German Color Newsreel (1944)

Abstract

Newsreels played an important role on the home front of all combatant nations. However, the “Panorama” newsreel, shot on color film, was produced specifically for distribution in German-occupied countries on behalf of the Ministry of Propaganda from 1944-1945. The first 1944 edition shown here is typical of Nazi foreign propaganda in that it portrays both the German civilian population and the soldiers at the front as unshaken by the events of the war. The focus is on young people, contributing to the war effort at times but also enjoying themselves at school and in leisure pursuits. The audience does not see any signs of destruction until the cameras move to Berlin. Even then, however, residents of the capital are still able to get around by public transport, visit the theater or zoo, or spend time at the beach. Notice the very few young men in these scenes of the home front. Finally, in the second half of the film, there is news from the battlefront, but the audience does not have to face scenes of the German retreat. Rather we see men, looking confident and healthy, training for combat.

Source

[Singing]

/Boys and girls of the Hitler Youth serving as agricultural helpers.

/During the war years, the German youth established close contact with the rural population through their self-evident willingness to help.

/They have become indispensable helpers to the peasantry on farms and in the fields.

/The village of Ströbeck in the Harz Mountains is known far and wide as the chess village. In addition to their satchels, the children take the board with the black and white squares to school every day. Chess is considered a subject of instruction here.

[Music]

/Every year the people of Ströbeck organize a chess game with living figures in historical costumes on their market square.

/Morning training in the gymnastics school at Medau.

[Music]

/Elegance, grace and rhythm unite in a picture of joyful affirmation of life.

/A cross-section of a typical Sunday in Berlin in the fifth summer of the war.

/Uniforms dominate the street scene.

/In the Berlin Zoo, which was opened exactly 100 years ago and has been hit hard several times by terror attacks.

/Sports fans get their money’s worth at a boxing match at the Dietrich Eckart stage.

/The excursion bus has been replaced by the BVG steamer.

/The Wannsee open-air swimming pool has lost none of its former appeal.

/Sports and relaxation at the Reichssportfeld, reminiscent of the great days of the Olympic competitions.

/A Cossack unit in German service before a ride.

/The guns are brought into firing position at a gallop.

/The highest happiness on earth is to be found on horseback!

/In a tank workshop on the Eastern Front.

/A tank is disassembled into its main parts, inspected and made fit for battle again.

/The shower of sparks from a welding apparatus.

/The work is done, the crew returns to the front with their combat vehicle.

/German speedboats on training runs with young crews.

/In the twilight on the bridge.

/S-boat flotilla full speed ahead!

/In a German paratrooper school. Here the new generation of the “Green Devils” is being prepared for their coming tasks.

/Ground practice on the exercise field.

[Singing]

/Get ready for the first jump!

/Man after man leaps down into the depths without hesitation.

/After landing: quick as a flash to the weapons!

Source: "Panorama" no. 1, color newsreel, Germany, 1944. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv 35798-1.

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