

Background: The situation from Germany's point of view in January 1944 was not promising. Goebbels wrote in his diary on 29 December 1943: "1943 was everything but successful for us. One disaster followed another. Fate did everything to us that it could." Still, in comparison to January 1943 when the Battle of Stalingrad was about to be decided, Germany faced no immediate crisis. Goebbels, in his accustomed fashion, reviews the situation in this article titled "A New Year," and finds that Germany's prospects are promising indeed. He relies heavily on his standard argument that Germany is the morally superior nation, and that therefore it must win, an argument he increasingly relied on as the war situation deteriorated.

The source: "Vor einem neuen Jahr," *Das Reich*, 2 January 1944, pp. 1, 3.

A New Year

by Joseph Goebbels

1943 was a year of testing for us. The Reich had the task of defending the economic and military ground that our army had won in past great offensives, and which is the foundation of the coming final victory. It was to be expected that the enemy would do all it could to tear them from us. They did not succeed. They did it is true deal us significant blows, but were not able to bring about a fundamental change in the war situation. One needs only to remember the views and plans with which they began the past year to realize that they were able to gain only a small portion of their goals, a portion in no way sufficient to change the war in their favor.

That was openly admitted in London and Washington at the end of the year. The leading military critics of the Anglo-American newspapers competed in criticizing their war leadership, whose results stood diametrically opposed to their predictions and promises. That is how things in fact stand. We can be satisfied with the course of the war in 1943. It has not brought us what we hoped, but that is even more true for the enemy.

The enemy camp seriously underestimated the moral and military strength of the Reich in the most fateful and gravest ways. They are still doing that in part today. We Germans in general hold only our own government responsible if it makes false promises, but it is worth remembering that the British prime minister called the Anglo-American campaign in Italy the beginning of an attack on the soft underbelly of Europe and promised the public that reaching the Brenner Pass was only a matter of weeks. By the time the leaves fell in the fall, amphibian operations would finally have destroyed the Wehrmacht's strength in all the European theaters of action. One needs only a cursory look at the map to realize that these were hasty prophecies not worth the paper they were printed on.

The enemy side was just as deceived about the political developments of 1943. How often was the moral collapse of the Reich predicted, yet here we are! One does not need rose-colored glasses to conclude that the German people have never been so determined to fight and win as they are in this fifth year of war. In the face of our determination, the enemy has had to back off from his demands for unconditional surrender. He has probably realized that it only makes him look ridiculous. What would the English and American soldiers say about it? On the Southern Front they must struggle through mine fields and conquer mountains at the cost of rivers of blood, only to lose them the next day. Their great offensives gain a few centimeters. One will not defeat the German army that way.

There is a familiar Berlin joke that exactly describes the current situation: "He who boasts gets more out of life." The English and Americans have succeed in using clever and boastful bluff propaganda to

persuade a certain part of the world that victory is a foregone conclusion that really does not need to be discussed any longer. The more the military facts speak against them, the more crudely and shamelessly London and Washington repeat their claims. On the one hand the enemy side is attempting to build up its own courage, and on the other to persuade the neutral public of things that are simply not true. They boast destructive plans against the Reich and the German people as if they were already in Berlin, while in fact they are fighting in vain a long way from Rome. We would never make propaganda so far from the truth. But the English and Americans do it without the least shame. They have the hippopotamus skins of hardened sinners, and the idea of a political conscience is entirely foreign to them. There is no point in arguing with them.

One of the favorite elements to their agitation is to speak of so-called war criminals. They use the familiar method of shouting "Stop, thief!" Churchill and Roosevelt know well enough that they are the real cause of this terrible war. They prepared it and unleashed it at the proper moment. The blood guilt rests with them. But that does not stop them from accusing those who were attacked of being the guilty party, of promising us the punishment that they themselves deserve. It is of course all theoretical: in fact, they face the unconquerable wall of our continent. They are trying to figure out how to open the gate without having to fight for it. They are following tested methods. They believe that what worked in 1918 has to work again this time, and therefore create the illusion that they have a material superiority and invincibility that we cannot oppose. We hardly want to deny that the enemy has caused us great difficulties, or that he will continue to do so in the future. That is how war is. But the enemy is not in the position to rip the tools of victory out of our hands. That is what is critical.

