

5. GERMAN FILMS IN BRAZIL: IMMIGRATION, ASSOCIATIONS AND NATIONAL FILM CULTURE

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In the context of the substantial immigration within South America, Brazil has been one of the most important destinations of German immigrants since the eighteenth century. It has been estimated that in the 1930s the number of immigrants of German origin in Brazil was around a million (Nazario 2007: 85) but the role of immigrants, immigrant associations and their contribution to national cultures in the country and on the continent has hardly been reflected in national film historiographies.

This chapter focuses on how German educational associations in Brazil informed Brazilian cinema culture in many regions of the country during the 1930s (Fuhrmann 2016, 2015).¹ It questions the common assumption in Brazilian film historiography that German films that were shown by associations were just aimed at a German immigrant public, to establish a bond between Germany and the immigrants' territories, and that they are examples of Nazi propaganda in the country (de Moraes von Simson 2005; Blank 2008). In contrast, it will be argued that the reception of German films in Brazil should be understood also in the context of a dynamic national Brazilian film culture. Applying a transnational perspective to the history of German films in Brazil, the chapter shows how records of immigrant associations provide important sources for an understanding of a national film culture and its audience.

The chapter is based on research of records such as annual reports and correspondence of the Association of German Teachers in São Paulo (Deutscher Lehrerverein São Paulo), the Film Service of the National Association

of German-Brazilian Teachers (Filmdienst des Landesverbandes Deutsch-Brasilianischer Lehrer, L.D.L.), the German-Brazilian Cultural Film Service (Deutsch-Brasilianischer Kulturfilmdienst, D.K.D.) and German journals in Brazil, roughly between 1930 and 1938. The records and journals are archived at the Martius-Staden Institute in São Paulo, which is the biggest archive on German immigration in Brazil.

Rural regions have been less well covered in traditional Brazilian film history, which usually focuses on urban film cultures in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and the investigation of genres and movements like the *Chanchada* musical comedies in the 1940s and 1950s, the Cinema Novo in the 1960s and early 1970s or the rise of the New Brazilian Cinema in the 1990s (Ramos 1985; Stam and Johnson 1995; Shaw and Dennison 2007).² The following investigation throws light on a less known aspect in film history. It provides important information on the distribution of German films and their reception in Brazil in an extra-theatrical context for German and Brazilian film historiography.

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Voluntary associations played an important role in the distribution of German films between 1931 and 1938, especially in the southern states of Brazil. Together with public cinemas, associations form part of the public sphere. In response to Jürgen Habermas's revisionist approach to the concept of the public sphere as a domain of social life in which access is guaranteed to all citizens, scholars such as Nancy Fraser and Geoff Eley have argued that, despite all the rhetoric of openness and accessibility upon which the official public sphere rests, in fact it is constituted by a significant number of exclusions (Fraser 1992: 113). The revisionists' approach recognises the existence of competing public spheres in each phase of history and stresses the heterogeneity of these spheres as an arena of continuous conflict. Therefore, according to Geoff Eley, it makes more sense to understand the public sphere 'as the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest and negotiation among a variety of publics takes place . . .' (1992: 306).

In the context of this research, a more nuanced understanding of the exclusionary character, as well as the diversity, of the public sphere can be provided through the study of the network of voluntary associations and associative life. According to Eley:

The public sphere [. . .] was linked to the growth of urban culture – metropolitan and provincial – as the novel arena of a locally organized public life (meetinghouses, concert halls, theaters, opera houses, lecture halls, museums), to a new infrastructure of social communication (the press, publishing companies and other literary media; the rise of a reading public

via reading and language societies; subscription publishing and lending libraries; improved transportation; and adapted centers of sociability like coffee houses, taverns, and clubs), and to a new universe of voluntary associations. (Eley 1992: 291)

The importance of associations in German history has been emphasised by Roger Chickering, who saw the proliferation of voluntary associations as ‘one of the most remarkable cultural phenomena of the Wilhelmine era’ (1984: 183). Most of the associations were driven by non-political objectives, such as entertainment, self-training and articulation of a common welfare policy.

Membership of an association has had a great significance in German daily life, which extends to the countries of German immigration. German immigrants took their language, customs and traditions to their new homeland and set up an infrastructure to practise and preserve culture in sports clubs, orphanages, charities, schools, chambers of commerce or religious associations (Müller 1997: 150). Showing and watching films was a way of maintaining and caring for traditions and culture, connecting the new homeland with the country of origin. The important aspect of associations that they adapted themselves to the dynamics of modern social processes (Nipperdey 1976: 182) is particularly significant for the German-Brazilian context since associations played an important role in the modernisation of Brazilian rural regions. Film screenings of associations very often were the very first film experience for small-town citizens and villagers, as reported by Karl Otto Müller, the head of the Cultural Film Service, in 1934 (1934: 76).

