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The Complete HITLER

*A Digital Desktop Reference
to His Speeches and Proclamations
1932–1945*

Max Domarus



Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc.
Wauconda, Illinois USA

**The Complete Hitler
A Digital Desktop Reference
to His Speeches and Proclamations 1932-1945**

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Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc.
1000 Brown Street
Wauconda, IL 60084 USA
www.bolchazy.com

Produced in the United States of America

2007

by Media Services

ISBN 978-0-86516-658-5

HITLER

Speeches and Proclamations

VOLUME I

HITLER

Speeches and Proclamations

1932-1945

Volume I 1932-1934

Volume II 1935-1938

Volume III 1939-1940

Volume IV 1941-1945

MAX DOMARUS

HITLER

Speeches and Proclamations
1932–1945

THE CHRONICLE
OF A DICTATORSHIP

VOLUME ONE
The Years 1932 to 1934



BOLCHAZY-CARDUCCI PUBLISHERS

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY
MARY FRAN GOLBERT

Published by
Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers
1000 Brown Street, Unit 101
Wauconda, IL., 60084
United States of America

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Originally published in German:
Hitler. Reden und Proklamationen 1932–1945.
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Domarus, Max: Hitler. Speeches and Proclamations 1932–1945.
Volume I: The Years 1932 to 1934.

I. Germany. Politics and government. 1933–1945. Sources.

I. Domarus, Max. II. Title.

ISBN 0-86516-2271 (Volume 1: 1932–1934)

ISBN 0-86516-2298 (Volume II: 1935–1938)

ISBN 0-86516-2301 (Volume III: 1939–1940)

ISBN 0-86516-231X (Volume IV: 1941–1945)

ISBN 0-86516-228X (Four Volume Set)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 89–43172

Produced by Verlagsservice Henninger GmbH,
Würzburg, West Germany

Printed and bound in West Germany by
Mainpresse Richter Druck und Verlags-GmbH & Co KG,
Würzburg

VOLUME ONE

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Abbreviations

BA	= Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
BDM	= Bund Deutscher Mädel
BVP	= Bayerische Volkspartei (Bavarian People's Party)
DAF	= Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labor Front)
DNB	= Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro (German News Bureau)
DNVP	= Deutschnationale Volkspartei (German National People's Party)
DVP	= Deutsche Volkspartei (German People's Party)
FHQ	= Führerhauptquartier (Führer Headquarters)
Gestapo	= Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police)
HJ	= Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth)
HQu	= Hauptquartier (Headquarters)
HStA	= Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich
IMT	= International Military Tribunal, 1945–1949
KdF	= Kraft durch Freude ("Strength through joy")
KPD	= Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
NS	= Nationalsozialistisch (National Socialist)
NSBO	= Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellenorganisation (National Socialist Factory Cell Organization)
NSDAP	= Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
NSFK	= Nationalsozialistisches Fliegerkorps (National Socialist Air Corps)
NSK	= Nationalsozialistische Parteikorrespondenz (National Socialist Party News Agency)
NSKK	= Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps (National Socialist Motorized Corps)
OSAF	= Oberster SA Führer (Supreme Commander of the SA)
Pg	= Parteigenosse (Party comrade)
PL	= Politischer Leiter (Political Leader)
PO	= Politische Organisation (Political Organization)
RAD	= Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich Labor Service)
RGB1	= Reichsgesetzblatt (Reich Law Gazette)
RSHA	= Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Central Office for Reich Security)
RK	= Reichskanzlei (Reich Chancellery)
SA	= Sturmabteilung (Nazi storm troops; brown shirts)
SD	= Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service, the SS intelligence agency)
SPD	= Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SS	= Schutzstaffel (Nazi elite guard; black shirts)
StA	= Staatsarchiv
TU	= Telegraphenunion (Telegraph Union)
VB	= <i>Völkischer Beobachter</i> (Nationalist Observer)
WTB	= Wolffs Telegraphisches Büro (Wolffs Telegraph Bureau)

PREFACE

This publication of the speeches and proclamations of Adolf Hitler is the final product of records I compiled during the years 1932 to 1945 and supplemented by sources and publications made available after World War II.

Such in-depth study of materials documenting the very recent past—and at such an early date—may first appear unusual for a historian who had, until then, specialized in the nineteenth century. There are, however, certain parallels between the two fields. My own avid interest in English history led me to concentrate my scholarly research on Napoleon I and Wilhelm II. When, in 1932, Adolf Hitler became the most important political figure in Germany, I became interested in his public words for, in terms of foreign policy, they reminded me of these two historical predecessors. There could be no doubt that this man—once in power—would perforce come into marked conflict with the western world, above all with Great Britain. Hence I began to collect all of Hitler's speeches, interviews, proclamations, letters, and other statements available, convinced that they would one day be of documentary value, should this demagogue be allowed to pursue his course.

During my university studies and as a journalist, I had the opportunity to travel widely in Germany from 1932 to 1939 and to gain a close view of many significant aspects of the Third Reich. I personally heard Hitler speak and was able to interview public figures who had direct contact with him. In this way I was able to witness for myself Hitler's astonishing power and influence as an orator. The enthusiasm his speeches prompted was not confined only to easily-aroused mass audiences but also infected—perhaps even more strongly—individuals belonging to Germany's leading circles.

At that time I was aware that Hitler's arguments were most persuasive with the German people and with people in neighboring countries

or those who had some link to the German mentality and culture. Members of the Anglo-Saxon nations were unimpressed by Hitler's oratory, just as were the Soviets and Japanese, although they did make certain concessions to Hitler for diplomatic and tactical reasons. My own observations of the events and the comparisons I drew with historic parallels soon taught me how to accurately and soberly assess both the real and alleged accomplishments of the Third Reich and to anticipate the reactions they would elicit abroad.

I became a particularly attentive and critical listener, studying the various phases and methodology of his oratory and making my own notes of key phrases either during his speeches or shortly thereafter. Thus I was able to immediately spot changes and deletions in texts of the speeches subsequently published.

As a soldier from 1939 to 1945, I no longer had the opportunity to personally attend speeches and visit mass rallies. However, this was less of a handicap than might have been expected, for Hitler's public appearances became increasingly infrequent during World War II, and the few speeches he did deliver were broadcast on the radio. When I had leave, I updated my collection and supplemented it with such military orders, proclamations and directives as were available to me. After 1945, I was able to further complement the documents I had compiled with archive material.

Friends and fellow historians at home and abroad urged me to publish the collection in the form of a day-to-day chronicle, accompanied by a detailed commentary providing the historical background. This would then serve to make the most anomalous and terrifying phenomenon of our century more accessible and comprehensible and—by revealing the sharp contrast between the Führer myth and reality—act as a corrective to an incomplete or false interpretation of the Nazi regime.

Much research on the history of the Third Reich has perhaps viewed its subject in too complicated a fashion. The initiator and driving force behind the fatal events was Adolf Hitler. While he did not necessarily reveal his innermost thoughts, he never made any significant distinction between what he poured forth before mass audiences and what he said in more intimate circles. He readily disclosed most of his views to the public eye, albeit not always at the same time he took action. The advantage in studying his public statements lies in their authenticity, for memoirs and even personal records are inherently prone to error.

The present study is confined to the years 1932 to 1945—but not only for reasons of length. Inarguably, many of Hitler's speeches in the years

preceding 1932 also present interesting and valuable sources of information, but his activities as a minor party leader and failed putschist are of lesser importance for German and European history. He did not become a major factor until he began gaining influence and exercising power, first as leader of the largest party in Germany, then as head of government, head of state, and supreme commander of the German armed forces. This decisive epoch commenced with Hitler's dramatic struggle for control of the government in 1932 and ended with the total collapse of his foreign and military policies in 1945.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all those who, by their inspiration and their assistance, have promoted the publication of this work. First of all, I would like to thank Professors Hugh Trevor-Roper (Baron Dacre of Glanton), Oxford; Alan Bullock, Oxford; Fridolin Solleder, Erlangen-Nuremberg; and Hugo Hantsch, Vienna for their encouragement and support. I would further like to thank the following for their expert assistance: Professor Heinz Lieberich, Munich, Director-General of the Bavarian State Archives; Hofrat Gebhard Rath, Vienna, Director-General of the Austrian State Archives; and Dr. Fritz de Quervain, Bern, head of the Swiss Military Library.

I am especially indebted to the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, particularly to Secretary-General Helmut Krausnick, Professor Thilo Vogelsang and Dr. Anton Hoch; the Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, particularly to Director Karl G. Bruchmann and former Colonel G.S. D.H. Teske (Bundesarchiv, Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau); the Staatsarchiv, Nuremberg, the Staatsarchiv, Munich and the Monacensia-Division of the Munich City Library; the Stadtarchiv, Würzburg; the Würzburg University Library; the Stuttgart Military Library; and the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, Freiburg im Breisgau.

A debt of gratitude is owed to my assistant, Dr. Gerhard G. Drexler, Würzburg, who not only spent years with me working through the voluminous material and reading the proofs, but who also, as a member of the young generation, contributed his valuable assistance in keeping the commentary succinct and to the point. My particular thanks are due to my wife, Gertrud, for her interest and patience throughout.

Notes on the English Edition, Volume I

In 1987, the fourth edition of the hardcover set was published in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The broad international attention and unanimous acclaim the study has received as one of the standard reference works on the history of the Third Reich has necessitated that an English edition be made available, particularly since the majority of the original sources contained therein—speeches, proclamations, public statements, etc.—have not been accessible to date in English. The occasion of the translation was used to do minor revision and updating work on the commentary.

By virtue of this edition, a wider range of historians and all those interested in the phenomenon of the Third Reich are now afforded an opportunity to follow and study the events of the years 1932 to 1945 in Germany on the basis of previously unavailable documentation and to thereby gain a new perspective on this much-researched field.

Above all I thank my son, Wolfgang, and his partners, the publishers in Great Britain and the United States, as well as all those involved in accomplishing this project. I am particularly indebted to the translator, Mary Fran Gilbert, for the courage she has demonstrated in taking on such a demanding task and for her professional and objective approach to the material. Special thanks are also due to the technical editor, Gabriele Kamprad, for her careful and painstaking collation of the translation with the original. Finally I express my thanks to Hanne Henninger, Christiane Wachtel, Uwe Laubender, Andrew Bird, and Susannah Kennedy for their contribution to the project.

I am happy to see the English edition materialize and pleased to have been able to lend my support to its genesis and evolution.

Würzburg, November 1989

Max Domarus

INTRODUCTION

Hitler's Personality

Manner and Mental State

Prominent figures on the rise to power or in the act of seeking aggrandizement have frequently employed the spoken word to attain their ends. They have chosen this vehicle because it not only facilitated their ascent, but also satisfied their passion for public speaking. They were intoxicated by both the applause of their audiences and by the demonstration of their power of suggestion and the potential influence they could exert. The history of mankind contains various examples of this phenomenon.

In retrospect, Napoleon I and William II are particularly illustrative cases in point for their respective eras at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The speeches and proclamations of the Emperor of France, for example, which were first published at a relatively late date,¹ undoubtedly convey the most forceful impression of his personality. The German Kaiser's public addresses appeared in published form prior to World War I² but were eclipsed when war broke out. They had, however, been instrumental in nurturing a false impression of the international distribution of power in the minds of the German people.

Adolf Hitler's speeches and proclamations played a considerably more formative role in the rise and fall of the so-called Third Reich.³ The greater part of his theories and plans were expounded in public, and these statements rarely deviated—if at all, only in a chronological sense—from those he made to the few persons with whom he was intimate.

Politicians and statesmen can be granted the privilege of discussing certain topics comprehensively in a private sphere without instantly weighing each phrase as an expression of persona—and public—conviction. Thus the remarks of such personages made within a limited circle cannot be considered unequivocal evidence of their actual intentions.

While records of Hitler's private conversations⁴ are no doubt interesting and revealing, the fact that these reports are second-hand means that they are inevitably flawed by the absence of the verbatim wording and tainted by the possibilities of error and misinterpretation—a product of the unavoidable subjectivity inherent in such studies. Conversely, Adolf Hitler's public speeches⁵ and proclamations ring true; they are his own words, and there is no doubt as to their documentary authenticity. Regardless of the circumstances and political necessities which led to their genesis, Hitler judged it fitting to make them available to the public in the form and at the time cited. It is the commentator's duty to place them in a historical perspective.

Adolf Hitler was born on April 20, 1889 in Braunau am Inn (Upper Austria), the son of the minor customs official Alois Hitler and his wife Klara, née Pözl. Following the collapse of the German Empire in November 1918, he resolved to become a "politician,"⁶ and on January 30, 1933, he became Chancellor of Germany. Even prior to this date, thirteen million eligible voters had cast their ballots for him in the hope that he would bring about a better political and economic future.

This insignificant member of the petty bourgeois class, a mere corporal in World War I, rose to become the sole head of government, German head of State, and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. He deprived his domestic political opponents of power across the board, filling key public offices with his loyal party-liners. In an open breach of the Treaty of Versailles, he called a new national conscription army into existence, then shifted his attention beyond Germany's borders. Without firing a single shot, he annexed Austria and the Sudeten German territories as part of the National Socialist Reich,⁷ exploiting the peoples' right of self-determination to his own ends and finally procuring the stamp of international approval for his actions.

When Hitler used force to invade and annex Poland, the Western Powers put their foot down and declared war. The German dictator had neglected to provide for this contingency, and it ultimately was to seal his fate. With the powerful German Army, he was still able to conquer a number of weaker countries and invade the Soviet Union, and the swastika flag he had designed flew intermittently from North Africa to the North Pole and from the Atlantic to the Caucasus while he was in power. However, nothing could avert the ultimate consequence which had been mapped out from the very onset. Hitler had started a war he could not finish; he and his politics suffered a total collapse. When the

sum of his prophecies and foreign policies had been proven false, he chose to shoot himself on April 30, 1945 in the Reich Chancellory bunker, leaving behind devastation in Germany and Europe unparalleled in the history of mankind. After his death, high-ranking staff branded him a murderer on millions of counts.⁸

In both his private and public life, Hitler cultivated the image of a hero and superhuman being: bursting with energy, of great foresight, never erring, ever courageous, intrepid and endowed with a profound sense of purpose. Was this his real personality?

Before Hitler launched his career as a political agitator, he exhibited little evidence of being extraordinary. As a boy, he had been interested solely in doing and learning what he liked, early enjoying the role of “ringleader,”⁹ although this certainly was not a consequence of any striking individuality on Hitler’s part.

Even in the course of the years he spent in Vienna¹⁰ and Munich¹¹ as a young man, he did not exhibit behavior which would have made him stand out among his peers, but was introverted and moody. He retained his childhood aversion to systematic application and regular work. Consequently, he was incapable of assuming a normal profession and, given the frequently disagreeable daily demands of a household, even less inclined or able to establish a homestead or marry. Only dire necessity drove him to enter service as a bricklayer’s laborer and a painter and to market his handdrawn postcards.

He preferred dreaming of “great” times, i.e. times marked by the upheavals of war and revolution, and found it depressing that the Germany and Europe of the early 20th century seemingly no longer afforded any room for events of extraordinary import. His public addresses before German youth as Führer and Reich Chancellor repeatedly revolved around the memory of his own pathetic and miserable youth, when he had never been allowed to experience anything “great.” Conversely, he stressed how lucky modern youths could consider themselves, having been endowed with his generous gift of “great” times.

In Vienna, the young Hitler avidly followed the chauvinistic speeches and utopian programs of the *Alldeutschen*¹² and the anti-semitic agitation of crank eccentrics¹³ albeit without taking any active part in their doings. It was only within his own circle of acquaintances that he was fond of voicing loud support for nationalistic theories. All things considered, however, he in no way stood out from his fellow workers

or the other lodgers at the hostel for the homeless where he roomed. At that time, he was only one of many political ruminators ranging from the café intellectuals to the völkisch apostles who preached the coming of a Greater German Reich and blamed the Jews for every misfortune ever suffered by the German people.

Hitler had nothing but disdain for the “völkisch St. Johns,”¹⁴ condemning them as weaklings able to defend themselves only with “spiritual weapons.” Hitler was, of course, anything but a heroic personality himself; all those who came into contact with him prior to World War I unanimously described him as a reserved man who seemed more insecure and awkward than self-confident or in any way superior. Handwriting samples have served to further document that he was essentially a pessimist and a doubter, prone to vacillation. His lifelong pathophobia and his later fear of potential assassins were also characteristic. Similarly, the manner in which he postponed his military service in Austria, opting instead to leave for Munich,¹⁵ is not necessarily indicative of a pronounced martial nature. Moreover, this decision was also influenced by his contempt for the declining “Danubian Monarchy.”

The fact that Hitler proved a good soldier¹⁶ and demonstrated a certain amount of courage in World War I does not qualify as evidence to the contrary, but illustrates that he had the willpower, when he applied himself, to accomplish feats above and beyond the scope of his natural disposition.

When he judged a task worthwhile or sensed imminent danger, Hitler undeniably commanded extraordinary energy reserves and was powered by a veritably supernatural force. Like a second self, this force stood behind him, later propelling him from speech to speech, from plan to plan, and from victory to victory; ultimately, it plunged him into ruin.

It remains an open question whether this “force” originated in his subconscious or can be interpreted in psychopathological terms; Hitler himself believed in a mission from a supernatural sphere.¹⁷

Hitler’s own staff and followers as well as his political opponents at home recoiled in the face of his sinister, compelling energy—the almost demonic force he exuded. Even the few assassins who rose against him did not dare to challenge him openly, hiding instead behind the anonymity of a bomb.

When he was in a good mood and among people he liked, Hitler could be charming, witty and gracious. But whenever the demon “willpower” arose in him, he struck his pose and took on the role he felt

called upon to play before history and the German nation—or merely before the altar of his own dogmas. The sentimental musier then metamorphosed into a cruel despot, more ruthless than a person with a basically brutal disposition could ever have been.

At times like these, Hitler cast off his irresolution and worked himself up to personify ‘inalterable determination’ (*unabänderliche Entschlossenheit*). In a similar fashion, Hitler, the chronic pessimist and doubter, could embody—and project—unbounded optimism.

Even in his last days, he was capable of instilling a sense of confidence in many German listeners—albeit a confidence totally lacking any foundation in reality and amounting to nothing but a figment of his imagination. He acted his part somewhat overdramatically, but nonetheless with such vehemence that he convinced not only those around him but himself as well that his emotional outbursts were genuine. Yet in such moments, the slightest interruption—the appearance of a stranger, an unexpected remark—would suffice to disconcert him. Then, instead of countering with a magnanimous gesture or a quick-witted retort, he would be betrayed by the uncertainty in his expression, and his only reply would more often than not be an embarrassed stock phrase.

As a rule, he needed to rehearse important speeches and his public performances on the political stage. Thus prepared, he was able to appear convincing, whether he was inspecting a guard of honor at the front, shaking a king’s hand, or acting the part of children’s favorite and ladies’ man.

Hitler was plainly not “normal” within the bourgeois sense of the term. Even as a child he had lacked the ability to apply himself with any consistency; later, he found it difficult to hold a steady job and lead a well-ordered life. For the most part, his attitudes and habits were in open or disguised conflict with those of his environment. Eminent physicians who came into contact with him termed his character as being that of a psychopath,¹⁸ confirming in their findings the reports of those who witnessed his fits of temper and abnormal behavior.¹⁹

It is nonetheless difficult to pass conclusive judgment, for Hitler consciously acted the part of a madman on selected occasions and could quite convincingly feign outbursts of rage. This conduct was designed to lend his speeches added emphasis or impress and intimidate his visitors. As soon as they had taken their leave, he, who had only shortly before foamed at the mouth in frenzy,²⁰ was then instantly able to ap-

pear calm and normal. Now and then he even expressed amusement over the scene he had just succeeded in bringing off.²¹ Hitler viewed himself as exempt from commonly accepted standards, believing himself to be one of the heroes of world history, the likes of whom were “bestowed” upon mankind only rarely in the course of millenniums, and he frequently intimated in his speeches that he was a “genius.”²² Among those “individuals of stature in world history” whose roads to greatness need not be obstructed by moral considerations were Hegel, Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Napoleon. Hitler was actually able to match and even surpass these men in his hunger for power, his cruelty, in his unquenchable thirst for conquest, and his almost pathological underestimation of facts and eventualities.

Considered from this vantage point, one can doubtless label Hitler a lunatic. But this does not perforce mean that he was mentally ill to such an extent that he was incapable of thinking and acting clearly and consistently.

The mental condition of these “individuals of stature” throughout world history who, in the course of their doings, generally caused undue suffering to their contemporaries, is described perhaps most accurately by the English historian Arthur Weigall. In his work *Alexander the Great*, he takes the following stance on the question of Alexander’s soundness of mind:²³

The question of his sanity has often been discussed by scholars; but I take the view that while many of his actions, such as his march across the Gedrosian desert, were so insensate that he may well be described colloquially as a “lunatic,” he was not actually mad, nor can the apposite references to him as the “Macedonian Madman” be taken literally. In any assembly of men—in a regiment of soldiers, for example—there is usually some dare-devil whom we loosely describe as a lunatic; in any army in wartime there is some general who uses up his men in a way which is criticized as insane; in any realm of adventure there is some foolhardy hero, who, we say, is crazy; in any gathering of statesmen there is some rash visionary whose ideas are too grand to be thought sane; in any group of intellectuals there is some eccentric genius who may be described with no unfriendly intent as being “as mad as a hatter”; in any religious body there is some fanatic who, without real reproach, may so be termed; in every age and every society there is some abnormal man with a mission who, often because his views are so disconcerting to the complacently sane, is named either in vexation or in admiration a lunatic. In all these senses Alexander was a lunatic; and, indeed, the fact seems to have been recognized, for towards the end of his life he was identified with the god Dionysos, who was definitely the divine lunatic made mad by his father Zeus.

This characterization could readily be applied to Adolf Hitler.

Some of his contemporaries uphold the opinion that Hitler, enfeebled by various illnesses, underwent a steady mental deterioration in his later years.²⁴

In a physical sense, there is indeed evidence of a certain decay (stomach pains, insomnia, tremors, etc.), although his external posture revealed only slight changes toward the end of the war: his shoulders caved in somewhat; his tendency to stoop grew more pronounced; his hair turned grey. However, these physical disorders and signs of aging in no way infringed upon his mental powers. Newsreel shots through March 1945 showed him in the then-familiar poses: smiling and greeting the public, giving Hitler Youth boys a paternal pat on the back, etc.

In the end, Hitler's appeals, telegrams and other official statements breathed the same spirit which had pervaded them from the very beginning: he had retreated not an inch. Adolf Hitler was no more insane in April 1945 than he had been in the year 1919.

Were one to attempt to discern symptoms of mental illness in his public statements, one might well cite Hitler's gigantomania and arithmomania, obsessions far exceeding the normal scope of like quirks. In nearly every major speech, Hitler produced random arrays of the oddest figures. Tens of thousands of party comrades, for instance, were cited; hundreds of thousands of Volksgenossen or prisoners, millions of peasants and workers, millions of tons of foodstuffs, sunken holds, or bombs dropped; billions of letters dispatched, etc. ad infinitum.

Although fond of revelling in figures of such magnitude, he also regarded smaller numbers as sufficiently impressive to warrant endless repetition, e.g. the "seven men" who founded a movement, "thirteen years of struggle and thirteen million followers," "twenty-one replies to Roosevelt" (designed to surpass Wilson's Fourteen Points, at least numerically), etc.

Only in a marginal sense did this *idée fixe* originate from a knowledge of real numerology or the causal relationships between specific dates, Fate, numbers and so-called coincidences.²⁵

The demagogue Hitler doted on figures, adding to and subtracting from columns and sums for their own sake alone. One had the impression that Hitler positively intoxicated himself with the sheer sound of the figures, using them as a stimulant and attempting to hypnotize his listeners into a state of rapture with his litanies. But more often than not, Hitler's juggling with figures was thoroughly pointless, for the numbers alone proved nothing; moreover, the real figures added up much differently.

Closely linked to the question of Hitler's mental state is the problem of his soundness of mind. Taken in a certain sense, no criminal is normal, for his thoughts, reactions and deeds do not conform with those norms fixed by law and convention. Systematically disposing of all internal restraints recognized and respected by what are regarded as normal members of human society, Hitler silenced the voice of his conscience, albeit gradually and with perceptible initial hesitation. Ultimately, however, it is always the initial act in a criminal career which requires the most effort, while ensuing steps become progressively easier.

Hitler cold-bloodedly murdered his own comrades and followers on June 30, 1934 merely because, in his view, they obstructed his path to power; thus it comes as no surprise that he was unable or unwilling to use more moderate methods in dealing with his real opponents or those he regarded as such. He believed himself to be the sole judge of right and wrong.

The principle, "Whatever benefits the German Volk [i.e. Hitler] is right," which was openly propagated during the Third Reich, set the stage for the free reign of criminal instincts. In times of war, moreover, this way of thinking necessarily brought with it particularly harrowing consequences. How could one expect that Hitler, markedly reluctant as he was to comply with laws in times of peace and unscrupulous about violating them when circumstances were opportune, would be willing to abide by legal norms in wartime? It is a sorry fact that the most gruesome consequences of Hitler's self-styled concept of what was right became evident in the course of World War II.

Until then, he had oppressed and persecuted only his political opponents in Germany; now, in order to save his "racially valuable" soldiers from dying in vain, he felt justified in literally exterminating (*ausrotten*) entire "enemy" peoples and races—his openly declared intention.

However, the War represented merely the final phase of a course set as early as 1933–34. Even at this initial stage, Hitler had viewed himself as exempt from all legally established rules, regardless of whether they were designed to preserve the Constitution or curb criminal behavior. Numerous laws promulgated by Hitler's cabinet in 1933 far exceeded the scope of the Enabling Act and were clear infringements of the Constitution, e.g. the Governor Law and the Party Law. Even an alleged national emergency would not have constituted sufficient grounds for the slayings carried out on June 30, 1934 at Hitler's orders, let alone justified their commission. This crime was nevertheless declared, in a

post facto national law; to have been “legal.”²⁶ It is worthy of note that there is no official record, even from this early era, that Hitler was ever called upon to account for such actions or even reprimanded in anyway.

One cannot dismiss this fact by reasoning that Germany was governed at the time by a dictatorship tolerating no resistance. There were still quite enough opportunities to register protest or to resign, both within and outside of the cabinet, without risking life and limb.²⁷ The truth of the matter is that Hitler had already convinced Germany's prominent figures that everything he did was within his given rights, even if his actions conflicted with the laws in force.

This conviction was held not only by his party comrades, whom he had early inoculated with these dogmas, but also by non-National Socialist cabinet and Reichstag members and even Reich President von Hindenburg. With his outstanding powers of rhetoric, Hitler had succeeded in mesmerizing even high-ranking, well-educated Germans of flawless personal integrity to such an extent that they gave him *carte blanche*—and did so in a country which takes great stock in the letter of the law.

It has been said that Hitler had a “sixth sense,” that he could, for instance, actually sense when danger was looming and adjust his behavior so as to extricate himself at the last minute. Needless to say, this concept of Hitler as “supernaturally” endowed cannot stand up to scrutiny. The circumstances surrounding the events in which he allegedly escaped imminent danger by some mysterious means were in fact by no measure extraordinary. His behavior on these occasions was normal, and he made no changes in his itinerary—something he certainly would have done had he anticipated any real threat.

No one can seriously claim that Hitler's “supernatural” powers were so keen that, for instance, the mere fact of his presence was sufficient to deactivate a hidden bomb.²⁸ In the light of reason, there remain only three such incidents which appear to be accompanied by unusual attendant circumstances:

1. Hitler's flight over the Baltic on November 6, 1933, in which the plane lost its bearings. Allegedly, Hitler suddenly ordered the pilot to change course by 180 degrees against the pilot's will, thus rescuing the aircraft from certain destruction.

2. Hitler's conduct at his speech on November 8, 1939 in Munich. He left the Bürgerbräukeller earlier than scheduled; half an hour later, a bomb exploded there.

3. Hitler's deliverance from the assassination attempt of July 20, 1944 in the Führer Headquarters *Wolfsschanze* (Wolf's Lair) in East Prussia.

The real circumstances surrounding these incidents are as follows:

Case 1: The legend of Hitler's aeronautic adventure on November 6, 1933²⁹ was based upon a report by the English journalist Ward Price,³⁰ who was not personally present at the incident but gathered his information from reports of those close to Hitler. The aircraft's pilot, Hans Baur,³¹ tells a completely different—and by no means mysterious—story.

The plane lost its orientation as a result of limited visibility and malfunctioning radio direction finding. Due to the length of time already spent in the air, Hitler feared that the plane might have passed Schleswig-Holstein and already be flying over the North Sea. Baur decided to set his course south in search of land; when he sighted a city on the coast, he made a futile attempt to decipher its name on the railway station sign. Hitler, however, recognized a meeting hall where he had once spoken and was thus able to identify the place as Wismar. That was the sum of his contribution toward “rescuing” the plane.

Case 2: It is an undisputed fact that Hitler vacated the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich half an hour earlier than planned on November 8, 1939. But his actions on that date indicate that the detonation of the bomb could easily have been nothing other than a bogus assassination attempt staged with Hitler's knowledge. This interpretation is lent further credence by a number of other peculiarities evidenced not only in Hitler's behavior but in that of the SS as well.³²

Case 3: There is nothing supernatural about the fact that Hitler was bending over a table to study a map on July 20, 1944 when the Stauffenberg bomb exploded. He certainly had no idea that an explosive would detonate under the table at that moment! Moreover, he did nothing on July 20 prior to this attempt on his life which deviated from his usual routine.

It warrants mention that the conference took place that day in a barracks in which the force of the explosion would necessarily have caused less damage than in the underground bunker which was closed for repair work at the time. Failing to consider this factor was the would-be assassin's mistake; Hitler's escape was thus not the result of any counteraction he had taken in wise anticipation of the danger.

Furthermore, Hitler was not the only survivor of the explosion: of a total of 21 persons present, only four suffered mortal injuries. Afterwards, he naturally exploited his “salvation” of July 20, 1944 for propa-

ganda purposes, insisting it had been a miraculous act of Providence; however, this case offers as little evidence as the others for his supposed “supernatural” ability to sense danger in the offing. He once claimed that he had “provided for every eventuality from the start,”³³ but the facts of history prove the opposite: his pronounced lack of foresight in foreign policy is only one example.

By contrast, in regard to matters of domestic policy Hitler was constantly on his guard. Unwilling to tolerate the slightest display of power outside his own sphere of influence, he nipped many developments in the bud which, left on their own, might have grown to present a threat. These moves were not, however, motivated by anything faintly resembling supernatural inspiration; they were the result of sober calculation on his part.

From ‘Artist’ to ‘God-man’

Hitler took pleasure in describing himself in conversation as an artist even when his thoughts were occupied with matters of a completely different nature, such as in the last days of August 1939, when he was attempting to explain German policy in Poland to the British Ambassador.³⁴ In *Mein Kampf*,³⁵ Hitler narrates in detail his youthful aspirations to become a painter, a career cut short by his failure to pass the entrance examinations to the academy in Vienna.³⁶ He was barred from studying architectural drawing as well, for he lacked a middle school diploma.

These failures served only to intensify his desire to become an architect. The obstacles to this route lay both in financial considerations and in his strong aversion to any type of methodical application requiring attention to detail.

Without means from the very beginning, he had no choice but to earn his living some way or another. He was not happy working as an unskilled construction laborer, and during this time he began to paint postcards, as a “beginning artist and watercolor painter,”³⁷ as he referred to himself, and to sell his attempts or have them sold in inns. Later, when he was a soldier and no longer needed to concern himself with the problem of earning his daily bread, he sketched and painted watercolors for his own enjoyment. His subjects were mainly landscapes and milieu scenes of occupied France.

It must be conceded that Hitler did have a certain talent for watercolors. While the products of these artistic efforts are not overwhelming, there is nothing repulsive about them, notwithstanding claims to this effect.

Similarly, the desire to mirror his own greatness and the greatness of the German Volk in gigantic monuments was not the sole motivation for his propensity for architecture. There is little doubt that Hitler could have made a passable architect had he devoted his intelligence and extra-

ordinary willpower to this end. He had a genuine sense of proportion and favored, in his architectural plans, the classicistic forms which characterized Munich's cityscape in the 19th century. The paintings he later commissioned and sponsored reflected the naturalist style of that period as well. It was one of his pet ideas to erect a huge art gallery in the city of Linz, where he had gone to school. This plan occupied his thoughts even on April 29, 1945, when he was drawing up his last will and testament.³⁸

"I think I am one of the most musical people in the world," Hitler once noted in jest to the English journalist Ward Price,³⁹ claiming to have heard Wagner's *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* a hundred times.

Hitler's affinity for Richard Wagner went beyond purely musical considerations. He was at least as impressed by the concepts of heroic saga, mystic mission and redemption manifested in the master's works as by the self-assurance of a man whose only self-willed epitaph was his own name and who deemed that the veneration of mere men could not even approximate a true appreciation of his genius.⁴⁰ All the same, Hitler did exhibit a bent for music. Claims that, aside from Wagnerian operas, he attended only Lehar's *Lustige Witwe*, are unsubstantiated. While it is true that he whistled melodies from this and other operettas to himself when in a good mood,⁴¹ he was equally fond of attending operas by Verdi, Puccini and Mozart. Less enthralling to him were orchestral and chamber arrangements, but at official functions or in small circles he nevertheless listened to them without becoming bored.

These interests in painting, sculpture, architecture and music constitute the sum of Hitler's cultural leanings. Although he did occasionally attend theater performances, he was never able to develop any liking or real comprehension of German literature, philosophy or the humanities in general. At most, he accepted the ideas of Nietzsche, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Oswald Spengler, but only insofar as they appeared to lend support to his theories of power and struggle. Spengler instantly fell out of his favor when, upon Hitler's seizure of power, he ventured to voice doubts as to the future development of National Socialism.⁴² The sole intellectual discipline which held any attraction for Hitler was technology. He was interested primarily in motorization, roadbuilding and the construction of fortifications, armaments and other military aspects of technological science.

Hitler's personal library was pitiful, a fact even his secretaries noticed,⁴³ for it was confined to technical manuals and popular-science

volumes of a general nature. Although he claimed to have read an “infinite number of books”⁴⁴ during his time in Vienna, his reading was in general haphazard and hasty, and the bulk consisted primarily of political and pseudohistorical volumes with a nationalistic slant. The idea of literature as a valuable and significant source of education for the intellect as well as for one’s Weltanschauung were alien concepts to one as autodidactic as himself. His tremendous powers of retention and recall enabled him to store whatever he had read and reproduce it whenever a fitting opportunity arose. His speeches illustrate the skill with which he could adjust style and content like a chameleon to suit his respective audience.

In his opinion, the spoken word or the printed record of an oral proclamation completely eclipsed the impact of the “written word” in books. Not surprisingly, Hitler’s own works *Mein Kampf* and *Zweites Buch*⁴⁵ were tedious in comparison to his oratory. Notwithstanding the fact that millions of copies of *Mein Kampf* were printed, the book itself had no widespread impact. Not even his closest staff actually read it, let alone any significant number of his lesser party comrades. And even those of his followers who claimed to have applied themselves to the volume, admitted, if pressed, that they had not proceeded much further than the descriptions of Hitler’s youth in the opening chapters.

The speeches on art and culture which he delivered faithfully at the party conventions in Nuremberg and art exhibitions in Munich left much to be desired. With pedantic verbosity he characteristically held forth at length, attempting to instill in his remarks the character of ageless wisdom. He personally detested modern art, holding it to be “degenerated” (*entartet*), and did not hesitate to make a virtue—and a law—of his private dislike, ordering that this style be banned and artwork exhibiting it be confiscated by the state.⁴⁶ Hitler loathed “intellectuals,” scorning them and castigating their human weaknesses, their arrogance, their penchant for finding fault, and their lack of heroism—all the while instinctively sensing that, if anyone, it was most likely to be intellectuals who would not succumb to his power and would be more discriminating with regard to his hysterical nationalistic slogans, which, in the sober historical perspective, very soon proved to be a miscalculation and a utopian vision.

Hitler’s battle against intellectual critics and the “upper class” persisted throughout his rule. Again and again he directed his tirades against these groups in helpless rage, never managing to bring them completely under his control.⁴⁷ His railings included the following:

One thing I cannot bear: people whose sole activity consists of criticizing the activities of others.⁴⁸

I want to differentiate here between the Volk, i.e. the healthy, full-blooded mass of Germany loyal to the Volk, and a decadent, so-called high society, unreliable because only conditionally linked by blood. It is sometimes casually referred to as the "upper class," being, however, in reality no more than the scum produced by a societal mutation gone haywire from having had its blood and thinking infected by cosmopolitanism.⁴⁹

When I take a look at the intellectual classes we have—unfortunately, I suppose, they are necessary; otherwise one could one day, I don't know, exterminate them (*ausrotten*) or something—but unfortunately they're necessary. So when I take a look at these intellectual classes and imagine their behavior and take a closer look, in comparison to myself, and to our work, then I almost get scared. For since I have been politically active and particularly since I began to lead this Reich, I have experienced only successes. And all the same, this mass is floating around, often in such a positively repulsive, nauseating way. What would happen if we ever suffered a defeat? It is a possibility, gentlemen. Can you imagine how this race of chickens would act then, given the chance?⁵⁰

The open animosity Hitler had for intellectuals was more than merely the resentment of the half-educated man in the face of the trained thinker—it was a virtual admission of his own inadequacy.

Hitler had conceived of his lifelong goals as early as 1919 and rigidly adhered to them until his death, regardless of how glaringly they clashed with reality. On matters of principle, i.e. in respect to these preconceived ideas, he was unwilling to accept even the best advice and staunchly refused to pay the slightest attention to the existence of other views or to irrefutable facts not consistent with the standpoints he had adopted in 1919.

In order to comprehend his aims and the manner in which he attempted to achieve them, one must bear in mind Hitler's theory of the "Man at Thirty." He upheld the conviction that a man could change his views on the world only prior to that age; thereafter, these would become irrevocable, and there would be no necessity to "learn anything anew." At most, only minor additions might be made to the existing structure. He summed up his feelings on this point as follows:⁵¹

It is my conviction that, in general, aside from cases of exceptional talent, a man should not become publicly involved in politics before his thirtieth year. He should not do this because as a rule, until this time, a general platform is being constructed from which he then examines the various political problems and ultimately determines his own position on them. Only after arriving at this Weltanschauung and the resultant constancy of his own point of view in regard

to the questions of the day should or may he, now at least inwardly matured, take part in the political leadership of the general public.

Even a thirty-year-old will, in the course of his lifetime, have much more to learn, but this will be merely to supplement and fill out the frame given him by the Weltanschauung he has adopted. In principle, his learning will no longer consist of new materials, but rather of supplements to his basic philosophy, and his followers will not be forced to stifle the anxious feeling that they have been misinformed by him prior thereto; on the contrary: the visible, organic growth of the Führer will give them a sense of satisfaction, for his learning is a reinforcement of their own theories. This, in their eyes, is proof that their views hitherto have been correct.

A Führer who is forced to depart from the platform of his general Weltanschauung as such because he has recognized it to be false only then acts decently if, upon realizing the error of his prior view, he is willing to draw the final consequence. In such a case, he must, at the very least, forego the public exercise of any further political activities. Because he was once mistaken in his basic beliefs, it is possible that this could happen a second time.

These remarks also explain Hitler's fear of having to admit even a single mistake, a fear which would accompany him throughout his life, for under no circumstances would he have been willing to draw the "consequence" he himself proposed.

Hitler had reached the milestone of thirty in 1919, and all of the ideas he had conceived of and judged correct prior thereto were to endure as his incontrovertible basic principles. Remaining within this logic, Hitler claimed that he had, in the course of the preceding years, laid a "philosophic foundation of granite," and asserted, "in addition to what I once created, I have had to learn little, and needed to change not a thing."⁵² *Mein Kampf* was the forum for his fixed views on the world, valid for all time. Not only did he intend never to amend them; he intended to make them reality one step at a time.

Refusing to the very last to retreat an inch from these preconceived ideas, he adamantly rejected even first-hand reports if they did not appear to confirm his opinions.

I have only been able to score these successes ... because I have never allowed weaklings to talk me out of or lead me away from an opinion I had once formed and ... because I have always resolved under any circumstances to respond to a necessity once recognized.⁵³

What was his premise for this peculiar theory of the "Man at Thirty"? It would be safe to assume that its roots lay in the Bible. Christ had begun teaching only after he had reached the age of thirty, and considering that Hitler perceived himself a heaven-sent Messiah, he doubtless believed

to have come of age for this role at thirty. Furthermore, his participation in World War I from 1914 to 1918 concluded shortly before the end of his thirtieth year, and he may well have regarded this experience as a last anointing prior to taking on his mission in a new life untainted by human fallibility.

In respect to Hitler's views on religion, it should be noted that he was baptized and raised as a Roman Catholic, and the attitudes instilled in him early on had a lasting impact upon his thinking. He greatly admired the colossal organization of the Catholic Church and was impressed by both the psychic power it exercised over its followers and the strict and devoted adherence to dogmas it practiced. Although he did not abide by the Church's commandments, he remained personally attached to Catholic ways of thinking even into the initial years of his rule. As late as 1933, he still described himself publicly as a Catholic.⁵⁴ Only the spreading poison of his lust for power and self-idolatry finally crowded out the memories of childhood beliefs, and in 1937, he jettisoned the last of his personal religious convictions, declaring to his comrades, "Now I feel as fresh as a colt in the pasture."⁵⁵

In his speeches, Hitler nonetheless continued to invoke "God," "the Almighty" and "Providence" (*Vorschung*), doing so not merely as a means to an end or in a blasphemous sense. He actually believed in a god, but it was not the same God who has been worshipped by the peoples of this planet for millenniums as the preserver and protector of all life: it was even less the God whose highest commandment requires one to love one's neighbor.

The god in whom Hitler believed was the peculiarly German god whose name was inscribed on the belt buckles of both the old and the new German Army.⁵⁶

It was the god who "let iron grow" and wanted "no slaves," who therefore armed the Germans with "saber, sword and spear."⁵⁷ Hitler once noted to the English journalist, Ward Price:⁵⁸

I believe in God, and I am convinced that He will not desert sixty-seven million Germans who have worked so hard to regain their rightful position in the world.

On another occasion, he stressed in a public speech:⁵⁹

I, too, am religious; that is, religious deep inside, and I believe that Providence weighs us human beings, and that he who is unable to pass the test of Providence but is destroyed by it has not been destined for greater things.

Hitler's god sat enthroned somewhere above the clouds, looking down and taking note of whether the Germans were indeed united, strong and truly willing to persevere; he sent down test upon test in which the Germans were to demonstrate their firmness and resolution. And were they to prevail, this god would finally bestow upon them—the best Volk—the crown of supremacy over all other people in fulfillment of Geibel's prophecy, "And the essence of what is German shall one day heal the world."⁶⁰

This was to culminate in the establishment of a tremendous, utopian Reich, comparable to a new Atlantis, in a world ruled by super-human Aryans, the legitimate heirs of the Holy Grail. Hitler exposed this National Socialist aim not only in his inner circle,⁶¹ but stated it unequivocally in *Mein Kampf*:⁶²

A state which is dedicated, in this age of racial poisoning, to cultivating its best racial elements, must one day become master over the earth.

This objective bears a striking similarity to the drive for world supremacy Hitler so often ascribed to the 'International Jewry' in his book.

Hitler believed in his mythical god with unshakable fervor and was firmly convinced that this being had chosen him from among the millions of German soldiers of World War I as the best, the most unyielding and the most courageous of all, the one man capable of raising Germany from out of its humiliation to new glory, destined to ultimately redeem the entire world. Thus the Reich Hitler had created, having once passed the scrutiny of Providence, would never again wane. He stated on various occasions:

I believe that it was also God's will that from here [Austria] a boy was to be sent into the Reich, allowed to mature, and elevated to become the nation's Führer.⁶³

I follow the path assigned to me by Providence with the instinctive sureness of a sleepwalker.⁶⁴

When I look back on the five years behind us, I cannot help but say: this has not been the work of man alone. Had Providence not guided us, I surely would often have been unable to follow these dizzying paths.⁶⁵

The Almighty will always help those who help themselves.⁶⁶

God formed this Volk, and it has become what it should according to God's will, and according to our will, it shall remain, nevermore to fade!⁶⁷

Work such as ours which has received the blessings of the Omnipotent can never again be undone by mere mortals.⁶⁸

God helped us.⁶⁹

Where will and faith so fervently join forces, Heaven cannot withhold its approval.⁷⁰

Hitler construed "faith" to mean none other than the German Volk's faith in himself. He declared:

German Volk, I have taught you to have faith, now give me your faith!⁷¹

What has happened in these past weeks is the result of the triumph of an idea, a triumph of will, and even a triumph of persistence and tenacity, and above all it is the result of a miracle of faith, for only faith could have moved these mountains. I once went forth with my faith in the German people and took up this immeasurable struggle. With faith in me, first thousands, then hundreds of thousands, and finally millions have followed after me.⁷²

His many victories and triumphs were, he felt, visible proof sent down from this god, confirmation that he was on the right path; every danger he withstood and surmounted became yet further evidence of divine approval. In each decision, he was guided by the will of Providence.

His own doubts he drowned out by claiming absolute infallibility. He deemed his judgment irreproachable, not only in respect to the present and the future (he had, it will be remembered, "provided for every eventuality from the start"), but also in view of the past. In his speeches, Hitler was always able to find or manufacture some mysterious reason explaining that even glaringly inaccurate prognoses and false decisions had, in retrospect, been right after all. Toward the end of his rule, this insistence upon his own flawlessness was to become increasingly grotesque as the gulf between what he had predicted and what had come to pass grew more unbridgeable with each passing day.

The image of the God-man which Hitler wished to personify was, of course, incompatible with human fallibility, making him anxious to conceal from the German people anything which he construed as a weakness.

