

Background: In this article dated 24 September 1944, Goebbels really says very little. He has nothing new to promise, no new hopes to give. Rather, he recycles past arguments that if Germans only hold out, their virtues will lead them to victory. It is not one of his better efforts.

The source: “Das höhere Gesetz” *Das Reich*, 24 September 1944, pp. 1, 3.

The Higher Law

by Joseph Goebbels

If proof were still needed of the accuracy of our views of the political background of the whole war goal the enemy side is pursuing, it would be given by the most recent events in several countries at the edge of our continent. England and the USA gave their blessing, and one cannot deny that the gentlemen in the Kremlin know what they want, and that nothing and no one will divert them from realizing their plans and intentions. Their political world program is the same today as it was in October 1917, when they destroyed czarism in the bloodiest of all revolutions in the history of the entire world: the Bolshevization of the whole world, beginning with paving the way to anarchy in individual nations, abolishing all legal authority, giving all power to the streets. It runs like a red thread through the history of Bolshevism, even if the actual methods vary. No country on any continent can feel safe. The Kremlin may sometimes work slowly, but it works with astonishing tenacity and determination. England and the USA have used this war to help it along. The consequences of such criminal behavior are becoming apparent. No one can say that even one of the political prognoses we have made from the beginning about the further development of this war has proved false. They sowed the wind and now they are reaping the whirlwind. Red anarchy marches around Europe. They are halted along certain borders, but only because of the German force of order. All other attempts to defend against it must be seen as failures. In other words, if the Reich were to collapse, Stalin would become the lord of Europe. Everyone knows what that would mean.

We certainly do not want to overdramatize the situation. The situation is too obvious to require that. We see things as we have always seen them, that is, as they are. A quick look at the map demonstrates that the Reich today is the only bulwark against Bolshevism. The English and Americans have their military successes in the West only because the greater part of our forces are in the East, and the Soviets are able to roll over the southeast flank only because we must set considerable troop contingents against the Western powers. No one can fail to see that the Kremlin is making the best use of this situation. In the countries it has chosen to be its victims it uses the old Bolshevik practices; that is, it overthrows national governments that are too weak in character to resist under difficult conditions, disarms their military forces, occupies the critical points of the territory in question, and then lets anarchy run wild in the big cities. Mass meetings with pro-Bolshevist resolutions are followed by street demonstrations. The next stage is so-called popular elections, which happen under the Red Army's bayonets. They always provide the nearly 100% results for Bolshevism that the Kremlin wants. The rest of the road is almost inevitable. The proceedings do not lack a certain monotony. One would think that its traces would terrify, but the opposite is true. They do not seem to fade away, but rather are tested again for their special situation. But the result is always the same.

No one any longer will dare to suggest that we are speaking here only in our own interest. The German people has made sacrifices over the past five years because of its recognition of a danger to the world that entitle it to speak on this matter. We have warned the peoples of Europe at every opportunity, unfortunately mostly in vain. What our persuasive abilities failed to achieve will now be proved in the

relevant cases by Bolshevik terror. The Red Army enters no country without a clear goal and a steadfast program. Sometimes the Soviets seem to proceed in steps or in an uncertain manner, but that is only for tactical reasons. Unless there is pressing reason, they are reluctant to attract the attention of the world public, and most often they succeed. One asks if it is as stupid as it looks, or if it only looks stupid. That in the end makes no difference. What is important is that Bolshevism's results are the same, and the results, however they may be reached, appear to be permanent once they are reached. One can change them only with weapons. But where are they available in sufficient quantities in the affected countries? We are in the war's sixth year. Those peoples without ideals worth fighting for and holding out for are tired and worn out. He who has the strength to stay at his post is almost certain of victory. But he who loses his strength or who no longer wants to use it, who leaves his post, thereby signs his own death sentence.

How often have we brought this fundamental lesson of the war to the broad European public, and how seldom have we found an audience! What happened last year in Italy should really have sufficed; it was indeed more than enough. How could one presume that anyone would want to repeat that dangerous experiment, raising the false hope that it would turn out better for him than for the Italian people! English and American newspapers and magazines are filled with reports about the dreadful misery and misfortune in that part of Italy occupied by the enemy, which read like descriptions of hell.

Can any one of the countries that have deserted our common cause in recent weeks expect that it will be better for it? Reports from Rumania and Bulgaria speak the same language. It would be historically ignorant to believe that political weakness and lack of character would be rewarded so soon and so well. Our enemies are not as generous as we were to the French people in Compiègne in the summer of 1940. They are serious about their campaign of hate and revenge toward us. They are not just battle cries. They want our very lives, and would exterminate our people and nation root and branch were we to surrender to their power. They agree on this, even if their individual opinions differ on this or that minor point. We must defend our existence in this war. We could not avoid this struggle for our national existence; it was forced on us, and any yielding to the enemy side would lead to weakness, and any weakness would lead to collapse.

