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Motion Pictures, Television, and Education

By STEVE KNUDSEN, Education Advisor to the SMPTE President

"...so much hinges on our ability to shorten up the process by which the new generations acquire the most sophisticated forms of knowledge from the older."

These words sum up the importance of the contribution which motion pictures and television seek to make for education. But they do more. They point out the urgency of the educational problems we attack.

Each of the papers which follows was prepared for an engineering society — objectivity was quite properly a prime requirement. Yet each in its own way makes a contribution to an urgent and important phase of education.

The quotation above is not out of context; it comes from a paragraph speaking of motion pictures. The writer was James E. Webb, Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Worldwide Training in Film and Television Production

By DON G. WILLIAMS

Foreign schools belonging to the International Association of Schools of Cinema and Television have become increasingly aware of the educational applications of these media and the increased employment they will provide. Traditional professional training methods in Europe are reviewed and the role which the United States can play in developing the training for, and production of, foreign educational films and film makers are discussed.

UNLIKE THE UNITED STATES, nearly every major European country has a national school of cinema. Their institutions are frequently combined with a school of dramatic arts and are aimed at preparing their students to enter the entertainment motion picture industry.

About ten years ago, at the instigation of the French National School of Cinema, (IDHEC) these schools formed themselves into an international association to improve the teaching of motion-picture production. Representatives from each of the schools met at Cannes, France, as guests of the Cannes Film Festival Committee. The first year the only person from the United States to attend the conference was a government representative. However, he felt the meeting was of enough importance to the United States to warrant having a non-governmental delegate there, and suggested to Washington that at the next meeting the United States be represented.

Inasmuch as there is nothing in the United States equivalent to the national cinema schools of Europe, the University Film Producers Association (which represents all of the schools in the United States which produce and train for the production of motion picture films) was asked if they would care to send a delegate to the meeting the following year. The UFPA accepted the invitation and Herbert E. Farmer of the University of Southern California and the author were selected as delegates; we attended the next meeting, also held at Cannes, and helped organize the International Liaison Center of Schools of Cinema and Television.

The reason for presenting this background is to give some idea of the change that has taken place in European schools in the last several years. Mr. Farmer and the author, as well as Mr. John Mahon of the University of Los Angeles and Dr. Robert Wagner of Ohio State University who were delegates the following year, spent most of the time explaining to the European delegates the type of training given in American universities for motion-picture production, and the fact that our graduates went into educational or industrial film production or started as apprentices in the commercial film industry. The Europeans had almost no concept of what we were talking about when we discussed educational films or commercial and industrial films. One representative example comes to mind. After considerable discussion with a gentleman from the Dutch school, suddenly a knowing look appeared on his face and he said, "Oh yes, I have seen one such film made by our Philips Electric Company." The word "audio-visual" was completely unknown to these people.

Organization of Schools

The European schools are divided into two types; those which give two or three years training primarily in the field of motion-picture production and expect their students to have received their liberal arts education elsewhere, and those schools which train from four to six years and combine a liberal arts education with their cinema training.

The first can be exemplified by the Italian school, Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, which last year celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary; the

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school in Paris, IDHEC; as well as the Polish and Czechoslovakian schools.

The students come to these schools with what would be the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree in the United States. They are expected to have done a great deal of reading and study in the field of motion pictures. They take intensive entrance examinations in motion-picture appreciation, art and history. The number of students admitted is relatively low compared to the number who apply. When they are admitted, they study motion-picture production in all its phases.

At first they are not permitted to specialize, but must attend to the basic arts and techniques of film production. They take courses in the history of motion pictures, camera, editing, directing, lighting, stage design, acting, and the entire range of those arts and sciences which contribute to the production of a motion picture. After they understand the elementary aspects of production, they are allowed to specialize according to their talents. They are allowed to select a special field such as acting, directing, set design or camera work, and to specialize in it during their last year. When they have finished, because of the close tie that most of the schools have with national studios, the graduates are given the opportunity to work as assistants on the major productions in the national studios which are subsidized by the government.

