

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Memorandum. Object: An exclusive general option on the motion-picture rights...

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MEMORANDUM

OBJECT: An ~~ex~~clusive g e n e r a l o p t i o n on the motion-picture rights of all the titles published by the joint firms of QUERIDO/BERMANN-FISCHER VERLAG (Amsterdam), SUHRKAMP (formerly S. FISCHER) VERLAG (Berlin and Frankfurt), and BERMANN-FISCHER VERLAG (Vienna).

The two men in charge of the above-mentioned combined publishing houses, Mr. F. H. LANDSHOFF and Mr. GOTTFRIED BERMANN-FISCHER, are willing to come to an agreement with one of the leading American motion-picture companies, under the following terms:

1.) The PUBLISHERS grant an exclusive general option, ²(valid for two years, on the motion-picture rights of all the titles published under their imprint (QUERIDO or BERMANN-FISCHER).

~~When~~ In those exceptional cases where the PUBLISHERS do not own the motion-picture rights of any particular book published under their imprint, they will act as negotiators and go-betweens -- which is to say that they will promptly inform the respective author or his representative of the OTHER PARTY's interest, and will do their best to secure the desired rights for the OTHER PARTY. Also, the information about such works, given by the PUBLISHERS to the OTHER PARTY, will be as prompt and as complete as in all other cases.

2.) The PUBLISHERS will prepare, for the ^{exclusive} benefit of the OTHER PARTY, a concise but thorough synopsis (written in English) of any book published under their imprint which may contain potential movie material. These condensed outlines are to be prepared and delivered b e f o r e publication of the book in question.

2.) The OTHER PARTY have to decide within months after
delivery of the outline whether or not they wish to buy the
motion-picture rights of the literary work in question. In case
the OTHER PARTY decide to buy those rights, a contract has to
be signed ~~between~~^{by} BOTH PARTIES (Publishers and Motion-Picture
Company), on terms to be agreed upon in each individual case.

4.) If the OTHER PARTY are not interested in the motion-picture
rights of the literary work in question, or fail to take up
their option in due time, the rights return automatically to
the PUBLISHERS who, in such a case, would be free to offer the
same material to other potential buyers, without any further
obligation towards the OTHER PARTY.

5.) The PUBLISHERS will keep the OTHER PARTY informed, not
only about their own output and their own projects, but also
about any significant or promising literary novelties prepared
or published by other publishers in those countries where the
joint firms of QUERIDO/BERMANN-FISCHER maintain offices or
representatives (The Netherlands, (Sweden,) Switzerland, Germany,
Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia). The PUBLISHERS will furnish,
for the exclusive benefit of the OTHER PARTY, regular reports
on literary activities in those countries, and will prepare
outlines of books that may be of interest, from the point of
view of the motion-picture industry. The movie rights of such
books may be obtained through the good services of the PUBLISHERS.

6.) For the exclusive option and the other services indicated

above, the PUBLISHERS expect from the OTHER PARTY the amount of \$..... payable in ²⁴monthly instalments of \$....., within twenty-four months after the signing of the contract.

In order to appreciate the advantages such an arrangement would offer to the "Other Party" (i.e. the motion-picture company), one has to consider the unique position the QUERIDO-FISCHER chain occupies among Central-European publishers.

QUERIDO VERLAG (established in 1933 as the German-language branch of an old Dutch publishing house) was for years one of the most vital centers of German literature in exile -- presenting the works of such outstanding refugee authors as Lion Feuchtwanger, Erich-Maria Remarque, Heinrich Mann, Vicki Baum, etc. Today, QUERIDO is playing an equally important role as a link between intellectual life in occupied Germany and the outside world.

As for BERMANN-FISCHER VERLAG, it is the heir of the famed German publishing house of S. FISCHER, BERLIN -- the great firm which, for more than half-a-century, had the privilege of publishing the works of Gerhart Hauptmann, Thomas Mann, Arthur Schnitzler, Jakob Wassermann, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Hermann Hesse, etc. When Hitler came to power, the son-in-law of S. Fischer, Dr. G. BERMANN-FISCHER, went abroad -- first to Vienna, then to Stockholm -- and continued to publish the writings of those ~~and~~ Fischer authors who were considered objectionable by the Nazi regime. Others, like Gerhart Hauptmann und Hermann Hesse, who -- without being Nazis -- could still appear in the Third Reich, were published ^(in Berlin) by Bermann-Fischer's partner and representative, Mr. SUHRKAMP, who tried to keep up the old S. Fischer tradition, in spite of ~~the~~ difficulties. Since the end of the war, BERMANN-FISCHER has been

been working again in close collaboration with his Berlin branch.