For example, Hitler never appeared in public wearing eyeglasses; nor did he ever allow any pictures of him wearing them to be published.

He also took great pains to ensure that no details of his scarce love affairs leaked out to the public. Except for a chosen few, the Germans at large were kept in ignorance, first hearing, for instance, the name of Eva Braun⁷³ only subsequent to Hitler's death. The God-man Hitler fancied himself to be was a more or less sexless creature, above and beyond the paltriness of human emotions and passions. His heart belonged not to the female sex, but exclusively to the German Volk. A

superior entity of this kind therefore would have no need of hedonic pleasures or stimulants. He held that this monastic being should partake neither of alcohol nor tobacco and even denied himself the consumption of meat.

While Hitler did not take the precept of sexual abstinence all too seriously and was unable to completely dispense with wearing glasses despite his use of oversized letters (1 cm) on the so-called *Führermaschine* typewriter, he did abstain quite strictly from alcohol, tobacco and meat.⁷⁴ There is, however, speculation that these last habits were in truth manifestations of his hypochondriac pathophobia. The projected image of the ascetic is further incompatible with Hitler's frequent use of the stimulating drugs increasingly administered to him by his personal physician, Dr. Theo Morell, from the late 1930's onward.⁷⁵

The God-man, in Hitler's view, also comprised the court of final judgment, the supreme judge endowed with a veritably supernatural authority comparable to that which Christ once bestowed upon Peter ("Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven").⁷⁶ The God-man therefore had a divine right to determine the fate of all Germans; the fate of non-Germans hardly qualifying for his consideration. Whomever he deemed worthy of death was destined to die. Conversely, whomever he deemed worthy to live was allowed to do so and even—given good behavior—granted special privileges.

According to Hitler's view of the world, the devil incarnate who represented a threat to the divine plan and designed to rob the German people of their rightful reward was Jewry. Infiltrating every corner of the world, it existed for the sole purpose of draining the peoples of the world economically, of corrupting their moral integrity and bringing about their physical destruction.

The Jews, as Hitler presented it, were particularly bent upon destroying the German people. Every enemy of Germany and—since Germany and Hitler were synonymous—every opponent of the Führer was deemed Jewry's accomplice, whether these parties were Freemasons, Bolsheviks, gypsies, or members of a foreign race. To ban this evil was to "fulfill the work of the Lord," as Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*.⁷⁷ The dictator was indeed adept at drumming up credence for such beliefs: "Providence has preordained me to be the greatest liberator of humanity"⁷⁸—he ultimately had taken on the role of Savior himself.

Political Aims

‘Patriotism’

In the main, Hitler’s political aims involved foreign affairs. He viewed his domestic policies as the necessary prerequisites for a “strong” foreign policy, i.e. mere tools for concentrating power in a single hand.

From the time of his youth, Hitler had been accustomed to equating his own personal happiness with Germany’s welfare and power. He took the collapse of the imperial regime and the military defeat of 1918 to heart, perceiving Germany’s fate as a personal injustice to himself. Upon hearing the news of the surrender, he wept bitterly.⁷⁹

Hitler was not alone in feeling that a world was falling apart at the end of World War I. Many Germans had deluded themselves into believing in a strong and unconquerable Germany and this illusion was blasted in the face of harsh reality.

Just as Hitler categorically refused to admit a mistake or assume the slightest responsibility for any errors on his part, he made no attempt to understand the catastrophe of 1918 in terms of the imperial government’s own policies or as a result of poor judgment in regard to Germany’s military and economic potential; moreover, he simply chose to disregard the enemy’s sheerly overwhelming numerical superiority. Instead he believed the reasons for the defeat lay in betrayal and in the doings of secret forces, among them the Jews and the Freemasons. Those directly to blame, in his opinion, were the German politicians who had signed the Armistice, although in reality they had had no control over Germany’s political and military leadership. Hitler became a zealous advocate of the *Dolchstoßlegende* (the “legend of the stab in the back”⁸⁰), and vowed to become a politician so that he might finally wreak revenge upon the Social Democrats and the Marxists. He labelled them the “November Criminals,” making public threats that he would bring them to court when he seized power and “let their heads roll.”⁸¹

When he finally took office as Reich Chancellor after fourteen years of domestic “struggle,” he was unable to prosecute the guilty parties as planned for the simple reason that there had been no “November Criminals” and the imperial army had not been “stabbed in the back.” But other heads began to roll: the heads of those who were not willing to submit to Hitler’s rule.

In the initial years of Hitler’s government, his patriotism proved somewhat onesided, in essence nothing other than a vehicle for his own display of power. When all was said and done, he was thoroughly indifferent to the fate of the German people, viewing them merely as the instrumental Volk which played a subordinate and narrowly defined role in his despotic drama. If they refused to acquiesce and resisted his plans, he was determined to use brute force, and stated so quite openly:⁸²

We perceive in this historical evidence of Teutonism the unconscious mandate vested by Fate: to unite this stubborn German Volk, if necessary by force. That was, in terms of history, just as necessary then as it is necessary today.

Above all, in the course of World War II the German dictator unhesitatingly sacrificed millions of Germans for the mere sake of proving his “perseverance” theory. Accordingly, the “last battalion” on the battlefield would be “a German one.”⁸³ Hitler once declared, “I believe I have a right to say that, had Fate put me at the helm [in 1918], this collapse would never have come about.”⁸⁴ In World War II he did in fact stand at the helm, but he steered Germany into a political and military catastrophe far graver than that of 1918. In 1945 he not only had no intention of allowing himself to be “beaten to pieces for this German Volk,”⁸⁵ he was not even willing to bear the same burden he had foisted upon the shoulders of his fellow countrymen, as he had promised:⁸⁶

Today I am as willing as I was before to make any personal sacrifice. [—] Germans should not be asked to make any sacrifices I myself would not make without an instant’s hesitation!

He was even less willing to assume the responsibility for how he ran the government, let alone allow the German people to “crucify” him: a retaliation he had proposed should he ever fail. Of his various vows in this vein, he kept not one. They included the following:

German Volk, give us four years, and I swear to you, just as we, just as I have taken this office, so shall I leave it.⁸⁷

The German Volk shall then form its judgment, take its decision and pass sentence upon me, and then, for all I care, it can crucify me if it finds that I have not done my duty.⁸⁸

If ever I were to err here, or should the Volk ever be of the opinion that it cannot agree with my actions, then it may have me executed. I will calmly stand firm.⁸⁹

No action will take place for which I will not vouch with my life, as this Volk be my witness.⁹⁰

I wish to bear the entire responsibility.⁹¹

We are responsible for that which we shall one day leave behind to those who shall come after us. For Germany must not end with us.⁹²

Hitler would never assume this highly touted responsibility to the German people but would abruptly take his leave by pressing a trigger when the sum of his foreign policies and military operations proved a grave miscalculation.

The suffering of the German people interested him only insofar as he was able to turn it to a profit at home or abroad. When he himself had caused the hardships, they were declared an unavoidable sacrifice which had to be made for the glory of Germany.

Mussolini, the senior among the European dictators of the time, reacted differently to defeat, accepting his dismissal in 1943—when Italy’s imminent collapse was evident—and refraining from appealing to the Italians to continue fighting for the regime. He had remained human. The “God-man” Hitler, however, showed no mercy for the German people.

“Were I given the gift of continents, I would still prefer being even the poorest citizen of this Volk,”⁹³ he declared, but his sole objective, to which everything else was subordinated, lay in the exercise of naked power. As a ‘German,’⁹⁴ he was initially confined to establishing his supremacy in his own country. But he doubtless would have attempted to realize his visions of unbounded power in any other nation offering prospects of success. He would not, for instance, have been averse to using France as a base for the international empire of the future, for Hitler believed himself capable of motivating the French to comparable, if not even greater accomplishments than those of the Germans. Particularly characteristic of this attitude is a remark he made in 1933, when he exclaimed, “If I were Propaganda Minister for France—poor Germany!”⁹⁵

Three years later, he went so far as to deny any aspirations to military supremacy, stating:⁹⁶

Introduction

I can only say that my ambition is directed toward other triumphs. [—] It is my ambition to establish a memorial to myself within the German Volk. But I am also aware that it would be better to erect this memorial in peacetime rather than in times of war. My ambition is aimed at creating the best possible institutions for training our Volk. It is my will that we in Germany have the greatest stadiums; that our road network is expanded; that our culture becomes elevated and refined; I want our cities to become beautiful; I want to put Germany at the top in every field of human cultural life and cultural aspiration. That is my ambition!

The memorial Adolf Hitler erected to himself “within the German Volk” bears no resemblance to this vision.

Anti-Semitism

In Germany, one is occasionally confronted with the opinion that Hitler's rule was basically a good thing—he had only gone too far in persecuting the Jews and starting the war.

This viewpoint does little justice to reality, however, for both the holocaust of the Jews and the outbreak of the war were no more than the—albeit ghastly—end sum of Hitler's politics and particularly the logical consequences of his foreign policy. Moreover, the final form each of these aspects took did not match Hitler's original plans, or at least he had envisioned a different chronology of events.

In his public and private speeches prior to 1939, Hitler had not announced in so many words his intention to annihilate all Jews, nor had he disclosed the means he would use to do so. Even during the War when his machinery of destruction was running at top capacity, he confined his remarks on a massacre of the Jews to threats within the scope of his foreign policy, knowing only too well that such an openly propagated program of extermination was certain to meet with resistance from the majority of the German people and the bulk of his party followers.

Anti-Semitism had existed in Germany for centuries—at times open, at times latent—serving always as tinder when the flames of revolution and war swept the country, and often erupting into pogroms and other similar forms of persecution. However, these were phenomena not peculiar to Germany alone, but in evidence to greater and lesser degrees in many other European countries. One of the more obvious causes for such hostility lay in the fact that many—and naturally above all the orthodox—Jews were, in terms of daily life, a group apart: easily isolated as the alien and incomprehensible “other” due to a different physiognomy, distinctive dress, and a foreign cultural heritage characterized by traditions and habits in contrast to their environment.

The Dutch historian Louis de Jong⁹⁷ has argued conclusively that in wartime a person need only have an outer appearance differing from that of the normal citizen to be suspected, with no further substantiation, of being a spy and a traitor or to fall prey to the lynch-law of an aroused mob in search of a scapegoat. In both World Wars, countless members of almost all of the European peoples were arrested, persecuted and even killed as spies, traitors, enemy collaborators, etc.—although they were completely innocent, and had aroused suspicion only by their appearance.

Throughout the course of centuries, anti-Semitic tendencies had been reinforced in the German population by government measures, such as segregation of the Jews in ghettos, restrictions on their gainful employment, and other special and discriminatory laws. They were barred from certain civil servant posts and military careers, and this form of social injustice persisted even into the First World War.

The two Christian churches in Germany had made it a practice of brandmarking Jews as the heathens who had nailed Christ to the cross. The devil as depicted in Christian publications more often than not exhibited Jewish facial features.

One of the few professions open to the Jews from the very beginning was that of banking. Jews were more generous in granting credit than the other banking institutions, often providing funds to customers who had long been declared unworthy of credit. Yet, when Jewish bankers demanded repayment plus interest and initiated the standard enforcement measures, they were rewarded with ill-repute and decried as profiteers and sharks.

When the Jews were finally granted admission to academic professions in the 19th and 20th centuries, German lawyers, physicians, journalists, etc. were suddenly confronted with the competition of large numbers of Jewish colleagues. As long as the economy remained intact, this did not present a problem. But when the crises of the 1920's and 1930's hit, the cry arose in academic circles that the Jews should be ousted or their numbers in these fields limited to their percentage in the population as a whole.

At the time National Socialism was beginning to take hold, it was widely held that the Jews were responsible for every mishap in Germany from the early Middle Ages to the 20th century. By 1918 at the latest, anti-Semitism was playing an integral and open part in nationalist circles and parties throughout the country. The extremist right-wing Freikorps, returning home from the Baltic, established the swastika—which had

been in existence for millenniums⁹⁸—as a popular symbol of anti-Semitism in Germany. In Austria, the swastika was first introduced as an Aryan symbol by Guido von List at the beginning of the 20th century. He and Lanz von Liebenfels, the founder of the *Ordo Novi Templi* and editor of the *Ostara* pamphlets, formed the core of a mystical anti-Semitic movement in Vienna, which had a major influence on Hitler and during the formative phase of National Socialism.⁹⁹

Anti-Semitism and the Germanic cult were closely related to esoteric doctrines. These less tangible roots of National Socialism remained largely hidden from the public eye, notwithstanding the penchant for the occult displayed by Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler and the National Socialist ideologist, Alfred Rosenberg. Hitler, too, had been exposed to secret sciences, and in more intimate circles he occasionally remarked on the esoteric goals of National Socialism.¹⁰⁰ As was the case with other leading National Socialists, Hitler upheld ties to the Thule Society in the early 1920s, which cultivated a *völkisch* and anti-Semitic image but whose inner circle was devoted to the study of the occult.¹⁰¹

Hitler's own antipathy toward the Jews was a combination of innate dislike, construed hatred and vague racial ideas preconditioned by the doctrines of Gobineau and Houston Steward Chamberlain. In reality, neither he nor any members of his family had ever had any unfavorable experiences with Jews. Hitler even wrote that, in his youth, he had been outraged by anti-Semitic remarks and got along well with his Jewish peers.¹⁰² This changed when he was first confronted with immigrants from Galicia with their curls and black kaftans: he regarded these Jews as alien creatures, and they aroused his aversion. Had there been a larger percentage of blacks in Germany, this race would also certainly have prompted his response of innate, primitive antagonism. The gypsies, another people which did not disguise its different cultural traditions, met with nearly the same fate as the Jews during the Third Reich.

Every subject with which Hitler could find fault in Vienna served only to aggravate his hostility toward Jewry: the internationally-oriented Marxist organizations, the parliament, the press, and modern art.

When he further concluded from the anti-Semitic tracts circulating at the time and the invective he witnessed at pseudopolitical meetings that the Jews allegedly upheld an organization which surreptitiously ruled the world and planned to undermine Germany's international standing,¹⁰³ he made of his suspicions a holy crusade: the Jews were indeed to blame for Germany's tragedy and the catastrophe of 1918. They were

none other than devils in disguise, and combatting them was but doing the work of the Lord. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler conjured up an apocalyptic vision of this satanic world conspiracy:¹⁰⁴

If, with the aid of his Marxist creed, the Jew triumphs over the peoples of this world, then his coronation will be the dance of death for humanity, and this planet will once more drift through the ether devoid of human life, as it did millions of years ago. Eternal Nature is relentless in avenging transgressions of her laws.

Hence I believe I am acting in accordance with the wishes of the Almighty Creator: *by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.*¹⁰⁵

At the time Hitler and his infant NSDAP were beginning to play a role in the Germany of the 1920's, his anti-Semitic slogans were not taken seriously by the bulk of the population. Phraseology of this type belonged, as a rule, to the basic vocabulary of the various *völkisch* and nationalistic groups which flourished at the time.

After Hitler took power, a practical solution to what was regarded as the Jewish problem was promised. Both the German people and the National Socialists entertained such solutions as, for instance, removing Jews from public office, curbing their influence in the economy and, as a last resort, bringing about their emigration from Germany. The application of prick tactics was to render staying in Germany so difficult for Jews that they would soon resign of their own volition and leave the country. "Out with the Jews!" was the refrain of one National Socialist fight song, and this was also the aim presented first to party members and then to the German people as Hitler's ultimate goal. For years there was talk about shipping the Jews to some obscure location such as the island of Madagascar. And while this type of forced emigration would have been unjust and hard, it would not have been the first time in the history of mankind—nor in the short space of the early 20th century—that similar events had taken place; one need only recall the deportation of 1.5 million Greeks from Asia Minor following the war between Turkey and Greece in 1922. In any case, this fate would by no means have been comparable to the massacre and extermination Hitler ultimately practiced on millions of Jews during the Second World War.

From the very onset, he did not seriously consider evacuating the Jews as a viable alternative. Initially, Hitler wanted to continue to utilize this group as the enemy personified.¹⁰⁶ Later, he had a further motive: exploiting the Jews as hostages within the scope of his foreign policy and as a means of exerting pressure on foreign countries. His belief in

the existence of a secret Jewish world government was genuine, as is evident in his various remarks to this effect in *Mein Kampf*. In fact, Hitler held so fast to his conviction of the strong lobby of “International Jewry” on Western governments that he actually expected them to react favorably to his policies of expansion to the East. It was his firm belief that Jews worldwide would successfully bear down on the governments to exhibit restraint in dealing with Germany in the hope of saving the ‘Jewish hostages’ if he threatened to annihilate them.

As is illustrated in this work, the actions taken against German Jews on April 1, 1933 and November 9–10, 1938 were motivated by foreign policy considerations¹⁰⁷ and similarly, the mass extermination program put into practice from 1941 to 1945 grew out of the same logic.

As early as March 29, 1933, Hitler had declared:¹⁰⁸

However, *Judentum* must realize that a Jewish war against Germany would hit *Judentum* in Germany itself with full force.

And on January 30, 1941, he had stated:¹⁰⁹

I would not like to forget the point I made previously on September 1, 1939 before the German Reichstag.¹¹⁰ That is, that if the Jews should succeed in plunging the rest of the world into a world war, then the entire Jewish race will have played out its role in Europe.

As 1941 came to an end, bringing with it—despite Hitler’s prophecies—neither the defeat of the Soviet Union nor peace with England, he once more hoisted the blame upon the Jews and promised retaliation:¹¹¹

I predicted on September 1, 1939 before the German Reichstag and I am careful to refrain from rash prophecies—that this war will not end the way the Jews would have it, namely with the extermination of all European and Aryan peoples, but the result of this war will be the annihilation of the Jewish race.

These were reprisals Hitler had announced early on. Ultimately, he made good his threats, ordering his SS henchmen to liquidate millions of Jewish men, women and children. The success he had hoped to achieve—i.e. the willingness of the West to make peace on his terms—had failed to materialize and left him with the consequences of yet another irrational estimation of reality.

Domestic Policy

The German people as a whole generally expressed as little interest in Hitler's foreign policy aims as in his anti-Semitic slogans. One must bear in mind that his domestic policies were instrumental in persuading the populace to elect him.

Circumstances played into Hitler's hands in the years 1920 to 1923, when postwar misery, inflation and economic ruin had shattered Germany, and once more ten years later, when the world depression had taken its toll and there were millions of unemployed.

In the interim years of economic prosperity, Hitler made little impact. His ideas were dismissed as the folly of a failed putschist and eccentric, a fact best illustrated in the election results of 1928, in which the National Socialists won only twelve seats in the Reichstag. Two years later, on September 14, 1930, their number skyrocketed to 107, to increase on July 31, 1932 to a total of 230 deputies—an election in which thirteen million Germans cast their ballots for Adolf Hitler.

At the time, Reich Chancellor von Papen had declared, "Herr Hitler, you are only here because there is a crisis!" Hitler countered in a public assembly with the words, "if good fortune were here, I would not be needed, and I would not be here, either!"¹¹²

What was Hitler's persuasive cure for the ailing times? What was behind the domestic goals he used to mesmerize millions of Germans? An ostensible answer to this question lies in the 25 points comprising National Socialist policy at home and abroad which Hitler expounded in the Munich Festsaal of the Hofbräuhaus on February 24, 1920.¹¹³ However, Hitler himself set no great stock in this party program, a fact he frankly admitted in *Mein Kampf*.¹¹⁴ The main thing, so he argued, was that the 25 points had been declared "inalterable." The form in which they were later to be put into practice was contingent upon the provisions passed for their implementation. In fact, however, numerous

points were never tackled after Hitler's seizure of power, among them many domestic policy programs as, for instance, the abolishment of large department stores. The item professing belief in positive Christianity, to cite another, had most likely been a purely rhetorical claim from its very inception.

In his speeches, Hitler rarely mentioned the official party program with the noted exception of his intention to abrogate the peace treaties of Versailles and St. Germain, which received all the more attention.

For his battle on the home front Hitler had another, more tangible program in store. He propagated the belief that the source of all misfortune suffered by the German Volk lay solely in its lack of unity. The population, he contended, was split into classes, stations, religions, parties, etc. and thus hindered from fully developing its inherent potential. The movements of Nationalism and Socialism and their respective adherents represented two warring factions. It was his main objective to join these forces, and he predicted, "On that day when both ideas are molten into one, they will become invincible!"¹¹⁵ Democracy as a form of government was doomed to extinction, he expounded, for it put only weaklings in power. Parliaments were nothing but talking shops; their longwinded debates made swift and reasonable decisions impossible. A single, authoritative will was called for. *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Wille* was the only feasible solution. The system which had been governing Germany since 1918 was, in his eyes, composed of traitors (the so-called "November Criminals") and "fulfillment politicians" in the thrall of the enemy: incompetent, inferior weaklings across the board. Were this system not eliminated without delay, the sorry fate of the German Volk would be sealed, and it would ultimately drown in "Bolshevist chaos." From a modern vantage point, these ideas may well appear wild and absurd, but in the troubled years of the early 1930's, they seemed to hit the nail on the head in Germany.

Just as the German governments of the Weimar Republic were not, contrary to Hitler's unfair accusations, responsible for the economic plight of the time, they were similarly in no position to eliminate or even relieve it. Moreover, they were not even capable of placating the public by adequately explaining that the international economic situation would improve of its own accord as it had in 1923 and thus relieve the suffering, at least in a psychological sense.

As of 1930, the Social Democrats no longer took an active part in politics and restricted their activities to tolerating bourgeois cabinets. The party had become sterile, and it is a fact that many of the leading

Social Democrats of the time cared less about alleviating the misery at large than protecting their positions and status in the face of the surging ranks of National Socialists. They did not even consider once more climbing the barricades to defend the rights of the working people; instead, they gladly deserted their posts on July 20, 1932 on the occasion of von Papen's coup in Prussia, just as they were willing to step back in the spring of 1933 under Hitler in exchange for their retirement pensions.

Empowered by Article 48, Reich Chancellor Heinrich Brüning of the Center Party was free to rule with an iron hand—an unsatisfactory state of affairs for a government purporting to be a democracy. His “emergency decrees” did not suffice to bring unemployment under control. Brüning held the opinion that Germany must “starve itself into shape,” but his deflationary measures served only to aggravate the situation. By repeated and drastic cuts of up to more than twenty percent in civil servant salaries, pensions and retirement payments and by reducing government spending, he succeeded not only in provoking the rage of the powerful civil service sector and the middle class; to compound matters, the buying power of the people had been sharply reduced, resulting in a stagnation of the German economy as a whole. Increasing numbers of factories were forced to shut down, and farmers were hard put to sell their produce and ultimately sunk into debt. Hitler stood out of the direct line of fire and prophesied that, unless he was given the chance to rule the nation, matters were certain to worsen steadily.

Hitler's economic program was the exact opposite of Brüning's. With a sovereign disregard to money—a trait he also exhibited in his private affairs—he categorically refused to consider the objections of orthodox economists to his measures, insisting that it was ridiculous to back up German currency with gold or foreign exchange funds:

Neither gold nor foreign exchange funds, but work alone is the foundation for money!¹¹⁶

The salvation of our Volk is not a financial problem; it is exclusively a problem of utilizing and employing the available work force on the one hand and exploiting available soil and mineral resources on the other. The Volksgemeinschaft does not subsist on the fictitious value of money but on actual production, which gives money its value. This production is the primary cover for a currency, not a bank or a vault full of gold! And when I increase this production, I am actually increasing the income of my fellow citizens; if I decrease production, I decrease income, regardless of what salaries are being paid out.¹¹⁷

In Hitler's view, Germany had at its disposal sufficient workers, raw materials and foodstuffs to solve its economic problems on its own. His slogan was, "*Deutsche Arbeiter, fanget an!*" ("German workers, begin!").¹¹⁸

The millions of Germans unemployed at the time were suffering less from material need—particularly as unemployment aid preserved them from the worst—than from the fact that they did not know what to do with their time and loitered aimlessly on streetcorners and squares. A popular newspaper quip had it that the cry for work was louder than the groans of the slaves in ancient Rome.

Hitler had a remedy: he invited the unemployed to join his SA formations. There they would find what they were lacking: something to do and an ideal they could fight for. He elevated himself to their savior, declaring that he had given them a new faith and a new hope, and allowed himself to be worshipped like a god by his storm troopers. Perceptive of the more primitive instincts of the masses, he generously accommodated the German people's affinity for disciplined behavior, uniforms, decorations, parades, and military spectacles.

Not surprisingly, the number of Hitler's supporters grew proportionately to economic need: on July 31, 1932, their forces amounted to thirteen million Germans, i.e. approximately 37 percent of the voting public. Nearly the entire *Mittelstand*, (middle-classes and petite bourgeoisie) including most civil servants, cast their votes for Hitler, as did the peasants (excepting those who were staunch Catholics) and naturally the right-wing extremists, the Freikorps and the bulk of the retired officers. Of the workers, only those voted for Hitler who wanted a radical change in the existing power structures at any cost and, depending upon the situation at the moment, supported either the Communists or the National Socialists.

In spite of all his oratorical efforts, Hitler did not succeed in swaying the organized Social Democratic workers to support his rise to power. Although his arguments were not completely unjustified, he was unable to make any headway with this group by claiming that the higher echelons of the SPD and the trade unions (i.e. the *Bonzen*—"big shots"—as they were pejoratively referred to at the time) were taking little interest in the workers' plight. The SPD adherents countered with the equally not unwarranted argument that they had always been betrayed in the past and always would be in the future. They preferred "being betrayed by their own kind," as a popular slogan put it. Hitler also did not fare well with members of the Center Party before he took

power, for they were under the close guardianship of the clergy, the majority of whom rejected Hitler, albeit not for reasons of foreign policy.

This lack of success with Center and SPD voters did not discourage Hitler: they could wait until after he seized power. At the time, he was more interested in persuading as many right-wing and Communist voters as possible to join his ranks with the aim of overcoming the fifty-percent hurdle.

Communism and *Reaktion* were the only two potential adversaries Hitler took seriously. The Communist methods impressed him; he admired their conformity to one will, their obedience to a single command and their readiness to fight their enemies in the streets if necessary. Bolshevism itself he dismissed as a primitive philosophy, perhaps just right for the Russians he so despised. Any further critical debate on its precepts he considered a waste of time:

Communism is not a higher evolutionary stage, but the most primitive basic form of shaping peoples and nations.¹¹⁹

It is an ideology founded in a fear of one's neighbor, in a dread of somehow standing out, and is based upon a spiteful, envious cast of mind. This code of regression to the primitive state leads to cowardly, anxious acquiescence.¹²⁰

Hitler had a simple recipe for contending with Communism: brute force, a method with which he achieved great success in Germany.

As he saw it, Communism presented no danger whatsoever. On the contrary: the more Communists there were, the easier it was for him to intimidate the bourgeoisie and the reactionaries with the bogey of an impending Bolshevik revolution.

Personally, he believed that the "primitive" German Communists had neither sufficient force nor intelligence to stage a successful rebellion in the critical years between 1930 and 1932, although he would not have begrudged the "Reds" a certain amount of success in doing away with the "upper ten thousand" and the "worthless Philistines" plaguing Germany. He declared quite openly:¹²¹

Had Communism really intended nothing more than a certain purification by eliminating the rotten elements from among the ranks of our so-called upper ten thousand or our equally worthless Philistines, one could have sat back quietly and looked on for a while.

In the turbulent years following World War I, the Communists did, in fact, launch several attempts to overthrow the government, such as those in Munich, Saxony and the Ruhr District. The bourgeoisie still shuddered to think of the attendant horrors, the slaughtering of hostages

and other acts of violence, although today it is difficult to determine which atrocities were worse: those committed by the Communist insurgents or those of the extreme right-wing Feme and the rampaging *Soldateska*. However, the period from 1930 to Hitler's takeover held no real danger of a Bolshevik coup. Moreover, Communist voters never made up more than seventeen percent of the population.¹²² And this, Hitler argued, had been his doing. He threatened that, were the NSDAP not finally allowed to take power, his following would desert en bloc to the ranks of the KPD, and the country would be plunged into what he described as Bolshevik chaos.

With the aid of this sophistry, he ultimately prevailed in convincing the reluctant German Nationalists, the reactionary Junkers, the leaders of industry, and the generals of the Reichswehr that it was imperative that he be placed at the head of government. Finally, made weary by financial need and the surfeit of successive elections, the German people could no longer resist the cry, "Put Hitler in power, and bad times will end!"

Hitler had outlasted his reactionary opponents, but now he was called upon to demonstrate whether he could really provide the "work and bread" he had promised in dozens of speeches. And Hitler did prove that his economic theory was indeed the more effective, at least in the short term, given the circumstances at the time. A few months after he had seized power, unemployment figures dropped sharply; soon they ceased to be significant. Some observers have claimed that the increasing orders Hitler gave to the armament industry constituted the sole reason behind this accomplishment, but in those first decisive years, this factor played only a minor role. It is more correct to say that he boosted all sectors of the economy. Building owners were forced to have their dilapidated properties repaired; the construction industry was given work. The building of streets and bridges was commissioned; motorization was accelerated. Although the bulk of these measures consisted of government-commissioned jobs, private enterprise was also stimulated. Millions regained their means of existence. The farmers expressed their satisfaction with the new "autarky program." The workers were prospering, earning well and even receiving public acclaim for their efforts and being sent on vacations by the recreational organization *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through joy).

This miracle was naturally accomplished with the aid of the money press, using the method of excessive creation of currency by the so-called *Mefo-Wechsel-System* devised by Hitler's "financial wizard,"

Hjalmar Schacht.¹²³ By simultaneously enforcing strict price controls, the Reich Government seemed able to finance arms production while bolstering the German mark even after gold coverage had been abandoned and foreign exchange control instituted. However, these artificial achievements were short-lived. The damage done to the currency in financing unrestrained arms production was knowingly accepted as unavoidable, for, as the gambler Hitler trusted, victorious campaigns would bring about a solution before the camouflaged inflation would break out.

All the same, Hitler did demonstrate a certain talent for economic policy in the years following his takeover and this fact alone would have earned him recognition from the German people and toleration from the rest of the world. But Hitler planned to go down in history as much more than a politician with a keen grasp of economic realities: he wanted to exercise power—power over Germany, and power over the world.

He might have been satisfied with the position of power he had achieved in Germany by 1933. For, in addition to the thirteen million Germans who had voted for him in 1932, now both the Social Democratic workers and the adherents of the Center Party pledged him their support in considerable numbers.

In light of the National Socialist manipulations of the votes obvious since the election of November 12, 1933, it is difficult to accurately ascertain the percentage of Hitler's following in 1933; however, it unquestionably exceeded fifty percent.

But to Hitler, all this was not enough. His lust for power was so great that he was unwilling to allow anyone else even the slightest political influence. He used every opportunity—above all, every genuine or construed crisis—to eliminate persons who had fallen into his disfavor, thereby misappropriating their privileges himself or seeing to it that these were played into the hands of loyal adherents. He used this recipe within his own party, in government, and later in the armed forces. Even during the war, Hitler never ceased his efforts to enlarge the sphere of his domestic power.

When the SA threatened to mutiny in 1930, Hitler dismissed its leader, the retired Captain Pfeffer von Salomon,¹²⁴ declaring himself "Oberster SA Führer" (OSAF) and the devoted Ernst Röhm,¹²⁵ a retired Captain, its new Chief of Staff. When Gregor Strasser,¹²⁶ Head of Political Organization, advocated a policy of alliance with Schleicher,¹²⁷ Hitler branded him a traitor and proceeded to take over the leadership of the entire party organization.

In 1941, when Rudolf Hess¹²⁸ disappeared to Britain, Hitler personally took over his vacated position and called upon the servile Martin Bormann¹²⁹ to assume the leadership of the Party Office. When Reich President von Hindenburg was hovering near death in 1934, Hitler made certain of one thing—he alone would succeed the Old Gentleman as Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.¹³⁰

When Reich Minister of War von Blomberg¹³¹ opposed Hitler's wishes in 1938, the Führer assumed his functions without further ado and simultaneously put the unpopular Commander in Chief of the Army, Freiherr von Fritsch,¹³² to the sword. When in 1941 the German Army failed to take Moscow, Hitler used Field Marshal von Brauchitsch¹³³ as a scapegoat, dismissing him in order to take on the post of Commander in Chief of the Army himself.¹³⁴

In 1942, Hitler had the Reichstag empower him to dismiss any judge he chose and take on the function of Supreme Judge (*Oberster Gerichtsherr*). When the Commander of the Replacement Army (*Ersatzheer*), Friedrich Fromm,¹³⁵ adopted an ambivalent attitude on July 20, 1944, Hitler placed him under arrest and appointed in his stead the loyal Reichsführer SS, Himmler.¹³⁶

Hitler's thirst for power knew no bounds, and he was continually on his guard against those who refused to recognize his absolute supremacy. His control was so complete that there is little or no doubt that Germany could not have liberated itself from this dictatorship during Hitler's lifetime.

Had the dictator not ultimately become the victim of his own foreign policies, neither the people, the churches, the Armed Forces, nor the National Socialist Party would ever have succeeded in removing him from his seat of power.

After his death, Hitler's empire would have collapsed not unlike that of Alexander the Great. For all his talk of the future *Führerstaat*, racial selectivity, etc., he naturally could not bring himself to train or even name a genuine successor, fearing that he might thereby risk sacrificing some—no matter how small—part of his power.

Foreign Policy

When Hitler turned thirty in 1919, he already had a clear picture of his foreign policy plans and refused to the end to relinquish or revise these aims. He had set forth his concepts in *Mein Kampf* for all time:¹³⁷

The demand for a reestablishment of the 1914 borders is a political absurdity. The borders of 1914 mean nothing at all for the future of the German nation.

In face of this, we National Socialists must keep an unshakable hold on our political aims, namely of securing the land and soil rightfully belonging to the German Volk on this earth. And this action is the only one which, before God and our German posterity, would allow an investment of blood to appear justified.

In this context, I must attack most sharply those *völkisch* penpushers who pretend to perceive in such an acquisition of soil a “violation of sacred human rights.”

Thus we National Socialists are intentionally closing the chapter on the direction which foreign policy took in our pre-war period. We are taking up where we broke off six centuries ago. We are stopping the endless stream of Germans moving to the south and west of Europe and setting our sights on the land in the east.

Hitler’s plans could hardly have been fixed more clearly, but the pseudo-historical deliberations in which they were embedded reveal the naivete characteristic of his foreign policy as a whole.

Except in respect to the *Völkerwanderung*, the myth of an “endless stream of Germans moving to the south” has no basis in fact. The only—admittedly meager—support for the idea of German expansion to the west lies in Bismarck’s campaign of 1870–71 and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. It would be more correct to speak of a French drive towards the east and to the Rhine.

In contrast, the German drive to the east was indeed a reality which had not slumbered in the six hundred years Hitler so flippantly

dismissed. The conquests of the Teutonic Order marked the beginning of an *Ostpolitik* consistent with that of the Hohenzollerns and the Habsburgs which persisted up to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918.

But what did Hitler care about the facts of history? He was determined to realize his foreign policy goals at any price. The only debatable question was whether Germany's military potential sufficed to execute his expansionist plans, and how the West would react to his crusades. In regard to the latter point, Hitler had long devised a solution. "In Europe there will be only two allies for Germany in the foreseeable future: England and Italy," he had predicted in *Mein Kampf*.¹³⁸

Hitler's foreign and military policies actually did have a common denominator, for they were all ultimately aimed at the establishment of a new German continental imperium stretching to include the entirety of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union all the way to the Ural Mountains. And to put this plan into effect, he needed alliances with Great Britain and Italy, followed by war with the Soviet Union. This was a program of positively Napoleonic dimensions, and the attempt to translate it into action ended no differently than the Corsican's plans had 130 years before.

It seems difficult to comprehend why Hitler should have believed his goal for German hegemony in Europe was anything but foolhardy illusion so shortly after William II had failed with his claim for world supremacy and in his colonial and naval policies. World War I had conclusively shown that the world was not willing to tolerate expansionist policies on the part of Germany or Austria, not even in the Balkans. It had further established that Germany's military power fell drastically short of being able to match the united forces of the Western Powers. However, German statesmen—and first and foremost Hitler—turned a deaf ear to these so obvious lessons of the First World War.

The discussion on *unbewältigte Vergangenheit* which has been carried on in West Germany for some time deals with the question of failing to come to terms with the past, whereby, the "past" in this context refers to the Third Reich and the catastrophe of 1945. However, this term might apply more accurately to the German attitude between the two World Wars. The majority of the German population, above all the influential bourgeoisie, was taken completely by surprise at the defeat of 1918 and was unable to fathom that the German Army, touted for decades as invincible, could have been forced to surrender.

The statesmen and generals responsible did their utmost to hide the real reasons behind the military catastrophe from the German people.

A legend was called to life blaming the defeat on a “stab in the back of the German Army.”

On the other hand, the measures taken by the Allies after 1918 were neither wise nor justified. Independent of the perspective one takes, they were half-measures at best, and bore the seed of new conflicts. The ill-chosen borders to Germany’s east are a case in point, for while they were not actually the immediate cause for the outbreak of war in 1939, they did constitute a major factor. Other problematic points included the military and economic clauses in the Treaty of Versailles and the occupation of the Rhineland. An added burden was the attitude of certain Western circles which indirectly promoted the reactionary parties in Germany for their own gain while obstructing the work of the genuinely pacifist governments of the Weimar Republic.

In the minds of many Germans, Hitler among them, there was no doubt that the catastrophe of 1918 was a result not of any numerical or technical supremacy on the part of the Allies, but of treason in their own ranks.

Hitler spoke of the “laurel wreath” which had been “craftily snatched from the German soldier in 1918”¹³⁹ and became a spokesman for the unity theory:¹⁴⁰

As long as the German Volk was unified in history, it has never been vanquished. It was only the disunity of the year 1918 which led to the collapse.

Hitler honestly believed that the German front had been broken also by virtue of the enemy propaganda dropped behind the lines. He put no stock in the basic lesson which the history of war has taught to all peoples: the military resources constitute the single crucial factor, and they depend in turn upon the number and quality of the available troops, upon the capacity for producing arms and upon the store of foodstuffs. Exhortations to hold out and even new weaponry can, at best, prolong a war, but they cannot influence its outcome.

Hitler also chose to ignore another basic insight which has been reinforced by the events of history: propaganda is effective only with one’s own people or vis-à-vis dependent or inferior states; it is powerless in the face of equally strong or superior peoples.

The foreign policy concepts Hitler adopted in 1919 were inconsistent with reality in respect to both Great Britain and the Soviet Union. And they were his inevitable ruin: his view of history was distorted and he refused to correct it.

He once claimed:¹⁴¹

There is no excuse before history for an error; no excuse, for instance, to the effect that one explains afterwards: I didn't notice that or I didn't take it seriously.

These words were Hitler's self-pronounced death sentence: persisting in his erroneous assumptions of 1919 could never change reality, and the hard facts caught up with him in the end.

In terms of his preconceived notions of foreign policy, an alliance between Germany and Italy seemed most feasible. Such a tie could be reinforced by drawing parallels in history—not only the alliance which Bismarck had entered into with Cavour's young Italy, but also the close relations between Italy and Germany during the Holy Roman Empire. However, Hitler was less interested in historical precedents than in the simple fact that the manifestation of Fascism and the phenomenon of Mussolini presented themselves as sufficient grounds for an alliance.

In contrast, Hitler's completely unrealistic fantasy of a possible Anglo-German alliance was void of any basis in fact or history. The alliances which had been established in the past—for instance, that between Great Britain and the House of Habsburg during the War of the Spanish Succession, or that between Britain and Prussia during the Seven Years' War—had been formed not as the basis for a new German expansionist drive, but for the sole purpose of defeating France.

In Hitler's opinion, the Hohenzollerns would have been well-advised to have formed an alliance between imperial Germany and Great Britain, using the latter as protection to the rear for conquering new *Lebensraum* in the Soviet Union. He wrote in *Mein Kampf*:¹⁴²

If one's goal were more land in Europe, this could only be accomplished, broadly speaking, at Russia's expense, meaning that the new Reich [of 1871] would once again join the march on the road of the Teutonic Knights of old, to gain by the German sword sod for the German plough and daily bread for the nation.

For this kind of policy there could be but one ally in Europe: England.

These words suffice to illustrate that the German dictator—as the majority of his countrymen—had no understanding of the British mentality, British history or British statecraft. What did impress him were the British wars and concentration camps, for Hitler conceived of power purely as brute force. In contrast to his ideas, British statecraft propagated a healthy balance: in times of peace, it instilled in the populations of those countries dominated by Britain a sense of individual satisfaction, while during wartime it awakened the will to demonstrate undivided solidarity with the mother country.

As a consequence of World War I, Hitler harbored a strong feeling of hatred for France and viewed it as dependent upon Great Britain. Were Britain to become a German ally, France would be checkmated in any case.

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler mentioned the United States only seldom and in passing. He was nevertheless aware that the United States was closely allied with Britain and reasoned that, were he to win over the latter, he would simultaneously win over its closest ally. The converse sequence, i.e. that war with England would mean war with the United States, apparently did not occur to him. So great was his obsession with the idea of an Anglo-German alliance that he strictly ruled out the possibility of war with Britain.

There was absolutely no historical basis—and there were no logical arguments whatsoever—for the assumption that Britain would support or even tolerate a German drive against the Soviet Union; it was purely a figment of Hitler's imagination. But it was a theory he did not hesitate to propound over and over again for the sake of his listeners and, above all, himself.

Hitler perceived himself as the great simplifier and once stated: "Our problems seemed complicated ... But I simplified the problems and reduced them to the lowest common denominator."¹⁴³

Applied to his foreign policy, this meant that he simply projected concepts of domestic German policy onto international relations, believing to have thus untied the Gordian knot. The Soviets, for instance, he equated with the "primitive" German Communists, holding that they could be quashed with brute force.

The British he placed in the same pot with the backward German Nationalists: once successful, they had now become incapable of rousing themselves to any firm stand. In Hitler's ill-considered opinion, they were best brought into submission—or out of the way—by being either reminded of their common "Germanic-Anglo-Saxon" past" instilled with fear of the Bolshevik threat, or simply left to their own frivolous devices. It was not worth the trouble to fight them, for they would ultimately fold on their own. In light of these views, it is not surprising that Hitler could boldly state, "I do not doubt for a second that we will procure our vital rights outside the country in exactly the same way as we were able to lead it onwards within."¹⁴⁴

Even during the Second World War, he boasted, "I am firmly convinced that this [external] battle will end not a whit differently from the battle I once waged internally!"¹⁴⁵

From their very beginnings, Hitler's attempts to convert his *idée fixe* of an alliance between Germany and Great Britain were nothing but grotesque. True to his theory of identical procedures in his "struggles" at home and abroad, he accorded the British the same treatment as he had the German Nationalists in the past, comparing them with the "Hugenbergers."¹⁴⁶

When Chamberlain visited Germany three times in 1938, Hitler sincerely believed he was meeting with the equivalent of a German Nationalist privy councillor.

Speaking to a gathering of German generals, he stated, "These insignificant worms, I came to know them in Munich."¹⁴⁷ And at a public rally in 1942, he pronounced, "The English have simply been ossifying for too long."¹⁴⁸

Hitler made a habit of snubbing British statesmen, and his offers to form an alliance were the height of insult. He would slap them in the face, as François-Poncet once aptly noted,¹⁴⁹ and at the same time make a pretense of offering them his hand in friendship.

Hitler was puzzled over England's manifest lack of interest in becoming a part of the German *Gleichschaltung*. Moreover, they surprisingly declined to accept his "generous offer" (*großzügiges Angebot*) to protect the British Empire with his very own divisions. Addressing a visitor from Sweden in 1939, he demanded: "Herr Dahlerus, you know England so well, can you give me any reason for my perpetual failure to come to an agreement with her?"¹⁵⁰

While Hitler's consternation over such matters by no means moved him to reconsider his rigid preconceptions, Great Britain's declaration of war on September 3, 1939, did jar him into speechless shock for several minutes, according to reports of the interpreter Paul Schmidt.¹⁵¹ Britain's unexpected step struck a deathly blow to the very roots of his theories on foreign policy and, as such, would have prompted any normal-thinking statesman to step down immediately—at the very least. It had certainly not been Hitler's intention to wage war with England; his primary interest lay merely in conducting a small-scale conquest of Poland. He was completely taken aback when Great Britain actually sounded the call to arms.

However, a few hours later he had regained his composure—and his hold on the view that an alliance with England continued to be a possibility. During the entire course of the war, he thus staunchly refused to take any vigorous action against Britain which might unnecessarily irritate his prospective future ally.

He upheld the belief that he need only pursue his other goals, above all the conquest of the Soviet Union, to bring the British to their knees and to the realization that Hitler was the only ruler in the world to whom they should pay homage—just as Hugenberg, von Papen and von Hindenburg had done by allowing themselves to be persuaded that Hitler was Germany's savior.

If all else failed, he would only have to conjure up the bogey of Bolshevism once again—as he had at home—to bring his reactionary opponents in the West into line.

The attack on the Soviet Union which Hitler launched midway during the war with England originated not only in his old and cherished hope of one day taking over this enormous territory in the East, but also in the irrational hope that the western world would look up to him as its champion in the fight against Bolshevism.

The German newspapers from June 23, 1941 created the impression that the entire world, including the United States, warmly welcomed Germany's treatment of the Soviet Union, and that Britain was certainly no exception. Little did the German dictator suspect that the British welcomed a much different aspect of Germany's endeavors in the East. It was not difficult for them to surmise how much bloodletting this foray would cost the Germans. Even if Hitler were to succeed in conquering the Soviet Union, he would be so weakened as to make it easier for the Western Powers to defeat him in return.

