

Introduction

Film Century is broadcast as part of Channel 4's **History in Action** strand. The ten programmes are presented by Sheena McDonald and feature selected archive film footage.

Each programme offers alternative and sometimes conflicting evidence for students to evaluate. This is a series about film as evidence and about the evaluation of primary source material. It is also about ten stories – or sets of events – that are central in the study of twentieth-century history.

The programmes may be appropriate for Key Stage 3 or GCSE, or for S1/S2 and Standard Grade. There are a number of syllabuses in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which are linked to the content of these programmes.

At Key Stage 3, for example, students are expected to study the Second World War and its legacy (see programmes 3, 4, 5 and 6). In depth studies on the following are also supported: the Russian Revolution (programme 1); Depression and the New Deal (programme 2); the break-up of overseas empires (programme 8); the Cold War (programme 6) and the partition of Ireland and its consequences (programme 10).

The Study Guide aims to provide students with background material, programme-based questions and extension activities. A list of extracts and sources used in each programme is given in the Filmography on page 24.

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Studying history using film and television

We know what is going on in the world around us through the news media. Newspapers, radio, newsreels and television have provided us with most of the information we absorb.

Film Century looks at the way some of the key events in the twentieth century have been recorded on film and television. Such images provide us with invaluable insights into past times. However, these programmes explore why film material should be approached critically.

History, film and television

Film and television footage enhances our knowledge of the past. It provides a window onto another time and place since, as a primary source, film can show the 'reality' of a particular situation in a way no other source can. Its strengths are its ability to convey some of the atmosphere of the time, the excitement of direct involvement and the quality of seeing events as others saw them.

In history lessons, such images have a vital role in presenting information rapidly and with interest. They capture the on-going form of real life: 'this is as it was'. We cannot help but wonder what has happened to all these human beings who parade before us so full of life.

However, we need to become aware that there are many devices undermining film's capacity for recording actuality. Focus, camera position, framing, lens selection, lighting, editing techniques and other factors combine to determine the form, content and meaning of film footage.

For every piece of film, the student of history must ask many questions:

- ◆ Who is communicating and why?
- ◆ What is the point of view of the film-makers?
- ◆ How was it produced?
- ◆ Was it shot 'live'? What technology was available?
- ◆ What was the access to the subject?
- ◆ Who was the intended audience? Who saw it and what sense did they make of it?
- ◆ How did the existence of the camera alter the reality before it?
- ◆ Was the film subject to censorship?
- ◆ Does the film provide evidence of the period in which it was made?
- ◆ Are there any major areas relevant to an understanding of the period which are not addressed in this programme?

- ◆ If these extracts provided the only available knowledge, how would it alter our view of the events?

An extract from *Revolution in Russia* shows how the existence of a camera can alter people's behaviour and so questions the basic premise that cameras show 'how it really was'. A child keeps reappearing, fascinated by the camera and determined to be immortalised.

At a more cynical level the existence of a camera can totally alter the behaviour of those filmed. Several of the programmes show military personnel in action. How reliable is this evidence in the light of the following report by Robert McGowan and Jeremy Hands during the Falklands Campaign of 1982?

'A Sergeant in 42 Commando is lecturing his men during the journey south:

"Under the Geneva Convention you are not, I repeat not, allowed to stick a bayonet in a newly captured prisoner. So what do you do if you capture an enemy trench with a couple of wounded Argies still inside?"

"Shoot their heads off," came the reply.

"Quite right. But remember, if there's a T.V. crew nearby you've got to go through all the first-aid rubbish just as if they were your best mates."

The students' notes provide a list of the main film and television extracts used in the programme. Arthur Marwick, in *The Nature of History*, argues that, 'It should at all times be clear to the viewer exactly what it is he or she is seeing and where it came from. This of course runs entirely contrary to the basic film-maker's craft of montage, of editing tiny clips from here and there into one beautiful smooth compilation. But such very smoothness does violence to the complex problems of historical study.'

Several of the extracts in the series have accompanying background music. In a newsreel or television compilation where information and explanation are required, the addition of music is suspect. Its inclusion often causes the viewers to feel events rather than to think about them. Music primes the viewer for an emotional response.

Programmes like **Film Century** look at contemporary footage. They enable teachers to help students develop the necessary critical tools to distinguish between propaganda, interpretation and fact, with history and media studies sharing in this task.

Revolution in Russia 1917

Background

The Russian Revolution occurred in 1917. Defeats suffered by the Russian Army in the First World War brought to a head the long-standing grievances of the peasants and workers. Early in February 1917 army units in St Petersburg mutinied and were joined by workers in revolt. Revolutionary Councils called Soviets were set up.

The Tsar, Nicholas II, lost control and was forced to abdicate. A Provisional Government was set up under Kerensky whose aims were to set up a democratic state and to continue the war against the Germany.

Meanwhile, Lenin, a leader of the Bolsheviks, urged a further revolution where the workers and the peasants would take over the government and end the war. In July the Bolsheviks seemed defeated by Kerensky and Lenin fled to Finland.

However, the continuing disastrous defeats of the Russian armies and the failure of the Provisional Government to gain complete authority in Russia enabled a restoration of power to the Bolsheviks. They began to win majorities in the

Soviets and in November they made another bid for power. This is known as the November Revolution and Kerensky failed to take effective counter-measures.

The Winter Palace had become the seat of the Provisional Government after Tsar Nicholas II had abdicated. It was the Winter Palace that was seized on Lenin's orders, in October 1917.

As AJP Taylor writes in *Revolutions and Revolutionaries*, 'Contrary to the dramatic scenes in Eisenstein's famous film, the Provisional Government was not overthrown by a mass attack on the Winter Palace. A few Red Guards climbed in through the servants' entrance, found the Provisional Government in session and arrested the ministers in the name of the people. That was the Bolshevik Revolution. Six people, five of them Red Guards, were casualties of bad shooting by their own comrades'. Indeed there were more casualties than this when making the film *October* in 1927.

In Moscow, the revolution took a little longer, but within a short time, the Bolsheviks gained control of the main Russian towns with Lenin and Trotsky as key Bolshevik leaders.

However, the Bolsheviks found it less easy to take over the rest of Russia and by 1918 a full scale civil war had begun in Russia which was to last several years. Trotsky became the Commissar for War and was responsible for the creation of the 'Red' Army, which fought the 'Whites' in the Civil War.

History and film

This programme looks at how the Revolution was presented on film from 1917 to 1927. Some film extracts show moments of history unfolding in front of the camera. Other extracts show these events restaged at a later date.

Over the years, producers of programmes about the Revolution have sometimes mixed the original footage

with reconstructed versions. For the viewer, it has become difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction. We see examples of this in the ways in which Lenin, the Bolshevik leader of the Russian Revolution, was depicted. Sometimes we cannot tell whether Lenin is the real man, or a 'look-alike actor'.



Early footage was very limited. There was no sound-track and film needed to be shot in good light conditions. There were no telephoto lenses so if people were a long way away, like Tsar Nicholas II in the extracts, they were quite hard to see. Cameras were very heavy and cumbersome. It was difficult to get anywhere near actual fighting. To create atmosphere when screened, live music would have been played.

The taking of the Winter Palace occurred on the night of October 25, 1917. There is very little film of what happened because of the limited capabilities of film-making at the time. The footage which remains is not very dramatic and it is not clear what is going on. This programme shows extracts of film with some evidence of rifle fire at the Winter Palace, fighting around Moscow, and some of the local heroes who had set up the Soviets which took control in 1917.

Lenin was ahead of his time. He believed cinema was 'the most important art' and appreciated the importance of film for spreading Bolshevik ideas. Propaganda was not regarded as an underhand and subversive weapon of indoctrination but as a positive force which could communicate the ideas of Bolshevism to the widest of audiences.

Lenin commissioned Soviet newsreels for screening in theatres throughout the land. Railway carriages were converted into cinemas, called AGIT-trains (the Office of Agitation and Propaganda), and they travelled throughout Russia. As most of the peasantry could not read, films took the place of newspapers and spread a powerful message.

Film production was run on the basis of Lenin's New Economic Policy. Film stock and equipment often had to be bought from abroad. There was no censorship although film-makers were largely in favour of the regime which had given them so much freedom compared with pre-1917 Russia. By 1927, the USSR was able to release more than 200 films per year.

In the ten years that followed the Russian Revolution, advances in cinema technology and a desire to fill in the missing events of the Revolution inspired Soviet film-makers. As part of the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the Revolution in 1927, several films were made, the most famous being Eisenstein's silent film, *October*.

Eisenstein was given unlimited official patronage in terms of equipment, shooting facilities and help with

crowd scenes. *October* uses over 100,000 extras and 30 miles of film was shot for the final 7,000 feet. The pressure to complete was so great that his team would shoot 40–60 hours without a break, taking injections to keep themselves awake.

October created new images and new dramas around the Revolution. The reality of the capture of the Winter Palace becomes an epic film myth. The Revolution becomes more glorious than it actually was, with scenes of heroic Bolsheviks rising up against their corrupt rulers and seizing power for the people.

Soviet cinema exposed the public to an unfamiliar type of history, visual history, designed to make an immediate impression. Eisenstein's pictures have become the enduring images of the Russian Revolution. But we know that none of them show what actually took place. Atmospheric lighting, dramatic camera-work, Shostakovich's music, and the choreography of the actors reveal this film as a re-creation of an event, rather than the reality. And yet, they have shaped our view of how heroic the Revolution was and they are evidence of the way in which individuals and groups of people understood their own time.



