

**Background:** This article comes from the lead from the first issue of the Nazi Party's central office for propaganda (*Reichspropagandaleitung*). It lays out Goebbels' public thinking on propaganda in 1931.

**The source:** "Wille und Weg," *Wille und Weg* (later *Unser Wille und Weg*), 1 (1931), pp. 2-5.

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## Will and Way

by Joseph Goebbels

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It is the task of National Socialist theory to construct a program that can hold its own in the daily political struggle. We have worked on this program since the start of the movement. Its basics are laid out in the 25 points **[the party's official program, adopted in 1920]**. The 25 points provide the foundation of all of National Socialist practice.



The National Socialist movement develops from political practice. It stems not from a desktop, but rather from real life. That distinguishes it from every other contemporary German political organization.

A good theory is the most practical thing in the world. That has been true for the National Socialist movement, and will remain so. In the long term, practical work is impossible unless it is supported by a programmatic theory, which in turn can find its methods and goals only from practice.

It will not be the goal of this magazine to spread and deepen National Socialist theory and practice. That is, we do not intend to add another programmatic and theoretical attempt to those the movement already has, and which certainly help to give us a intellectual face to outsiders. Rather, our goal is to show practitioners the methods they can use to gradually gain power by winning the souls of the people.

Political methods always presume a political goal. Only when the goal is crystal clear and unchangeable is it possible to determine the foundations of practical work. The means one uses to reach the goal is political will.

Therefore, the goal of these pages, written from those in the field for those in the field, is this: We want to take the existing and developing theory and program of National Socialism and determine what is necessary for them to be realized in the political arena. A political program whose proponents do not gain power is useless, for it can not be applied to practical life. Without power, no political platform will have historical significance. More than any other art, the art of politics is far removed from the dry theories of the desktop. They come from daily life, and exist for daily life.

There are a variety of ways to gain power. There are illegal means to gain power through brute force; one can also gain power legally by winning a majority in an election. There are revolutions, Putsches, uprisings. But each of these methods requires a political group to win the sympathies of the broad masses, if it wishes over the long run to maintain its power. But the sympathy of the people does not come of itself; it must be won.

The means of gaining that support is propaganda. The task of propaganda is not to discover a theory or

to develop a program, but rather to translate that theory and program into the language of the people, to make them comprehensible to the broad masses of the people. The goal of propaganda is to make what the theorists have discovered clear to the broad masses.

Theoreticians found a political movement. Propagandists follow close behind. The theoreticians give a movement its intellectual foundations, the propagandists put the programmatic content of the movement into the coinage of the people, and spread it to them.

It would hardly be worthwhile to argue about who is most important in the struggle for power. The propagandist is nothing without the theorist, but the theorist is also nothing without the propagandist. One can't give political knowledge to the people without the proper means of propaganda. Even the most brilliant political theories will have no impact unless they are put in a form that the people can understand.

The great accomplishment of the National Socialist movement is that it created a synthesis of both elements of the art of politics.

The foundation of National Socialist theory is firm. Naturally it needs disciplined and thoughtful development, but the task of a worldview is not to explain the what of political life, but rather the how. A worldview does not govern the things of life, but rather the relationships of those things. The task of explaining this relationship in the details of public life, of persuading the broad masses of its desirability, is the task of our political propaganda.

No other political movement as understood the art of propaganda as well as the National Socialists. From its beginnings, it has put heart and soul into propaganda. What distinguishes it from all other political parties is the ability to see into the soul of the people and to speak the language of the man in the street. It uses all the means of modern technology. Leaflets, handbills, posters, mass demonstrations, the press, stage, film and radio — these are all tools of our propaganda. Whether or not they serve or harm the people depends on the use to which they are put.

In the long run, propaganda will reach the broad masses of the people only if at every stage it is uniform. Nothing confuses the people more than lack of clarity or aimlessness. The goal is not to present the common man with as many varied and contradictory theories as possible. The essence of propaganda is not in variety, but rather the forcefulness and persistence with which one selects ideas from the larger pool and hammers them into the masses using the most varied methods.

Therefore, we named this magazine "Will and Way." The will of the National Socialist movement is laid out in its program. The way changes every day. Since we do not have political power, we can not realize the ideas of National Socialism. We must therefore give all our energy to achieving power. We will gain power only with the people, not against them. They will join us when it feels as we do, when it is persuaded that what we want is correct.

Thus National Socialist propaganda is the most important aspect of our political activity. It is in the foreground of our practical goals. Without it, all our knowledge would be fruitless, without effect. Propaganda must put knowledge in a fresh form. It must spread it to the people, it must convince people of the necessity of our knowledge. It wins new fighters for the movement. It makes members out of supporters and martyrs out of members.

Today, we have a tight network of National Socialist propaganda throughout the country. It should be clear to any observer that we are preparing not only for the tasks of today, but for the future. National Socialist propaganda serves to educate the people. Its task is not only to win them for the tasks of today, but to assist in the transformation of the character of the broad masses. We are convinced that a new politics in Germany is possible only after a complete transformation of our national character, after an entirely new national way of thinking. This is our most pressing task, and in working for these tasks

today we are doing the best preparatory work for the great political tasks of tomorrow.

National Socialist propagandist is the teacher of the people. National Socialist propaganda is the art of teaching the people. Today we are in the opposition. The propaganda we carry out today will become practically organized and wide-ranging national education after we take power.

The goal of this monthly is to create the foundations, to show the ways and means through which we can reach these high goals. We intend to strengthen and sharpen our will for our political goals. We want to deal with our practical daily tasks. We want to give ourselves the steely firmness that is necessary to survive the nerve-wracking daily battles.

But this will must not be directed aimlessly at the people. This will must be focused in a clear direction. It must be directed to the nation, organized, disciplined, focused and clear. We want to show the way that leads from success to success until victory is attained. Our goal in these pages is to bring will and way together in an unified synthesis of practical techniques. We are not writing for the general public, but rather for those active in daily politics throughout the country. It is a forum for discussion firmly tied to the party. Each who has something to say has the right and duty to speak. We will here exchange experiences, make proposals, criticize mistakes and suggest improvements.

These pages should over the course of time become a resource that political fighters will need for their daily battles. They should receive teaching, education and strength. They will receive the power to bring our ideas to Germany, and learn the ways and means to put a good theory into effective practice.

The knowledge of our movement is sealed by the blood of the 200 who died for it. To transform this will into reality is our daily task in the struggle for power.