Triumph of the Will

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This article is about the Nazi propaganda film. For the Canadian television series, see Kenny Hotz's Triumph of the Will.

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Triumph of the Will (German: Triumph des Willens) is a 1935 Nazi propaganda film directed, produced, edited, and co-written by Leni Riefenstahl. It chronicles the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg, which was attended by more than 700,000 Nazi supporters.[1] The film contains excerpts from speeches given by Nazi leaders at the Congress, including Adolf Hitler, Rudolf Hess and Julius Streicher, interspersed with footage of massed Sturmbteilung (SA) and Schutzstaffel (SS) troops and public reaction. Hitler commissioned the film and served as an unofficial executive producer; his name appears in the opening titles. The film's overriding theme is the return of Germany as a great power, with Hitler as the leader who will bring glory to the nation. Because the film was made after the 1934 Night of the Long Knives (on 30 June), many prominent Sturmbteilung (SA) members are absent—they were murdered in that Party purge, organised and orchestrated by Hitler to replace the SA with the Schutzstaffel (SS) as his main paramilitary force.

Triumph of the Will was released in 1935 and became a major example of film used as propaganda. Riefenstahl's techniques—such as moving cameras, aerial photography, the use of long focus lenses to create a distorted perspective, and the revolutionary approach to the use of music and cinematography—have earned Triumph of the Will recognition as one of the greatest propaganda films in history. Riefenstahl helped to stage the scenes, directing and rehearsing some of them at least fifty times. Riefenstahl won several awards, not only in Germany but also in the United States, France, Sweden and other countries. The film was popular in the Third Reich, and has continued to influence films, documentaries and commercials to this day.[2] In Germany, the film is not censored but the courts commonly classify it as Nazi propaganda which requires an educational context to public screenings.[3]

An earlier film by Riefenstahl—The Victory of Faith (Der Sieg des Glaubens)—showed Hitler and SA leader Ernst Röhm together at the 1933 Nazi party congress. After Röhm's murder, the party attempted the destruction of all copies, leaving only one known to have survived in Britain. The direction and sequencing of images is almost the same as that Riefenstahl used in Triumph of the Will a year later.

Frank Capra's seven-film series Why We Fight is said to have been directly inspired by, and the United States' response to, Triumph of the Will.[4]
Synopsis

The film begins with a prologue, the only commentary in the film. It consists of the following text, shown sequentially, against a grey background:

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<tr>
<th>Am 5. September 1934</th>
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<td>[On 5 September 1934]</td>
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<th>20 Jahre nach dem Ausbruch des Weltkrieges</th>
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<th>16 Jahre nach dem Anfang deutschen Leidens</th>
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<th>19 Monate nach dem Beginn der deutschen Wiedergeburt</th>
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<td>[19 months after the beginning of the German rebirth]</td>
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flog Adolf Hitler wiederum nach Nürnberg, um Heerschau abzuhalten über seine Getreuen

[Adolf Hitler flew again to Nuremberg to review the columns of his faithful followers]

Day 1: The film opens with shots of the clouds above the city, and then moves through the clouds to float above the assembling masses below, with the intention of portraying beauty and majesty of the scene. The cruciform shadow of Hitler's plane is visible as it passes over the tiny figures marching below, accompanied by an orchestral arrangement of the *Horst-Wessel-Lied*. Upon arriving at the Nuremberg airport, Hitler and other Nazi leaders emerge from his plane to thunderous applause and a cheering crowd. He is then driven into Nuremberg, through equally enthusiastic people, to his hotel where a night rally is later held.

Day 2: The second day begins with images of Nuremberg at dawn, accompanied by an extract from the Act III Prelude (*Wach Auf!*) of Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Following this is a montage of the attendees preparing for the opening of the Reich Party Congress, and footage of the top Nazi officials arriving at the Luitpold Arena. The film then cuts to the opening ceremony, where Rudolf Hess announces the start of the Congress. The camera then introduces much of the Nazi hierarchy and covers their opening speeches, including Joseph Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg, Hans Frank, Fritz Todt, Robert Ley and Julius Streicher. Then the film cuts to an outdoor rally for the Reichsarbeitsdienst (Labor Service), which is primarily a series of quasi-military drills by men carrying spades. This is also where Hitler gives his first speech on the merits of the Labour Service and praising them for their work in rebuilding Germany. The day then ends with a torchlight SA parade in which Viktor Lutze speaks to the crowds.

