



Nazi Films in America, 1933- 1942

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From 1933 until America's 1941 entry into World War II, nearly 500 Nazi films were shown in American theaters, accounting for nearly half of all foreign language film imports during the period. These poorly disguised propaganda films were primarily meant to generate recognition for the Third Reich among four groups of people: Americans of German ancestry; the 350,000 German nationals in America; avowed Nazis who lived in the United States; and other anti-Semitic groups, individuals and isolationists. Produced by Germany's top studios and featuring prominent pro-German and Nazi actors, directors and technicians, the movies were replete with overt and covert anti-Jewish imagery and themes. In spite of this obvious intent to use the medium to justify Nazi ascendancy, viewers and film critics from such prominent publications as the *New York Times*, *Variety*, the *Washington Post* and the *Chicago Times* consistently overlooked the films' anti-Semitic message, dubbing them harmless entertainment.

This is the complete history of German films shown in America from the founding of the Nazi government to America's involvement in the war. Summaries, descriptions and discussions of these almost 500 films serve to examine the major filmmakers and distributors who kept the German film industry alive during the rule of Hitler and the Third Reich. Special emphasis is placed on films directly commissioned by Joseph Goebbels, head of the German Ministry for the Enlightenment of the People and Propaganda and the man directly responsible for ensuring that the anti-Semitic ideology of the new regime was reflected in all films produced after January 30, 1933. Rarely seen photographs and illustrations complete an in-depth study of the Nazi use of this global medium.

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