

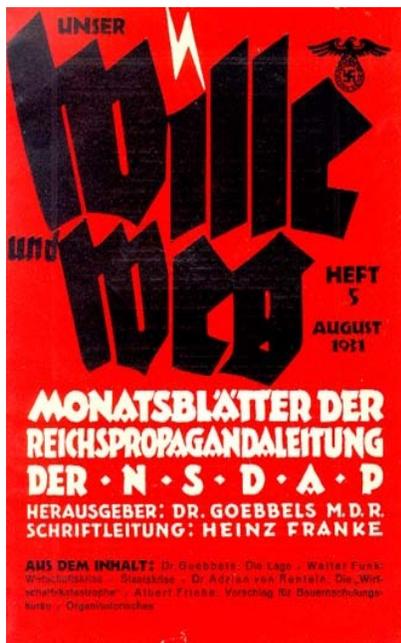
Background: This article discusses the Nazi approach to rural propaganda. The second round of the 1932 presidential elections had been held, and the Nazis were considering what to do next. The article also indicates that the Nazis were not always unified on propaganda strategy.

The source: Gustav Staebe, “Nächste Aufgaben der ländlichen Propaganda,” *Unser Wille und Weg*, 2 (1932), pp. 135-139

Coming Tasks of Rural Propaganda

by Gustav Staebe

One of the movement’s most important sources of strength is its ability to move from one challenge that it has overcome directly to the next, following the example of its Führer. The millions who voted National Socialist on 24 April [the presidential election] and the active fighters may enjoy their well deserved satisfaction, but it has never been in the nature of National Socialism for its followers and leaders to fall into a kind of victory psychosis. Instead, we immediately evaluate the new situation and the increased efforts of the System to respond, then to decide what to do next. The Wilhelmstraße [the government district in Berlin] is the key to changing today’s conditions. That is where laws can be passed to build the Third Reich and where National Socialist provincial governments can be supported. That is why the battle was continued in the five provinces where our electoral victory was greatest on 24 April, even on the very night of our success. Just as we have always felt it necessary to deepen the ideological understanding of our voters and newly-won members, so, too, this goal directly follows the election. We must use clever advertising to support our successes. Individuals must be persuaded to become convinced National Socialists by thorough work and forceful training. Only then will their confidence in a National Socialist government be unshakable, not to be weakened by a perhaps unpopular action by a National Socialist minister.



This essay discusses how such individual effort can best be used successfully with the German rural population. Adolf Hitler expressed the great importance of National Socialist rural propaganda in his 8 February 1931 speech to the First National Socialist Farmers’ Congress in Weimar. The Third Reich would be

founded in the rural population, or it would fail. “Show ourselves in the villages!” That is the guideline of our propaganda leader. The more National Socialism takes hold in the countryside, the stronger will be the foundation of the Third Reich.

It is to be hoped that farmer training courses will be held in every district. Wherever that was done before 24 April, the result was a good harvest. In those areas the swastika flag flew from the most secure flagpole; there, too, it rested on the most effective public propaganda both in meetings and written form.

The farmers’ educational weeks have had excellent results. The main credit belongs to their organizer and leader, party comrade Albert Fricke from Lower Saxony. Under his thorough and energetic

leadership, a small army of knowledge-hungry German farmers and especially their sons gathered in many districts. Party comrade Friehe and his untiring comrades, along with district agricultural experts and leading farmers who were party members, organized courses in provincial towns easily reached from the surrounding villages. The courses were clear and easily understandable. Townspeople and rural people got to know each other better, and farmers and workers finally found the common path to a unity of the German people and its fate. A brief summary of the content of the courses: Preservation and increase of national strength, population, national health and culture, which can give new life and strength only in a new Reich. Blood and soil are once again a new symphony, as they were for our ancestors. There can be no improvement in agriculture and in guaranteeing the nation's ability to feed itself as long as German farmers see their purpose only in liberal-capitalistic and economic ways. Problems such as genetics and the racial question also came to the fore in the courses, even if they unfortunately were often neglected in election propaganda. They are the highest thinking of the people's movement.

