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## THE USE OF EDUCATIONAL FILM LIBRARIES IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF WAR FILMS

L. C. LARSON

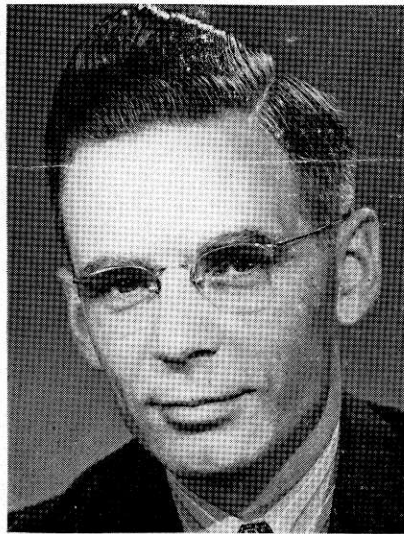
*Chairman, Educational Film Lending Library Committee  
Indiana University*

**E**ARLY IN January, 1942, a committee of three representatives from the National University Extension Association conferred in Washington with representatives of government agencies that were developing motion picture programs for the dissemination of information on the war effort. On behalf of the educational institutions, the committee offered to these agencies the distribution facilities and educational leadership provided by approximately one hundred film libraries, located in forty-four states, that were at that time serving over twelve thousand school and community groups who owned approximately eighteen thousand 16mm sound projectors.

Two members of this original committee met with the Committee of Seventeen in Washington on January 27, 1942.<sup>1</sup> The Committee of Seventeen unanimously adopted the following resolution: "That government films be deposited directly with existing 16mm film libraries which meet specified standards." The report furthermore recommended that city and county school and community groups should be encouraged to order government films from film libraries which are serving their groups with educational, commercial, or entertainment films.

Even though government agencies approved of the idea of using existing 16mm outlets, they realized that it would be difficult to administer a program which involved direct contact with a large number of individual libraries. Moreover, because of a wide variation among libraries in rental fees, service charges, and enrollment plans, there was the problem of standardizing conditions under which users could obtain films. By reason of this and other considerations, the government's motion picture program as it was being organized prior to April 1, 1942, included only the use of national commercial distributors with regional outlets.

1. Reagan, C. R. "Visualization for Victory," *Educational Screen*, 1942, 21:94-95.



L. C. Larson of Indiana  
University Extension Division

A meeting of the directors of educational non-profit film lending libraries was held in Chicago on March 26-29, 1942, to discuss the need of an organization which could carry on negotiations with government agencies. Six representatives were appointed to constitute the Educational Film Lending Library Committee, with the power to allocate quantitatively the deposit of free prints with member libraries, and when necessary to re-allocate such deposited prints to obtain maximum use. The recommendations also included the suggestion that prints of government films should be deposited free in educational libraries to be distributed for a service charge of fifty cents per subject booking, plus transportation, to be paid by the borrower.

The resolutions and recommendations adopted at the conference were favorably received by government agencies. A representative of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, on April 9th, asked the Educational Film Lending Library Committee to submit recommendations for the allocation of forty percent of the available prints of this agency's films, or between 45 and 50 prints of each of 24 subjects. Since the number of

prints was limited, the Committee recommended the initial use of forty-seven larger libraries located in 41 different states.

A month after the Office of War Information was organized, the Educational Film Lending Library Committee received an invitation to submit recommendations on the allocation of eighty prints of each of four subjects to educational libraries. The OWI followed the recommendations of the Committee, and forty-seven educational libraries now have one to three prints of each of twenty-one subjects released by this agency.

In order to provide an objective and equitable basis for the allocation of prints of government films to educational libraries and to define the standards which would insure maximum distribution and proper utilization of deposited government films, the Educational Film Lending Library Committee submitted the following recommendations, which were adopted and approved by the Executive Committee<sup>2</sup> of the National University Extension Association at a joint conference in Washington on October 6, 1942.

### PREAMBLE

The O.W.I., C.I.A.A., O.C.D., U.S. Department of Agriculture, U. S. Office of Education and other government agencies consider the motion picture to be an important medium for the dissemination of information, for the building of civilian morale, and for the training of war workers and specialists in vocational and scientific fields.

Many of the universities, colleges, and state departments of education maintain and operate lending libraries of motion pictures on a non-profit basis. They have trained staffs and the necessary facilities for serving educational, cultural, industrial, agricultural, and other community groups with films

2. The Executive Committee members of the National University Extension Association are: George B. Zehmer (University of Virginia), President; D. C. Faber (Iowa State College), Vice-President; W. S. Bitner (Indiana University), Secretary-Treasurer; R. M. Grumann (University of North Carolina); F. C. Lowry (University of Tennessee); Robert B. Browne (University of Illinois); and Herbert H. Scott (University of Oklahoma).

needed for informational and training programs.

