

Background: In this 1932 article from *Der Angriff*, Goebbels openly favors dictatorship. He presents it in a way that makes the Nazi Party and Hitler appear to be the ideal agents of such rule. The article is dated 1 September 1932.

The source: “Goldene Worte für einen Diktator und für solche, die es werden wollen,” *Wetterleuchten. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1939), pp. 325-327.

Advice for a Dictator

And for Those Who Want to Become One

by Joseph Goebbels

1. A dictatorship requires three things: a man, an idea, and a following ready to live for the man and the idea, and if necessary to die for them. If the man is lacking it is hopeless; if the idea is lacking, it is impossible; if the following is missing, the dictatorship is only a bad joke.
2. A dictatorship can rule against a parliament when necessary, but never against the people.
3. Sitting on bayonets is uncomfortable.
4. A dictator's first task is to make what he wants popular, bringing the will of the nation in tune with his own will. Only then will the broad masses support him in the long run and join his ranks.
5. A dictator's highest duty is social justice. If people sense that the dictator only represents a thin upper class that has nothing to do with them, they will see the dictator as a hateful enemy and quickly overthrow him.
6. Dictatorships will rescue a nation when they know better ways than the previous governmental forms that they are fighting, and when their power is so anchored in the people that they do not depend on weapons, but rather on their followers.
7. A dictator does not need to follow the will of the majority. He must however have the ability to use the will of the people.
8. Leading parties and masses is the same as governing a nation. He who ruins a party will lead a nation into the abyss. Political ability is not demonstrated by using treacherous methods to rise to a ministerial chair on the labor of others.
9. Dictatorships must be able to survive on their own spiritual reserves. It will not work if what is good in their ideas comes from their opponents, and what does not come from their opponents is bad.
10. The ability to speak is no shame. It is shameful only when actions do not follow words. To speak well is good. To act bravely is even better. The typical reactionary can neither speak nor act. He has somehow gained power, but has no idea what to do with it.
11. Nothing is more foreign to dictatorial thinking than the bourgeois concept of objectivity. A dictatorship is by its very nature subjective. It takes sides by its nature. Since it is for one thing, it must be against another. If it does not do the latter, it runs the risk of having people doubt its honesty about the first.
12. A dictatorship speaks openly about what it is and what it wants. Nothing is farther from it than to

hide behind a facade. It has the courage to act, but also the courage to affirm.

13. Dictatorships that hide behind the law to give themselves an appearance of legality even if their actions disagree, are short-lived. They will collapse of their own incompetence, leaving behind chaos and confusion.

14. Only those who lack the courage to join a party value being above party. When worlds collapse, when foundations shake, when revolutionary fevers spread through peoples and nations, one must join a party, one must be for or against. He who stands between will be torn apart by the contradictions, a victim of his own indecisiveness.

15. It may sound grotesque, but it is true: The nature of a dictator must be clear from his name. One cannot rule with a name like Müller or Meier. And the claim to a title must be fought for. It can not be gained by swindle.

16. A true dictator depends on himself. His false counterpart hides behind the rules and depends on legal paragraphs to justify his actions.

17. Everything great is simple and everything simple is great. The little man likes to conceal his insignificance through complexity.

18. The army exists to defend the country against external threats, not to suppress the people in the interests of a thin layer of usurpers. A dictatorship that cannot defend itself with its own supporters deserves to be displaced.

19. Primo de Rivera [**the Spanish dictator who lost power in 1930**] fell because his power rested on guns, but he earned only hatred and scorn from the people.

20. Mussolini's work is unshakable, for he is his people's idol. He gave back to Italy what has always been the surest and best foundation of a state: confidence.