

**T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection**

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** Leni Riefenstahl

**COLLECTION:** 4700.0053

**IDENTIFICATION:** German actress and filmmaker; producer of official documentaries during the Nazi regime

**INTERVIEWER:** David Culbert

**SERIES:** Various Topics

**INTERVIEW DATE:** September 5, 1979

**FOCUS DATES:** 1930s

**ABSTRACT:**

Incomplete files on some of films because burned by a party member; selecting Herbert Windt to write music for the 1933 documentary *Seig Des Glaubens*; meeting cameraman Walter Frentz; controversy over photograph of Rudolph Hess on stage of Lougness Hall at Nuremberg rally; using staged shots of Nazi leaders in her films; working on documentary *S.O.S. Eisberg* in Greenland when Hitler rose to power; discusses first film *Das Blaue Licht* (released in 1932); preparing to make film *Mademoiselle Docteur* (about a German spy during World War I) but Propaganda Ministry prohibited it; first meeting with Adolph Hitler and her refusal to make a documentary of party rally at Nuremberg; second meeting with Hitler three days before rally -- assumes that she is making documentary; fight between Hitler and Joseph Gobbels over the documentary; Hitler's insistence that she make the documentary (*Seig Des Glaubens*); problems filming *Seig Des Glaubens*; screening of *Seig Des Glaubens* for German school children; problems encountered cutting *Seig Des Glaubens*; compares to *Seig Des Glaubens* to *Triumph Des Willens*; outlines content of *Seig Des Glaubens*; destruction of copies *Seig Des Glaubens*; describes her film technique; conflict over whether or not to include a military presence in *Triumph Des Willens*; making a film on the German military (*Tag Der Freiheit*); brochure "Hinter den Kulissen des Reichsparteitags" created to accompany *Triumph*; journalist Ernst Jaeger being ostracized for being married to a Jewish woman; discusses cinematography and filming of *Triumph*; refusal of news bureau to give her newsreel for use in her films; meeting her production manager Walter Traut; lost all rights to films that she made for Nazi Party; film maker Walter Ruttmann; Hitler insisting that she make *Triumph* and promising her that if she did so that he would allow her to choose her future projects; describes grueling schedule she kept while working on *Triumph*; describes cutting scene with Hitler arriving and flag unfurling; discusses camera techniques; music scores for films; making boring subject matter (parades and speeches) into interesting films; shooting *Olympia* (her film about the Olympics)

**TAPES:** 3 (T60, T61, T62)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 1 hour, 35 minutes

**PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 43 pages

**RESTRICTIONS:** Only the English language segment of the transcript may be used by researchers. The restriction says nothing about the tape.