Hitler's hope of overtaking the Soviet Union with a single sweep revealed itself to be a tragic fallacy. His concept of the primitive Russians who were most easily crushed by brute force—just like their supposed counterparts, the German Communists—proved a glaring underestimation. What had been demonstrated in the aftermath of the French Revolution once more became apparent: changes in the world outlook of a regime have no influence upon the willingness of a country's populace to protect itself and its country. Bolshevik Russia defended itself against Hitler's armies just as bitterly as the Czarist regimes had withstood the invasions of Charles XII and Napoleon I. Even the brutal tactics Hitler demanded of the German Wehrmacht were to no avail in accomplishing his goals of capturing Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad and forcing the Russian Army to capitulate.

The course of the war ran contrary to Hitler's prophecies in every way and in respect to Germany's friends as well as foes. He had once ridiculed the policy of the German Empire vis-à-vis its allies, stating:¹⁵²

At that time, a few semblances of states grown old and impotent were drummed together and the attempt was made, using this junk destined for destruction, to show a bold front to an enterprising world coalition.

But the allies he mobilized during World War II did not differ markedly from these “semblances of states”: the Hungarians as well as the Finns to whom they were related; the Croats and the Bulgarians; the Romanians, the Italians, and ultimately the Japanese. Hitler was not even capable of persuading his allies to regard all of Germany’s enemies as their own foes as well.¹⁵³

It became evident that German power politics made an impression only upon the weak Balkan peoples and, to a limited degree, upon Italy. There it seemed that Hitler’s theories on forming alliances might well prove true. Initially, Mussolini had shown extreme reserve in response to Hitler’s attempts to curry his favor. However, his reserve thawed when, during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, he unwillingly became dependent upon Germany and was increasingly forced to be an audience to Hitler’s torrent of words. Being an impulsive Italian, the Duce was impressed by the disciplined conduct of the German military and party organizations. So enthused was he by the German goosestep at his visit to Munich and Berlin in 1937 that he immediately introduced it as the “Passo Romano” in his own country. Mussolini—a loquacious man of his own accord—was so fascinated by Hitler’s oratorical talent that he was soon converted to a patient and interested listener. Given sober consideration back in Italy, some of the German ruler’s ideas were less persuasive, and Mussolini only reluctantly agreed to the Italo-German military alliance of May 22, 1939, known as the Pact of Steel.

Hitler’s first disappointment dawned only a few months later: in violation of its obligations as laid down in the Pact, Italy refused to side with Germany when war broke out, insisting on remaining neutral. When it did enter the war in 1940, it soon became evident that this had more negative than positive consequences for Germany. After three years of warfare, Italy collapsed in 1943 and Fascism disappeared without a trace. Mussolini was happy to have escaped with his life, but Hitler had the Italian leader brought to Germany in order to preserve the appearance of an intact alliance.

Hitler’s irrational preconceptions on foreign policy had been proven false across the board, from the alleged Jewish world government and the potential for an alliance with Great Britain and Italy, to his plans for easy conquest and annihilation of the Soviet Union. However, he refused to acknowledge defeat until the foreign enemies he himself had

made had occupied nearly his entire Reich and were literally knocking at the door of the Reich Chancellory. It was not Hitler's prophecy that his warfare abroad would end "not a whit differently" from his domestic struggle—but Churchill's predictions that came to pass:¹⁵⁴

And when the final signal is given, the whole circle of avenging nations will hurl themselves upon the foe and batter out the life of the cruellest tyranny which has ever sought to bar the progress of mankind.

It would be wrong to claim that Hitler's war and foreign policy goals met with unanimous approval and support within the Party, the State and the Army. Even the staunchest chauvinists and militarists strove for a reestablishment of the borders of 1914 and, at the utmost and if circumstances were conducive, the annexation of the coal-mining areas of Brie, the Baltic States and the Ukraine. The German people were, for the most part, extremely cautious and skeptical of any measures which could lead to war, for the shock of World War I was still too vivid.

Hitler, well aware of this, took care in his speeches not to state his military objectives in any certain terms, and sought instead to blur and disguise his intentions. Even as late as 1939–1940, he circumvented the term "war" in official legislation and directives, preferring to speak in euphemisms, citing for instance a "special task force" (*besonderer Einsatz*), police actions, etc.

To the Germans who attempted to warn Hitler of the unavoidable consequences of his fateful foreign policy, he pointed out that he had attained his domestic goals despite all predictions and warnings to the contrary and would thus similarly prove right with his ideas on this external struggle, a mere counterpart to his internal triumph. Speaking publicly in 1937, he had declared:¹⁵⁵

I have no desire to concern myself with those who know only the one well-worn objection to all major decisions: "It won't work." [—] I do not need to assure you that a man who has succeeded in rising from an unknown soldier of the World War to the leader of the nation will also succeed in solving any problems to come. May no man doubt my determination to put plans once conceived into action, no matter how.

By 1938–1939 and, at the latest, with the occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia, it had become apparent even to the uninitiated where Hitler's course was headed. But it was already too late for any legal action; his position within Germany had become unassailable. In 1933, he had sworn never to relinquish control of German government during his lifetime.¹⁵⁶ Before switching what he called his "train of govern-

ment” onto the steeply declining track of war, he had meticulously dismantled every brake which could have brought it to an emergency halt. Hence with an ever-increasing tempo Hitler raced onward toward destruction and ruin. A few of the passengers attempted to leap to safety, but few succeeded. The first to abandon the train was Fritz Thyssen;¹⁵⁷ another was Rudolf Hess.

The extent of the catastrophe could have been checked had one of the men riding the “train of government” possessed the courage to stand up to the mad engineer face to face, take over the helm and turn the course of the train and the tide of events.

But there was no such man to be found in Germany.

The Methodology of Hitler's Oratory

Even prior to World War 1, Hitler had cherished hopes of appearing on the public stage as an orator. The possibility of exercising power by means of the spoken word always held a strong fascination for him.

Reinhold Hanisch, one of Hitler's acquaintances from the Vienna hostel for the homeless, reports:¹⁵⁸

One evening, Hitler happened to go to a movie theater—a rare occasion—in which Kellermann's *Tunnel*¹⁵⁹ was being shown. There is a public speaker in the film who throws the working masses into turmoil with his speeches. Hitler was beside himself. The impression was so strong that he spoke of nothing except the power of oratory for days.

It was not the film alone which impressed Hitler, but also the novel upon which it was based. Apparently he bought it shortly thereafter. A great part of the vocabulary Hitler later built into his own speeches was doubtless drawn from this source.

The language Kellermann used to describe events of fantastic import and persons of extraordinary magnetism left its mark, above all the bold superlatives and the ultimate flourish, "of all time," which grew to become one of the dictator's favorite expressions.¹⁶⁰ The actors in Kellermann's story captivated Hitler's attention as much as the rhetoric. Mac Allan, the main character in the book, is a small-time engineer, able to carry through the idea for building a tunnel—a plan initially ridiculed as folly. He invents an amazingly strong steel drill and, bursting with energy, devotes himself to the task of burrowing a tunnel under the Atlantic. His oratorical genius enables him to win over the giants of finance, convince reluctant industrial magnates, and instill in the construction workers the belief that the tunnel rightfully belongs to the people; he is able to overcome every crisis by his circumspect action in emergencies and succeeds in completing the "gigantic" project within twenty-five years' time.

This was the kind of hero Hitler longed to be. In his case, the power of oral persuasion would not be lacking if similarly "gigantic" projects could be found.

S. Woolf, who came from a lower-class background but memorized an enormous number of details and had them constantly at his fingertips, was another character in the story who certainly also commanded Hitler's admiration, even though he was a Jew.

In any case, Hitler began training his memory and learning facts by rote with which he later impressed technical and military experts. Contempt for money and mistrust of the militia, later characteristic of Hitler's attitude, are also reflected in the themes of Kellermann's novel. When Hitler launched his political career in 1919, there appeared to be little chance that he would ever achieve the political power to which he aspired. He had neither assets nor any schooling to speak of; he could claim neither influential friends nor membership in any powerful organizations within a party or a given social class. Nonetheless, he had two reasons to believe himself capable of mounting the steep ladder to political success. One reason lay in the chaotic circumstances gripping Germany in the wake of its total defeat in World War I and in the transition which had taken place in the system of government after 1918. Only when chaos reigned both at home and abroad were the people perhaps sufficiently receptive to the ravings of an unknown agitator. Astute in his estimation of the masses, Hitler did everything—in the years preceding his accession to power—to prevent calm from setting in. He supported every action at home designed to hinder the respective government, while at the same time endeavoring to thwart any stabilization abroad. The second asset Hitler intended to exploit in his bid for power was his extraordinary talent for public speaking. Well he knew how dangerous a weapon demagogical speech could be in times of turbulence; in *Mein Kampf*, he had elaborated upon this theme *in extenso*:¹⁶¹

However, the power which has always started the great religious and political avalanches in history has been, from time immemorial, none but the magic power of the spoken word.

Above all the broad masses of a people have always been subject to the force of oratory. And all great movements are national movements, are volcanic eruptions of human passion and inner emotions, aroused either by the cruel goddess of need or by the torch of the spoken word hurled into the masses, and not soda-sweet outpourings of aestheticizing literateurs and drawing-room heroes.

A change in a people's fortune can be prompted only by a storm of burning passion, but he alone can arouse such passion who harbors it within him. This passion alone can bestow upon him whom it has chosen the words which, like the blows of a hammer, are capable of opening the gates to a people's heart.

Hitler ridiculed the “helpless stammerings of someone like Bethmann-Hollweg”¹⁶² and wrote:¹⁶³

The oratory of a statesman to his people is not something I judge by the impression it leaves upon a university professor, but rather by the effect it has on the people.

Hitler did succeed in proving, in his domestic climb to power, that a gifted orator can indeed harness the support of a people muddled by times of confusion and chaos. However, events have also shown that the weapon of oratory can become blunted or useless when brandished in foreign politics against an equally strong or superior opponent. Indeed, it can even be turned against the aggressor.

Hitler admired the speeches of Anglo-Saxon statesmen during World War I, above all those of Lloyd George, rating them as “psychological masterpieces for influencing the soul of the masses,”¹⁶⁴ and completely overlooking the military and political power from which these speeches drew their force.

Similarly, Hitler was firmly convinced that the Western Powers had conquered the German Army in 1918 not by numerical superiority and better weaponry, but with handbills and other types of propaganda. He also held the opinion that Wilson had won international recognition primarily for the elegant wording of his Fourteen Points. In reality, the united forces of the Western Powers stood behind this program, and without them, even a man like Wilson—whom Hitler dismissed as a “would-be world savior”¹⁶⁵—was powerless.

When Hitler attempted to repeat the success of his domestic oratory on the stage of foreign politics after taking power, it soon became evident that he was every bit as ineffectual with his outpourings as Bethmann-Hollweg had been with his “helpless stammerings.”

However, nothing could have been further from Hitler’s thoughts in 1919 at his first appearance at a public gathering in the small Hofbräuhauskeller in Munich, where he was exhilarated by the impact of his oratory. He describes this, his first experience as a demagogue, in *Mein Kampf*:¹⁶⁶

What I had before simply sensed inside, without really knowing it, was now proven by reality: I could speak! After thirty minutes, the people in the small room were electrified, and the enthusiasm was first expressed in the fact that my appeal to the willingness of those present to make a sacrifice resulted in a donation of three hundred marks. [—]

However, the success of this first major gathering was also significant in another way. During my many years of military service, I had become acquaint-

ed with a great number of loyal comrades who now gradually began to join the Movement due to my persuasion. They were all energetic young men, accustomed to discipline and raised, throughout their service, on the principle: nothing is impossible, and if there is a will, there is always a way.¹⁶⁷—

Thus Hitler set upon the path of rhetorical rabble-rousing, with varying degrees of success depending upon the situation. If times were bad, he spoke to full houses; if matters were stabilizing, his eloquence was powerless to shake the masses out of their complacency. Trusting nonetheless in his luck, Hitler initially put his powers of oratory to the test not in front of mass audiences, but before small, select and influential circles and organizations. On January 30, 1933, he achieved his goal and became Reich Chancellor.

During the fourteen years he strove for political power at home, he had only once relied upon means other than his persuasive public speaking. Intending to repeat the success of the Fascist “March on Rome,” he launched his own German variation on November 8, 1923. While he was initially able to win over those holding power in Munich at the time—General State Commissar Gustav von Kahr as well as the officers responsible for the Reichswehr and police—as soon as he turned his attention to other affairs and relaxed his hold upon them, they began to waver, released from the spellbinding power of his oratory, and ultimately resumed their responsibilities to the lawful government in Berlin. Hitler had learned a lesson he would never forget: German generals were not revolutionaries in any sense of the word. They preferred, as the Kapp Putsch had also illustrated,¹⁶⁸ to adhere to the lawful regime—even if they detested it—rather than follow a revolutionary, even if the latter’s goals coincided with their own. In later years, after he had become Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Hitler exploited these tenets of the German military for his own purposes, which cost German soldiery its reputation and was to take many a German general to the gallows after the lost war.

Hitler subtly tuned his speeches to suit the audience he was addressing. Although his remarks rarely varied in content, he enjoyed giving them a local flavor and expressing them in an idiom peculiar to his listeners.

When speaking before intellectuals, professors or university students, for instance, he employed the convoluted and abstract style en vogue in such circles.

In many of his speeches, he made extensive use of uncommon words and phrases of Latin and Greek origin, and he did in fact use them

correctly. Apparently he believed they sounded impressive and established a sense of familiarity with experts present in the audience. His command of difficult forms of address and ceremonial titles was as perfect as that of a diplomatic chef de protocol.

In the years 1932 and 1933, when considering it useful, Hitler pronounced the initial “st” separately as “s” and “t” as though he were from Hanover or Hamburg and had never heard of the German sound shift. His use of set phrases and anomalies was calculated to favorably impress Northern German listeners, and it apparently did not miss its mark. When he addressed Southern Germans, there was no need for such artifice for he usually spoke an idiom resembling to Bavarian German. Adolf Wagner, Gauleiter in Munich, spoke with a similar intonation and was hence regularly appointed to read Hitler’s opening address at the Nuremberg Party Congresses, while Hitler himself sat behind the lectern among the high-ranking party functionaries and listened to his speaking “double.”

Hitler’s natural voice was rather highpitched. Particularly when he commenced a speech, he forced his voice into a lower range to make it sound more resounding and masculine. In other situations he intentionally allowed his voice to become shrill and overstrained for dramatic effect. He even took the opportunity of dictating his speeches to rehearse the accompanying accents at great volume, and occasionally his voice carried throughout the building. Uninitiated persons within earshot were caught by surprise and assumed he was admonishing his assistants.

This constant modulation naturally took its toll on his vocal cords, and in 1935 he had to undergo surgery.¹⁶⁹ Following the operation, performed by Professor Dr. von Eicken, Hitler feared for some time that he might lose his voice, but the ailment proved temporary and his fears groundless.

In moments of excitement, Hitler’s voice often took on a threatening, subdued tone; he rolled his “r’s” harshly and punctuated his speech with idiosyncratic pronunciations. His intonation became monotone, his phrasing a series of volleys. This manner of speaking was particularly pronounced when Hitler extolled outstanding feats of National Socialism, Germany’s far superior weaponry and similar supposed accomplishments, i.e. when he spoke on martial subjects or indulged in his penchant for megalomania. Then he appeared in an autosuggestive, trancelike state—regardless of whether he was delivering a public address or speaking to an audience of one.

Certain figures of speech peculiar to Hitler have given rise to the claim that he spoke incorrect and distorted German. This is, however, an unfounded allegation, for the phrases in question belong to the Austrian idiom which Northern Germans in particular are likely to find alien.¹⁷⁰ Had he, in fact, consistently spoken bad German, neither the German industrial magnates, the German diplomats nor the German generals, etc. would have been so taken by his oratory. There is no doubt that his rhetoric and his command of even the finer nuances of the German language were exceptional.

To determine the specific methodology used in each speech, Hitler first considered the external parameters of the situation: the time, the place, the temperature of the hall, etc. In *Mein Kampf*,¹⁷¹ he explains how significant, for instance, the time of day can be in terms of a speech's impact. He felt that it was psychologically less advantageous to speak in the morning than in the late afternoon or evening when the mental resistance of his listeners had ebbed. The "twilight of the Catholic churches," the "mysterious magic of the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth," and similar local settings were more conducive, he found, to manipulating the masses.

He viewed oratory as "a wrestling match between two diametrically opposed forces,"¹⁷² and concluded:

The outstanding oratorical art of a commanding Messianic figure will more easily succeed in winning over for a new cause people whose powers of resistance have already been weakened in the most natural way—than those who are still in full possession of their spiritual and mental resilience.

It was the calculated aim of each of his major speeches to break this "resilience" in his audience. The first part of his usual 90-to-120-minute speeches—some lasted up to several hours—was dedicated to long-winded narrative abounding with endless historical or pseudophilosophical deliberations designed to tire his listeners and, like hypnosis, break down their mental resistance. When they had become dulled and lethargic, he bombarded them in the second half of his speech with demagogical phrases, nationalist slogans and the like in order to "electrify" them, goading them on to ever more thunderous applause and indiscriminating mass response.

In his "party narrative,"¹⁷³ the initial phase of each of his longer speeches, Hitler literally commenced at Genesis, Chapter 1, Verse 1, tracing the annals of the Party from its inception in 1919 through the

struggles of its early years and up into the present in minute detail and including every tangent of its triumphs as a party and a force in the nation to be reckoned with.

In using this method of captivating the attention of his audience, Hitler once again made use of a custom he had borrowed from the Catholic Church, where the sermon is preceded by a lengthy reading from the Bible. In his opinion, the stereotypical repetition of well-known texts transported his listeners into a mild state of trance, making them more receptive to new information to follow. Hitler spoke slowly and in measured words in this first part of his speeches, almost hesitantly and ponderously, not unlike a lecturing professor. Then, when he moved into the second part, the tempo of his speech took on increasing speed while he pushed the pitch of his voice to its limit.

Even the most agitated theatrical gestures and fervent dramatic phrases appearing to burst forth spontaneously were, more often than not, carefully cultivated and practiced techniques. Both Hitler's valet, Heinz Linge, and his friend and photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann, witnessed the dress rehearsals for such performances,¹⁷⁴ in which Hitler stood before a mirror reflecting a full-length image and recited the speech sentence by sentence, all the while observing his reflection. He studied his every movement, his every facial expression. He repeated the sentences and gestures until he was satisfied with his performance. Occasionally he turned to his friends and asked, "Am I good, Hoffmann?" or "Does it ring true, Linge? Do you think I can step before the crowd now?"

In view of such sober speculation and calculated technique, Hitler's speeches might be judged to have been nothing other than cheap comedy—laughable and grotesque charades. But this would neither serve to explain their enormous impact and almost magical effect nor do justice to the facts. Hitler was a natural actor, i.e. he actually became the role he wished to act. In fact, he came to believe what he said, or at least created that impression upon Germans and, in part, upon foreigners—not unlike a great character actor capable of evoking tears of sadness or putting the fear of God into his audience.

Hitler was actually capable of working himself up into a state of intense agitation which left him completely exhausted. His rhetorical talent far surpassed that of any other National Socialist party leader. Even Goebbels, whose role in the Third Reich is greatly overestimated today both in Germany and abroad, did not come near rivalling Hitler's talent

as an orator. Goebbels claimed of himself that he was capable of “playing on the psyche of the people as if it were a piano,”¹⁷⁵ but in reality the sparks his speeches ignited never grew into any real flame. Although he was able to arouse a non-critical crowd, he did not understand the art of calling forth real enthusiasm. Goebbels was a successful propagandist only when he received his directives from Hitler or was enthralled by his Führer’s ideas. The bulk of the people recognized that Goebbels’ own arguments were often mere figures of speech, doubtless presented with a certain amount of pathos but flawed by a lack of conviction on his part.

This was definitely not true of Hitler. His charismatic personality and oratory struck a genuine resonance within the German people. In the initial years of his rule, his speeches met with enthusiastic applause, and later, when his theatrical ravings, unrestrained outbursts of temper and loud-mouthing invective became disagreeable even to the indiscriminating masses, it was fear of the demon that made even these specimens of histrionic oratory outwardly successful. The English journalist Ward Price early recognized Hitler as the first German “demagogue since Luther.”¹⁷⁶

While Hitler perceived of oratory as a “wrestling match,” he did ensure that his was the better position from the onset. True discussion and debate were ruled out, both in personal conversation and in the setting of a public meeting. He could not stand criticism, he once exclaimed,¹⁷⁷ and the interjections of hecklers were a thing he abhorred. As he himself admitted,¹⁷⁸ the SA, his *Sturmabteilung*, originally served the sole function of doling out blows to hecklers and forcibly evicting anyone disrupting Hitler’s performance. Only when absolute silence reigned could he exert his spellbinding power upon his audience.

Only on one occasion did Hitler take part in a debate in the Reichstag—on March 23, 1933.¹⁷⁹ Then, too, he called out to the Social Democratic deputies who interjected their comments (as was common parliamentary practice): “Would you please let me finish, I didn’t interrupt you, either!” The impromptu speech Hitler made on this occasion convinced doubters that he did in fact compose his own speeches and did not require a prompter. When the Social Democrat Wels delivered his unexpected declamation against the Enabling Act, Hitler made a few notes on a piece of paper and then dismissed Wels and his arguments so thoroughly as to move even the skeptical Privy Councillor von Hugenberg to avid enthusiasm.

Hitler can be viewed in many ways, but certainly not as a bad speaker or one who needed an intellectual crutch to formulate well thought-out

speeches. He even declined using the official drafts of government speeches drawn up by his staff of which several are on file at the Federal Archives in Koblenz,¹⁸⁰ at the most drawing from statistical material compiled in them. Schacht's remark that Hitler had never uttered a rash or ill-considered word and had "never made a mistake or a slip of the tongue,"¹⁸¹ may apply to many private discussions, but not to his speeches as a whole.

Occasionally, Hitler became carried away by the dramatic torrent of his own rhetoric and later regretted certain language as having been too strong. Hence when he became Chancellor, he insisted upon checking all speeches before they were published, and he modified or deleted such wording. However, this was only infrequently the case. In general terms, the reprints of his speeches in the *Völkischer Beobachter*¹⁸² and the reports of the official German news agency (Deutsches Nachrichtenburo, DNB) constituted verbatim accounts of what he had said. This also applies, with few exceptions, to the special editions of certain speeches published (in pamphlet form) at a later date by the NSDAP's official party publishing house, Franz Eher Nachf., in Munich.

During World War II, Hitler doubtless would gladly have withdrawn or erased certain of his past statements and slogans. To cite a case in point, posters containing a "Proclamation to the Soldiers on the Eastern Front" issued on October 2, 1941¹⁸³ had to be taken down by special commandos a few weeks later. The text had announced the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union, and every soldier at the German eastern front was acutely aware of how premature this announcement was.

It was characteristic of Hitler to speak only if he had real or alleged triumphs of which to boast. In the wake of defeats or after having initiated measures capable of arousing public antipathy, he shrouded himself in silence and, instead of delivering the expected or even fervently hoped-for speech, he issued a written proclamation, thus avoiding any direct contact with the public.

It is for this reason that his public speeches grew more and more infrequent in the course of the Second World War. Only once was he forced to deliver an address after he had suffered a devastating defeat: on November 8, 1942, when the landing of the Allied Forces in North Africa coincided with his traditional commemorative speech on the occasion of the Munich Putsch in 1923.¹⁸⁴ Predictably, the speech he delivered that day numbers among his weakest. The portentous event weighed heavily in the hall and preoccupied the thoughts of the older party comrades; they even occasionally forgot to applaud at the places

in Hitler's speech which normally would have prompted an automatic response.

One might have expected Hitler to refrain from comment on the assassination attempt of July 20, 1944, for it did prove that strong opposition pervaded even into the ranks of those closest to him. He chose instead to interpret his escape as a sign from Divine Providence, a triumph tantamount to a miracle, and interrupted long months of silence to report the news of his "victory."¹⁸⁵ Demonstrating by this public appearance that he had survived unscathed was only secondary to his pose of triumph.

When speaking in smaller circles or to his friends, Hitler made use of the same techniques he employed when addressing public gatherings: he made certain that he was given undivided attention and complete silence, initially tiring his listeners with repetition and circumlocutory narrative, and then striking the tone he had chosen from his repertoire: sentimental reminiscence, incensed anger, plaintive self-pity, or fanatic fervor.

Ward Price, who witnessed Hitler's behavior in countless situations, wrote in 1938: "When more than two people are present, even though they are of his most intimate circle, there is no general discourse. Either Hitler talks and they all listen, or else they talk among themselves and Hitler sits silent."¹⁸⁶

So great was Hitler's oratorical power over many Germans that, even into March and April of 1945, he was still capable of instilling new faith in normally quite level-headed people in a situation which was devoid of hope. Albert Forster, Gauleiter in Danzig, reported to the chancellory bunker in March of 1945 in despair that 4000 Russian tanks were approaching Danzig. The German tanks available could not halt their progress. Forster consulted with Hitler and returned in a completely altered state of mind. "He told me that he will save Danzig," he cried, "so there can be no doubt about it!"¹⁸⁷

Colonel General Ritter von Greim, whom Hitler had dispatched to Berlin after Göring had been dismissed, arrived at the chancellory bunker on April 26, 1945 completely demoralized, as his pilot Hanna Reitsch reports.¹⁸⁸ When he emerged from Hitler's room, he was convinced of the possibility of a German *Endsieg*. Hitler had painted a rosy picture of the dismal situation and subsequently appointed von Greim Field Marshal and Commander in Chief of an air force which effectively no longer existed.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that Hitler's speeches mainly impressed those Germans who were witnessing his performance for the first time or for whom the spectacle was a rare occasion. Even the highest-quality blade will dull with repeated use, just as the most beautiful melody can become unbearable when heard too often.

Grand Admiral Erich Raeder noted before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg that Hitler's arguments lost much of their impact with those who were forced to hear them frequently and even daily,¹⁸⁹ particularly during the course of World War II. The generals at the Führer Headquarters, who came to know Hitler's tirades nearly by heart, had no qualms about nodding off to sleep during his monologues unless, of course, Hitler's remarks were directed at themselves.¹⁹⁰ Foreign visitors to Germany¹⁹¹ were struck by the fact that, during Hitler's most frenzied outbreaks when he ranted like a madman, his closest advisors—Göring, Ribbentrop and others—looked on in utter indifference or gazed out of the window.

Hitler's attempts to repeat the oratorical triumphs he had scored within Germany in the scope of his foreign policy and to impress foreign statesmen by impassioned delivery and radio speeches were completely ineffectual when parried by representatives of comparable or superior nations.

Behavior with which he could humble Schuschnigg, Hácha, Horthy, and many of the politicians from the Balkans, and convince Mussolini and Ciano, was useless when practiced upon the British, American and Russian statesmen. Hitler's oratorical art made as little impact on Chamberlain, Churchill, Halifax, and Henderson as on Roosevelt and Sumner Welles. And even the "enthusiastic" newspaper articles published by Lloyd George and Lord Rothermere on their respective visits to see Hitler were in reality nothing more than amused, ironic commentaries.

When Hitler received Molotov in 1940, his raptures on a fantastic future did not evoke a like response from the Russian, who kept steering the discussion back to topics in the present which were more to the point.¹⁹² Even Franco, who was indebted to the German dictator for his military support in the Spanish Civil War, remained immune to Hitler's impassioned rhetoric in 1940 in Hendaye and persisted in upholding his policy of neutrality.¹⁹³

The years 1932 to 1938—during which Hitler brought Germany under his control and set up the Greater German Reich—were studded with triumphs; the years 1939 to 1945—during which he struggled with

the same means to bring the world under his control—were pierced by defeat upon defeat. The contrast between what Hitler had prophesied and what actually came to pass grew increasingly stark, and the speeches he delivered as a blow to foreign powers ultimately worked against him.

The wild threats with which Hitler intended to force the British into submission during World War II had nearly the opposite effect. Churchill declared as early as November 1939:¹⁹⁴

“If words could kill, we should be dead already. But we are not disturbed by these blood-curdling threats. Indeed, we take them as a sign of weakness in our foes.”

The BBC adopted the practice of broadcasting segments of Hitler's speeches and contrasting his allegations with the true facts. The difference was a fatal one for Hitler. He had attempted to measure the world in terms of domestic German standards, and this basic miscalculation ultimately brought about his ruin.

Remarks on the Structure of this Work

Adolf Hitler's speeches and proclamations are products of his own creation, the unerring first-hand documentation of his career as a politician, head of government, head of state, and supreme commander of the German armed forces. They record his rise during the years 1932 to 1938 and trace his fall during the years from 1939 to 1945. In and of themselves, they represent an impressive history of the Third Reich.

All of Hitler's words either cited or mentioned in this work—speeches, proclamations, interviews, telegrams, correspondence, etc.—are referenced throughout according to their respective source.

Significant statements are reproduced verbatim. Routine speeches and proclamations, among them campaign speeches, addresses on the occasions of the annual Party Congress, May Day, Thanksgiving Day, New Year's Day, etc., are reproduced in full or in the form of lengthy excerpts only the first time they were held. The subsequent annual reiterations are quoted only insofar as they deal with new information or ideas, while the remainder are presented in summary form. Addresses constituting mere repetitions of prior speeches are cited only as to source. The "party narrative," the circumlocutory and predictable introduction to many speeches, has generally been deleted.

Such abridgement was unavoidable, for otherwise the publication of these speeches, particularly for the eventful years 1932 and 1933, would have exceeded a reasonable scope and necessitated sacrificing clarity. It can nonetheless be said that none of Hitler's public remarks which played a significant role in the course of events have been omitted.

Dashes enclosed in brackets following a section of a speech signify that further—inconsequential—comments on the same topic have been omitted. Brackets within a quote contain remarks by the author consisting of explanations designed to aid comprehension, corrections of grammatical errors, and occasional exclamation marks drawing attention to particularly preposterous claims on Hitler's part.

Quotations taken from the *Völkischer Beobachter* are based exclusively upon the Munich and/or Southern German editions unless reference is explicitly made to the Berlin or Northern German editions.

Descriptions of audience response—frequently a part of *Völkischer Beobachter* accounts and DNB reports—have generally been omitted or included merely in part. Only Hitler's speech before the Industry Club on January 27, 1932 and the debate between Hitler and Wels in the Reichstag on March 23, 1933 contain a complete record of the applause and jeers as cited in the Eher pamphlet and, respectively, the stenographic minutes of the Reichstag session.

Awareness of the historical background is required to place the speeches and proclamations in perspective; this is facilitated in the detailed commentary provided parallel to the original documentation. The footnotes provide further information and explain the roles of various important persons cited.

The materials are presented chronologically and divided into years. Each year is prefaced by a brief summary of its most important events. In order to facilitate the task of locating individual speeches, proclamations or footnote references, each page is headed by date. Volume IV closes with a comprehensive index of topics, persons, and places, as well as a glossary.

The division of the work into two major sections (Volumes I and II: 1932 to 1938; Volumes III and IV: 1939 to 1945) is based upon a logic inherent in the course of Hitler's career. The years 1932 to 1938 were the seven years of Hitler's triumph. He scored victory after victory during this time, albeit confined almost exclusively to the domestic front. The years 1939 to 1945 marked his gradual decline. The dictator had grossly overestimated his capacity to master conflicts with foreign powers, first on the diplomatic level and then in the form of a full-scale war. His initial successes proved but Pyrrhic victories, serving only to expedite his ultimate defeat.

THE YEAR 1932

Major Events in Summary

The year 1932 marked the climax of Hitler's domestic struggle. To a certain extent, the events of these twelve months reflect the entire course of his endeavors to gain control of German government since 1919. Thus the year 1932 as mirrored in this work is an accurately drawn miniature of the fourteen years of struggle for power which preceded it.

There were three alternative paths which could lead Hitler to the power he so coveted. The first possibility was a violent coup, which would, in all probability, necessitate bloodshed and an open confrontation with the armed forces of the Reichswehr and the police—a path which Hitler was hesitant to take now and had attempted to avoid at his putsch in November 1923. Nevertheless, he kept this possibility in mind as a last resort and had made certain preparations for it during this major year of struggle, 1932.¹

The second path was that of legal accession to power by means of a plebiscite, i.e. by achieving an absolute majority or a "right-wing majority" in the Reichstag and the Landtage (State Diets) or else with the election of a National Socialist Reich President. Under normal circumstances, the Weimar Constitution provided for the latter only every seven years.

In both cases—either a right-wing majority in the Reichstag or the election of a National Socialist Reich President—nothing could have prevented the legal constitution of a cabinet chosen by Hitler.

The year 1932, given Hitler's rhetorical prowess, appeared to fulfill all of the prerequisites for this solution: domestic chaos had reached a peak due to the worldwide economic crisis; six million unemployed were demanding work and bread. The *Mittelstand*, the civil servants, and the peasants were less than satisfied with the German Government. The Reich President and the Reich Chancellor had been governing since 1930 with what amounted to dictatorial powers by virtue of Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution and had nevertheless been unable to alleviate the economic oppression.

No less than fifteen election campaigns in 1932 (two presidential elections, two Reichstag elections, nine Landtag elections, and two local

elections) were dominated by Hitler's demagogical talents, which were *sans pareil* at the time. He was nonetheless able to score only partial successes in relatively small Länder. In the more decisive elections, the requisite 50% of the votes cast eluded his grasp despite his tireless efforts and unrivaled oratorical campaigns. The third path to power led, in the current figure of speech, through the "back door." It was essential to exert sufficient influence on both the private and public counsellors of the Reich President in the circles of the aristocracy, the Reichswehr, and the economy to such an extent that they would, in turn, attempt to sway the Reich President to institute a presidential cabinet under Hitler composed of ministers enjoying his personal confidence.

This path, which ultimately took Hitler to his goal, also gave him ample opportunity to make use of his powers of oral persuasion. He who had long been the butt of ridicule as a small-time party leader and failed putschist had become socially acceptable by 1932. The Reich President received him several times. Ministers in and out of office, leaders of industry, former generals, and active officers of the Reichswehr met to confer with him; party leaders from the German Nationalists to the Center made appointments to see him. Some were attempting to consolidate their forces with his; others to pacify him with insignificant ministerial posts. As the "drummer"² of the national uprising, he had served their purpose well; now they wanted to exercise the power he had gained.

But Hitler outplayed them all. Under the very eyes of the Government, he had established a "state within a state" with his National Socialist Party and now declared publicly that he and the NSDAP were the true representatives of Germany, and not the existing Reich Government. His Reichsleiters and Gauleiters conducted themselves as though they were Reich Ministers and District Presidents. Countless party "offices" (Agrarian Policy Office, Army Policy Office, Labor Service Office, etc.) made public statements on the events of the day and interfered with genuine "official" matters. Hitler dispatched his own observer—former General Franz Ritter von Epp—to the Disarmament Conference in Geneva.

In 1932 he issued a proclamation to the German peasants admonishing them to finish harvesting their crops in good time.³

The "Reich Press Chief" of the NSDAP conducted press conferences as though he were the press chief of the Reich Government. Uniformed men of the SS, the *Schutzstaffel*, assumed the task of erecting roadblocks at mass meetings and rallies as though they were the regular police. Tens

and even hundreds of thousands of SA men in uniform made spectacular performances of marching and parading in the former German garrison towns. Their formations⁴ were numbered after the former imperial army troops.

When Hitler later acceded to power, he did not hesitate to appoint his party friends to the same positions in State which they had held within the Party, with the exception of the SA, as would become dramatically evident in 1934.

When attending negotiations in Berlin in 1932, Hitler resided at the Kaiserhof Hotel across the street from the Chancellory. He intended that those in power there see that he was really standing “ante portas” and hear the cries of the many thousands from the Wilhelmsplatz demanding Hitler’s *Machtergreifung*.

Asked by a journalist whether one might indeed witness a march on Berlin á la Mussolini, Hitler replied: “Why should I march on Berlin? I’m already there!”⁵

In reality, Hitler was not as certain of victory as he pretended to be. He knew very well that, were he not successful in exploiting the extraordinary circumstances of the year 1932 (i.e. the economic and political crises and the presidential and parliamentary elections), his accession to power would become a thing of the distant future. By the end of 1932, the worst of the world economic crisis had passed, the unemployment rates had already begun to decline, and there were endeavors in Lausanne and Geneva to close the chapter on the Treaty of Versailles and the reparations.

To some of Hitler’s voters, the struggle for power had already taken too long: they would no longer cast their ballots for him. Party leaders here and there began to lose heart and became restless. Hitler declared at that time: “If the Party ever falls apart, I will take a gun and end it all in a minute.”⁶

But Hitler mastered these crises. His talent for oratory and his persistence won out. In the end he was able to persuade not only his vacillating party comrades but also those in power at the time—above all Papen and Hindenburg—that he alone was able to lead Germany onwards to an age of new greatness.

The triumph Hitler achieved over his domestic opponents in 1932 continued to affect him throughout his lifetime. He believed himself capable of attaining his foreign-policy goals by using the same methods and expected that the outcome of this second struggle would not deviate “by a hair’s breadth” from the first.⁷

Report and Commentary

1

It was Hitler's habit to begin the new year with a proclamation to his National Socialist supporters, a practice he upheld until 1945. Originally, the proclamation was coupled with a New Year's command to the fighting formations of the SA and SS, the HJ, etc.; from 1935 on, this was replaced by the order of the day to the soldiers of the Wehrmacht. Hitler's New Year's proclamations adhered more or less to a standard pattern: enumeration of the enormous successes of the preceding year and the pronouncement of even greater victories for the year to come. The ominous figures naturally played an important role, whereby their accuracy was of lesser importance.

In the New Year's proclamation for 1932, which follows verbatim,⁸ Hitler maintained without hesitation that his following had swelled to 15 million. In point of fact, however, the most successful election of the year 1932, the Reichstag election of July 31, had brought him no more than 13.7 million ballots.

*New Year's Proclamation to the Party.*⁹

National Socialists!

The twelfth year of our Movement's struggle has come to an end. Thanks to the colossal loyalty of all our fellow fighters, thanks to their sense of duty and sacrifice, the victory march of the National Socialist German Workers' Party can continue this year as well. We all know one thing: in 1931 our Movement became the largest party in Germany. Tremendous external victories are visible evidence to all of this fact.

When six and a half million German adults elected 107 of our trusted deputies to the German Reichstag on September 14, 1930, for the first time the whole world saw rent apart the web of lies with which the internal growth of our Movement has been outwardly veiled for years. Even the lies and slander were forced to halt their workings: a victory had been wrought which lies could not erase. Admittedly, only a few short weeks later, those professional political

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perverters of the truth had regained their footing and recovered from the initial shock to the extent that their brazen old game of lies could begin anew. They made an attempt to persuade themselves and the world that only a “temporary illness” of the German Volk could be the cause of our success. The Party—according to them—had reached its climax and would now plunge into abrupt decline.

Party Comrades! You have witnessed how Fate and the facts have once again proven our official political prophets to be liars. The year 1931 has pinned victory upon victory to our National Socialist flags. In spite of the flood of lies, misrepresentations, and slander which I had predicted, the masses of our adherents have grown enormously in this year’s elections. Germany is in the process of becoming National Socialist at a rapid pace. The elections in Bremen, Hamburg, Oldenburg, Anhalt-Dessau, Mecklenburg, Hesse, and Württemberg have brought about a continuous increase in the greatness and significance of our Movement. However, these external victories, no matter how exhilarating they are, would be worthless were they not ultimately accompanied by a comparable internal growth within the Party.

Party Comrades! You should gauge the magnitude of our Movement’s growth by the following: on September 14, 1930, our Party had 293,000 members. Today, on January 1, 1932, membership has already exceeded the 800,000 mark.

By January 1, 1931, approximately 100,000 men had joined our SA and SS organizations. Today, on January 1, 1932, there are far more than 300,000. The number of our adherents already exceeds 15 million!

This is a victory march unparalleled in the history of our Volk.

This numerical growth corresponds to the unique internal expansion of our organization.

Today Bolshevism and its Marxist-Centrist-Democratic helpers are faced with a gigantic front of awakening Germany!

Were it not for the pact which the Center and the middle classes have entered into with Marxism as a result of their inner relatedness of character, there would be no red, anti-Christian Germany today.

Therefore they are the accursed accomplices of Bolshevism.

Just as a figure like Bismarck once rightfully described liberalism as the pacesetter of Social Democracy, Democracy and the Center are today the pacesetters of Bolshevism and thus the parties who are mainly to blame for our misfortune. One merely external demonstration of the greatness of our National Socialist Organization is the establishment of the “Braunes Haus” as central Reich Office. In February of last year, the move was made from the offices in 50 Schellingstrasse to the newly acquired building in the Brienner Strasse. Despite extensions and modifications, today this building is already much too small. A new building is on the rise, another is in the planning stages, and yet another structure neighboring the Braunes Haus has been occupied since December. Not until 1931 was it possible to enlarge Organization Department II.

This has led not only to the increased conquest of the worker in the city, but also to the winning of the peasant.

The National Socialist German Workers' Party is a party not only of city dwellers; today it is also already the largest German peasants' party.

Its policy of balancing and reconciling the individual ranks of life, of unifying all Germans for the great political lifework of our Volk, impresses its mark more strongly upon its own composition with each passing month.

The inner stability of our Movement and the absolute rightness of the thoughts as well as the foundations of its organization revealed themselves perhaps most clearly when called upon to overcome all of our adversaries' attempts, by way of internal disturbances, to fragment the party of German resurrection they so abhor.

The rejoicing with which our enemies welcomed every apparent indication of inner rebellion in our Movement was just as great as their bitter disappointment: the Party has come out of every test stronger than before. The year 1931 is the most convincing evidence of all!

National Socialists! Today you see this evolution clearly behind you. May you set your sights from there on the future. The time is approaching when the world will face a decision which comes about only once in millenniums.

The bourgeois parties view what happens in the world through their own eyes. Small and shortsighted as they are, they suppose the manifestations of the environment to be powers similar to their own. Even now, they have not yet recognized in Bolshevism the destruction of all human cultures but perceive it to be a perhaps still "interesting experiment of a new desire on the part of the State." They are totally unaware that today a thousand-year-old culture is being shaken to its very foundations; they have no conception of the fact that, if Bolshevism ultimately triumphs, it will not merely mean that a few miserable bourgeois governments will go to the devil, but that irreplaceable historic traditions will come to an end as well. Yes, and that furthermore a turning point in the development of humanity will inevitably be the end result in the worst meaning of the word. Bolshevism's triumph means not only the end of today's peoples, their states, their cultures, and their economies; it also means the end of their religions! This world shock will result not in freedom, but in barbarous tyranny on the one hand and a materialistic brutalization of man on the other!

As so often before in the history of peoples, Germany's fate this time will again be of decisive importance for the fate of all. If the flags of the red stultification and brutalization of humanity (*Menschheitsverdummung und Menschheitsvertierung*) should ever be hoisted over Germany, the rest of the world will share the same lot.

For seventy years, disreputable bourgeois parties in Germany have exhausted the power of the national idea and, to a large degree, left our Volk at the mercy of Marxism. For seventy years the parties of democracy and, in their wake, the strictly Christian Center Party, have helped to corrupt our Volk by practicing sodomy with the forerunners of Bolshevism.

Today they are clinging with a reprehensible thirst for power to a regime which would no longer belong to them if their own significance alone were any measure.

Were the National Socialist Movement to cease existing today as a counterbalance to Marxism, Germany would be Bolshevist tomorrow.

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But what is Fate's will? If there was any deeper meaning underlying the events of last year, then it can only be that it is Fate's own will that a clear line is drawn.

We can see how the verse from the Bible which recognizes both the hot and the cold but damns the lukewarm to being spewn forth is coming to fruition in our Volk. The middle will be smashed and shattered. The compromises will come to an end. Today international Bolshevism is faced with the German nation under National Socialism. The Almighty Himself is creating, out of His own merciful will, the prerequisite for the salvation of our Volk; in allowing the lukewarm middle to be destroyed, He intends to give us the triumph.

National Socialists! We now enter upon the new year in the conviction that it will be the most difficult year of the struggle of our Movement.

A glance behind us shows countless sacrifices. As long as we comprised a small party, we were entitled to perceive in our own sacrifices the magnitude of the obligation for our actions. Now that Providence has granted us such great successes, the extent of our duties to Germany lies in the magnitude of the sacrifices which our Volk has taken on in the course of its historical evolution. We are fighting not for the victory of one party, but rather for the preservation of our Volk.

In view of the magnitude of these sacrifices and this task, we cannot expect that the way which lies ahead will be easy!

Men of the National Socialist Movement! SA and SS Comrades! I repeat the demands I made last year:

Men of my National Socialist Movement! I am not demanding that you do anything illegal, I am not requiring anything which would bring your conscience in conflict with the law, but I do demand that you follow me loyally on the path which the law permits and which my conscience and my insight require, and that you join your fate with my fate.

It will be a purgatory of slander, lies, misrepresentations, terror, and suppression through which our Movement must pass!

Our opponent fears retaliation for the inordinate number of crimes he has perpetrated upon our Volk. Hence no trick or deed is beyond him in his determination to prevent the victory of our Movement.

National Socialists! Expect it from the very beginning, and nothing will surprise you. Then you will overcome everything.

The path from seven men to fifteen million was more difficult than the path from fifteen million to the German nation will be.

As we once had the audacity to believe in our gigantic goal and its realization, let us today have the courage, like a knight without fear and without reproach, to withstand hell, death and the devil and choose the way to victory and freedom. National Socialists! Each of you shall be proud to be attacked by our adversaries in 1932!

He who is not attacked by the Marxist falsifiers and the Centrist liars and their press is useless to Germany and worth nothing to our Volk!

Struggle through to the realization that our enemies today are left with only one means of fighting: lying; and gauge from this the necessity of a community welded together for better or worse.

January 1, 1932

Comrades! Let us march into this new year as fighters with the goal of leaving it as victors.

Long live our glorious National Socialist Combat Movement!

Long live our eternally beloved German Volk!

Deutschland erwache!

