

## 30 Articles of War for the German People

### By Joseph Goebbels

These are the articles of war for the German people, who are now engaged in the most fateful battle of their history. Countless of Germany's best have sacrificed their lives in their spirit both at the front and at home for the life and freedom of their nation. Millions of brave German soldiers fight for them on every front, and millions of industrious men and woman work untiringly for them at home, in the factories, workshops, offices, laboratories, and in agriculture. These war articles are a reminder to our people of those who have fallen. They are a testimony to the willingness of those who fight and work to sacrifice, and a harsh rebuke to the lazy and undecided.

#### Article 1

Everything is possible in this war, save that we capitulate and bow to the power of the enemy. Anyone who speaks or even thinks in such a way is a cowardly traitor, and must be expelled in disgrace and shame from the fighting and working German community.

#### Article 2

We are fighting for our lives. If we win, we will be able to repair the damage and the pain this war has caused in a relatively short time by applying our full strength. If we lose, it will mean the end of our nation and our history.

#### Article 3

This war is a defensive war. It was forced upon us by our enemies, who wish to destroy the possibility of life and growth for our nation. If they succeed, our present generation will have lost everything that countless German generations have won over millennia of struggle by hard work and sacrifice. Our nation's history will end in shame and disgrace.

#### Article 4

This war brings countless dangers and risks, as does any war. Each must remember that every danger and risk can be overcome if a great nation like Germany with a capable and determined leadership uses all its strength and every resource to deal with it.

#### Article 5

We will certainly win this war if all Germans think of the community and act as do the best sons of our people. But if all ignored the community, as do the lazy, the cowardly, and the hesitant, we would have long since lost it. The war will be won or lost according to the strength of our community.

#### Article 6

Each German proves his community sense by conscientiously fulfilling his duties to the nation, just as he makes a claim on the community. Even in times of peace, each is dependent on the help and support of the community, and must therefore be willing to share its burdens and duties. How much more is that true during war!

#### Article 7

Any advice from the enemy is an attack on our war morale. The enemy wants to win as much as we do. Everything he says and does is intended to lead us astray and deceive us. He who listens to the enemy, no matter how sanctimonious the reasons he may give, puts his people in the gravest danger. Ignorance may not protect him from the penalty he deserves.

#### Article 8

Silence is an important command from the war leadership. Few know the war's secrets. These are weapons in our nation's struggle for existence, and may not be revealed to the enemy. It would be unfair and destructive of the general welfare to spread rumors that force the government to speak about matters important or even decisive in the war. This can only help the enemy and harm our nation.

#### Article 9

The war leadership is doing the best it can. Often it cannot reveal the reasons for its actions without giving valuable information to the enemy. That means that even those of good will often do not understand its actions. That is why it must have the confidence of the people, confidence it has earned by its courage, cleverness, farsightedness, as well as its past successes. The know-it-alls can criticize only because the government is condemned to silence; if it could speak, they would be refuted instantly.

#### Article 10

The only thing we cannot afford to lose in this war is our freedom, the foundation of our life and our future. Everything else can be replaced, even

if only through years of hard work. But a loss of our freedom would mean the loss of all our other material and cultural possessions, both for the nation as a whole and for each individual. If the war requires it, we must therefore be willing to use all we have to defend that freedom. Without it, neither the nation nor the individual can live.

#### Article 11

An old trick of warfare is to split a people from its government, leaving it leaderless and therefore defenseless. This is the only trick with which the enemy could defeat us. Anyone who falls prey to the enemy's trick is either stupid or a traitor. He endangers the victory for which our soldiers risk their lives, and for which our heroes have died. He stabs the fighting front in the back. No penalty is too severe for him.

#### Article 12

Beware of those seemingly intelligent people who seek to win your confidence with clever words, then undermine your confidence with a flood of phrases and rumors. Listen carefully to what they say, and you will soon see that they are cowardly, not intelligent. They may know better, but they cannot do better. Were they the latter, instead of criticizing they would be filling an important position at home or at the front, contributing by their actions to speeding our victory.

#### Article 13

He who speaks about the war and its prospects should always speak as if the enemy were listening. In many cases, he actually is. Each thoughtless word from our side gives him new hope and courage, and therefore prolongs the war. Annoyance or anger about this or that inconvenience of the war sometimes has justification, but in view of the great battle we stand in the midst of, most problems are of minor significance,

#### Article 14

We are helping those who need it as much as possible. If real help is impossible during the war, those affected should know that it will come after victory. Victory is the prerequisite for a national reconstruction that will repair all the damage of the war. The more one sacrifices for the war, the more fanatically one believes in victory. Therefore, we must work and fight. That alone gives sacrifices, even the hardest ones, their meaning.

