

Joseph Goebbels at his Desk (March 1, 1933)

Abstract

Before joining the NSDAP, Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945) was a Doctor of Philosophy in German literature, an unsuccessful writer, and unemployed. His rhetorical abilities helped him rise quickly within the party, and he soon became an expert in spreading National Socialist, anti-republican, and antisemitic propaganda. Hitler rewarded Goebbels by appointing him Berlin Gauleiter in 1926 and “Reich Propaganda Leader” in 1930. The entries in Goebbels's diary attest to his all but fanatical veneration for Hitler. On March 13, 1933, six weeks after Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor, Goebbels was named head of the newly founded Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. From there, he led the “coordination” [*Gleichschaltung*] of the press, the visual arts, music, and literature, and also issued content-related directives. His aggressive, omnipresent propaganda aimed not only at ensuring Germans' loyalty to the party line but also at preparing them mentally for the wars Hitler was planning. The fact that Goebbels, a small man with a crippled foot and a darkish complexion, in no way resembled the ideal “Nordic-German” types glorified by Nazi propaganda was cause for all kinds of mockery, both from his opponents and members of the general population.

Source



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