

Topic Page: [Riefenstahl, Leni](#)

Definition: **Riefenstahl** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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1 Leni ('le:ni). 1902–2003, German photographer and film director, best known for her Nazi propaganda films, such as *Triumph of the Will* (1934)

Summary Article: **Riefenstahl, Leni**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(Berta Helene Amalie Riefenstahl)(lā'nē rē'fənshtäl', bĕr'tə hālā'nə ämäl'yə), 1902–2003, German filmmaker, b. Berlin. First a dancer, then an actress, she began directing her own films in 1932. Her *Triumph of the Will* (1935) documented a huge Nazi rally at Nuremberg using such innovative techniques as moving cameras, telephoto lenses, and unusual camera angles to produce startling black-and-white footage with wide panoramas and striking closeups, thus dramatizing and glamorizing the ritualistic political event. The film brought her widespread attention as well as Hitler's favor and friendship, and she was commissioned to film the 1936 Berlin Olympics (*Olympia*, 1938). The latter film has been hailed for its lyrical technique. Riefenstahl has sometimes been praised as a visionary and a technically pioneering filmmaker. She also, however, has been condemned as a Nazi propagandist, and her 1930s work has been regarded as inseparable from the propaganda purposes for which they were made. Riefenstahl's connections with the Nazis led to her being blacklisted after 1945. Her later film and photographic work includes underwater pictures and studies of Africa.

See her memoir (1993);

biographies by G. B. Infield (1976), T. Leeflang (1991), S. Bach (2007), and J. Trimborn (2007); study by C. C. Graham (1986);

Taschen, A. , *Leni Riefenstahl: Five Lives: A Biography in Pictures* (2000);

Müller, R. , dir., *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl* (film, 1993).

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