



January 30, 2007: XIV:3  
**TRIUMPH OF THE WILL/TRIUMPH DES WILLENS** 1934 (110 minutes)



**Cast:** Adolf Hitler, Max Amann, Martin Bormann, Walter Buch, Richard Walther Darré, Otto Dietrich, Sepp Dietrich, Hans Frank, Joseph Goebbels, Hermann Göring, Jakob Grimminger, Rudolf Hess, Reinhard Heydrich, Konstantin Hierl, Heinrich Himmler, Robert Ley, Viktor Lutze, Erich Raeder, Fritz Reinhardt, Alfred Rosenberg, Hjalmar Schacht, Franz Schwarz, Julius Streicher, Fritz Todt, Werner von Blomberg, Hans Georg von Friedeburg, Gerd von Rundstedt, Baldur von Schirach, Adolf Wagner, *and* The Soldiers of the SA, SS & Wehrmacht, The *Hitlerjugend*, plus other participants of the Party Rally *and* the citizens of Nüremberg

**Directed, produced, written and edited by** Leni Riefenstahl

**Camera** Sepp Allgeier, Karl Attenberger, Werner Bohne, Walter Frentz, Hans Karl Gottschalk, Werner Hundhausen, Herbert Kebelmann, Albert Kling, Franz Koch, Herbert Kutschbach, Paul Lieberenz, Richard Nickel, Walter Riml, Arthur von Schwertführer, Karl Vash (Vaß), Franz Wehmayr, Siegfried Weinmann, Karl Wellert

**Assistant Camera** Sepp Ketterer, Wolfgang Hart, Peter Haller, Kurt Schulz, Eugen Oskar Bernhard, Richard Kandler, Hans Bühring, Richard Böhm, Erich Stoll, Josef Koch, Otto Jäger, August Beis, Hans Wittman, Wolfgang Müller, Hans (Heinz) Linke, Erich Küchler, Ernst Kunstmann, Erich Grohmann, Wilhelm Schmidt

**Special Camera/Effects** Albert Kling (ærial photography) Svend Noldan (special effects) Fritz Brunsch (special effects) Hans Noack (special effects)

**Sets** Albert Speer

Bertha Helene (Leni) Amalie Riefenstahl was born August 22, 1902, in Berlin. She studied painting and dance, was hired as a dancer by Max Reinhardt and by 24 had given solo dance concerts in many European cities. In 1925 she made her film debut as an actress in *Der Heilige Berg* (The Holy Mountain), one of the Alpine mountain films of Dr. Arnold Fanck, who stressed realism and usually hired winter

sports experts rather than actors. Riefenstahl proved as good an athlete as a dancer and starred also in Fanck's *Der Grosse Sprung* (The Great Leap, 1927); *Die Weisse Hölle vom Piz Palü* (The White Hell of Pitz Palu, 1929, co-directed with G.B. Pabst); *Stürme über dem Montblanc* (Storm Over Mont Blanc, 1930); *Der Weisse Rausch* (The White Frenzy, 1931); and *SOS Eisberg* (S.O.S. Iceberg, 1933).

In 1931 Riefenstahl established her own production company and wrote (with noted Hungarian film writer Béla Balázs), directed, produced and starred in *Das Blaue Licht* (The Blue Light, 1932) which won her the silver medal at the Venice Biennale and drew Hitler's attention. He wanted her to film the 1933 Party rally but Goebbels opposed her, arguing she was too young (31), too inexperienced and a woman. Without his assistance she shot several thousand feet of film which Hitler insisted be edited and released. This was *Sieg des Glaubens* (Victory of Faith, 1933) which is lost. Riefenstahl asserts her name did not appear in the credits. She complained to Hitler about Goebbels' interference and Hitler ordered her to film the 1934 rally. Because she hadn't made a nonfiction film she sought the help of Walter Ruttmann, director of the famous German documentary *Berlin: The Symphony of a Great City* (1927). He agreed to do a film prologue on the Nazi rise to power and she left for Spain to scout locations for *Tiefland* (finished in 1954), her next fiction project. She returned from Spain in mid August 1934 and had only two weeks to prepare for filming. Hitler had combined the offices of President and Chancellor on the August 2<sup>nd</sup> death of von Hindenburg. He presided over the sixth party rally held in Nürenberg from September 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>. *Triumph of the Will* (1935) is the film record of his gigantic display of party power, regarded as the most effective visual propaganda for Nazism ever made.