To keep the studios from being flooded with an unusual amount of talent in any one field, the enrollment of nationals in their own country is very drastically limited. Consequently, there may be only eight or ten cameramen or directors graduating each year for the studios to absorb. This is not as true in the field of dramatics in which more are graduated and the young actors or actresses are more on their own without the studios being required to use them. All the schools of Italy, France, Czechoslovakia and Poland have large foreign student enrollments and will admit any foreign student who is qualified, if it is definitely understood that the student will not work in that country but will return to his own home after finishing training. The majority of the students enrolled are dedicated young people, partially because of the very strict entrance requirements. All of them are given an opportunity to work with the media. Most of them actually participate in the production of two or three short films as a team and each is required to produce one film for which he is personally responsible. This is called the thesis film, and on this film the student usually does the writing, directing, and then performs his own specialty. Graduation depends upon the excellence of this film as well as a final examination and competence in classwork.

The second type of school is best exemplified by the institute in Moscow. This is a six-year institution which enrolls about 600 students. Students enter here after graduating from a secondary school. While they are considerably in advance of our high school students, being equivalent to our juniors in college, they are still considered as beginning their university work. They are given a combination of a four year liberal arts education and special training in the entire field of motion pictures and drama.

This institution considers itself a professional school and makes no attempt to train technicians. In fact, they insist that they could train apprentice cameramen in six weeks if that is all they cared to do, but the cameramen coming out of their schools are men who are capable of becoming directors of photography when they have had proper seasoning and experience in the national studios. Students are given intensive work in all fields of theory, not only of the esthetic and technical aspects of motion-picture production but the psychological, political, and sociological implications of motion pictures as a means of communication. They make no distinction whatsoever as to the training required for a person who will produce motion pictures for education, propoganda, or entertainment. They train their people to produce in all areas.

The writer was told three years ago, when the Association met in congress, that the Moscow Institute had just completed an agreement with the national studios so that the students in their last year would have an opportunity to work directly in the studios under production conditions to complete their training. This would be on what we would consider an apprenticeship basis. (There have been several attempts to work out a similar arrangement in this country by the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Southern California, but these programs have met with only limited success.)

The Moscow Institute has not only a student enrollment from all areas in Russia, but also a large number of scholarship students from outside Russia. They seem to have almost unlimited funds for foreign scholarships. A study by the UFPA revealed that there are probably less than twenty full scholarships available to students in the United States to study motion-picture production and that none of these are primarily available to foreign students. For a country which has always prided itself on leadership in the field of motion-picture production and where billions of dollars have been produced by the industry, this is ironical.

Goals of Instruction

None of the schools, with the exception of Russia, was found to be training its students to produce industrial or educational films. This is not to say that such countries as France, England and Italy were not using educational films. However, these were being produced by people who had little or no formal film training and who just happened to get into film work through such paths as the ministries of education. With the advent of educational television and the widespread introduction of American educational films overseas in the last four or five years, there suddenly has been a demand for the production of these types of films in Europe; the people in charge of the national schools have realized that here was a vocational potential which they had completely overlooked.

The International Association met at Berkeley, Calif., in 1961 and had an opportunity to view a great many films that had been produced by American universities and also some that were produced by American industrial film producers. This experience, coupled with the fact that a number of the European film festivals in recent years have shown educational, industrial and advertising films as an adjunct to their main exhibits, has caused a great deal of discussion about the training of young film makers for these fields. In addition to this, the production of educational films for European television stations had undergone the same evolution as had the educational film in the United States some years ago. People in the ministries of education were no longer satisfied with films that were poorly made by what might be called advanced amateurs. They, the television studios, were turning to the film schools for people with professional motion-picture training to produce educational films for them.

This was evidenced by the type of observers who attended the international meeting this past year. Half a dozen ministers of education attended, compared with none previously. Five or six ministers of culture who represented newly independent countries in Africa and Asia were at the meeting to find out what could be done to improve film production in their own countries. Four representatives of European universities (not film schools) attended the meeting as representatives of faculties in these universities who were interested in the motion picture as a means of the mass communication of ideas and education. For the first time in the history of the national organization, the Polish school showed a student-made film which was strictly an educational production.

As a result of the shift in interest, a completely new situation has appeared in these schools which were originally designed to train people for the entertainment motion-picture industry in their countries. They did not even understand the purpose of the university film production in the United States when they first met in 1954; they have now discovered that this unknown area may

eventually absorb the largest segment of their graduates, and they are becoming quite concerned as to what difference this should make in their curricula.

