

Background: This article is dated 21 January 1939, and is part of a major propaganda campaign against the United States. This was in part the result of negative American reaction to the anti-Jewish pogrom of November 1938. President Roosevelt had criticized Germany policy explicitly. Goebbels is unhappy with American reactions to National Socialism, and suggests the Americans ought to stop criticizing Germany. It was first published in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, then in many other newspapers.

The source: “Was will eigentlich Amerika,” *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1941), pp. 24-30.

What Does America Really Want?

by Joseph Goebbels

The American press has the noble right to complain about Europe. It makes vigorous use of this right, particularly when Germany is involved. National Socialist Germany is a thorn in its eye.

The Third Reich has been the target of its mockery, hatred, lies, and slander since 30 January 1933, especially from that part controlled by the Jews. The American press takes particular pleasure in criticizing Germany on grounds of humanitarianism, civilization, human rights, and culture. It has every right to do so. Its humanity is shown in most vivid form by lynchings. Its civilization is shown in economic and political scandals that stink to high heaven. Its human rights are displayed by eleven or twelve million unemployed, who apparently chose to be so. And its culture exists only because it is always borrowing from the older European nations. Such a nation is certainly justified in sneering at ancient Europe, whose nations and peoples looked back on centuries, even millennia, of cultural achievements long before America was even discovered.

The American press replies to our complaints by saying that it has nothing against Germany, only against National Socialism. That is a poor excuse. National Socialism today is Germany's guiding political idea and worldview. The entire German nation affirms it. To criticize National Socialism today therefore means to criticize the entire German people.

It will not do to say that National Socialism is a dictatorship, and that there are still many in Germany who, inwardly at least, reject it. That simply is not the case. It is a fantasy that exists only in the minds of democratic politicians and journalists, but has nothing to do with the facts. There is no doubt about it: the public campaign against Germany is a conscious and intentional provocation aimed at the German Reich and the German people.

Generally, it does not make any difference to us. We Germans do not depend on the love or grace of other nations; we live from our own national strength. The time is long past when Germany expected its salvation from abroad. Such international help was always lacking when it was most needed during the postwar period. It appeared only when international money and stock capital believed that it could earn vast profits that could be earned nowhere else by helping Germany.

We could simply say that America is far away, with a big ocean separating us. What do we care about what they think, write, or say about us? That was fine as long as America's highly developed hate campaign against Germany kept within certain bounds. But when it infects even official circles rather than merely newspapers and radio stations it becomes more serious.

This campaign reached unbelievable heights after 10 November 1938. American public opinion,

influenced by the Jews, is trying to interfere to an intolerable degree in German domestic politics. They think that can use methods against Germany that are normally unheard of in relations between civilized nations.

We know very well who the instigators and beneficiaries are. They are mostly Jews, or people who are in their service and who are totally dependent on them.

For example, it is not surprising that the New York press attacks Germany so strongly. Over two million Jews live in New York and public, and especially economic life, there is entirely under their control.

The German press so far has generally responded to this filthy and dispicable campaign of hatred only sporadically and in a restrained manner. Only after official personages in the United States got involved did we think it necessary to say something. For example, the American Interior Secretary Ickes publicly declared on 19 December 1938 that no American could accept a medal from the hands of a brutal dictator that with the same hand robbed and tortured thousands of people, that saw a day when it committed no new crime against humanity as a day wasted. Put simply, that is not a style of speaking that is customary in relations between states.

The American Undersecretary of Secretary of State Welles responded to German protests by saying that Ickes's statement represented the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the American public. One does not know what to say. What does he mean! Was the American president ever personally attacked in the German press, or America's leading men slandered? We have been very restrained, even though we certainly had every reason to discuss this or that matter of American domestic policy.

Such things are not our concern. American statesmen, not us, determine American domestic policy. We are concerned only with Germany's affairs. We also have no reason or intention of smuggling German political ideas into America. The very opposite, since the methods that we use are purely German. They are only valid in Germany. But we do believe that just as we respect the internal affairs of other countries and avoid polemics against them, they should treat us in the same way.

One cannot say that that is true of the United States of North America at present. Nearly the whole press, radio, and film industry support the worldwide campaign against Germany.

Senator Pitman put the matter bluntly on 22 December 1938: "The American people do not like Germany's government."

We happen to think that the American people have nothing to do with the matter. If they do not like Germany, it is because of the hate campaign. This campaign is conducted by certain international scoundrels who lack conscience and scruples. They are doing it both for foreign and all too transparent domestic reasons.

The Lima Conference is behind the anti-German campaign. North America hopes to encourage South American hostility against Germany, and really against Europe as a whole. They do not like German competition in the South American market. The enormous North American armaments industry is also calling up images of a coming war against the totalitarian governments for business reasons.

We have no intention of answering the criticisms that the American Jewish press raises against Germany by looking at America's domestic affairs. It is enough to observe that although Germany is the poorest country in the world in terms of foreign currency reserves and raw materials, it has not only abolished unemployment, but has a labor shortage. North America, meanwhile has between eleven and twelve million unemployed, even though it is rich in foreign currency reserves and raw materials. Most of the American press ignores this situation. It cannot deny it, of course. It claims that German success is contemptible, since it used methods of hate and contempt.

This is entirely backward. The seven million Germans who got jobs after National Socialism took power in Germany are not interested in the methods that gave them jobs. It reminds one of the familiar joke. Two workers are halfheartedly trying to remove a paving stone. A passerby watches for a while, then grabs a pickax and yanks the stone out. One worker says to the other: "Well, sure, if you use force..."

The American press uses the same argument. It cannot deny National Socialism's successes. It can only say: "Well, sure, if you use force..." It thinks the German people had to make too great a sacrifice for these successes.

The German people sees things differently. It knows that certain restrictions in some areas were necessary for national reconstruction. The American public is practically drowning in wealth, prosperity, foreign currency, gold bars, and raw materials. It can hardly imagine how an intelligent, hardworking, and courageous people can get along without all those advantages.

However that may be, future developments concern us.

No one but Germany has the right to judge Germany's domestic affairs. No one has the right to turn one people against another, to incite discord and promote ignorance that lead to international crises.

Mr. Eden, the ambassador of international world democracy, found the right audience a few weeks ago in New York when he attacked National Socialism. The most prominent representatives of American international industry, economics, and finance were gathered. Mr. Eden would have done better to tell the eleven or twelve million unemployed where they could find jobs. He seems to have realized that his hate tirade might have found a less friendly reception there than it did from the audience to which he did speak.

Jewry applauds whenever Germany is attacked. Jewry hates National Socialism for reasons that do not need to be mentioned. Jewry is our enemy, it should be our enemy, it must be our enemy. The question is whether the American people want to make the Jews happy by engaging in fruitless conflict with the German Reich and the German people. That we do protest against. That is neither necessary nor helpful.

We have nothing against the American people. We know and respect their political views and internal affairs, even if we might do things differently. We believe we have the right to expect the same of American public opinion about Germany. We also fail to see the benefits of such controversy. What good will it do America? Does it think it can starve Germany using the same methods as those of the World War?

Every economic action has two sides. It affects not only its target, but also the side that uses it. American cotton farmers, sitting on piles of unsold cotton, know this well.

It is time to recommend peace and good sense. American public opinion is going the wrong way. It would benefit by returning to the old, tested practices of international courtesy and good manners, and by treating Germany in the way normal among civilized nations.

We do not expect our appeal to have a great impact on American attitudes. Still, we think it our duty to speak plainly.

Given the influence of the Jews on parts of American public opinion, we again stress the shortsightedness and uselessness of such methods, and ask the world this question: "What does America really want?"