

READING

The Common Interest before Self-Interest

Six years before Hitler took power in Germany, Joseph Goebbels, the National Socialist Party's propaganda expert, published a pamphlet that would be reprinted many times during the Nazi years. It spelled out the goals of National Socialism:

What is the first commandment of every National Socialist?

Love Germany more than anything and your fellow Germans more than yourself!

What is the aim of the National Socialist idea of liberty?

To create the national community of all honestly creative Germans!

What is the content of that national community?

Freedom and bread for every German!

Who is a fellow German, a racial comrade?

Every honestly creative German is, provided his blood, his customs, his culture are German and provided he speaks the German tongue!

What is the basic economic principle with which National Socialism wishes to replace the present economic warfare of all against all?

*The Common Interest before Self-Interest!*¹

¹ Quoted in Joachim Remak, ed., *The Nazi Years: A Documentary History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969), 39.

Connection Questions

1. How does this pamphlet define what it means to be German? What do you think Goebbels meant by the phrase “national community”? What might he have meant by “honestly creative German”?
2. What did National Socialism offer to these “honestly creative” Germans? What did it ask of them?
3. Why do you think this pamphlet was repeatedly reprinted? Why would a government want to encourage the values expressed in the pamphlet?
4. How does this pamphlet define the relationship between the individual and society?