

Martin Faber

Films about Polish history with German subtitles

Films are second only to books as a medium for telling the story of the past. Many people even prefer films because they make historical events seem more vivid. Filmmakers use a variety of film genres. There are historical documentaries, in which events are reconstructed with the help of historians and contemporary witnesses and using documents and original locations. There are feature films, in which significant events from history are re-enacted by actors, and the boundaries between confirmed facts and the authors' fantasy are sometimes blurred. And since the early 20th century, the dawn of cinematography, there have been films shot directly at historical events. This allowed such productions to serve as documentaries and appear in later documentaries, which today have historical source value in their own right.

Films in all these genres also show Polish history. Most of them were made in Poland itself, whose people have always been intensely concerned with the history of their own country and have sought to disseminate it in this popular way. In recent years, intensive efforts have been made to recover old film treasures and make them available in restored form. Such films are often patriotic in nature, but can nevertheless help foreigners to learn about the Polish past. These films are mostly available only in the Polish language version. Meanwhile, it is becoming increasingly easy to produce new versions of films in other languages. This is especially true of subtitling technology, for which there are now a number of computer programmes that greatly facilitate the process of adding translations. Among other things, this is why the portal *CBHist.* was created: in order to make materials on Polish history available in German. Both experts and non-experts can broaden their knowledge here.

The Polish National Film Archive has offered to cooperate and is creating the legal conditions for archival films to be shown on the portal. In turn, the work on the German subtitles was carried out by the portal's staff.