



Felix Moeller

**The Film Minister – Goebbels and the Cinema in the
»Third Reich«**

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There is probably no other politician who has exerted so much power over the medium of film as Joseph Goebbels, Propaganda Minister in the »Third Reich«. As a minister and a key figure in the state Goebbels was one of the most powerful men in Nazi Germany, and at the same time the top producer, studio boss, director, screenplay author and censor in the country.

It is completely accepted today that Hitler's and Goebbels' abilities as master showmen, their staging skills and influence on film as a dream machine helped to lengthen the Second World War. Adopting the style of studio tycoons like David O. Selznick or Louis B. Mayer, Goebbels tried his hand at controlling the German film industry. The American cinema was his great model, and his vision involved making German film into Hollywood's only competitor. Goebbels constantly sought the right mixture of propaganda and entertainment in film, so that he could distract its audience from reality and at the same time slip in political messages. But was Goebbels actually so successful in this to justify the myth of the overlord of a gigantic and perfect manipulation apparatus?

This book is the first comprehensive presentation of Goebbels' activities as the Nazi film minister. The author was also able to use the Nazi Propaganda Minister's diaries, which were long kept secret. Goebbels' film programme, his propaganda strategies, the planning of perfidious anti-Semitic feature films and suggestive war newsreels are reflected in these explosive pages, and so is Hitler's influence and the way in which famous film stars co-operated with the Nazi leadership. Together with other unpublished material, this synthesis of biography and film history provides a fascinating, accurate and detailed glimpse behind the scenes of the German film industry and the internal perspectives of power.

Felix Moeller, son of film director Margarethe von Trotta, studied history, political science and communications in Munich and Berlin. In 1994 he completed his studies with the award of a doctorate in philosophy by the Freie Universität in Berlin. He has contributed numerous publications to the appraisal of film in the Nazi period.

»The Axel Menges' Architecture Art and Design series, comprised of large monographs, is an exceptional range. It is a pleasure to find an art book series unafraid of covering so many fields outside the traditional areas normally explored by the more familiar and conventional imprints like, for example, It makes this series the best art/cultural studies list available. Felix Moeller's detailed survey of the life of Reich Minister, Joseph Goebbels, and his malign influence on Nazi art practice comes with enough analytical weight and historical context to make it a standout in an already outstanding series.« Jonathan Dawson, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia.

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