A crew of 170 worked on the film including 18 cameramen, each with an assistant. Riefenstahl built tracks to move the cameras, installed an elevator on the flagpole to get high shots, and instructed her cameramen, who wore SA uniforms to blend in, to get moving active footage. Riefenstahl consciously constructed Hitler as a Messianic figure. The film won the German Film Prize of 1935, the gold medal at the Venice Biennale and the gold medal at the Paris World's Fair in 1937. To satisfy the military who felt passed over by the film and to stop Hitler from changing her opening sequence, she made *Tag der Freiheit—Unsere Wehrmacht* (Day of Freedom—Our Armed Forces, 1935) a skillful assemblage of factual footage which lacks the thematic and psychological impact of *Triumph of the Will*.

*Olympia*, a four-hour epic on the Berlin Olympic Games followed, premiering on 20 April 1938 to mark Hitler's 49<sup>th</sup> birthday. Widely admired for

technical innovation and accomplishment the Olympic films won first prize at the Venice Biennale and were honored by the Olympic Committee in 1948.

After the fall of the Third Reich, Riefenstahl was one of the few leading figures in the German film industry to suffer for her past glorification of Nazism. She vigorously denied romantic involvement or political complicity with Hitler and was formally cleared in two judicial processes of being a Nazi. She published photography books on the Nuba and Kau peoples of Africa and on underwater reefs. She published her memoirs in 1987 and is the subject of a 1994 documentary entitled "*The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*."



#### JUDGMENTS OF *Triumph of the Will*

"blood-chilling" *Frank Capra*

"cinematically dazzling and ideologically vicious"  
*Richard Barsam*

"The historic event served as the set of a film which was then to assume the character of an authentic documentary." *Susan Sontag*

"The film is purely historical. I state precisely; it is *film-verité*. It reflects the truth that was then, in 1934, history. It is therefore a documentary. Not a propaganda film. Oh! I know very well what propaganda is. That consists of recreating certain



events in order to illustrate a thesis or, in the face of certain events, to let one thing go in order to accentuate another.” *Leni Riefenstahl*

“*Triumph of the Will*, like the antisemitic films produced in Germany in 1941 (*Jew Suss*, *Der Ewige Jude*) to encourage the Nazis to perpetrate the Final Solution with zeal and efficacy, is an indispensable part of the Third Reich.”

“An outstanding mirror to the monstrosity of Nazi Germany. In its arresting visual power *Triumph of the Will* is a cinematic document of one of the most compelling subjects of our time, and yet, by its very essence, it is a demonstration of extreme falsehood in the service of extreme evil.” *Ilan Avisar*

“Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph des Willens* is one of the greatest achievements, perhaps the most brilliant of all in the history of film propaganda. It is a magnificently controlled work of art, and, at the same time, a documentary on an event captured in all of its immediacy.” *Leif Furhammar & Folke Isaksson*

“*Triumph of the Will* is a failed propaganda film. Although Hitler liked the film, in Nazi Germany it was not successful with the general public and was not used very widely as propaganda.” *Ilan Avisar*

“A sympathetic documentary of a propaganda event.” *Richard Corliss*

**from “Editing Reality” Bruce Jackson and Diane Christian. *Visual Sociology*, 9 (1), pp.62-74. 1994.**

### **[b] The reel thing**

Documentary films are created in an inverted funnel of declining possibility. The filmmaker begins with the materials and subjects of the world, which are infinite in scope. From that infinitude one selects a subject, then an approach. These decisions are in part predicated on practical concerns: the amount of money determines the size of the crew, the amount of footage that can be purchased, shot, and processed, the number of location and editing days, the sophistication of the sound mix. Thousands of microdecisions are made for aesthetic reasons, technical reasons, weather reasons, background noise reasons, time-to-go-to-dinner-now reasons, access and permission reasons, sore back and feet reasons. Every decision forecloses others and the possibilities become ever narrower.

