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Homecoming (1941)

Homecoming is a 1941 German anti- Polish propaganda film directed by Gustav Ucicky .

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Storyline

In the Lutsk Voivodeship , the Volhynian German minority is being harassed by the Polish majority. The doctor dr. Thomas has no hospital available for necessary operations. His daughter Marie teaches at the German school and has to watch as this school is expropriated by the Polish state and demolished by the angry masses. She brings her protest, in which she invokes the constitutionally guaranteed protection of minorities, to the mayor, but is not heard. Along with her fiancé, Dr. Fritz Mutius, drives her to the capital to present her concerns to the voivodeto recite, but is not even received there. The fiancee decide to use their stay in the capital to appear in court the next day, but first they go to the cinema in the evening. They are accompanied by their friend Karl Michalek, who was forcibly recruited by the Polish army . When they refuse to sing the Polish national anthem in the screening room , the mob begins to beat them; Fritz is badly injured. After being turned away from the hospital, he dies.

Movie

original title	<u>homecoming</u>
production	<u>Germany</u>
country	
original language	<u>German</u>
Publishing year	<u>1941</u>
length	96 minutes
age rating	<u>FSK none</u>
	<u>Rod</u>
directing	<u>Gustav Ucicky</u>
script	<u>Gerald Menzel</u>
production	<u>Wien-Film GmbH</u> , production group: <u>Erich von Neusser</u> , production manager: <u>Ernst Garden</u>
music	<u>Willy Schmidt-Gentner</u>
camera	<u>Gunther Anders</u>
cut	<u>Rudolph Schaad</u>
	occupation

- Paula Wessely : Maria ("Marie") Thomas
- Peter Petersen : Dr. Thomas, her father
- Attila Hörbiger : Ludwig Launhardt
- Ruth Hellberg : Martha Launhardt
- Carl Raddatz : Dr. Fritz Mutius
- Elsa Wagner : Mrs. Schmid
- Eduard Köck : Mr. Schmid
- Otto Wernicke : Father Manz
- Gerhild Weber : Josepha Manz
- Franz Pfaudler : Balthasar Manz

Violence against the German minority continues to increase; Marie's father also falls victim to an attack in which he becomes blind. When the Germans secretly gather in a barn to hear Hitler's speech to the Reichstag on September 1, 1939, they are arrested and imprisoned. They are mistreated by the guards and finally herded into a flooded basement, where they narrowly escape a massacre. At the last second they are saved by the invading German soldiers .

- Werner Fuetterer : Oskar Friml
- Herman Erhardt : Karl Michaellek
- Berta Drews : Elfrida
- Gottlieb Sambor : Mayor

The Germans are preparing to resettle in their "homeland". Now there are only small problems to be solved, e.g. B. that the widowed innkeeper Launhardt does not dare to ask for the hand of Marie, who is supposedly socially superior. However, since she has already stepped in as a surrogate mother for his sons, the misunderstandings can be easily cleared up.

At the end of the film, the motorcade of Volhynian Germans passes the border with the German Reich . The final shot shows a huge picture of Hitler placed at the border station.

Historical context

The secret additional protocol of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact , which regulated the planned division of Poland, also provided for the resettlement of around 60,000 Volhynia Germans whose settlement area was assigned to the Soviet Union . This resettlement took place shortly before Christmas 1939. The Volhynian Germans on Polish territory were resettled in the Warthegau , where no Poles or Jews were to live in the future.

The film (see below) was shown during the initial phase of the campaign against the Soviet Union , which was successful for the German side . In this context, the film propagated an official German war goal, namely the "liberation" of all ethnic Germans in a Greater German Reich, which had already been partially achieved a few years earlier during the invasion of Poland . Erwin Leiser also notes that the film branded "tactics and terror of National Socialism" "albeit as a *Polish* provocation and *Polish Brutality*", for which Leiser paradigmatically u. a. the scenes of a military parade, being forced to sing along to a song, attacks on Germans (through "Poland as cowardly and evil subhumans ", with a girl triumphantly having the swastika ripped from her neck and stoned) and the impending death penalty for secretly listening to Hitler's speeches on the radio served by Germans. ^[1]

Production and Reception

The pictures by the painter Otto Engelhardt-Kyffhäuser , who accompanied a trek of resettlers from Volhynia to the Warthegau at Heinrich Himmler's request in January 1940 and recorded them in numerous sketches and drawings, served as a template for the film, the creation of which he in turn documented.