THE TRANSNATIONAL

In order to analyse the reception of German films in Brazil, however, a transnational perspective is necessary, which considers the associations’ particular situation in the context of Brazilian national cinema. Archival records of the teacher organisations show that the audience of German films was more heterogeneous. German schools were not attended just by German children or children of German origin. Film screenings in villages and districts addressed the broad public, and Brazilians attended the screenings as well and sometimes even made up the majority of the film audience.³

Film has always been and continues to be an international means of communication, which, especially in the context of distribution and reception, is always transnational. In his article ‘The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema’ (2000), Andrew Higson submits his canonical text ‘The Concept of National Cinema’ (1989) to a new critical reflection. Starting from Benedict Anderson’s (1991) concept of an imagined community, Higson asks about the usefulness of the concept of a national cinema that is a helpful taxonomic labelling device

but also 'to some degree tautologous and fetishizing the national' (2000: 64). The analysis of national cinema can lead to a limitation on films that show the nation as a demarcated geopolitical space with a homogeneous community, closed off to other identities.

What national cinema is not able to show is the cultural diversity and the exchange that characterise the cinematographic activities in a country. Borders are not only a means of state demarcation, but also passages that enable migration and exchange (ibid.: 67). The transnational seems to be much more adequate to describe social, cultural and economic formations that do not stop at national borders. Transnational phenomena can be studied in all areas of film: the coproductions or the effect of migrating filmmakers on the production side; censorship, dubbing, subtitling and marketing issues in the sphere of distribution; and the ways audiences receive films in their specific cultural context. In addition to the reception of films in a new cultural context, one must add the specific exhibition context for foreign films, an aspect that is not mentioned by Higson but is particularly important for the analysis of German films in Brazil (Fuhrmann 2015: 181).

SCREENING GERMAN CULTURAL FILMS IN BRAZIL

The aim of film screenings of the Association of German Teachers in São Paulo, the D.K.D. and the L.D.L. was to screen mainly non-fiction films, so-called Cultural Films (*Kulturfilme*) from Germany to German immigrants. Cultural Films were a didactic documentary film form characteristic of German cinema since the beginning of the 1920s until the end of World War II. They were an early form of audiovisual infotainment and covered all kinds of cultural topics or aspects of natural sciences (Kreimeier et al. 2005).

A special promotion of the Cultural Film seemed to take place in the rural German-speaking areas at the end of the 1920s, initiated by the visit of Edgar Beyfuß to Brazil in August 1925. Beyfuß was the head of the UFA's Cultural Division (Kulturfilmabteilung), and ran the Organisation for Film Education (Filmunterrichts-Organisation). One of the stops on his tour was the German School, also known as Olinda School,⁴ in São Paulo, where he gave a lecture about the Cultural Film and showed a short film about their production. In the following years, the German schools in Brazil – headed by the Olinda School – reinforced their film-programming activities, which were decisively influenced by political changes in Germany and by a private film network in Brazil.

In 1931, two years before Hitler took power, the Association of German Teachers in São Paulo purchased a Zeiss-Ikon film projector to increase the number of film screenings in and around the city.⁵ The purchase of the projector was necessary after the association received two donation films from

the German Association for Image Use (Deutsche Bildspielbund), a central organisation in Germany, which was dedicated to the coordination of visual education in German schools and educational institutions.⁶ Three other films, *Oh, du mein Vaterland/Oh, My Dear Fatherland*, *Frohe Menschen/Happy People* and a film about a sporting event in Cologne in 1928 were donated to the L.D.L. The fact that this association was dependent on donations rather than acquiring films on a regular basis by itself indicates that it did not follow specific selection criteria. The uncertainty in the supply of new films was a continuous problem for the associations.⁷