In films based on real-time events, filmmakers are limited by the arrow of time: they return from the field with a fixed amount of data, a fixed world of possibility: so many feet of exposed film and audiotape. (They can go back and do pickups, but it’s never the same, and that just changes the moment at which the world of possibility is fixed, not the fact or limitation of it.). They may manipulate those images and sounds, but they will have no other images to do things with....

### **The real thing**

The key fact missed most often by social scientists utilizing documentary films for data, is this: documentary films are not found or reported things; they’re made things. They differ from fiction films in that they bring with them questions of accuracy linked to an external reality.... We need to remember that documentaries don’t document just an event; they also document the perception of an event, and that perception is enacted in the film itself. That double documentary aspect is what permits multiple documentaries to be made about the same event or person and for each to have validity and utility. Right and wrong exist somewhere else....

The only reality of a film is the reality of the film you see. The reality you see depends on some measure on who you are and what you know, on what codes you can read. The reality the film is about is in another plane entirely. This is as true for the most complex documentary as the simplest and most direct news footage.



## [dc] History and Film

Problematical questions about historical accuracy and influence arise for Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. Some critics charge that the 1934 Nüremberg Nazi Party rally was staged for the cameras' documentation, making it a propaganda film not a documentary. Hitler, newly proclaimed Führer, personally commissioned Riefenstahl to make a record of the gigantic display of party power at his sixth party rally. He wanted the film to give him rallies forever.

The question of whether reality creates the picture or the picture creates the reality is a complicated one—an issue TV new producers face regularly. Some analysts go so far as to say that to point the camera is to create the action filmed....

Riefenstahl asserts that her film was historical and her editing authentic and artistic....Where is the boundary between shaping a story and plugging a platform? The reason we want to dismiss *Triumph of the Will* as propaganda is because we want to discredit its content, its celebration of Nazism. Filmmakers used her footage and her techniques to fight Nazism, in fact. Frank Capra made the *Why We Fight* series at Roosevelt's personal request; the President sought the successful Hollywood filmmaker to galvanize American passion to fight Hitler. Capra used grim narration over Riefenstahl's footage to argue military obsession and menace. Charlie Chaplin also used and mocked her Hitler footage to incite ridicule of Hitler in *The Great Dictator*.

Barsam describes *Triumph of the Will* as "cinematically dazzling and ideologically vicious". But ideological viciousness is not obvious in *Triumph of the Will*. It is implicitly present only after the next ten years of history. In 1934, Churchill and Roosevelt were also praising Hitler as the new savior of Germany.

Riefenstahl, a brilliant, ambitious young director and actress, didn't want to make the documentary. She wanted to make an epic romance called *Tiefland (Heartland)* with dancing and drama; she wanted to play a Gypsy dancer and have poor peasants rebel against oppressive landlords. Riefenstahl declined Hitler's first invitation to film the rally. But he persisted, asking her to give six days of her life to Germany. She said she was completely unfamiliar with all the subject matter, that she couldn't tell the SA from the SS. Hitler responded that individuals didn't matter, what mattered was the

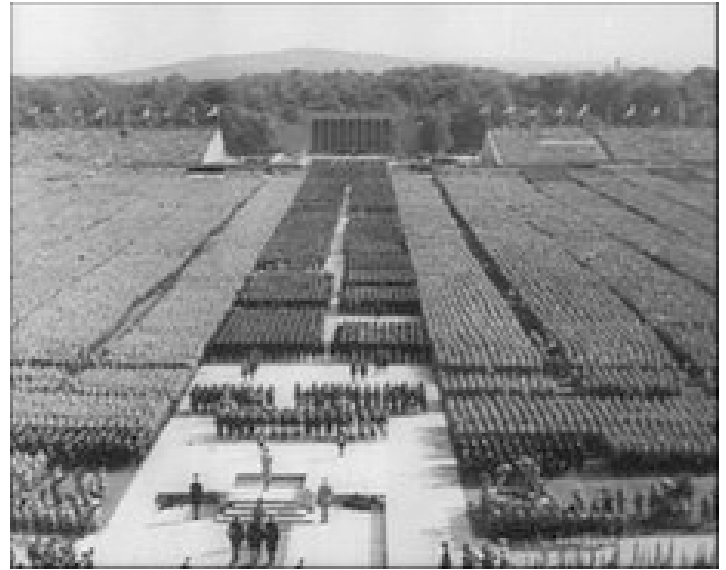
transcendent epic of the party, their people, their Führer. (Riefenstahl, 1992:158) He said "It is not important who is in the film. It is important that the film has the atmosphere." She said it would interfere with her projects, taking perhaps a year to edit. Hitler asked her to do it as a personal favor and he guaranteed her artistic control. She had eighteen cameramen and eighteen camera assistants under the direction of Sepp Allgeier, the best talent, full control. Riefenstahl plaintively asked many times afterward, "Tell me one person who would not make this film under these conditions?" Yet her career and life were ruined by her genius in *Triumph of the Will*, by her naive confidence that art transcended reality. She became a documentary filmmaker by accident and opportunism, not by desire. Her passion and romantic escapism would have been more safely expressed in fiction rather than history.