The farmers' educational courses also gave rhetorically gifted party members, and not only those from rural areas, but also those from cities who wanted to learn more, fundamental knowledge on overcoming liberalism, and therefore the proletariat. It gives him the resources he can use in future public meetings to build the worldview of National Socialism brick by brick.

Farmers' educational courses are the best foundation for a solid organization of the movement in rural areas. They are good not only for the rural population that hungers for such knowledge, but also lead to proper and effective rural propaganda.

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An important help is the most effective means of rural propaganda, the "National Socialist Rural Post." The "National Socialist Rural Post" is published on Adolf Hitler's orders and is the party's only official agricultural weekly. Its superiority to all forms of city propaganda was particularly clear in the last election campaign. When political leaders in agricultural areas reflect on the impact of the "N. S. Rural Post", its importance cannot be overlooked. Reports reaching the party leadership from throughout the country report its success, and make good suggestions for improving its content and level. To summarize the many responses, one might say: The "National Socialist Rural Post" is the most successful propaganda method to reach the German rural population. No other party has such a newspaper, since no other party has recognized like the NSDAP that changes in the political attitudes of the rural population can result only from using methods that can be understood by them and are consistent with their psychology. No one doubts the necessity of the "National Socialist Rural Post."

If coming issues of the "National Socialist Rural Post" are to reach the new rural voters in an understandable way that deepened their ideological understanding, the newspaper must be better publicized. In the interests of our larger goal, all concerns about local papers must be dispensed with. The "National Socialist Rural Post" is not a local paper, and will keep its national focus. It is not a competitor to other National Socialist newspapers. The results of recent weeks give the lie to those who thought that the "National Socialist Rural Post" had too little applicability to their area, and therefore ignored it. In just those areas it is most clear: the farmers wanted the "green paper," and asked also for our local papers. The "National Socialist Rural Post" takes firm root where it is properly promoted. In places where it is distributed without much plan and where there is no follow-up, people know what it is, but do not take the step of subscribing.

In the near future, advertising columns must go from farmer's house to farmer's house. Each farmer, farm worker or agricultural hand, and anyone else in the countryside, must be persuaded persistently, but not obnoxiously, to subscribe to the only National Socialist farmer's newspaper. If the propagandist is clever and persuasive, he will not leave a single house without at least having won a new subscriber.

Encourage every new party member to send his subscription to the Verlag Frz. Eher, Munich, Thierschstr. 11. The next election will show where rural propaganda has been properly done, and where it has not been.

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If rural propaganda is to deepen the hold of our ideas, it is absolutely necessary to build a group of speakers who can address meetings in the villages. I proposed in this place some time ago that such training be separated from the *Gau* speaker courses. Unfortunately, my proposal found only limited acceptance. Separating the training of rural and city speakers is a prerequisite for success with the rural population. The Agriculture Department in the NSDAP's central office has a special section responsible for rural advertising. It is headed by party comrade Metzner, formerly an associate of Fritz Reinhardt of Herrsching **[who ran the party's correspondence course for speakers]**. This office has the necessary material for training rural speakers and is ready to help the districts **[Gau]** in establishing training courses.

In rural speeches, it is advisable to emphasize the positive, and restrict criticism to agricultural policy. The clearer a speech, the more successful it will be. It would be good for our speakers to organize their speeches along these lines: Where is the System leading us (Pan-Europe), where does National Socialism want to go?!

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We all expect difficult political battles. We are nearing the final battle, and all our strength must be gathered and used. We cannot have a single farmer who rejects the sole party that not only will help him, but sees in him the foundation of a new state. That only gives a weapon to the System. As we fight for the farming villages, we are fighting for food, for freedom, and for the independence of our posterity.