In May 1931, the association released the first information about an upcoming film tour. It started in Presidente Venceslau during the Easter festivities (5–8 April), in Campinas (25 April), in the city of São Paulo at the Olinda- and Vila Marianna School (2 May),⁸ in the German Sports Club of 1890 (Deutsche Turnerschaft von 1890) in São Paulo (7 May), in Monte Mor (9 May), in Cosmópolis (4 June) and in São Caetano (12 June). All shows were successful, very well attended, and ticket sales were an important source for improving the financial situation, as for example in Presidente Venceslau or São Caetano. Because of the lack of electricity, film screenings in rural regions generally required great skill from the organisers. In Presidente Venceslau the association had to use a power plant from a nearby carpenter's shop that was installed on a truck;⁹ other exhibitions were transferred to public cinemas due to the lack of electricity; and a show in the Friedburg Colony, now Fribourg, a district of the city of Campinas, had to be cancelled for lack of electricity, a problem that the city managed to resolve only in 1935.¹⁰

In the following years the São Paulo association continued its very successful screenings with films supplied by the Deutsche Bildspielbund: *Ein Besuch bei Hindenburg/A Visit at Hindenburg*, *Das arbeitende Hamburg/Working Hamburg*, *Das schöne Hamburg/Beautiful Hamburg*, *Die Lüneburger Heide/The Luneburg Heath* and *Ein Turnfilm/A Physical Education Film*. The news of the work and the success of the association caught the attention of other states. In June 1932, the *Lehrerzeitung: Vereinsblatt des Katholischen Lehrervereins in Rio Grande do Sul* (Teachers' Journal: Publication of the Catholic Teachers Association of Rio Grande do Sul) published an article on the annual assembly of the São Paulo association, which included the screening of films in the state of São Paulo.¹¹ With reference to the journal's article, Walther Kosche from the Pre-Theological Institute in São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul, contacted his colleagues in São Paulo and offered a collaboration between his film service and the São Paulo film service.¹² Kosche already had experience with film screenings and the management of a film service. Being interested in cinematography, he had operated the D.K.D. since April 1932. The organisation of the D.K.D. was different from that of the São Paulo film service. From the central office in São Leopoldo, Kosche established a network of film agencies that was open to

everyone who wanted to become a partner. To join the network, new members paid a fee that was used to finance the purchase of new films and projectors and to cover administration costs. The concept of the D.K.D.'s film service was based on the constant circulation and exchange of films among the agencies.

The expansion of the D.K.D. in 1933 was the result of Kosche's great personal commitment. The amount of correspondence indicates that he must have travelled extensively throughout the state, contacting colleagues, clubs and other associations in order to provide a quality film programme to its members. In his correspondence with the São Paulo association, Kosche requested information on films such as Arnold Fanck's generic mountain film *Der Berg des Schicksals/Mountain of Destiny* (1923/4), *Tertianerstreiche/Secondary School Pranks* or 'any other film'.¹³ Kosche's exchange of correspondence also made it possible for his associations to exchange films with other film enthusiasts. A contact from Bom Jesus in Rio Grande de Sul offered Kosche several films, among them the film he was looking for, Fanck's *Der Berg des Schicksals/Mountain of Destiny*, as well as *Kakteen- und Orchideenblüten/Cacti- and Orchid Blossom*, *São Lourenço und Umgebung/Saint Lawrence and Surrounding* (120m), *Rosario-Prozession und Navegantesfest/Rosario Procession and Navegantes Celebration* (850m), *Spiessbraten/Spit Roast* (40m) and four 30m films with Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan.¹⁴

The D.K.D. exclusively worked with reduced-format films (16mm) that made organisation faster and more economical. In cases where the D.K.D. had the chance to show standard-format films that were offered to the service, it organised screenings in local public cinemas. The collaboration between the D.K.D. and São Paulo did not take place until 27 March 1934, after an agreement that had been reached at an assembly held during the celebrations of the national Schoolday in Blumenau at the end of September 1933. With this collaboration, from 1934 onwards, the service was administered by the L.D.L. In 1935, the service was restructured and renamed L.D.L.-Film Service of the National Association of German-Brazilian Teachers.

The administration of the service changed from São Leopoldo to São Paulo, under the direction of one of the Olinda schoolteachers, Dr Karl Otto Müller. In order to facilitate the administration of the São Paulo office, the Film Service set up a provincial sub-office in Porto Alegre that managed the southern states of Brazil.¹⁵ Later, the new service branched out throughout the country with district and regional offices, reaching Bahia, in the Brazilian north-east. In Rio Grande de Sul, offices were located in the cities of São Leopoldo, Santa Cruz, Cachoeira, Santa Maria, Santo Ângelo, Belo Centro, Burica, Ijuhy, Neu Württemberg, Carasinho, Boa Vista de Erechim, Erechim, Marcelino Ramos, Porto Novo, Porto Felix, São Lourenço, Pelotas and Bagé; in Santa Catarina: Blumenau, Joinville, Porto União and Florianópolis; in the state of Paraná: Curytiba, Ponta Grossa and Rio Negro-Mafra; in Minas