Her film is a peerless documentary of the myth of Nazism. Like Abel Gance's *Napoléon*, which she admired and imitated in camera movement, the film omits negative elements and ambiguities and celebrates the glory of a hero and his noble military ideal and discipline. The reason we want to call *Triumph of the Will* propaganda is because its message is nationalism and militarism and idolatry and we are slow to unmask that message. Our own political conventions climax in scenes that echo *Triumph of the Will*, with flag waving, adulation and hysteria. Candidates piously pledge allegiance and promise warlike vigor. They are celebrated as saviors of the nation. Nationalism and militarism are touchstones of political viability. While we critique Riefenstahl's halo lighting of Hitler, the adoring up-gazing camera angles and the inflammatory chauvinism, we might well reflect that our political staging and image-making use exactly the same techniques.

*Triumph of the Will* has a terrific energy: flags flutter, soldiers and farmers salute, women and children wave and gaze and thrill to marching male energy. Riefenstahl edited the film to move, to be moving, unlike static newsreels. The film expresses her love and pride and hope for her history. It is palpable. We don't see a dark side of nationalism and militarism and Nazism. The anti-Semitism is missing, the speeches are cut and mask the will to world domination. (The holocaust horror was probably as unthinkable to Riefenstahl as it was to Freud five years later, to Chaplin in 1940, to many today.) Instead Riefenstahl's vision is relentlessly romantic.

Germans were still forbidden in 1934 to arm the military, so the endless marching men she filmed and then directed the orchestral music to match did not even carry guns. She filmed an innocent army, organized energy and discipline and sacrifice without weapons. The talk of blood and sacrifice, the Blood Flag Hitler ritually touched to the flags of Germany, only foreshadowed the real blood that now informs our reading of this passionate nationalism, military energy and unswerving dedication to a leader who is the nation who is the people who is or becomes under

such deification mad. But Hitler was more than a demon; he was a seductive drama, celebrated as a savior in Riefenstahl's film and embraced by civilized nations—a social phenomenon. Whatever one says about the construction of documentary—about the inevitable presumptions, focusing or omissions—it is the social element, the real others, that constitute the core of documentary truth. Riefenstahl's work stands as an early, eerie and enduring documentary of one of the most disturbing social phenomena in history.



**STAR WARS**

**LORD OF THE RINGS**

**Alan Riding, Leni Riefenstahl, Filmmaker and Nazi Propagandist, Dies at 101 NY Times September 9, 2003**

Leni Riefenstahl, the German filmmaker whose daringly innovative documentaries about a Nazi rally in Nuremberg in 1934 and the Berlin Olympics of 1936 earned her both acclaim as a cinematic genius and contempt as a propagandist for Hitler, died Monday night at her home in Pöcking, south of Munich. She was 101.

After the defeat of Germany in 1945, she was pronounced a Nazi sympathizer by the Allies and never again found work as a movie director. But her revolutionary film techniques deeply influenced later generations of documentary makers and television

commercial makers, keeping alive the debate over whether her talent could be separated from her prewar political views.

For many students of her life and legacy, Ms. Riefenstahl was both propagandist and genius. A popular dancer and actress before becoming a movie director in 1932, she enthusiastically put her talent at the service of the Nazis.

Yet, without her exceptional artistic vision, her two most famous documentaries, "Triumph of the Will" and the

two-part "Olympia," would neither have caused a sensation at the time nor be considered classics today.