Munich, January 1, 1932

Adolf Hitler

New Year's Command¹⁰ to the SA, SS, HJ, and the NSKK

The year 1931 strengthened and consolidated the Movement's units combined under the command of the Supreme SA Leadership both internally and in terms of numbers.

The army of Brownshirts has multiplied many times over.

The Movement has had to bear a high number of casualties. Forty-six were killed for the honor and freedom of the Volk; 4,804 were wounded. We wish to commemorate them foremost in loyalty and gratitude.

The victims were not killed in vain. The blood of the fighters shall give the sprout new energy.

Comrades, I thank you at the threshold of the new year for everything you have accomplished in the past year full of renunciation and sacrifices.

I wish to express my unqualified recognition of all the leaders and men of the SA, SS, HJ, and NSKK.

Proud of the accomplishments of 1931, you may enter the new year with cheerful confidence.

You are the hope of the German Volk.

Be worthy of your mission!

Der Oberste SA Führer: Adolf Hitler

Pursuant to the Weimar Constitution, the Reich President, who was to be elected directly by the people, had a term of seven years. The Field Marshal of World War I, Paul von Hindenburg, had been elected in 1925 as a candidate of the right-wing parties. In 1932, he was nearly 85 years old, which meant that under normal circumstances he would not have been considered for a further term. In any case, the right-wing parties which had chosen him as their leader in 1925 did not approve of his manner of governing, for he was more or less loyal to the Constitution. However, the Social Democrats and—even more so—the Center suddenly clung to him in 1932. Reich Chancellor Heinrich Brüning (Center) was using Article 48 to govern in an authoritarian fashion as Hindenburg's presidential chancellor and could hardly have remained in office given a different President. But the Social Democrats feared that new elections could result in even more ballots for the National Socialists or even in the election of a National Socialist Reich President.

One possible solution to this problem was a parliamentary maneuver: all of the parties, with the exception of the Communists, would pass

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a resolution in the Reichstag by a two-thirds majority which would extend President Hindenburg's term in office for national reasons.

For this purpose Hitler was sent a polite invitation to attend negotiations in Berlin in early January 1932. The Reich Government believed that Hitler would be so naive as to consent to the extension of Hindenburg's term and forfeit this magnificent opportunity to launch a tremendous speechmaking campaign. Although Hitler was certain from the onset that none other than he could be considered as candidate for the NSDAP, he nevertheless accepted the invitation and proceeded to Berlin. The Party's press agency circulated the following account on January 8, 1932:¹¹

On Tuesday, January 5, Adolf Hitler was requested by telegraph to travel to Berlin for talks with Reich Minister of the Interior Groener. The leader of the National Socialists conferred with Reich Chancellor Brüning and Reich Minister of the Interior Groener on the evening of Wednesday, January 6 and yesterday afternoon, January 7, on the subject of the Reich President election.

Adolf Hitler reserved comment to the Reich Chancellor in order to first inform the parties of the national opposition of his opinion.¹²

Hitler subsequently failed to enlighten Brüning and Groener, who told the press that the talks had been held "on friendly terms."¹³ He first travelled to Lemgo to speak there on January 8 at the Lippian municipal election. It was, he declared to the *Völkischer Beobachter*, "the most monumental election rally the land of Arminius had ever seen."¹⁴

On January 9, Hitler was back in Berlin, where he once again conferred with Brüning and Reich Minister Treviranus for one hour. A further conference with Privy Councillor Alfred Hugenberg¹⁵ followed in the afternoon. The discussions with the national opposition (German Nationalists and Stahlhelm), which had formed what was called the "Harzburg Front"¹⁶ with Hitler as early as October 1931, were continued on January 11 in the Kaiserhof Hotel and concluded with a rejection of an extended term "due to doubts as to its constitutionality," in spite of State Secretary Meissner's previous personal visit to Hitler.¹⁷

On January 12, Hitler addressed the following letter to Reich Chancellor Brüning:¹⁸

Berlin, January 12, 1932

Dear Herr Reichskanzler!

On January 6, 1932, Reich Minister of the Interior General Groener informed me that there were plans to extend the presidency of Field Marshal von Hindenburg by parliamentary measures or to reelect the Reich President by a

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two-thirds majority. Reich Minister of the Interior Groener requested my Party's view on this contemplated action.

I have the privilege of informing you, Herr Reichskanzler, that the National Socialist German Workers' Party, with all respect for the person of the Reich President, is not in a position to support this proposal. On behalf of the National Socialist Movement, I thus refuse our consent. I will inform you, dear Herr Reichskanzler, of the constitutional, foreign policy, domestic, and moral reasons which have prompted us to take this view in a detailed statement to be dispatched without delay.

With my assurance of respectful esteem, I remain, Herr Reichskanzler, faithfully yours,

Adolf Hitler

The "detailed statement" of reasons promised by Hitler was given to Brüning on January 16, 1932 by Göring. The lengthy letter¹⁹ was written in the style of a painstakingly exact constitutionalist who simply saw no way of departing from the letter of the law and approving of an extension to the President's term by resolution of parliament. Brüning made the mistake of answering this empty, albeit long-winded document. Now Hitler was in his element: he branded Brüning as a national opportunist who had not voted for Hindenburg in 1925 but now intended to exploit him as a shield for his own political machinations.

Hitler's open letter to Brüning of January 25, 1932 (in reply to the latter's letter of January 23, 1932) read as follows:²⁰

In respect to your remarks, Herr Reichskanzler, concerning the political reasons which force me as Führer of the National Socialist Movement to reject your attempt, with all due respect to the person of the Field Marshal von Hindenburg, I may note as follows:

You perceive in the arguments which we have to show for our rejection of your proposal a lack of objectivity and a motivation due solely to party politics, while conversely claiming for yourself the exclusive right of being motivated by vaterländisch (patriotic) and other similar standpoints. Herr Reichskanzler, may I then take the liberty of posing the following question:

Seven years ago, at a time when the Center was fighting Hindenburg's election to Reich President with every means available and the Field Marshal's rival candidate was truthfully anything but an "historic figure," did you or did you not cast your ballot for Herr Marx, motivated by the same *vaterländisch* or party political reasons? Or did, in your opinion, the interests of the *Vaterland* speak against Hindenburg at that time and only now speak for him?

Herr Reichskanzler, you are of the purely personal opinion that today your parliamentary attempt is a necessary act in terms of national politics, and I am of the conviction that the most important thing to be done in these terms is the elimination of the present system.

In your letter you write that you must, as a "tax to truth," disagree with my "theories" by pointing out the facts.

Herr Reichskanzler, I have reread your letter perhaps a dozen times now but have searched in vain for these "facts"; apparently they have been omitted. You say that, from a "patriotic point of view," you find it quite striking that I attribute the main cause of distress in Germany to the political conditions resulting from our parties. Herr Reichskanzler! Fürst Bismarck, who indisputably represented a patriotic standpoint as well and for this very reason was so dreadfully showered with hate and reproach by the Center, had the exact same opinions, particularly in respect to the parties—the same ones which constitute your basic support, Herr Reichskanzler—in viewing party politics as the main causes of distress in Germany.

Then you write—also with little regard to the "facts"—that, in what is "almost the general opinion," one of the "external factors" for our misery is the Treaty of Versailles which, with its political and economic-financial injustice and unreasonableness, has given rise to distress in both Germany and the world.

Quite right, Herr Reichskanzler! But a Treaty of Versailles would never have come about had not the Center, the Social Democrats and the Democrats, the parties who support you, undermined, destroyed and betrayed the old Reich—if not in fact prepared, carried out, or at least accepted and covered up for the revolution. I, for one, Herr Reichskanzler, have never regarded the Treaty of Versailles as a possible foundation for the life of our Volk or the success of the economy, but the parties supporting you have, by signing this Treaty, at least pretended that its performance was within the realm of the possible. In order to "preclude any confusion in history," I may note that I, and not you, was the first person in Germany to take a stand against this Treaty in countless mass rallies. However, the merciless handling of this Treaty which, in your view, destroyed every attempt at rebuilding Germany in the first five years, would have been completely impossible had not certain "German" parties given their consent to each act of blackmail, ignominy and disgrace.

Hence I am disregarding neither "the external circumstances" nor the "state of affairs" which they have created; rather, I am holding those parties responsible who, through their doings, either created these circumstances or at least encouraged them. Just as Bismarck was once forced to overcome the old liberal party in order to weld Germany together, so must your parties, Herr Reichskanzler, be annihilated in order to save Germany.

Herr Reichskanzler! You talk about "well-informed men in all countries" and attempt to play them off against us. Do you intend perhaps to cite the opinions of these "experts," who talked the German Volk first into taking the Dawes Plan and then the Young Plan by prophesying that we and the rest of the world would benefit as a result of these "treaties"? Herr Reichskanzler, we, and not your experts, have accurately prophesied the developments. I am willing at any time to confront the "opinions" of your "experts" with our warnings at that time before the entire German Volk. Seldom have opinions of government experts been proven wrong by the facts in such a dreadful fashion. Today's catastrophe, Herr Reichskanzler, is one we have been predicting for years, and

for this reason we were decried by you and your parties as “dreamers posing a threat to state security.”

Herr Reichskanzler! If you say that a different Reich Government would have to continue on the paths you have taken, I grant you, seen from your vantage point, the necessity of such an attitude: just as a military commander, regardless of how many defeats he has suffered, is still convinced that another would not have done any better. But history has shown that there is indeed a difference, in a situation which is desperate as it is, whether someone like the Herzog von Braunschweig is commanding the army or someone like Gneisenau. In conclusion, you admonish us to consider that successes in foreign policy are only attainable by means of the unanimity with which the nation supports its negotiators.

Herr Reichskanzler! Certainly there was a time when it was the obligation of every decent human being to support those who preserved the interests of Germany which were defended on the battlefield at that time. But in that most terrible age, the very parties upon which you depend today did not follow this doctrine in the least!

Today the main thing is to finally snatch the soul of the nation for the most “patriotic of interests” from these saboteurs of the German power of resistance. You cannot expect us, Herr Reichskanzler, to cover up for the Young Plan, the implementation of which your parties celebrated as a decisive step forward, while we recognized it as madness from the very start. And you cannot expect today that a genuinely responsible German give his unqualified approval to measures which, as the sum of human and historical experience has shown, can only bring further disaster upon a people. I do not doubt for a second, Herr Reichskanzler, that if Frederick the Great, Freiherr vom Stein or Bismarck had been damned to observe the politics of the last thirteen years as normal citizens, they would not be members of your Centrist-Democratic-Marxist club; they would be in the national opposition.

Your actions, Herr Reichskanzler, are dictated by conscience; ours by insight. Perhaps your conscience gives you the energy to continue on your desperate way, but we are inspired by the will to elevate reason and courage to reign over our German life in place of the servile policy of illusionism and the international slogan-slinging doubletalk of the past thirteen years.

I further take the liberty of expressing my astonishment that you, Herr Reichskanzler, choose not to see the difference between purely informatory talks, which you had with me and concerning which I have consequently refrained from comment, and the suggestion—upon which the Party as such should pass a resolution—to go along with a parliamentary action at a time when National Socialists throughout Germany are being brutally deprived of their civil rights: you have only to think of how National Socialist civil servants are treated in Prussia, think of the official acts of suppression, the suspicions, and persecution of all sorts being exercised against National Socialism; think of the many hundreds of honest fighters of my Movement who have been killed; remember, too, that the Reich with its ban on National Socialists gaining employment even as simple dock workers promotes the campaign of persecution against National Socialism!

The fact that you, Herr Reichskanzler, do not wish or are unable to comprehend my astonishment at being enlisted to take part in a parliamentary act of this kind in view of these circumstances is nothing but an indication of how fundamentally your thinking differs from mine.

Herr Reichskanzler! You regard it as your given right to believe that no one else could have done better than you have. But then do not deprive us of the right to be convinced that no government could have done worse than yours.

Munich, January 25, 1932

Braunes Haus

Adolf Hitler

Hitler's speeches in January 1932 were predominantly concerned with Germany's general economic and political situation but did not yet contain any indication of his decision to campaign for the office of Reich President. First he had to lay the groundwork.

On January 14, he composed a written dedication²¹ to the newly-founded NS Party press agency. On January 16, he submitted a declaration to the Lower Court of Berlin-Moabit in the libel suit filed against him by former SA leader Captain Stennes for defamation as a police spy.²² Hitler was acquitted. On January 17, he delivered a speech to National Socialist students at the Berlin tennis courts,²³ and on January 23, addressed 7,000 party comrades in Munich (Zirkus Krone).²⁴

Hitler pulled off a major coup on January 27. Introduced by the industrial magnate Fritz Thyssen, he spoke before the Industry Club in Düsseldorf. As at nearly all major speeches in 1932, he was attired in a dark-blue, double-breasted suit with a black tie.

Most of the captains of industry gathered at Düsseldorf witnessed Hitler's oratory for the first time, and most of them were unquestionably opposed to him at the commencement of his two-and-a-half-hour address. They mistrusted the NSDAP—its very name hinted of Socialism—and expected at best a crude rendering of party propaganda.

Although Hitler essentially expounded the same themes he treated in his mass rallies, the skeptical leaders of industry soon fell prey to his oratorical skill.

Here Hitler again utilized his standard method of tiring his audience. For one and a half hours he held forth on lengthy "philosophical" explanations of the alleged causes of the world crisis, on the values of the individual and the Volk, on the principles of struggle and achievement, on the *Herrensinn* (concept of domination) in economics and politics, etc. When he had reached the conclusion that all of his listeners, including those who were antagonistic, were thoroughly confused and hence incapable of any intellectual resistance, he proceeded to the more

tangible passages and confronted his now highly receptive audience with the imminent threat of Communism. At this point he began juggling with figures and percentages. He claimed point-blank that fifty percent of the German population had Bolshevist leanings; the question was how to create a strong and healthy Germany under these circumstances.

Soon he began to cite nationalistic slogans to his awakening audience. The World War, he claimed, had been lost due to the spiritual aberration of Marxism. Only the *Machtstaat* (totalitarian state) could combat the disease in the economy. It was essential for Germany to maintain an army of eight million reservists. A single supreme command should govern the state, just as in the army or, even better, in a company! He himself had been a mere nameless German soldier "with a very small zinc number on his breast"; today he and his Party comprised the German Volk's only remaining assets. And even if he were only the drummer of national Germany, this in itself would be a great statesmanlike deed.

The means for Germany's recovery were "the restoration of a healthy, national, powerful body politic, intolerant and relentless against those who do not acknowledge the vital interests of the nation and otherwise open to friendship and peace with anyone who wants friendship and peace."

These closing words brought Hitler tumultuous, long drawn-out applause. But this was not all: he was granted access to German industry's *Nibelungenschatz*, a secret fund for combatting Bolshevism. This meant that the Party's strained financial situation was restored to good order for the approaching presidential election. As Goebbels noted,²⁵ it was improving "from day to day."

Hitler addressed the Industry Club in Düsseldorf verbatim as follows:²⁶

If today the National Socialist Movement is regarded in many circles in Germany as being opposed to the business world, I believe the reason for this lies in the fact that we formerly adopted a position in respect to the events which determined the development of today's situation differing from that of the other organizations which play a significant role in public life. Today our views still differ in many points from those of our opponents.

It is our conviction that the misery is due not only and not primarily to general world events, for this would more or less exclude, from the very onset, the possibility that an individual people might better its situation. Were it true that the German misery is necessarily due solely to a so-called world crisis²⁷—a world crisis on the course of which we as Volk naturally can exercise no influence or only an insignificant amount of influence—then Germany's future could only be described as hopeless. How should a state of affairs change for

which no one bears the blame? In my opinion, the view that the world crisis alone is to blame leads, in the long run, to a dangerous pessimism. It is only natural that the more the factors giving rise to a certain state of affairs are removed from an individual's sphere of influence, the more that individual will despair of ever being able to change this state of affairs. The gradual result will perforce be a certain lethargy, an indifference, and ultimately, perhaps despair.

For I believe it is of primary importance to break with the view that our fate is determined by the world. It is not true that the final cause of our misery lies in a world crisis, in a world catastrophe; what is true is that we have slipped into a general crisis because certain mistakes were made here from the very beginning. I cannot say: "The general view is that the Peace Treaty of Versailles is the cause of our misfortune." What is the Peace Treaty of Versailles other than the work of man? It is not something which has been burdened or imposed upon us by Providence. It is the work of man for which, quite naturally, once again men will have to be held responsible, with their merits and with their faults. If this were not so, how would man ever be able to do away with this work at all? It is my opinion that there is nothing which has been caused by the will of man which cannot in turn be changed by another man's will.

Both the Peace Treaty of Versailles as well as all of the consequences of this Treaty are the result of a policy which was perhaps regarded as being correct, at least in the enemy nations, some fifteen, fourteen or thirteen years ago; seen from our vantage point, it can only be seen as fatal, even though it was still supported by millions of Germans a mere ten years or less ago and only today stands revealed in its utter impossibility. Hence, I must conclude that there is some implicit blame for these events in Germany as well if I want to believe at all that the German Volk can still exercise some influence toward changing these conditions.

It is, in my opinion, also false to claim that today's life in Germany is determined solely by considerations of foreign policy; that the primacy of foreign policy today controls the whole of our domestic life. It is naturally possible for a people to reach a point where factors of foreign policy exclusively influence and determine its domestic life. But let no one say that this circumstance is either natural or was intended from the onset. Rather, the important thing is for a people to lay the necessary groundwork to alter this state of affairs.

If anyone tells me that foreign politics are the foremost determining factor in the life of a people, then I must first ask: What do you mean by "politics"? There are a number of definitions: Frederick the Great said: "Politics is the art of serving one's State with every means." Bismarck stated: "Politics is the art of the possible"—based upon the concept that everything within the realm of possibility should be done to serve the State and, in the subsequent transition to the concept of nationalities, the nation. Yet another considers that this service to the people can be effected by peaceful as well as military means, for Clausewitz said: "War is the continuation of politics, albeit with different means." Conversely, Clemenceau believed that peace today is nothing other than the continuation of the battle and the pursuit of the battle aim, although, once again, with different means. In short: politics is and can be nothing other than the realization of the vital interests of a people and the practical waging of

its life-battle with all means available. Thus it is quite clear that this life-battle has its initial starting point in the people itself, and that at the same time the people is the object, the value in and of itself, which is to be preserved. All of the functions of this body politic should ultimately fulfill only one purpose: securing the preservation of this body in the future. Therefore I can neither say that foreign policy is of primary significance, nor that economic policy has priority. Naturally a people will require an economy in order to live. But this economy is also only one of the functions the body politic requires for its existence. Primarily, however, the most essential thing is the starting point itself, namely the people in and of itself.

One should not say that foreign politics are of prime importance in determining the path of a people; rather, one must say that, first of all, it is the people, with its own intrinsic value, with its organization and training in this value, which marks out its own path within the world around it. I should not say that foreign policy is capable of changing the value of the people to any significant extent; rather, I must say: each people must wage the battle to safeguard its own interests and can only wage a battle which corresponds to its innermost nature, its value, its capabilities, the quality of its organization, etc. Naturally, foreign policies will in turn exercise their retrospective influence. We ourselves have experienced it: what a difference there is in the reactions of the individual peoples to foreign policies! The reaction is determined by the inner state of mind, by the inner value, by the inner disposition, by the capabilities of each individual people. Thus I can ascertain that, even if the basic value of a nation is constant, shifts in the inner organization of the life of this nation can suffice to give rise to a change in its attitude to the external world.

Therefore it would be wrong to claim that foreign policy shapes a people; rather, the peoples control their relations to the rest of the world respective to the forces inherent in them and respective to their education in the utilization of these forces. We can be quite certain that, had a different Germany stood in the place of today's Germany, the attitude to the rest of the world would also have been appreciably different. However, presumably the influences of the rest of the world would also have manifested themselves in other ways. Denial of this would mean that Germany's destiny could no longer be changed, no matter which regime is governing in Germany. The roots underlying such a belief and the explanation for it are obvious: assertions that the destiny of a people is determined solely by foreign countries have always been the excuses of bad governments. Weak and bad governments throughout the ages have made use of this argument in order to excuse their own failures or those of their predecessors; the failures of their entire tradition-bound, predetermined course; and in order to claim from the very beginning: no one else in my position could have done otherwise. For what could anyone do with his people against conditions which are firmly established and rooted in the rest of the world, with a people which is then naturally regarded as a fixed value as well?

My view in this respect is another: I believe that three factors essentially influence the political life of a people.

First of all, the inner value of a people, which is passed down from one generation to the next as inheritance and genotype—a value which only suffers

any change when the carrier of this inheritance, the people itself, changes in terms of its genetic composition. It is a certain fact that individual character traits, individual virtues and individual vices always recur in peoples as long as their inner nature, their genetic composition, does not undergo any essential change. I can see the virtues and vices of our German Volk in the Roman authors just as clearly as I perceive them today. This inner value, which determines the life of the people, can be destroyed by nothing save a genetic change in its very substance. An illogical organization of life or an unreasonable education may interfere with this value temporarily. But in this case, merely its outward effects are obstructed, while the basic value in and of itself continues to exist as it has before. This is the great source of all hope for the recovery of a people. Here lies the justification for believing that a people which, in the course of thousands of years, has exhibited countless examples of the highest inner value cannot suddenly have lost this inborn, genetically transmitted value from one day to the next; rather, that this people will one day again bring this value into play. Were this not the case, the belief of millions of people in a better future—the mystic hope for a new Germany—would be incomprehensible. It would be incomprehensible how this German Volk, depleted from eighteen to thirteen and a half million people at the end of the Thirty Years' War, could regain the hope of rising again by means of industriousness and efficiency, how hundreds of thousands and finally millions belonging to this utterly crushed Volk could once again be seized by the yearning for a new form of government. It would be inconceivable, were there not a certain unconscious conviction in all of these individuals, that a value was present in and of itself which manifested itself time and time again throughout the millenniums, perhaps repressed and hindered in its effectiveness at times by bad leadership, bad education, bad organization within the State—but which in the end always struggled its way through—presenting to the world over and over again the wonderful spectacle of our Volk rising anew.

I said that this value can be corrupted. In particular, however, there are still two other inwardly related phenomena which we can observe again and again in periods of national decline.

One of these is the substitution, in democracy, of a levelling, numerical concept for the value of the individual. The other is the negation of the value of the people, the denial that there is diversity in the natural abilities, achievements, etc. of the individual peoples. In fact, each of these two phenomena is mutually dependent upon the other or at least exerts an influence on the other's development. Internationalism and democracy are inseparable concepts. It is only logical that democracy, which negates the special value of the individual within the people and puts in its place a general value, a numerical value, must proceed in this same way in respect to the life of the peoples, and there it degenerates to internationalism. It is maintained, in a general sense, that peoples have no innate values; rather, at most, there may be manifestations of temporary differences as a result of education; but there is no essential difference in value between Negroes, Arians, Mongolians, and Redskins. This view, which constitutes the basis of our entire international body of thought today, is so far-reaching in its consequences that ultimately a Negro will be able

to preside at the sessions of the League of Nations; it leads perforce in turn to the further consequence that, within a single people, in the same way, any differences between the value of individual members of this people will be particularly disputed. In this way, of course, any existing special ability, any existing basic value of a people can, for all practical purposes, be made ineffective. For, with this view, the greatness of a people is not the sum of all its achievements, but rather ultimately a sum of its outstanding achievements. Let no one say that the image which is conveyed as the first impression of the culture of mankind is the impression of its overall achievement. This entire structure of culture, down to its foundations and in each of its building blocks, is nothing other than the result of creative talent, the achievement of intelligence, and the industriousness of individuals. The greatest results are the great crowning achievement of individual geniuses endowed by God; the average results are the achievement of men of average ability; and the total result is undoubtedly a product of the application of human working power towards the exploitation of the creations of geniuses and talented men. But this naturally means that, when the capable minds of a nation—who are always in the minority—are given a value equal with all the others, this must result in subjugating the genius to the majority, in subjecting the ability and the value of the individual to the majority, a process which is mistakenly called the rule of the people. This is not the rule of the people, but in fact the rule of stupidity, of mediocrity, of half-measures, of cowardice, of weakness, and of inadequacy. The rule of the people is rather when a people allows itself to be governed and led in all areas of life by its most capable individuals who are born for the task, than to allow all areas of life to be administered by a majority which, by its very nature, is alien to these areas.

In this way, however, democracy will, in practice, result in cancelling out the real values of a people. This is one of the reasons why peoples with a great past slowly forfeit their former status from the very point onwards when they submit to unlimited democratic rule by the masses; for the existing and potentially outstanding achievements of the individual in all areas of life are then practically ruled ineffective, thanks to being subjected to rape by numbers. But this means that such a people will gradually lose not only its cultural and not only its economical significance, but also its significance as a whole. In a relatively short time, it will no longer represent to the rest of the world the value it once did. And this will necessarily be accompanied by a shift in its ability to safeguard its interests in respect to the rest of the world. It is not inconsequential whether a people embarks on a period such as, for instance, 1807 to 1813 under the leadership of the most capable individuals who are granted extraordinary authority, or whether, in a similar period, such as 1918 to 1921, it marches under the leadership of parliamentary mass madness. In the one case, one observes that the inner rebuilding of the life of the nation has led to the highest achievements which, though certainly founded in the value of the people, are only then capable of being manifested; while in the other case even the value which already exists no longer manifests itself. Yes, things can proceed to the point when an unquestionably industrious people, in whose lifetime apparently very few changes have taken place—particularly in respect to the efforts of individu-

als—loses so much in terms of its overall achievement that this achievement is no longer of any significance to the rest of the world.

But there is yet another factor involved: namely, the view that, having already denied the value of the individual and the particular value of a people, life on this planet must not necessarily be maintained through conflict—an opinion which, perhaps, might be of no import had it only become implanted in individual minds, but which has appalling consequences because it is slowly poisoning an entire people. It is not as though these types of general changes in the *Weltanschauung* are confined to the surface or involve purely intellectual processes. No, in the long run they affect the very roots, influencing all of the expressions of a people's life.

I may cite an example: you, Gentlemen, are of the opinion that the construction of the German economy must be based upon the concept of private property. Then again, you can only maintain the idea of private property if it appears to be somehow founded in logic. This concept must draw its ethical justification from the insight that it is a necessity dictated by nature. It cannot, for instance, be motivated solely by the claim: "It has been this way until now, and therefore it must continue this way." For—in periods of great upheavals in the State, of movements of peoples, and of transitions in thought—institutions, systems, etc. cannot only remain unaffected because they have existed previously in the same form. It is characteristic of all truly great revolutionary epochs in the history of mankind that they pass over, with unparalleled ease, forms which have become sacred only with time or which only apparently become sacred with time. Thus it is necessary to justify these types of traditional forms which are to be preserved in such a manner that they can be regarded as absolutely necessary, and as logical and right. In that case, I must say one thing: private property is only morally and ethically justifiable if I assume that men's achievements are different. Only then can I say that, because men's achievements are different, the results of those achievements are also different. But if the results of men's achievements are different, then it is expedient to leave the administration of these achievements to men to an appropriate degree. It would be illogical to assign the administration of the fruits of an achievement connected to one individual to the next best, less capable individual or the whole, for these latter individuals have already proven, by the simple fact that they themselves have not performed the achievement, that they cannot be capable of administering the resulting product. Therefore one must admit that, from an economic point of view, men are not equally valuable, not equally significant in every area from the onset. Having admitted this, it would be madness to claim that, while there are doubtless differences in value in the economic sector, there are none in the political sector! It is nonsense to base economic life on the concept of achievement, of personal value and thus practically on the authority of the individual, while denying this authority of the individual in the political sphere and substituting in its place the law of the greater number—democracy. This will inevitably slowly cause a gulf between the economic view and the political view which one will attempt to bridge by assimilating the former to the latter—an attempt which has indeed been made, for this gulf has not remained pure, empty theory. The concept of the equality

of values has meanwhile been raised to a system not only in the political but also in the economic sector. And not only as an abstract theory: no, this economic system thrives in gigantic organizations—yes, today it has already seized the huge territory of an entire State.

I am, however, incapable of regarding two basic ideas as being the possible foundation for the life of a people for any length of time. If it is correct to assume that human achievements are different, then it must also be correct that the value of man in respect to the creation of certain achievements is different. But then it is absurd to attempt to apply this only in respect to a certain sphere, in the sphere of economy and its leadership, but not in the sphere of leadership in the life-struggle as a whole, namely in the sphere of politics. Rather it is only logical that, if I acknowledge the unequivocal recognition of particular achievements in the sphere of economy as the prerequisite for any higher culture, then politically I must similarly grant priority to the particular achievement and thus to the authority of the individual. If, on the other hand, it is asserted—by none other than the economic sphere—that no particular abilities are required in the political sector, but that absolute uniformity reigns here in respect to achievement, then one day this same theory will be transferred from politics to the economy. Political democracy, however, is analogous to Communism in the economic sector. Today we find ourselves in an age in which these two basic principles are in conflict with each other on every border and have already penetrated the economy.

One example: the practical activity of life is rooted in the significance of the individual. This is gradually becoming threatened by the rule of numbers in the economic sector. There is, however, one organization in the State—the Army—which cannot be democratized in any way whatsoever without surrendering its very essence. One proof that a *Weltanschauung* is weak is when it is inapplicable to all areas of life as a whole. In other words: the Army can only exist if the absolutely anti-democratic principle of unconditional authority from above and absolute responsibility from below are maintained, while in contrast, democracy means, for all practical purposes, complete dependency from above and authority from below. However, the result is that in a State in which the whole of political life—beginning with the community and ending with the Reichstag—is built upon the concept of democracy, the Army must gradually become an alien body, and an alien body which is bound to be perceived as an alien body. To democracy, it is an alien idea, an alien *Weltanschauung* which inspires this body. An internal struggle between the advocates of democracy and the advocates of authority is the inevitable consequence, a struggle we are now experiencing in Germany.

One cannot expect that this struggle will suddenly come to a standstill. No, the opposite is the case: this struggle will continue until the nation ultimately becomes immersed in either internationalism or democracy and thus falls prey to a complete dissolution; or else creates a new and logical form for its inner life. It follows that education in pacifism must of necessity affect even the most insignificant of individual lives. The concept of pacifism is logical if I proceed on the basis of a general equality between peoples and human beings. For what other sense could there be in struggling? The concept of pacifism, translated

into practical reality and in all sectors, must slowly lead to the destruction of the drive for competition, of the ambition to bring forth particular achievements of all types. I cannot say: in politics we will become pacifists, will rid ourselves of the notion that it is necessary to protect life by means of conflict—but in economics we wish to remain keen competitors. If I eliminate the idea of struggle as such, it is of no significance that it still exists in isolated areas. In the end, political decisions will determine individual achievements. You can build up the best economy for fifty years on the basis of the principle of authority, on the basis of the principle of achievement; you can construct factories for fifty years; you can amass wealth for fifty years—and in three years of inadequate political decisions you can destroy all the results of these fifty years. (*Chorus of assent*). This is only natural, because political decisions spring from a different root than constructive economic decisions.

In summary, I see two principles starkly opposed: the principle of democracy which, wherever its practical results are evident, is the principle of destruction. And the principle of the authority of the individual, which I would like to call the principle of achievement, because everything which mankind has achieved until now and all human cultures are only conceivable given the rule of this principle.

The value of a people in and of itself, the type of inner organization through which this value is to be made effective, and the type of education are the starting points for the political action of a people and thus the foundations for the results of this action.

Do not go so far as to believe that a people which has deprived itself of its values to the extent the German Volk has would have fared better in former centuries, whether there was a world crisis or not. When a people chooses the path which we have chosen—practically for the past thirty or thirty-five years, but officially for the past thirteen—then it can end nowhere else but where Germany is today. The fact that evidence of the crisis has spread throughout almost the entire world is understandable when one considers that the development of the world has today progressed to an extent, and mutual relations have been reinforced in a manner, which seemed scarcely possible fifty, eighty or one hundred years ago. But it would nevertheless be wrong to believe that this process is only conceivable now, in the year 1932. No, the history of the world has witnessed similar things more than once before. Whenever particular relations between peoples have led to situations being created accordingly, the disease of these peoples has necessarily spread and influenced the overall situation.

It is, of course, easy to say: we prefer to wait until the general situation has changed. That is impossible. The situation which you see before you today is surely not the consequence of some revelation of God's will, but the result of human weaknesses, human errors, human fallacies. It is only natural that, first of all, these causes must be transformed and thus mankind committed to an internal transformation, before one can count on a change in the situation.

This follows from a single look at the situation of the world today: we have a number of nations which have created for themselves an outlook on life based upon their inborn superior value, which bears no relation to the *Lebensraum*

they inhabit in densely populated areas. We have the so-called white race, which has, in the course of some thousand years since the collapse of ancient civilization, established for itself a privileged position in the world. But I am incapable of comprehending the economically privileged supremacy (*Herrenstellung*) of the white race over the rest of the world if I do not view it in the closest of connections to a political concept of supremacy which has been peculiar to the white race as a natural phenomenon for many centuries and which it has upheld as such to the outer world. You can choose any single area, take for example India: England did not acquire India in a lawful and legitimate manner, but rather without regard to the natives' wishes, views, or declarations of rights; and she maintained this rule, if necessary, with the most brutal ruthlessness. Just as Cortés or Pizarro demanded for themselves Central America and the northern states of South America not on the basis of any legal claim, but from the absolute, inborn feeling of superiority (*Herrengefühl*) of the white race. The settlement of the North American continent was similarly a consequence not of any higher claim in a democratic or international sense, but rather of a consciousness of what is right which had its sole roots in the conviction of the superiority and thus the right of the white race. If I imagine things without this frame of mind which, in the course of the last three or four centuries of the white race, has conquered the world, then the fate of this race would in fact be no other than that, for instance, of the Chinese: an immensely congested mass of people in an extraordinarily restricted territory—overpopulation with all its inevitable consequences. If Fate allowed the white race to take a different path, it was because this white race was of the conviction that it had a right to organize the rest of the world. Regardless of what external disguise this right assumed in a given case—in reality, it was the exercise of an extraordinarily brutal right to dominate (*Herrenrecht*). From this political view there evolved the basis for the economic takeover of the rest of the world.

A famous Englishman once wrote that the characteristic feature of English policy was this miraculous marriage of economic acquisitions with political consolidation of power, and conversely the political expansion of power with immediate economic appropriation: an interaction which becomes inconceivable the moment one of the two factors is lacking. I know, however, that the view is held that one can also conquer the world economically. But this is one of the greatest and most terrible fallacies there are. Let the English confine their struggle for India to economic means; let England relinquish in full the attitude with which it once acquired India, an attitude which helped to preserve India for England throughout the many rebellions and the long and bloody battles in the middle of the last century—and you will see what happens: the English factories will not hold India, they will come to a standstill because the spirit of old England, the spirit which once laid the necessary groundwork for these factories, has been lost!

Today we are confronted with a world situation which is only comprehensible to the white race if one recognizes as indispensable the marriage between the concept of domination in political will and the concept of domination (*Herrensinn*) in economic activity, a miraculous consensus which left its mark on the whole of the past century and in the consequences of which the white

peoples have, in part, undergone a remarkable development: instead of expanding in a territorial sense, instead of exporting human beings, they have exported goods, have built up a worldwide economic system which manifests itself most characteristically in the fact that—given that there are different standards of living on this earth—Europe, and most recently, America as well, have gigantic central world factories in Europe, and the rest of the world has huge markets and sources of raw materials.

The white race, however, is capable of maintaining its position, practically speaking, only as long as discrepancies between the standards of living throughout the world remain. If today you were to give our so-called export markets the same standard of living we have, you would witness that the privileged position of the white race, which is manifested not only in the political power of the nation, but also in the economic situation of the individual, can no longer be maintained.

The various nations have now—in accordance with their innate natural abilities—safeguarded this privileged position in various ways, perhaps England most ingeniously, for she has consistently tapped new markets and immediately anchored them in a political sense, so that it is quite conceivable that Great Britain—assuming its mental outlook remains unchanged—might develop an economic life more or less independent of the rest of the world. Other peoples have not attained this goal because they have exhausted their mental powers in internal *weltanschaulich*—formerly religious—battles. During the great period when the world was partitioned they were developing their capacities internally, and later they attempted to participate in this world economy; but they have never created their own markets and gained complete control of these markets.

When Germany, for example, began to establish colonies, the inner conception, this entirely cool, sober, English concept of colonization, had already been replaced in part by more or less romantic ideas: the transmission of German culture to the world, the spread of German civilization—things which the English viewed as far-removed during the colonial period. Thus our practical results failed to meet our expectations, aside from the fact that the objects of our endeavors were, in part, no longer capable of fulfilling our lofty and romantic hopes, particularly since the white race has slowly increased to such numerical proportions that the preservation of these gigantic population figures appears guaranteed only if the economic world market potential is secured. Thus, in reality, one part of the world is absolutely dependent upon maintaining a situation which we Germans as democrats and members of the international League of Nations have long since rejected in an intellectual sense. The result is obvious: competition forced the European peoples to an ever-increasing improvement in production, and the increasing improvement in production led to a steady economizing in the labor force. As long as the tapping of new international markets kept pace, the men who had been dispensed with in agriculture and later in the trades could be transferred to the new lines of production without further ado, so that we now perceive the characteristic features of the last century in that primarily men were being eliminated in agriculture and entering the trades; later, in the trades themselves, more and

more people fell victim to rationalization in the methods of production and then, in turn, found new opportunities to earn a livelihood in an expansion of the branches of production. But this process was conceivable only as long as there was a constant increase in available sales potential, a potential which had to be as large as the increase in production.

The situation in the world today can be summed up as follows: Germany, England, France, and also—for non-imperative reasons—the American Union and a whole series of smaller States are industrial nations dependent upon the export business. After the end of the War, all of these peoples were confronted with a world market practically empty of commodities. Then the industrial and manufacturing methods, having become particularly ingenious during the War in a scientific and theoretical sense, pounced on this great void and began to restructure the factories, invest their capital and, as the inevitable consequence of the invested capital, to increase production to the utmost. This process was able to work for two, three, four, five years. It could have continued to function if new markets had been created which corresponded to the rapid increase and improvement in production and its methods—a matter of primary importance, for the rationalization of the economy leads, from the beginning of the rationalization of basic economy, to a reduction in the human work force, a reduction which is only useful if the workers who have been dispensed with can easily be transferred in turn to other branches of industry. But we see that since the World War there has been no substantial increase in the number of markets; quite the opposite, they have shrunk in number because the number of exporting nations has slowly been increasing; for a host of former sales markets have themselves become industrialized. We see, however, a new major exporter—the American Union, which today has perhaps not manifested itself all-powerfully in all sectors, but certainly in individual areas—can count on advantages in production which we in Europe do not and cannot possibly possess.

The last and most serious phenomenon we observe is the fact that, parallel to the gradual growth of confusion in white European thinking, a *Weltanschauung* has seized hold of a part of Europe and a large part of Asia which threatens to actually tear this continent out of the framework of international economic relations—a phenomenon which German statesmen even today pass over with an astonishing lack of regard. For instance when I hear a speech which stresses: “It is necessary that the German Volk stand together!”, then I am forced to ask: does one really believe that this standing together today is nothing but a question of good political will? Do they fail to see that a gulf has already grown in our midst, a gulf which is not the mere figment of some people’s imaginations, but rather whose spiritual exponent today forms the basis for one of the largest world powers? That Bolshevism is not only a mob ranting about in a few streets in Germany, but a world view which is on the point of subjecting to its rule the entire continent of Asia and which today, in the form of a State, stretches almost from our eastern border to Vladivostok?

Here the matter is presented as though these were only the purely intellectual problems of isolated visionaries or ill-disposed individuals. No, a *Weltanschauung* has conquered a State and, starting from there, will slowly

shatter the whole world and bring about its collapse. Bolshevism will, if its advance is not halted, expose the world to a transformation as complete as the one Christianity once effected. In 300 years people will no longer say: this is a new idea in production. In 300 years people might already know that it is almost a new religion, though based upon other principles! In 300 years, if this movement continues to develop, people will see in Lenin not only a revolutionary of the year 1917, but the founder of a new world doctrine, worshipped perhaps like Buddha. It is not true that this gigantic phenomenon could simply, let us say, be thought away in today's world. It is reality, and must of necessity destroy and overthrow one of the basic requirements for our continued existence as the white race. We observe the stages of this process: first of all, a decline in the level of culture and, with it, of receptivity; a decline in the level of humanity as a whole and thus the breaking off of all relations to other nations; then the construction of an independent system of production with the aid of the crutches of capitalist economy. As the final stage, an independent system of production to the complete exclusion of the other countries, which, as a matter of course, will one day be faced along their borders with the most serious economic competitor.

I know very well that gentlemen in the Reich Ministry of Defense and gentlemen in German industry will counter: we do not believe that the Soviets will ever be able to build up an industry genuinely capable of competition. Gentlemen, they would never be able to build it solely from Russian, from Bolshevik natural resources. But this industry will be built from the resources of the white peoples themselves. It is absurd to say: it is not possible to build an industry in Russia using the forces of other peoples—it was once possible to equip an industry in Bohemia with the help of Germans. And one more thing: the Russia of old was already in possession of a certain amount of industry.

If people go on to argue that the methods of production will never by any means be able to keep pace with us, then do not forget that the standard of living will more than compensate for any advantages we have due to our methods of production. (*Hear, hear!*)

We shall, in any event, witness the following development: Bolshevism will—if today's way of thinking in Europe and America remains as it is—slowly spread throughout Asia. Whether it takes thirty or fifty years is of no consequence at all, considering it is a question of *Weltanschauungen*. Christianity did not begin to assert itself throughout the whole of southern Europe until 300 years after Christ, and 700 years later it had taken hold of northern Europe as well. *Weltanschauungen* of this fundamental nature can manifest their unrestricted capacity for conquest even five hundred years later if they are not broken in the beginning by the natural instinct of self-preservation of other peoples. But even if this process continues for only thirty, forty or fifty years and our frame of mind remains unchanged, then, Gentlemen, one will not be able to say: what does that have to do with our economy?!

Gentlemen, the development is obvious. The crisis is very serious. It forces us to economize in every sector. The most natural reduction is always made in human labor. The industries will of necessity rationalize more and more; that means increasing their productivity and reducing the numbers of their work

forces. But when these people can no longer be given places in newly tapped professional fields, in newly tapped industries, this means that, in time, three people's accounts must be opened: the first is agriculture. Once people were economized from this basic account for the second account. This second account was the trades, and later industrial production. Now, in turn, one is eliminating men from this second account and pushing them into the third account: unemployment. In doing so, one is putting on a disgraceful show of glossing over reality. It can be best put by saying that those without a means of existence are simply regarded as "non-existent," and thus superfluous. The characteristic feature of our European nations is that gradually a certain percentage of the population is proven superfluous in terms of statistics. Now, it is quite clear that the requisite maintenance of this third account is a burden thrust upon the other two. This increases the tax pressure, which in turn requires a further rationalization of the methods of production, further economization, a further increase in the third account.

In addition, there is the battle for world markets being waged today by all European nations with the consequence that this battle naturally affects prices, which again leads to a new wave of economizing. The final result, which can hardly be foreseen today will, in any case, be decisive for the future or the downfall of the white race and, above all, of the peoples who are greatly hampered in establishing inner economic autarky due to their territorial limitations. The further consequence will be that, for instance, England will reorganize her domestic market and erect customs barriers for its protection, high ones today and even higher ones tomorrow, and all other peoples who are in any way capable of doing so will take the same steps.

In this sense, all those who claim that Germany's hopeless position is particularly indicative of our distress today are right. At the same time, however, they are wrong in seeking the distress only in external causes, for this position is of course not only the result of external developments, but of our inner, I would almost say, aberration, our inner disintegration, our inner decay.

Let no one say that we National Socialists do not understand the necessity of dealing with momentary damage. But one thing is certain: every type of distress has some root or another. Thus it does not suffice—regardless, Gentlemen, of what emergency decrees the Government issues today—when I doctored around on the periphery of this distress and attempt from time to time to cut away the cancerous tumor; rather, I must penetrate to the agent, the origins. In this connection it is of relatively little significance whether this generative cause is discovered or eliminated today or tomorrow; the essential thing is that, without its elimination, no cure is possible. It is wrong to reject a program covering twenty or thirty years today on the grounds that we cannot wait that long—a tuberculosis patient does not care if the treatment his physician has recommended to cure his illness lasts three or more years. The essential thing is that no purely external remedy, even if it is quickly applied and momentarily alleviates his pain, is capable of eliminating the disease as such. We can observe this in an absolutely classical form in the consequences of our emergency decrees. Again and again the—admittedly honest—attempt is made to somehow improve and combat an impossible situation. You see that every attempt,

in its final consequence, leads exactly to the opposite: to an increase in the very phenomena one is trying to eliminate. In this connection I am willing to leave out what is, in my opinion, the greatest problem at this moment, a problem which I would like to describe not only as a purely economic one, but also a *völkisch* problem in the truest sense of the word: that of unemployment.

What one sees are only six or seven million people who are not engaged in the process of production; and one regrets, from a purely economic standpoint, the loss in production which this causes.

But, Gentlemen, one fails to see the mental, moral, and spiritual effects of this fact. Do they really believe that such a percentage of the national work force can lie idle for even ten, twenty, or thirty years without this idleness exercising any mental effect, without it leading inevitably to a spiritual change? And do they believe that this will have no significance for the future?

Gentlemen, we know from our own experience that Germany lost the War due to a mental aberration whose consequences are today evident practically everywhere. Do you believe that, once seven or eight million people are barred from taking part in the national process of production for ten or twenty years, these masses can perceive of Bolshevism as anything but the logical *weltanschaulich* complement to their actual, practical economic situation? Do you really think that one can choose to disregard the purely mental side of this catastrophe without it one day becoming reality, an evil curse following the evil deed?