Demonstration in front of the Winter Palace, Petrograd

Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

- 🔑 Revolution
- 🔑 Bolshevik
- 🔑 Tsar
- 🔑 Provisional Government
- 🔑 Coup
- 🔑 Commissar
- 🔑 Civil War
- 🔑 Soviet
- 🔑 Proletarian
- 🔑 Communist



Biographical information

Find out more about the following people:

- ◆ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin
- ◆ Alexander Kerensky
- ◆ Liev Davidovich Trotsky
- ◆ Sergei Eisenstein

Visits

The Museum of the Moving Image, South Bank, Waterloo, London, SE1 8XT, to see their example of an AGIT-train.

Film houses regularly screen films by early Soviet film-makers.



Programme-based questions

- 1 What limitations faced early film-makers when recording key live events? Give examples.
- 2 In the live extracts, what evidence is there that the process of filming clearly affected those filmed?
- 3 How have the news extracts of 1917 added to your understanding of the October Revolution?
- 4 Using the extracts, compare the way the Revolution was reported in 1917 with the 1927 film extracts.
- 5 What do the extracts from Eisenstein's *October* tell us about the way the 1917 Revolution was viewed in the USSR ten years later?
- 6 How has music been used in the film extracts and to what effect?
- 7 How do these extracts portray the role of women during the Revolution?

Discuss the view that Eisenstein's film is more a source for the period in which it was made than for the period about which it was made.



Further viewing

Reds, USA, 1981 dir Warren Beatty

Dr Zhivago, GB, 1965 dir David Lean

Ten Days that Shook the World, GB, 1967

Great Depression 1929 – 1936

Background

The Great Depression is the name given to the economic collapse which began in 1929. It affected much of the western world throughout the 1930s. It is also known as 'the Slump'.

The Depression had a variety of causes. A key factor was the collapse of the US economy. Producers were beginning to have difficulty selling their goods. Workers were laid off. Shareholders in these companies tried to sell their shares quickly before their true value dropped. This triggered off a panic with everyone wanting to sell shares and no-one wanting to buy.

In October 1929, prices on the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street dropped markedly and on 'Black Thursday', 24 October, 13 million shares changed hands. The value of shares fell dramatically. Thousands of businesses collapsed and 25% of the US workforce became unemployed by 1932.

The US collapse profoundly affected the European markets. Loans were recalled and there was no money for further investment or to buy European goods. Until the mid-1930s, world trade declined, and millions of people were out of work.

Germany's recovery from the First World War had been dependent on US loans and her economy was seriously affected. Germany's unemployed reached over six million, providing appropriate conditions for the rise of the Nazi Party.

Unemployment was high in Britain, France and the USA.

In the USA, President Franklin D Roosevelt launched the New Deal to tackle the Depression. The US Government set up a programme of Public Works and Government Aid for businesses, farming and industry.

In the UK, there was a national government of all parties set up in 1931 to address the Depression. The government thought that Britain should carry on as usual and was suspicious of New Deal-type solutions.

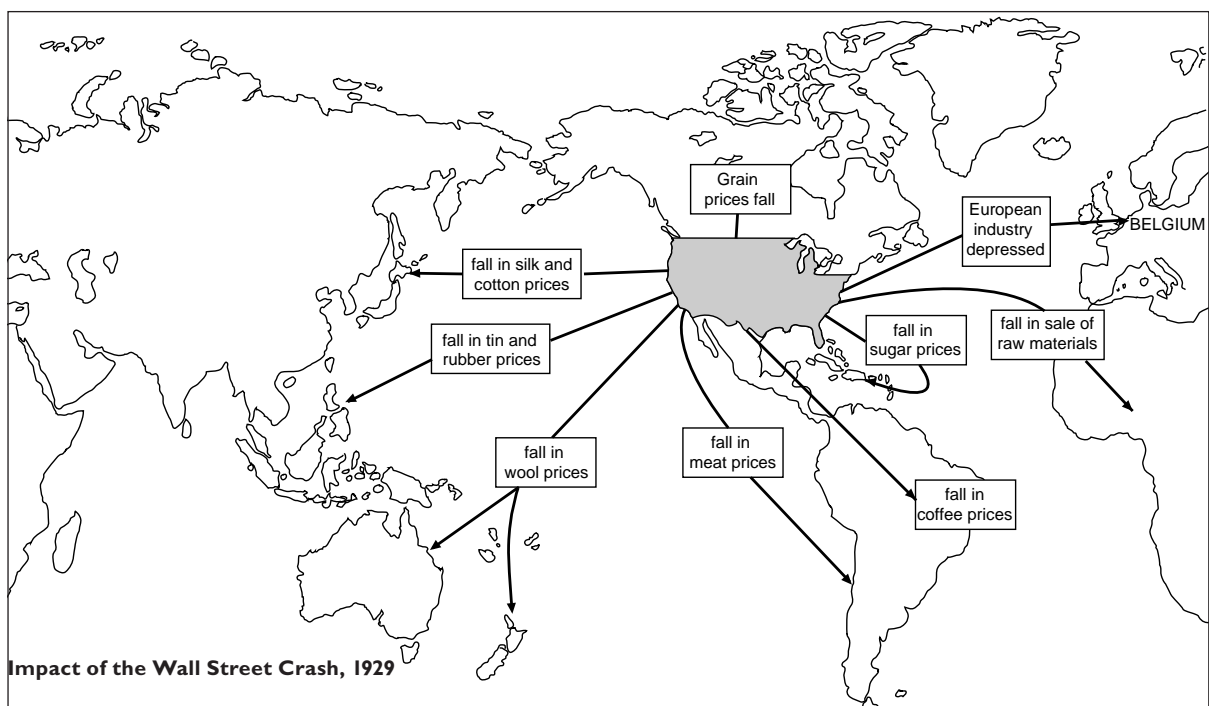
History and newsreels

In the history of news-gathering, these sources are among the first with the sound and the image recorded at the same time.

Newsreels tended to be shot outside in good light conditions. Crews had to carry bulky cameras, yards of cable and spools of heavy, expensive film. There was little time or money to shoot and the race was on to get it processed and distributed before any rivals.

Such newsreels opened up new vistas for their audiences. They were shown at public cinemas where the audience had paid to enter in the hope of seeing an entertaining film. It was vital therefore that the news did not unduly depress the audience as this might put them off buying tickets in future.

Newsreels were therefore carefully packaged and shaped so that the news was made as undisturbing as possible for the audience. Their structure followed the same dramatic and story-telling techniques as the feature films which followed. The news reader was often light-hearted and reassuring in tone. Audiences



joined in, cheering and hissing, as if watching a pantomime.

This programme shows material from the USA, Britain and Belgium about the Depression. It looks at how newsreels and official films in Britain and the USA suggested solutions to the problems, as compared with unofficial films, which argued for radical change.

By 1928, sound could be added to the images and the 'talkies' had arrived. Newsreels could record voices and this programme shows JH Thomas, a member of the minority Labour Government, speaking on a newsreel for the first time.

As technology improved so did the expense and expertise needed to produce film newsreels. Mainstream information films were produced either by the Government or by production companies hoping to make a profit. Such newsreels were careful not to be too critical of politicians and industrial owners. Any which advocated change or revolution were dropped.

Some people on the left of politics became increasingly irritated by the newsreels' approach to social affairs. They decided to make their own films as a means of social protest.

Their films could be shown in 'non-theatrical', non-licensed venues such as trade union meeting halls and film clubs. This programme shows an example from the London-based Workers' Film and Photo League of their 'Workers' Newsreels'.

Some of the unofficial films made in the early 1930s were part of the political struggle. Their purpose was to offer 'news from the working-class's point of view' and 'a true picture of today'. They revealed evidence of appalling living conditions which commercial films rarely showed.

The audience of such films was small, and their impact was slight. A recent critic said unofficial films 'now appear, however intrinsically fascinating, about as inspiring as a Pathe newsreel of a wet bank-holiday'. The reality was coming home that the way a film was made, bought and distributed by the film companies was crucial.

In the USA, where Hollywood was dominant, some labour organisations preferred to make films which were less like documentaries and more like feature films, with a strong story line.

Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

- 🔑 Depression
- 🔑 Stock Markets
- 🔑 Minority Government
- 🔑 Censor
- 🔑 Controversial
- 🔑 Right/Left
- 🔑 Scab



Biographical information

Find out more about the following people:

- ◆ JH Thomas
- ◆ President FDR Roosevelt
- ◆ Karl Marx



Programme-based questions

1 How does the extract from *Misere au Borinage* document poverty and hardship in a Belgian mining community?

- 2 What evidence is there to suggest that few politicians, such as JH Thomas, had ever been interviewed 'live' before?
- 3 What were the main differences between the workers' newsreels and those usually shown in the cinema? What was their stand-point? Why were they produced?

Compare the extracts with your own study/knowledge of the Depression.

- a Which scenes illustrate areas you have explored?
- b How have these extracts added to your understanding of the period?
- c Are there any major areas you consider relevant to an understanding of this period which are not addressed in the extracts?

Extension work

- 1 Why was there a Miners' Strike in Belgium in the summer of 1932?
- 2 How successful was the New Deal in curing unemployment in the USA in the 1930s?

In a democracy like the UK or the USA today, what methods of protest or complaint are available to citizens? Draw a spider diagram. At what point, if any, do you think citizens are entitled to go on strike?

Spirit of Dunkirk 1940

Background

In 1940, Dunkirk, a port in northern France, became the scene of perhaps the most famous evacuation in modern history. People today still talk about the 'Spirit of Dunkirk' as an example of how the British managed to turn defeat into victory. The expression comes from the early summer of 1940 when British and French armies, fighting the Germans in Belgium and northern France, were forced right back to the English Channel. 100,000 Allied soldiers were taken prisoner, but about 330,000 men were rescued by naval vessels and about 600 small boats from England.

