

## “Contrasts in Africa” (1925)

### Abstract

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These clips from a 1925 newsreel present scenes from two markedly different parts of Africa at the time, vicariously offering German film viewers an exotic trip from the comfort of their seats. The first set of images shows a riverine region, in which a pair of presumably European big-game hunters shoot a hippopotamus with a great deal of help from a group of two dozen African men, who initially stalked it and then drag the carcass out of the water and butcher it. The location remained unspecified, perhaps because the film’s production company, Emelka, did not know or did not think to include the detail. As a consequence, the images appeared as generic “Africa,” a cinematic echo of the *Völkerschauen*—the live, zoo-like exhibits of cultural groups from the colonized parts of Africa and the Pacific that had taken place throughout Europe and North America since the 1870s. The second set of images, by contrast, features footage of tall buildings and bustling street traffic in Johannesburg, South Africa, that likely struck viewers as nearly indistinguishable from that in any German metropolis. By contrasting the “modern face of Africa” with its traditional, “savage” image, the report implicitly touts the advances European colonists had supposedly brought to parts of the “dark continent.”

### Source

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Source: *Emelka-Deulig-Wochenschau* compilation (clips), 1925. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv Filmwerk ID: 648948, <https://digitaler-lesesaal.bundesarchiv.de/video/648948/630629>

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