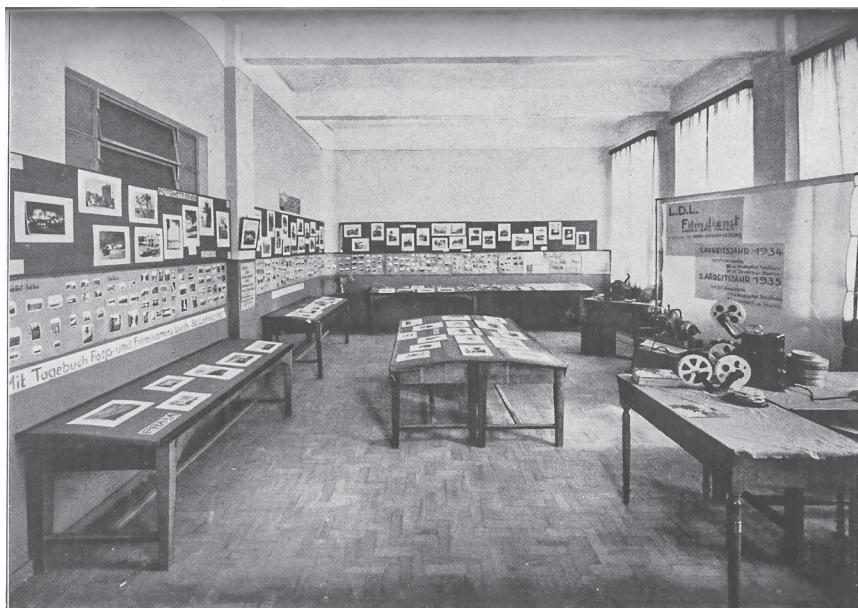


Figure 5.1 Exhibition of the L.D.L.-Film Service at the annual school festivity of the Olinda School in 1936. (Source: Arquivo do Instituto Martius-Staden, São Paulo, Brazil.)

Gerais: Burnier and in Rio de Janeiro. Two mobile agencies operated by the associations of Evangelical and Catholic teachers supported the network in Rio Grande do Sul. An agency in Espírito Santo was formed in 1936.¹⁶

Films from the L.D.L.-Film Service could be rented for free or just with a cover fee to pay the exhibition costs. Screenings of standard-format films (35mm) were made by the Foreign Organization of the Nazi Party (N.S.D.A.P.) and the official representation of the German Reich Railroad (Deutsche Reichsbahn) in Rio de Janeiro. Screenings of the Teachers Association in São Paulo, and of the D.K.D. and the L.D.L.-Film Service were all very popular. For the period between 1931 and 1938 it is possible to evidence numerous requests from associations and clubs that were planning exhibitions and suggested new acquisitions of film. According to the Olinda School Report, in the first year the D.K.D. organised ninety-nine nights of film presentations, thirty-one of them in the state of São Paulo (Müller 1934). By the following March, the total number of screenings had grown to 121. The films were supposed to 'help maintain nationality as a living link with the homeland' and strengthen German public education in Brazil (Müller 1936: 88). On the other hand, the films produced by the D.K.D. were to inform in the homeland (*Heimat*) about the 'German nationality in Brazil' (Müller 1934: 75).

In her investigation of historical photographs, Olga Rodrigues de Moraes von Simson points out that the aim of these film services was to provide national socialist ideology to the German immigrants:

The aim of the work of distributing educational films was, according to the expansion programme of the national socialist ideology for the German colonies that were spread over the five continents, to maintain the Teuton tradition among the settlers that were spread all over the continents, to report about the political, social and educational achievements obtained by Nazism in the motherland [. . .]. (de Moraes von Simson 2005: 27)

From 1933 on, the L.D.L.-Film Service could not avoid the influence of the N.S.D.A.P., and local Nazi groups tried to influence the German-Brazilian associations in the following years. However, limiting film screenings to Nazi ideology and propaganda means to exclude the films' historical audience, which positions the films in a rather ambivalent reception context.