More recently (summer 1948) the two firms of QUERIDO and BERMANN-FISCHER decided to pool their resources and coordinate their activities -- thus forming a new concern with whose potency and prestige no other German-language publisher can compete.

The list of QUERIDO-FISCHER authors comprises the following names, among others (to mention only those who produce fiction, plays, or biographies -- in short, potential movie material):

Vicki Baum, Alfred Döblin, Lion Feuchtwanger, Bruno Frank, Leonhard Frank, A. M. Frey, Oskar Marie Graf, Martin Gumpert, Gerhart Hauptmann, Konrad Heiden, Hermann Hesse, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Heinrich Ed. Jacob, Georg Kaiser, Marta Karlweiss, Alfred Kerr, Kurt Kersten, Hermann Kesten, Irmgard Keun, Annette Kolb, Alexander Lernet-Holenia, Emil Ludwig, Joachim Maass, Erika Mann, Heinrich Mann, Klaus Mann, Thomas Mann, Valeriu Marcu, Ludwig Marcuse, Alfred Neumann, Robert Neumann, Gustav Regler, Erich-Maria Remarque, Joseph Roth, Arthur Schnitzler, Anna Seghers, Wilhelm Speyer, Carl Sternheim, Ernst Toller, Friedrich Torberg, * Jakob Wassermann, * Franz Werfel, Otto Zarek, Carl Zuckmayer, Arnold Zweig, Stefan Zweig.

(This list does not include the many non-German writers -- American, English, French, Italian, Swedish, Dutch, and so forth -- whose works appeared, in German translation, under the imprint of either publishing house.)

* Friedrich Wolf

F. C. Weisskopf

Some of the distinguished men and women just enumerated are, of course, the authors of books most successfully used by the motion-picture industry. If an agreement of the kind suggested in this Memorandum had existed, ~~some~~ ^{some} ~~twenty~~ years ago, between the PUBLISHERS and the OTHER PARTY (i.e. an American motion-picture company), the OTHER PARTY would have received pre-publication outlines of now world-famous novels like Thomas Mann's "The Magic Mountain," Lion Feuchtwanger's "Power" and "Proud Destiny," Vicki Baum's "Grand Hotel," Heinrich Mann's ^{the} "Blue Angel," Anna Seghers' "The Seventh Cross," Erich-Maria Remarque's "Three Comrades," and so forth. -- There is no reason to doubt that writers whose contributions proved so valuable in the past,

Franz Werfel's "Bernadette,"

will produce material of equal quality in the future.

But at least as interesting as great names are, from the film producers point of view, young talents -- not yet established, not yet widely recognized writers from whom new ideas may be expected. The QUERIDO-FISCHER list includes some "promises" of this sort; others are to be added. If any publisher has a chance to discover tomorrow's literary leaders and celebrities, it is that firm with its widespread network of local branches, representatives and other observation posts in various parts of Europe.

In this context, it may be appropriate to stress the special significance of one particular point incorporated in the proposed "terms" -- namely, Point No. 5 which stipulates that "the PUBLISHERS will keep the OTHER PARTY informed, not only about their own output and their own projects, but also about any ... promising literary novelties prepared or published by other publishers in those countries where the joint firms of QUERIDO/BERMANN-FISCHER maintain offices or representatives." This clause may ~~indeed~~ turn out to be most most beneficial to "the Other Party." For the two chiefs of the joint firm, Mr. LANDSHOFF and Mr. BERMANN-FISCHER, are indeed in a singularly good position to observe, through their various local agencies and contact men, the literary market in most European capitals, from Stockholm and Copenhagen to Prague and Budapest. The international staff of QUERIDO-FISCHER's readers and advisers is not likely to miss any interesting novelty or any promising talent.

American motion-picture companies are spending a lot of money to finance the junkets of roving talent-scouts and ~~maintain offices~~ ^{keep agencies} in foreign countries. One of those companies might diminish its expenses and get better results by collaborating with a major European publishing house and literary center, such as QUERIDO/BERMANN-FISCHER VERLAG.

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