The german woman

by Joseph Goebbels

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Germans! Germans!

It is a happy coincidence that my first speech as Minister of Popular Education and Propaganda is addressed to German women. Although I agree with Treitschke that men make history, I do not forget that women bring up boys to adulthood. You know that the National Socialist movement is the only party that excludes women from everyday politics. The harsh criticism and the hostility that this arouses is completely unwarranted. We have kept women away from the democratic parliamentary intrigues of the last fourteen years in Germany, not because we do not respect them, but because we respect them too much. We do not hold the woman to be inferior; rather, we consider that it has a different mission, a different value, from that of man.That is why we felt that the German woman, who, more than any other in the world, is a woman in the best sense of the word, should use her strength and abilities in other areas than man.

Woman has always been not only man's sexual companion, but also his work companion. Formerly, she worked hard with the man in the fields. She settled with him in the cities, entered offices and factories and did her share of the work for which she was made. She put in it all her abilities, her fidelity, her disinterested devotion, her spirit of sacrifice.

The woman in public life today is no different from the women of the past. None of those who understand the modern age would have the mad idea of ​​excluding women from public life and depriving them of their jobs, professions and livelihoods. But we must also say that what belongs to man must remain his prerogative. This includes politics and the military. This is not to denigrate women, but rather to recognize how they can best use their talents and abilities.

A simple look at the last years of German decline brings us to the frightening, almost terrifying, conclusion that the less Germans were inclined to act like men in public life, the more women succumbed to the temptation to fulfill the role of man. The feminization of men always leads to the masculinization of women. An age in which all great ideas of virtue, steadfastness, toughness and determination have been forgotten should not be surprising that man is gradually losing his preeminent role in life and in politics in favor of women.

My words may displease a female audience, but it must be said, because it is true and because it will help to understand our attitude towards women.

The modern age, with all the enormous revolutionary transformations it has brought about in government, politics, economics and social relations, has affected women and their role in public life. Things that we thought impossible a few years or decades ago have now become everyday reality. Good, noble and commendable things have happened. But also despicable and humiliating things. These revolutionary transformations have largely removed women from their own tasks. Their gaze was directed in directions that did not suit them. This resulted in a distorted view of German femininity that bore no relation to old ideals.

Fundamental change is needed. At the risk of sounding reactionary and outdated, I say it without ambiguity: the first and the best place of the woman, the most suitable place for her, is in the family and her most glorious duty is to give children to her people. and to the nation, children who can perpetuate the race and guarantee the nation's immortality. The woman is the one who educates the youth and therefore lays the foundations for the future. If the family is the nation's source of strength, the woman is its heart and center. The best place a woman can occupy in serving her people is in her marriage, in the family, in motherhood. This is his greatest mission. This does not mean that women who have jobs or have no children have no role in the birth of the German people.They use their strength, their capacities, their sense of responsibility towards the nation, in another way. We are convinced, however, that the first task of a nation which has reformed the society must be to offer again to the woman the possibility of accomplishing her true task, her mission in the family and as mother.

The national revolutionary government is anything but reactionary. He does not want to slow down the increasingly rapid pace of our time. He has no intention of being late. He wants to be the standard bearer and the scout of the future. We know the demands of the modern age. But that doesn't prevent us from seeing that every age has its roots in motherhood, that there is nothing more important than the true mother of a family that gives children to the state.

German women have changed in recent years. They are starting to see that they are not happier because they have more rights, but less duties. They now realize that the right to be elected to a public office to the detriment of the right to life, motherhood and daily bread, is a fool's bargain.

A hallmark of modern times is the rapid decline in the birth rate in our large cities. In 1900, two million babies were born in Germany. Today their number has dropped to one million. This catastrophic drop is particularly evident in the capital. In the last fourteen years, the birth rate in Berlin has fallen more than in any other European city. In 1955, without emigration, it would have only about three million inhabitants. The government is determined to stop this decline of the family and the resulting impoverishment of our blood. There has to be a fundamental change. The liberal attitude towards the family and the child is responsible for Germany's rapid decline. Today we have to start worrying about the aging of the population.In 1900, there were seven children for an elderly person, today only four. If current trends persist, the proportion will be 1 to 1 in 1988. These statistics speak for themselves. They are the best proof that, if Germany continues on this path, she will fall into the abyss with incredible speed. We are almost in a position to predict the decade when Germany will collapse due to depopulation.We are almost in a position to predict the decade when Germany will collapse due to depopulation.We are almost in a position to predict the decade when Germany will collapse due to depopulation.

We are not prepared to watch the collapse of our national life and the destruction of the blood we have inherited without doing anything. The national revolutionary government has the duty to rebuild the nation on its original foundations and to transform the life and work of women so that they once again serve the national common good in the best possible way. He intends to eliminate social inequalities to once again guarantee the existence of our people, the future of our people and the immortality of our blood.

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This exhibition entitled "the Woman" will perhaps represent a turning point. If the aim of the exhibition is to give an idea of ​​women in contemporary society, it does so at a time when German society is undergoing the most important changes for generations. I know how difficult it is. I know the obstacles that had to be overcome to give a clear theme and a solid structure to this exhibition. It must reveal the meaning of woman for the family, the people and the whole nation. It will give an idea of ​​the real life of women today and provide the knowledge necessary to resolve current differences of opinion, which are not primarily the result of the contemporary women's movement.

But that's not all. The main purpose of the “Woman” exhibition is not only to show the current state of affairs, but to make suggestions for improvement. It aims to show new ways and new possibilities. Clear and often radical examples will give food for thought to thousands of German women. It is especially pleasing to the men of the new government that we are that large families are given special attention, since we want to save the nation from decline. The importance of the family cannot be underestimated, especially in families without fathers, which depend entirely on the mother. In these families,the woman has full responsibility for the children and she must realize the responsibility she has towards her people and the nation.

We do not believe that the German people are inevitably doomed to decline. We are absolutely convinced that Germany still has a great mission to accomplish in the world. We are convinced that we are not at the end of our history, but rather that a new, great and honorable period in our history begins now. This faith gives us the strength to work and not to despair. It has enabled us to make great sacrifices over the past fourteen years. She gave millions of German women the strength to hope in Germany and its future and to let their sons participate in the awakening of the nation.This faith has not ceased to live in the courageous women who lost their husbands and their heads of families in the war and those who gave their sons to fight for the rebirth of their people. This faith has kept us standing during these fourteen years of adversity and despair. And this faith fills us today with new hope that Germany will once again find its place in the sun.

It is the beginning of a new German femininity. If the nation has mothers again who proudly and freely choose motherhood, it cannot perish. If the woman is healthy, the people will be healthy. Woe to the nation which neglects its wives and mothers. She condemns herself.

We hope that the concept of the German woman will again gain the consideration and respect of the whole world. The German woman will then be proud of her land and her people, of thinking German and of feeling German. It is the honor of his nation and his race that will be most important to him. Only a nation that does not forget its honor will be able to provide for its needs.

The German woman must never forget this.

I declare the exhibition open. May she reveal all the old mistakes and show the way to the future.

Then the world will respect us again and we can affirm what Walther von der Vogelweide said about the German woman in his famous poetry:

The one who searches

Virtue and true love,

Should come to our country.

There is a lot of joy.

May I live there for a long time.

Deutsches Frauentum , Signale der neuen Zeit. 25 ausgewählte Reden von Dr. Joseph Goebbels (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1934), p. 118-126, translated from German by BK