It is important to look at the relationship between Germans who were living in Brazil and joined the Nazi Party and German-Brazilians who opposed the Nazi hegemony in the country. Most German-Brazilians cared about their language, art and tradition, but showed little interest in Nazi ideology, as Luiz Nazario writes in his survey article about Nazi film politics in Brazil (2007: 86). There were voices in Brazil that criticised the party's actions for being insensitive and running the risk of threatening the reputation of German-Brazilians as 'good Brazilian citizens' (Müller 1997: 296). The number of N.S.D.A.P. members outside Germany was never significant. Only 5 per cent of Germans living outside Germany joined the Nazi party (ibid.: 47). Of the 90,000 Germans who were living in Brazil as Germans with German citizenship (*Reichsdeutsch*), members of the Nazi Party in Brazil numbered only about 3.2 per cent (Dietrich 2007: 159). Brazilian historian René Gertz recalls that 'among those who joined the party was probably a significant number who were in direct economic dependence on German companies (from Germany) operating in Brazil, for whom joining the party was almost an obligation' (Gertz 1996: 89). The great majority of Germans in Brazil were ethnic German (*Volksdeutsch*) of German origin with a Brazilian citizenship, a group that considered themselves as German-Brazilians (Dietrich 2007: 157). German historian Jürgen Müller has argued that although many German-Brazilians considered the Versailles Treaty as a national humiliation and believed in a new and strong German nation after the end of World War I, correspondence and newspaper reports indicate that the nationalism of this group did not necessarily mean being a national socialist, nor being subordinate to the aims of the National Socialist Party (Müller 1997: 203–5).

Considering this background of the ambivalent political orientation of Germans and German-Brazilians, film programmes should be understood at best as being in an ambivalent position between propaganda, visual information from Germany and entertainment. An example can be analysed with the L.D.L.'s most popular film of 1934, *Der Tag von Potsdam/The Potsdam Day*. The film shows the festivities of the meeting between Adolf Hitler and German President Paul von Hindenburg, two weeks after the election of Hitler as the new Chancellor of Germany in 1933. No source exists to tell us how the audience responded to the film at the time, but different readings of the film are possible. Being of an important historical event in German politics, the film could be understood as what it was: a topic of particular interest for people of German origin. It is also possible that the audience understood the film as a glorification of Adolf Hitler. However, we could also understand it as an encounter between the old and the new Germany. German immigration to Brazil peaked after World War I so that to many German-Brazilians Hindenburg was much more a biographical reference than Hitler. In addition, every city film offers sites that can be of general interest to an audience that is not familiar with the history of the city (see Jung 2002). To argue for a more nuanced understanding of the films and their ambivalent interpretation, the films that were shown by the associations between 1931 and 1935/6, however, have to be placed in an additional broader cultural propaganda context.

CULTURAL PROPAGANDA

The screening of films in Brazil resulted from an effort by the Association of Teachers Abroad (Verein Deutscher Lehrer im Ausland, V.D.A.) in Germany in 1930. In January, the newspaper *Die Deutsche Schule im Auslande* (The German School Abroad), the official organ of the V.D.A., published its first article on cultural propaganda in schools abroad (Schmidt 1930). In the article the author remarks that, though the war is over, a new struggle has started. Besides the economic competition over resources and new markets in the world, there exists a cultural struggle between nations, which deserves the same attention. In addition to Asia, Europe and the East, South America is the fourth 'battlefield' for cultural propaganda – a German cultural policy without threatening indigenous culture. The author emphasises that knowledge of German culture is not intended to alienate non-German students from their own culture, but to use German education as a 'reinforcement' between cultures (ibid.: 9).

Another article reports on the exhibition of Cultural Films as part of this cultural propaganda. The German Reich Railway provided the V.D.A. with a film of 1,500m about Germany, to be shown in all schools and associations in South and Central America (Prinzhorn 1930). Including explanatory texts in Spanish and Portuguese, the film was intended not only for immigrants of

German origin, but also for students and relatives who were not German and who could see the film during a social event. The aim of the film, that ‘really is a propaganda film’ (ibid.), was not simply to depict Germany, but to establish the country as a competitor to France, which attracted the majority of tourists from South America. The first premiere of the cultural propaganda film was planned to take place in Brazil. It is quite possible that the propaganda film was *Oh, My Dear Fatherland*, which was donated to the L.D.L., and the association’s tour in May 1931 the film’s premiere.