Day 3: The third day starts with a Hitler Youth rally on the parade ground. Again the camera covers the Nazi dignitaries arriving and the introduction of Hitler by Baldur von Schirach. Hitler then addresses the Youth, describing in militaristic terms how they must harden themselves and prepare for sacrifice. Everyone present, including General Werner von Blomberg, then assemble for a military pass and review, featuring Wehrmacht cavalry and various armored vehicles. That night Hitler delivers another speech to low-ranking party officials by torchlight, commemorating the first year since the Nazis took power and declaring that the party and state are one entity.

Day 4: The fourth day is the climax of the film, where the most memorable of the imagery is presented. Hitler, flanked by Heinrich Himmler and Viktor Lutze, walks through a long wide expanse with over 150,000 SA and SS troops standing at attention, to lay a wreath at a First World War memorial. Hitler then reviews the parading SA and SS men, following which Hitler and Lutze deliver a speech where they discuss the Night of the Long Knives purge of the SA several months prior. Lutze reaffirms the SA's loyalty to the regime, and Hitler absolves the SA of any crimes committed by Ernst Röhm. New party flags are consecrated by letting them touch the Blutfahne (the same cloth flag said to have been carried by the fallen Nazis during the Beer Hall Putsch) and, following a final parade in front of the Nuremberg Frauenkirche, Hitler delivers his closing speech. In it he reaffirms the primacy of the Nazi Party in Germany, declaring, "All loyal Germans will become National Socialists. Only the best National Socialists are party comrades!" Hess then leads the assembled crowd in a final Sieg Heil salute for Hitler, marking the close of the party congress. The entire crowd sings the *Horst-Wessel-Lied* as the
camera focuses on the giant Swastika banner, which fades into a line of silhouetted men in Nazi party uniforms, marching in formation as the lyrics "Comrades shot by the Red Front and the Reactionaries march in spirit together in our columns" are sung.

Origins

Shortly after he came to power Hitler called me to see him and explained that he wanted a film about a Party Congress, and wanted me to make it. My first reaction was to say that I did not know anything about the way such a thing worked or the organisation of the Party, so that I would obviously photograph all the wrong things and please nobody—even supposing that I could make a documentary, which I had never yet done. Hitler said that this was exactly why he wanted me to do it: because anyone who knew all about the relative importance of the various people and groups and so on might make a film that would be pedantically accurate, but this was not what he wanted. He wanted a film showing the Congress through a non-expert eye, selecting just what was most artistically satisfying—in terms of spectacle, I suppose you might say. He wanted a film which would move, appeal to, impress an audience which was not necessarily interested in politics.

— Leni Riefenstahl

Riefenstahl, a popular German actress, had directed her first film called Das blaue Licht (The Blue Light) in 1932. Around the same time she first heard Hitler speak at a Nazi rally and, by her own admission, was impressed. She later began a correspondence with him that would last for years. Hitler, by turn, was equally impressed with Das blaue Licht, and in 1933 asked her to direct a film about the Nazis' annual Nuremberg Rally. The Nazis had only recently taken power amid a period of political instability (Hitler was the fourth Chancellor of Germany in less than a year) and were considered an unknown quantity by many Germans, to say nothing of the world.

In Mein Kampf Hitler talks of the success of British propaganda in World War I, believing people's ignorance meant simple repetition and an appeal to feelings over reason would suffice. Hitler chose Riefenstahl as he wanted the film as "artistically satisfying" as possible to appeal to a non-political audience, but he also believed that propaganda must admit no element of doubt. As such, Triumph of the Will may be seen as a continuation of the unambiguous World War I-style propaganda, though heightened by the film's artistic or poetic nature.

