstag, den 10. Mai 1941:
Achtung! Achtung!

„Sieg im Westen“

Soeben per Flugzeug eingetroffen!
("Victory in the West")
DER FILM, DEN ALLE SEHEN WOLLEN!

Deutscher Filmabend

Hilfsverein für deutsche Seelente zum Besten des
Seemannsheims und der Hilfskassa

DONNERSTAG, DEN 17. APRIL 1941,
in der MOOSE HALL, 188 Nord Broad Strasse

ZWEI VORSTELLUNGEN:

namittags um 2:30 Uhr und abends um 8 Uhr pünktlich.

"Heimatland" "Drei Unteroffiziere"

1- "WOCHENSCHAU" 61

EINTRITT 50c. Kinder unter 10 Jahren 25c.
Das gesamte Publikum ist herzlich eingeladen.

Achtung! Achtung!

Soeben per Flugzeug eingetroffen!

„Sieg im Westen“

("Victory in the West")

DER FILM, DEN ALLE SEHEN WOLLEN!
Alleinige URAUFFUEHRUNG für Amerika

endgültig ab Mittwoch, den 7. Mai, im

96. Str. Theater 3. AVENUE und 96.
STRASSE
ATw. 9-4015

Beginn der Vorstellungen des ganz aussergewöhnlichen Interesses werden in der
ersten Woche täglich bereits um 12 Uhr mittags, Kasse 11:45 Uhr.
NB.: Der Film ist das Grösste, was Sie je bei uns zu sehen bekamen!

Left, above: Ad in "Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter" of showing of "Sieg im Westen" at 96th Street Theater, New York City. Left, center: Ad of showing in Chicago of "Sieg im Westen" appearing also in "Weckruf", Bund publication. Left, below: Handbill distributed by Los Angeles Bund, announcing showing of "Blitzkrieg im Westen" at German House. Above: Announcement of showing of German Films, for benefit of German Seamen's Home, appearing in "Philadelphia Herald". Below: Also in "Philadelphia Herald", announcement of showing of German Films by Kyffhäuser Bund.

ACHTUNG! ACHTUNG!

Nachstehend finden Sie abgeenderte Daten fuer wichtige

VERANSTALTUNGEN IM DEUTSCHEN HAUS

Von Donnerstag den 1. bis Mittwoch den 7. Mai (einschl.) jeden Abend 8 Uhr

Das historische Filmdokument des Durchbruchs im Westen der verborgenen, aktuellen Tonfilm
des grossen Sieges der deutschen Armee

"BLITZKRIEG IM WESTEN"

AUSSERDEM heute UFA-WOCHENSCHAU

Tanz und Unterhaltung Eintritt 30 cts plus Steuer Kinder frei

Heimatlicher Abend

zum Besten des

Kyffhäuser Kriegshilfswerks

am SONNABEND, DEN 19. APRIL, abends 8 Uhr
im Auditorium der St. Heinrichs-Kirche, 4400 N. E. Str.

EINTRITT 50 CENTS, Kinder in Begleitung Erwachsener frei.