After Dunkirk, the German advance continued victoriously. By 22 June the conquest of France, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg was complete. Paris had been occupied from 14 June and an armistice was signed with Germany by France on 22 June 1940.

Germany held these areas for the next four years until the D-Day landings and the Allied advance from Normandy to the Rhine which took place between 6 June 1944 and 7 March 1945. In north-west Europe Germany held parts of Denmark, Holland and northern Germany until her surrender on 8 May 1945.

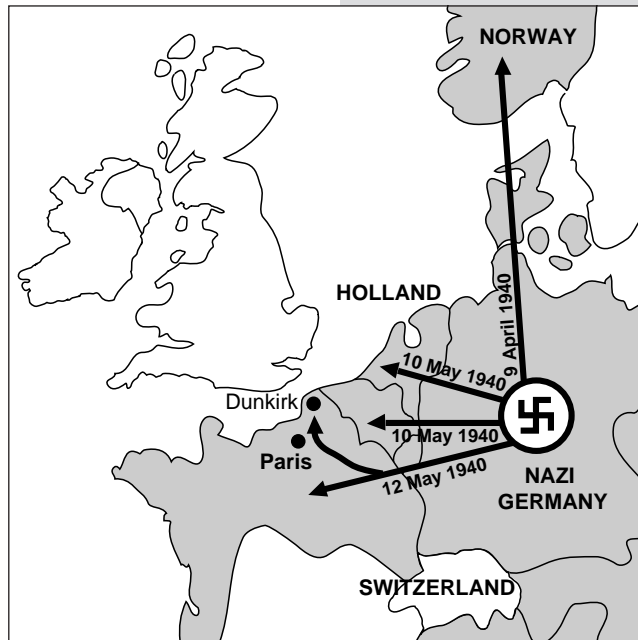
The evacuation from Dunkirk has become a story of heroism and a symbol of Britain's indefatigable spirit. There were many acts of individual bravery. However, acts of a less heroic nature also occurred but these rarely find their way into the history books. Breakdowns in discipline occurred which could only be prevented by armed naval personnel. Officers also deserted their men in the rush to get onto the boats. General Alexander was shocked by the appalling behaviour and some troops were so demoralised that 'they threw their rifles and equipment out of the railway carriage windows'.

The Ministry of Information silenced evidence of British weaknesses and told journalists to blame the defeat on Belgian and French cowardice, while the BEF (British Expeditionary Force) remained 'undefeated'. Winston Churchill's famous 'We shall fight them on the beaches' speech captured the myth of Dunkirk and the indomitable spirit of Britain. And yet a recent publication (*1940: Myth and Reality*, Clive Ponting, 1990) shows that during the summer of 1940, discussions through neutral embassies explored German terms for peace. Even Churchill was not averse to a negotiated peace with Germany if that seemed the best option.

History and film

This programme looks at two versions of the 'Spirit of Dunkirk' – one from British films which

managed, very quickly, to turn the pictures of retreat into a story of victory. The other is from a full length German documentary, *Victory in the West*, to be shown in celebration all over occupied Europe in 1941. German camera-men stayed in Paris at the front line and took harrowing and unique pictures of the British defeat.



German Invasion of Western Europe, 1940

Victory in the West shows dead bodies, abandoned equipment and the chaos of retreat. The music is used ironically to reinforce the fact that the British, whom the commentator always calls 'English', are truly beaten.

To see dead British soldiers is still unusual for a British viewer. Scenes of British soldiers dead and mutilated are suppressed to avoid further suffering of the bereaved and to prevent public demoralisation.

The German films climaxed with the fall of Paris, the cultural capital of Europe. They show Hitler's early-morning visit to inspect the city's architecture, while the streets were empty.

The British newsreels present a completely different view of the retreat. Only one newsreel camera-man was present at the rescue and the single wide shot showing soldiers wading out to safety is all that was filmed of the actual rescue. After seven days it was shown throughout Britain. The newsreel created Britain's 'Dunkirk Spirit' almost overnight.

The Ministry of Information recognised in January 1940 that:

'We need the co-operation of the newsreel companies more, possibly, than that of any other part of the film industry. We are actively seeking their co-operation at the moment, because without it the distribution of favourable news is almost impossible.'

Churchill, possibly worried that the newsreels had been too successful at putting across a picture of

Dunkirk as a triumph, told Parliament, 'We must be very careful not to describe Dunkirk as a victory. Wars are not won by evacuations'.

Further films which helped take the sting out of defeat followed. The programme shows one story, starring Peggy Ashcroft, of the little boats which sailed out of England to help rescue the Allied soldiers from the northern beaches of France.

Newsreels played an important part in maintaining morale during the war. Nevertheless, many cinema-goers became fed-up with the obvious propaganda and according to Tom Harrison, in his article 'Films and the Home Front', half the audience felt a positive distaste for newsreels. They had also come to the cinema to switch-off from the war and resented being reminded of it. Estimates suggest newsreels reached 24 million people a week by 1944.



Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

- 🔑 Documentary
- 🔑 Evacuation
- 🔑 Propaganda



Biographical information

Find out more about the following people:

- ◆ Winston Churchill
- ◆ King Leopold III of Belgium



Programme-based questions

- 1 Where did the Germans get the British footage which they used in their films?
- 2 In what ways do these extracts disagree in their presentation of the British Army in 1940?
- 3 Which identical aspects of the Dunkirk episode have been interpreted in different ways?
- 4 Why is it 'unthinkable' that images such as 'dead bodies, lying untended, abandoned equipment and the debris of an army in retreat' would have been shown in Britain?

5 How do the British versions turn defeat into victory?

6 How is music used in the extracts?

7 What is the overall impression these sources give of the events of Dunkirk?



Discussion points

In 1917, US Senator Hiram Johnson said that 'the first casualty when war comes is truth'. Discuss this statement in relation to the way events during wartime are reported.

Extension work

Find out more about:

- ◆ Pathe News
- ◆ Popular songs during the war.



Further viewing

Watch the film *Dunkirk* (1958 dir Leslie Norman). How does this film reconstruct the rescue from the beaches? How reliable is this film as a resource?

Dad's Army BBC

City Bombing 1940 – 1945

Background

The Second World War was the first major war in history in which more civilians were killed than combatants. Bombing cities from the air is one key reason for this significant shift in wartime death rates. Both sides rained terror from the skies on their enemies, killing civilians indiscriminately.

The period of intensive German bombing of the United Kingdom is known as 'the Blitz', although bombing occurred throughout the war with varying intensity. Major industrial and communication centres were the targets. 93% of the houses in the poorer London boroughs were damaged. Total civilian deaths amounted to 60,595 with 86,182 seriously injured.

The British replied tenfold to the German bombing. Unable to fight them on northern European soil, bombing was seen as the next best thing. It also showed the USSR that the Allies were doing something to help defeat Hitler, thus easing the burden on the USSR, who alone fought Germany in northern Europe from 1941 to June 1944. A third reason was that German resources would need to be redirected to their Home Front away from other areas of war.

At first, British efforts were quite wasteful of resources. The Butt report of 1941 concluded that only 25% of all RAF bombs were within five miles of their targets. In certain cases, 'area bombing' was the agreed solution. A five-tiered target structure for Allied bombers was agreed in January 1943 – SATOG (submarines, aircraft, transport, oil, general).

RAF Bomber Command lost 43,290 men in its bombing raids over Europe. Cost estimates for the bombing campaign are between 9–25% of the total Allied war cost.

550,000 German civilians were killed by Allied bombing during the war. Towns such as Dresden and Hamburg were subjected to incendiary bombing. Firebombing created such a demand for oxygen that winds of 100mph resulted, sucking in buildings and people. 50,000 civilians died in a single night in July 1943 on an attack on Hamburg, where bombing created a fire-storm with temperatures of 1,400 degrees centigrade. During the night of 13 February 1945, an estimated 70,000 people in Dresden were killed.

And yet German productive capacity, although diminished, continued throughout the war and there

is no evidence of a general collapse in German morale.

Moral and strategic disputes still rage over whether the bombing campaigns were worth it. Tokyo suffered the world's worst air raid on 10 March 1945, with 168,000 citizens killed. Historians disagree on the importance of the nuclear attacks on Japan at Hiroshima (6 August 1945) and Nagasaki three days later, in bringing about a final surrender.

Since 1945, large-scale bombing has occurred in Korea, Vietnam and the Middle East. Strategic bombing is now seen as a way of inflicting maximum losses on the enemy with minimum losses to the attacker. In the 1991 Gulf War, bombing was used to debilitate the enemy before ground troops were moved in.

History and film

In popular memory there is the idea of the Blitz spirit, that 'London can take it'. This claims that people pulled together during the bombardments with an attitude of 'mustn't grumble'. Some historians such as Philip Ziegler, in his book *London at War*, argue that there was no Blitz spirit until the government deliberately created it through propaganda films. In reality he argues that the nightly anxiety of death and destruction which affected mainly those who lived in the inner cities meant sleepless nights and shattered lives.

'Mass Observation' was a polling organisation which secretly collected evidence on the feelings and experiences of wartime people and passed on this information to the government. Evidence from its archives contradict the myth of how the British pulled together under adversity. Examples reveal how the Portsmouth bombings were followed by looting, wanton destruction and a feeling of desperation. In Plymouth, Mass Observation reported that 'the people cannot stand this intensive bombing indefinitely'.

The Ministry of Information laid down censorship rules. In 1940 they declared that, *'No still photographs of air-raid damage may be published which do not contain at least 50% of non-damage within the area published. Newsreel footage must start from an undamaged building and must conclude on an undamaged building, and it must not linger over the damaged building'*.

