

Transatlantic Travel with Norddeutscher Lloyd (1928)

Abstract

This short film from the Norddeutscher Lloyd shipping company advertised the modern amenities of its new ocean liner *Bremen*, which featured its own catapult-launched float plane for rapid mail service. Early scenes showcased the vessel's modern navigational technology, too, as well as its diligent crew, in order to reassure potentially wary passengers. The *Bremen* clearly occupied a position of national pride, starting with the words on the opening frame, "Seefahrt ist Not" (Seafaring is indispensable), which evoked the title of the fallen German writer Gorch Fock's 1913 semi-autobiographical maritime novel. The very next scene featured President Paul von Hindenburg himself christening the vessel in 1928, just a year before its maiden voyage to New York in 1929, on which it set a world record for the fastest trans-Atlantic crossing by a ship (4 days, 17 hours, 42 minutes). In its size and luxury, as well as its speed, the *Bremen* symbolized Germany's postwar recovery. The Treaty of Versailles had required German shipping companies to hand over all of their large ships and half of their smaller ones to the Allied powers, which had forced Norddeutscher Lloyd to rebuild most of its fleet from scratch in 1919. The company recovered with remarkable speed, by both buying back its former ships and building brand-new ones. In 1926, it sought to solidify its reestablished reputation by laying the keels for the *Bremen* and its sister ship *Europa*, two high-speed ocean liners that would each go on to set multiple speed records and capture a significant segment of the growing American travel market. Although this film lists a production year of 1928, it also includes scenes from a later 1930/31 version, including ones of its arrival in New York City.

Source

Source: *Bremen - Königin der Meere*, Döring Filmwerke for Norddeutscher Lloyd, 1928 (censorship version dated 1930/31). Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv Filmwerk ID: 21654
<https://digitaler-lesesaal.bundesarchiv.de/video/21654/640919>

BArch

Recommended Citation: Transatlantic Travel with Norddeutscher Lloyd (1928), published in:
German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/weimar-germany-1918-1933/ghdi:video-5232>> [March 16, 2026].