Production

The film follows a script similar to Der Sieg des Glaubens, which is evident when one sees both films side by side. For example, the city of Nuremberg scenes—even to the shot of a cat included in the city driving sequence in both films. Furthermore, Herbert Windt reused much of his musical score for that film in Triumph des Willens, which he also scored. Riefenstahl shot Triumph of the Will on a budget of roughly 280,000RM (approx. $110K USD 1934, $1.54M 2015). With that said, there were extensive preparations facilitated by the cooperation of party members, the military, and vital help from high-ranking Nazis like Goebbels. As Susan Sontag observed, "The Rally was planned not only as a spectacular mass meeting, but as a spectacular propaganda film. Albert Speer, Hitler's personal architect, designed the set in Nuremberg and did most of the coordination for the event. Pits were dug in front of the speakers' platform so Riefenstahl could get the camera angles she wanted, and tracks were laid so that her cameramen could get traveling shots of the crowd. When rough cuts weren't up to par, major party leaders and high-ranking public officials reenacted their speeches in a studio for her.

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Hitler congratulates Riefenstahl in 1934

Riefenstahl and her film crew in front of Hitler's car during a parade in Nuremberg

Riefenstahl also used a film crew that was extravagant by the standards of the day. Her crew consisted of 172 people, including 10 technical staff, 36 cameramen and assistants (operating in 16 teams with 30 cameras), nine aerial photographers, 17 newsreel men, 12 newsreel crew, 17 lighting men, two photographers, 26 drivers, 37 security personnel, four labor service workers, and two office assistants. Many of her cameramen also dressed in SA uniforms so they could blend into the crowds.

Riefenstahl had the difficult task of condensing an estimated 61 hours of film into two hours. [6] She labored to complete the film as fast as she could, going so far as to sleep in the editing room filled with hundreds of thousands of feet of film footage.[8]

Themes

Religion

This morning's opening meeting... was more than a gorgeous show, it also had something of the mysticism and religious fervor of an Easter or Christmas Mass in a great Gothic cathedral.

— Reporter William Shirer

Triumph of the Will is sometimes seen as an example of Nazi political religion. The primary religion in Germany before the Second World War was Christianity. With the primary sects being Roman Catholic and Protestant, the Christian views in this movie are clearly meant to allow the movie to better connect with the intended audience.

Religion is a major theme in Triumph of the Will. The film opens with Hitler descending god-like out of the skies past twin cathedral spires. It contains many scenes of church bells ringing, and individuals in a state of near-religious fervor, as well as a prominent shot of Reich Protestant Bishop Ludwig Müller standing in his vestments among high-ranking Nazis. It is probably not a coincidence that the final parade of the film was held in front of the Nuremberg Frauenkirche. In his final speech in the film, Hitler also directly compares the Nazi party to a holy order, and the consecration of new party flags by having Hitler touch them to the "blood banner" has obvious religious overtones. Hitler himself is portrayed in a messianic manner, from the opening where he descends from the clouds in a plane, to his drive through Nuremberg where even a cat stops what it is doing to watch him, to the many scenes where the camera films from below and looks up at him: Hitler, standing on his podium, will issue a command to hundreds of thousands of followers. The audience happily complies in unison.[12] As Frank P. Tomasulo comments, "Hitler is cast as a veritable German Messiah who will save the nation, if only the citizenry will put its destiny in his hands."[13]

Power

It is our will that this state and this Reich shall endure through the coming millennia.

— Hitler

Germany had not seen images of military power and strength since the end of World War I, and the huge formations of men would remind the audience that Germany was becoming a great power once again. Though the Labor Service men carried spades, they handled them as if they were rifles. The Eagles and Swastikas could be seen as a reference to the Roman Legions of antiquity. The large mass of well-drilled party members could be seen in a more ominous light, as a warning to dissidents thinking of challenging the regime.

Hitler's arrival in an airplane should also be viewed in this context. According to Kenneth Poferl, “Flying in an airplane was a luxury known only to a select few in the 1930s, but Hitler had made himself widely associated with the practice, having been the first politician to campaign via air travel. Victory reinforced this image and defined him as the top man in the movement, by showing him as the only one to arrive in a plane and receive an individual welcome from the crowd. Hitler's speech to the SA also contained an implied threat: if he could have Röhm, the commander of the hundreds of thousands of troops on the screen, shot, it was only logical to assume that Hitler could get away with having anyone executed.”

Unity
As soon as our own propaganda admits so much as a glimmer of right on the other side, the foundation for doubt in our own right has been laid.