If the German distress could be alleviated by means of emergency decrees, then all of the major legislators in the past centuries would have been bunglers; for they attempted, under similar circumstances, to regenerate the body politic in order that, with the aid of this newly created source of strength, they might implement new and healing resolutions. What the current German Government wants is of no significance at all, just as it is of no significance what the German economy wants or desires. The important thing is to realize that we are presently once more in a situation which has already previously arisen in the world a number of times: a number of times in the past, the volume of certain types of production grew to exceed the parameters of demand. Today we are experiencing the same thing to the greatest possible degree: if all automobile factories existing in the world now were employed one hundred percent and working one hundred percent, then one could replace the entire stock of motor vehicles within four and a half or five years. If all locomotive factories were employed one hundred percent, one could easily renew all of the locomotive parts in the world within eight years. If all of the rail factories and rolling mills of the world were employed one hundred percent, one could, perhaps in ten or fifteen years, lay the entire network of tracks in the world today once more. This applies to almost all industries. One has achieved such an increase in productive capacity that the present market potential no longer bears any relation to capacity. But when Bolshevism as an ideology tears the continent of Asia out of the human economic community, the prerequisites for the employment of these gigantically developed industries will no longer exist to nearly the same extent. Then we will find ourselves industrially in approximately the same stage in which the world has found itself several times before in other areas. It

has happened several times before, for instance, that the tonnage of sea-going vessels was much larger than the amount of goods requiring carriage. Several times before certain economic groups have thus been subjected to severe crises. When you read history and study the ways which have been chosen to rectify this situation, then you will in short always find one thing: the amount of goods was not adjusted to fit the tonnage, the tonnage was adjusted to fit the amount of goods—in fact not by voluntary economic resolutions on the parts of the shipowners, but rather by decisions of power politics. When a politician or an economist objects and says to me: that may have once been the case between Rome and Carthage, or between England and Holland or between England and France, but today it is business that decides; all I can answer is: that is not the spirit which once opened up the world to the white race, which also opened to us Germans the way into world economy. It was not the German economy which conquered the world, followed by the evolution of Germany's power; but in our case, too, it was the power-state which created the basic conditions for ensuing prosperity in the economy. (*Hear, hear!*) In my view, it is putting the cart before the horse to believe today that Germany's position of power can be recovered using business methods alone instead of realizing that a position of power constitutes the prerequisite for an improvement in the economic situation as well. That does not mean that the attempt should not be made today or tomorrow to combat the disease which has seized our economy, notwithstanding the fact that it is not possible to hit the focus of the disease with the first blow. But it does mean that each such external solution ignores the root of the problem, the fact that there is only one basic solution.

It rests upon the realization that the collapse of an economy always has as its forerunner the collapse of the State and not vice versa; that a prosperous economy cannot subsist if it is not backed by the protection of a prosperous, powerful State; that there would have been no Carthaginian economy without a Carthaginian fleet and no Carthaginian trade without the Carthaginian army; and that, in our modern age—when things get rough and the interests of peoples clash—it is natural that an economy cannot exist unless the all-powerful, determined political will of the nation is standing behind it.

Here I would like to enter a protest against those who simply dismiss these facts by claiming: the Peace Treaty of Versailles is, "in what is almost the general opinion," the cause of our misfortune. No, this is certainly not "almost the general opinion," but solely the opinion of those who share the blame for its having been concluded. (*Applause*)

The Peace Treaty of Versailles is itself nothing but the logical consequence of our slowly increasing inner, mental confusion and aberration. We happen to find ourselves in an age in which the world is approaching extraordinarily difficult mental conflicts which will thoroughly shake it up. I cannot avoid these conflicts by simply shrugging my shoulders in regret and—without clearly realizing their causes—saying: "What we need is unity!" These conflicts are not phenomena born merely of the ill will of a few individuals; rather, they are phenomena ultimately having their deepest roots in the facts of race.

If Bolshevism is spreading in Russia today, then ultimately this Bolshevism is just as logical for Russia as Czarism was before it. It is a brutal regime ruling

over a people which, were it not led by a brutal government, could in no way be maintained as a State. But if this world outlook should spread to us as well, we must not forget that our Volk, too, is composed racially of the most diverse elements, that we thus of necessity must perceive in the slogan "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" much more than a mere political battle cry. In reality, it is the expression of the will of men who, in their natures, indeed do possess a certain kinship with respective peoples of a low level of culture. Our Volk and our State were also once built up only through the exercise of the absolute *Herrenrecht* and *Herrensinn* accruing to the so-called Nordic people, the Arian race elements which we still possess in our Volk today. Therefore whether or not we can find our way back to new political strength is only a question of regenerating the German body politic in accordance with the laws of an iron logic.

The claim that inner *weltanschaulich* unity is of no significance can only be made by a man who is a specialist in one area or another and therefore no longer has an eye for the real living forces which shape the nation—a statesman who never gets out of his office and busies himself in his bureaucratic ivory tower, in thousands of hours of negotiations and meetings, with the latest effects of the crisis, without discovering the major causes and with them the major decisions required for their removal. It is quite clear that, by issuing a decree, I can easily take a position today on any of the various aspects of public life. But take a look at what effect this position can have on the practical side of life! There is no organization existing in the world today which does not have as its foundation a certain unanimity of purpose. One cannot conceive of an organization which does not view certain basic questions which arise repeatedly as requiring an absolutely unanimous recognition, affirmation or solution. This applies even to the smallest organization there is—the family. No matter how competent a man or a woman may be, if certain, necessary, basic questions are not affirmed equally by both in their common union, then their competence will not be able to prevent their union from becoming a source of perpetual strife and their external life from ultimately failing due to this inner discord. Man can only develop the force of his activities in one direction, and the main question for the people as a whole is the direction in which this force is to be guided. Should it direct itself outwards, or should it turn inwards? It must turn inward at that point when the attitude toward a certain problem is not completely unanimous; otherwise the individual will already have become the enemy of his neighbor, who effectively constitutes his environment. It is not a matter of indifference whether or not an association has and recognizes a set of basic principles. No, the decisive factor in judging any human organization is the strength of the inner relation, a strength which is based upon the recognition of certain guiding general principles.

In the life of peoples, external strength is determined by the strength of the internal organization, but the strength of the internal organization in turn depends upon the stability of common views on certain basic matters. What good is it if a government issues a decree to save the economy when that nation, as a living thing, itself has two completely different attitudes towards the economy? One part says: "The prerequisite of the economy is private property," while the other claims: "Private property is theft." Fifty percent believe in one

principle, fifty percent in the other. You may object by saying that these views are pure theory—no, this theory is of necessity the basis for practice. Was this view mere theory when, in November 1918, the Revolution broke out as a consequence and shattered Germany? Was that a completely insignificant theory which, above all, was of no interest to the economy? No, Gentlemen! I believe that such views must, if they are not clarified, inevitably tear apart the body politic, for they are not simply confined to theory. The Government talks about the “*vaterländisch* way of thinking,” but what does “*vaterländisch* way of thinking” mean? Ask the German nation! One part supports it, while the other declares: “Vaterland is an inane bourgeois tradition and nothing more.” The Government says: “The State must be saved.” The State? Fifty percent regard the State as a necessity, but the sole desire of the other fifty percent is to crush the State. They are conscious of their role as a vanguard not only of an alien national attitude and an alien national concept, but also of an alien national will. I cannot say that this is only based on theory. It is not mere theory when fifty percent of a people at the most are willing to fight, if necessary, for the symbolic colors, while fifty percent have hoisted a different flag representing a State which is not their own but lies outside the borders of their own State.

“The Government will seek to improve the morals of the German Volk.” Which morals, Gentlemen? Even morals must have some basis. What appears to you to be moral appears immoral to others, and what seems immoral to you is for others a new morality. The State says, for instance: “Thieves must be punished.” But countless members of the nation counter: “One must punish the owners, for ownership itself comprises theft.” The thief is glorified more than anything else. One half of the nation says: “Traitors must be punished,” but the other half holds: “Treason is a duty.” One half says: “The nation must be defended with courage,” and the other half regards courage as idiotic. One half says: “The basis of our morality is religious life,” and the other half sneers: “The concept of a God does not exist in reality. Religions are merely the opium of the people.”

Do not ever think that once a people has been seized by these conflicts of Weltanschauung one can simply circumvent them by means of emergency decrees, that one can delude oneself into believing that there is no need to take a stand on them because they involve things which concern neither the economy, nor administrative life, nor cultural life! Gentlemen, these conflicts affect the power and the strength of the nation as a whole! How can a people actually constitute a factor of any significance abroad when, in the final analysis, fifty percent are Bolshevik-oriented and fifty percent nationalistic or anti-Bolshevik-oriented? It is conceivable that Germany can be turned into a Bolshevik State—it will be a catastrophe—but it is conceivable. It is also conceivable that Germany can be turned into a national State. But it is inconceivable that a strong and healthy Germany can be created if fifty percent²⁸ of its members are Bolshevik-oriented and fifty percent are nationalist-oriented! (*Hear, hear!*) We cannot get around solving this problem! (*Animated applause*)

If today’s Government declares: “But we are industrious, we are working, this last emergency decree cost us so and so many hundreds of hours of sessions” (*amusement*), then I do not doubt what they say. That does not,

however, mean that the nation will become even the slightest bit stronger or more stable; the process of inner decay will continue unceasingly on its inevitable course. But the consequence to which this path will finally lead is something you then again can see only if you take a very large mental leap: once, as the first prerequisite for the organization of our Volk on a large scale, Germany had a *weltanschaulich* foundation in our religion, Christianity²⁹ When this *weltanschaulich* foundation was shaken, we see how the strength of the nation turned away from external things and toward the internal conflicts, for the nature of man forces him, as a matter of inner necessity, to seek a new common foundation at that point at which the common *weltanschaulich* foundation is lost or attacked. These are then the great ages of civil wars, religious wars, etc.—conflicts and confusions in which either a new *weltanschaulich* platform can be found and thereupon a nation erected anew, a nation which can turn its strength outwards, or in which a people becomes split and falls into ruin. In Germany, this process ran its course in an absolutely classical form. The religious conflicts meant a withdrawal of the entire German strength inwards, an internal absorbing and exhausting of strength and thus automatically a gradual increase in an attitude of no-longer-reacting to major world events in foreign countries, while these meet with a completely passive people, because at the same time this people has inner tensions which urgently require a solution.

It is incorrect to say: world politics and the world situation alone determined Germany's fate in the sixteenth century. No, our internal situation at that time played a helping role in shaping the image of the world which later caused us so much suffering: the partitioning of the world without Germany.

In a second, really magnificent example from history, this process is repeated: in order to replace the lacking religious unity—for both religions are finally frozen fast, neither is now capable of overcoming the other—a new platform is found: the new concept of the State, first of legitimist character and later slowly passing to an age of the national principle and colored by it. It is on this new platform that Germany once more unites; and, piece by piece, with this unification process, a Reich which had fallen into decline as a result of the old confusions automatically and once more lastingly increases its strength in the external world. This increase in strength led to those days in August 1914 which we had the proud good fortune of experiencing firsthand. A nation which apparently had no internal differences and thus was able to channel its entire strength outwards! And in scarcely four and a half years, we see the process reverting. The inner differences become visible, they slowly begin to grow, and gradually the external strength is crippled. The inner conflict once more takes on urgency; in the end comes the collapse of November 1918. In reality, this means nothing other than that the German nation was once more investing its entire strength in inner conflicts—externally, it was relapsing into complete lethargy and powerlessness.

But it would be quite mistaken to believe that this process was confined only to those days in November 1918. The *weltanschaulich* disintegration set in at the very time when Bismarck was powerfully uniting Germany. Citizens and proletarians began to take the place of men from Prussia, Bavaria,

Württemberg, Saxony, Baden, etc. In place of a many-faceted disintegration, which is overcome politically, the classes begin to split, leading ultimately to the same result. For the remarkable feature of the former disintegration of the State was that Bavarians would, under certain circumstances, tend to cooperate more readily with non-Germans than with Prussians. That means that relations with the outside were regarded as more feasible than relations with one's own German Volksgenossen. Exactly the same result is coming about now by means of the class division. Once again a mass of millions has ceremoniously declared that it is more willing to take up relations to men and organizations who think similarly and have a similar outlook but are members of a foreign people, than to enter into relations with men of its own Volk who are of the same blood but think differently. This is the only explanation for the fact that today you can see the red flag with the sickle and hammer—the flag of an alien sovereign power—waving over Germany; the fact that there are millions of people to whom one cannot say: “You, too, are Germans—you, too, must defend Germany!” If these men were willing to do this as in 1914, they would be compelled to renounce their Weltanschauung; for it is thoroughly absurd to believe that Marxism would have been converted to the national cause in 1914. No! The German worker, with an intuitive realization, turned away from Marxism in 1914 and, contrary to his leaders,³⁰ found his way to the nation. (*Lively applause*) Marxism itself, as concept and idea, knows no German nation, knows no national State, but knows only the Internationale!

I can thus state one fact today: no matter what the legislature does—particularly by means of decrees and most of all by means of emergency decrees—if Germany is unable to master this inner division of outlook and Weltanschauung, then no amount of legislative measures will be able to prevent the ruin of the German nation. (*Hear, hear!*) Indeed, do not believe, Gentlemen, that in ages in which peoples have fallen into ruin as demonstrated by history, the governments were not governing! At the same time Rome was slowly disintegrating, the governments were certainly active. Yes, I would almost like to say that the rapidity with which a legislative machine functions seems to me to be almost proof of the disintegration of a *Volkskörper* (body politic). (*Hear, hear!*) One merely attempts to veil the existing inner division and the degree of disintegration from the outside world by means of the legislative rotary machine. Today the situation is no different. And do not believe that any government would ever have admitted that its work was not conducive toward saving the nation. Each of them naturally protested against the view that its activities were not absolutely necessary; each was convinced that no one else could have done it better than itself. You will never, in the history of the world, find a general who, no matter how high the number of battles on his debit account, was not convinced that no one could have done better than he. (*Amused laughter*) But the essential fact will always remain that, in the end, it is not immaterial in the least whether the Herzog von Braunschweig or Gneisenau is commanding the army; whether a system confines its attempts to save the nation to emergency decrees or whether a new mental outlook inspires a Volk inwardly and leads it back to life, back to being a vital, living factor, and away from being the dead object of legislative machinery.

(Animated applause) It is not immaterial whether, in the future, you simply attempt to bring the most obvious manifestations of the crisis under control in Germany by means of a legislation more or less trimmed with a border of constitutionality, or whether you lead the nation itself back to internal strength.

And when this system³¹ objects and says to me that there is no time left for that now—it is true, *meine Herren*, that far too much time has been wasted on unproductive work, far too much time has already been lost. One could have initiated the regeneration process in 1919, and in the past eleven years Germany would have undergone a different external development. For it was only possible to impose the Peace Treaty upon us in the form chosen because at the time it was being drawn up, Germany had totally ceased being a factor of any weight whatsoever. (*Hear, hear!*) And the results of this Peace Treaty took on those forms we know and have experienced only because, in all these years, no Germany with any kind of definite and perceptible will of its own existed. Thus we are not the victims of the treaties, but rather the treaties are the consequences of our own mistakes; and I must, if I wish to improve the situation at all, first change the value of the nation again. Above all, I must recognize one thing: it is not the primacy of foreign politics which can determine our actions at home, but rather the character of our actions at home that determines the character of our successes in foreign policy, yes, and even our very objectives. (*Hear, hear!*)

I may cite two examples of this from history: firstly, Bismarck's idea of a conflict between Prussia and the House of Habsburg, the construction of a new Empire by ousting Austria, an idea which never would have become reality had not—before the attempt was made to put it into action—the instrument been created with which the political objectives could have practically been turned into reality. It was not the political situation which forced Prussia to decide to reorganize its Army; rather, the reorganization of the Prussian Army which Bismarck far-sightedly carried through against the resistance of parliamentary madness first made the political situation possible which came to an end in Königgrätz and established in Versailles the Empire which, because it gradually came to be founded on other principles, was later once more destroyed and partitioned in the very same chamber at Versailles.

And vice versa: if today a German government attempts, along the lines of Bismarck's ideas, to take the path of that age and, perhaps as forerunner of a German policy of unification, attempts to establish a new *Zollverein*, a customs union, then formulating this aim is not the important thing, but rather the important thing is what preparations one undertakes in order to make the implementation of this aim possible. I cannot formulate an aim which, supported by the press campaign of one's own papers, is understood throughout the world to be a political aim of utmost importance unless I secure for myself the political means which are absolutely essential for the implementation of this type of plan.

And the political means—today I can no longer view them as limited—can lie only in the reorganization of an army. Ultimately, it is completely irrelevant whether Germany has an army 100,000 or 200,000 or 300,000 strong; the main thing is whether Germany has eight million reservists whom it can transfer to

the army without heading toward the same *weltanschaulich* catastrophe as that of 1918.³² (*Hear, hear!*)

The essential thing is the formation of a political will of the entire nation; this is the starting point for political action. If this formation of will is guaranteed in the sense of a willingness to commit oneself to some national objective or other, then a government that is supported by this formation of will can also choose those paths which one day may lead to success. However, if this formation of will does not take place, every power in the world will test the chances of such an undertaking on the strength of the means at its disposal to back it. And one will surely be aware of the fact that a government which rouses itself to exhibit such a great national show externally but is, internally, dependent upon the shifting forces of Marxist-Democratic-Centrist party views, will never be capable of really fighting to carry through this plan to the very last. (*Hear, hear!*) Let no one say: this is simply a case in which all are standing together as one man. This standing together of all as one man can only then be attained when all share one single opinion. The phrase "March divided, fight united" exists only in terms of the army because in an army with a single supreme command, the order to march divided is followed in exactly the same way as the order to fight united, because both stem from one and the same root of command. But I cannot simply allow armies to run around side by side as complete strangers and then expect, upon some signal which a high-and-mighty government deigns to give them, that they will suddenly harmonize wonderfully and initiate a joint maneuver. (*Hear, hear!*)

That is impossible! And it is simply impossible for the further reason that, ultimately, the catastrophe lies not so much in the existence of different points of view, but rather foremost in the fact of the State's licensing these differences.

If today they wish to hurl the worst accusation at me as a National Socialist, then they say: "You want to bring about a decision in Germany by violence, and we must oppose that. You want to one day destroy your political opponents in Germany! We, on the other hand, stand for the precepts of the Constitution and must thus guarantee all parties their right to exist." To that I have only one reply: translated into reality, this means: "You have a company. You must lead this company against the enemy. Within the company there is complete liberty to form a coalition." (*Amused laughter*) Fifty percent of the company have formed a coalition based upon love and defense of the Vaterland, the other fifty percent based upon a pacifist Weltanschauung; they reject war as a matter of principle, demand the inviolability of freedom of conscience, declare it to be the highest and only virtue we have today. (*Amused laughter*) But if it does come to a fight, they want to stand together. (*More amused laughter*) But should one man—insisting on freedom of conscience—desert to the enemy, then the absurd situation would arise where you would have to place him under arrest and punish him as a deserter, while completely forgetting that you actually have no right to punish him. A State which allows the view to circulate—with license from the State—that treason to the Vaterland is a duty; which tolerates that large organizations calmly state: it will be our task to put a simple stop to any military action in the event of war—what right does that State have to punish a traitor to the Vaterland? Of course it is only incidental that such a State itself carries the

madness of this view ad absurdum, for the man who would otherwise have been branded a criminal now will become a martyr for one half of the nation. Why? Because this same State, which, on the one hand, declares the theory of treason to one's country an ethical and moral theory and protects it, has the audacity, on the other, to imprison a person who attempts to transpose this view from the sphere of theory into practice.

Gentlemen! All this is impossible, completely impossible, if one at all believes that a people, in order to survive, must direct its strength outwards. But take a look at the situation today: seven or eight million employed in agriculture; seven or eight million employed in industry; six or seven million unemployed! Consider that, in all human probability, nothing at all will change in this respect, and you will be forced to admit that Germany as a whole cannot survive in the long run—unless, that is, we find our way back to a truly extraordinary, newly-shaped political strength working from within but having the capacity of making us effective once more vis-à-vis the outside world.

For it does not matter at all which of the problems of our *völkisch* life we wish to attempt to solve: if we wish to maintain our export trade, then here as well the political will of the nation as a whole will one day have to take a serious stand to prevent us from being thrust aside by the interests of other peoples. If we wish to build up a new domestic market or if we wish to solve the problem of our *Lebensraum*: whatever the case, we will always need the collective political strength of the nation. Yes, even if we want to be valued merely as allies—beforehand we must make Germany a political power factor. But that will never be achieved by bringing a proposal before the Reichstag that negotiations be initiated for procuring a few heavy batteries, eight or ten tanks, twelve aircraft, or, as far as I'm concerned, even a few squadrons—that is entirely irrelevant! Throughout the history of peoples, technical weapons have undergone continual changes. But what had to remain unchanging was the formation of will. It is the constant factor and the prerequisite for everything else. Should it fail, no number of weapons can help. On the contrary: if you were to summon the German Volk to a levée en masse and place weapons at its disposal for this purpose—tomorrow the result would be civil war, not a fight against the external world. Practical foreign politics can no longer be implemented with today's body politic. Or do you believe that Bismarck would have been able to fulfill his historic mission with today's Germany, that the German Empire would have emerged from this state of mind?

In stating this, I am still a long way from confronting today's system with the claim that one should, for instance, remain silent and inactive in the face of individual incidents; rather, my claim is that an ultimate solution is only possible when the internal disintegration in terms of classes is overcome once more in the future. When I say this, I am not being a pure theoretician. When I returned to the homeland in 1918, I was faced with a situation which I, just as all the others, could have accepted as a given fact. It is my firm conviction that a large part of the German nation was of the unequivocal opinion in those November and December days of 1918, and even in 1919, that were Germany to continue on its path in terms of domestic policy, it would be heading rapidly towards its downfall in terms of foreign policy. In other words, the same opinion I held.

January 27, 1932

There was only one difference. At that time I said to myself: it is not enough to merely recognize that we are ruined; rather, it is also necessary to comprehend why! And even that is not enough; rather, it is necessary to declare war on this destructive development and to create the instrument necessary to do so. (*Bravo!*)

One thing was clear to me: the world of the parties up to that time had shattered Germany, and Germany was broken by this. It is absurd to believe that the factors whose existence is inseparably bound up in history with Germany's disintegration can now suddenly be factors in its recovery. Each organization becomes not only the personification of a certain spirit; in the end, it even symbolizes a certain tradition. If then, for example, associations or parties have almost made it a tradition of retreating in the face of Marxism for sixty years, I do not believe that, after the most horrible defeat, they will suddenly break with a tradition which has become second nature to them and transform their retreat into an attack; what I do believe is that the retreat will continue. Yes, one day these associations will go the way of all organizations which suffer repeated defeats: they will enter pacts with the opponent and attempt to attain by peaceful methods what could not be won by fighting.

Granted, given a cool and considered view, I did have to say to myself in 1918: certainly it is a terribly difficult course to present myself to the nation and form a new organization for myself. Actually, it would naturally be much easier to enter one of the existing formations and attempt to overcome the inner gulf dividing the nation from there. But is this at all possible in the existing organizations? Does not each organization ultimately have in it the spirit and the people who find satisfaction in its program and its struggle? If an organization has, in the course of sixty years, continually retreated before Marxism and finally one day simply capitulated like a coward, is it not then necessarily filled with a spirit and with people who neither understand nor are prepared to take the other path? Is it not so that the opposite is true, that in such an age of confusion the future will simply consist of once again sieving through the body politic which has fallen into disorder; that a new political leadership will crystallize from within the Volk which knows how to take the mass of the nation in its fist and thereby avoids the mistakes which led to downfall in the past? Of course I had to say to myself that the struggle would be a terrible one! For I was not so fortunate as to possess a prominent name; instead, I was nothing but a German soldier, nameless, with a very small zinc number on my breast. But I came to one realization: if, beginning with the smallest cell, a new body politic did not form in the nation which could overcome the existing "ferments of decomposition,"³³ then the nation as a whole would never itself be able to experience an uprising. We have practically already experienced it once. It took more than 150³⁴ years until Prussia, the germ cell of a new Empire, arose out of the old disintegrated Empire to fulfill its historic mission. And believe me: the question of the inner regeneration of a Volk is no different in the least. Each idea must recruit its own people. Each idea must step out before the nation, must win over the fighters it needs from its midst and must tread alone the difficult path with all its necessary consequences, in order to one day achieve the strength to change the course of destiny.

Developments have proven that this reasoning was right in the end. For even if there are many in Germany today who believe that we National Socialists are incapable of constructive work—they are deceiving themselves! If we did not exist, Germany today would no longer have a bourgeoisie. (*Hear, hear!*) The question, “Bolshevism or no Bolshevism” would long have been decided! Take the weight of our gigantic organization—this greatest organization by far in the new Germany—off the scales of national events and you will see that, without us, Bolshevism would already tip the scales now—a fact best evidenced by the attitude which Bolshevism has toward us. It is a great honor to me when Herr Trotsky calls upon German Communism today to cooperate with the Social Democrats at any price because National Socialism is to be regarded as the only real danger to Bolshevism. And it is an even greater honor for me because in twelve years, starting with nothing at all and in opposition to the overall public opinion at the time, in opposition to the press, in opposition to capital, in opposition to the economy, in opposition to the administration, in opposition to the State: in short, in opposition to everything, we built up our Movement, a Movement which can no longer be eliminated today, which exists, on which one must have an opinion whether one wants to or not. (*Cheers of approval*) And I believe that this opinion actually must be quite clear to anyone who still believes in a German future. You see before you an organization which does not only preach the theory of the realizations I characterized as being essential at the beginning of my speech, but which puts them into practice; an organization filled with the utmost national sentiment, based on the idea of the absolute authority of leadership in every field, on all levels—the only party which has, in itself, totally overcome not only the international idea but the democratic idea as well; which, through its organization, acknowledges only responsibility, command and obedience and which thus for the first time integrates into the political life of Germany a phenomenon of millions united in upholding the principle of achievement. An organization which fills its followers with an unrestrained aggressive spirit (*Kampfsinn*); for the first time, an organization which, when a political opponent declares: “We take your behavior to be a provocation,” is not satisfied to suddenly withdraw, but brutally enforces its own will and hurls back at him: “We are fighting today! We will fight tomorrow! And if you regard our meeting today as a provocation, then we’ll hold another one next week—and will continue until you have learned that it is not a provocation when the German Germany professes its will! And if you say, “You may not go out on the streets”—we will go out on the streets in spite of it! And if you say, “Then we will beat you”—no matter how many sacrifices you force us to make, this young Germany will always march again, it will one day completely win back the German streets, the German individual. And when people reproach us for our intolerance, we are proud of it—yes, we have even made the inexorable decision to exterminate Marxism in Germany down to its very last root. We made this decision not because we are pugnacious—I, for one, could imagine a life made up of nicer things than being chased through Germany, being persecuted by countless decrees, standing constantly with one foot in prison, and having no right I can call my own in the State. I could imagine a better fate than that of fighting a battle which, at least

in the beginning, was regarded by everyone as a mad chimera. And lastly, I believe that I also have the capability of taking on some sort of post in the Social Democratic Party, and one thing is certain: had I placed my capabilities at its service, today I would presumably even be fit to govern. But for me it was a greater decision to choose a path along which nothing guided me but my own faith and an indestructible confidence in the natural powers of our Volk—which are certainly still present—and its significance, which will one day of necessity once more manifest itself, given the right leadership.

Now a twelve-year struggle lies behind us. We did not wage this battle in purely theoretical terms or put it into practice only in our own party; rather, we are also willing to wage it on a large scale at any time. If I reflect back to the time when I founded this association together with six other unknown men, when I spoke before 11, 20, 30, or 50 people, when, in the space of one year, I had won 64 people over to the Movement, when our small circle expanded steadily—then I must confess that that which has come about today, when a stream of millions of German Volksgenossen flows into our Movement, represents something unique, standing alone in German history. For seventy years the bourgeois parties have had time to work. Where is the organization which could compare itself to ours? Where is the organization which could point out, as ours can, that if necessary, it can bring 400,000 men out on the streets, men who carry within them a sense of blind obedience, who follow every order—as long as it is not against the law? Where is the organization which has achieved in seventy years what we have achieved in barely twelve—with means which were so improvised that one would almost have to be ashamed to confess to the opponents how pitiful the birth and growth of this great Movement once was.

Today we are at the turning-point in German destiny. If the present development continues, Germany will one day of necessity result in Bolshevik chaos; however, if this development is brought to an end, our Volk must be sent to a school of iron discipline and gradually cured from the preconceptions of both camps. A hard lesson, but one which we cannot avoid!

If one believes that the concepts of “bourgeois” and “proletarian” can be conserved, then one is either conserving German impotence and thus our downfall, or one is ushering in the victory of Bolshevism. If one is not willing to abandon these concepts, then it is my conviction that a recovery of the German nation is no longer possible. The chalk line which the Weltanschauungen have drawn for peoples throughout the history of the world has more than once been the death line. Either the attempt to reshape a body politic hard as iron from this conglomerate of parties, associations, organizations, world outlooks, arrogance of rank, and class madness is successful, or else Germany will perish once and for all for lack of this inner consolidation. Even if another twenty emergency decrees were sent to hail down on our Volk, they would be unable to alter the main course leading to our ruin! If one day the way which leads upwards is to be found again, then first of all the German Volk must be bent back into shape. That is a process no one can escape! It does no good to say: “The proletarians are the only ones to blame for that!” No, believe me, our entire German Volk, every single class, has more than its share of the blame

for our collapse; some because they willed it and intentionally tried to bring it about; the others because they looked on and were too weak to prevent it! In history, failure weighs just as heavily as the intention or the deed itself. Today no one can escape the obligation to bring about the regeneration of the German *Volkskörper* by means of his own personal contribution and integration.

When I speak to you today, then it is not with the aim of moving you to cast your ballots or inducing you to do this or that for the party on my account. No, I am presenting an outlook to you here, and I am convinced that the victory of this outlook constitutes the only possible starting point for a German recovery; at the same time it is also the very last asset which the German Volk possesses. I have heard it often said by our opponents: "You, too, will be unable to master today's crisis." Assuming, Gentlemen, that that were the case. Then what would that mean? It would mean that we were approaching an appalling age and would have nothing with which to counter it but a purely materialistic attitude on all sides. The crisis, however, would be experienced a thousand times more strongly as a purely materialistic matter, without some ideal having been restored to the Volk. (*Animated applause*)

People so often say to me: "You are only the drummer of national Germany!" And what if I were only the drummer?! Today it would be a greater statesmanlike deed to drum a new faith into this German Volk than to slowly squander away the one they have now. (*Cheers of approval*) You take a fortress and subject it to the harshest of privations: as long as its garrison can envision salvation, believes in it, hopes for it—it can bear reduced rations. Completely remove from the hearts of these people their last faith in the possibility of salvation, in a better future, and you will witness how these people suddenly come to view reduced rations as the most important thing in their lives. The more they are made conscious of the fact that they are mere objects of trade, mere prisoners of world politics, the more they will turn exclusively to material interests, like any prisoner. Conversely, the more you lead a people back to the sphere of ideal faith, the more it will come to regard material distress as a less exclusively determinant factor. The most tremendous proof of this has been our own German Volk. Surely we never want to forget that it waged religious wars for 150 years with an enormous sense of devotion, that hundreds of thousands of people once left their own plot of land and all their worldly goods for the sake of an ideal and a conviction! We never want to forget that for 150 years there arose not a single ounce of material interest! And then you will comprehend how tremendous the power of an idea, of an ideal, can be! And only in this light can one understand that today hundreds of thousands of young people in our Movement are willing to risk their lives to combat the opponent. I know very well, Gentlemen, that when National Socialists march through the streets, and the evening is suddenly pierced by commotion and racket, then citizens draw open their curtains, look out and say: "My night's rest has been disturbed again and I can't sleep. Why do the Nazis always have to agitate and run around at night?" Gentlemen, if everyone would think that way, then one would have one's peace at night, but citizens would no longer be able to go out on the streets today. If everyone would think that way, if these young people had no ideal to motivate them and propel them forwards, then of course they would gladly

manage without these nocturnal battles. But let us not forget that it is a sacrifice when today many hundreds of thousands of SA and SS men of the National Socialist Movement climb onto trucks every day, protect meetings, put on marches, sacrifice night after night and return only at daybreak—and then either back to the workshop and factory or out to collect their pittance as unemployed; when they buy their uniforms, their shirts, their badges, and even pay their own transportation from what little they have—believe me, that is already a sign of the power of an ideal, a great ideal! And if today the entire German nation had the same faith in its calling which these hundreds of thousands have, if the entire nation possessed this idealism—Germany would stand differently in the eyes of the world today! (*Animated applause*) For our situation in the world results, in its devastating effects for us, only from the fact that we ourselves underrate German strength. (*Hear, hear!*) Only when we have revised this disastrous assessment can Germany make use of the political possibilities of once more—if we look far into the future—placing German life on a natural and sound foundation: either new *Lebensraum* and the expansion of a large domestic market or the protection of German economy against the outside by deploying accumulated German strength. The labor resources of our Volk, the capabilities are there, no one can deny our industriousness. But first the political foundations must be laid anew: without them, industriousness, capability, diligence, and thrift would ultimately be of no avail. For an oppressed nation is not capable of allocating the profits accruing from its thrift to its own welfare; rather, it is forced to sacrifice them on the altar of blackmail and tribute.

Thus, in contrast to our official³⁵ Government, I regard the vehicle for German recovery not as being the primacy of German foreign policy, but rather as being the primacy of the restoration of a healthy, national and powerful German body politic. It was in order to accomplish this task that I founded the National Socialist Movement thirteen years ago and have led it for the past twelve years; and I hope that it will also accomplish this task in days to come, that it will leave behind it the best reward for its struggle: a German body politic completely regenerated from within, intolerant against anyone who sins against the nation and its interests, intolerant against anyone who will not acknowledge its vital interests or opposes them, intolerant and relentless against anyone who endeavors to destroy and subvert this *Volkskörper*—and otherwise open to friendship and peace with anyone who wants friendship and peace! (*Tumultuous, long, drawn-out applause*)

2

Hitler had made good use of January 1932, but the parties of the Weimar Republic (Social Democrats, Center, and the German State Party) had not been idle in the meantime: they had reached consensus and jointly nominated Hindenburg as their candidate for the election to Reich President.³⁶

Hitler bided his time. According to Goebbels' diary,³⁷ he made the decision on February 2 to run for the office of Reich President. However, this was merely the date on which he disclosed his intentions to Goebbels. As early as January 30, a cry had rung out from the gallery at an NSDAP rally in the Berlin Sportpalast demanding: "Hitler should be Reich President!" Predictably, the *Völkischer Beobachter* made a great issue of this incident.³⁸ Hitler had obviously already begun to popularize his candidacy. The two speeches he delivered in Berlin on February 9 and 10 also served this purpose: there he spoke before 15,000 Berlin SA men in the Sportpalast³⁹ and, the following day, before Berlin SS, HJ and student formations in the same arena.⁴⁰

The official announcement of Hitler's candidacy was delayed. First he intended to exploit the propaganda value of the question of his citizenship. In 1925 he had surrendered his Austrian citizenship, fearing that he might be deported back to Austria as an undesirable alien. As a result, he was now a "stateless person."⁴¹

On the other hand, it is highly probable that, had he filed an application for citizenship during the 1920's, Hitler would have been turned down, for—at the very least—those Länder governed by the Social Democrats would have raised their objections.

The Weimar Constitution stipulated that candidates for the office of Reich President were to be German citizens. Recorded evidence of Hitler's cautious initial attempts to obtain citizenship date back to 1929, and it is safe to assume that he already entertained plans to run for

president at that time if, for instance, premature elections were to prove necessary due to the death of Hindenburg, who was already over eighty. Hitler sent out feelers to Dr. Stützel (BVP), Bavarian Minister of the Interior, via Wilhelm Frick⁴² and the National Socialist deputy, Dr. Buttman, to ascertain whether an application for naturalization would have any chance of success. The Bavarian Council of Ministers deliberated on the matter,⁴³ and Stützel gave a negative reply.

According to German law⁴⁴ there was another way to obtain citizenship: by being appointed a civil servant. When Dr. Wilhelm Frick became the first National Socialist Minister in Thuringia in 1930, he immediately sought to effect Hitler's naturalization through these channels and drew up a document appointing Hitler *Gendarmeriekommissar* (Gendarme Commissar) in Hildburghausen. Although Frick later claimed that the appointment had been made without Hitler's knowledge, it is difficult to believe that this is true and that Hitler, enraged at such an offer, even "tore up" the document. It is much more probable that Hitler kept the document in his desk in case of emergency: should Hindenburg suddenly die and new elections be scheduled, it might no longer be possible, even in a Land under National Socialist rule, to obtain citizenship at short notice in time to run for office. And in this case Hitler undoubtedly would have made an appearance, armed with the Thuringian document to prove that he had been a German citizen since 1930. However, in 1932 he considered it opportune to make no further ado of this matter but to choose more official channels to achieve his goal. At that time, only one German Land was governed with the participation of National Socialists: Brunswick.⁴⁵ Evidently, this Land was destined to become the scene of Hitler's forced naturalization.

However, Hitler felt that this act required a preparatory propaganda campaign, particularly since the 1930 attempt at procuring citizenship had just circulated in the press. Dr. Frick had been forced to declare in the *Völkischer Beobachter* on February 10⁴⁶ that he had made the proposal in question only because Stützel had declared that any application Hitler filed would have been to no avail.

The same issue of the *Völkischer Beobachter* contained the text of a speech delivered in Leipzig by the Chief of Police in Berlin, Grzesinski (SPD). He was quoted there as saying that, in his opinion, it was a disgrace that Hitler was not chased out of Germany with a dog whip.⁴⁷ In contrast, the National Socialist newspapers en masse lamented throughout February that it was a shame to deny Hitler—the old front-line soldier, the national pioneer—the right to hold German citizenship.

On February 12, the German National People's Party issued a statement in support of Hitler's naturalization.⁴⁸ Two days later, Hitler took the opportunity presented at a convention of party leaders in Munich for the Gau of Munich and Upper Bavaria to accuse the Social Democrats of being responsible for refusing to grant him citizenship. On February 14, he stated:⁴⁹

Miracles have taken place. Field Marshal von Hindenburg is presently being made out to be the only possible candidate for the presidency by Crispien, Barth and company.⁵⁰ These are the fruits of our educational efforts; I would not ever have thought that the Social Democratic Party would become so patriotic, so militaristic. The results of our educational efforts are also evident in other areas: the acute sense which the Social Democratic Party has today for what is national and what is non-national, for what is German and what is non-German; for what is native and what is alien; for which side of the border one is born on ... this acute sense which somehow does not really seem to fit in with its international outlook ... this, too, is a result of our educational efforts.

On February 15, when Hindenburg had declared his consent to run for office, i.e. to being reelected, Hitler issued the following proclamation to the NSDAP:⁵¹

Munich, February 15

National Socialists!

As a final attempt to rescue the disastrous Weimar system, the parties of the black-red coalition, who are hopelessly in the minority, have decided to propose Field Marshal von Hindenburg's reelection to the office of Reich President. In this way the policy of collapse, which received its final justification in the Young Plan⁵² and the emergency decrees, is to be carried on. National Germany will reply in the only way possible:

the National Socialist Movement must, true to its fight against the system, reject this candidacy. The hour of settling with the November Men has thus arrived. We regret that Field Marshal von Hindenburg was moved to allow his name to be misused in this fight.

Adolf Hitler

Still, Hitler refrained from announcing his own intention to run for office. Before doing so, he wanted to drum up more popular support in the ranks of the workers and peasants.

For this purpose he delivered a speech in a Düsseldorf machine works on February 16, addressing an alleged 26,000 workers. This move was designed to compensate for the somewhat negative impression which word of his speech at the Düsseldorf Industry Club had created among the working force three weeks earlier.

On the same day, Hitler called upon all Germans to secure the 1932 harvest.⁵³ This appeal bore the title, "The German Harvest of 1932 in Danger," and read as follows:

NSK Munich, February 16

An Appeal from the Führer

The precondition for the independence of the German State is the possibility of being able to provide sufficient food for the German Volk from native German soil. The German agriculture and horticulture industry, if intact, is in a position to guarantee the vitally necessary self-sufficiency of the German Volk's food supply. The present system has left German agriculture and German horticulture to hopeless decay. Overindebted and in spiritual despair, the German farmers and gardeners no longer know where to look for the means to till the fields in the spring as usual; considerable reductions in the amount of seed are already being contemplated. But this gives rise to the danger that the harvest will be insufficient in 1932 and thus will prevent the vitally necessary self-sufficiency of the German Volk's food supply. The impoverished German Volk is no longer in a position to raise the foreign currency necessary to procure the foodstuffs abroad which would be lacking given an insufficient harvest.

German Volksgenossen, German Farmers and Gardeners! This must not be allowed to happen; it is your patriotic duty to prevent a catastrophe from happening with the harvest.

Thus I call upon all Germans to regard the task of safeguarding the German harvest of 1932 as their foremost duty. Anyone who endangers the orderly spring tilling by any means whatsoever and attacks the German farmer or gardener from behind; or anyone who fails to till his land correctly with only his own self-interest in mind is committing treason against the German Volk. German industry, the trades, and business have a bounden duty to make all sources of aid available and to enable the agriculture and horticulture industries to safeguard the harvest for 1932.

I declare on behalf of the National Socialist Movement that a forthcoming National Socialist Government will grant special protection—even continuing after the harvest—to all measures taken now by farmers and other parties designed to effect the spring tilling in an unrestricted fashion. A National Socialist Government will also conduct an investigation of all compulsory auctions of agricultural property which has been effected since the bank catastrophe on July 13, 1931. This is the most elementary of obligations in the National Socialist view of the State, in which the preservation of the German peasantry as a source of regenerated blood for the Volk as well as the safeguarding of its food supply are the highest laws of life. National Socialism rates the laws of life of the Volk higher than the interests of international finance which have led to the destruction of all of the natural foundations of the German Volk and the German economy.

I expect each and every party comrade and German-minded person, in particular the German farmers and gardeners, to now do his duty in respect to safeguarding the endangered crops.

Adolf Hitler

Already Hitler's words sounded like those of a head of state! Regardless of how grotesque this appeal was, it was in fact effective. The overwhelming majority of German peasants became Hitler's followers in 1932. On February 22, Hitler finally allowed Goebbels to announce his candidacy at an evening rally of the NSDAP in the Berlin Sportpalast. The news was followed by shouts of "Heil" lasting several minutes.⁵⁴ "The people are standing up and cheering and calling out and laughing and crying all at once," Goebbels wrote in his diary.⁵⁵

On February 25, Hitler's naturalization was effected in Brunswick. The official notice read as follows:⁵⁶

Brunswick, February 26

The Führer of the NSDAP, Adolf Hitler, has been appointed *Regierungsrat* (senior executive officer) in the Brunswick legation in Berlin with immediate effect. Adolf Hitler has thus become a German citizen. His certificate of appointment was signed in the afternoon of Thursday by the Brunswick Minister-President Kuchenthal and Minister Klagges.

The somewhat dubious means by which Hitler had become a German citizen were not regarded by the National Socialists themselves as improper in the least. Indeed, they were pleased at having "put one over" on the Reich Government and that, by means of this incident, the public had been made aware of a loophole through which citizenship could be procured—and probably had been even before Hitler conceived of the plan.

Hitler was by no means averse to now campaigning against Field Marshal von Hindenburg. This became evident as early as the first speech Hitler delivered after the announcement of his candidacy. On February 27 he addressed a rally of 25,000 in the Berlin Sportpalast.⁵⁷ Following the standard long-winded introduction, his "party narrative," he stated:

The fact that today's *Vorwärts* writes in its appeal to the Social Democratic Party: "Beat Hitler!" makes me proud. There is nothing I want more than to have a good fight with you, and then Fate shall take the scales in its fist and weigh which side has more sacrifices and more will and more determination, yours or ours. I know your slogans.

You say: "We will stay on at any price," and I say to you: "We will overthrow you no matter what!"

And no matter what action you might take against it, no matter what your writings, lies or slander, it will come to nothing!

And if you say that now finally I am personally standing in the arena of this battle, that's true: I believe that now the decision is nearing, and I would be too proud and too self-confident to perhaps march in the second rank. On the

contrary: I am happy that I can now fight with my comrades, one way or another. And if you now believe you can wear us down with threats, that is where you are wrong! Feel free to threaten me with the dog whip. (*Thunderous jeering*) We shall see whether or not the whip is still in your hands at the end of the fight. The thirteenth of March will be a day of fighting for us, and I believe that this fight, my Volksgenossen, will reap the reward it deserves. Thirteen years of struggle, thirteen years of persistence, thirteen years of determination cannot have been in vain.

I believe in Divine Justice. I believe that it has defeated Germany because we had become faithless, and I believe that it will help us because we now once again profess our faith.

I believe that the long arm of the Almighty will withdraw from those who are seeking merely alien shelter.

We once served the Field Marshal obediently as our Supreme Commander; we honored him and desire that the German Volk continues to see in him the leader of the great struggle. It is because this is our wish and because this is our desire that today we view it as our duty to call out to the old Field Marshal:

Old man, we hold you in too great a reverence to be able to tolerate that your being supported by the very ones we wish to destroy. As much as we regret it, you must step aside, for they want the fight, and we want it, too.

And I believe that this battle will end with the victory of those who have really earned the victory, earned it through their fight, through their sacrifices and their commitment, through their persistence and determination, through their faith and the great ideals which inspire them.

Hitler brought up his heavy guns in a letter addressed to the Reich President himself on February 28. He objected to the ban on the Berlin NSDAP newspaper, *Der Angriff*, to Berlin Chief of Police, Grzesinski, who had wanted to chase him out of Germany with a dog whip; to the fact that two different yardsticks were being applied to the election campaign and thus interfering with it, etc. He closed with the words:⁵⁸

Herr Generalfeldmarschall! Do you believe it is worthy of your name, on the one hand, to allow your personal honor as a candidate for the presidency to be protected by a tangled mass of emergency decrees and legislative provisions, while on the other hand leaving your rival for office as fair game to the mercy of the lies and slander of party politics?