The interior shots for the film were taken from January 2 to mid-July 1941 in the Viennese studios of Rosen Hugel , Sievering and Schonbrunn. The exterior shots took place between February and June 1941, e.g. in choir cells and Ortelsburg (East Prussia). Polish and Jewish actors, who were recruited by the Polish actor Igo Sym , also had to take part. Sym was murdered by the Polish resistance movement on March 7, 1941, while the film was still being shot. The role of the Jewish merchant Salomonssohn had to be played by a "non-Aryan" in the form of Eugen Prei. He accepted the role for fear of deportation. *All in all, returning home* cost 3.7 million Reichsmarks.

When the film was submitted to the film inspection agency on August 26, 1941, the film was classified as suitable for minors and received the highest rating of "politically and artistically particularly valuable". This was followed by the ratings "education for the people" and "value for young people" on October 10th and "Film der Nation" on October 30th, 1941. The UfA -Verleih took over the distribution.

The premiere took place on August 31, 1941 at the Cinema San Marco in Venice . As part of the Venice Film Art Weeks, the film won the cup of the Italian Ministry of Popular Culture. The German premiere followed on October 10, 1941 in Vienna's Scala cinema. A flower-covered bust of Hitler stood in the foyer , and Reich Governor Baldur von Schirach was present. At the end of the performance, which was interrupted several times by applause, the participants Paula Wessely, Ruth Hellberg, Gerhild Weber, Carl Raddatz, Werner Fuetterer, Gustav Ucicky and Gerhard Menzel presented themselves to the applauding audience.

The premiere in Berlin took place on October 23, 1941 simultaneously in the Ufa-Palast am Zoo and in the Ufa-Theater Wagnitzstrasse. Propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary on August 20, 1944 that the dungeon scene with Paula Wessely was "the best thing that has ever been filmed". However, with box office earnings of 4.9 million Reichsmarks, *Heimkehr* did not live up to expectations.

After the end of the Second World War , the Allied High Command banned the performance of *Heimkehr* . The film was not submitted to the FSK ; there was no public performance. The exploitation rights are exercised by Munich -based Taurus-Film GmbH.

After the end of the war, the director Ucicky was banned from working in both Germany and Austria for his work as a director of "Heimkehr", which was lifted for Austria in July 1947. Paula Wessely was also banned from performing for her participation. ^[2]

The writer Elfriede Jelinek thinks that *Heimkehr* is "the worst Nazi propaganda film ever" and used parts of the film dialogue in her play Burgtheater .

See also

- List of German feature films premiered in the German Reich during the Nazi era

Literature

- Klaus Kanzog : "*Particularly valuable in terms of state policy*". *A manual for 30 German feature films from 1934 to 1945* (= *Discourse Film* 6). Discourse Film Publishing House, Munich 1994, ISBN 3-926372-05-2 .
- *Strategies of a National Socialist Film*. Werner Eichbauer Verlag, Vienna 1998, ISBN 3-901699-06-6 (also: Vienna, Univ., diploma thesis, 1992).



Shooting the film in Poland, recording a propaganda company , 1941

- **Georg Markus** : *The Hörbigers. family biography*. Amalthea Signum, Vienna 2006, ISBN 3-850-02565-9 .

Web Links

- *Homecoming* (<http://www.archive.org/details/1941-Heimkehr>) at the Internet Archive
- *Homecoming* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0033702/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- *Homecoming* (<https://www.filmportal.de/a71654b0e0a8462892ce8e6e9d81d5c7>) at filmportal.de
- *Homecoming* (<http://www.film.at/heimkehr/>) at www.film.at
- Gerald Trimmel: *The National Socialist feature film "Homecoming". Strategies of manipulation and propaganda* (<http://www.donau-uni.ac.at/imperia/md/content/studium/kultur/film/heimkehr.pdf>) (*PDF; 702 kB*) , Austrian Film Gallery, edition close_up, Krems 2003
- Hanns-Georg Rodek: *Propaganda cinema "Homecoming": A Nazi film justified the attack on Poland* (<https://www.welt.de/kultur/article4440757/Ein-NS-Film-rechtfertigte-den-Ueberfall-auf-Polen.html>) , *Die Welt* of December 3, 2008

Itemizations

1. **Erwin Leiser** : *"Germany, awake!" Propaganda in the film of the Third Reich* . Rowohlt Verlag, Reinbek near Hamburg 1968, p. 60 f.
 2. Hans Schmid *Heimkehr*" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120318011121/http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/36/36487/1.html>) (memento of March 18, 2012 in the Internet Archive) at TELEPOLIS.
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Abgerufen von „[https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Heimkehr_\(1941\)&oldid=227112839](https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Heimkehr_(1941)&oldid=227112839)“

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