ADDRESSING THE LOCAL PUBLIC

Films that were shown by the D.K.D. and the L.D.L.-Film Service in areas of German immigration and in German schools during the 1930s were not exclusively filmed in Germany. Films such as the aforementioned *Saint Lawrence and Surrounding*, *Rosario Procession and Navegantes Celebration* or *Spit Roast* were clearly addressing a national, local public. A film such as *O Brasil Grandioso/Grand Brazil*, screened in September 1931 at the Olinda School, did not address an exclusively German audience. Germans made up the smallest part of the Olinda School students, which was mostly attended by German-Brazilians, and a quarter of the audience was composed of Brazilian and other nationalities.¹⁷ Following the reports and correspondence about cinematic events in the cities and in the rural regions, the target public was also not exclusively German or of German origin. In rural regions, it was practically impossible to organise film screenings without the Brazilian-Portuguese-speaking population. As the cultural propaganda was directed at the public in Brazil, as recommended in 1930, a photograph of a board at the entrance of the Cine Casari in Presidente Venceslau reads: ‘Today Great Success. UFA presents two interesting films of great culture. Part 1: Sport in General in two fine parts; Part 2, *Minha Patria/My Fatherland*, in eight parts, demonstrating the most beautiful landscapes of Germany’ (Soares 2009: 90).

The combination of a sports film and the title *My Fatherland* suggests that the photo was probably taken during the tour of the São Paulo Association on 8 April 1931. Bruno Pinto Soares points out the contradiction of the text on the sign:

My Fatherland intends to show the most beautiful landscapes of Germany, and the name itself invites to imagine that it is a production with a nationalist tenor. The interesting thing in this matter is the intention to show the film in the urban area of the city, after all the overwhelming majority of the German community lived in the rural area. It can be noted that the film was not addressed to the Germanic public of the city, because if it was, it would be shown in the colony itself. The intention of programming a film, which has the purpose of showing the ‘most beautiful landscapes of

Germany', had a greater purpose for the city than just to learn about the fatherland of many Venceslau inhabitants. In this case, it could work two goals: to nourish the far from their fatherland Germans with the national-socialist ideology and to make it sympathetic to the inhabitants in places that give shelter. (Soares 2009: 90)

Soares concludes that 'the sign itself, in Portuguese and not in German or bilingual, demonstrates that the target audience for reproduction would be the non-Germanic community of the city' (ibid.). Soares describes how the film screening with all its ideological purpose also functioned as kind of a neighbourhood link between the two communities, Brazilian and German-Brazilian, in a small town like Presidente Venceslau. Other sources support Soares's observation. In June 1931, due to the lack of electricity, it was necessary to relocate a film projection in Cosmópolis, in the interior of São Paulo, to the local cinema. Only thanks to the presence of the Brazilian population was it possible to avoid a financial loss. A report remarks:

Though the stories of the films were easy to comprehend, it is interesting that especially the Brazilians lamented that the texts were just edited in German and not in Portuguese. Without any doubt we could be even more successful, if we considered this request in future.¹⁸

An exhibition on 25 June 1934 in Araçatuba, in the interior of São Paulo, was almost exclusively attended by Brazilians. Of 500 spectators, only 100 were of German origin. The exhibitions in Congonhas do Campo and Casa de Pedra in Minas Gerais, in 1938, were also almost a Brazilian event: of 200 spectators only ten to fifteen were of German origin.¹⁹ A unique connection between German and Brazilian films in a screening in March 1935, in São Caetano, Minas Gerais, shows that the Brazilian public was taken into consideration at least in the planning of the screenings. Next to films like *Von Ammergau zum Staffelsee/From Ammergau to Lake Staffel*, *Die Ostsee, 5. und 6. Teil / The Baltic Sea, Part 5 and 6* and *Sport im Schnee/Snow Sports* were shown the films *Os 3 Cavalheiros/The Three Gentlemen* and *Koko e o Cacique/Koko and the Chief*. It is not only remarkable that the programme included German and Brazilian titles, but also that the German titles referred to the Cultural Film genre, while the other two titles were animation films. The evening programme can be seen as an alternative to the dilemma in Cosmópolis. Although it is not known in what language the event was presented or introduced, or whether intertitles of the first three German films were translated into Portuguese, the animation films did not require any explanatory text or introduction. They had the goal of being amusing, entertaining films for a broad audience, regardless of the audience's origin, German or Brazilian.