— Hitler

It was very important to Adolf Hitler that his propaganda messages carry a unified theme. If a country isn’t unified in saying the enemy is bad, the audience starts to have doubts. Unity is seen throughout this film, even in the camps where soldiers live. The camp outside of Nuremberg is very uniform and clean; the tents are aligned in perfect rows, each one the same as the next. The men there also make a point not to wear their shirts, because their shirts display their rankings and status. Shirtless they are all equals, unified. When they march, it is in unison and they all carry their weapons identically, one to another.

Hitler’s message to the workers also includes the notion of unity:

_The concept of labor will no longer be a dividing one but a uniting one, and no longer will there be anybody in Germany who will regard manual labor any less highly than any other form of labor._

— Hitler

Children were also used to convey unity:

_We want to be a united nation, and you, my youth, are to become this nation. In the future, we do not wish to see classes and castes, and you must not allow them to develop among you. One day, we want to see one nation._

— Hitler

_Triumph of the Will_ has many scenes that blur the distinction between the Nazi Party, the German state, and the German people. Germans in peasant farmers’ costumes and other traditional clothing greet Hitler in some scenes. The torchlight processions, though now associated by many with the Nazis, would remind the viewer of the *medieval Karneval* celebration. The old flag of *Imperial Germany* is also shown several times flying alongside the Swastika, and there is a ceremony where Hitler pays his respects to soldiers who died in World War I (as well as to President *Paul von Hindenburg*, who had died a month before the convention). There is also a scene where the Labor Servicemen individually call out which town or area in Germany they are from, reminding the viewers that the Nazi Party had expanded from its stronghold in *Bavaria* to become a *pan-German* movement.

_The Party is Hitler—and Hitler is Germany just as Germany is Hitler!_

— Rudolf Hess

**Hitler’s speeches**

Among the themes presented, the desire for pride in Germany and the purification of the German people is well exemplified through the speeches and ideals of the Third Reich in _Triumph of the Will_.

In every speech given and shown in _Triumph of the Will_, pride is one of the major focuses. Hitler advocates to the people that they should not be satisfied with their current state and they should not be satisfied with the descent from power and greatness Germany has endured since World War I. The German people should believe in themselves and the movement that is occurring in Germany. Hitler promotes pride in Germany through the unification of it. Unifying Germany would force the elimination of what does not amount to the standards of the Nazi regime.

To unify Germany, Hitler believes purification would have to take place. This meant not only eliminating the citizens of Germany who are not of the *Aryan race*, but the sick, weak, handicapped, or any other citizens deemed unhealthy or impure. In _Triumph of the Will_, Hitler preaches to the people that Germany must take a look at itself and seek out that which does not belong: "[T]he elements that have becomebad, and therefore do not belong with us!" Though within the context, he seems to be referring to the corrupt elements of the power structure, it later could seem in hindsight to imply that the elimination of the "inferior" people of Germany would, in theory, return Germany to its once pridelful and powerful former self. *Julius Streicher* stresses the importance of purification in his speech, a direct reference to his own virulent *anti-semitism*. Hundreds of thousands mentally sick and disabled would be murdered in the _Action T4_, a programme run directly from Hitler’s Chancellery.
Like American filmmaker D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, *Triumph of the Will* has been criticized as a use of spectacular filmmaking in the service of a destructive political ideology. The film was released in 1935, during World War II, and it served as a propaganda piece aimed at justifying the actions of the Nazi Party and promoting the cause of the Third Reich.

In the film, the German Chancellor, Hitler, preaches to the people in his speeches that they should believe in their country and themselves. He promises that the new state that the Nazis have created will endure for thousands of years. Hitler says that the youth will carry on after the old have weakened. They close with a chant, "Hitler is the Party, Hitler." The camera focuses on the large Swastika above Hitler and the film ends with the images of this Swastika imposed on Nazis marching in a few columns. His speech brought attention to the rally and created a huge turnout in the following years. He attracted many people in the way that he addressed the issues and his people. He spoke to them as if it were a sermon and engaged the people. In 1934, over a million Germans participated in the Nuremberg Rally.