What do you intend to do, Herr Reichspräsident, in order to restore to this battle, which also involves you personally, the principles of chivalry?

The letter was delivered to Hindenburg by messenger at noon on February 28. Its contents were publicly disclosed a short two hours later at an NSDAP press conference held at two o'clock that afternoon. The next day Hitler began his election campaign through Germany, at this stage still traveling by car, in the course of which he spoke in the following cities:

- March 1: Hamburg (Sagebiel);⁵⁹
- March 2: Stettin (Exhibition Hall);⁶⁰
- March 3: Breslau (Jahrhunderthalle);⁶¹
- March 4: Leipzig (Meusdorf Park);⁶²
- March 5: Bad Blankenburg;⁶³
- March 6: Weimar (Market Place);⁶⁴
- March 6: Frankfurt am Main (Festhalle);⁶⁵
- March 7: Nuremberg (Luitpoldhain);⁶⁶
- March 8: Stuttgart (Stadthalle);⁶⁷
- March 9: Cologne (Messehalle);⁶⁸
- March 10: Dortmund (Westfalenhalle);⁶⁹
- March 11: Hanover (Stadthalle).⁷⁰

If one lends credence to the admittedly exaggerated reports of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, Hitler spoke before approximately 500,000 people in the course of this campaign. His listeners waited patiently inside and in front of the meeting halls. Hitler frequently arrived hours after the stated time (there were, for instance, delays of four hours in Breslau and two hours in Stuttgart). This was due in part to traffic problems caused by bad weather conditions but also motivated to a certain extent by the intention that, having waited so long, the audience would be more receptive to the speech which then came.

In Hanover Hitler learned that the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Carl Severing, had issued a circular to the police throughout Prussia, warning them to be prepared for putsch attempts of the radical parties, in particular of the National Socialists, which might follow the presidential election. Hitler realized immediately that, should the election turn out unfavorably for him, measures would be taken against the Party and in particular against the SA—as was in fact the case after the second ballot. In order to reduce this threat, he issued the following statement to the press:⁷¹

Hanover, March 11

The system, now at the brink of collapse, is attempting to maintain its position at the last minute by spreading rumors of plans to stage a putsch. These attempts are so stupid that no one can possibly take them seriously. The National Socialist Movement today has less reason than ever before to abandon the legal path it has taken and on which the system will be forced to its knees. All of the rumors circulating to the effect that the NSDAP is planning a putsch are false and to be seen as typical signs of our opponents' election campaign.

Adolf Hitler

In Hanover, Hitler also had a conference with the American journalist H.R. Knickerbocker,⁷² to whom he stated that he would receive no fewer than twelve million votes on March 13, election day, and that Hindenburg would receive no more than twelve million votes.

The *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* published the following account of the interview:

The American journalist Knickerbocker had a conference with Hitler in Hanover on Friday.

In respect to the election, Hitler declared that he would receive no fewer than twelve million votes. It was impossible, he stated, for one of the candidates to receive the absolute majority of the votes on the first ballot. The decision would therefore be made on the second ballot, and Hitler had no doubt as to its outcome.

In reply to the journalist's question as to what would happen when he became Reich President, Hitler declared:

The moment he was elected to the office of Reich President, Brüning would resign. He would even have to do so if he (Hitler) received thirteen million votes on the first ballot. Then an interim government would have to take the place of the present Cabinet until the outcome of the election became final.

The moment he assumed the office of Reich President, a Reichstag election would be announced in order to bring about a Reichstag which accurately reflected the will of the Volk.

By no means would he immediately revoke all of the emergency decrees issued by Brüning's Government, nor would he announce that the Treaty of Versailles was to be torn in two. The emergency decrees and the Treaty of Versailles had created a state of affairs which could not be changed by simply revoking the emergency decrees and tearing up the Treaty. These decrees would be revoked when something else had been created to take their place, and the Treaty of Versailles would be over and done when a different treaty was drawn up at another conference.

In other words, Hitler was thoroughly optimistic—but not without reason, for numerous prominent public figures had declared their support for his candidacy. Fritz Thyssen, the industrial magnate on the Rhein, voiced the thoughts of many leading figures when he stated:⁷³

"I am voting for Adolf Hitler because I know exactly who he is and am firmly convinced that he is the only one who can and will snatch Germany back from the brink of disaster and ruin."

In the course of 1932, Hitler was to convince many more of Germany's leading figures to adopt this view.

However, March 13, 1932 was a bitter disappointment for the NSDAP. The evening before, National Socialist newspapers⁷⁴ had proudly proclaimed: "Tomorrow Hitler will be Reich President," and

most of the Party's supporters shared this conviction. The election results showed 18.65 million votes for Hindenburg, 11.34 million for Hitler, 2.55 million for Duesterberg (nominated jointly by the Stahlhelm and the DNVP), and 4.98 million for the Communist Party's candidate, Thälmann. Although Hindenburg had not received an absolute majority, his lead was so large as to preclude any chance of Hitler's being elected on the second ballot.⁷⁵ The Party was totally demoralized. But Hitler recovered immediately and issued the following appeals that same night:⁷⁶

National Socialists! Party Comrades!

The first campaign battle is over! In the face of a united effort by all the other parties, despite the harshest suppression and obstruction of our propaganda by the authorities, the National Socialist Party has nearly doubled its electorate in less than a year and a half.

Today we have risen to the undisputedly largest party in Germany by far. Our opponents fought with an unparalleled flood of lies, slander and misrepresentations. The parties marching united against us have sunk from 21.4 million to 18.6 million; we, in contrast, have risen from 6.4 to 11.3 million. The German Nationalists and the Stahlhelm have maintained their prior standing. What we have not completely succeeded in doing in this election campaign must be finished in the coming one.

National Socialists!

By our own efforts, we have once more attracted more than five million votes from the German Volk to our cause. The offensive against the united Centrist and Marxist front must now be resumed immediately with the most drastic means possible. I know, Party Comrades, that you have made great sacrifices in this battle. Still I demand that you instantly commence the battle for the second ballot. Not a day must be lost! I have already announced in my speeches that, no matter how the election ends, the fourteenth of March will see us back at work. And regardless of how great and intensive these efforts of the past weeks have been, they will and must increase still further!

If the voters of the entire national front recall the dictates of the moment, we must still be capable of tearing loose the few million lacking Volksgenossen from the perverted front of our opponents and lead them to our Movement.

I know that my speakers are tired now. I know that my SA and SS men have many sleepless nights behind them; I know that the political leaders, just like the leaders of the SA, have accomplished supernatural deeds in the past few weeks. But today there must be no mercy. Just as I am instantly reassuming my work, I expect from all of you that you increase your efforts without hesitation and, if necessary, double them. True to the task we see clearly before us, our propaganda will be subjected to a new test! The orders for the continuation and intensification of the fight are being issued to the organizations this very night.

Party Comrades!

Through our energy and tenacity, we have grown from seven men to a force of currently 11.3 million! Counting the other national forces, we now total approximately 13.8 million. We must be capable of tearing the lacking two and a half million away from the opposing front and lead them to where they belong.

The goal is clear, the sacrifices which were made in the past serve only to reinforce the necessity of this struggle. We owe it to all those who placed their confidence in us to give our utmost and our very last to pin the victory to our flag.

The first round of this election is over; the second has begun today. This battle is one I will personally wage.

Munich, March 13, 1932

Adolf Hitler

Comrades in the SA and SS! Hitler Youth! NSKK!

A difficult struggle lies behind you! I have personally come to know your sacrifices and your efforts. Thanks to them, the Party has now become, in an incomparable ascent, the strongest political movement in Germany by far. But a second and greater struggle now lies before you! Once more this system has demonstrated its ability to temporarily maintain itself by means of lies and deception, by abusing all public institutions and using terror and bans. Thus the battle against the system must recommence immediately. The fourteenth of March marks the beginning of the struggle for the decisive second ballot. Our task is: tear loose at least two and a half million voters who have been led astray from the Centrist and Marxist front and lead them to our national front. We have grown from seven men to a force of nearly eleven and a half million today. If all the party comrades and all of the comrades in the SA, SS, Hitler Youth, and NSKK fulfill their duty fanatically, we will also accomplish this task! As much as you may require a rest, the approaching fight, the most difficult of all, forces me to demand that you make the most difficult sacrifices. Our offensive shall commence immediately. The propaganda is now to be continued for four weeks with the utmost intensity. On April 10, no matter what it costs, this goal must be attained! Our comrades, who have made such great sacrifices and in the end even gave their health and their lives, have a right to demand the utmost commitment from us as well. A National Socialist who has recognized his opponents does not loosen his grip during his offensive until, in the end, they have broken down! The reward lies only in the ultimate victory!

Munich, March 13, 1932

Adolf Hitler

Of the many speeches and proclamations Hitler made in 1932, these appeals were doubtless the best and most effective. He was able to remobilize his adherents, who had sunken into deep depression, and lead them on into a new election campaign which, despite the hopelessness of his position, brought him two and a half million new voters.

In 1932, Hitler had not yet become the “divine Führer” of his later years, when he believed he could not afford to make mistakes. He confessed that he had miscalculated in his prognosis of the first ballot.

On March 15, he traveled to Weimar in order to comply with the Social Democrats’ demand that he testify before the parliamentary investigating committee of the Thuringian Landtag concerning Frick’s attempt at obtaining citizenship for him in 1930.⁷⁷

Hitler more than welcomed such opportunities to speak before people who did not usually attend his rallies. On this occasion he again delivered a lengthy propaganda speech, picked his opponents’ accusations to pieces and projected the image of an impeccably legal-minded man who had, in 1930, torn Frick’s certificate of naturalization into shreds in Gera.⁷⁸

On the same evening, he took advantage of a rally of 5,000 party members in the Weimar Goethehalle to once more make a laughing stock of the investigating committee.⁷⁹

I do not know if it was a yearning to make fools of themselves or a yearning to receive their daily allowances which was the main motivation of this investigating committee. Generally speaking, it is no great honor to behold these illustrious opponents with which fate has unfortunately blessed us. It would be better if one were faced with worthy fighters and not this stuff, this nature’s run of the mill.

All things considered, Hitler was probably correct in stating that he had no opponents of any real stature; on the other hand, it would certainly not have been “better” for him had he in fact had them. During World War II he believed that he could abuse and make fun of his opponents abroad in the same way. In 1941 and 1942 he declared that it was regrettable that he always had mere “washouts” to deal with.⁸⁰ But these opponents soon showed him who had the upper hand.

However, on March 15, 1932, Hitler’s rhetorical escapades were a great success. He continued his Weimar speech with the remark that the Social Democrats’ fear of him had been the sole reason for Hindenburg’s campaign success.

I really did not believe it possible that the great “socialist, revolutionary liberators of the people,” the Social Democrats—down to the last man—and even a large part of the KPD would really vote for Hindenburg in the election. We openly confess that we deceived ourselves on this count. I was aware of the fact that the gentlemen are afraid of me. But that the gentlemen were so afraid of me and that they were scared so stiff that they turned out down to the last man—that I did not expect. Actually, we can all be proud of that. After a struggle

of barely twelve years, we have performed this miracle: that they have such an utter respect for a movement and, I am proud to say, for one man, that they abandon principles and pledges and memories and traditions to take up the single cry: It's every man for himself.

If I then turn my gaze to the unequal weapons with which we had to fight: on the one hand the large and powerful representatives of the State—Ministers, Chancellors, of course only in their capacity as civil servants, not as agitators or, much less, as candidates; when I take a look at the imbalance of arms, with the radio, the cinemas, and the power to prohibit everything which is really convincing on the other hand; and when I see the other side at the mercy of this terror; and when I further reflect on this admirable number of opponents: the Center, the Bavarian People's Party, the German People's Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Reichsbanner, the Iron Front, all of the unions, the Christian unions, the free unions, the "völkisch" organizations such as the DHV⁸¹—if you take a look at this whole bunch of parties, associations and organizations, then I can be proud that, confronted with this whole jumbled-up mixture, we National Socialists alone summoned up 11.3 million, and now, in a barely thirteen-year-long fight, compared to these "venerable remains" of times past, we have, after all, been able to raise—from nothing—the largest German party which has ever existed. I know very well that this or that person from the ranks of those who do not know me and do not know us has perhaps thought: "Now they'll have had enough."

My Volksgenossen! I may make one pledge to you here: throughout my entire life, I have always said that, for me, no one day will ever mark the end of the struggle, but rather that the following day the struggle will continue. And above all, I can promise you one thing: I have sunk my teeth into my opponent and you will not be able to shake me loose from this opponent. And as I have attacked today, so will I attack again tomorrow, and the day after once more. You would have to kill me before you will get me to loosen my grip on this enemy of Germany.

However, he had to be patient for the time being, for the Reich Government, hoping to check the flow of Hitler's feared oratory, had imposed a truce (*Burgfriede*) until noon of April 3. No election rallies were allowed prior to this date. However, Hitler had other ways to focus public attention on himself in the interim. The above is characteristic in style and content of Hitler's campaign speeches for the second ballot in the presidential election on April 10, 1932.

On March 17, he published a statement on the raids by Severing's police in Prussia and protested against the house searches being conducted in SA lodgings.⁸² On March 19, he spoke at the Reichsführer convention of the NSDAP in Munich.⁸³

On March 24, Hitler published a telegram protesting against the ban on 25 National Socialist newspapers which had been imposed in connection with the police action taken by Severing.⁸⁴

On March 26, he addressed an appeal to subscribers and readers of the National Socialist press.⁸⁵

The actual election campaign had been reduced to less than a week—April 3 to 8—by means of the truce imposed by the Reich Government. Party leaders were prohibited from making radio speeches; only members of the Government and state dignitaries were allowed access to the microphones. If Hitler intended to use his own talent for oratory, his strongest and hitherto most successful instrument of propaganda, he was forced to resort to extraordinary measures. He chartered a plane⁸⁶ and was thus able, in a single day, to speak at four to five of the rallies scheduled by the NSDAP in the largest and most important German cities. He wanted to be heard by millions. Although ultimately a total of only one million people attended the rallies, as one can conclude from the respective accounts in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the program in and of itself was undoubtedly an enormous physical and rhetorical achievement.

3

Punctually at 12:00 noon on April 3 (the end of the truce), Hitler launched his speechmaking offensive with a campaign speech in Dresden (at the Reick Cycle Track).

At the same time he issued a proclamation (“manifesto”) to the German Volk for April 24.⁸⁷

On the same day, he made election speeches in Leipzig (Exhibition Grounds), Chemnitz (Südkampfbahn), and Plauen.⁸⁸

On April 4, Hitler spoke in Berlin (Lustgarten), Potsdam (Luftschiffhafen), and twice more in Berlin (Sportpalast and Friedrichshain).⁸⁹

On April 5, Hitler landed at the airport of the Free City of Danzig and there reviewed the SA troops. On this occasion, he received a welcome from Danzig police officers. This same day, Hitler delivered speeches in Elbing (Fabrikhalle) and Königsberg (Haus der Technik). In addition, the SA marched up at the Wrangel Barracks in Königsberg in his honor.⁹⁰

Hitler made a stopover in Berlin on April 6. There he collected reports on the Prussian police action taken against the SA which, as became clearly evident, had been initiated with the consent of the Reich Minister of the Interior and of Defense, Groener, and which was tantamount to a ban on the SA. Hitler, however, was already organizing his counteraction through “subterranean” channels, via Röhm, to Schleicher, who maintained close relations to the son and adjutant to the Reich President, Colonel Oskar von Hindenburg, and the State Secretary, Otto Meissner.

In view of the house searches, Hitler also felt it was necessary to protect his Chief of Staff, Röhm, and above all to conceal the latter’s homosexual tendencies or refute respective claims as slander.⁹¹

Hence he published the following statement on behalf of Chief of Staff Röhm:⁹²

April 6, 1932

For quite transparent reasons, the rumor has been circulating frequently during the campaign that I am planning to dismiss my Chief of Staff. In this respect I may explicitly state once and for all: Lieutenant Colonel⁹³ Röhm is now and will remain my Chief of Staff after the elections. Not even the dirtiest and most disgusting smear campaign, which does not stop at misrepresentations, violations of the law or abuse of office and which will be lawfully atoned for, can change this fact.

Berlin, April 6, 1932

Adolf Hitler

On April 6, Hitler delivered campaign speeches in Würzburg (Frankenhalle), Nuremberg (Festhalle), and Regensburg (in a tent outside the city limits).⁹⁴

On April 7, Hitler published a statement concerning an allegedly forged bill from the Kaiserhof Hotel which the SPD press had published as proof of his extravagance.⁹⁵

On the same day he made a campaign speech in Frankfurt am Main (Festhalle) and stressed his financial independence in the following remark:

It may be that I am the only politician who is not employed by his party. I have placed my salary as senior executive officer in Brunswick at the disposal of the Brunswick State Bank to be distributed among disqualified unemployed.⁹⁶

Hitler left Frankfurt for Darmstadt and declared at a campaign rally there the same day:⁹⁷

When I prophesied six million unemployed one year ago, I was laughed at and made out to be an irresponsible agitator. I have been proven right in my theory that the loss of liberty leads to loss of work.

On April 7, Hitler also spoke at an election rally in Ludwigshafen (Exhibition Hall).⁹⁸

On April 8, he ignored stormy weather conditions and flew from Mannheim to Düsseldorf to deliver a speech there (Cycle Track). The same day he also spoke in Essen (Cycle Track) and Münster in Westfalia (Münsterhalle).⁹⁹

According to a decree of the Reich Government, no events were to be scheduled for April 9. But Hitler had arranged effective verbal propaganda for this day: a great number of leading figures declared their support of his candidacy on April 9. Even Crown Prince William of Prussia made the following contribution to Hitler's publicity campaign:¹⁰⁰

April 10, 1932

Abstention at the second ballot of the presidential election is incompatible with the concept of the Harzburg Front. Because I believe that it is absolutely essential that the national front stand united, I will vote for Adolf Hitler on the second ballot.

Oels Castle, April 2, 1932

Wilhelm, Crown Prince

The outcome of the second ballot on April 10 was as follows: Hindenburg 19.3 million, Hitler 13.4 million, and Thälmann 4.9 million votes. Duesterberg and Winter¹⁰¹ had not run.

Although Hindenburg had achieved an absolute majority, Hitler was the real winner on the second ballot (36.7 percent of the votes). He had succeeded in recruiting a further two million new voters in what had appeared to be a hopeless situation. Not only did he receive most of the votes of those who had formerly cast their ballots for Duesterberg (German Nationalists and Stahlhelm), but also a substantial number of the Communist voters. In 1932, many radical workers and unemployed swayed between Hitler and the KPD, as was evidenced in the elections still to come that year.

Hitler proudly issued the following appeals to his adherents on April 10:¹⁰²

National Socialists! Party Comrades!

You have fought a great and difficult battle. I knew that your loyalty is unshakable. Still I must thank you for your tremendous faith, your willingness to make sacrifices, and your diligence!

In spite of all the acts of suppression and persecution, our Movement has won a new victory through you which justifies it in regarding itself as a vanguard of national liberty and thus of the national future. Tomorrow the new struggle will begin. I know that you will continue to be the best guard of the German Volk in the future.

On April 24, we will once more pit ourselves against our opponents. And at one point in time the day must and will come on which we shall carry our flags to the last victory.

Munich, April 10, 1932

Adolf Hitler

Men of the SA and SS! My Leaders!

A difficult task lies behind you. We owe a new great victory to your courageous protection and your untiring diligence. I am immensely proud to be your Führer.

Munich, April 10, 1932

Adolf Hitler

To the Leaders of the Organization and the Propaganda Department of the National Socialist Movement! Party Comrades and Leaders!

The victory of April 10 obliges me to thank all those who, by their efforts, have created the necessary foundations in the organization, our propaganda

and the press. The confidence which thirteen and a half million Germans have placed in our Movement is not only the highest reward for work well done, but also the most weighty obligation for the future.

The National Socialist Movement cannot rest until the goal of the national liberation of Germany has become reality. Millions of German mental and manual workers, millions of German peasants are expecting our fight to continue!

The work begins tomorrow, April 11, for the difficult battles to come.
Munich, April 10, 1932 Adolf Hitler

Hitler had every reason to be satisfied with the election results of April 10.

Brüning and Groener believed that they, too, had scored a success, but they were deceiving themselves. While it was true that Hindenburg had been elected, the economic and political problems remained unsolved. Brüning's doctrinaire policies of deflation had only worsened the already disastrous economic situation, and his efforts to bring about equality of rights for Germany abroad and in military terms, and to remove the burden of reparations had not yet reaped any results. These were to fall to his successors. Domestically, the impression had arisen that the Reich Government was much less interested in alleviating the general crisis than in using every imaginable stratagem to prevent the NSDAP—which had become the strongest party—from taking over power.

Brüning and his ministers could produce no tangible evidence of success, and it was only a matter of time before they would fall. Misjudging their true situation after the presidential election, Brüning and Groener wrongly assumed themselves to be strong enough to strike a decisive blow to the NSDAP. On April 13, they induced the Reich President to sign a decree "toward securing the authority of the State" pursuant to Article 48.¹⁰³ The first paragraph of this decree pronounced that "all paramilitary organizations" of the NSDAP (SA, SS, etc.) were disbanded with immediate effect. The chief of the ministerial office, General von Schleicher, had shrewdly refused to have any part of this decree.¹⁰⁴

Its wording could not have been more unwisely chosen. The NSDAP was not the only party with "paramilitary organizations"; the SPD, for instance, had its own uniformed militant associations, the Reichsbanner and the Iron Front.

Hitler immediately seized upon this point. On the same day he issued the following appeal:¹⁰⁵

April 13, 1932

National Socialists, Party Comrades, former men of the SA and SS,
former members of the NSKK and the Fliegerstürme!

Now you know why I attempted to prevent the black and red parties from campaigning for the office of president. As a prelude to the elections in the Länder, General Groener has disbanded the SA and the SS. However, the Reichsbanner and the Iron Front were found to be politically valuable and thus not banned.

Party Comrades, I understand your feelings. For years now, faithful to my orders, you have adhered to the legal path to gain political power. During this time, you have undergone the most cruel persecution and torture. Hundreds of comrades have been killed, many thousands have been wounded. The cowardly murderers and perpetrators are, for the most part, nonetheless free to go their ways. For any attempt at self-defense, countless numbers of you were sent to jail or even to the penitentiary. In spite of the horrible misery which has been inflicted upon you, too, through the fault of the parties in power today, you have remained upright and honest Germans.

You have marvellously fulfilled Seume's prophecy that one day the poorest sons of our Volk will be its most loyal citizens.¹⁰⁶

I know what General Groener, Herr Braun, Herr Severing, Herr Grzesinski, Herr Stützel, Herr Brüning and company want, and you know it, too. Our answer to this new act of desperation on the part of the system will not be to party; it will be to strike.

The 24th of April will be the day of retaliation. Toward this end I recommend to you, my former comrades of the SA and SS, the following:

1. From now on you are only party comrades.

2. As party comrades, you fulfill your duty by voluntarily devoting yourselves more than ever before to the political campaign work in the sections and *Ortsgruppen* (local groups) as party comrades.

Do not give those presently in power any reason to cancel the elections under any pretext whatsoever.¹⁰⁷ If you fulfill your duty, General Groener's blow will fall back upon him and his confederates a thousand times over from the force of our propaganda.

Do not lose faith in the future of our Volk, in the greatness of our Vaterland, and in the victory of our cause, which is to serve both. I will give my utmost for this fight, and hence for Germany. You shall follow me. In spite of General Groener: as long as I live, I belong to you, and you belong to me.

But on April 24, may it please a righteous Providence to bless our fight for liberty and justice. Long live our National Socialist Movement, long live Germany!

Berlin, April 13, 1932

Adolf Hitler

This proclamation had an immediate effect. By April 15, the Reich President had dispatched a letter to Groener.¹⁰⁸ In a rather harsh tone, Hindenburg wrote that he had been informed in the interim that similar organizations were maintained by the other parties, and he was forced to insist that they receive equal treatment. However, the last thing

Brüning and Groener could afford was a ban of the Reichsbanner. Ultimately, Hindenburg's letter constituted the death sentence for Groener's political career. Right-wing circles in Germany had frequently been annoyed by Groener in the past. In November 1918, as Ludendorff's successor, he had been forced to discuss the significance of the oath of allegiance with William II, evoking strong disapproval. In 1930, in his capacity as Reich Minister of Defense, he had allowed normal policemen to arrest Reichswehr Lieutenants Ludin and Scheringer and First Lieutenant Wendt on suspicion of having been involved in National Socialist propaganda activities—a faux pas for which the officers' caste could not forgive him. And now, in the opinion of the military, he had gone so far as to weaken the military power of the Reich by banning the SA.

It seems astonishing that Groener did not realize the gravity of the situation. As Reich Minister of Defense, he must have been well aware of the close relations between the SA and the Reichswehr which had been developing at least since fall of 1931 and which now, for instance in East Prussia, had become particularly close. Since there was practically no chance at the time that general conscription could be reinstated in Germany, the concept of militias enjoyed great popularity in Reichswehr circles as well, and the attitude toward the SA was by no means as negative as it would become two years later under Hitler's influence. In any case, following the ban on the SA, Hitler could now simply wait for the end of both Groener and Brüning.

On April 14, he granted the Berlin correspondent of the *Evening Standard* an interview on the background of the ban¹⁰⁹ and then commenced his second airborne campaign throughout Germany with his sights on the Landtag elections scheduled for April 24.

Hitler started on April 16 with speeches in Augsburg (Sängerhalle), Donauwörth (Donauhalle), Rosenheim ("Deutscher Kaiser" Hall), Schlossberg bei Rosenheim (Sailerkeller), Traunstein (Turnhalle), and Miesbach (Hofbräuhaus).¹¹⁰

On April 17, Hitler applied to the Government in Brunswick to institute disciplinary proceedings against him based upon allegations published by the *Berliner Tageblatt*. The paper had claimed that he had made a statement to the foreign press to the effect that pressure from France had been the underlying cause for the SA ban.¹¹¹

On April 18, he held campaign speeches in Beuthen, Görlitz and Breslau (Jahrhunderthalle).¹¹²

On April 19, he paid a visit to East Prussia, viewed the Tannenberg Monument and delivered speeches in Allenstein, Willenberg and Lyk.¹¹³

April 19, 1932

In Lyk he paid a special compliment to his audience, declaring:

I do not believe there is another Land in Germany with the faith Mazovia has. Since I am not able to stop everywhere, I have resolved to come to Mazovia for a week after the end of the Oldenburg election¹¹⁴ to make up for what I unfortunately have had to miss today.

On April 20, his birthday, Hitler received the congratulations of his party friends in Königsberg and then proceeded by plane to attend the election rallies scheduled for that day. He spoke in Halle (Race Track) and in Kassel and Marburg in huge tents which had been erected for the masses attending the rallies.¹¹⁵

On April 21, he spoke at one such gathering in a tent in Bad Kreuznach, proclaiming to thunderous applause:

We are uniting the German Volk. The picture presented by this tremendous rally you see here today is one which is repeated before my very eyes four times a day. We can proudly say that we are the largest unification movement the German nation has ever known.

Hitler delivered similar speeches this same day in Koblenz (Stadium) and Trier (Sängerhalle).¹¹⁶

Campaign rallies in Frankfurt an der Oder (Stadium),¹¹⁷ Neuruppin (Schützenplatz)¹¹⁸ and Berlin (Sportpalast)¹¹⁹ followed on April 22.

The Landtag elections on April 24¹²⁰ did, in fact, result in a substantial increase in National Socialist mandates. In the largest Land, Prussia, the NSDAP became the strongest party by far. However, only in Anhalt¹²¹ did this suffice for a right-wing majority. It had not been possible to penetrate more deeply into the ranks of voters supporting the Social Democrats, the Center, and, respectively, the Bavarian People's Party.¹²² On the other hand, the peasants and the *Mittelstand* had cast their ballots predominantly for the NSDAP.

At least Hitler was in a position to issue a proclamation of thanks to his party comrades on April 24.¹²³

Hitler had a meeting with Schleicher in Berlin on April 28.¹²⁴ The next day he composed a general statement of gratitude for the birthday wishes he had received,¹²⁵ and on April 30 he filed suit against the outcome of the presidential elections at the Reich Canvassing Court.¹²⁶ He demanded that the election be declared null and void due to various, however insignificant, cases of obstruction. In view of Hindenburg's considerable margin, the action had no chance of success, but Hitler had resolved to let no opportunity pass in 1932 which might attract the attention of the public to himself and put his name in the headlines of

every newspaper, regardless whether the context was positive or negative.

Now things quieted down for a few days. Early in May, Hitler traveled to the Obersalzberg near Berchtesgaden to stay at the country house which he had purchased in 1925.¹²⁷ As early as May 8 he was back in Berlin for another conference with Röhm, Schleicher, and others who enjoyed Hindenburg's confidence.¹²⁸ Apparently it did not require much persuasion on Hitler's part to convey to his fellow interlocutors that it was time to dispose of Brüning and Groener.

Groener did make another feeble speech before the Reichstag on May 10, but his days were clearly numbered. On May 13, he was induced to tender his resignation as Reich Minister of Defense. He retained the office of Reich Minister of the Interior, which he held, at any rate, only as "caretaker." In essence, Groener's fall meant that Brüning's was certain to follow. The only thing lacking was a formal ground, which Hitler soon provided. As mentioned above, elections to the Landtag in Oldenburg had been scheduled for May 29, and Hitler lost no time in launching a new speechmaking campaign; the undertaking had every promise of a particularly noteworthy success, for the population there consisted chiefly of peasants.

After Hitler had imparted his "instructions" to the newly-elected Prussian Landtag deputies in the Prinz Albrecht Hotel in Berlin on May 19,¹²⁹ he repaired to the scene of the Oldenburg election. On May 20, he delivered initial speeches in Birkenfeld and Idar-Oberstein, villages in the Oldenburg exclave of the Hunsrück mountains.¹³⁰

He then proceeded to the fishing village of Horumersiel on the coast of the North Sea. Here he established a headquarters from which he intended to win over the population of Oldenburg in an oratorical offensive. He spoke on May 22 in the city of Oldenburg at a rally (Race Course);¹³¹ on May 23, he was in Rüstringen,¹³² on May 25 in Rodenkirchen,¹³³ and on May 26 in Delmenhorst (Schützenhof).¹³⁴ This same day he visited the Reich Navy's cruiser *Köln* in Wilhelmshaven and penned the following dedication in the ship's guest book:¹³⁵

With the hope of being able to help in rebuilding a fleet worthy of the Reich.
Adolf Hitler

Two campaign speeches in Kloppenburg (Markthalle) and Bad Zwischenahn (Maschinenhalle)¹³⁶ followed on May 27.

Hitler did not wait for the outcome of the elections in Oldenburg but left immediately for Mecklenburg-Schwerin, where Landtag elections

were scheduled for June 5. There he stayed with the National Socialist landowner Granzow in Severin and held a speech at a rally in Rostock (Alte Rennbahn)¹³⁷ as early as May 28.

May 29 was a black day for Brüning. President Hindenburg had returned to Berlin from a two-week sojourn at his estate Gut Neudeck in East Prussia with the conviction that the smouldering government crisis needed to be solved once and for all. On May 29, he demanded that the Reich Chancellor enlarge his Cabinet by adding right-wing members. Even if Brüning initially believed himself capable of persuading Hindenburg to reconsider, the outcome of the election in Oldenburg that same day settled the matter. Hitler had come away from the polls with nearly half of the electorate (49 percent). The deputies of the NSDAP held 24 of the 46 mandates and hence the absolute majority in the Oldenburg Landtag. Previously, there had been right-wing governments with a strong National Socialist constituency in a number of Länder (Thuringia, Brunswick, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Anhalt), but the outcome of this election was unique. There was no doubt that the next Landtag election in the rural Land of Mecklenburg-Schwerin the following Sunday would produce similar results. Under these circumstances, Brüning was forced to tender his resignation on May 30.

As his successor Schleicher had chosen Franz von Papen, a relatively unknown deputy of the Center Party and member of the *Herrenklub*,¹³⁸ Reich Minister of the Interior was to be Freiherr von Gayl from East Prussia. Schleicher himself assumed the Reich Ministry of Defense. The other ministers were experts in their fields, and several were to remain in office for years afterward under Hitler (von Neurath, Schwerin von Krosigk, Eltz von Rübenach, Franz Gürtner).¹³⁹

Hitler received a telephone call in Mecklenburg summoning him to Berlin; he delayed the speech scheduled for May 30 in Waren and appeared, in the company of Göring, before the Reich President that afternoon. Hindenburg asked him whether he would tolerate the new Cabinet. It appears that, having been given satisfactory assurances in respect to the dissolution of the Reichstag and to lifting the ban on the SA, he consented. But how long would he tolerate the new Government? One week? One month? In his eyes, Papen's Cabinet was an interim cabinet with the sole purpose of clearing away the last obstructions to his own accession to power. By no means was he willing to support this Government beyond the new elections to the Reichstag, which he expected to result in a right-wing majority. If Hindenburg and Papen had envisioned this toleration any differently, they had no one to blame but

themselves. Hitler's personal mouthpiece, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, commented with unusual restraint as early as June 3:¹⁴⁰ "The publication of the Party's position in respect to the new Cabinet and its measures will be forthcoming when appropriate." For the time being, the Government's main priority was to bring about a dissolution of the Reichstag and reinstate the freedom to demonstrate "for the NSDAP which has been unutterably suppressed in the past."

In the meantime, Hitler returned to Mecklenburg in order to reassume his interrupted campaign speeches. On May 31, he spoke in Wismar,¹⁴¹ on June 2 in Güstrow,¹⁴² and on June 4 in Waren.¹⁴³

On June 4, Hitler also met with Schleicher at a country manor in Mecklenburg to discuss once again the demand that the Reichstag be dissolved; the Cabinet naturally was disinclined to take up this matter. Hitler had even drawn up a memorandum on the subject, which he then, however, no longer needed to submit.¹⁴⁴

On June 5, Hitler scored another victory at the polls. In Mecklenburg-Schwerin he again received nearly half of the ballots. His party achieved the absolute majority in the Landtag there, holding 30 of 58 mandates. Hitler's party friend Granzow became Minister-President.

4

On June 5, Hindenburg signed the order to dissolve the Reichstag on the grounds that it “no longer reflects the political will of the German Volk subsequent to the outcome of the elections to the Landtage of the German Länder which have taken place in recent months.”¹⁴⁵

Hitler had had his way, but he met with a new setback on June 6. Pursuant to the Constitution, new elections were to be scheduled no later than sixty days from the dissolution. Hindenburg scheduled the election¹⁴⁶ for the last possible Sunday: July 31, 1932. The Government hoped to be able to make such visible progress in these two months that the wind would be taken out of Hitler’s sails and he would by no means be capable of attaining an absolute majority in the coming polls.

Hitler undoubtedly would have preferred an immediate election. There was a feeling of victory among his adherents, for Brüning had been overthrown and the entire “system” had suffered substantial damage. But what slogans should he use to carry him through a lengthy campaign, not to mention the considerable costs involved? Popular opinion already had it that the “Cabinet of Barons” had been constituted at Hitler’s request or at least with his consent. As long as it was merely a short-term solution, this might have been acceptable. However, if the reactionary Government held office for months on end, it might have been regarded as a permanent solution, and this was difficult to reconcile with the socialist demands of the NSDAP, at least in an outward sense. Now that the government system Hitler had fought so avidly was eliminated, logically he could not, at least for the time being, dismiss von Papen’s Cabinet as a gallery of rogues. The only alternative left was to concentrate his rhetoric on the specter of Communism, seek bloody confrontations with Communists on the streets as effective factual support for the claims he uttered, and combat the non-National Socialist Governments at the Land level.

The Reichsleiters and Gauleiters to whom Hitler presented his new propaganda concept on June 9 and 10 at a convention in Munich were less than enthusiastic, and Hitler saw himself compelled to require, as a precautionary measure, that the NSDAP Reichstag candidates swear allegiance to him personally at this time.¹⁴⁷

In addition, the progress of current proceedings before the Landgericht of Munich in the Abel perjury case, which concerned the NSDAP's position on South Tirol and foreign monetary grants, was not favorable. Hitler, who usually transformed courtrooms into forums for his propaganda, was driven into a corner and refused "to give any more answers at all to Jewish lawyers."

The court sentenced him to a fine of 1,000 RM, 200 RM of which were due to refusal to give evidence.¹⁴⁸

However, he hoped to find a more receptive audience in the Hessian election campaign. The Landtag there was to be elected on June 19, even though the last election had taken place only six months before. Adelung's Social Democratic caretaker Cabinet was still in office.

Hitler held his first speech in the Hessian campaign in Worms (Stadium)¹⁴⁹ on June 12 and afterwards left to fly to Berlin for a meeting with Papen on June 13 in the apartment of Herrenklub member Werner von Alvensleben, where he vehemently insisted that the SA ban still in force be lifted.¹⁵⁰

Late in the afternoon he was back in Mainz to deliver a speech at the Sport Grounds there.¹⁵¹ More speeches followed on June 14 in Alzey,¹⁵² June 15 in Darmstadt,¹⁵³ June 16 in Offenbach (Sports Grounds),¹⁵⁴ and June 17 in Giessen (Festhalle).¹⁵⁵

In the interim, Papen had hurried to comply with Hitler's request that the SA ban be lifted and the rights to assemble and to demonstrate be reinstated. A respective decree was signed by the Reich President on June 14.¹⁵⁶

On June 18, Hitler published the following decree reinstating the SA:¹⁵⁷

I hereby order that the SA be reinstated and assign this task to the Chief of Staff, Ernst Röhm. For the time being, I confirm that the Gruppenführers will remain in those sections and areas in which they were appointed prior to the disbanding of the SA. The SS will be reinstated by Reichsführer H. Himmler. All of the organizational orders of the former SA shall be valid for now as a framework. They will be reissued shortly. Any further implementation provisions will be decreed by the Chief of Staff.

Adolf Hitler

June 19, 1932

The SA columns began to march towards the end of the Hessian election campaign. Election day on June 19 did not, however, result in an outcome as straightforward as had been the case in Oldenburg and Mecklenburg. A considerable proportion of Hesse's population consisted of blue-collar workers, and the new Landtag was respectively comprised of 35 right-wing deputies (32 of them from the NSDAP) and 35 deputies from the other parties. It was impossible to form a right-wing government. But what had failed in Hesse was to succeed in Thuringia, where Hitler had also felt that new elections were requisite. On June 19, Hitler was addressing 2,000 party leaders in Weimar gathered for a general roll call there. He stated:¹⁵⁸

The Party is now involved in a series of the most difficult election campaigns. They have ended victoriously one after another. Now we see that a Reich Government has even lifted its ban on uniforms and the SA. I believe that all of this is necessary. I believe it is necessary, that no German Reich Government can or will completely fulfill the nation's hopes, but rather that these will only be fulfilled when the power and control is taken over by the Movement which has created the prerequisites for it.

I know that there are some Länder and some parties which believe themselves capable of combatting the tremendous development of our Movement from their own positions. But you can go home knowing for certain now that I am one of those people who are able to observe things and developments with ice-cold objectivity. I also believe that I have excellent nerves, and I am not about to lose control. But this calm does not mean that we will swallow everything without any will of our own. We will fight with all legal means available in order to defend our right. However (*continuing in a much louder voice*), if anyone in Germany believes that he can stabilize injustice by violating the Constitution, he will soon see our other side. We are fighting strictly in accordance with the law and, in this lawful fight, will use every means to knock down those who break with legality. They will never again break this Movement, for today this Movement is Germany.

Typically enough, Hitler then announced the dissolution of the Thuringian Landtag, which did not come about until July 15, prompted by a cabinet crisis there.

It would make me happy if here, of all places, a major victory could be won, because the Thuringian Landtag needs a new election again, too. That is the parliamentary fate which the gentlemen in power bestowed upon themselves with the Weimar Constitution. I am convinced that, just as in Mecklenburg and Oldenburg, our flag will fly alone in Thuringia.

On June 22, Hitler issued the following proclamation on the Reichstag election:¹⁵⁹

June 22, 1932

National Socialists! Party Comrades!

Ten election campaigns lie behind us. Ten times we have fought against our opponents' united front. Ten times we have won unprecedented victories! The year 1932 will one day be immortalized as the year of the most difficult sacrifices and struggles, but also as the year of the greatest victories and successes.

The fact that National Socialism is Germany's largest party today can no longer be denied by anyone. Nevertheless, a new wave of suppression and persecution is now hitting us. The bloodiest terror practiced by the murdering scum of the Communist underworld is combined with continued breaches of the law and the Constitution committed by the Center and the Social Democratic Party in those Länder in which these parties are still in power.

In Prussia, the Center jointly attempted, with the SPD, to secure the continued existence of the black-red rule by means of manipulations;¹⁶⁰ in Bavaria, this same Center, using a forged Landtag protocol, prevented our entire Party from representing the interests of our voters. 1,270,000 people have been robbed of their constitutional rights solely as a result of this trickery.

At the same time, thanks to the fourteen years of sloppy management by these very parties, the Reich and the Länder are facing political and economic bankruptcy.

As the responsible leader of the National Socialist Movement, I must therefore refuse to make any kind of pact with these parties today.

In view of the fact that the necessary assumption of exclusive responsibility in Prussia by the NSDAP has been made impossible by the manipulations of the former Prussian government parties, National Socialism would have to enter into a coalition with a party which is practicing a most intolerant persecution and oppression of our Movement throughout the Reich.

But we would rather do without ministers before we surrender our honor or our principles.

Germany and Prussia will not be saved by trickery and compromises, but rather only by exhibiting strength of character.

Today the Center does not yet believe in the purpose of the most recent elections and the mission of our Movement. We will get them to understand this faith by July of the year 1932 at the latest.

Party Comrades! See to it now that the election campaign on July 31 becomes a decisive battle. The victory on this day must also serve to finally break the power of the black-red parties in Prussia and in the Länder. And that without compromises.

God willing, we will then have created on August 1 the prerequisites for forming governments, above all in Prussia, which will both do justice to historic tradition as well as be capable of accomplishing the gigantic tasks of the present.

Munich, June 22, 1932

Adolf Hitler

Hitler now began his own preparations for the new election campaign. On June 24, he addressed the reinstated SA and SS formations in Munich (Zirkus Krone);¹⁶¹ he delivered a speech on June 28 at a

June 28, 1932

convention of Gauleiters and SA leaders in Munich,¹⁶² and spoke on July 3 at a meeting of 15,000 SA men in the Dante Stadium in Munich.¹⁶³ In each speech he issued warnings that the caretaker Government in Bavaria should refrain from any further obstruction of the SA and be wary of separatist plots.

The first genuine campaign speeches aimed at the election on July 31 were held on July 6 in Bad Tölz¹⁶⁴ and July 7 in Landsberg (Exerzierplatz).¹⁶⁵

A meeting at the Obersalzberg followed on July 9¹⁶⁶ and an election speech in Berchtesgaden on July 10.¹⁶⁷ Subsequently Hitler set off for a "Freedom Flight over Germany." For the first time that year, he donned a uniform for the occasion.¹⁶⁸

A colossal speechmaking program had been scheduled. Encouraged by his successes in the presidential and Landtag elections, he believed that a further intensification of his speechmaking activities at several rallies per day would bring, if not the absolute majority, then at least 40 to 45 percent of the ballot. However, this expectation proved false. In any case, he placed more value on the direct contact with the people afforded by such mass rallies than upon the mass communication available by radio. Although for years he had objected to being, as he claimed, illegally denied access to this medium, now that it was available as a potential instrument of propaganda, he declined to exploit it, leaving the microphones to Gregor Strasser and Goebbels.¹⁶⁹

Prior to the commencement of the election campaign, Hitler nonetheless made a phonograph record of a speech so that his voice at least could be heard where he was not able to conduct campaign rallies in person. He preferred this recorded speech, complete with a backdrop of excited masses, to a simple radio broadcast, in which he would have been merely one of many spokesmen for the various parties. The recording was extolled in the July 15th edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter* as "the first Adolf-Hitler record" and bore the title, "Appeal to the Nation,"¹⁷⁰ The arguments used in it are typical of Hitler's campaign speeches in the first half of 1932:

The great time of decision has now arrived. Fate has allotted those in power today more than thirteen years to be tested and proven. But they hand down their own worst sentence, in that they themselves confess to the failure of their efforts by the type of propaganda they use today.

Once it was their desire to govern Germany better in the future than in the past, and they are forced to observe that the only real product of their attempts at government is that Germany and the German Volk are still alive. In the

November days of '18 [1918], they solemnly pledged to lead our Volk and in particular the German worker into a better economic future. Today, after they have had nearly fourteen years to keep their promise, they cannot cite a single German professional group as witness for the quality of their actions.

The German peasant has become impoverished; the *Mittelstand* is ruined; the social hopes of many millions of people are destroyed; one third of all German men and women of working age is unemployed and thus without income; the Reich, the communities, and the Länder are overindebted; finances are in a muddle across the board; and all the coffers are empty!

What more could they possibly have destroyed? The worst thing, though, is the destruction of the faith in our Volk, the elimination of all hopes and all confidence. In thirteen years they have not succeeded in mobilizing in any way the powers slumbering in our Volk; on the contrary!

Out of their fear of the awakening of the nation, they have played people off against one another: the city against the country, the salaried workers against the civil servants, those who work with their hands against those who work with their brains, the Bavarians against the Prussians, the Catholics against the Protestants, and so forth, and vice versa.

The activism of our race was entirely consumed at home; outwardly, only fantasies remained: fantastic hopes of a cultural conscience, a law of nations, a world conscience, ambassador conferences, the League of Nations, the second Internationale, the third Internationale, proletarian solidarity, etc.—and the world treated us accordingly.