When newsreels reported bombing raids, they adopted a cheery commentary and lots of pace and style. Pathe Gazette filmed 'ordinary' people after a heavy night air attack. If those interviewed could disguise suffering with humour and bravery, then that would probably earn them a place in a newsreel story.

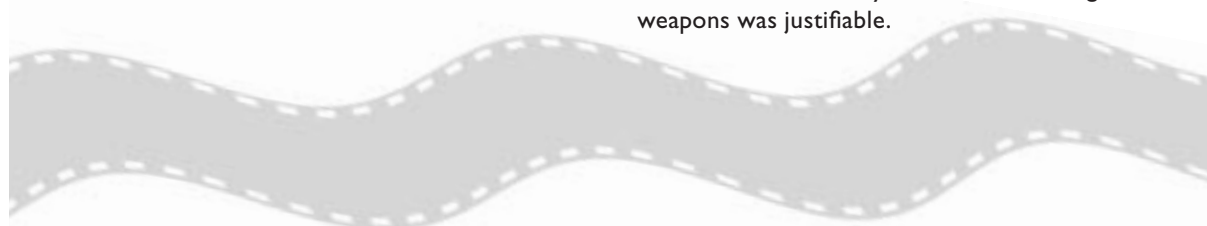


Coventry, 1940

Newsreels for the US audiences tended to show more suffering. This was because US civilians were not personally involved in bombing attacks and such images might stiffen their resolve against the Fascist enemy.

Images of the aftermath of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki stunned audiences and

fuelled the controversy over whether using atomic weapons was justifiable.



Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

- 🔑 Civilians
- 🔑 The Blitz
- 🔑 Aftermath
- 🔑 Propaganda
- 🔑 Luftwaffe
- 🔑 RAF
- 🔑 The Atom Bomb



Biographical information

Find out more about the following people:

- ◆ Dr Joseph Goebbels
- ◆ Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris



Programme-based questions

- 1 How have these extracts depicted bombing?
- 2 Compare the ways the Germans and the British showed the effects of bombing to their own people.
- 3 Give examples of humour and bravery in the face of bombing shown in the newsreels.
- 4 Why do you think neither German nor British newsreels showed close-up pictures of suffering or grief?
- 5 What do you think of the justifications in this programme for the bombing of Dresden?

6 What were the justifications in this programme for dropping a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima?

7 Study all the extracts.

'Bombing can never be justified.'

Use the evidence of these extracts, and your own knowledge, to explain whether or not you agree with this view.

Extension work

Find out about the Manhattan project.

Organise a classroom debate around the motion: 'This house believes that bombing can never be justified'.

Interview someone who lived through the Blitz. Ask them about their experiences. Did they experience a spontaneous Blitz spirit? How reliable is their evidence? Compare their view with the extracts from the programme.

Find out about the circumstances surrounding the statue of Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris put up in London's Strand in May 1992. What was the reaction to the Queen's visit to Dresden in September 1992?



Discussion point

Do you think this country would remember the Blitz in the same way if the Germans had won the war?



Further viewing

Watch the film *Hope and Glory* (1987 dir John Boorman). How does this film show the Blitz?

Conflict in the Middle East

1946 – 1948

Background

Palestine has long been one of the world's trouble spots. Ownership is claimed by both Jews and Arabs.

Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire and was inhabited mainly by Arabs, who had lived there for generations. Turkey lost control of Palestine as a result of the First World War. As Palestine was not considered ready yet for independence, it was placed under British rule by a mandate of the League of Nations.

During British rule, many Jews came to live in Palestine. Since the 1890s, a Congress of European Jews, known as Zionists, planned to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. They began to bring Jewish settlers into the area. (Zionism referred to Zion, the Promised Land of Palestine that God promised to Moses in the Old Testament.)

In 1917, the British Government published a document known as the Balfour Declaration. It promised support for a Jewish 'national home' in Palestine, the land from which the Jews had fled some eighteen hundred years before.

From 1914–1947 Jewish immigration numbered 402,000. The British failed to anticipate the size of the Jewish settlement and the strength of Arab opposition. The Arabs argued that their land was being taken from them by the British and given to Jewish settlers.

As the mandate was drawing to a close, the Jews in Palestine felt strong enough to set up their own state and became hostile to Britain and their Arab neighbours.

The Nazi treatment of the Jews evoked world-wide sympathy for a Jewish state. Arabs and Jews disagreed about the future of an Israeli state and tension mounted with Britain in the middle.

Both sides committed acts of terrorism. In 1946, the British military headquarters in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem was blown up, killing 52 people. A year later, Jewish terrorist organisations tortured and hanged two British Army sergeants.

Britain eventually decided to hand its responsibilities to the United Nations. On 29 November 1947, the UN General Assembly voted in favour of the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish provinces. This decision opened the way for the declaration of the state of Israel six months later.



The boundary of the British Palestine Mandate, 1920–1948

History and film

Neil Grant in his book *The Partition of Palestine* (1973) writes, 'Most books on this subject are biased: that does not mean that they are unfair, only that they are written from one point of view. To see the wider picture, it is necessary to read books written from different points of view. One of the reasons why Israel was founded successfully is that Zionist propaganda was

usually very good and Arab propaganda generally rather bad. This imbalance has continued: there are many more Zionist accounts than Arab ones'.

British newsreels about Palestine were sympathetic to the plight of the British soldier, caught in the middle of what was presented as an impossible conflict between Jews and Arabs.

The situation looked very different from the perspective of the USA, where there was a powerful Jewish lobby of influential people.

This programme shows us how powerful a tool editing can be. Compare the way the British Movietone News tells the story of the famous refugee ship *Exodus* with the film entitled *The Illegal*s, made to raise money for the Zionist cause. The images of over-crowded refugee ships desperately trying to put ashore, and barbed wire camps, made the British look like Nazis.

Sound editing can also alter the meaning of a film. At the time, all news film was shot without sound, which was added later by newsreel editors in London, Paris or New York. Compare the British versions, edited in London, with the US version of events in Cyprus, edited in New York. The US version implies that the British soldiers opened fire over the heads of the rioting refugees, whereas the British version shows the soldiers merely looking on while the interned refugees stage a protest.



Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

- 🔑 Mandate
- 🔑 Zionists
- 🔑 Lobby
- 🔑 War Veterans
- 🔑 Blockade
- 🔑 Holocaust



Biographical information

Find out more about:

- ◆ Theodor Herzl
- ◆ Arthur Balfour
- ◆ David Ben-Gurion



Programme-based questions

- I How do the programmes show
 - a British attitudes?
 - b American attitudes?

There is no Arab perspective recorded on film in the 1940s, because there was no developed Arab cinema industry in the region. This means that the Palestinian Arabs are relatively invisible on the film record. Any subsequent history programme may under-represent the role of the Arabs, not by a conscious decision, but because it is not available on film. Colin McArthur in his book *Television and History* adds, ‘...such is the tyranny of the moving image in tele-history that the existence or non-existence of a piece of film may determine whether or not a particular historical point will be made’.

Absence of evidence can become misconstrued as evidence of absence. Any objective film record of these events needs to address this lack of evidence.

- 2 Look at the Cyprus footage. What are the main differences between the British and the American versions? Why might there be differences between the way the US and the British newsreels cover these events?
- 3 If films are shot without sound, how might added sound effects, music and commentary influence the way the audience understands the images? Give examples from this programme.
- 4 The British people were profoundly shocked by the terrorist attacks on their troops. How do these extracts reflect this feeling?
- 5 Do you consider the Pathe newsreels to be biased? Give evidence for your answer.
- 6 How might the lack of film records affect visual histories? Think about the Arabs and the gap in coverage of their view.
- 7 How has this programme added to your understanding of conflict in the Middle East?

Extension work

Find out about the situation between Palestinians and Israelis today.

Berlin and the Cold War 1945–1949

Background

In the Second World War, the USSR and the USA fought on the same side, united by their common enemy, Fascism. But, within two years of the end of the Second World War in 1945, great divisions had appeared between these two superpowers.

The Cold War is the term given to these divisions. The feeling of hostility and mutual suspicion was so great that an actual war – a ‘hot war’ was a possibility.

Differences between the superpowers occurred immediately the Second World War ended. At the Potsdam Conference there were disagreements between the USSR and the West over Poland, the treatment of Germany and the administration of Berlin.

The increase of communist government in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria and East Germany alarmed the USA and her allies. The USA feared Stalin dreamed of world communist rule under his own leadership from Moscow. The USSR

believed the USA was as fervently anti-communist as Hitler had been and that an attack was inevitable.

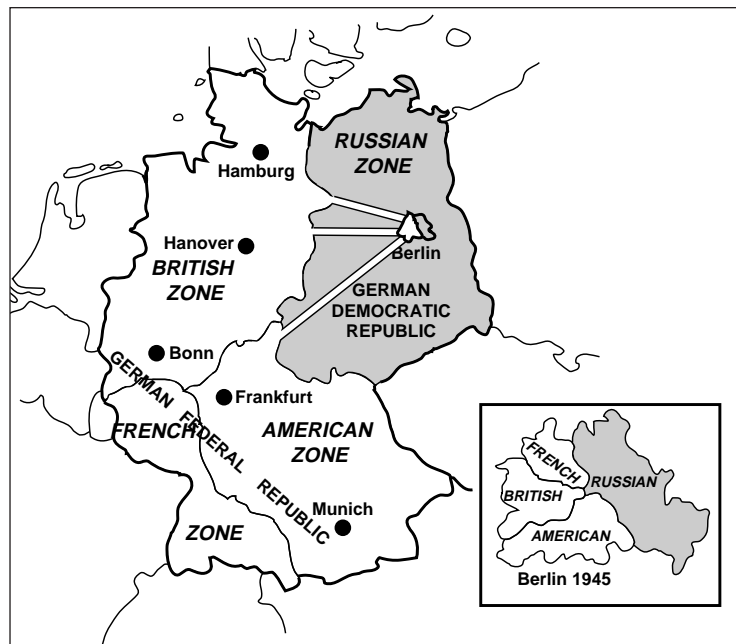
By 1949 at the heart of the conflict between the USA and the USSR, lay a dispute over the future of their old enemy, Germany. The Soviets wanted to keep the whole of Germany weak whereas the Americans argued there could be little economic recovery in Europe without a recovery first in Germany.

