

DER KINEMATOGRAPH**War and Cinema**

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This editorial appeared just one week after the outbreak of the First World War; Austria-Hungary had declared war against Serbia on July 28, 1914, and Germany, Russia, France, Belgium, and Britain had all become involved in the conflict by August 4. Noting a dramatic increase in the number of cinemagoers, the article presents the movies as an "accurate reflection of the people's moods" during a period of tumult and uncertainty. Before the advent of news broadcasting, makeshift slides were interspersed during film screenings to keep the audience informed about the latest developments. Another article in the same issue of *Der Kinematograph* called for overcoming internal differences under the old Prussian military slogan, "Mit Gott für König und Vaterland!" (With God for king and fatherland).

By the time these remarks appear in print, the situation should be settled, insofar as we should know to what extent the threat of a world war has grown. In the meantime, the general unrest that has seized audiences due to the uncertainty of these approaching events

manifested itself in a sharp increase in cinema attendance. At least this is true in Berlin. The audience waits impatiently for definitive news. The streets are densely populated until the late hours of the night, and for many the open theaters are a most welcome opportunity to spend a few hours at the movies in order to soothe their anxiety, restlessness, and excitement with the help of these glimmering pictures. Almost no other performance can cater to the disposition of the human psyche in the same way as the colorful changing images on the screen: the transition from the serious to the cheerful, from the didactic to the entertaining, from landscapes to military scenes. In these tumultuous days, as one sensational piece of news chases the next, here one of hope, there one triggering increased unrest, the seemingly haphazard and random sequence of flickering images is the accurate reflection of the people's moods. Just as conversations in these feverish days jump from important to insignificant topics, thereby expressing the uncertainty and the indeterminacy of the situation, so, too, the projectionist cranks out a motley collection of apparitions provided by the film industry for the audience in the cinema. Cinemagoers who were marveling at the wonders of the film world during the evening hours of last Saturday were suddenly interrupted during their peaceful observation by an ad hoc slide that indicated, in the curtest telegram style, that Serbia had rejected Austria's ultimatum and the Austrian invasion was imminent. Absolute silence followed this announcement, and the minds of most guests must have gravitated toward the question, what now? Still, optimism won out, and they continued to hope for a resolution to the conflict, though the news of the next few hours and days must have disabused even the most ardent optimist of this hope.