

# Nazi Propaganda Film: *Germany's Bloodletting* (1932)

## Abstract

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This 17-minute excerpt from the 1932 Nazi propaganda film *Blutendes Deutschland* [Germany's Bloodletting] presented the NSDAP's version of recent German history under the "Weimar system." By splicing together footage from the previous decade from a number of different sources and by framing it with an authoritative voiceover, the film constructed a narrative of republican chaos and National Socialist salvation. It disparaged Jews and communists with particular zeal, crudely mocking the Jewish vice-president of Berlin Isidor Weiß's first name, for instance, and referring to KPD supporters as "the underworld." Those two groups appeared as both cause and effect of the republic's larger failures, which included not only soaring unemployment, but also a purported disregard for the will of the people. The film pointed out what it saw as the Weimar Republic's democratic deficit, including its regular use of emergency decrees [*Notverordnungen*] and its frequent resort to the 1922 Law for the Protection of the Republic [*Republikenschutzgesetz*], the latter of which enabled various governments to ban SA gatherings, for example. The film's footage inadvertently conveyed the opposite impression, too, however, by presenting the energy and vibrancy of German elections during the Weimar Republic, with their array of decorated trucks, marches, placards, flags, flyers, and ballots that listed as many as two dozen parties from which to choose. The NSDAP produced two versions of *Blutendes Deutschland*, with the first appearing at the very end of 1932. It then produced a second, longer version in spring 1933 that incorporated footage of Hitler's January 30<sup>th</sup> appointment as Reich Chancellor. The Party, and particularly its head of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, saw the medium of film as one of the most effective tools for galvanizing support.

## Source

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Speaker: The underworld is mobilizing.

Democratic Carnival.

The challenge to the Weimar system is renewed at the 1927 party conference in Nuremberg.

Silver lining on the Geneva horizon. Stock market crash on Black Friday.

Isidor, the deputy police president of Berlin. Under his protection, Moscow and the Reichsbanner marched against Germany.

Newscaster: The Prussian state government has once again banned the SA from the entire state territory as of today.

Speaker: The Führer responds to this in Nuremberg.

Foreign countries dictate. The unemployment rate rises along with the debt.

The disarmament conference produces paper. In Germany, the political fronts are lining up for the final battle.

In the workers' quarters and in the backyards, the Führer's slogan resounds: Germany, awake! Germany, awake!

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Hitler: Does anyone really believe that a nation can achieve anything at all when its political life is as tattered and torn as ours in Germany? Thirty-four parties! The gentlemen are quite right. We are intolerant. I have set myself a goal, namely to rid Germany of the 30 parties.

Speaker: Elections - a referendum on Brüning. He comes and goes and goes and comes. The emergency decrees and 5 million unemployed remain.

Hitler: Economically, the three parties of the Center, the Social Democrats and the Communists have really brought the German nation down at lightning speed.

Speaker: Red murderers are attacking.

In the name of the movement, in loyalty to the Führer, Horst Wessel, the poet of our battle song, fell by the hand of a cowardly murderer.

Hitler: You may have believed that you would wear us down with this bloody terror. I assure you that within two or three months your terror will be eliminated. As surely as we are National Socialists!

Speaker: Two more cabinets are swept away.

Hitler: Unfortunately, I am unable to counter the lies and slander at this point, which could easily take hold of the entire nation. They can oppress us. They can kill us for all I care. We will not surrender!

Source: *Blutendes Deutschland*, propaganda film, dir. Johannes Häussler, 1932. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv Filmwerk-ID 280

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