

Magda Goebbels at Home with her Children (1938)

Abstract

The Nazi family *par excellence* was that of propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. His wife Magda was tall, blond, and blue-eyed, and embodied the “Aryan” ideal of beauty. Since Hitler was not married, she often stood at his side at official state receptions or party functions. She was portrayed in propaganda publications as the perfect housewife and mother. In 1938, she became the first woman to receive the “Cross of Honor for the German Mother.” Altogether, she bore Goebbels six children, whose lives were made public in regular reports in films and weekly newsreels. Behind the stylized façade, however, lay a hidden reality that hardly corresponded to the ideal picture of marriage and family presented in Nazi propaganda. Joseph Goebbels was known for his numerous extramarital affairs, and his wife was loyal above all to Hitler. Hitler’s refusal to authorize a divorce prevented her from leaving her husband as early as 1938. On May 1, 1945, Joseph and Magda Goebbels poisoned their six children in the bunker under the Berlin Reich Chancellery and then committed suicide. In a farewell letter to her son Harald Quandt (the son of her first husband), Magda explained that the Goebbels children could not grow up in a society without National Socialism. The photo shows (from left to right): Helmut (born 1935), Hildegard (born 1934), Magda holding Hedwig (born 1937), Helga (born 1932) holding Holdine (born 1938), and Harald Quandt (born 1921). Heidrun, the Goebbels’s youngest daughter, was born in 1940.

Source



Source: Magda Goebbels at home with her children. On the right, her son from her first marriage, Harald Quandt. (Daughter Heidrun was born later). Photo by Hedda Walther.

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