

Point number 10 of the Program, for example, says “It must be the first duty of every citizen to perform mental or physical work. Individual activity must not violate the general interest, but must be exercised within the framework of the community, and for the general good.”

National Socialism thus consciously rejects Western liberal individualism with its emphasis on the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—all of which are individualistic rights. Nazism is collectivistic: it does not hold that individuals have their own lives to live and happiness to pursue. Rather, individuals should work for the community out of a sense of duty; they serve the general good, to which they subordinate their personal lives.

Point 24 of the Program returns to this theme and emphasizes it strongly: “THE COMMON INTEREST BEFORE SELF-INTEREST.” The bold print and capitalization are in the original, for emphasis.

8. Economic socialism, not capitalism

The second theme of the Program is a stress upon socialism and a strong rejection of capitalism.

Numerically, socialism is the most emphasized theme in the Nazi Program, for over half of the Program’s twenty-five points—fourteen out of the twenty-five, to be exact—itemize economically socialist demands.

Point 11 calls for the abolition of all income gained by loaning money at interest.

Point 12 demands the confiscation of all profits earned by German businesses during World War I.

Point 13 demands the nationalization of all corporations.

Point 14 demands profit-sharing in large industrial enterprises.

Point 15 demands the generous development of state-run old-age insurance.

Point 16 calls for the immediate socialization of the huge department stores.

And so on.

So strong was the Nazi party's commitment to socialism that in 1921 the party entered into negotiations to merge with another socialist party, the German Socialist Party. The negotiations fell though, but the economic socialism remained a consistent Nazi theme through the 1920s and 30s.

For example, here is Adolf Hitler in a speech in 1927:

“We are socialists, we are enemies of today's capitalistic economic system for the exploitation of the economically weak, with its unfair salaries, with its unseemly evaluation of a human being according to wealth and property instead of responsibility and performance, and we are all determined to destroy this system under all conditions.”¹⁰

Even more strongly, Josef Goebbels hated capitalism and urged socialism. Dr. Josef Goebbels was perhaps the most brilliant and educated of all the Nazi politicians. Once the Nazis came to power he was to be one of the most powerful of the very top Nazis—perhaps number two or three after Hitler himself. But Goebbels' commitment to National Socialist principles began much earlier. He received a wide-ranging classical education by attending five universities in Germany, eventually receiving a Ph.D. in literature and philosophy from



Dr. Joseph Goebbels

¹⁰ May 1, 1927; quoted in Toland 1976, p. 306.

Heidelberg University in 1921. During his graduate student days he absorbed and agreed with much of the writings of communists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Damning those he called “the money pigs of capitalist democracy,”¹¹ Goebbels in speeches and pamphlets regularly declaimed that “Money has made slaves of us.”¹² “Money,” he argued, “is the curse of mankind. It smothers the seed of everything great and good. Every penny is sticky with sweat and blood.” And in language that could be right out of the writings of Karl Marx, Goebbels believed fervently: “The worker in a capitalist state—and that is his deepest misfortune—is no longer a living human being, a creator, a maker. He has become a machine. A number, a cog in the machine without sense or understanding. He is alienated from what he produces.”¹³

The Nazi solution, then, is strong socialism.¹⁴ The state should control the economy, organizing its production and distribution in the collective interest.¹⁵

9. Nationalism, not internationalism or cosmopolitanism

This raises a question. So far the Nazi Program emphasizes that collectivism and socialism take priority over the individual—but which collective or social grouping has priority? Here the Nazi Program emphatically defines its collectivism and socialism in nationalistic terms. Individuals belong primarily to their ethnic and racial groups, those ethnic and racial groups giving them their core identities.

¹¹ Quoted in Orlow 1969, p. 87.

¹² Goebbels 1929, in Mosse ed., 1966, p. 107.

¹³ Goebbels 1932, “Those Damned Nazis” pamphlet.

¹⁴ See Appendix 2 for more quotations from Nazi leaders on the socialism of National Socialism.

¹⁵ This explains why the Nazi SA “staged joint rallies with the Communists and planned campaigns to win over the KDP members well into 1929 and 1930” (Orlow 1969, p. 210).