Another example combines an ambivalent reception on the German spectators' side with a mixed audience. In May 1934, at the Olinda School, the screening began with the animation film *Wupp lernt das Gruseln/Wupp Learns to be Scared* (Hermann Diehl, 1932), followed by *Mit dem Condorflugzeug von Natal bis Santos/With the Condor Aeroplane from Natal to Santos* and *Der schöne Rhein. II. Teil/The Beautiful Rhine, Part II*. The animation film was hardly suitable to strengthen Germanhood in Brazil, but its function was first of all to start an entertaining film evening. The subtitle 'From Koblenz to Rotterdam' in *The Beautiful Rhine* was able to demonstrate that German landscapes reached beyond national borders to the Netherlands. In the same way, the German public could interpret the flight in a Condor aeroplane along the Brazilian coast as a masterpiece of German technology that measured aeronautically the new *Heimat*. The view of a Condor plane flying over Brazilian territory, travelling 3,000km along the Brazilian coast, from the north-east (Natal) to São Paulo (Santos), in contrast to 400km from Koblenz to Rotterdam in *The Beautiful Rhine*, certainly corroborates the Nazi ideology of people without space (*Volk ohne Raum*). However, considering the critical position of many German-Brazilians in relation to Nazi ideology, it was thus possible to reach the conclusion that Brazil and Germany represented different periods in the life of the German-Brazilians: the great Brazil as the aspiration for a new and better life and the small Germany for the outdated memory. However, for the Brazilian public, the programming of the film could have had a different effect: they could have appreciated the film for its demonstration of Brazil's enormous size in comparison with the small European country. Moreover, the film contrasted modernity and technology, the Condor plane over Brazil, with a traditional and old transport system, a boat on the river Rhine in Germany. Film shows of the associations could be an experience of taking part in progress and modern life. Due to the lack of electricity, it took four years before the people in Friedberg could watch films from the L.D.L.-Film Service. The first projection in 1935 suggests that the film show was not only the first contact for German immigrants and Brazilians with the medium of film but also a celebration of modern life that had finally reached the small town.²⁰

In her investigation of *Wochenschau*, the German newsreels about Brazil that were shown in Germany, Thais Blank argues that newsreels helped to consolidate the bond of a Nazi 'imagined community'. German viewers in Germany would see how the world was marked by Germanic traits even if this world was thousands of kilometres away (Blank 2008: 11). In analogy to Blank's argument, it can be argued that German Cultural Films that were shown in Brazil had a similar function: the films were supposed to produce a feeling of belonging, being German and being part of the Nazi community. The examples, however, show that the exhibitions of the São Paulo association, the D.K.D. or the L.D.L. should not be seen exclusively as an extraterritorial

extension of German or national-socialist cinematographic propaganda, but also as part of the Brazilian cultural offering. An interpretation of the film screenings that focuses exclusively on Nazi propaganda, which undoubtedly reached German immigrants in Brazil, underestimates the exhibition context and the dynamics of the film programmes that addressed the broad public, including Brazilians. The work of associations and services in the Brazilian regions shows that the associations' exhibitions could strengthen the bond of an imagined community. However, it was not necessarily the bond only of an imagined German community but also that of a Brazilian one.

The cinematographic activities of the Association of German Teachers in São Paulo, of the D.K.D. or of the L.D.L. were not the only ones in Brazil or in South America. The Association of German Teachers in Rio de Janeiro, for example, organised a show at the Cine Alhambra, in Rio de Janeiro, where 700 children watched films such as *Besuch bei Hindenburg/Visit to Hindenburg*, *Kinderland-Sonnenland/Children's Land – Sunland* (in two parts) and *Ceylon* (a Cultural Film from UFA). The Faulhaber Foundation (Faulhaber Stiftung) in Neu-Württemberg, now Panambi, regularly organised screenings of standard-format films and operated a travelling cinema, *Wanderkino*. In 1930, the Association of German Teachers in Chile reported on their efforts to acquire Cultural Films for free.²¹ In 1934, The Humboldt German school in Buenos Aires organised sound film screenings.²²

CONCLUSION

Without challenging the propagandistic efforts of Nazi Germany abroad, this case study shows that German Cultural Films were not just shown in public cinemas abroad but were an important source for the work of German educational associations. German Cultural Films might have followed an ideological aim, to bring Nazi propaganda to German immigrants, but the programming and the composition of the audience indicate that the films are better understood as part of a dynamic Brazilian film culture. Associations were present in regions where cinema culture was less developed or even absent. The film screenings were attended by Germans and by Brazilians. Further research in local archives in towns or municipalities with populations of German origin could give additional information and data to the records at the Martius-Staden Institute. Together they could produce an even more detailed picture of the audience composition and the reception of German films in Brazil.