After the war, Germany and its capital city, Berlin, were divided into four zones of military occupation. The western Allies – the UK, the USA and France administered three of the zones. The Soviets administered the fourth zone in the East.

The Allies tried to integrate their zones. The USSR responded by blocking road and rail links between

Berlin and the West which provided fuel and food to the Allied zones of occupation. This was called the Berlin blockade. Stalin hoped that the blockade would force the West to withdraw.

However, the USA and the UK organised the Berlin Airlift to get essential supplies through. The Berlin Airlift, ‘like a string of pearls in the sky’ as one citizen put it, kept the West Berliners alive during the winter of 1948–49. Altogether 277,264 flights were flown, delivering 2.3 million tons of supplies. 79 airmen lost their lives in air crashes. In the West, the plight of the West Berliners came to symbolise the cause of freedom and democracy in its struggle against repressive communism.



Divided Germany and the air corridors from Berlin to the West

Stalin finally lifted the blockade in May 1949. This decision was a huge propaganda defeat for the USSR and a great psychological boost for the West.

The division of Europe was formalised by the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany, which became known as West Germany, and the People's

Democratic Republic, East Germany.

Opposing military alliances emerged: the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in 1949 and the Warsaw Pact in 1955.

The Cold War endured many crises and can be said to have ended with the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

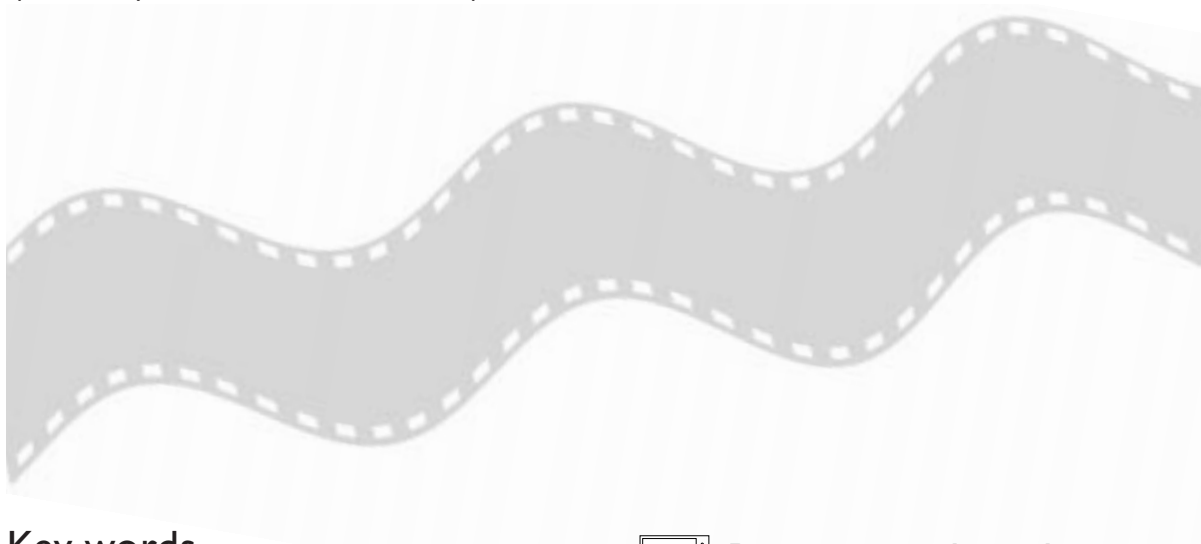
History and film

The Cold War was a time of great tension. The Arms Race was very expensive and needed to be justified to the electorates of the democracies. Film and newsreels were vital in mobilising public opinion in support of the West's Cold War position. Cinema news reports of the growing Soviet threat helped to shape the attitudes of people in the United States.

The USSR leadership felt less of a need to justify their position to their people. They had lost over 20,000,000 citizens in the Second World War, compared to the USA's 406,000. They knew the value of maintaining their defences. Being a centralised government in charge of the means of production, there was no need to convince anyone of the need to spend money on armaments. So, unlike the powerful,

persuasive US films, USSR films often presented lengthy extracts of their leaders' speeches.

This programme looks at the Berlin Blockade of 1948–9. It provides two contrasting views of the Berlin Airlift – a pro-Soviet newsreel shown in East Germany, and a pro-western newsreel shown in West Germany.



Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

🔑 Cold War/Hot War

🔑 Dictator

🔑 Nazism

🔑 Blockade

🔑 Airlift

What do the following terms mean?

◆ FDR

◆ DDR

◆ NATO

◆ Warsaw Pact

◆ The Iron Curtain



Biographical information

Find out more about:

◆ Joseph Stalin



Programme-based questions

- 1 How do these extracts portray the USA?
- 2 What do the extracts tell you of the USA and the USSR disagreements over the future of Germany?
- 3 Both the Soviet Union and the USA had to explain the reasons for the Cold War to their people. In what ways did their accounts differ?
- 4 How might the cinema news report from *The March of Time* have helped to shape Cold War attitudes in the USA?
- 5 Study all the extracts.

'Given the financial cost and the loss of life involved, the Berlin Airlift was not worth it?'

Use the brief evidence in these extracts, and your own knowledge, to explain whether or not you agree with this view.

Extension work

How did the Cold War end?



Further viewing

The Third Man, GB 1949, dir Carol Reed

Dr Strangelove, GB 1963, dir Stanley Kubrick

Crisis in Suez 1956

Background

The Suez Canal was opened in 1869. It is 165km in length, of which 34km are lakes. It runs through north east Egypt and links the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. The Suez Canal remains a vital trade route because ships bound for Europe from the Persian Gulf and Asia need not circumnavigate Africa.

By a convention of 1888, the Canal was never to be blockaded and was to be open to the ships of all nations, armed or unarmed, in peace or war. By the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936, British troops were to maintain the defence of the Canal Zone until 1955, when Egypt was to gain responsibility, which in fact she did in 1956.

The Suez Crisis took place over four months in 1956. A US offer to finance the building of the great Aswan Dam project was withdrawn because of Egypt's increasingly close relationship with the USSR. In July 1956, President Nasser of Egypt decided to seize the Suez Canal Company's assets and nationalise the Canal, administering it as part of Egypt. Nasser's action prompted an international crisis.

The ownership of the Suez Canal was seen as critical to British and French interests. The British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, considered the Canal a vital route through which Middle Eastern oil and Commonwealth and Empire trade flowed. The French and British Prime Ministers took the decision to occupy the area around the Suez Canal, without discussing the matter first with the USA, or other allies.

Israel attacked the Sinai Peninsula in October and Nasser ordered ships to be sunk in the Canal. France and Britain landed paratroops in the Canal Zone and moved in a sea-borne force. However, international opinion was hostile to Britain and France, particularly as Egypt claimed innocent civilians had been killed. The USA side-stepped her special relationship with

the UK and condemned the Anglo-French action, probably because the US feared upsetting the Arab world, thus causing an oil crisis.

Britain and France called off their action and the United Nations moved in to restore peace. Independent records conclude that 750 Egyptians died, with 950 wounded, many more than Britain had at first claimed. Anglo-French losses amounted to 23 dead and 121 wounded.

By April 1957, the Canal was re-opened under Egyptian control and the shareholders of the Suez Canal Company were compensated for the loss of

their assets. The Arab – Israeli War of June 1967 brought about closure of the Canal until 1975. The super-tanker was developed to off-set the increased length of the trade routes between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, thus reducing the importance of the Suez Canal as a world trade route.

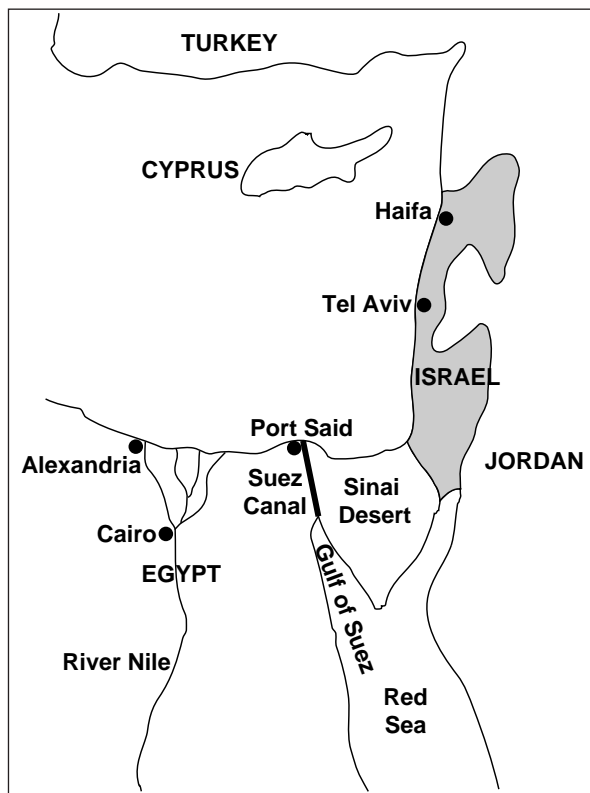
History and the media

This programme uses extracts from two films made at the time. One film was made by the Egyptians to explain their actions, and to criticise

what the film calls 'Anglo-French aggression'. The other, called *Suez in Perspective*, was made by the British and was designed to dismiss the claims made in the Egyptian film. Britain comes over as morally superior and so the nation's involvement in the war is not allowed to be problematic.