Ms. Riefenstahl never denied her early conviction that Hitler could "save" Germany. She also said that her idealized image of him fell apart "far too late," near the end of World War II. But, amid widespread skepticism, she insisted that she was never a Nazi and that "Triumph of the Will" and "Olympia" were apolitical, inspired only by her desire to create works of art.

Still, while her documentaries continue to be studied in some film schools, Ms. Riefenstahl remained trapped in the shadow of her association with Hitler. Her repeated attempts to find financing for a new film always ended in failure, while public screenings of her movies and exhibitions of her photographs invariably prompted protests. As recently as last year, she was briefly investigated in Germany for purported race-hatred crimes.

She nonetheless worked hard to shed her image as the Nazi regime's most persuasive propagandist. After the war, she spent 20 years in relative isolation, living in her mother's apartment in Munich. Then, in the late 1960's, perhaps out of frustration, she reinvented herself as a photographer and, within a decade, she had made her name in a new visual art form.

A tiny woman of great physical courage and fierce determination, she next took up scuba diving, claiming to be only 51 — when she was actually 20 years older — in order to obtain a diving license. Two collections of her underwater photographs, "Coral Gardens" and "Wonders Under Water," were published in the United States and she continued diving in the Maldives until she was in her late 90's.

Last year, to coincide with her 100th birthday, she released her first movie in almost half a century, a 45-minute documentary of marine life called "Impressions Under Water."

But it was her photography that stirred most controversy. Inspired by George Rodger's famous image of a muscular Nuba wrestler carried on the shoulders of another fighter, she made several trips to southern Sudan to photograph the Nuba. She worked alone at first, then later with Horst Kettner, 42 years her junior, who became her companion and lived with her until her death. (In March 2000, while making a return visit to the Nuba, the 97-year-old Ms. Riefenstahl was severely injured in a helicopter accident in Sudan. She was flown back to a hospital in Munich.)

Her first Sudan book, "Last of the Nuba," published in the United States in 1974, won her recognition as a photographer and to some extent rehabilitated her as an artist. But while even in Germany it became acceptable to praise Ms. Riefenstahl as the most important female movie director ever, both her role in celebrating the Third Reich and what the critic Susan Sontag described as the "fascist esthetics" of her work also came under new scrutiny.

Writing in The New York Review of Books in 1975, Ms. Sontag said there was a common "esthetic" running through what she called Ms. Riefenstahl's "triptych of fascist visuals" — her early work as an actress in Arnold Fanck's "mountain films," her two principal documentaries and her photographs of the Nuba.



"The fascist dramaturgy centers on the orgiastic transactions between mighty forces and their puppets," Ms. Sontag wrote. "Its choreography alternates between ceaseless motion and a congealed, static, 'virile' posing."

In the early 1990's, when Ms. Riefenstahl was more than 90, she once again found herself at the center of heated debate when she was the subject of a three-hour documentary, "The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl," by the German filmmaker Ray Müller. Coincidentally, she also published her own 669-page autobiography, "Leni Riefenstahl: A Memoir."

In the book, she was able to give her version of her life. Writing in The New York Times Book Review, John Simon said the memoir did not contain "a single unspellbinding page." He raised the question about the veracity of her accounts of everything from her private meetings with Hitler to her life with the Nuba. But he concluded, "The book must, in the main, be true; it is far too weird for fiction."

In the documentary, while Mr. Müller allowed her to talk at fascinating length about her filmmaking techniques, he also questioned her memory, notably her claim to have had few dealings with Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister. At the end of the documentary, Mr. Müller also tried to provoke her into admitting guilt for her past.

"What do you mean by that?" she asked, clearly surprised. "Where is my guilt? I can regret. I can regret that I made the party film, 'Triumph of the Will,' in 1934. But I cannot regret that I lived in that time. No anti-Semitic word has ever crossed my lips. I was never anti-Semitic. I did not join the party. So where then is my guilt? You tell me. I have thrown no atomic bombs. I have never betrayed anyone. What am I guilty of?"

It was evidently a well-rehearsed response. In an interview with The New York Times last year, she said: "I

didn't do any harm to anyone. What have I ever done? I never intended any harm to anyone."

