Light, Air, and Water: Film Advertising the Bilz Sanatorium at Oberlößnitz (1926)

Abstract

These scenes show some of the many treatments available at the Bilz Sanatorium, a wellness retreat in Oberlössnitz, near the city of Dresden. The health guru Friedrich Eduard Bilz founded this health resort in 1892, after blockbuster sales of his self-help book, *Lehrbuch der naturgemäßen Heilweise und Gesundheitspflege* [Manual of Natural Healing and Health Care], had made him a wealthy man. Fritz Boehner, who specialized in advertising films, produced this 1926 movie to promote the "light and air baths" and other ostensibly beneficial services on offer at Bilz's establishment. Like so many other proselytizers for natural and hygienic living who comprised the growing "life reform movement" [*Lebensreformbewegung*] at this time, Bilz had no medical training whatsoever. His practice rested instead on a self-devised method of harnessing water and sunlight to enhance the body's own self-healing powers, a method that most medical authorities at the time viewed as quackery. Bilz and his fellow life-reformers, however, saw their practices as an antidote to the physical and psychological ailments caused by industrial society, with its crowded cities and frantic pace. Dresden played a particularly important role in this life reform movement, having hosted the first International Hygiene Exhibition in 1911 and founded the German Hygiene Museum a year later. Bilz attended that 1911 exhibition and there witnessed a machine for generating artificial waves that inspired him to have a similar one installed at his own facility, as one of these scenes shows.

Source

Intertitles:

Light, Air, and Water. A film for the German people in four parts.
The founder of the Bilz health creations near Dresden.
[Shot of Bilz with his books.]
Part I.
The well-known Bilz Sanatorium with its three spa buildings and large park in Oberlößnitz-Radebeul near Dresden.
A well-known and popular place of pilgrimage for the sick and those in need of rest and recuperation.
The men's spa at the Bilz sanatorium.
A quick affusion.
Leg affusion.
Whole body wrap.
Belly wrap.
Belly massage.
Lady's spa at the Bilz sanatorium.
Unit for light and electrical treatments.
Diathermia
Sollux lamp
Sunburn-free ultrasun
Electrostatic generator
Electric vibration massage
The four cell bath

Galvanic bath
[...]

The large Bilz light-air-bath facilities in Lößnitzgrund near Dresden, which are well worth seeing.
Life and activities at the Bilz baths.
Sports, games, and gymnastics while bathing in fresh air.
The famous and spectacular wave pool at the Bilz baths.

Source: *Licht, Luft und Wasser* (clip), prod. Boehner Film, 1926. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv Filmwerk ID: 6313.
https://digitaler-lesesaal.bundesarchiv.de/video/6313/680719

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