Notice how television cameras have developed so that camera crews can get closer to the action and record what is going on. Some of the pictures used in the films came from ITN, Independent Television News, based in London.

These films, both shot live, purported to be reliable records of the events. They show how, with editing, sound-tracks and commentaries, a version of events can be constructed. Both versions show the



Suez Canal, 1956

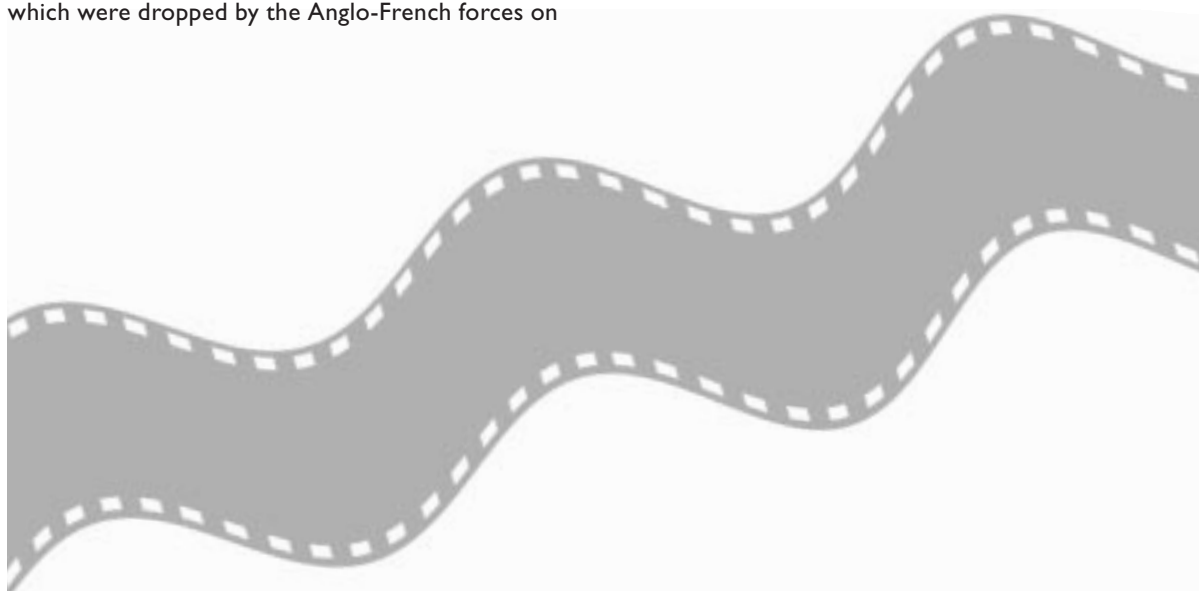
importance of the narrator as the voice of truth by choosing a well-educated, upper-class, middle-aged English voice.

Each version is persuasive in its way, and it is a challenge for historians to explore their reliability as evidence. The situation is further complicated because some government records of these events are still secret.

It is likely that Britain and France did liaise with Israel over her invasion. We now know that the bombs which were dropped by the Anglo-French forces on

5 November landed on targets such as the Egyptian airfields some 150 miles away, and not on Port Said. However, the Egyptian film implied that the bombing had been on Port Said.

These programmes illustrate clearly that film tells a story with words and pictures, but words can mean more than one thing, and pictures can mislead. It is vital to know who took the original pictures and to know whether sound was recorded at the time of filming, or added later.



Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

🔑 Nationalise

🔑 Conspiracy

🔑 Imperialist



Biographical information

Find out more about the following people:

- ◆ President Gamal Abdul Nasser
- ◆ Sir Anthony Eden
- ◆ Guy Mollet



Programme-based questions

- 1 How does the British extract describe Nasser?
- 2 In the Egyptian extracts, how do they depict civilian bombing? Compare this view with that put forward by the British film.

- 3 What are the different explanations given in the extracts for the damage in Port Said?
- 4 What are the strengths and weaknesses in the way the Egyptian film presents its case?
- 5 How far do the British film extracts justify what Britain was fighting for?
- 6 Why is it crucial to know who took the original pictures and to know whether sound was recorded at the time of filming or added later?
- 7 If you had to make a choice between believing one version of events rather than another, which one would you choose and why?
- 8 In order for you to make a reliable judgement about these events, what further knowledge would you need to verify the film record?

Extension work

How do historians today view the Suez Crisis?

Independence in West Africa 1957–1962

Background

In 1960, Harold Macmillan, a Conservative Prime Minister, was invited to speak to the South African Parliament, by the South African leader, Dr Verwoerd. He hoped that the British Government would understand the policy of 'apartheid' which was being introduced. Instead, Macmillan made an historic speech to South African MPs on 3 February 1960.

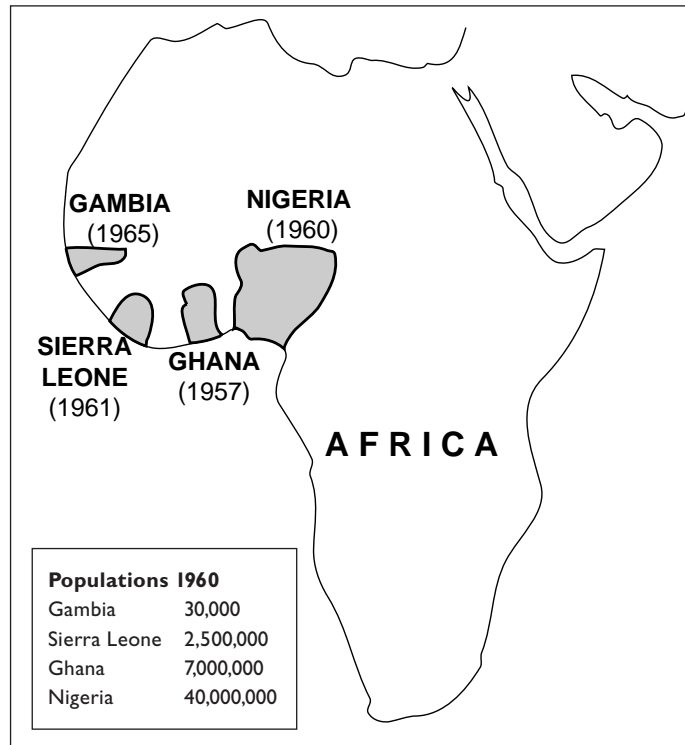
'In the twentieth century, and especially since the end of the war, the processes which gave birth to the nation-states of Europe have been repeated all over the world... The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact.'

Macmillan said that black Africans were pressing for their independence from their white colonial masters, and that apartheid was out of step with the flow of events.

Indeed, the 1950s had seen many countries gaining their freedom from Britain. In 1957, for example, Ghana under her leader, Kwame Nkrumah, won independence. After the tumultuous celebrations, the difficulties began. The political borders of these ex-colonies bore little resemblance to the tribal regions which made up these states. Struggles, degenerating into wars, were inevitable as adjustments were made.

The governments of the new African states wanted to keep the existing political boundaries. This led to several wars during the 1960s. Two particularly serious civil wars occurred. Firstly, in the Belgian Congo, on gaining its independence in 1960, and secondly, when the Ibo people of south-east Nigeria declared their independence as the nation of Biafra.

When Britain handed over power to these new states, the British government hoped that they would operate as democratic states on the British model. Many new African leaders thought such a system was unworkable and the countries became one-party states.



Independence in West Africa (brackets show date of independence)

History and the media

These programmes capture a unique period in British and African history. The coming of independence for African states meant the end of Britain as a colonial power. These films show Britain coming to terms with its changing role and the emerging African states on the threshold of a new political future.

Films made by Africans about African

independence show a great sense of optimism. In 1959, the first African television station was opened in the self-governing western region of Nigeria. The message of this station was that new technologies would transform the world of newly independent nations. These themes of development are captured in a film called *African Awakening*.

The African films are made as a record of a celebration. They record the moment of independence as a public expression for all to see. What these films do not show is the long process of secret diplomacy and deals, the forming of strategy, the details of economic policy, the to-ing and fro-ing of politicians. They are merely records of what the public were allowed to see.

The way in which the African films were produced casts light on their overall impact and style. They were made by Africans who had been trained in their craft overseas in the West. The camera and broadcasting equipment were made in the West and

African radio and TV crews followed western styles of production. Although Africa was becoming free, its dependence on the West had never been greater.

In the 1950s cinema newsreels were less in demand. By 1970, only British Movietone News remained in the market. BBC, ITN, and other information media, provided a more topical service than could be achieved by cinema newsreels. One ITN contributor at the time was a popular calypso singer, nicknamed

Lord Kitchener. He sang a song on ITN about Ghana's leader, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, on their Independence Day, 6 March 1957.

It would also be interesting to find out how films about Africa were viewed by British audiences. Blacks in positions of power was an unusual sight in the 1960s. More usually, blacks were seen in negative roles on film and television, as low-paid workers, law-breakers or backward tribes-folk.



Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

- 🔑 Colony
- 🔑 Independence
- 🔑 Decolonisation
- 🔑 Commonwealth
- 🔑 Parliamentary Democracy
- 🔑 Republican
- 🔑 Neo-colonialism
- 🔑 Imperialism



Biographical information

Find out more about:

- ◆ Benjamin Azikiwe
- ◆ Hugh Gaitskell
- ◆ Harold Macmillan
- ◆ Kwame Nkrumah
- ◆ Wole Soyinka
- ◆ Dr HF Verwoerd



Programme-based questions

- 1 What images of Africa do these extracts show us?
- 2 How does the Conservative Party film describe the government's achievements overseas, particularly in West Africa?
- 3 How does this programme reveal the Labour and Conservative Party's view of decolonisation?
- 4 Who made the African film extracts? Who was their intended audience?
- 5 What do these extracts tell us about the hopes and aspirations of West African leaders at the time?
- 6 Are there any major areas you consider relevant to an understanding of this period which are not addressed in the extract?

Extension work

Was Macmillan's speech a turning point in history?

Trace the history of Nigeria/Ghana to the present day.

Why have independent African states held on to boundaries drawn up by Europeans?

War in Vietnam 1966 – 1969

Background

The USA's involvement in the Vietnam War (1965–73) provokes controversy to this day. Why did the most powerful country in the world become drawn into a civil war in South-East Asia? What was the war like for the thousands of people on both sides? Why did horrendous violations of human rights take place? Why did the USA lose the war?

US involvement began in the 1950s with her giving economic aid to South Vietnam to withstand pressure from communist North Vietnam. However, by 1963, the Communists were close to defeating the South Vietnamese government.

The USA feared that, if unchecked, communism could spread throughout South-East Asia and they were determined to 'draw the line'. The Domino Theory claimed that if South Vietnam fell, then other non-communist countries in the area would fall.

Under President Lyndon B Johnson, a vast military build-up on the ground took place. The trigger for US military action began when the North Vietnamese attacked the US destroyer *Maddox* in August 1964. On 7 August, the US Congress authorised military action and heavy bombing of North Vietnam. By 1967 half a million US service personnel were fighting in Vietnam. US policy-makers and military commanders were confident that their vast array of state-of-the-art weaponry would be no match for the Third World North Vietnamese.

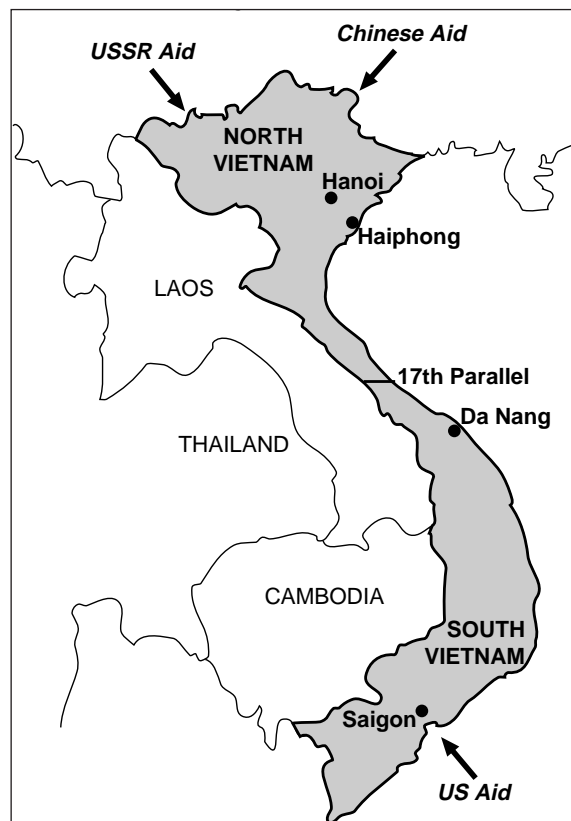
North Vietnam was supported by China and the USSR and consequently put up a strong fight. In 1968, they shocked US opinion by coming close to capturing Saigon during the Tet (New Year) Offensive.

Newsreels showed the shocking conditions of the war, which showed no sign of ending. Many Americans were now asking why their soldiers were

dying in this remote and brutal war. President Johnson explains in the official film *Why Vietnam?*

The war spread into Cambodia. Yet despite using more explosives than were used by all sides in the Second World War, no South Vietnamese victory was possible. President Nixon (1968–1974) promised to bring the war to an end. Peace was signed in January 1973 and the USA withdrew. The civil war continued until May 1975, when the South collapsed and the war ended with the capture of Saigon. Vietnam is today a united communist country.

The USA lost 55,000 men in the war, mostly aged under 21, and suffered 300,000 seriously injured.



Vietnam in the 1960s

Vietnamese losses probably amount to over three million, with countless casualties. Over nine million US citizens served in Vietnam over the eight-year period. Trillions of dollars were spent.

US entry into the war exacted a high cost in suffering which continues today. The incidence of mental illnesses amongst US veterans has been high and over 60,000 US Vietnam veterans have committed suicide since 1975.

The role of the media

By 1968, the war had reached a turning point. Television showed pictures

of the Tet Offensive and journalists spoke of atrocities by US troops such as My Lai, where many women and children were massacred. These reports turned many Americans against the war. US citizens no longer believed their government's denials of such atrocities and protestations that the USA could win the war.

Supporters of communism were well aware of the power of film in persuading people around the world to support their cause. The extract from the North Vietnamese film captures the spirit of the communist guerillas in the countryside as they prepare to

confront the American war machine. The Soviet film gives some idea of what it was like to be in Hanoi when the USA bombed the city. An East German television team followed the North Vietnamese as they fought back.

Film has shown us both sides of the conflict. It was used by the USA and the communists to argue their cause. Television news cameras went right into the centre of the fighting and viewers expected to be where the action was. American audiences saw Vietnam footage almost instantly as it could be transmitted to Tokyo and then by satellite to New York.

Vietnam was the first and, to date, the only military engagement that the USA has lost. Thousands of books, articles, films and programmes have been

made to explore this result. One explanation is that the US media, particularly television, was disloyal and misreported the war. There was a lot of negative concentration on US atrocities, napalm and herbicides, drug addiction and indiscipline, and this undermined public support for the war, particularly amongst the middle classes and America's youth.

Many analyses, however, including the US Army's own official account, conclude that the media reflected attitudes more than it created them. Images of hand-to-hand street fighting in Saigon and Hue where it was impossible for US troops to know who or where the enemy were, showed the hopelessness of such a military engagement. All sides converged in accepting it was an unwinnable war unless the USA used nuclear weapons and risked war with China and possibly the USSR.

Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

🔑 Civil War

🔑 Peasants

🔑 Guerillas

🔑 Vietcong

🔑 Offensive



Biographical information

Find out more about:

- ◆ President Lyndon Johnson
- ◆ Ho Chi Minh



Programme-based questions

- 1 What reasons does President Johnson give in the extract of the official film *Why Vietnam?* for US involvement in the civil war in Vietnam?
- 2 What do these extracts reveal about conditions during the Vietnam War?
- 3 Draw two columns. Head one Vietcong, the other US Forces in Vietnam. List the weapons that you have seen and put them in the appropriate columns.

4 How do the extracts covering the war from the Northern Vietnamese point of view show US involvement?

5 What do these extracts reveal of the role of women during this conflict?

6 Do the extracts help you to understand why the USA withdrew from Vietnam?

7 Vietnam is called the first 'television war'. How might the daily showing of news from Vietnam affect audiences at home?

Extension work

Do you think that the media should criticise the mother country once it is at war?

How do you think US servicemen reacted to the images of Vietnam as shown in the US media?

Many people think that US intervention in the Vietnam War was a worthless and immoral episode in US history? What is your view?

What motivates journalists to risk their lives to film newsreels for their country's audience?



Further viewing

Apocalypse Now, USA, 1979 dir Francis Coppola

Platoon, USA, 1986 dir Oliver Stone

The Deer Hunter, USA, 1978 dir Michael Cimino

Protest in Northern Ireland 1968-1969

Background

The Irish Troubles have their roots deep in history. Generations of politicians have been unable to solve the Irish Question.

By the Act of Union in 1800, Ireland was ruled as an integral part of the United Kingdom. Irish Home Rule began as a movement in 1870 and achieved its objective of independence in 1921 only for the predominantly Catholic areas of the country. This area was first known as the Irish Free State. It became Eire in 1937 and the Republic of Ireland in 1949.

Six Northern Counties who were mainly Protestant wished to stay in the United Kingdom and this area became known as Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland a minority wish to see the province become part of the Republic of Ireland. They feel that there are not equal civil rights for Catholics.

During late 1968 and early 1969, civil rights protests took place. Catholics in Northern Ireland claimed that jobs and housing were being denied them in favour of Protestants. There was discrimination in voting and unfairness in constituency boundaries.

In January 1969, a civil rights march from Belfast to Londonderry was ambushed by Irish Protestants who supported the union with the United Kingdom, outside the village of Claudy. The Royal Ulster Constabulary did not actively intervene and many marchers were injured.

Tensions grew. The civil rights protesters arranged big marches and these attracted considerable media attention. Counter-marches occurred and law and order could not be implemented. In July and August 1969, the annual Protestant celebrations to commemorate the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, led to outbreaks of violence. A bitter struggle broke out between the various factions. On 14 August 1969 the British Army was ordered onto the streets.

British troops and the RUC since then have contained the situation, especially in Londonderry, Belfast,

South Armagh and along the border. Up to 17,000 British troops have been stationed in the province at any one time.

Those fighting for a united Ireland have mainly come from the Provisional Irish Republican Army (the IRA) and those fighting to maintain the Union with Britain have come mainly from voluntary Ulster defence forces. In the conflict since 1969 more than 3,000 people have been killed and 36,000 injured.

Efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement have gained a new momentum in the 1990s and current negotiations are based on the Downing Street Declaration, 15 December, 1993. This Declaration states the fundamental principles with regard to the

future of the province, i.e. that constitutional change requires the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland.

