

well as the Nazis rose to power. Hitler variously describes the Jews as an “octopus,” as “a parasite on the body of other nations,” as a “vampire,” as a “spider” that was “suck[ing] the blood out of the people’s pores,” and as having taken over the German state. To free the German *Volk*, consequently, Hitler calls for the “elimination of the existing Jewish one” and “the end of this parasite upon the nations.”<sup>18</sup>

## **10. Authoritarianism, not liberal democracy**

So far we have three major themes in the Nazi Program: collectivism, socialism, and nationalism. The next question is: How do the Nazis believe this is to be achieved?

As early as 1920 the Nazis are clear that they are no friends of democracy, liberalism, or republicanism. They favor strong authoritarianism and centralized power.

Point 23 calls for censorship and government control of all newspapers.

Point 24 suggests limitations on religions that do not fit the Nazis’ goals.

Point 25 calls for centralization and unconditional power: “we demand the creation of a strong central power in Germany. A central political parliament should possess unconditional authority over the entire Reich, and its organization in general.”

These points in combination with the economically socialist points earlier are to give the government total control over all aspects of society.

Throughout the 1920s the Nazis are unapologetic about wanting to eliminate liberalism, democracy, and republicanism. Goebbels for example put it bluntly and publicly: “Never do the people rule themselves. This madness has been

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<sup>18</sup> Hitler 1925, pp. 623, 305, 327, 193, 453, and 327.

invented by liberalism. Behind its concept of the sovereignty of the people hide the most corrupt rogues, who do not want to be recognized.”<sup>19</sup>

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler agreed entirely: “There must be no majority decisions.” Instead, “*the decisions will be made by one man.*”<sup>20</sup> So, Goebbels continued, “We shall create a power-group with which we can conquer this state. And then ruthlessly and brutally, using the State’s prerogatives, we shall enforce our will and our programme.” Again from Goebbels:

History has seen repeatedly how a young, determined minority has overthrown the rule of a corrupt and rotten majority, and then used for a time the State and its means of power in order to bring about by dictatorship ... and force the conditions necessary to complete the conquest and to impose new ideas.<sup>21</sup>

The Nazis were very clear from the outset what they were in favor of, what they opposed, and how they planned to exercise power once they achieved it: socialism, nationalism, racial identity and purification—and a strong, centralized power to make it happen.

## **11. Idealism, not politics as usual**

It is important to emphasize that the Nazis put their program forward forthrightly and as a noble—even spiritual—ideal to achieve. They promised not merely another political platform, but a whole philosophy of life that, as they and their followers believed, promised renewal. And they called upon Germans to exercise the highest virtues of altruism and self-sacrifice for the good of society to bring about that renewal.

Program point 10 urges individuals to put the common good of Germany before their self interest. Point 24 repeats it.

<sup>19</sup> Goebbels 1929, in Mosse ed., 1966, p. 105.

<sup>20</sup> Hitler 1925, p. 449.

<sup>21</sup> Goebbels 1927, quoted in Irving 1999, p. 117.