In order that these film libraries maintained by educational institutions and agencies may be of utmost service to the government in obtaining maximum distribution and optimum utilization of films produced by government agencies, it is recommended that:

**A. FULL UTILIZATION OF THE RESOURCES OF ALL NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL FILM LENDING LIBRARIES**

The above-mentioned groups look to their local university, teachers college, and state department of education for leadership and guidance in the planning and execution of informational and training programs related to the war effort. A close integration and effective utilization of films is enhanced when both the institution and local groups have immediate access to available film materials. Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. All educational institutions and agencies, upon submission of evidence to the Educational Film Lending Library Committee that they have facilities and staff for serving educational and community groups in their immediate geographic areas with war films produced by the government, and can keep a print of a subject in use for a year, under the definition of minimum use set forth in paragraph C-6, should have an opportunity to serve as depositories for films distributed by government agencies.

**B. ADMINISTRATION OF DEPOSITORIES THROUGH USE OF A LIAISON COMMITTEE**

More than one hundred institutions now maintain film lending libraries. Various government agencies will be releasing new film subjects periodically. It is apparent that direct correspondence by these government agencies with over one hundred different institutions on the allocation of prints of each subject would place a heavy drain on clerical resources and seriously impede making films immediately available to school and community groups. Moreover, educational libraries need to work closely together and share experiences for getting the best possible use of war films. Therefore, it is recommended that:

2. For liaison purposes government agencies deal with educational libraries through the Educational Film Lending Library Committee, consisting of: L. C. Larson (Indiana University), Chairman; L. W. Cochran (State University of Iowa), Regional Chairman of Chicago Area; Russell Grummann (University of

North Carolina), Regional Chairman of Washington Area; B. B. Rakestraw (University of California), Regional Chairman of San Francisco Area; Herbert H. Scott (University of Oklahoma), Regional Chairman of Dallas Area; Donald W. Smith (University of New Hampshire), Regional Chairman of New York Area.

3. Two consultants should be added to the Committee to represent teachers colleges and state departments of education.

**C. ADMINISTRATION OF DEPOSITORIES FOR SHORT SUBJECTS**

Prints made available by government agencies to educational lending libraries should be allocated to each library on an equitable basis, which should take into consideration the need of community and educational groups for the use of films in informational and training programs. The opportunity to serve as a depository also carries the responsibility of obtaining maximum distribution and optimum utilization of deposited films. It is therefore recommended that:

4. The Educational Film Lending Library Committee, on the basis of information obtained through returned questionnaires, analysis of film bulletins, and from reports of the analysis of audience report cards on average number of showings and average total aggregate audience per print per month, classify libraries under the categories in Table "A."

5. On the release of new subjects, each library should receive from the issuing agency the minimum number of prints according to its classification. Within six weeks of receipt of first print of a subject, libraries may, on the submission of evidence to their regional chairman sup-

**TABLE "A"**

| Class | Minimum No. of Prints of Each Subject | Maximum No. of Prints of Each Subject |
|-------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| I     | 1                                     | 2                                     |
| II    | 2                                     | 4                                     |
| III   | 3                                     | 6                                     |
| IV    | 4                                     | 8                                     |
| V     | 5                                     | 15                                    |

**TABLE "B"**

| Class | Average No. of Bookings Per Print Per Month | Average No. of Showings Per Print Per Month | Average Total Aggregate Audience Per Print Per Month |
|-------|---|---|--|
| I     | 2   | 5   | 625  |
| II    | 3   | 6   | 750  |
| III   | 3   | 7   | 875  |
| IV    | 3   | 8   | 1,000  |
| V     | 3   | 9   | 1,125  |

ported by analysis of report cards, future bookings, unfilled requests, planned programs, etc., obtain additional prints up to the maximum number for their classification.

6. At the end of each six-month period, the Committee will recommend to government agencies a reclassification of libraries according to information obtained from the analysis of audience report cards and the monthly booking reports. Libraries must meet at least two of the standards in Table "B."

The Committee's recommendations on the classification of member libraries will be submitted to all government agencies. The agency issuing prints will send directly to each library the minimum number of prints, according to its classification. A library may obtain additional prints up to the maximum number of its class on submission of evidence concerning need to its Regional Chairman, who will submit his recommendation to the proper government agency. Prints will be sent by the agency directly to the library.

Following reclassification of libraries, excess prints in any library will be sent, on recommendation of the Committee, to a library needing extra prints. The government agency will not need to handle prints after they are allocated to educational libraries, until the subject is recalled.