The Nurembergers have long said that one should not hang someone before catching them. We know that Churchill and Roosevelt would like to put the noose around the German leadership's necks, not because they are responsible for the war, but rather because they are doing everything in their power to resist the enemy's war of annihilation against the German people. What is even worse from the standpoint of Washington and London, they are succeeding. Were we of Bettman-Hollweg's **[a World War I German politician]** stature, we would certainly get good press from the enemy. If we loosed our hold on the Reich or on the conquered territories so that the enemy could spread unrest within Germany and revolution in the occupied territories, we would certainly win the enemy's sympathy. But we wage war from a practical standpoint, and maintain order in the areas we have occupied, which leads the English and Americans to call us war criminals who deserve the gallows.

And they do not only want to hang the German leadership, but rather the entire German people. They would surely hang us all if they had the power. They do not know us very well if they think that will make us fear. We have been condemned to death so often in the past for our political crimes that we could not have survived had we died every time. We are in the position of the police who have to deal with a band of gangsters. The gangsters have professional reasons to hate the police. They understandably wish them dead. The police, after all, guard the public and the state. But do the police fear the gangsters? The opposite. They fight them, and eventually bring them to justice.

The enemy has committed every conceivable crime against humanity, culture, and civilization. They are, in fact, so spiritually corrupt as to boast about it in public. They plunder honest and decent nations to fill the pockets of their own money barons. They let millions go hungry and hundreds of thousands starve to reduce them to political inactivity. They murder huge numbers of women and children, hoping through their unbelievable barbarism to weaken the will and destroy the confidence of their husbands and fathers. They bomb and burn more than two millennia of Europe's cultural treasures. What other crimes could they commit to earn the disgust, the hatred, and the deep contempt of the entire world? Who has the right to speak of war crimes and historical justice, the enemy or we?

We know that this is painful for Churchill, Roosevelt, and their comrades. Their paid agitators will respond with howls of outrage. But that does not alter the fact that we are telling the truth, which the

world's public realizes. The enemy's bluff propaganda is childish! They are trying to suggest they have strengths that they do not have. They surround themselves with hollow social and humanitarian phrases, but only lies and deception are behind them. They are trying to keep their own and foreign nations in the dark, to keep them defenseless, and then to plunder them. They would long since have succeeded had not National Socialist Germany taken up the struggle against them. That is why they hate us with burning rage. It resembles the hatred and rage criminals have for the police, who reveal their dark handiwork even if they are dressed in a tuxedo and attempt to play the role of the gentleman.

The police are not deceived, and neither are we. We have seen through the enemy, and they know it. Our ears are deaf to their lies. In its struggle against the plutocratic-Bolshevist conspiracy, young National Socialist Germany feels itself the leader of the entire civilized world. It would cease to exist were we to give up before the enemy's assault. We are God's instrument today, fulfilling a great historical mission. It cannot be postponed. We must do it, or humanity will collapse. We all know this. This is a struggle between light and dark, between truth and falsehood, between true humanity and inhuman barbarism. Germany carries the banner. All the oppressed and tortured peoples look to us in hope, because they expect from us alone a new order and the salvation of the world.

Our language is not able to express the extent of our responsibility. This is more than a war, it is a battle for the world. A sinister conspiracy is attacking the foundations of human society. Whether humanity will be saved or whether it will collapse depends wholly on us. The enemy is using every possible base and cynical method to divert us from our mission, to tire us out, to weary our souls, to shake our hearts. But the last year proves once again that they will never succeed. The blessing of fate is with us.

This is the conviction with which we close the book of the old year and open that of the new. There are riddles and more riddles before us. We know that we can and must solve them all. It will be a dangerous year in which the fate of civilized humanity once again will hang in the balance. And as was the case so often in the past, salvation will come when one least expects it. We need only believe firmly in it, and fight for it. Salvation lies in loyalty to ourselves and to our task. As the year changes, millions of German soldiers raise their weapons, millions of German farmers their scythes, millions of German workers their hammer. Behind them millions of German women raise their children, both in supplication and in demand. The current generation of our people is defending the Reich, as countless generations before them also have done. It was given to us from the hands of our weak and discouraged fathers. We want to pass it on, strong and powerful, to our children.

That is why we are fighting and winning this war. Each new year is new proof of that.