

Nazi Propaganda Film: Berlin on the Eve of the Olympic Games (1936)

Abstract

The Propaganda Ministry produced this color documentary in 1936 to entice visitors to Berlin for the summer Olympics. Willi Forst, Austrian actor and director, directed it. The film portrays Berlin as a modern, vibrant, and welcoming city. It provides a studied balance of imagery. Bathers on the Wannsee, women smoking, people laughing, dining and dancing—all of this offers images of a bustling metropolis and an economic recovery. The film was one part of a large international PR blitz that welcomed people to the capital from all over the world. It doesn't expunge images of marching youth and language of devotion to the Führer, but it is also part of a concerted effort to downplay the more coercive aspects of contemporary Germany. Before the international visitors streamed into the capital, the Nazi government removed all antisemitic signage and presented a scrubbed image of a country at peace and unencumbered by the coercion and terror that lay under the surface.

Source

Welcome to the capital of the Reich, Berlin. Berlin presents itself in the Olympic year 1936 in festive flag decorations with a current design: black swastikas in a white circle on a red background.

The Victory Column of 1873 at Grosser Stern square and the Brandenburg Gate with the Quadriga, the city's landmark, greet the youth of the world, who walk in groups through the wide streets in awe.

Radio tower and transmitter transmit the events of the 11th Olympiad directly to all radio stations on the continent. [Radio announcement:] "The Führer and Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler opens the 11th Olympic Games 1936 in the Olympic Stadium."

In the consciousness of the people, Berlin is Germany's most important city, and Unter den Linden is one of its representative boulevards.

A spectacle of special character is the changing of the guard in front of the Neue Wache Memorial.

The baroque remodeling of Berlin's Palace was carried out around 1700 by Andreas Schlüter.

As the intellectual center of Germany, Berlin concentrates art and science to a special degree and its location leads to creative power.

Berlin derives its special charm from the alternation between the river landscape of the Spree and the pulsating rhythm of the big city, as here at Alexanderplatz.

Visitors appreciate the Berliners' joie de vivre, the fun of dancing between a beer with a shot of liquor and sweet cake.

And young people march for the Führer, believing in a better future.

Planning and design bring new accents to the cityscape.

A visit to the zoo brings new encounters with the animals.

While at Wannsee, the fun of bathing is experienced as a rush of the masses.

In the Reich Air Ministry, the seat of Minister Hermann Göring, the fate of the German people for the future is decided to a significant degree.

Source: *Berlin. Reichshauptstadt 1936*. Documentary, color, dir. Willi Forst, 1936. Commissioned by the Reich Propaganda Ministry. Internet Archive.

<https://archive.org/details/berlin-1936-colour-propaganda-documentary-you-tube>

Recommended Citation: Nazi Propaganda Film: Berlin on the Eve of the Olympic Games (1936), published in: German History in Documents and Images,

<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/nazi-germany-1933-1945/ghdi:video-5034>> [July 11, 2025].