

“Mothers, Avoid Alcohol and Nicotine!” (1942)

Abstract

There was a concerted effort in Nazi Germany—through official propaganda and media channel—to discourage the overconsumption of alcohol and tobacco, a campaign backed by science that showed the health risks of both products. Using scientific evidence in a much more proactive way than other countries at this time, the Nazi regime tried to convince Germans to cut back on both habits to improve the physical health of the race, increase production, and decrease automobile accidents. Hitler, among other leading Nazis, was a teetotaler: a person who practices personal abstinence from alcohol. Himmler sent a letter in 1937 to all holders of drivers’ licenses warning of the dangers of drinking and driving. The party banned smoking in many public spaces, such as party offices and waiting rooms, as well as on public transit, by 1941. This poster appealed to German mothers, specifically, to be wary of the dangers alcohol or tobacco posed for their offspring and urged them to abstain completely during pregnancy. While maintaining the health of Germans was a priority, many in the movement also found these habits did not reflect the disciplined lifestyle of the ideal Nazi man or woman. Despite the public campaigns and legal prescriptions, however, it does not appear that Germans heeded the call to limit their smoking or drinking, until the war made attaining such products difficult. The text reads: “Mothers, absolutely avoid alcohol and nicotine during pregnancy and breastfeeding. They hinder—they harm—they disrupt the normal course of pregnancy. Drink sweetened juice. Sweetened juice strengthens!”

Source



Source: *Deutsches Gold: gesundes Leben, frohes Schaffen*. Ed. Hans Reiter and Joh. Breger, Munich, 1942, p.302. Picture: Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheitsdienst, Berlin.

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