

Background: The following essay was published in *Der Angriff*, 30 April 1928. Goebbels satirically discusses the Nazi reasons for running for parliament. This is part of the campaign for the May 1928 Reichstag elections. Goebbels managed to get himself elected, despite (or perhaps because of) his less than respectful approach to the parliamentary institutions.

The source: I take the text from Joseph Goebbels, *Der Angriff. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1935), pp. 71-73.

Why Do We Want to Join the Reichstag?

by Joseph Goebbels

We are an anti-parliamentarian party that for good reasons rejects the Weimar constitution and its republican institutions. We oppose a fake democracy that treats the intelligent and the foolish, the industrious and the lazy, in the same way. We see in the present system of majorities and organized irresponsibility the main cause of our steadily increasing miseries. So why do we want to be in the Reichstag?

We enter the Reichstag to arm ourselves with democracy's weapons. If democracy is foolish enough to give us free railway passes and salaries, that is its problem. It does not concern us. Any way of bringing about the revolution is fine by us.

If we succeed in getting sixty or seventy of our party's agitators and organizers elected to the various parliaments, the state itself will pay for our fighting organization. That is amusing and entertaining enough to be worth trying. Will we be corrupted by joining parliament? Not likely. Do you believe that once we march into the meeting of the illustrious parliamentarians we will propose a toast to Philipp Scheidemann? Do you think us such miserable revolutionaries that you fear that the thick red carpets and the well upholstered sleeping halls will make us forget our historical mission?

He who enters parliament perishes! Well, that is true if he enters parliament to become a parliamentarian. But if he enters with a tough and driving will to carry on an uncompromising battle against the growing corruption of our public life, he will not become a parliamentarian, rather will remain what he is: a revolutionary.

Mussolini entered parliament. Shortly afterward, he marched on Rome with his Black Shirts. The communists also sit in the Reichstag. No one is naive enough to believe that they want to work seriously and positively. One more thing: If we do not succeed in making our dangerous men immune to legal prosecution, they will all find themselves behind bars sooner or later. Will that happen if they possess parliamentary immunity? Certainly. When democracy is near its end it will resort openly to the terror of capitalistic dictatorship that it ordinarily uses covertly. But that will not happen for some time, and in the meanwhile the fighters for our faith will enjoy parliamentary immunity long enough to broaden our fighting front such that shutting them up will not be as easy as democracy would like it to be.

Another thing. Our party's agitators pay 600 to 800 marks a month [in travel costs] to strengthen the Republic. Is it not proper for the Republic to cover these costs by providing them with railroad passes? Who of you thinks that we should throw our own small change to the Jewish Dawes railroad when the Republic longs to help us out?

Is it the beginning of a compromise? Do you really think that we who have stood before you a hundred

or a thousand times preaching faith in a new Germany, who have smilingly faced death dozens of times from the red mob, who have joined you in battling every form of resistance whether of official or nonofficial nature, who have bent before no command or terror, do you really think that we would lay down our weapons in exchange for a railroad pass?

If we only wanted to become representatives, we would not be National Socialists, rather I suppose German National Party members or Social Democrats. They have the most seats at their disposal and one does not need to risk one's life to compete with their leading lights. We do not have the stomach for that.

We do not beg for votes. We demand conviction, devotion, passion! A vote is only a tool for us as well as for you. We will march into the marble halls of parliament, bringing with us the revolutionary will of the broad masses from which we came, called by fate and forming fate. We do not want to join this pile of manure. We are coming to shovel it out.

Do not believe that parliament is our goal. We have shown the enemy our nature from the podiums of our mass meetings and in the enormous demonstrations of our brown army. We will show it as well in the leaden atmosphere of parliament.

We are coming neither as friends or neutrals. We come as enemies! As the wolf attacks the sheep, so come we.

You are not among your friends any longer! You will not enjoy having us among you!