The German people knows that. As much as the growing burdens and sacrifices of the war pain and torment us, they do not rob us of our clear political vision of the nature and necessity of this fateful battle, a vision that we unfortunately lacked in the year 1918. Our enemies harbor deceitful illusions if they believe that we will one day again weaken and raise the white flag. No one in Germany even thinks of that. The longer the war lasts, the clearer it becomes to all of us what is at stake. How could it be otherwise! Our enemies have left us no doubt as to our fate should we bow before them. But we also know that unbroken courage and steadfast determination in war always lead to success, even if it sometimes seems that the material superiority of the opposing side can no longer be overcome. It is clear to our enemies that their real difficulties will begin only when they have reached the Reich's borders. Until then, one or another of us could believe that things were not really all that bad. No one talks that way any longer. Each knows the gravity of the situation that we face today, and that is a boost in strength and war potential that simply cannot be measured. Who among us wants to forget that we have been fighting against almost the entire world for more than five years, and despite their most determined efforts, they have in no way succeeded in forcing us to the ground, or even temporarily reducing our powers of resistance! As heavy as the burdens on our people may be, everyone knows that no other people would be able to carry and bear the same burdens under the same conditions. Through that alone we have won in this war a leadership role that no one will be able to dispute once the war is over.

The summer of this year, during which our enemies promised the overthrow of the Reich, is over. Their united attack against our fronts did indeed bring us a whole series of military withdrawals and losses,

but one may look far and wide without seeing the slightest hint of a German collapse. And the opposing side certainly threw everything at us that was within its power. One cannot assume that they spared themselves in order to spare us. Despite all the difficulties that we have had to endure in the past weeks and months, it is clear that German powers of resistance have not in any way been broken or even diminished. We have proved brave and manly, and although our enemies wish that our strength were diminishing, it seems to be growing again. Our people's total war effort has found and is finding, ways to transform national strength into genuine war potential, and has already produced astonishing results. We are thus building operative reserves that will be of decisive importance for the coming decisions in both the military and the economic sectors. It will not be long before we stop living from hand to mouth in both sectors, but are once again in a position to operate according to a broad plan. We are of the opinion that we will always succeed and must succeed in mastering all the difficulties that surface as the war develops, however insurmountable they may sometimes seem. He who fights for his life always finds a way out of danger. And, by the way, one should not believe that the enemy side is free of problems. They, too, have in part been fighting for over five years and know as well as we what that means.

As a German, one can only speak with pride of the high war morale that our people has shown in these weeks and months of crisis. It is beyond praise, and earns the greatest admiration from the whole world, even from our enemies. They have nowhere succeeded in breaking and destroying it. The Reich cannot be beaten from this side either. Germany is fighting under these extraordinary conditions for the place in the sun that it deserves and that it has been so long denied. Our people does not disappoint the expectations its leadership has in its steadfastness. The mistake we made in November 1918, and for which we paid so dearly, ultimately with this war, will never be repeated. The sound political instinct of our people, its hard work and its eagerness for battle, and above all its war morale hardened in the spirit of National Socialism, guarantee this. Its leadership wishes only to be worthy of the virtues of its people. Without fear or wavering, it conducts the titanic struggle for the life and future of the Reich, using all means of resistance and attack that are at its disposal. It feels that it is obeying a higher historical mission that must be fulfilled if our part of the world, and thereafter all of the civilized world, is not to sink into chaos. We will fight against that possibility as long as there is breath in our bodies. We resist thereby a rotten decadent environment that here and there faces resignedly the storm of threatening disaster, letting things run their course. We Germans do not consider behaving that way, and therefore we are the people that will rescue the world, if not today, tomorrow.

Our enemies themselves have taught us what we must do in the decisive phase of this war. If they suggest we lay down our weapons and make a cowardly surrender, we respond with icy contempt. We know them too well not to know their plans. They will never throw us to the ground, never strike the sword from our hand. Never will we surrender our right to live in freedom and dignity as we ourselves wish. Whatever may come, we will stand upright through all the storms, working and fighting, filled with faithful confidence in the great historical mission that the Führer has given us. The more it is threatened, the more deeply we feel obligated to it. We are despite it all on the right path. The future will prove that. For above this war stands a higher law that we must obey. It is our companion through these dark times. What is the hysterical scream of our enemies over against it! They can never shake our faith and our confidence. The German people today stands like a soldier on the front line. It knows that danger is near. It therefore unsheathes its weapons, ready at any moment to use them when the hour of greatest trial comes.