Certainly, in her final years, she never shied from the limelight.

In 1997, when a Hamburg gallery held the first exhibition of her work in postwar Germany, Ms. Riefenstahl agreed to be interviewed by major German news weeklies, even though she knew much of the questioning would be hostile.

That same year, ignoring protests, she traveled to Los Angeles to receive a lifetime achievement award from Cinecon, a group that restores old movies. In 2001 she visited St. Petersburg, where her films were shown in a documentary festival.

Whether out of vanity or naïveté, Ms. Riefenstahl may well have believed that her artistic independence was never compromised, that she did not "sell" her talents to the Nazis who financed "Triumph of the Will" and "Olympia." Yet, shaped by the profound romanticism of 19th-century German culture, her monumental vision of beauty fitted perfectly into the National Socialist ideology.

Born into a comfortable Berlin home on Aug. 22, 1902, Helene Berta Amalie Riefenstahl grew up loving nature and the outdoor life. Her mother encouraged her artistic flair, and although her father, a businessman, was opposed to her working on the stage, she began dancing in an Isadora Duncan-like free style at the age of 16 and soon found work — and considerable recognition — in Berlin theaters.

In 1924, her life changed direction. Recovering from an injury at 22, Ms. Riefenstahl was profoundly affected by seeing Fanck's movie, "Mountain of Destiny," and promptly sought out the director. Entranced by the striking young dancer, Fanck cast her in his next seven mountain films, among them "The Holy Mountain," "The White Hell of Piz Palu" and "S O S Iceberg."

These films gave her the image of a romantic heroine in the Wagnerian cast, in harmony with nature and bent on fighting evil. Her often dangerous roles — she climbed rock faces barefoot and was once almost swept away by an avalanche provoked by Fanck — also showed her to be fearless. In 1932, she directed her first movie, "The Blue Light," another mountain film, in which she appeared as a warm-hearted peasant girl. (The names of her Jewish co-writer, Bela Balázs, and the film's Jewish producer, Harry Sokal, were removed from the credits when "The Blue Light" was reissued in 1938.)

It was also around this time, a year before Hitler's rise to power, that she first heard the Nazi leader speak at a rally. "I heard his voice: 'Fellow Germans'," she recalled in her autobiography. "That very same instant I had an almost apocalyptic vision that I was never able to forget. It seemed as if the earth's surface were spreading out before me, like a hemisphere that suddenly splits apart in the middle, spewing out an enormous jet of water, so powerful that it touched the sky and shook the earth. I felt paralyzed."

She subsequently wrote to Hitler, noting that "I must confess that I was so impressed by you and by the enthusiasm of the spectators that I would like to meet you personally." Her popularity as an actress made the request seem reasonable; Hitler's appreciation of her role in "The Blue Light" made the encounter possible.

In the years that followed, she met frequently with the Nazi leader. She always stridently denied that they were lovers although, recalling one meeting, she later wrote, "That evening I felt that Hitler desired me as a woman." At their first meeting in 1932, though, she said she was most struck by his informality and she quoted him as telling her, "Once we come to power, you must make my films."

In her autobiography, she said she told him that she could not make films on commission. Yet, the next year, with Hitler now Chancellor, she made "Victory of the Faith," a documentary about a Nazi Party rally at Nuremberg. She was not happy with the film and the following year she tried again, this time with ample time, money and equipment. The result was "Triumph of the Will."

The film, which took almost two years to edit from 250 miles of raw footage, included such innovative techniques as moving cameras, including one on a tiny elevator attached to a flagpole behind the speaker's podium that provided sweeping panoramic views; the use of telephoto lenses to create a foreshortening effect (for example, when filming a parade of Nazi flags); frequent close-ups of wide-eyed party faithful, and heroic poses of Hitler shot from well below eye-level. The film also used "real sound" but was not accompanied by a commentary. The film won Ms. Riefenstahl assorted German prizes and, although she again pledged to make no more party films, she then made an 18-minute documentary, "Day of Freedom: Our Army," about the Wehrmacht in 1935. Soon afterward, she was commissioned by the German Olympic Committee to record the 1936 Berlin Olympics. To the end of her life she insisted that "Olympia" was not an official film, but ample evidence exists to suggest it was indirectly financed by Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry.