Thus Germany has slowly disintegrated, and only a madman can still hope that those forces which first caused this disintegration might now bring about the resurrection. If the present parties seriously want to save Germany, why have they not done so already? Had they wanted to save Germany, why has it not happened? Had the men of these parties honestly intended to do so, then their programs must have been bad. If, however, their programs were right, then either their desire cannot have been sincere, or they must have been too ignorant or too weak.

Now, after thirteen years, after they have destroyed everything in Germany, the time has finally arrived for their own elimination. Whether or not today's parliamentary parties exist or not is of no consequence; what is, however, necessary is that the German nation be prevented from falling completely into ruin.

Therefore it is a duty to vanquish these parties, for in order to secure their own existence, they must tear the nation apart over and over again.

For years they have persuaded the German worker into believing that *he alone* could save himself. Fooled the peasant for years by claiming that only *his* organization would help him.

The *Mittelstand* was to be snatched from the jaws of ruin by parties of the *Mittelstand*; the economy by the parties of business. The Catholic was forced to seek his refuge with the Center, the Protestant with the Christian Socialist People's Service. In the end even the houseowners had their own political representation, just as did the tenants, the salaried workers, and the civil servants.

July 15, 1932

However, these attempts at breaking the nation down into classes, ranks, professions, and confessions and at leading it piece by piece to the economic good fortune of the future have now failed completely.

Even on the day our National Socialist Movement was founded, we were already governed by the conviction that the fate of the German individual is inseparably bound up with the fate of the entire nation.

When Germany disintegrates, the worker will not flourish in social good fortune and neither will the entrepreneur; the peasant will not save himself then; nor will the *Mittelstand*.

No, the ruin of the Reich, the disintegration of the nation, means the ruin and the disintegration of all!

Not a single confession and not a single German tribe will be able to escape sharing the same lot.

Even on the day our National Socialist Movement was founded, we had already long been certain that it was not the proletariat which would be victor over the bourgeoisie, and not the bourgeoisie which would be victor over the proletariat, but that international big finance must ultimately become the sole victor over both. And that is what has come to pass!

Recognizing this disintegration, thirteen years ago I took a handful of people and formed a new movement which in its very name is to be a proclamation of the new *Volksgemeinschaft*.

There is no such thing as socialism which does not have the power of the spirit at its disposal; no such thing as social good fortune which is not protected by—and even finds its prerequisite in—the power of a nation.

And there is no such thing as a nation—and thus no such thing as nationalism—if the army of millions who work with their intellects are not joined by the army of millions who work with their fists, the army of millions of peasants.

As long as Nationalism and Socialism march as separate ideas, they will be defeated by the united forces of their opponents. On that day when both ideas are molten into one, they will become invincible!

And who will deny that, in a time when everything in Germany is falling apart and degenerating, when everything in the business world and political life is reaching a standstill or coming to an end, a single organization has experienced an enormous and miraculous upturn?

With seven men I began this task of German unification thirteen years ago, and today over thirteen million are standing in our ranks. However, it is not the number that counts, but its inner value!

Thirteen million people of all professions and ranks—thirteen million workers, peasants, and intellectuals; thirteen million Catholics and Protestants; members of all German Länder and tribes—have formed an inseparable alliance. And thirteen million have recognized that the future of all lies only in the joint struggle and the joint successes of all.

Millions of peasants have now realized that the important thing is not that they comprehend the necessity of their own existence; rather, it is necessary to enlighten the other professions and walks of life as to the German peasant, and to win them for his cause.

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And millions of workers have similarly realized today that, in spite of all the theories, their future lies not in some “Internationale” but in the realization on the part of their other Volksgenossen that, without German peasants and German workers, there simply is no German power.

And millions of bourgeois intellectuals, too, have come to the realization of how insignificant their own illusions are if the masses of millions comprising the rest of the Volk do not finally comprehend the importance of the German intellectual class.

Thirteen years ago we National Socialists were mocked and derided—today our opponents’ laughter has turned to tears!

A faithful community of people has arisen which will gradually overcome the prejudices of class madness and the arrogance of rank. A faithful community of people which is resolved to take up the fight for the preservation of our race, not because it is made up of Bavarians or Prussians or men from Württemberg or Saxony; not because they are Catholics or Protestants, workers or civil servants, bourgeois or salaried workers, etc., but because all of them are Germans.

Within this feeling of inseparable solidarity, mutual respect has grown, and from this respect has come an understanding, and from this understanding the tremendous power which moves us all.

We National Socialists thus march into every election with the single commitment that we will, the following day, once more take up our work for the inner reorganization of our body politic.

For we are not fighting merely for the mandates or the ministerial posts, but rather for the German individual, whom we wish to and shall join together once more to inseparably share a single common destiny.

The Almighty, Who has allowed us in the past to rise from seven men to thirteen million in thirteen years, will further allow these thirteen million to once become a German Volk. It is in this Volk that we believe, for this Volk we fight; and if necessary, it is to this Volk that we are willing, as the thousands of comrades before us, to commit ourselves body and soul.

If the nation does its duty, then the day will come which restores to us: one Reich in honor and freedom—work and bread!

Hitler’s new speechmaking campaign was launched on July 15 in East Prussia with two addresses in Tilsit and Gumbinnen.¹⁷¹ Speeches in Lötzen, Ortelsburg, Osterode and Riesenburg followed on July 16.¹⁷²

The following day Hitler spoke at a mass rally in Königsberg.¹⁷³ All told, in the course of these three days his words reached more than 200,000 people. From Königsberg he sent a telegram of protest to Hindenburg, Papen, Schleicher, and Reich Minister of the Interior Freiherr von Gayl, objecting to the harassing behavior of a police officer toward the SA when its divisions marched in Königsberg.

On July 19, Hitler delivered a campaign speech in Schneidemühl before a crowd of 40,000.¹⁷⁴ The same day he addressed an election rally

in Cottbus.¹⁷⁵ There he also conferred with Rbhm, Göring, and Goebbels¹⁷⁶ on the appointment of a Reich Commissar in Prussia. Hitler proceeded by plane to Stralsund the same day to speak there before tens of thousands. However, bad weather conditions forced the plane to make a stopover and Hitler did not arrive at the rally until 2:00 a.m. He nonetheless delivered his twohour address to a drenched but patient gathering of followers.¹⁷⁷

On July 20, Hitler visited the giant flying boat ‘Dornier Do X’¹⁷⁸ at the harbor in Warnemünde and then boarded his plane for SchleswigHolstein.

His first speech was delivered in Kiel (Festhalle); then he flew to Hamburg, spoke at the Viktoria Sports Field, and proceeded to Lüneburg for another rally.

Hitler’s last speech of the day was delivered late in the evening at the Weser Stadium in Bremen, where he stated:¹⁷⁹

For me it will be easier to answer before history for the destruction of thirty parties than for those who founded them.

Shortly before Hitler had landed in Bremen, he had given the crowds gathered in the Weser Stadium an effective demonstration of his Promethean qualities. He had instructed the pilot to circle over the stadium in the dark night sky with the cabin illuminated. The result was an eerie, otherworldly scene, and many in the audience were left with the impression that Hitler had actually descended to earth as a sort of god. What had been conceived as mere fantasy by Benson in his book, *The Lord of the World*,¹⁸⁰ seemed to become reality.

July 20, 1932 was also a special day for Chancellor von Papen. The election campaign had been marked by a number of bloody confrontations between National Socialists and Communists, above all in Prussia.¹⁸¹ Hitler demanded that the Reich take action against the Social Democratic Government under Braun, arguing that he was ostensibly no longer able to maintain law and order. On July 20, with the aid of Article 48, Papen had Hindenburg appoint him Reich Commissar for the Land of Prussia in order to “restore public safety and order”¹⁸² and was thereby granted express authorization to dismiss the members of the Prussian State Ministry from office. A state of emergency was proclaimed for Berlin and Brandenburg and the executive power transferred to the Reich Minister of Defense or rather, at his orders, to the Commander of Wehrkreis III, Lieutenant General von Rundstedt.¹⁸³ A few Reichswehr officers and troops sufficed to remove the Prussian Minister-President,

Otto Braun; Minister of the Interior, Carl Severing; Berlin Police Chief, Grzesinski; his second-in-command, Weiss; and the head of the Schutzpolizei, Heimannsberg—all staunch Social Democrats—from office, i.e. to arrest them in their chambers. Several Oberpräsidenten and police chiefs in the Prussian provinces were declared dismissed from office. Things quieted down, and the military state of emergency could be lifted by noon of July 26.

It appeared that von Papen was fulfilling Hitler's every wish. However, July 20 had revealed a fundamental difference between Hitler and von Papen's Cabinet.

It was Hitler's desire to have the caretaker Government in Prussia dislodged so that he could take over the Prussian Government constitutionally in some way or another, if necessary by means of a coalition with the Center.

On the other hand, the reactionary Reich Government planned to turn the temporary measure taken on July 20—which, according to the Constitution, was to be upheld only until public safety and order had been restored—into a permanent institution. The existence of two governments in Berlin, i.e. the Reich Government and, from 1919 onwards, the Social Democratic Prussian Land Government, had long been a thorn in the side of conservative circles in Germany. They preferred the constellation which had existed in imperial Germany but which was now prohibited by the Constitution, namely that the Reich Government be identical to the Prussian Government. It soon became evident that von Papen, whose office as Reich Commissar for the Land of Prussia should actually have expired when the state of emergency was lifted, by no means contemplated relinquishing power in Prussia. This constituted an open invitation for a coup d'état.

On July 20, a dangerous course had been set—a course which constituted a threat not only to the continued existence of the Weimar democracy, but also to Hitler, who had based his tactics on constitutional premises. The question now was whether Hindenburg would be amenable to further steps taken by the Papen Government in violation of the Constitution, e.g. the elimination of the Reichstag.

For the present, Hitler's fate was hinged upon the outcome of the Reichstag election on July 31. He avidly resumed his speechmaking campaign, delivering addresses on July 21 in Hanover, Braunschweig, and Göttingen;¹⁸⁴ on July 22 in Liegnitz, Waldenburg, Neisse, and Gleiwitz;¹⁸⁵ on July 23 in Zittau, Bautzen, Dresden, Leipzig, and Dessau;¹⁸⁶ on July 24 in Elberfeld, Duisburg, Gladbeck, Bochum, and

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Osnabrück;¹⁸⁷ on July 26 at the Kyffhäuser Monument, in Erfurt, Gera, and Hildburghausen;¹⁸⁸ on July 27 in Eberswalde, Brandenburg, and Berlin (Grunewald Stadium);¹⁸⁹ on July 28 in Aachen, Cologne, Frankfurt am Main (Festhalle), and Wiesbaden (Sports Grounds);¹⁹⁰ on July 29 in Reutlingen, Neustadt an der Hardt, Freiburg im Breisgau, and Radolfzell;¹⁹¹ and on July 30 in Kempten, Bayreuth, Nuremberg, and Munich.¹⁹²

The outcome of the election on July 31 brought bitter disappointment for Hitler: in spite of his enormous efforts and untiring oratory, he had received only a few votes more than on the second ballot in the presidential election of April 10. Although the NSDAP was the strongest party (230 deputies) with a constituency of 13.7 million ballots (37.3 percent of the votes), the German Nationalists had obtained only 2.1 million votes (37 deputies), thus putting a right-wing government out of reach. The block comprised of Social Democrats and the Center stood strong; all the more so since these voters felt they had been singularly rebuffed by von Papen's Cabinet. The Communist mandates increased from 77 to 89.

It had become evident that, in spite of Hitler's consummate rhetoric, he was unable to attract the majority of the voters to his cause. The dream of seizing power legally by means of plebiscites had evaporated.

The only victory on this July 31 was the outcome of the Landtag election in Thuringia, which had afforded the possibility of instituting a right-wing government under National Socialist leadership.

The proclamations Hitler delivered to his adherents on the election outcome of July 31 were terse and weak:¹⁹³

To the Party:

A great victory has been won. The National Socialist German Workers' Party has now risen to become by far the strongest party of the German Reichstag. This development, standing unique in the history of our Volk, is the result of tremendous efforts, of constant persistence. This greatest triumph of our Movement does not mean that anyone should be given thanks; rather we all are called upon to do our duty of taking up and continuing the struggle with renewed and increased strength.

Adolf Hitler

To the Men of the SA and SS, and to the Members of the NSKK and HJ:

A tremendous victory has been won. Many comrades have made it possible with the most difficult sacrifices. The dead signify a sacred duty for us to now resume the struggle for Germany's liberation all the more.

Adolf Hitler

There was a single ray of hope left to Hitler: perhaps the Government would seek a reconciliation with him after all or propose a parliamentary compromise with the NSDAP, the German Nationalists, and the Center.

Von Papen's Cabinet was not wholly satisfied with the outcome of the election. The Chancellor had entertained the hope that his initial measures toward alleviating the economic crisis and his—albeit undeserved—success at the Conference of Lausanne (final installment of three billion marks for reparations) would also have a positive bearing on the election results for the German Nationalist Party. He had also believed that the Center voters would more readily cast their ballots for a former deputy of the Center Party—i.e. himself. But annoyed by what they viewed as Brüning's elimination and Hindenburg's disloyalty, they were by no means willing to vote for a disloyal renegade such as von Papen.

On the other hand, the Government viewed the election results, which had given a clear majority neither to the right nor to the left, as a confirmation of their own mandate to form an all-party presidential cabinet. Hence they were resolved to stay in power; indeed, even more so because von Papen, this charming Catholic and former Captain of the Uhlans,¹⁹⁴ had succeeded in winning Hindenburg's special favor.

The general feeling was that no particular consideration need be taken of Hitler. If he insisted, he could be given the office of Vice Chancellor.

According to the Constitution of the Reich, the Chancellor alone determined policy. There were no provisions granting a "Vice Chancellor" any amount of influence; he was merely to act as a "deputy chancellor" who could only then exercise any power when the Chancellor was absent or incapacitated by illness. This post was normally assumed by the senior minister or one of the other ministers in the Cabinet. But even in this case, policy decisions were made by the Chancellor. Von Papen's intention in creating a special ministerial post for a "Vice Chancellor" was to placate the National Socialists, should they join the Cabinet, with an illustrious-sounding but ineffectual post. The Reich Government believed Hitler was so naive that he would stumble into this trap. It is the irony of fate that von Papen of all people, the very person who had wanted to shelve Hitler in the powerless position of Vice Chancellor in 1932, was later to be named Hitler's own "Vice Chancellor."

The first few days in August were spent in exploratory talks. Hitler met with Schleicher on August 15¹⁹⁵ and informed him of his claims in

respect to forming the Government. His principal aims were quite clear: he wanted the positions with the greatest concentration of power—the Chancellorship and the Ministry of the Interior. In the Länder in which National Socialists were involved in the Government (Thuringia, Brunswick, Anhalt, Oldenburg, and Mecklenburg), the NSDAP had laid claim to and been awarded these posts. Only in those Länder in which they did not constitute the strongest coalition party had they permitted, for the time being, the other right-wing parties to designate the head of government. However, the post of Minister of the Interior and the Police had gone to the NSDAP without exception. On a national scale, little influence was attached to the position of Reich Minister of the Interior, for he had no police forces under his control. Only with the emergency decree of February 28, 1933 was the Reich Minister of the Interior granted significant powers.

Hence these two posts—the Chancellorship and the Ministry of the Interior—comprised Hitler's minimum claims. His interest in the other offices remained, for the time being, less pressing.

It was false, however, to assume that the head of the strongest party in the Reichstag would relinquish his claim to head the Government: this would have meant an enormous loss of image he could not afford in the eyes of his followers.

Schleicher, the smooth tactician, refrained from uttering any definitive statement on the demands of the National Socialists. Hitler returned to the Obersalzberg and left further negotiations in Berlin to his Chief of Staff, Röhm.

Rumors of disputes within party leadership began circulating throughout the country. As was later discovered, Gregor Strasser had been overly ambitious to assume a ministerial post.¹⁹⁶ Hitler's denial of August 10 was characteristically shrewd: it served also to disclose his current whereabouts, thus robbing the Reich Government of the excuse of having delayed negotiations with him because he could not be located.¹⁹⁷

Fictitious accounts are momentarily circulating in the press as to a "fragmentation" within the leadership of the National Socialist Party and the "opposition" which is allegedly being brought to bear against me by individual leaders, Dr. Goebbels, Gregor Strasser, etc. These reports are too silly to even require a denial.

I desire here only to make it known that I am not presently in Berlin at a new "headquarters" in the Badensche Strasse, but have been in the Bavarian mountains with Dr. Goebbels and the other leaders of the Movement since the end of the election campaign.

Curious reporters will find out soon enough which decisions the Party has made for the future.

August 10, 1932

Adolf Hitler

The claim made by the correspondent for the English newspaper *News Chronicle*, Davenport, to the effect that he had interviewed Hitler had already been denied in the *Völkischer Beobachter* on August 5.¹⁹⁸

In Berlin, Röhm continued to explore possibilities. On August 11, Hitler decided to travel to Berlin himself. It is not clear whether he was summoned by the Reich Government or went of his own volition.¹⁹⁹ In any case, a decision had to be made, for pressure from the Cabinet was mounting as well.

Hitler arrived with Röhm at the Reich Ministry of Defense at 10:00 a.m. on August 13 to meet Schleicher. There it quickly became evident that there was no intention of making Hitler Chancellor, and the subsequent conference with von Papen in the Reich Chancellory only served to make clearer that no change was being contemplated.

Negotiations had already failed. The *Kölnische Zeitung*, partial to Papen, received the following telegram at midday from its correspondent in Berlin:²⁰⁰

Today Hitler declared at his discussion with the Reich Minister of Defense that he was forced to adhere to his claim to the office of Chancellor as leader of the largest German party. It is known that it was the Chancellor's intention to grant the National Socialists two and, if necessary, three seats in the Reich Government; the newly instituted office of Vice Chancellor and the Ministry of the Interior. The office of Vice Chancellor is to be connected to the post of Prussian Minister-President.²⁰¹ For the time being, it is not clear whether Hitler himself or one of his trusted party comrades²⁰² is to assume the office of Vice Chancellor. In the following meeting with the Reich Chancellor, Hitler continued to uphold his claim to the leadership of the Reich Government and rejected all other proposals.

In the opinion of persons involved, the negotiations have now all but failed. It is expected that neither the present pause in negotiations nor Hitler's visit to Hindenburg will suffice to change this state of affairs. Thus Hitler's talk with Hindenburg, which is scheduled for this afternoon, is now regarded as having merely formal significance.

The *Kölnische Zeitung* quite accurately described the situation at noon on August 13. Also acutely aware of the state of affairs, Hitler no longer wanted to see Hindenburg at all.²⁰³ However, the Reich Government placed great value on Hitler's visit, intending to compromise him before the Reich President for having broken his promise to tolerate the Cabinet.

State Secretary Meissner telephoned Goebbels' apartment at 3:40 p.m. in order to ascertain Hitler's whereabouts and, under the false pretense that no decision had yet been made, lured him to the Wilhelmstrasse. Hitler was received by Hindenburg at 4:30 p.m. in the presence of von Papen and Schleicher. Naturally there was no question of inviting Hitler to become Chancellor; instead he was made to feel singularly unwelcome and, still standing, was censured by Hindenburg for claiming for himself "complete power"²⁰⁴ and admonished to conduct any opposition in a chivalrous manner.

Hitler, who had hardly been given the chance to say anything at all, was ushered out onto the street within a matter of minutes. The situation was obvious: von Papen and Schleicher had taken him for a ride! Not only in front of Hindenburg, but in front of the general public as well, he had been found unfit for the office of head of government. The party he held responsible for this humiliation was—certainly not without some justification—Schleicher, for he had been the one with whom Hitler had held so many confidential talks in the preceding months. He swore to take bloody revenge as soon as the occasion afforded.²⁰⁵

The following official account was published of Hitler's reception by Hindenburg:²⁰⁶

On Saturday afternoon, Reich President von Hindenburg received the leader of the NSDAP, Adolf Hitler, in the presence of Reich Chancellor von Papen in order to discuss the political situation and the question of reconstituting the Reich Government.

The Reich President inquired whether Hitler was personally willing to enter a government headed by Reich Chancellor von Papen along with other suitable figures in the NSDAP. Herr Hitler replied in the negative and demanded that the Reich President assign to him the full leadership of the Reich Government and the entire state authority.

Reich President von Hindenburg firmly rejected this proposal, citing as a reason that he could not answer to his conscience and his duties to the Vaterland if he assigned the entire power of the Government exclusively to the National Socialist Movement, which was determined to make one-sided use of same. He regretted that Herr Hitler did not feel able to adhere to the statements he himself had submitted prior to the Reichstag elections to the effect that he would support a Reich Government which enjoyed the confidence of the Reich President.

The talks concluded with a serious exhortation by the Reich President to Hitler to conduct NSDAP opposition, which he had announced, in a chivalrous manner and to remain conscious of his responsibility to the Vaterland and to the German Volk.

In the morning, prior to the Reich President's reception, a conference had taken place between the Reich Chancellor and Herr Hitler. In the course of this

talk, the Reich Chancellor had offered to propose Herr Hitler as Vice Chancellor in the present Government and furthermore to entrust important political and departmental ministries to several other figures in the National Socialist Movement, thereby granting this movement influence²⁰⁷ on the leadership of the state proportionate to its size.

The Press Office of the NSDAP Reich leadership published the following statement:

On Saturday the Führer was asked to attend discussions with Reich Chancellor von Papen and, subsequent thereto, with Reich President von Hindenburg. In reply to the question proposed to him as to whether he and the Party were willing to join von Papen's Government, the Führer declared: We are determined and resolved to assume the entire responsibility for German politics in every way if the definitive leadership of the Government is entrusted to us in exchange. If this is not the case, the National Socialist Movement can assume neither a part of the power nor a part of the responsibility; in particular, it is out of the question for the Party to enter von Papen's Government. However, since Reich President von Hindenburg has refused to entrust the National Socialist Movement with the leadership of government, the negotiations were broken off without any conclusions having been reached.

The measures to be taken now in order to continue the struggle of the National Socialist Movement shall be disclosed in a meeting of the leaders to be held this week. The Führer had left Berlin by Saturday evening.

A statement will be forthcoming from the NSDAP in respect to the official communiqué on the interchange between Hitler, Hindenburg, and von Papen, which contains several not insignificant errors.

Regardless of how unfavorable the decision of August 13 appeared, it did place Hitler in a position to announce political war against von Papen's Cabinet. That same day he took respective action. The most pressing task consisted of placating and sending home the SA men—who had expected Hitler to assume power—and award them the promised "work and bread," so that the Government was not given any excuse for imposing a new ban on the SA or taking even harsher action against the Party. Thus he immediately gave Röhm the order to announce that the SA was to be given two weeks' vacation. The Chief of Staff disposed of this task in a quite ingeniously worded proclamation.²⁰⁸ In contrast to Strasser, Röhm proved his loyalty to Hitler when difficult situations arose. There are no grounds to believe that Röhm or the SA had planned a coup in summer or fall of 1932 without Hitler's consent. The Stennes Crisis²⁰⁹ of 1931 was over, and Hitler had the SA completely under control.

The NSDAP's statement in response to the Government's official communiqué on Hitler's meeting with Hindenburg on August 13 was

published in the form of an interview which Hitler granted to a “representative” of the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*²¹⁰ on August 16. The interview read as follows:

Question: is it true that, after the talk with Reich Chancellor von Papen, you did not wish to see Reich President von Hindenburg? Why did you then allow yourself to be moved to comply with Hindenburg’s request for a visit after all?

Answer: As long as the present Reich Government has not resigned, the Reich Chancellor bears the responsibility for politics. This also applies in the event that a reorganization of the Cabinet is planned and the head of the Government is the one who is endeavoring to bring about that reorganization. Only at that point when the Government resigns does the responsibility fall upon the Reich President to then—if the Constitution is at all valid—institute the formation of a new government in accordance with it. I regard bringing in the Reich President in the course of forming a government as an instance of shifting the responsibility from the shoulders of the Reich Chancellor to the shoulders of the Reich President.

Incidentally, I did not travel to Berlin of my own accord. I was summoned. The Reich Government suggested to me that a new government be formed which as Führer of the National Socialist Movement I was forced to reject in the form proposed. I stated the requirements under which the National Socialist Party would be prepared to join the government. I was informed by the Reich Chancellor personally that these conditions had been rejected by the Reich President from the start. Thus I had even less reason to pay this visit, for I had not in any way attempted to force myself upon the gentlemen in Berlin.

Thus I stated that, in my view, the responsibility for the failure to reorganize the government was naturally to be borne by Reich Chancellor von Papen; that therefore it was out of the question for me to visit Hindenburg; and that I would only be willing to pay a visit to the Reich President if he had not yet made a final decision but rather desired to become acquainted for the time being with the various positions. However, as it was to become evident, this was not the case. The decision of the Reich President had already been made.

The fact that I nonetheless went to see the Reich President was due only to a message relayed by telephone to Minister Frick from the State Secretary of the Reich Chancellery, once more to the effect that the Reich President had not yet made such a decision. In reality, fifteen minutes earlier the Reich Chancellery had confirmed to the press the actuality of the decision of the Reich President, which had already been made, noting at the same time that my visit was to be accorded merely formal significance and could no longer have any affect.

The Reich President himself then also declared that his decision had already become final!

Question: Is it true that you abstained from presenting your position to Hindenburg?

Answer: It is correct that I abstained from presenting my position to Hindenburg, for the curious method I just described which was used to persuade me to visit Reich President von Hindenburg, coupled with the fact of

the Reich President's final verdict, gave me no cause to make repeated use of the arguments I had already expounded to the responsible political leader.

Question: Herr Hitler, your Party scored a sensational victory in the Reichstag election. Never before has a party of comparable size existed in Germany. In every other country it would be a matter of course that the leader of the largest party be assigned the task of forming a new government. Why, in your opinion, doesn't Herr von Papen take the logical steps?

Answer: Certainly, in Germany it used to be normal that the leader of the largest party was given the task of forming a cabinet. More recently, though, statesmanlike capabilities appear to be determined no longer by the largeness but rather by the smallness of the parties. Since we National Socialists have become a large force, any politician who wants to become a master among these masters must either have ruined a party or, what is even more effective, no longer have any party at all behind him. Politics is thus no longer the art of the possible, but has become the art of the impossible. Incidentally, the Movement does not owe its present size to the patronizing support of traditionladen figures in our political life who are dying off. Therefore it will not draw its strength in future from these sources either.

Question: Herr Hitler, how do you think von Papen's Government will be capable of working if it can no longer count on the patient and passive behavior of the strongest party in Germany?

Answer: My dear Sir, you will have to address that question to Herr von Papen. For my part, I know in which way I and my Movement will continue fighting.

Question: In your opinion, what consequences will it have for developments in Germany if von Papen's Government does in fact continue to hold the reigns for some time?

Answer: I approached von Papen's Government, the members of which I had, for the most part, never met, as I have approached and will approach every government calling itself a national government. I will support or tolerate it at least as long as I can perceive in its governmental practice a strengthening of the national front and a weakening of the Marxist front. As soon as measures taken by the Government cause the national side to falter and the international side to be stimulated, I will reject it, regardless of which men are involved. Basically, it is my conviction that every government which does not have a solid *weltanschaulich* footing in a fundamental movement of its Volk must and will fail.

The governmental practice of the current Reich Government will, in my view, lead to chaos.

Question: Is it correct, Herr Hitler, that you have announced that the NSDAP will conduct the most rigorous opposition to von Papen's Government?

Answer: The National Socialist Movement is going into opposition against the current Reich Government. Just how rigorous this opposition is, will be determined by the size of the damages which would be incurred in the absence

of an opposition. In this connection, the elections of July 31 have already clearly shown the direction in which von Papen's Government with the men presently in office will and must lead. Even a dictatorship is only conceivable when it represents the will of the Volk or has every prospect of being acknowledged in the near or foreseeable future as representing the will of the Volk. But I know of not a single dictatorship in world history which has succeeded in completely transforming itself into a new and recognized type of state which has not evolved out of a *Volksbewegung*.

Question: Don't you think that it would be better for the NSDAP to have one bird in the hand rather than two in the bush?

Answer: *Nein*. I will never give away a birthright for a song. In matters of principle, I would rather take on any fight and any persecution than ever be untrue to myself or the Movement. I believe that, in this degenerated and unprincipled age, it is important to show people that a movement is pursuing the goal it has set unerringly and unalterably, without consideration to momentary advantages or disadvantages to its leading figures. One cannot require heroism from a nation when its political leaders are ready to make any, even the cheapest compromise. This is tantamount to cultivating, from the top downwards, that spirit of lack of dignity in a Volk which then, even in the last fateful questions, regards an act of submission as being a "bearable" compromise.

Question: How did the leaders accompanying you in Berlin react to your decision?

Answer: My leaders would never have understood me had I acted any differently. Even if I make a hundred mistakes in practical matters, they would forgive me more easily for that than were I only once to deny the honor of the Movement or the principles of our struggle. Today more than ever before, they are behind me as a single man.

Question: Herr Hitler, how do you think your decision will be taken by the members of the NSDAP?

Answer: The members of the Party and my followers have heard from my own mouth a hundred times that I will never make compromises which are unbearable for the Movement. They know that I am willing at all times, if necessary, to give my life for the Movement. They know that hundreds of thousands of our comrades are doing the same thing and that thousands are making serious sacrifices. All that would be pointless if now suddenly the Movement could be lent out for a program other than its own. You ask what the party comrades and followers think? When I left Berlin that night, a large crowd of people surrounded my car and called out to me. I only remember two of the sentences, which I wish our banners would bear for all time: "Don't give in!" and "Stand firm!"

Question: How many acts of terrorism are being committed against your party comrades? According to my information, at the beginning of the year alone they numbered thousands. What does the Movement contemplate doing in order to protect its adherents from the daily acts of terrorism against the National Socialists still taking place under von Papen's Government?

Answer: The acts of terrorism practiced by the Marxist parties against our Movement now number tens of thousands. The number of dead is more than 300;²¹¹ the number of injured last year was more than 6,000, but in the seven and a half months of this year, this figure has already exceeded 8,200.

Countless comrades have been crippled and will remain so for the rest of their lives. In the past, our governments and the press—if I leave out very few papers, of which yours is one—have never taken any interest in these matters. At the most, if a National Socialist defended himself in order to save his life, he was made out to be the aggressor in the end and even sentenced on top of it. In this regard, I am not counting the terrible acts of persecution against the Party by the police which have, in a single city—namely Dortmund—finally been punished in court and thus been acknowledged as having taken place. On the day of the election, without warning, one of these red murderers slashed the throat of one of our comrades with a razor in broad daylight in Königsberg, for no reason at all. The poor man died a wretched death. The press, which normally makes a fuss about every single villain, took hardly any notice. Though, mind you, the bourgeois newspapers and the governments instantly came awake when calls for revenge came from the cup now filled to overflowing with indignation and wrath! Now that the party comrades who are in permanent danger of being killed have finally begun to retaliate, the value of human life has suddenly been discovered, but they do not now join forces against the red plague of murderers, no: they join forces against the “general political acts of terror.”

You ask what we contemplate doing to stop this?

There is such a thing as a right of self-defense, and we will not be talked into giving it up for long by the stupid clichés of “law and order.” This pitiful bourgeois prattle will not bring my dead comrade back to life, will not make a cripple healthy again, will not do any good to the injured. The National Socialist Movement has fought legally to the utmost, but unless this butchering soon comes to an end, I will be forced to decree a right of self-defense to the party comrades which will then—let there be no doubt—instantly do away with these red Cheka methods.

I may add that, at times like these throughout history, police regulations have always failed. No further proof is necessary to show that the situation in Germany today is no different.

Question: What do you view as the next steps for your Party?

Answer: The Party is fighting for power. Its steps are determined by the fighting methods of our opponents,

Question: Your Movement is not seriously regarded anywhere as reactionary or unsocial. How can it be that, despite this, the parties which are most rigorous in attacking von Papen's Government as the “Cabinet of Barons” for being reactionary and unsocial, today welcome the fact that this government is not being replaced by a National Socialist Government, i.e. by men who come from all classes of the Volk?

Answer: Oh, you are quite mistaken! Certain right-wing circles call us Bolshevists, and the Bolshevists in turn claim that we are reactionaries, barons,

big-business capitalists, slaves of industry, and God knows what else. The fact that the enemies of the German Volk both at home and abroad are happy that no reorganization will take place in the Government is a great honor for the Party. The fact that they sigh in relief that I have not become Chancellor is a great honor for me. The Marxist enemies of Germany at home know, after having betrayed the German Volk for years, that the National Socialist Movement will in fact honestly look after the German working man. The bourgeois reactionaries know that we will replace their policy of weakness with a policy of national strength. Both suspect that the age of class and rank conflict is coming to an end and that the unity of the German Volk will once more be restored to it on the platform of National Socialist thought.

Hitler repeated these arguments once more in an interview with a representative of the American news agency Associated Press²¹² and, asked whether one might indeed witness a march on Berlin à la Mussolini, he replied:

Why should I march on Berlin? I'm already there! The question is not who will march on Berlin, but rather who will march out of Berlin. The SA will not take part in an illegal march.

Hitler also expounded his position at a convention of party leaders in Munich (Reichsadler Hotel) on August 15²¹³ and met with no contradiction. He had declared an open war against von Papen's Cabinet. Now all he needed was an opportunity to effectively demonstrate this to his followers and the entire Volk. This arose on August 22, when a special court in Beuthen set up by von Papen's Government passed a death sentence on five National Socialists who had beaten a Polish Communist from Potempa to death.

With the Reich President's decree of August 9,²¹⁴ von Papen had introduced capital punishment for politically motivated manslaughter. Special courts were instituted to pass judgment in such cases, and fate would have it that National Socialists were the first to be tried by such a court. The motives behind the killing of the Communist Pietrzuch, who was regarded as a Polish insurgent,²¹⁵ were by no means clear, and it has not been established that they were even political. But who cared about the life of a Polish insurgent? Von Papen at any rate could count on the entire Right to react to this type of justice with righteous indignation, particularly since the defendants could not have been aware of the capital punishment decree at the time of the crime. Hitler, however, chose to address the following telegram to his condemned comrades:²¹⁶

My dear comrades! In view of this outrageous *Bluturtd* (unjust death sentence), I feel bound to you in unreserved loyalty. From this moment onward,

your freedom is a question of our honor. It is our duty to fight a government under which this is possible!

Adolf Hitler

He also issued the following appeal:²¹⁷

National Socialists! Germans!

In November 1918, Marxism attacked and destroyed the old Empire in a cursed revolt, aided and abetted by the cowardice and weakness of bourgeois politicians. Ever since this atrocity, Germany's misery has been unutterable. The counterpart to the terror of the November Criminals at home was the ensuing terror of our opponents from abroad.

While the bourgeois politicians subscribed to the new system in pitiful obsequiousness, if not at least drawing back from it in cowardice, our National Socialist Movement alone has taken up the fight for our Volk's everlasting rights to live.

Ever since, we have been pursued by the hatred of those very parties which, in the name of Marxism, have from the beginning always used violence and terror as standard weapons in class conflict. Their pre-war slogan, "*Und willst du nicht Genosse sein, so schlag ich dir den Schädel ein*"²¹⁸ has been upheld since the revolution with appalling frankness as a natural right and even recognized by bourgeois bureaucrat-governments. The fact that we National Socialists were not willing to surrender our constitutional rights of freedom of speech and freedom to demonstrate was interpreted as a "provocation of the proletariat" and thus as justification for our persecution.

For fourteen years the public authorities of this system have, more often than not in a scandalously one-sided fashion, rebuked not the oppressors, but rather forbidden the oppressed, time and time again. Uncounted are the sacrifices which young Germany, possessing no other representation but the National Socialist Movement, has been forced to make for its ideals.

More than 300 massacred—one could literally say, butchered—party comrades number among our dead martyrs. Tens of thousands and even more tens of thousands have been injured, and some will be crippled for the rest of their lives. The bourgeois constitutional state and the yellow bourgeois press barely took any notice. Only when the cup began to run over and the terror of the red bands of organized murderers and criminals became unbearable did von Papen's "National Government" rouse itself to take instant action. We have now become acquainted with the first evidence of their national will. On nearly the same day on which the murderers and tormentors of our party comrades in Ohlau escaped with mild sentences, although we suffered two dead and 27 seriously injured, the courts of Herr von Papen's Government sentenced five National Socialists to death. German Volksgenossen! Whoever of you harbors sentiments for the fight for the honor and freedom of the nation will understand why I refused to join this bourgeois Government. The courts of Herr von Papen will ultimately sentence many thousands of National Socialists to death. Did they really believe that they would be able to cover up this action, an action which is struck with blindness and challenges the entire Volk, with my name

as well? The gentlemen are mistaken! Herr von Papen, I will have nothing to do with your bloody objectivity, I wish for victory for national Germany and annihilation for its Marxist destroyers and corrupters. But I am not suited to be the hangman of the national freedom fighters of the German Volk.

With this deed, our standpoint in respect to this national Cabinet has been mapped out once and for all. Whatever agony upon agony the Heavens above us may send, our Movement will still come to terms with this Government which executes our fellow fighters. Herr von Papen can feel free to set up such blood tribunals to pass judgment on our Movement. The power of the national uprising will come to terms with this system as surely as it will eliminate Marxism in spite of these attempts to save it. In view of this most atrocious of unjust death sentences, there is all the more reason for us to have only one single mission in life: to fight, and fight once again!

We shall liberate the word “national” from the grip of an objectivity whose real innermost essence is inflamed by the judgment passed in Beuthen against national Germany. Herr von Papen has thus engraved his name in German history with the blood of national fighters. The seed which will nevertheless bear fruit from this will be one which can no longer be appeased by punishment. The fight for the lives of our five comrades begins now.

Adolf Hitler

This was the tone Hitler most enjoyed using when dealing with his opponents. The consideration he had shown to von Papen and Schleicher in the preceding three months was no longer necessary. Indeed, he was now free to brand the present rulers—as he had the “system” governments before them—as sounding the nation’s death knell. They would be wise to refrain from carrying out the judgment of Beuthen.

Silesian SA leader Edmund Heines,²¹⁹ who had been present when the judgment was pronounced, had called out in a loud voice from among the spectators attending the trial: “The German Volk will pronounce other judgments. The judgment of Beuthen will become the starting signal for the German awakening!” Hitler dispatched Chief of Staff Röhm to visit the convicted men in prison in Beuthen. Thousands of National Socialists demonstrated for days on the streets of Beuthen and Breslau, shouting: “Down with Papen’s Government.”

The Reich Government had no desire to risk a civil war for the sake of a Polish insurgent, and thus commuted the death sentences to life imprisonment.²²⁰ It had underestimated Hitler and was noticeably shaken by the ferocity of his threats.

It suddenly became evident that, having broken with Hitler, the Cabinet enjoyed little popular support, particularly in view of Papen’s emergency decree of June 14 which had drastically reduced social benefits. In the new Reichstag, the Government would be faced with

opposition across the board, from Left to Right, from the Communists, the SPD, and the Center, to the National Socialists. Its only certain support would come from the scattering of German Nationalists' and the German People's Party.

On August 29, von Papen and Schleicher attempted to reach a compromise in talks with Hitler in Berlin, but to no avail. Brüning also met with him there the same day.²²¹ Now that Brüning had fallen, the Center was no longer averse to a coalition with the National Socialists. At a gathering of 230 NSDAP Reichstag deputies who, on August 29, had congregated in Berlin in order to swear the oath of allegiance to their Führer,²²² Hitler once again broached the subject of the judgment of Beuthen, stating:

I refuse to comprehend how five National Socialists can be sent to the guillotine for the sake of a Polish insurgent who once fought against our German brothers in Silesia. Here I am not being objective, but subjective. Whoever struggles and lives, fights and, if it has to be, dies for Germany has every right; and whoever turns against Germany has no rights at all.

Alluding to rumors that the Reich Government planned to dissolve the Reichstag even before any voting took place, he continued:

Our position differs from that of our opponents in that we say: it is perhaps possible to govern without a Reichstag, but one cannot govern without the Volk. The only person capable of governing is that person who grows forth out of the Volk and knows this Volk. The system governing today must fail due to the total absence of any living bond with the Volk.

On August 30, the newly-elected Reichstag assembled and began its work by receiving a statement submitted by the Communist Chairwoman by Seniority, Clara Zetkin. The German Nationalists were not in attendance. The 230 National Socialists in uniform, who had formerly made it a custom of heckling Marxist speakers, maintained silence. They were determined to demonstrate that this Reichstag functioned well, and they did not wish to give rise to any excuses for its dissolution. Subsequently, Hitler's candidate, former Captain Hermann Göring,²²³ was elected Reichstag President with the votes of the NSDAP, the Center, the German Nationalists, and the DVP. Thus, the National Socialists now presided over one of the important offices in the Reich, for the head of parliament was empowered to intervene on various occasions, to approach the Reich President directly, etc. The palace of the Reichstag President now became an important base in Hitler's continuing struggle for power.

5

On September 1, Hitler spoke in public for the first time following a one-month pause,²²⁴ addressing a gathering of 20,000 in the Berlin Sportpalast. After sharply attacking von Papen's government and the Herrenklub, he once more condemned the judgment of Beuthen.

In view of the latent tension and the possibility of a violent confrontation, he found it expedient to utter a statement of sympathy on behalf of the Reichswehr and to describe the use of armed forces in domestic conflicts as detestable.²²⁵

The Government declares that it is the one holding power; thus we confess: for us, the Army of the Reich does not exist for the protection of the government, but for the protection of the Volk. We would take care of this Army as never before, not only in a material, but also in a spiritual sense; we would place it upon a platform which every German could look up to without worry. And when the regiments march by, every German would say, full of pride: those are our soldiers, the German Volk's regiments. If a political regiment relies solely on the bayonet, it abuses the most valuable possession we have in Germany.

In respect to the Government's threat to repeatedly dissolve the Reichstag, Hitler stated:

As far as we are concerned, a hundred times! We shall nevertheless be the victors. I will not lose control. My will is unshakable, and I can hold out longer than my opponents.

Hitler passed the time until the next session of the Reichstag on September 12 with a series of speeches and rallies.

On September 2, he held a meeting with the Party's leaders in Berlin.²²⁶

On September 3, he delivered an address in Berlin at the funeral of SA member Gatschke, where he stated:

Our dead will not have died in vain.²²⁷

An address to party leaders from the Gau Mittelfranken in Nuremberg followed on September 4.²²⁸ Hitler's fears of a coup were not unfounded. The German Nationalists openly discussed the possibility of dissolving the Reichstag without scheduling a new election. Hindenburg, however, was averse to such experiments, wishing to uphold the Constitution. Only in an extreme emergency would he consent to dissolve the Reichstag. Hence, von Papen had no choice but to make do without a dissolution, and he was sufficiently optimistic to believe that his economic program, which contained a number of National Socialist ideas, would win the votes not only of the German Nationalists and the DVP, but those of the Center and even the National Socialists as well. But his hopes were crushed by Hitler's violent rejection in a public address in Munich (Zirkus Krone) on September 7:²²⁹

The hour is only ostensibly favorably disposed towards those in power today. The gentlemen in office believe that the German Volk is enduring for their sake alone and has only one fervent desire: "Dear God, please do send us the old Excellencies of 1914 again!" They really believe that this German Volk and in particular that part which we have organized and snatched from despair has no other hope than to finally fall under the leadership of the Herrenklub. They are mistaken! In the meantime we have worked for thirteen years, and by no means do we owe our successes to chance.

We have adhered strictly to legality and have gradually become the determining factor in Germany. And now that it is no longer possible to govern constitutionally without us, suddenly these same gentlemen are stating that the Constitution and parliamentarianism have become obsolete; that the party system must be done away with. A new age has dawned, they say, in which these outmoded phenomena must be swept away.

Well, if a new age is really coming, then we want new heads, too; then you can get out! In this case as well, one cannot fill old bottles with new wine.

The new age has already come, and we welcome its arrival: the new age is the new German Volk which we have created!

No, I am only holding to the pledge I was forced to make. We want to rule strictly in compliance with the Constitution. Mind you, we will amend the Constitution some day, too, but we will amend it in a strictly constitutional manner! One has only to look at the Government's new economic program. It will serve to rescue not the German Volk, but at most a few banks!

But strangely enough, these gentlemen seem not to view the product of our work as so vulgar that it is not worth plundering piece by piece. Piece by piece our work is being exploited now ... letter by letter, word for word, but not the contents! Today these gentlemen boldly declare: "Who do the National Socialists think they are, presuming to take on this position?" Oh yes, in 1919 and 1920, then it was possible to "presume to take on a position"! Then one had only to begin with nothing, to work hard and slave away. Today we say: there are two types of nobility: one you are born with, and the other you achieve!

To thunderous applause, Hitler pointed down to the arena, where SA and SS columns stood in close ranks.

There stands the nation's new nobility! These are the men who fought and struggled for thirteen years for the freedom of their Volk!

If Herr von Papen believes today that half of the National Socialist Party no longer stands behind Hitler, but rather behind him, the only thing I can say is: dear Herr von Papen, please call a halt! You are not even capable of speaking well enough to persuade the Party to come to you; you would have had to practice for at least thirteen years! Now, I know for certain that you, Herr von Papen, made an appearance in our party office in Berlin only three months before you took office and asked: what ideas and plans does the National Socialist Party have? But you cannot learn that in three months, you know, especially if you only ask once! When people try to accuse me of identifying myself with murderers, I say: no, but I identify myself with my comrades! The men convicted in Beuthen are my comrades, because they fought with us for Germany. And for me, comradeship does not end if someone takes a false step!

The five convicted men have now been granted a "reprieve"—their sentences have been commuted to life imprisonment. Do they really believe that it will take that long until we rise to power in Germany? [—] And I can assure these gentlemen now: we will rise to power!