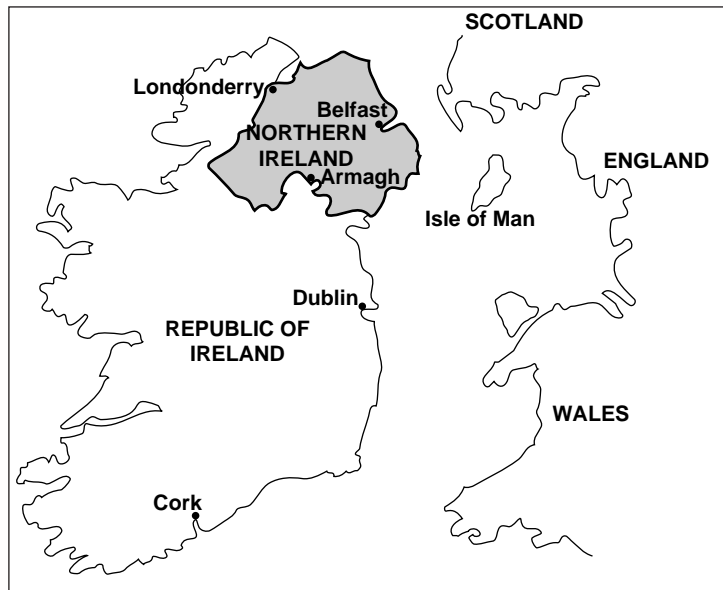
History and the media

Robert Kee, in the introduction to his television series *Ireland*, said, 'Some people think it's dangerous to go into Irish history because by looking into past

Irish troubles you may simply stir up new ones. But as a historian of the last century said: "A knowledge of the truth is never dangerous, though ignorance may be so. And even more dangerous is that half-knowledge of history which enables political intrigues to influence the passions of their dupes by misleading them with garbled accounts of the past".'

This programme looks at the way the past can become garbled. People who make television news have considerable power over the story they tell, because they choose which words and pictures are put together, after the event has been filmed.

The same event, a civil rights march in Londonderry on 5 October 1968, has been told in different ways. RTE (Radio Telefis Eireann), the public service broadcaster in Ireland, based in Dublin, provided the pictures. And yet, RTE, UTV (Ulster Television) and ITN edit the same footage in different ways producing a different slant to the story.



The programme also looks at the way a four-day march from Belfast to Londonderry was covered. A Dutch television team followed the march from beginning to end. Their camera got right among the marchers and the programme makers put the story of the march into a religious context.

When examining news footage, it is vital to look at the context within which it was made and shown. This is rarely referenced by the extract itself. News reporting in Northern Ireland before 1968 had been mainly sympathetic to the views of the Unionist politicians.

The events of 1968–9 drew world-wide attention to the civil rights marches and leaders like Bernadette Devlin became celebrities. However, with the increased presence of British troops and the deteriorating situation which ended in the imprisonment of suspected terrorists without trial (internment), British news reports altered. Lord Hill, the Chairman of the BBC, said,

'The BBC and its staff abhor the terrorism of the IRA and report their campaign of murder with revulsion... as between the British Army and the gunmen, the BBC is not and cannot be impartial.'

Both the BBC and the ITN laid down special rules for journalists covering Northern Ireland. All news items about Ireland had to be cleared at the highest levels. Interviews with Republicans became uncommon and had to be 'balanced' with the opposite view being given equal time. Republicans had to be treated as 'hostile witnesses', i.e. they were questioned aggressively, often with frequent interruptions.

Dozens of programmes in the 1970s and 1980s were made but never shown and ambitious film-makers learned that Northern Ireland spelt trouble and was best avoided. In this way a subtle type of censorship and bias pervaded the news that Britain received about Northern Ireland.



Key words

Look up these key words in a dictionary and write down their definitions:

- 🔑 Civil Rights
- 🔑 Discrimination
- 🔑 Presbyterian
- 🔑 Orange-men



Biographical information

Find out more about:

- ◆ Rev. Ian Paisley
- ◆ Gerry Fitt
- ◆ Bernadette Devlin



Programme-based questions

- 1 What do these extracts tell you of daily life in Northern Ireland in the 1960s?
- 2 What do these extracts reveal of the civil rights marchers? What kinds of people are they?

- 3 How do these extracts show policing in Northern Ireland?
- 4 How do these extracts show the Loyalist, Unionist position?
- 5 These extracts show different attitudes to the civil rights marches. Use the evidence of the extracts, and your own knowledge, to explain these differences.
- 6 Why is the 'neutral' reporting of news from Northern Ireland so difficult to achieve for British media?

Extension work

Look at the way the situation in Northern Ireland is being covered today.

Events become important simply because they were recorded by television cameras and shown on screens. List three news items which have made a deep impression on you; describe the images and the way they were edited. Compare your choices with others in your group.

Filmography

A note about titles:

In these lists, we have given the title of the film in English.

We have used italics to indicate where we have used a feature film title which you might be able to look up in a film encyclopedia. In all other cases, the title describes the film's content, and it may not be used on the programme itself.

We have not listed films from which very short extracts appear.

A note about subtitles:

An **asterisk** * against a title in the list indicates that we have used the original, foreign language version of the film and have supplied subtitles for translation. Summary translations have occasionally been used for ease of understanding.

Revolution in Russia 1917

Street Scenes, St Petersburg 1914

Patriotic Demonstration, St Petersburg 1914

Scenes Outside the Winter Palace 1917

May Day Parade 1918

Red Army Manoeuvres c. 1919

The End of St. Petersburg

Director: Vsevolod Pudovkin 1927

October

Director: Sergei Eisenstein 1927/8

Great Depression 1929–1936

British Movietone News: August 1929

JH Thomas speaks about unemployment

Jimmy Durante sings 'Give a Man a Job' c. 1933

The Soul of a Nation 1933

Street of Forgotten Men c. 1931

Today We Live 1936

British Movietone News: May 1930

May Day Parade

Workers' Newsreel:

Action against the means test 1935

Misery in the Borinage 1933

Millions of Us 1936

Spirit of Dunkirk 1940

* *Victory in the West* 1941

Pathe Gazette: June 1940

Evacuation of the BEF

Young Veterans 1941

Channel Incident 1940

* The German Newsreel: July 1940

Hitler visits Paris, 28.6.1940

City Bombing 1940–1945

* The German Newsreel: October 1940

Stukas over the Midlands

* The German Newsreel: November 1940

Bombardment of Coventry

Gaumont British News: April 1941

Swift aid to Britain's bombed out cities

Neighbours Under Fire, 1940

Surviving the Blitz in London

Why We Fight, 1943

Mass funerals after Coventry bombing

Pathe Gazette: Winter 1944

Interviews on the subject of bombing Germany

* The German Newsreel: December 1943

Germans parade through the ruins of Mannheim

* The German Newsreel: December 1943

Dr Goebbels inspects Berlin after Allied air raids

Pathe Gazette: February 1945

Dresden bombed to atoms

British Paramount News: August 1945

Hiroshima bombed

Conflict in the Middle East 1946–1948

Pathe News: March 1947

Jewish terrorists blow up the Goldsmith's Club

British Movietone News: August 1947

Funeral of Palestine victims ('the two sergeants')

US Paramount News: July 1946

New days of crisis in Palestine

US Paramount News: July 1946

Jewish war veterans' rally

British Movietone News: July 1946

The Exodus – largest immigrant ship seized

The Illegals 1948

Pathe News: August 1946

Palestine immigrants – inside Cyprus

US Paramount News: August 1946

British intern 2,000 refugees

Pathe News: September 1946

British soldiers: 'Our best ambassadors'

British Movietone News: October 1947

The British announce attitude on Palestine

British Movietone News: December 1947

Palestine outburst follows UN assembly vote

Berlin and the Cold War 1945–1949

* Russian May Day Parade 1947

The March of Time: November 1948

* Stalin addresses International Conference

International Problems of 1947

A Defeated People 1946

* 'Through our Eyes': December 1948

Berliners in the Soviet Sector liken the airlift to Allied bombings in the Second World War

Crisis in Suez 1956

Anglo-French Aggression 1956

Suez in Perspective 1956

Independent Television News: November 1956

UN troops keep the peace on the Canal

Independence in West Africa 1957–1962

British Movietone News: March 1957

Independence celebrations in Ghana

Independent Television News: March 1957

'Lord Kitchener' sings a calypso he composed for Ghana's Independence Day

Britain Overseas 1959

With Conservative Party ministers

Independent Television News: February 1959

Hugh Gaitskell, Labour Party Leader, interview

Independent Television News: December 1957

Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister of Ghana, interview

Ghana Republic: Accra, 30 June 1960

Western Nigerian TV: first in Africa 1959

Federal Nigeria News: 1960

African Awakening 1962

War in Vietnam 1966–1969

Why Vietnam? 1966

* Cu Chi Guerrillas 1967

CBS TV coverage of Tet Offensive: February 1968

Soviet coverage: reporting North Vietnam 1969

East German TV coverage: from Hanoi to Ben Hai 1969

Protest in Northern Ireland 1968–1969

World in Action: Backs to the Wall: October 1968

RTE News coverage of 5/10/68 and 1-4/1/69 marches

UTV News coverage of the same protest marches

ITN's coverage of the same protest marches

* Dutch TV's 'Hier et Nu' coverage of 1-4/1/69 march

BBC TV News: the aftermath of the march 6/1/69

Credits

Film Century was produced by **Flashback Television Ltd** for Channel 4. It was first transmitted in Spring 1997.

Producer – **Vicki Wegg-Prosser**

Executive Producer – **Taylor Downing**

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