Response

*Triumph of the Will* premiered on 28 March 1935 at the Berlin Ufa Palace Theater and was an instant success. Within two months the film had earned 815,000 Reichsmark, and Ufa considered it one of the three most profitable films of that year. Hitler praised the film as being an "incomparable glorification of the power and beauty of our Movement." For her efforts, Riefenstahl was rewarded with the German Film Prize (Deutscher Filmpreis), a gold medal at the 1935 Venice Biennale, and the Grand Prix at the 1937 World Exhibition in Paris. However, there were few claims that the film would result in a mass influx of "converts" to fascism and the Nazis apparently did not make a serious effort to promote the film outside of Germany. Film historian Richard Taylor also said that *Triumph of the Will* was not generally used for propaganda purposes inside the Third Reich. *The Independent* wrote in 2003: "Triumph of the Will seduced many wise men and women, persuaded them to admire rather than to despise, and undoubtedly won the Nazis friends and allies all over the world."[14]

The reception in other countries was not always as enthusiastic. British documentarian Paul Rotha called it tedious, while others were repelled by its pro-Nazi sentiments. During World War II, Frank Capra helped to create a direct response, through the film series called *Why We Fight*, a series of newsreels commissioned by the United States government that spliced in footage from *Triumph of the Will*, but recontextualized it so that it promoted the cause of the Allies instead. Capra later remarked that *Triumph of the Will* "fired no gun, dropped no bombs. But as a psychological weapon aimed at destroying the will to resist, it was just as lethal."[15] Clips from *Triumph of the Will* were also used in an Allied propaganda short called *General Adolph Takes Over*,[16] set to the British dance tune "The Lambeth Walk". The legions of marching soldiers, as well as Hitler giving his Nazi salute, were made to look like wind-up dolls, dancing to the music. The Danish resistance used to take over cinemas and force the projectionist to show *Swinging the Lambeth Walk* (as it was also known); Erik Barrow has said: "The extraordinary risks were apparently felt justified by a moment of savage anti-Hitler ridicule."[17] Also during World War II, the poet Dylan Thomas wrote a screenplay for and narrated *These Are The Men*, a propaganda piece using *Triumph of the Will* footage to discredit Nazi leadership.

One of the best ways to gauge the response to *Triumph of the Will* was the instant and lasting international fame it gave Riefenstahl. *The Economist* said it "sealed her reputation as the greatest female filmmaker of the 20th century."[18] For a director who made eight films, only two of which received significant coverage outside of Germany, Riefenstahl had unusually high name recognition for the remainder of her life, most of it stemming from *Triumph of the Will*. However, her career was also permanently damaged by this association. After the war, Riefenstahl was imprisoned by the Allies for four years for allegedly being a Nazi sympathizer and was permanently blacklisted by the film industry. When she died in 2003–68 years after the film's premiere—her obituary received significant coverage in many major publications, including the Associated Press,[19] *The Wall Street Journal*,[20] *The New York Times*,[21] and *The Guardian*,[22] most of which reaffirmed the importance of *Triumph of the Will*.

Controversy

Like American filmmaker D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, *Triumph of the Will* has been criticized as a use of spectacular filmmaking...
to promote a profoundly unethical system. In her defense, Riefenstahl claimed that she was naive about the Nazis when she made it and had no knowledge of Hitler's genocidal or anti-semitic policies. She also pointed out that *Triumph of the Will* contains “not one single anti-semitic word”, although it does contain a veiled comment by Julius Streicher, the notorious Jew-baiter (who was hanged after the Nuremberg trials), that “a people that does not protect its racial purity will perish.”

However, Roger Ebert has observed that for some, “the very absence of anti-semitism in *Triumph of the Will* looks like a calculation; excluding the central motif of almost all of Hitler's public speeches must have been a deliberate decision to make the film more efficient as propaganda.”[23]

Riefenstahl also repeatedly defended herself against the charge that she was a Nazi propagandist, saying that *Triumph of the Will* focuses on images over ideas, and should therefore be viewed as a Gesamtkunstwerk (holistic work of art).[citation needed] In 1964, she returned to this topic, saying:

> If you see this film again today you ascertain that it doesn't contain a single reconstructed scene. Everything in it is true. And it contains no tendentious commentary at all. It is history. A pure historical film ... it is film-vérité. It reflects the truth that was then in 1934, history. It is therefore a documentary. Not a propaganda film. Oh! I know very well what propaganda is. That consists of recreating events in order to illustrate a thesis, or, in the face of certain events, to let one thing go in order to accentuate another. I found myself, me, at the heart of an event which was the reality of a certain time and a certain place. My film is composed of what stemmed from that.[24]

