

Twenty Films From the United Nations

(Written for "The Listener" by GORDON MIRAMS)

IT is probably well enough known to some people, but should be worth repeating for the benefit of others, that the United Nations and its specialised agencies by no means confine themselves to issuing documents and producing reports, conventions, and agreements on paper, and circulating these round the world. They also from time to time produce films on celluloid and send them round the world, too.

Amid the many other activities of UN and its agencies, this work of film-making and film-distributing may tend to be lost sight of; but it is in fact already being carried out on a large enough scale to entitle the UN to be considered as a major film production source—with at least fourteen films already produced directly by, or under the sponsorship of, the United Nations and its agencies, and with another five or six about to be released. All this work is co-ordinated through the United Nations Film Board at Lake Success.

Unesco, with headquarters in Paris, does not itself possess production or distribution facilities, though it is the UN agency most closely concerned with stimulating the making and interchange of films at the international level, as well as with many other aspects of the cinema.

The twenty UN films referred to cover a diversity of subjects ranging from afforestation and food, through illiteracy and juvenile delinquency, to lighthouses and maps. Some of them, of course, deal specifically with the set-up and functioning of the UN and its agencies; but all of them, in one way or another, show examples of the collaboration which is already going on between nations to-day, often in little-publicised fields and to an extent which

the average person seldom realises. The films have been produced in nearly a dozen different countries; they are already being distributed in thirty-eight countries, and copies are being made in a total of eighteen languages.

Here, for example, are the titles of the films which have been made on the subject of the United Nations itself—

that is, on the setting up of the organisation and the way it works:

The People's Charter, which is composed entirely of authentic documentary material and shows how, in the midst of war, the idea of UN was born;

Searchlight on the Nations, which describes how the modern media of mass-communication are used to bring the reports of UN to the peoples of the world;

The Defence of Peace, a French-made film explaining, largely by means of



SHOOTING a scene in the UNESCO award-winning documentary "FIRST STEPS"



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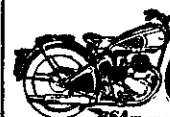
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