**D. ADMINISTRATION OF DEPOSITORIES FOR SPECIAL SUBJECTS**

It is recognized that in the case of certain subjects there will be a limited number of prints available for distribution. Depositories should make an extra effort to obtain an optimum use of special subjects. Therefore, it is recommended that:

7. All educational film libraries should have an opportunity to distribute special subjects to their educational and adult groups if they can meet two of the following qualifications: (1) keep a print in use for a year under a standard of four bookings, (2) ten showings, or (3) an average audience of 1500 per month.

8. When a limited number of prints of a film is released, one print should be allocated to each library, in turn, according to alphabetical order. Additional prints of the same subject or new subjects should be allocated in the same fashion, beginning with the library next following the one which received the last print of the last release of prints.

9. When the number of prints exceeds the number of libraries, one print should be allocated to each library and, of the remainder, one print additional should be allocated to each library, beginning with Class V. In no event should a library in any class receive more than the minimum number until all classes have received their designated minimum number of prints.

10. Regional depositories should agree to waive the service charge on one loan for a negotiated period during each six months, to libraries within their respective states, who have been approved as depositories for short subjects but are unable to keep special subjects busy for a period of one year. During the term of such loan, these libraries will be expected to meet proportional standards required for the distribution of special subjects and should provide the depository with information needed for the monthly report.

Since many of the member libraries are universities, the library-depositories will be arranged alphabetically according to city address. It so happens that any twenty libraries in consecutive order from this list will provide a fair geographic distribution which takes into account population as well, since the more populous areas have more libraries. All libraries that can meet the standards given in D-7 will, in this manner, have an opportunity to serve as regional depositories.

#### E. ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING MAXIMUM DISTRIBUTION AND OPTIMUM UTILIZATION

Depositories have the responsibility of not only announcing the availability of government films in their libraries for use by educational and adult groups, but also

the responsibility for assisting these groups to organize programs using war films. Therefore, it is recommended that:

11. The Educational Film Lending Library Committee should publish a monthly newsletter which will contain information on the promotion, planning and utilization of government films in community and school programs.

12. The Educational Film Lending Library Committee should assist depositories, on request, in developing a system of accounting and records which will enable libraries to submit accurate reports each month to government agencies and the Chairman of the Committee, on bookings, scheduled days of use, and refused requests.

13. Each depository will send to the other depositories announcements covering government films, study guides, study aids, etc., prepared to accompany films.

14. Depositories in regions and states should cooperate on the organization of conferences, short courses, and work shops, devoted to methods and procedures for obtaining the most effective use of government films by campus, school, and community groups.

#### F. ACCEPTANCE OF STANDARDS OF DISTRIBUTION

A depository cannot give the government full cooperation in return for the opportunity of serving as a depository unless it has a budget, staff, and facilities necessary for the administration of a film lending library. Therefore, it is recommended that:

15. Before an institution is approved as a depository, these recommendations should carry the signature of the director or supervisor of the film library, immediately following this statement:

"We have read the October 6, 1942, Educational Film Lending Library Committee's recommendations carefully and believe that we have the budget, staff, and facilities necessary to meet minimum standards expected of a Class ..... depository of short subjects, as indicated in items C-4 and C-6, and the minimum standards for ..... prints of special subjects as indicated in D-7. We will endeavor to carry out these standards for all films deposited in our library by government agencies.

SIGNED: .....  
Director or Supervisor of Film Library

According to information available from the analysis of data obtained from a September 1st questionnaire which was returned by 103 libraries, the number of libraries in each classification is as follows: Class I, 67; Class II, 23; Class III, 5; Class IV, 3; Class V, 5. If all libraries that have returned questionnaires approve the recommendations, one hundred and sixty-five prints of each subject will be needed to provide each library with the minimum number of prints according to its classification. If each library attains the minimum distribution standards of its class, the one hundred and three libraries should provide a minimum annual total audience of approximately 1,500,000 individuals for each deposited subject. The maximum number of prints, or 355, under standards given in C-6, would reach a minimum annual audience of approximately 3,000,000 individuals for a given film subject.

A print of a one-reel subject which will cost the government approximately \$6.00, can be expected to last at least three years under conditions of use defined in C-6. Therefore, a government agency, through the use of the film medium, can present a ten-minute message at a print cost of two hundredths of a cent per individual reached. In most cases, the educational and adult groups served by educational libraries will spend another ten to thirty minutes in discussing the issues raised by the films. It is doubtful whether the government could use another mass medium of communication which would reach, as effectively, the citizens of our country for this per capita cost.

While the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and the Office of War Information have designated but sixty-one educational libraries as depositories for their films, they, as well as other government agencies, will undoubtedly want to take advantage of the recommendations of the Educational Film Lending Library Committee and use all non-profit educational lending libraries, in order to get the maximum distribution and optimum utilization of their films among groups served by the educational non-profit film lending libraries.



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