

Background: This is a summary of Goebbel's speech on propaganda to the 1927 Nuremberg rally, taken from a Nazi book on the rally. Compare it with a more developed version of his thinking in 1928 speech to party members in Berlin.

The source: Alfred Rosenberg and Wilhelm Weiß, *Reichsparteitag der NSDAP Nürnberg 19./21. August 1927* (Munich: Verlag Frz. Eher, 1927), pp. 30-32..

1927 Nuremberg Rally

Dr. Goebbels spoke on the party's propaganda. He began by referring to his speech at the previous party rally in Weimar in which he discussed various propaganda opportunities. Today he wanted to lay out principles and show how propaganda can be transformed into a political organization. The idea becomes a worldview on its way to governmental power.

Ideas find people to spread them. The more an idea spreads and reaches all areas of life, the more it becomes a worldview. If an organization becomes the bearer of a worldview, its ultimate goal is the government, which is the bearer of the whole nation. Propaganda reaches its goal if its worldview takes practical form by gaining control of the state. In the beginning is the idea, which is taken up by propaganda and transformed into an organization that seeks to win the state. The task of propaganda is to spread knowledge. The speaker mentioned the notorious word "drummer," which "they" in their goodness and mercy apply to us. The essential characteristic of propaganda is effectiveness. The best propaganda is that which is most effective. It is good if I persuade three million people to believe in a political theory, but it is even better if those three million are ready to give their lives for the idea. But revolutions have never been made by millions, but rather only by small minorities. Propaganda does not need to be intellectual; it must be effective. It should express our worldview in a way that can be understood by the masses. The *völkisch* idea has existed for 50 years. I will grant that it was stronger 50 years ago than it is today. But one must remember that on 9 November 1918 it was not this idea, but another, that triumphed. If the *völkisch* movement then had understood power and how to bring thousands out on the streets, it would have gained political power on 9 November 1918. The *völkisch* movement today is accused of simplifying its idea, even of being indecent. A corrupted nation of 60 million suffering slavery will not be freed by "high class" and "decency." The complaints about the National Socialist movement come from bourgeois anxiety. People in the bourgeois camp ask if we are not really Bolsheviks. The speaker suggested such brilliant writers express their national doctrines to a thousand communists in a working class meeting. He thought that they quickly would not know whether or not they themselves were communists (laughter). A political meeting is no polite gathering. The speaker must make his knowledge understandable to the people before him. If the good citizen is used to being spoken to in a "high class" way, then one must tickle his fancies by being "high class" (laughter). Most parties today do not know how to speak to the workers. With the German people today in a desperate situation, one cannot use "white-gloved" methods to reach them.

There are two kinds of propaganda, one aimed at the understanding, the other the feelings. Both depend on imponderables. Worldview movements aim for the feelings. The force behind worldview movements has never been understanding, but rather faith. For example: Christ never wrote a party program, but did preach the Sermon on the Mount. In it he laid the foundations of a new world,

summarized in the simple phrase “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Rousseau’s words were the foundation of the French Revolution, but if an agitator had not stood at his side his theory would have slumbered on the bookshelves. Marx’s “Capital” is the foundation of the Marxist movement. It would have remained book learning had not thousands of agitators made it a political force. Bebel and Lenin gave this philosophy political power, not Marx. Mussolini is both the philosopher and agitator of Fascist thinking. He is also the statesman who found in the March on Rome the right action while he was chewing on his pen behind his desk. When someone asked him about his theory of the state, he answered that he had developed it while being asked! When one wants to condemn a speaker who has found a way to connect with the masses, one calls him a demagogue.

Marxism had two important intellectual fathers: Marx and Engels. The Marxist movement is founded on their work. Bebel and Lenin brought Marxism to the masses. Marxism never attempted to alleviate the misery of its followers, but rather to use their misery to build the political power that eventually gave it political success. National Socialism must do the same. The leader stands at the head of the broad masses, but without them he is nothing. Each needs the other. The individual is effective when supported by the political will of the masses, the masses are effective when they are captivated by the energy of the leader. Propaganda is good if it is successful, if it reaches the group of people for which it is intended.

The goal of our propaganda is control of the government. We want to replace the organization with a state founded on the idea.

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