This case study also illustrates the need for more comparative analysis. German immigration to Brazil was not insignificant in numbers but was outmatched by Portuguese, Italian and Spanish immigration. Further research could show if the different immigration groups, or any other nation that was active in Brazil, joined the struggle for cultural propaganda and made similar

efforts in the regions that were dominated by the respective immigrants. One major counterargument in the discourse of national cinema is the danger of cultural imperialism through foreign films and culture (Jarvie 2000). Research results would not play down the significance of national genres and movements in Brazilian film history but present Brazilian film history as an example of a dynamic, multi-ethnic cinema culture. To reach a more detailed understanding of national and transnational cinematographic relations in film history, associations and their activities could therefore play a key role.

NOTES

1. This chapter is based on an earlier version of the article 'Cinema nacional, para quem? Associações, recepção e Transnacionalismo', *História: Debates e Tendências* 16(2), July/December 2016, 328–43.
2. Already in its fifth year, the Pre-SOCINE workshop of the annual conference of the Brazilian Society of Film and Audiovisual Studies, Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos de Cinema e Audiovisual (SOCINE), which precedes the conference in October each year, illustrates the growing interest and change in Brazilian film and cinema historiography. Presentations that are given at this workshop often cover rural regions, for example the Sertão in the north-east of Brazil.
3. 'Bericht des Deutschen Lehrervereins-São Paulo über die Filmvorführungen vom 22.5.1931'. GIVf, 25/Schubert-Chor, Arquivo do Instituto Martius-Staden, São Paulo [henceforth AIMST].
4. Today known as Colégio Visconde de Porto Seguro.
5. Correspondence, 'Deutscher Lehrerverein São Paulo, 4 Aug. 1931'. Akten des Landesverbandes deutsch-brasilianischer Lehrer, Mappe 5, AIMST.
6. Ibid.
7. 'Kulturfilmdienst' (May 1936). Correspondência Deutscher Lehrerverein São Paulo, 1936, AIMST.
8. Today known as Colégio Benjamin Constant.
9. Correspondence, 'Bericht des Deutschen Lehrervereins – São Paulo über die Filmvorführungen, 22 Mai 1931'. Deutscher Lehrerverein São Paulo und Ruhegehaltskasse Bezirk São Paulo. Protokolle vom 29.08.1925 bis 25.10.1931 (samt Anlage), AIMST.
10. Correspondence, Richard Gübels(?), 8 December 1935. Correspondência Deutscher Lehrerverein São Paulo, 1935/II, AMIST.
11. 'Jahreshauptversammlung des Deutschen Lehrervereins S. Paulo', *Lehrerzeitung: Vereinsblatt des Katholischen Lehrervereins in Rio Grande do Sul*, Porto Alegre, 31(6), June 1932, 6–7.
12. Correspondence, Dr. Kosche, São Leopoldo, 2 July 1932. Correspondência Deutscher Lehrerverein São Paulo, 1932, AIMST.
13. Ibid.
14. Correspondence, Gustav Holl, Bom Jesus, 14 June 1933. Akten des Landesverbandes Deutsch-Brasilianischer Lehrer, 1933, AIMST.
15. 'Landesverband Deutsch-Brasilianischer Lehrer, 46. Rundbrief'. Akten des Landesverbandes Deutsch-Brasilianischer Lehrer, 1935, AIMST.

16. 'Bericht über die Lehrertagung in St. Maria (Espírito Santo), am 8. und 9. September 1936'. Akten des Landesverbandes Deutsch-Brasilianischer Lehrer, 1936, AIMST.
17. In 1923 the school had 426 students: 259 Brazilian of German origin, 79 German, 88 Brazilians and other nationalities. In 1938 the school was attended by 947 students: 520 Brazilian of German origin, 126 German, 249 Brazilians and 52 of other nationalities.
18. 'Bericht des Deutschen Lehrervereins-São Paulo über die Filmvorführungen am 22 May 1931'. GIVf, 25/Schubert-Chor, AIMST.
19. 'Deutschbrasilianischer Kulturfilmdiens (DKD)'. GIVf, 31/12, AIMST.
20. Correspondence, Richard Gübels(?), 8 December 1935. Correspondência Deutscher Lehrerverein São Paulo, 1935/II, AIMST.
21. 'Verein Deutscher Lehre in Chile. 1. Rundschreiben'. End of March 1930. Correspondência Deutscher Lehrerverein São Paulo, 1930, AIMST.
22. 'Deutschbrasilianischer Kulturfilmdienst. São Paulo'. Letter from 5 September 1934. GIVf, 31/12, Allgemeiner Schriftwechsel 1934–1936, II, AIMST.

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