However, Riefenstahl was an active participant in the rally, though in later years she downplayed her influence significantly, claiming, "I just observed and tried to film it well. The idea that I helped to plan it is downright absurd." Ebert states that *Triumph of the Will* is "by general consent [one] of the best documentaries ever made", but added that because it reflects the ideology of a movement regarded by many as evil, it poses "a classic question of the contest between art and morality: Is there such a thing as pure art, or does all art make a political statement?[23]"

When reviewing the film for his "Great Movies" collection, Ebert reversed his opinion, characterizing his earlier conclusion as "the received opinion that the film is great but evil" and calling it "a terrible film, paralyzingly dull, simpe-minded, overlong and not even 'manipulative', because it is too clumsy to manipulate anyone but a true believer".[25]

Susan Sontag considers *Triumph of the Will* the "most successful, most purely propagandistic film ever made, whose very conception negates the possibility of the filmmaker's having an aesthetic or visual conception independent of propaganda." Sontag points to Riefenstahl's involvement in the planning and design of the Nuremberg ceremonies as evidence that Riefenstahl was working as a propagandist, rather than as an artist in any sense of the word. With some 30 cameras and a crew of 150, the marches, parades, speeches, and processions were orchestrated like a movie set for Riefenstahl's film. Further, this was not the first political film made by Riefenstahl for the Third Reich (there was *Victory of Faith*, 1933), nor was it the last (Day of Freedom, 1935, and Olympia, 1938). "Anyone who defends Riefenstahl's films as documentary", Sontag states, "if documentary is to be distinguished from propaganda, is being disingenuous. In *Triumph of Will*, the document (the image) is no longer simply the record of reality; 'reality' has been constructed to serve the image.[10]"

Brian Winston's essay on the film in *The Movies as History* is largely a critique of Sontag's analysis. Winston argues that any filmmaker could have made the film look impressive because the Nazis' mise en scène was impressive, particularly when they were offering it for camera re-stagings. In form, the film alternates repetitively between marches and speeches. Winston asks the viewers to consider if such a film should be seen as anything more than a pedestrian effort. Like Rotha, he finds the film tedious, and believes anyone who takes the time to analyze its structure will quickly agree.

**Wehrmacht objections**

The first controversy over *Triumph of the Will* occurred even before its release, when several generals in the Wehrmacht protested over the minimal army presence in the film. Only one scene—the review of the German cavalry—actually involved the German military. The other formations were party organizations that were not part of the military.

The opposition of the generals, was not simply out of personalized pique or vanity. As produced by Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*, posits Germany as a leaderless mass of lost souls without any organizing institutions, or antecedent institutional leaders. And that the
“new order” embodied by the Nazi Party and Hitler, provides a both new, and a singular/saving leader and institutional framework for the whole of the German nation.

However, the Army had been, and had seen itself as being, an institution that held shared responsibility for the leadership of the nation and state since at least the time of Fredrick the Great. The leaders of that Army had also been viewed throughout the history of the German-speaking peoples as an integral part of the leadership cadre. By omitting the Army (along with other institutions, e.g., the nobility, the Church, academia, business), the film demonstrated that the Army, as well as its leaders, had “disappeared” from what the Army considered to be its shared leadership role in the state, National Socialist or otherwise. The Army's leaders vehemently disagreed with this implied assertion of the film.

Hitler proposed his own "artistic" compromise where *Triumph of the Will* would open with a camera slowly tracking down a row of all the "overlooked" generals (and placate each general's ego). According to her own testimony, Riefenstahl refused his suggestion and insisted on keeping artistic control over *Triumph of the Will*. She did agree to return to the 1935 rally to make a film exclusively about the Wehrmacht, which became *Tag der Freiheit: Unsere Wehrmacht* (Day of Freedom: Our Armed Forces).

