US Films
Ride The Rails

By SIDNEY S. SISKIND
Chief Resident Officer, Regensburg, OLCB

The US EDUCATIONAL FILM Program, one of HICOG'S primary reorientation facets, has penetrated the most remote hamlets and villages of the US Zone to depict democracy at work. The program's cameras have been set up in one-room schoolhouses. They have been run on special generators in electricityless villages in Bavaria.

Today, they are even riding the rails of Bavarian trains, enticing long-distance travelers into hour-long showings of educational films. This unique extension of the film program came about during the Lenten season when the Bundesbahndirektion (German railroad directorate) at Regensburg decided to discontinue the facilities of its dancing car for the religious period. HICOG worked together with the railroad authorities to convert the dancing car into a Kinowagen (moving picture car). The railroad supplies projectionists, equipment and the car, and the Americans supply the films.

The trial run took place on the Regensburg trip to the Bavarian Forest ski resorts. During three and one-half hours, 450 passengers attended the so-called premiere of the HICOG-Bundesbahn Film Program. Some passengers even saw it twice.

So enthusiastic was the reception that the Kinowagen has also been attached to the Hof-Regensburg-Munich excursion trains and it also is being placed on the train to Berchtesgaden. Even groups making the Holy Year pilgrimage will have an opportunity to see the films, as plans are currently underway to place the Kinowagen on the Hof-Regensburg-Altoetting route.

Each excursion train car is equipped with loudspeakers. As soon as the train begins to roll, the projectionist comes on the air to invite all passengers to a free, one-hour educational film showing. Tickets are distributed among passengers, to guarantee each one an opportunity to attend.

The Kinowagen has a 70-seat capacity, and is equipped with a permanent type screen and a projector. A portable gasoline generator supplies the necessary current.

Residents from the Soviet Zone are frequent passengers on the Hof-Regensburg run, and the movies provide them with ample food for thought.

The entire Educational Film Program, of which this is but a small segment, has developed into one of the most important and effective re-education media in the entire US Zone. It has been chiefly through the efforts of US Resident Officers, working to overcome prejudices, skepticism and mistrust among the Germans, that the program has been well received wherever it has gone.

It is through these films that the German people can learn democracy as a way of life where the individual respects his neighbor, and can have respect for himself. Wherever the films are seen, they are doing a job — whether in the villages, the cities or on the trains. + END

Theater on wheels has seating capacity of 70. At right is closeup of projector and miniature screen in darkened "Kinowagen," which has proved so successful on one route that it is being introduced on others. (Photos by Hans Maar)