There were numerous questions presented to the United States delegate about the difference in training required of educational and industrial producers as opposed to theatrical producers. The final consensus was that this would be largely in the field of writing and directing. They also realized that they are going to be facing the same difficulty as that prevailing in the United States where we are training students who have a chance to contact Hollywood producers, that is, that all young producers see their future in the glamorous field of theatrical production, and at the age of twenty it is very hard to convince them that their bread and butter may be in the much less glamorous area of educational production.

The Future

The shift in emphasis creates an opportunity for the United States to train in our universities some of the young people who will be the future film makers of Europe, the Middle and Far East, if there is any possible way of obtaining scholarships for them. At the present time it is much easier for a young person in one of the developing countries to get a scholarship into one of the countries of Eastern Europe than it is here in the United States. It seems that the United States is overlooking a fine opportunity by not having some scholarships open to these people who in the future will be in a position to influence great numbers of people by the films they make, merely because we do not have funds available for them to attend institutions which have been training the serious film maker for the last twenty-five years.

When these students were interested only in training for the entertainment motion-picture field, we had only a few institutions that could offer them anything. Now that they have this new interest in the educational film and films for educational television, we have many more institutions which can offer excellent training. Even fifteen or twenty non-government scholarships to finance studies in the United States for a two year period would help. While this would not counterbalance the number of scholarships offered by European schools, it would at least give us an opportunity to compete for the training of some of these young people who are going to be key members in the expanding area of educational film production and procurement in their own countries, and young people who, by the production of educational films and television, are going to influence whole generations.

Training Army Personnel for Motion Pictures and Television

By DOUGLAS W. GALLEZ

The Army's exploitation of visual media for education, training and tactical applications places a continuous requirement for personnel trained in motion-picture and television production and for skilled technicians to operate and maintain equipment. Increased emphasis upon research and development requires greater numbers of personnel experienced in photographic instrumentation. The historical development of Army photographic training, the training program existing today and anticipated future needs are discussed.

THE ARMY constantly requires skilled production specialists — producers, writers, cameramen, audio specialists, laboratory technicians — who can conceive and execute productions from idea to script to finished product. We need highly trained men to operate and maintain motion-picture and television facilities, both in the studio and in the field, in peace time and in combat.

The need for such personnel has never been greater. A look at the history of Army pictorial activities provides some idea of how far we have progressed.

Presented on May 6, 1960, at the Society's Convention in Los Angeles, by the author, then at the Army Pictorial Center, Long Island City, N.Y. The author may now be addressed: Lt. Col. Douglas W. Gallez, Signal Corps, Chief, Photographic Div., Audio-Visual Communications Directorate, Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Dept. of the Army, Washington 25, D.C. The opinions or conclusions in this study are those of the author and are not to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views or possessing the endorsement of the Department of the Army.

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History of Army Pictorial Activities

Photographic activities of the Army Signal Corps date from 1881–82, when an enlisted photographer was assigned to accompany the Greely arctic expedition; and the first photographic instruction appears to have been given in 1894 at the Signal School, which at that time was located at Fort Riley, Kan. But it was not until July, 1917, that photography was assigned to the Signal Corps as part of its official mission. The Army's first training film, *Close Order Drill*, had been photographed at West Point the year before. During World War I, the Signal Corps trained its photographers at several military installations. In addition, many universities and colleges organized special courses of instruction including photography. As a result of this training, World War I became the first conflict extensively photographed by the motion-picture camera. The Army sent overseas thirty-eight Signal Corps photographic teams who, by the end of the war, added 7 million feet of motion-picture film to the historical record of combat begun by Mathew Brady and other photographers during the Civil War. In 1918, some 3,000 men were engaged in military photographic activities.[1]

After the Armistice, the body of cameramen and laboratory technicians trained for the emergency reverted to civilian life, leaving a skeleton of photographic personnel scattered throughout the nation to carry on the pictorial mission of the Signal Corps as best they could.[2] During the period between World Wars, the primary concern of the Signal Corps was communications, with photography being relegated to a minor role. The Army placed greater emphasis on the use of photography for publicity and record purposes, less emphasis on its use for intelligence and training.

Photographic instruction dwindled until 1927, when the Signal School established a four-month course in the elements of still and motion-picture photography. In the next year a lecture series on sound motion-picture theory was added, with practical work being afforded graduates in the Army War College laboratory in Washington, D.C.

During the Twenties, the Army felt a need for production of new training films and in 1928 assigned responsibility for such productions to the Signal Corps. Subsequent attempts at production indicated that the Army lacked suitable personnel, equipment and facilities to