

Background: In this interesting article, Goebbels presents himself as the defender of the common people against prudish moralists. I'm not sure where it was originally published, but probably in the Nazi Party's daily newspaper the *Völkischer Beobachter*. The article is dated 27 January 1934.

The source: Joseph Goebbels, "Mehr Moral, aber weniger Moralin!" *Wetterleuchten* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1939), pp. 382-385.

More Morality, Less Moralism!

Every revolution has its mistakes, ours too. That is not in itself bad, since they mostly disappear on their own or with time. The important thing is that those in charge keep their eyes open, and do not remain silent when they ought to speak out of fear of the public. Obviously, an historic revolution of vast extent brings a mass of nonsense to light along with its enormous benefits.

It becomes dangerous only when the nonsense is left to grow, thus hemming in and strangling the healthy, organic development of the revolution.

It is time today to expose some of this nonsense that has accompanied the National Socialist revolution to the full light of day, to examine it without pity.

That is even more necessary, since otherwise some of this nonsense over time may gradually corrupt the style and nature of our revolution, leaving to posterity an image of our nature and goals that in no way corresponds to National Socialist convictions and views.

Certainly there is need for public regulation of the great moral foundations of our national life. However, some nonsense is also spreading that attempts to reach beyond that to establish a code for the purely personal conduct of individuals.

That leads eventually to a moralism that is everything other than National Socialist.

Peculiar people whose life is either behind them, or have no right to have one ahead of them, preach moralism in the name of our revolution. This moralism often has nothing in common with true morality. They proclaim ethical laws that might be appropriate for a nunnery, but are entirely out of place in a modern cultural state.

An example. In a major central German city an advertising poster for a soap company showed a fresh, attractive girl holding the soap package in her hands. A moral knight who unfortunately had the right to determine the fate of this poster forbade its distribution on the ground that it offended the moral sensibilities of the population, since the woman in the poster was holding the soap in a place "that for moral reasons cannot be described more precisely."

What is moral about this? The person announcing the ban, who presumes that other people share his dirty fantasies, or the German people and the National Socialist movement, that are rightly upset and in opposition to such a ridiculous action?

Investigating the matter, we find that this wonderful citizen discovered his attraction for National Socialism three months after we took power, which however did not stop him from issuing the ban in the name of National Socialism.

Things have gone so far that this company of moralists does not stop at the borders of private life. They

would love to establish purity committees in cities and the countryside that would keep an eye on Müller's and Schulze's love and marriage life. It is true that they do not want to go so far as to ban kissing altogether, as in the familiar operetta, since it is too popular a pastime. If it were up to them, however, they would turn National Socialist Germany into a wasteland of muttering and complaining, a place where denunciation, spying, and extortion were the order of the day.

These same moralists often turn to government offices with the request to ban films, plays, operas, and operettas, since the dancers, stars, etc., apparently represent a grave danger to public decency. If we gave in to their demands, we should soon see only old ladies and men on the screen or the stage. The theaters would be empty, since the public generally does not attend them to see the same people they see in church or old people's homes.

Save us from these hypocritical creatures who have no genuine strong conception of life, and who in reality preach no honest morality. They generally are life's losers, protesting life itself. Eternal life and its laws will hardly make way for them; at most, they will hide behind a screen of contemptible hypocrisy and dishonest prudery.

They think that the German woman should not go out alone, she should not sit alone in a restaurant, she should not go out with a boy or even an S.A. man without a chaperone for a Sunday afternoon excursion, she should not smoke, she should not drink, she should not wash up and make herself pretty, in short she should do everything to keep the evil interest of a man away from her. That is, at least, is how these midget moralists think a German woman should behave. And woe to the poor womanly creature who has the misfortune to transgress against one of these laws. Of course, no German woman will have bobbed hair, since only Jewesses and other contemptible creatures do that.

Have these moral trumpeters any idea how they slander and demoralize millions of German women with their preaching, women who bravely and honestly do their duty in life and on the job, who are good comrades to their men and sacrificing mothers for their children?

don't they realize that they embarrass National Socialism throughout the world, that they are thirty years too late, or that one must take them to task because they are beginning to be annoying? There are good and bad women, decent and less decent women, some with bobbed hair, some without. Whether or not they powder their noses is not a sign of their inner worth, and if they occasionally smoke a cigarette at home or in society, they do not need to feel rejected or cast out.

In any event, these moralists should not sit in judgment over women, whether they are enemies or even if like all real men they wish women happiness, relaxation, and domestic peace, though their stuffy superiority would keep women from it.

They think it is not National Socialist to enjoy life; but rather one should only look at the dark side of human existence. Pessimism and suspicion are the best teachers in our earthly vale of sorrows. A true National Socialist has no cause to protect these miserable creatures. Primitiveness and absolute rejection of pleasure are the only character values to these people. If one has a clean and a dirty collar, one puts the dirty one on to give evidence of his hatred of bourgeois values. A man with a good and a bad suit wears the bad one, particularly for festive occasions, for it shows the astonished world how revolutionary his outlook is. He dislikes joy and laughter; people should have nothing to laugh about.

Are we living in a pietistic state, or in the age of life-affirming National Socialism?

No one can suspect us of wanting to live lives of ostentation or luxury. The Führer and many of his close comrades neither smoke nor drink nor enjoy sumptuous living. Those, however, who want to rob a nation of sixty million of every pleasure and all traces of optimism are contemptible, entirely aside from the fact that their foolish desires would drive countless people into poverty and misery.

Every banned activity makes more people unemployed; if no one can drive a car, the automobile factories will shut down, if no one wears a new suit, the looms and tailors will have nothing more to do; if people no longer attend movies or the theater, hundreds of thousands of stage and film employees will depend on public assistance.

To take joy and pleasure from a people means to make it unfit for its struggle for its daily bread.

He who does that sins against our reconstruction efforts and embarrasses the National Socialist state before the whole world.

The result would be a dreary impoverishment of our public life. That we will not accept.

We do not want to abolish pleasure, but rather to let as many as possible share in it. That is why we encourage people to attend the theater, that is why we give workers the opportunity to dress well for festive occasions. That is the reason behind *Kraft durch Freude*. That is why we shake off the agents of a prudish hypocrisy, why we do not allow decent, hard-working people who have every reason to need relief from their hard daily labors, who need to reaffirm life, to recover from the weariness, cares, and burdens of every day, to have their necessary pleasures ruined by the eternal chicanery of these pedants.

We need more affirmation of life and less complaining! More morality, but less moralism!