### Influences and legacy

*Triumph of the Will* remains well known for its striking visuals. As one historian notes, "many of the most enduring images of the [Nazi] regime and its leader derive from Riefenstahl's film."[26]

Extensive excerpts of the film were used in Erwin Leiser's documentary *Mein Kampf*, produced in Sweden in 1960. Riefenstahl unsuccessfully sued the Swedish production company Minerva-Film for copyright violation, although she did receive forty thousand marks in compensation from German and Austrian distributors of the film.[27]

In 1942, Charles A. Ridley of the British Ministry of Information made a short propaganda film, *Lambeth Walk – Nazi Style*, which edited footage of Hitler and German soldiers from the film to make it appear they were marching and dancing to the song "The Lambeth Walk".[note 1] The targeted-at-Nazis parody of "The Lambeth Walk" (a British dance that had been popular in swing clubs in Germany which the Nazis denounced as "Jewish mischief and animalistic hopping") so enraged Joseph Goebbels that reportedly he ran out of the screening room kicking chairs and screaming profanities.[29] The propaganda film was distributed uncredited to newsreel companies, who would supply their own narration.[29]

Charlie Chaplin's satire *The Great Dictator* (1940) was inspired in large part by *Triumph of the Will*.[30] Frank Capra used significant footage, with a mocking narration in the first installment of the propagandistic film produced by the United States Army *Why We Fight* as an exposure of Nazi militarism and totalitarianism to American soldiers and sailors.[31] The film has been studied by many contemporary artists, including film directors Peter Jackson, George Lucas and Ridley Scott. The opening sequence of *Starship Troopers* is a direct reference to the film.

### Copyright

The Federal Court of Justice of Germany has addressed the matter of the film *Triumph of the Will* (see BGH UFITA 55 (1970), 313, 320/321). It ascertained that the film was a NSDAP production, where the NSDAP was granted unlimited rights of use for exploitation. According to the March 17, 1965 law regarding the regulation of liabilities of national socialist institutions and the legal relationships concerning their assets, all rights and assets of the NSDAP were transferred to the Federal Republic of Germany, and anything relating to film business was to be managed by Transit Film GmbH.

In 1996, the film was restored to copyright under the 1994 Uruguay Round Agreements Act.[32]

Since the death of Leni Riefenstahl the federally owned Transit Film GmbH holds the exclusive right of use to all rights of the film. The respective contractual agreements had previously provided, to a certain extent, for the joint management of rights.

### See also

- *The Birth of a Nation* (1915 American film), which inspired the "second" KKK's formation
- List of German films 1933–1945
Notes

1. ^ See $ External links for video

References

4. ^ Hagopian, Kevin Jack. "Triumph of the Will – Film Notes". *New York Writers Institute*. University of Albany. "When director Frank Capra was commissioned by the U.S. government to make what became the Why We Fight series of propaganda films in World War II, he screened a copy of Triumph of the Will which had been seized by the U.S. Customs office."
Further reading


External links

- *Triumph of the Will* on Internet Archive
- Das Blaue Licht: Triumph des Willens (1935), the original Riefenstahl website
- *Screenplay of Triumph of the Will*, DasBlaueLicht.net
- *Hinter den Kulissen des Reichsparteitag-Films*, Riefenstahl's 1935 book on the making of the film with many photographs (in German)
- *Triumph of the Will* on IMDb
- *Triumph of the Will* at Rotten Tomatoes
- *Lambeth Walk – Nazi Style*, by Charles A. Ridley

Leni Riefenstahl


- The Last of the Nuba(1973) · The People of Kau(1976) · Vanishing Africa(1982)

- Coral Gardens(1978) · Wonder under Water(1990)

- Leni Riefenstahl's Memoiren(1987)


Fascism

- Nationalism · Imperialism · Authoritarianism · One-party state · Dictatorship · Personality cult · Direct action · Social Darwinism · Social interventionism · Indoctrination · Proletarian nation · Propaganda · Eugenics · Heroism · Militarism · Economic interventionism · Protectionism · Statolatry · New Man · Totalitarianism · Social order · Anti-communism

- Definitions · Economics · Fascism and ideology · Fascism worldwide · Symbolism

- Actual Idealism · Anti-democratic thought · Class collaboration · Corporatism · Heroic capitalism · National capitalism · National Socialism · National syndicalism · State capitalism · Supercapitalism · Third Position · Totalitarianism · Social order

