



English translation of the Summary of the Preliminary Study on Alfred Bauer by the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History

Summary
**Preliminary Study of an Historical Portrait of
Dr. Alfred Bauer (1911-1986)**

Written by PD Dr. Tobias Hof on behalf of the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History

The Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) commissioned the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History to carry out a preliminary study on Dr. Alfred Bauer (1911-1986), the first director of the Berlinale from 1951 to 1976. The festival management wished to investigate pressing questions about Alfred Bauer's role during the Nazi era, which several media publications had raised at the beginning of 2020. The editor of the approximately sixty-page preliminary study, PD Dr. Tobias Hof, comes to the conclusion that Alfred Bauer made a not insignificant contribution to the functioning of the German film system during the Nazi dictatorship and thus to the stabilisation and legitimisation of Nazi rule through his work at the Reichsfilmintendanz (the steering body of National Socialist film policy). Bauer systematically shrouded this role after 1945.

The historian Tobias Hof has evaluated relevant studies on the history of Nazi films and has analysed numerous archival documents from the German Federal Archives in Berlin-Lichterfelde, the National Archives and Record Administration in Washington DC, the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, and the Deutsche Kinemathek (Museum for Film and Television) in Berlin as well as the Berlin State Archives. The materials reviewed make it clear that Alfred Bauer, as advisor to the Reichsfilmintendanz from 1942 to 1945, was well informed with regard to the entire procedures and processes of the German film industry and production and that he played a central role in the area of production planning.

Before Alfred Bauer joined the Reichsfilmintendanz in spring 1942, he studied law at the University of Würzburg from 1930 to 1935. He entered into the local National Socialist German Student Union (NSDStB) and became a member of the local Sturmabteilung (SA) on November 5, 1933. Bauer applied for membership in the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) on June 9, 1937. He received his membership card with the number 4401355 on November 15, 1937. His date of entry was as stipulated in Order 18/37 (April 20, 1937) dated back to May 1, 1937. Immediately after completing his studies, on October 1, 1935, he joined the National Socialist Lawyers' Association, the professional organisation of lawyers in the "Third Reich". In 1939, he passed his assessor examination in Berlin.

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During his internship (1935-1939), Bauer received his doctorate from the University of Würzburg in July 1938 with a thesis on film law. His student file, which is in the archives of the University of Würzburg, yields information neither about the topic of his dissertation nor with respect to his activities in the NSDStB. His doctoral thesis remains missing to this day. After the war began, Bauer was drafted into a Wehrmacht anti-aircraft unit. Due to health problems, he was released on March 23, 1942.

When Alfred Bauer joined the Reichsfilmintendanz, it was under the direction of Fritz Hippler (1942-1943), who was later replaced by Hans Hinkel (1944-1945). The Reichsfilmintendanz was one, if not **the** central institution for controlling German film production under the Nazi regime. Under Hinkel's leadership in particular, it became an extremely important institution in the control, planning and monitoring of German and European film production. In addition to occupational and personnel issues, including labour programmes, forced labour and so-called "UK-Stellungen" ("Unabkömmlichkeitsstellungen", indispensable positions to release specialists from work in the armaments industry, in the Wehrmacht and - towards the end of the war - in the Volkssturm), the Reichsfilmintendanz was also (co-) responsible for the Coordination of film distribution, film censorship and film production during the "total war". While the Reichsfilmintendant specified the guidelines and was in direct contact with Joseph Goebbels (Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda) and Max Winkler (Reich Commissioner for the German Film Industry), the two advisors Alfred Bauer and Walter Müller-Goerne were responsible for the actual processing of business processes. The documents inspected reveal that the leading employees of the Reichsfilmintendanz (including Bauer) were aware of the role of the Reichsfilmintendanz within the German film industry and also of the significance of the film medium for the Nazi society and rule project - and that they accordingly were also cognisant of their own responsibility.

The documents also make it clear that Alfred Bauer was not only an important functionary within the Reichsfilmintendanz, but that he also carried out his job there in a committed and dutiful manner. If one realises the importance of the Reichsfilmintendanz within the Nazi film system, it can be stated from the sources examined that Bauer made a not insignificant contribution to the functioning of the German film system within the Nazi dictatorship and thus to the stabilisation and legitimisation of Nazi rule. However, the files that have been viewed so far only permit limited statements about Bauer's personal decision-making authority and his creative leeway, as well as his own views on the medium of film and its role in the establishment and implementation of the Nazi social and rule project.



Alfred Bauer's denazification files from the Berlin State Archives, nevertheless, can be described as unmasking: During his denazification proceedings (1945-1947), Bauer attempted to deliberately make false statements, half-truths and assertions not only about his past in the NSDAP, in other party organisations (besides the SA and the National Socialist German Student Union, among other things, the National Socialist People's Welfare and the National Socialist Lawyers' Association) and in the Reichsfilmintendanz. Furthermore, he tried to take advantage of the sometimes chaotic conditions in post-war Berlin and to create an image of a convinced and active opponent of the Nazi regime. Even if his argumentation and defence strategies show numerous similarities to comparable cases, the audacity and obtrusiveness of his approach stand out. They reveal Bauer's ambitious, almost unscrupulous opportunism, which may also have influenced his closeness to the Nazi regime.

After completing his denazification process, Bauer was able to continue his career in the German film industry unhindered. On July 6, 1950, he submitted a memorandum to the mayor of Berlin, Ernst Reuter, the three allied city commanders and the Association of the Berlin Film Industry on the establishment of a film institute in Berlin. To this end, he proposed the establishment of an annual film festival. In November of the same year, the Allies commissioned him, under the leadership of the American film officer Oskar Martay, to plan and organise a film festival in Berlin. The first Berlinale under Bauer's direction took place in June of 1951.

The preliminary study provides new insights into the life and work of Dr. Alfred Bauer as well as to the importance of the Reichsfilmintendanz within the Nazi film system. At the same time, it also clearly shows the research gaps in the history of the German film industry. Based on the first results and the questions raised, the study, therefore, recommends a further and intensive examination of the person of Alfred Bauer and the German film industry of the 1940s and 1950s, with a focus on institutions, people and networks as well as personnel-oriented and ideological continuities. Such a project would provide new insights into the political and social significance of the German film industry in the late Nazi era and the early Federal Republic, and it would shed light on the important transformation phase from dictatorship to democracy.