Still, she made extraordinary use of the 170-member team of cameramen and technicians that she assembled. To evoke the early Greek Olympics in the first part of the documentary, "Festival of the Nations," she filmed near-naked athletes in assorted heroic poses. During the training period, she also filmed close-ups of oarsmen, marathon runners and swimmers that she edited into the final version. When the games began, she had to cover 136 events because, she recalled, "we never knew when a world record would be broken."

And, once again, both her filming and editing techniques broke new ground. To capture the drama of the pole vault and long-jump events, she had holes dug beside the sandpit where the athletes landed.



In the high-diving event, which dominated the second part of the film, "Festival of Beauty," she used four cameras, including one underwater, to capture the movement of divers from all angles. Then, in the editing room, she turned the divers into graceful birds.

"Olympia" was not blatantly propagandistic. Notably, it showed Jesse Owens' moments of victory, while Hitler was seen for only 15 seconds on the single occasion he visited the Olympic stadium. Although the film was widely praised, its reception in 1938 was muted by Europe's gradual slide toward war. She was also met with hostility when she took the film to the United States in November 1938.

When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, Ms. Riefenstahl went to the front as a war correspondent, but she claimed that she soon left in disgust at Wehrmacht brutalities. Yet the next year, when Germany occupied France, she sent a telegram to Hitler congratulating him on seizing Paris. "Everyone thought the war was over," she later explained, "and in that spirit I sent the cable to Hitler."

During the war, she continued to see Hitler sporadically but turned her attention back to filmmaking. Several projects fell through, but in 1944 she was able to complete filming of "Tiefland," or "Lowlands," an adaptation of the Eugene d'Albert operetta in which she also played the role of a Spanish Gypsy dancer. The film

was shot in the Tyrol, and its extras included Gypsies interned in a nearby concentration camp.

After the war, Ms. Riefenstahl insisted she had not known that the Gypsies were being detained before their deportation to Nazi death camps. However, when in April 2002 she repeated the claim that none of the Gypsies had died, a German Gypsy Association, Rom, started legal action against her, arguing that at least half the extras were later killed.

On her 100th birthday, the Frankfurt prosecutor's office opened an investigation into charges that she had denied the Holocaust, but the case was dropped two months later for lack of evidence and because of her advanced age.

Ms. Riefenstahl said she saw Hitler for the last time in March 1944 when she visited him in Kitzbuhel, Austria, to introduce her new husband, an army officer called Peter Jacob. She later wrote that Hitler had aged considerably and his hands trembled, but "he still cast the same magical spell as before."

Ms. Riefenstahl's only marriage lasted little longer than her numerous passionate affairs during her time as an actress and filmmaker. At the end of the war, she was detained for almost four years for "de-Nazification," first by the American authorities and then by French forces. She was found to be a Nazi "sympathizer," but she was not banned from working and was finally able to release "Tiefland" in 1954. But her movie career was over.

## **COMING UP IN THE SPRING 2007 BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS (REDUX) XIV:**

Feb 6 Georg Wilhelm Pabst, *Pandora's Box/Die Bűchse der Pandora* 1929

(with Philip Carli on electronic piano)

Feb 13 Jean Renoir, *Rules of the Game/La Règle du jeu* 1939

Feb 20 Vittorio De Sica, *Bicycle Thieves/Ladri di biciclette* 1947

Feb 27 Yasujiro Ozu, *Tokyo Story/Tokyo monogatari* 1953

March 6 Orson Welles, *Touch of Evil* 1958

March 20 David Lean, *Lawrence of Arabia* 1962

March 27 Jean-Luc Godard, *Contempt/Le Mėpris* 1963

April 3 Stanley Kubrick, *Dr. Strangelove* 1964

April 10 Sergio Leone, *The Good the Bad and the Ugly/Il Buono, il brutto, il cattivo* 1966

April 17 Robert Altman, *Nashville* 1975

April 24 Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, *Singin' in the Rain* 1952

For the most interesting new independent films, check out the **Emerging Cinema** series at the Market Arcade. For the best selection of great video rentals in Buffalo visit **Mondo Video** at their new digs near UB's south campus: 3268 Main Street, Buffalo.

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Leni Riefenstahl in *Olympia* 1938

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