- Austrian · British · Clerical · Falangism · Hutu Power · Integralism · Italian · Japanese · Legionarism · Metaxism · National Anarchism · National Radicalism · National Socialism · National Syndicalism · Revisionist Maximalism · Rexism · Strasserism
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<td>Abba Ahimeir · ion Antonescu · Nimio de Anquin · Gabriele D'Annunzio · Sadad Arawi · Radaslaŭ Astroŭski · marc augier · Maurice Bardèche · Jacques Benoist-Méchin · Henri Béraud · Zoltán Böszörményi · Stephan Bandera · Giuseppe Bottai · Robert Brasillach · Marcelo Caetano · Alphonse de Châteaubriant · Cornelli Zelea Codreanu · Gustavs Celmīšs · Frits Clemen · Álvaro Coco Erriordi · Carlo Costamagna · Richard Walther Darré · Marcel Déat · Léon Degrelle · Savitri Devi · engelbert dolfus · Pierre Drieu La Rochelle · Julius Evola · Gottfried Feder · Francisco Franco · Giovanni Gentile · Joseph Goebbels · Jorge González von Marées · Hans F. K. Günther · Heinrich Himmler · Adolf Hitler · Gregor Strasser · Otto Strasser · Wang Jingwei · ikki Kita · Fumimaro Konoe · Yevhen Konovalets · Vihtori Kosola · Agostino Lanzillo · Dai Li · Dimitrie Ljotić · Leopoldo Lugones · Curzio Malaparte · Tefik Mbojra · Joanna Metaxas · Robert Michels · Oswald Mosley · Asit Krishna Mukherji · Benito Mussolini · Eoin O'Duffy · Gearóid Ó Cuinnéagáin · Sergio Panunzio · Giovanni Papini · Ante Pavelić · William Dudley Pelley · Philippe Pétain · Plaek Phibunsongkhram · Alfred Ploetz · Robert Poulot · Vitkun Quisling · José Antonio Primo de Rivera · Lucien Rebatet · Dionisio Ridruejo · Alfredo Rocco · Konrad Rasztayevski · Alfred Rosenberg · Píllinio Salgado · Rafael Sánchez Mazas · Margherita Sarfatti · Vinayak Damodar Savarkar · Carl Schmitt · Kurt Schuschnigg · Ardengo Soffici · Troy Southgate · Othmar Spahn · Úgo Spirito · Avraham Stern · Mykola Stsiborskyi · Ferenc Szlávi · Józef Tiso · Hideki Tojo · Gonzalo Torrente Ballester · Georges Valois · Anastasy Vonsyatsky · Hirohito</td>
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<td>The Doctrine of Fascism · Fascist Manifesto · The New Face of Power in America La Conquista del Estado · Manifesto of the Fascist Intellectuals · Mein Kampf · My Life · The Myth of the Twentieth Century · Zweites Buch · Zavezhanie russkogo fashista</td>
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<td>Albanian Lictor Youth · Arab Lictor Youth · Ethiopian Lictor Youth · Fascist Union of Youth · Frente de Juventudes · Al-Futuwwa · Gioventù Italiana del Littorio · Hitler Youth (Faith and Beauty Society · Deutsches Jungvolk · Jungmädelbund · League of German Girls) · Hlinka Youth · Mocidade Portuguesa · National Youth Organisation (Greece) · NS Ungdomsfylkning · Opera Nazionale Bailla · Union of Fascist Little Ones (Union of Young Fascists – Vanguard boys) · Union of Young Fascists – Vanguard (girls) · Ustashe Youth</td>
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<td>Albanian Fascist Militia · Black Brigades · Blackshirts · Blueshirts · Blueshirts (Falange) · Corpul Muncitoricilor Legionari · Einsatzgruppen · Gold shirts · Greenshirts · Greyshirts · Heimwehr · Hirden · Hlinka Guard · Iron Wolf · Lãncieri · Legião Portuguesa (Estado Novo) · Makapili · Rodobrania · Schutzstaffel · Serbian Volunteer Corps (World War II) · Silver Legion of America · Sturmbteilung · Sudetendeutschland · Freikorps · Ustashe Militia · Volksstoss · Walloon Legion · Waffen-SS · Werewolf</td>
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Triumph of the Will (German: Triumph des Willens) is a 1935 Nazi propaganda film directed, produced, edited, and co-written by Leni Riefenstahl. It chronicles the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg, which was attended by more than 700,000 Nazi supporters. The film contains excerpts from speeches given by Nazi leaders at the Congress, including Adolf Hitler, Rudolf Hess and Julius Streicher, interspersed with footage of massed Sturmabteilung (SA) and Schutzstaffel (SS) troops and public reaction.