#### Article 15

Each must follow all the laws and regulations to the letter related to the war. Who violates them from neglect or forgetfulness does just as much damage as if he did so intentionally. Each must take the war with the seriousness it deserves.

#### Article 16

Anything grows dull with time, even the impact of the war. We must therefore constantly guard against becoming complacent in fulfilling our war duties. Our behavior today will be admired in a few decades by our children and grandchildren. They will not experience the spiritual pain that this long war has brought us. Rather, they will see the war only as the greatest heroic event in the history of our nation. Do not forget that in the midst of the everyday problems of the war.

#### Article 17

Everything comes to an end eventually, even war. We must be sure that its end is a happy one. We can best ensure that by remaining calm and steadfast. The nation with the most of these virtues will win.

#### Article 18

Nothing is more stupid than to believe that the leadership has it better than the people. The individual may have a heavy material burden to carry. But the heaviest burden is that of responsibility, with its never-ending cares. One should not be unfair and should not make unreasonable judgments about matters he does not understand.

#### Article 19

Nothing is more contemptible than to think that one part of the nation wages the war, and another only watches. This is no war of governments or armies; it is a war of peoples. He who stands aside only proves that he does not understand the situation. He is a war parasite who lives from the pain and contributions of others. Were they to think as he, we would lose the war? In the interests of decent citizens, the lazy must be reminded of their war duties. The war effort demands that, as does the public morale.

#### Article 20

Just as in war there are medals and decorations for those who fulfill their duties with distinction, so, too, there must be warnings and if necessary harsh penalties for those who neglect their war duties. A war duty left

undone is far worse than a neglected duty in time of peace. Each German today lives under the laws of war. They lay out harsh penalties, even for behaviors that are not very serious in peace. They are shameful crimes during war, since they endanger victory. They deserve the harshest penalties.

#### Article 21

The soldier dies at the front while fulfilling his duty. He has the right to demand that those at home who sabotage or harm the war effort receive the death penalty. The front has the right to be supported by high morale at home. Anyone whose actions at home rob the front of this assurance deserves a harsh penalty. The soldier at the front demands it.

#### Article 22

Whether at home or at the front, discipline is the most important virtue. We can master the war's enormous problems only through iron resolve. A weakness in discipline weakens morale and violates all the laws of war. Any loosening of our people's unity in war is a crime against the community. Our people's greatest chance of victory is in firm resolve and hard determination.

#### Article 23

No one has the right to complain about limitations on his personal freedom caused by the war. What significance do these have in view of the fact that countless men, even woman and children, have died!

#### Article 24

The war demands our full devotion for itself and its duties. All that still remains from can only be viewed as a gift subject to recall. We must always realize that eventually we may have to give it up. We are fighting this war not to maintain, but to restore peace. In war more than ever, one must use what one is defending.

#### Article 25

Nothing is too valuable to be sacrificed for freedom. All we possess we won as a free people. Without our freedom, it would have no purpose, meaning, or endurance. It is better for a nation to be impoverished but free rather than to seem prosperous, but end a war as slaves. A free people can rebuild everything it lost in defending its freedom. An enslaved people will lose that which survived the war, and also the ability to gain it back again.

#### Article 26

The duty of the individual during war extends to sacrificing his life for the life of his nation. In view of such great and final sacrifice, surely one must demand that each be ready to give up his goods and property if that is necessary for victory and the security of his nation! Only such willingness to sacrifice transforms a collection of individuals into a people, and in a higher sense, a nation.

#### Article 27

The goal of our government and military leadership is a German nation that can live freely in all important areas. Our generation must secure this through battle and hard work. It cannot be postponed until later. Either we do it, or it will never be done.

#### Article 28

Our generation has not only particular burdens, but also particular honor. If we win, and we can and must win, we will be the most famous generation in the history of Germany. If we lose, our names will be cursed through the centuries by the generations that must bear the frightful cost of our failure.

#### Article 29

There are people who have little interest in such matters. They are materialists who think only of comfort and pleasure, and who have no sense of their historic responsibilities. One can only hold them in contempt. They are ready to give up our nation's future for the pleasures of the moment. Wherever they speak, they must be dealt with firmly. They do not understand reason, only self-interest. They act under the principle: After us the deluge! Our reply to these unprincipled people is this: Even if we have to give up our dreams for many years, at least our children and grandchildren will have things better!

#### Article 30

Remember in all that you do and do not do, in all that you say and do not say, that you are a German! Believe loyally and unshakably in the Führer and in victory. Remember always that you are a child of the bravest and most industrious people on earth. We must suffer much to reach our goal, but the goal will be reached despite everything if only we hold true to all our virtues and are ready, if necessary to sacrifice everything in this war to guarantee the nation's freedom and its future.