My picture is hanging in the cells of each of the convicted men. And I should be the one to betray them? [—] Whatever they have done wrong is something we will one day clarify; we will be fair judges, and they will submit to our judgment. But we will then also make certain that these things cannot happen again—not by inventing draconian punishments, but in that we remove elements such as the Polish insurgent Pietrzuch!

Poland has expelled more than 900,000 Germans.²³⁰ How many Poles has Germany ever expelled?

Do you think that I would sell the Movement for a few ministerial posts? Do you think that I am wooing for a title? One day it will stand in my will that nothing but "Adolf Hitler"²³¹ shall be inscribed on my tombstone. I am making my own name the title I bear. Even Herr von Hindenburg cannot bestow a title upon me. I am not wooing for any title, I am only striving for leadership!

And if people say today: you are not entitled to leadership! Fine, I will take up the gauntlet, you highborn *Herrschaften*!

I have never waited for others to begin the offensive; I myself initiate the attack. If the others say that the Constitution has become outmoded, we say: the Constitution has only now begun to have a purpose! By virtue of it, the German Volk is getting a chance to speak for the first time in fourteen years. We want to take up the fight and want to see whom the Volk heeds: the order of Herr von Papen, "Everyone, about face!" or our command, "Young Germany, forward march!"

In this Munich speech, Hitler also made a point of the difference in age between himself and Hindenburg, doing so in a manner which evoked little public approval. He declared:²³²

There is one advantage I have over my most illustrious opponent: the Reich President is 85 years old, and I am 43 and feel fit as a fiddle.

I also have the conviction and the certain feeling that nothing can happen to me, for I know that Providence has chosen me to fulfill my task. My will is tough, unrestrained, and unshakable. And by the time I am 85 years old, Herr von Hindenburg will be long gone. Our turn will come.

Whatever the Government chooses to do, whether it dissolves the Reichstag or not, is of no concern to us National Socialists. In the long run it will not work to govern with bayonets and the Reichswehr.

In a subsequent interview with the Paris newspaper *Oeuvre*²³³ he stated:

I should negotiate with von Papen? Never, as long as I am alive. I was the one who helped von Papen up out of the dark, where he should have stayed! What value do I place on a title? I am constantly in danger of falling victim to an assassination. And you think I should place any value on getting hold of a ridiculous vice chancellor portfolio?

I am independent in every way. I do not need money. I earn enough with my books, at least more than I can spend. I have not changed my views. I want all or nothing, and if the Reich President decides to have me summoned once again, I will use exactly the same language to him.

On September 10, Hitler spoke for the first time to representatives of the Center who had congregated in the palace of the Reichstag President, the residence of Hermann Göring. Although no specific arrangements were made regarding a possible coalition, Hitler's eloquence and appearance visibly impressed his listeners.²³⁴

Von Papen planned to present his government program at the Reichstag session scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on September 12. However, he was prevented from doing so, for the Communist deputies believed that von Papen already had the dissolution order in his pocket and would read it at the close of his speech. Deputy Torgler²³⁵ thus moved that immediate votes take place on the repeal of von Papen's emergency decree of September 4, which allowed, among other things, salary cuts up to 20 percent, and on the KPD's motion of no confidence.

Had the voting taken place immediately, von Papen would have been placed in a difficult position, for he had not yet procured the dissolution order from the Reich President. However, Frick moved for a thirty-minute recess in order to discuss the changed circumstances with Hitler, who was across the street in the palace of the Reichstag President. Von Papen as well needed these thirty minutes in order to obtain the dissolution decree. There was barely enough time to secure Hindenburg's signature under the text, which was written by hand on normal paper.

When the session resumed, Göring—acting on Hitler’s instructions²³⁶—immediately initiated the voting, ignoring von Papen’s request to take the floor. Von Papen had the red folder containing the dissolution order in his hand and finally laid it on the table in front of Göring. The outcome of the vote showed 512 ballots (NSDAP, Social Democrats, Communists, and the Center) against von Papen, 42 (DNVP, DVP) in his favor, and five abstentions.

Göring then declared that the dissolution order, which he had read in the interim, was invalid because it had been counter-signed by a government which had been brought down. This, however, was an error, for even if the vote had taken place in the absence of the dissolution order, the Reich President was nonetheless in a position to issue the order and have it counter-signed by the caretaking government still in office. However, there is doubt as to the constitutionality of the reasons cited for the dissolution, i.e. the danger that the Reichstag might repeal the emergency decree of September 4, 1932. It was the constitutional right of the Reichstag to decide on such matters, and it was to suffer no interference.

The Reichstag accepted the decree of dissolution, and Hitler held a meeting with the Party’s leaders in Berlin on September 13, attended not only by the former NSDAP Reichstag deputies, but also by the National Socialist Ministers in the Länder Governments. He introduced a new slogan for the approaching election campaign, “the social freedom fight, which is inseparable from the freedom of the nation.”²³⁷ A similar speech was held before the SA and SS roll call in Munich (Zirkus Krone) on September 15.²³⁸

In an interview granted to the London *Daily Mail*,²³⁹ Hitler also upbraided von Papen for his government’s economic program: it could succeed only in subjecting the Volk to even more hardship.

I can assure you that those in power, should they attempt to treat the Volk the way it was treated prior to the French Revolution, can be certain of one thing: namely that they will provoke a revolution which will be perhaps even more violent than the French Revolution was.

It was not yet clear whether an election to the Reichstag would in fact take place. According to the Constitution, it would have to be scheduled for no later than the sixtieth day following the dissolution.

In these tense days in September, it was thoroughly conceivable that the Government might commit a flagrant breach of the Constitution. For this eventuality, Hitler had threatened resistance, i.e. an open rebellion. A map of Germany at the time shows how the Länder governed by the

National Socialists (Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Anhalt, Thuringia, and Oldenburg, with the exclaves in the Hunsrück mountains and near Lübeck) constituted isolated areas within a territory otherwise dominated by von Papen.

Undoubtedly, these parts of the country could easily emerge as centers of the rebellion, particularly considering that the local police would not only tolerate armed marches of the SA and SS but would also actively participate in an uprising. As early as September 20,²⁴⁰ the *Völkischer Beobachter* published photographs of joint war-like maneuvers of the National Socialist police force and the SA and SS formations in Mecklenburg. On the other hand, it was questionable whether these civil-war troops were capable of conducting successful operations against the forces of the Reichswehr and the Prussian police. Since the experiences of 1923, Hitler had cautiously avoided actually resorting to such conclusive measures; instead, he preferred using them as a means of pressure, just as he later directed that ineffectual preparations for an invasion of the Channel coast be made in 1940 for the sole purpose of exerting pressure on the British Government. In 1932, this type of tactic was effective. The Government recoiled in the face of a possible coup and ordered a new Reichstag election on September 20.²⁴¹ Once again, as in the July elections, the last possible date had been scheduled—Sunday, November 6—in order to curb Hitler's propaganda potential by a long election campaign and, if possible, use the time allotted to increase popular support for von Papen's Government.

Hitler was not so easily discouraged. At 7:00 a.m. on October 2 he addressed the Hitler Youth in Potsdam at a *Reichsjugendtag* (Reich Youth Convention);²⁴² on October 3, he spoke at a convention of the NS *Frauenschaft* in Munich²⁴³ and on October 6 at a Reich propaganda convention of the NSDAP in Munich,²⁴⁴ where he announced his final instructions for the election campaign and stated:

We will fight for November 6 as though it were a matter of life and death. I am looking forward to the fight with absolute confidence. The battle may begin. In four weeks we shall come out of it as winners. In the Reichspräsidentenpalais, the unanimous realization will be made that the National Socialist Movement has arrived, it is here and will never disappear.

There are only two possibilities: either it will be given power or denied power, and in the latter case those now in power will be overcome by the force of this Movement.

On October 11, Hitler launched a new tremendous speechmaking campaign comparable in magnitude to his "Flights over Germany" in

April and June. He opened this campaign with a speech in Günzburg, where he declared:²⁴⁵

Herr von Papen was of the conviction that his emergency decree for the stimulation of the economy would bring brilliant results by November 6, and thus he scheduled the date for the Reichstag election sixty days after its dissolution. And I was of the conviction that the nation would see in these sixty days that this effort at “stimulating the economy” was the greatest feat of bungling and patchwork one can imagine. I was of the conviction that one question would be answered before even four weeks had passed, namely the question why I refused to enter this Cabinet on August 13. This will be decided on November 6.

It was not, however, the opponents in question who reproached me for refusing to join the Cabinet; it was the so-called “friends” in the bourgeois camp. At this point, I might ask with the same justification: how was it that you dared to invite me to join this Government?

Did you really believe that I worked for thirteen years to deliver the result of this work to the mercy of political lunacy? And it would have been lunacy had I staked everything on one horse, long aware that it was unfit for the race. Influence was one thing I would not have had in the Cabinet, but the responsibility was something they would have graciously surrendered.

I have no qualms about assuming the responsibility, and I mean the entire responsibility, but I do have qualms about assuming it in areas where I have no influence. If Fate had chosen those forces which today thirst for power to be Germany’s leadership, it would be a crime to resist. However, I do not believe that Fate could have chosen these men, because otherwise they would have made an appearance earlier. It is not possible for someone who was a silent member of the Center Party until five months ago²⁴⁶ to then one day suddenly become the “brightly enlightened leader” to the Third Reich. I did not fight Marxism in order to erect a different class regime in its place. I have stood before millions of German workers in these thirteen years and have struggled for their support. But I did not fight to betray them now in the end.

Above all, my opponents are mistaken about my tremendous resolve. I have chosen my path, and I will adhere to it until the end. Whether or not I gain power is not as important as the fact that I carry out what I have promised. Similarly, the Party is not for sale and cannot be bought from me. Do not make the mistake of believing that I would lend out this Movement even for a second or allow others to use it for their work.

By November 5, Hitler had repeated this speech with constantly new variations no less than 45 times on his tour of Germany.

He spoke in Nördlingen on October 11²⁴⁷ and delivered a speech in Pocking (lower Inn valley) on October 12, attacking von Papen’s Government with the following words:²⁴⁸

Either they govern as we wish—then we will bear the responsibility—or they do not govern as we wish—then the others bear the responsibility. I do not

believe in any regime which is not anchored in the Volk itself. I do not believe in an economic regime. One cannot build a house from the top, one must begin at the bottom. The foundations of the State are not the Government, but rather the Volk. And my answer to the bourgeois parties and politicians who have been sleeping since November 1918 while National Socialism has been working is this: now your time is up, now it's our turn.

When Herr von Papen says: "Herr Hitler, you are only here because there is a crisis," my answer is, "Yes, and if good fortune were here, I would not be needed, and I would not be here, either!"

On October 13, Hitler spoke in Gunzenhausen, Nuremberg (Luitpoldhain), and Weiden.²⁴⁹ On October 14, he delivered campaign speeches in Hof and Selb.²⁵⁰ In Hof he declared:

I hold the Reich Chancellor [von Papen] to be neither competent nor capable, nor chosen to help the German Volk.

In the other case [Hindenburg], it should not be said that I am mocking old age. However, that is the way it is: just as every old peasant must one day pass down his farm, so must every old statesman pass down his Reich.

On October 15, Hitler spoke in Coburg on the occasion of the ten year anniversary of the SA's march on Coburg and was given the freedom of the city.²⁵¹

On October 16, while still in Coburg, Hitler composed a lengthy open letter to Papen which took up nearly four of the oversized newspaper pages in the *Völkischer Beobachter*.²⁵² This epistle was a retort to a speech von Papen had delivered to the League of Bavarian Industrialists (Bayrischer Industriellenverband) which had apparently irritated Hitler. He accused the Chancellor of misguided economic policy which was fostering a new breed of class hatred. The slated constitutional reform was, Hitler railed, tantamount to creating a new doctrine of divine right. Furthermore, the Government was guilty of practicing outmoded naval policy and, he went on to say, the German-French military alliance von Papen was allegedly striving for was unwise in respect to England. Hitler closed with the words:

And another thing, Herr von Papen, you are perfectly free to live in your world. I am fighting in mine! It is a blessing to know that my world is the world of a community of millions of German mental and manual workers and German peasants who, although most of them come from humble origins and a many times more humble poverty, wish to be the most faithful sons of our Volk, for they fight not only by lip service, but with thousandfold suffering and countless sacrifices for a new and better German Reich.

Adolf Hitler

On October 16, Hitler campaigned in Schweinfurt (tent on the Schützenplatz) and in Würzburg (Ludwigshalle).²⁵³ In the capital of Lower Franconia, he stated:

I do not believe that the struggle will ever really come to an end. Just as the peasant must till his field year after year, so must a statesman till his Volk over and over again. I see nothing burdensome, nothing forced in this struggle, but something very natural and necessary, and I am looking forward to duelling with these gentlemen.

On October 17, Hitler spoke in Königsberg (Haus der Technik) and stated:²⁵⁴

What I am striving for is power, not some title. I do not need remuneration from the State. From the start and for all time, I relinquish any claim to salary from the State. I want only the power.

If we do one day achieve power, we will hold onto it, so help us God. We will not allow them to take it away from us again.

On the same day Hitler delivered further speeches in Tilsit and Insterburg,²⁵⁵ and on October 18 in Elbing (Maschinenhalle).²⁵⁶

Silesia was scheduled for October 19. Hitler first spoke in Oppeln and then in Breslau's Jahrhunderthalle,²⁵⁷ where he declared:

If people ask me today. "Well, Herr Hitler, why didn't you board the train [to join the Government]?" I reply: I did not board the train because I did not intend to get off again afterwards. I did not take a seat in a train which will certainly jump the rails. And if people talk about the determining influence I was allegedly to be given, the question is, why was I not allowed to board the locomotive? When I once enter the Government, I do not intend to leave it.

On October 20, Hitler proclaimed at a campaign rally in Sonnenfeld:²⁵⁸

I cannot be offered any title in this Republic which would be better than my name. I am and will always remain a child of the Volk. It is for this Volk I have fought throughout all these long years, and I will continue fighting for it. And it is for this Volk I would let myself be beaten to pieces if necessary.

Campaign speeches in Halle (tent), Magdeburg (Stadthalle), and Stendal (Seehalle) followed on October 22.²⁵⁹

On October 23, Hitler delivered speeches in Zwickau (tent), Eisenach (Fürstenhofsaal), and Weimar (Weimarahalle);²⁶⁰ on October 24, he spoke in Köslin and Stettin (Messehalle).²⁶¹

The following day he visited Pasewalk, where he had been stationed in the reserves' sick bay in 1918. It was here that he had resolved "to become a politician," and he stated in his speech there on October 25:²⁶²

I might have perished like millions of my comrades. I took my life back from Providence as a gift and swore to myself to dedicate this life to the Volk. And I will adhere to this until my dying breath.

Further speeches on October 25 were delivered in Anklam and Rostock.²⁶³

This same day, von Papen suffered a critical defeat before the Constitutional Court. The President of the Reichsgericht, Dr. Bumke,²⁶⁴ pronounced that the measures taken on July 20 in Prussia could only be regarded as temporary and were to be restricted mainly to matters of police authority. A number of rights were restored to Braun's Government (representation in the Reichsrat, etc.).

On October 26, Hitler spoke in Schwerin and Bad Schwartau (this latter rally was held in place of one scheduled for Lübeck which had been prohibited by the Senate of the city).²⁶⁵

On October 28, further speeches followed in Bremervörde and Altona (Exhibition Hall).²⁶⁶ A rally slated for the same day in Neumünster (Schleswig-Holstein) was cancelled because the tent had collapsed.

On October 29, Hitler took the part of Prince August William of Prussia²⁶⁷ against accusations made by the Stahlhelm, issuing the following statement:²⁶⁸

The leadership of the Stahlhelm has deemed it necessary to attack and abuse our Party comrade Prince August William of Prussia for the fact that he has taken his place among the ranks in a movement of millions composed of those who have, by their efforts, created the one and only foundation for an uprising of the Volk.

This pitiful attempt has served to make the Prince, whose selfless efforts toward bringing about a German *Volkserhebung* are known to us all, particularly dear to the hearts of us German men. The future *will* provide the best reply to this piece of villainy.

On October 29, Hitler moved on to speak in Oldenburg (Ziegelhofsaal) and Aurich;²⁶⁹ on October 30, he stood before crowds in Dortmund and subsequently in Essen (Exhibition Hall),²⁷⁰ where his speech was transmitted by cable to Wesel, Kleve, Mörs, and Geldern. On the same day, he also spoke in Cologne.²⁷¹

On November 1, campaign speeches in Pirmasens (Festwiese) and Karlsruhe (tent) followed.²⁷²

November 2 found Hitler in Berlin (Sportpalast with four parallel events).²⁷³ His presence was designed to stress the alliance which the Berlin National Socialists had earlier formed with the Communists. Berlin's NSDAP endorsed a strike at the Berlin transportation company

called by the Communists, thus demonstrating to the capital of the Reich the truth of Hitler's claim, i.e. that, were he not given power, the disappointed masses would turn to Communism.

In 1939 Hitler was to employ this same tactic in respect to his alliance with the Soviet Union, evoking fear and panic in the Western Powers. On November 3, 1932, Hitler spoke at campaign rallies held in tents in Hanover and Kassel.²⁷⁴

On November 4, Hitler declared at a rally in Ulm (Markthalle):²⁷⁵

Go ahead and show the German worker for once, Herr von Papen, how he and his family are supposed to live on 70, 80, or 90 marks a month.

The Reichstag election campaign closed with speeches in Munich (Exhibition Grounds), Augsburg (Stadtgarten), and Regensburg (Sangerhalle) on November 5.²⁷⁶

At the end of this third "Flight over Germany" campaign, Hitler presented a signed portrait to the Lufthansa pilot Hans Baur with the following dedication:²⁷⁷

To the magnificent pilot of D 1720, Captain Baur, in grateful memory of the three "Flights over Germany."

With kindest regards,

Adolf Hitler

Hitler's indefatigable speechmaking bore fruits in this campaign as well.

When the ballots were counted on November 6, the National Socialists had lost slightly more than two million votes and 34 seats. However, this was not nearly the number von Papen and his supporters had expected.

In spite of the disappointment of many of his voters who had felt that the march into the Third Reich was proceeding too slowly, Hitler had held his own with 11.7 million votes (33.1 percent). With their 196 deputies in the Reichstag, the National Socialists continued to comprise the strongest party by far. The NSDAP had lost 15 seats to the German Nationalists, who had now increased their own mandates from 37 to 52, and 11 seats to the Communists, who were now represented in the Reichstag for the first time with a force of 100 deputies elected by slightly more than 17 percent of the voters. The other losses were attributable to non-voters. The SPD and the Center suffered from the decrease in voter turnout.

Parliamentary government without the NSDAP was an impossibility. Von Papen's Government still had the backing of only 10 percent of the

November 6, 1932

population. The Communists had obviously scored their gains from disappointed NSDAP voters who now hoped for a radical change through the KPD. Hitler could be satisfied: his Bolshevist nightmare was taking on more tangible outlines.

As a result, compared to his remarks on July 31, Hitler's proclamations on the outcome of this election were proud and confident.²⁷⁸

National Socialists! Party Comrades!

The most difficult fight in the history of our Party now lies behind us.

A tremendous attack against the Movement and the rights of the German Volk has been driven off!

Von Papen's Government—despite the most outrageous promises, despite the use of all conceivable means of force, despite the deployment of the greatest of all propaganda vehicles, the radio, of nearly the entire press, etc.—has suffered a crushing defeat.

The German National People's Party, which was strongly devoted to the Government's cause, totals, with its adherents, not even 10 percent of the German Volk. Ninety percent reject it!

It is clear to us what this election outcome means: continuation of the fight against this regime to its ultimate removal!

The coming weeks and months will be our best ally in this fight! They will not only increase the insight of our Volk as a result of the growing financial distress; they will also strengthen the realization that our National Socialist warning that von Papen's regime and the bourgeois parties experiencing a revitalization through this Government are driving Germany further and further toward Bolshevism is correct.

Even this election has been proof! Solely this Hugenberg-Papenish reaction is to blame for the fact that today for the first time one hundred Bolshevists are taking their places in the German Reichstag!

I hereby establish the motto for the Movement's stand just as clearly as I did after the first ballot in the presidential election. It is:

Ruthless continuation of the fight until we have prevailed over these opponents—some open, some disguised—of a true resurrection of our Volk! No compromises whatsoever and not a single thought is to be wasted on any kind of agreement with these elements!

I thus give the following orders for the continuation of this fight:

1. All organizational work on the internal building up of the Party shall be of secondary importance behind the single task of strengthening our propaganda to the utmost.

2. All party offices shall immediately institute all measures toward introducing the new propaganda campaign.

3. Before this regime and the parties covering up for it are not defeated unto destruction, there will be no negotiating!

I will issue the detailed implementation provisions for carrying out this order within the current week.

Munich, November 6, 1932

Adolf Hitler

November 6, 1932

Men of the SA and SS!

I may thank all leaders and men of the SA and SS for the tremendous efforts in this, the most difficult fight of our Movement to date. I know with how much sacrifice and grief, with how many sorrows and privations you have had to fight.

I know that you yourselves are convinced that you have made a superhuman effort. I know that many are now yearning for a rest.

I can understand that, but I cannot allow it.

We all believe that we have done our utmost. We must overcome our own inclinations and do even more. For the fight must and will be continued until our opponents are indeed destroyed in the end. Therefore I direct as follows:

In closest cooperation with the political propaganda leadership of the party, the SA and the SS shall immediately resume work and, with it, the fight.

Munich, November 6, 1932

Adolf Hitler

To the Leaders of Party Organization and Propaganda

I hereby thank the Amtswalters of the Party, the National Socialist Frauenschaft, and the Hitler Youth as well as all speakers and editors for the tremendous effort which has just been made.

The fight to prevail over our opponents will be resumed immediately. Respective instructions will be issued within the current week.

Munich, November 6, 1932

Adolf Hitler

6

At first glance, the November 6 results appeared to reflect a success for von Papen, considering the gains of the German Nationalists and the losses of the NSDAP. However, this illusion was soon to be shattered: the new Reichstag would doubtless revoke von Papen's emergency decrees, just as its predecessor had done.

Hindenburg admonished the Chancellor that things could not proceed in this fashion and that he must secure for himself parliamentary support. For better or worse, von Papen was forced to once again establish contact with the parties.

He first wrote to Hitler, although the latter's treatment of the Chancellor during the campaign had been anything but gentle. The tone of von Papen's letter of November 13 was quite polite.²⁷⁹

The Reich Chancellor
to Herr Adolf Hitler, Munich,
Dear Herr Hitler,

Berlin, November 13, 1932

When the Reich President appointed me to head the government on June 1, he assigned the presidential cabinet I was to form the task of achieving as broad as possible a concentration of all national forces.

At that time, you most warmly welcomed the Reich President's decision and consented to lend your support to such a presidential cabinet. When we also commenced putting this concentration into practice within the presidential cabinet after the election of July 31, you took the view that it would only be possible to unite these national forces under your leadership.

You know how much effort I have invested in the many talks toward finding a solution in the best interests of the country. But for reasons known to you, the Reich President was of the conviction that he was forced to reject your claim to the office of Chancellor.

Since then, the political battle positions taken by the national forces in relation to each other have brought about a situation which can only be regarded, from a patriotic viewpoint, with the greatest regret. As a result of the November 6 election, a new situation has arisen, thus recreating a new

November 13, 1932

opportunity to unite all national forces. The Reich President has now assigned me the task of ascertaining, in talks with the leaders of the individual parties in question, whether and to what extent they are willing to support the implementation of the planned political and economic program of the Reich Government. Although the National Socialist press has written that it would be a naive undertaking were Reich Chancellor von Papen to attempt to negotiate with those persons under consideration for the national concentration and that he would deserve the following reply: "There will be no negotiations with von Papen," I would nonetheless regard it as a breach of my duties and would be unable to reconcile it with my conscience were I not to approach you in accordance with my request. I have gathered from the press that you uphold your claim to the office of Chancellor, and I am also aware of the extent to which the reasons against this which led to the decision of August 13 continue to exist; in this context I do not need to assure you once again that my person is of no consequence here. However, I am of the opinion that the leader of such a large national movement whose services to the Volk and the country I have always acknowledged, in spite of the criticism these warranted, should not deny the presently responsible leading German statesman a discussion on the situation and the decisions to be made. We must attempt to forget the bitterness of the election campaign and place the interests of the country which we both serve above all other reservations.

Because I have a number of pressing engagements connected with official visits of the Reich Government to Saxony and Southern Germany throughout the next week, I can be at your disposal on Wednesday or Thursday of the coming week.

With the greatest respect, I remain, dear Herr Hitler, faithfully yours,
Papen

In this letter, the Chancellor hinted for the first time that, were a compromise to be reached, he himself (i.e. his remaining in office) was no longer the *conditio sine qua non* he had been on August 13.

Von Papen's position was weakening steadily, and he began to realize that not he, but Hitler would be called upon to save Germany.

Well aware of this, Hitler kept the tone of his November 16 reply relatively mild.²⁸⁰ His main interest lay in recording any future negotiations in writing so that he could not be duped into repeating the fiasco of August 13.

The Reich Chancellor von Papen
Dear Herr Reichskanzler,

November 16, 1932

The request which you addressed to me on November 13 to discuss the situation and the decisions to be made prompts me to reply, after careful consideration, as follows:

In spite of all of the reservations, I do endorse your view, Herr Reichskanzler, that I should not deny the "presently responsible leading German

statesman” a “discussion on the situation and the decisions to be made.” However, the nation certainly expects more from such a discussion than a purely theoretical treatment of the hardships and troubles which are its present concern. Furthermore, I have so often disclosed my views on this subject both orally and in writing that you, Herr Reichskanzler, are most certainly acquainted with them. The usefulness of a general discussion of this nature would therefore appear to me to be extremely limited, and its possibly damaging consequences all the more serious. Millions of our Volksgenossen will expect positive results from such a conference if it does take place and they are informed of it. And they have every right to do so. Mere discussions of the situation will help no one. Thus I currently hold that such a talk would only be effective if it is clear from the start that the result will not be negative. For this reason I feel obligated to inform you, my esteemed Herr Reichskanzler, of four items which constitute the prerequisites for such an exchange of ideas.

Item 1: I am not in a position to appear at an oral interchange, but must request that, if such an exchange of ideas is indeed desired, this be effected in writing.

The experiences of oral discussions which have taken place to date before witnesses have shown that both parties’ powers of recollection did not result in the same report of the meaning and the contents of the negotiations. You write at the beginning of your letter that you, Herr Reichskanzler, had received the assurances of the NSDAP to support the presidential cabinet in order to bring about “as broad as possible a concentration of all national forces.” The fact is, in response to a remark that the Cabinet could be reorganized after the elections, I stated in the presence of Captain Göring that I would not even demand this were the Government to do justice to its national task.

I immediately rejected a proposal relayed to me at that time to submit a written declaration of toleration, stressing that this, of course, was completely out of the question.

It was impossible, I stated, to demand that I issue a *carte blanche* for gentlemen who were, in part, personally and in any case politically unknown to me. The economic and political measures instituted by this Cabinet even within the first six weeks served to justify my cautious reserve!

How easily oral discussions can give rise to mistaken views is also borne out in the claim which you yourself, Herr Reichskanzler, have made on various occasions, i.e. that I had demanded complete power at that time, when in fact I had only made claim to the leadership.

You yourself were to have been Foreign Minister in the new cabinet. General Schleicher, who enjoys the particular confidence of the Reich President, was to be Reich Minister of Defense, and aside from the post of Reich Minister of the Interior and two or, at the most, three ministries completely without political significance, everything was to be occupied either by men already in office or by men to be chosen on the basis of talks with the parties in question. Now you, Herr Reichskanzler, misinterpreted our more than modest demand to such an extent that I, made wiser by these experiences, am no longer willing to deviate from the single sure method, i.e. dealing with such questions in writing. I am all the more forced to do this because I am, in any case,

powerless in the face of the so-called official versions. You, Herr Reichskanzler, have the possibility of informing the German Volk of your own views on a conference not only by means of the radio, which you have monopolized for your own purposes, but in addition by forcing them upon the readers of my own press by imposing certain conditions. I am completely defenseless against such actions. Thus should you, Herr Reichskanzler, be willing to engage upon talks in consideration of the other three items, I may request that you transmit your views and, if applicable, your questions to me in writing; I will then reply in like fashion.

Item 2: It only makes sense to engage in such an interchange if you, Herr Reichskanzler, are willing to enlighten me prior thereto to which extent you actually feel and regard yourself solely responsible as the leading German statesman. Under no circumstances am I willing to allow myself to be subjected again to the method of August 13. In my eyes, it is not permissible for the "responsible leading statesman" to divide his responsibility in any given instance of responsibility. In this connection I base my view on the passage in your letter in which you yourself once more talk of reasons which had led to the decision of August 13 and which continue, you state, to exist, whereby you again add that your person is of no consequence here! Herr Reichskanzler, I may once and for all state the following: I feel myself fundamentally responsible, as the leader of the National Socialist Movement, for the political decisions of the Party as long as I am its leader; conversely, you, too, are fundamentally responsible for the political decisions of the Reich leadership as long as you are Reich Chancellor. It was out of this conviction that I requested on August 13, in view of the failure of our talk, that you assume the responsibility yourself and not burden it upon the Reich President.

I explained to you that, as a consequence of your assurance that it was impossible to comply with our demands due to reasons allegedly attributable to the Reich President, I naturally was forced to refuse to even call on him.

I told you that, as long as a Reich Chancellor bears the political responsibility, this same person is also obligated to cover for his sovereign, whether this be a king or a president. In reply to your question as to my own concept, I suggested to you that an official communiqué be issued to the effect that a meeting had taken place regarding a reorganization of the Reich Government attended by you, Herr Reichskanzler, and myself as the leader of the National Socialist Movement, and that same had been inconclusive and therefore been discontinued. In view of the fact that I had previously taken part in an election to Reich President as a competitor, it did not seem right to me, particularly in consideration of the mass of millions of my own followers, to allow the Reich President himself to make an appearance in the event that I was to be rejected as a person—which was to be expected at the time.

You were the responsible leading politician in the Reich, and particularly in this case, in my opinion this was all the more reason for you to have assumed the responsibility. Unless your conscience would not have allowed this—but then you would have been obliged to resign. Unfortunately, you could not be moved to take on that share of the responsibility accruing to you. I bore my own share.

Instead, your chancellory resorted to a ruse and thereby succeeded—contrary to my own wishes and the assurance you had given me—in luring me to nonetheless attend a talk with the Reich President.

Perhaps the fact that you knew the results in advance sufficed, in your view, to relieve you of any responsibility; at any rate, the matter did not bring about my downfall, but the 85-year-old Reich President was drawn into public controversy as a consequence and burdened with a heavy responsibility! I would not like to witness a repeat performance. Thus I am only willing to engage in such a written exchange of ideas on the German situation and the alleviation of our distress if you, Herr Reichskanzler, are first willing to establish your sole responsibility for the future.

Item 3: I request, Herr Reichskanzler, that you inform me which purpose the integration of the National Socialist Movement is actually to serve. If you wish to win me and hence the National Socialist Movement over to—as you write in your letter—support the political and economical program planned by the Reich leadership, then any written interchange on this point is irrelevant, if not to say futile.

I cannot and do not wish to pass any judgment on what the Government regards as the program of its choice, because even after the most painstaking reflection, this program has never become quite clear to me.

However, if it is a matter of continuing the measures taken to date in domestic, foreign, and economic policy, then I must decline any and all support on the part of the National Socialist Party, for I hold these measures to be, in varying degrees, insufficient, badly thought-out, completely useless—and even dangerous. I know that you are of a different opinion, Herr Reichskanzler, but I regard the practical efforts of your Government even at this point as having, to say the least, been proven ineffective.

Item 4: Herr Reichskanzler, in your letter you state that November 6 created a “new opportunity to unite all national forces.” I must confess to you that the meaning of your suggestion fully escapes me. I am of the conviction that this opportunity has naturally worsened as a result of the dissolution of the Reichstag on September 12, for the consequence, on the one hand, is an outrageous proliferation of Communism, while on the other it means a revitalization of the smallest of splinter parties totally devoid of any practical political impact.

Thus the formation of any type of supporting platform anchored in the German Volk is only conceivable in respect to the parties if one includes the German Nationalists and the German People’s Party. The plan of including the SPD, which you are apparently contemplating, is one I reject from the start. However, as you are well aware, Herr Reichskanzler, before the election the leader of the German Nationalist People’s Party branded, in the most unequivocal of terms, any cooperation with the Center as treason against the nation and a crime against the nation. I do not believe that Herr Privy Councillor Hugenberg could suddenly become so unprincipled as to do something after the election which he had condemned so vehemently before it. Thus your attempt, Herr Reichskanzler, appears unclear and hence just as much a waste of time as it is futile, until you are in a position to inform me that Herr Hugenberg has now come to think differently.

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I must regard these four items, Herr Reichskanzler, as my requirement for an exchange of views, i.e. a written interchange. It is up to you to consent or refuse.

In conclusion, I may assure you, Herr Reichskanzler, that I am not filled with any subsequent bitterness as a result of the campaign. In the thirteen years of my struggle for Germany, I have had to bear so much persecution and so many personal attacks that I have in fact slowly learned to place the great cause which I serve above my own pitiful self. The only thing which fills me with bitterness is having to stand back and watch how, under your less than lucky touch in guiding the State, Herr Reichskanzler, day by day a national asset is wasted away, an asset in whose creation I own an honest share, as German history is my witness. This waste of national hopes, national faith, and national trust in a German future is what fills me with pain and grief; although it also steels my own resolve to unshakably insist upon the demands which, in my view, are the only ones which can overcome our crisis.

With the greatest respect, I remain, dear Herr Reichskanzler, faithfully yours,

Adolf Hitler

In this letter, Hitler landed a few blows to von Papen in return for his behavior on August 13 and in respect to his government program, which, “even after the most painstaking reflection, never became quite clear.” As a whole, however, the letter was moderate in tone and closed with the remark that Hitler harbored no “subsequent bitterness” toward von Papen.

In any case, it was Hitler’s opinion that von Papen needed to be removed from office in order to rule out the possibility that he might once again behave arrogantly toward Hitler. This intention was made clear in a short postscript which he added to his letter to von Papen:

Since I have been informed that General von Schleicher was made acquainted with the contents of your letter, Herr Reichskanzler, I have taken the liberty of forwarding a copy of this letter to him as well.

Von Papen was forced to announce the resignation of the Cabinet on November 17. Hitler, the Center, and the Social Democrats had all refused to grant him parliamentary toleration. Schleicher had even commenced opposition within the Cabinet itself.²⁸¹

On November 19, Hitler was received by Hindenburg. This time he succeeded in being able to speak to the Reich President in private. All of the disrupting factors which had plagued him since his first visit in October 1931 had now been swept away. Hitler was finally able to speak in a language which impressed the weathered patriot and military man in Hindenburg.

If the President initially believed that Hitler might, at most, be considered for the post of Vice Chancellor, after the conference he was amenable to the idea of Hitler as Chancellor of a parliamentary government.

When Hitler had taken his leave, Hindenburg remarked to State Secretary Meissner: "It seems as if the man is gradually coming to reason."²⁸² The following official communiqué was issued in respect to the meeting:

In the conference which took place on Sunday, November 19, between the Reich President and Herr Adolf Hitler, Herr Hitler stated that he would only place his Movement at the disposal of a cabinet of which he himself was head. Furthermore, he expressed hopes that talks with the parties would allow him to find a basis upon which he and a government he would form could procure an Enabling Act from the Reichstag. Therefore the Reich President felt obligated to attempt to form a majority government under Hitler's leadership.

On November 21, Hitler was received once again by Hindenburg. True to his pledge to record all negotiations in writing, he handed over the following document to the Reich President:

Esteemed Herr Reichspräsident,

From notices in the press and a confirmation given to me by State Secretary Meissner, I have learned of Your Excellency's intention to officially request me to enter into negotiations with the other parties without a new presidential cabinet first being formed. I hold this request to be so important that, in the interest of the authority of the name and the wishes of Your Excellency as well as in the interest of the so imperative salvation of the German Volk, I am substantiating my views on this matter in writing.

For the past thirteen years, I have been combatting the parliamentary system. In it I perceive an inoperable method of forming a political will and expressing the political will of the nation. Prompted by unrelenting propaganda on my part and the part of my staff, this conviction has since become common property to many millions of German people. They thus welcome the fact that Your Excellency has made the decision to do justice to this new realization and carry out a restructuring of the leadership of the State. In order to prevent this new leadership from ending in a catastrophe, it must have a constitutionally admissible starting point and grow to become a real representative of the will of the nation within a reasonably short time. Hence an inner, living relationship must be established between it and that part of the German Volk which already constitutes a sound basis. It is your task to further increase this percentage in an organic sense to gradually come to encompass the entire nation. If this is not done, the result will be a dictatorship supported solely by bayonets and thus exclusively dependent upon them. If inner causes do not bring about the collapse, it will arise at the first instance of pressure from abroad. The consequence can be none other than Bolshevism. Therefore, foreseeing

November 21, 1932

the fall of von Papen's Government from the experiences of the first six weeks, on August 13 I represented the opinion that this task could only be accomplished successfully by assigning this mission to the National Socialist Movement. For reasons which should not be mentioned here, Your Excellency, Herr Reichspräsident, believed that you had no choice but to reject my proposal at that time.

Now, after six months in power, von Papen's Cabinet—as I prophesied—has fallen into an irretrievable isolation at home and Germany has fallen prey to the same isolation abroad. The results of the attempt to save our economy and eliminate unemployment have, in varying measure, been unsatisfactory and imperceptible. The social misery is horrendous. General trust has sunken to zero. The Bolshevization of the broad masses is making rapid progress.

If a new government were to take on this terrible political, economic, and financial inheritance today, its activities could only be accompanied by success if it unites a great authority from above with a correspondingly great power from below.

Having been summoned to Berlin once more by Your Excellency as the leader of the National Socialist Movement to aid in alleviating this, the most severe crisis of our Volk, I must state that this can only be done, according to the best of my knowledge and belief and in my opinion, if the Movement and I are accorded the position necessary to fulfill this task and to which the Movement is entitled in view of its strength and numbers. For the harsh necessity of placing Germany above the parties will only then be recognized when, as a factor in negotiations, the strongest movement is given, from the very onset, that authority which Your Excellency has granted to all holders of presidential power to date. With due respect to justice and fairness, this claim is no less valid. The National Socialist Movement would bring to any government a total of 196 mandates—two thirds of the number of deputies required for a legal assumption of power.

I can pledge my firm decision to Your Excellency that, were I to propose and head a presidential cabinet given the approval of Your Excellency, it would be equipped with all of the constitutional prerequisites for the lasting and productive work required to lend new heart to our politically and economically ruined Volk.

Thus I may address only one single request to Your Excellency: that I be given at least that power and authority given to the men before me who were not able to contribute as much as I can to the great value of the power and the significance of the name of Your Excellency. For if I am forced by the Constitution to enlist other parties in order to legalize the activities of the coming Government, I do, Herr Reichspräsident, at least bring with me the largest party of all. My own name and the existence of this, the greatest German movement, are security, but they must be destroyed if our deployment leads to an unfavorable outcome. However, in such a case, Herr Reichspräsident, it is not a military dictatorship that will follow us, but Bolshevik chaos.

If, on the other hand, there be plans to return to the pure parliamentary forms of past government, then in my opinion these plans should be disclosed openly to Your Excellency. In such a case, I may most humbly request that I be

allowed to take the liberty of pointing out the consequences of such a decision. I would most deeply regret this.

In summary, I may request Your Excellency to grant consideration to these, my reasons, and to dispense with any such attempt to solve the crisis.

In this letter, Hitler listed his three alternative solutions to the current government crisis: a presidential cabinet, a majority government, or a military dictatorship. The latter he perceived as a distinct possibility under Schleicher and thus concentrated his warnings on this eventuality. Naturally, his preferred solution was his own nomination as presidential chancellor; however, he wished to convey that he would also be willing, albeit somewhat grudgingly, to attempt a majority government.

Hindenburg had also laid down his own aims in writing, and when the two parted, the President declared amicably that his door was always open to Hitler. An official account of this visit was published as well.

At his second meeting on the morning of Monday, November 21, the Reich President issued a declaration to Herr Adolf Hitler which was worded as follows:

‘You know that I support the idea of a presidential cabinet. I conceive of a presidential cabinet as one which is to be led not by a party leader, but by a non-partisan man, and that this man be a person who enjoys my particular confidence. You have declared that you would only place your Movement at the disposal of a cabinet which you, as leader of the Party, would head. If I follow your thoughts in this respect, then I must insist that such a cabinet also has a majority in the Reichstag. For this reason, I bid you as leader of the largest party to determine whether and under what conditions you would have a secure and workable majority with a definite common practical program, were you to take over government leadership.

‘I may request your answer by Thursday evening.’

In compliance with Hitler’s wish, the Reich President laid down the following requirements for the formation of a government and a majority, which he proffered to Hitler in writing:

‘1. *Objectively speaking*: the establishment of an economic program; no return of the dualism Reich-Prussia; no limitation of Article 48.

‘2. *Personally speaking*, I reserve my final consent to the list of ministers. As international representative of the Reich and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, it is my personal responsibility to determine who shall fill the posts of the Foreign Office and the Reich Ministry of Defense.’

Hitler accepted these two documents with the remark that he would relay his answer to the Reich President in writing.

Hitler had made decisive progress on November 19 and 21. He had his foot in the door of the Reich President’s palace. It was now up to him to continue exerting unrelenting pressure until the entire structure collapsed.

Apparently, Hitler had little real motivation to become Chancellor in 1932. The winter was approaching; unemployment would certainly rise; weather conditions ruled out the institution of short-term employment programs. Furthermore, if he took power now, Schleicher would still be lurking in the wings and, with him, the danger of a military dictatorship. It appeared more feasible to first force Schleicher out onto the political stage and to then seize power in spring 1933, after Schleicher had made his exit. The fact that the President had granted Hitler two audiences and assigned him the task of forming a government greatly enhanced Hitler's public prestige. Coasting on this success, he believed he could afford to stall. Schacht stated in an interview at that time:²⁸³ "There is only one person who can become Reich Chancellor today, and that is Adolf Hitler. If Hitler does not become Chancellor now, he will in four months. Hitler can wait." Hitler's main and only concern lay in making the other side responsible for the failure of negotiations which he had, in fact, himself intended. He soon devised a way of doing so: at that time, the Weimar Constitution was already undermined to such an extent that the responsible statesmen no longer even realized when they were violating constitutional rules.

Hindenburg's conditions—i.e. no reinstatement of the dualism between the Reich and Prussia and his reservation to make the appointments to the Foreign Office and the Reich Ministry of Defense by virtue of his position as international representative of the Reich and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces—were unquestionably at variance with the Weimar Constitution. Grotesquely enough, Hitler was the most strident advocate of the Constitution in 1932, exhibiting real expertise in adhering to its precepts.

Thus he composed a letter to State Secretary Meissner on November 21 requesting that he be told which form of government the Reich President in fact preferred.

Berlin, November 21, 1932

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Filled with the great responsibility of this difficult time, I have undertaken to carefully check the request which I received today from the Reich President. After thorough discussion with leading men in my Movement and in other sectors of public life, I have first of all come to the following conclusion:

A comparison of the two documents, i.e. on the one hand the request transmitted to me and, on the other, the required conditions, reveals a contradiction in a number of items which, to me, appears irreconcilable. Before I take a stand on this, a stand upon which my final decision would depend, I may ask you, Mr. Secretary, to ascertain the opinion of the Reich President and inform

me which form of government the Reich President desires and has in mind in this case. Does he envisage a presidential cabinet with a secure parliamentary toleration as required by the Constitution, or does His Excellency desire to see a parliamentary cabinet with the reservations and limitations relayed to me, which, by virtue of their very character, can only be maintained—and thus guaranteed—by an authoritarian leadership in the State?

Mr. Secretary, if you critically compare the two documents, taking into consideration the requirements of constitutional law as well as the constitutionally anchored position and thus responsibility of a parliamentary government, you yourself will perceive the significance of clarifying this basic point. I would like to add that Reich Chancellor Brüning was and has remained one of the party political leaders of the Center and nonetheless became presidential chancellor in his second Cabinet. I have regarded myself not as a “party leader,” but simply as a German, and it was with the sole aim of delivering Germany from the pressure of Marxism that I founded and organized a Movement which is alive and effective far beyond the borders of the German Reich. The fact that we entered the parliaments is due only to the Constitution, which forced us to tread the path of legality. I myself have consciously kept my distance from any type of parliamentary activity.

The difference between my own view and that of von Papen’s Cabinet in respect to the possibility of an authoritarian leadership in the State lies solely in my requirement that same be anchored in the Volk. To bring this about with legal means is my most fervent wish and my foremost aim. With the utmost respect, I remain yours very truly,

Adolf Hitler

State Secretary Meissner answered the questions posed by the leader of the NSDAP in the following letter:

November 22, 1932

Dear Herr Hitler,

I am most honored to reply to your letter of yesterday at the request of the Reich President.

The Reich President sees the respective distinguishing characteristics of a presidential cabinet and a parliamentary government as follows:

1. A presidential cabinet—born in times of distress and failure of the Parliament—will, as a general rule, pass the requisite government measures without the prior consent of the Parliament on the basis of Article 48 of the Constitution. Thus its absolute powers are drawn first and foremost from the Reich President, and in principle, it only requires Parliament to sanction or tolerate these measures. A parliamentary government must submit all proposed bills to the legislative bodies for deliberation and approval prior to their passage; thus its absolute powers are drawn exclusively from a given parliamentary majority.—As a result, the head of a presidential cabinet can only be a person who enjoys the particular confidence of the Reich President.

2. A presidential cabinet must be conducted and constituted in a non-partisan sense and adhere to a non-partisan program approved by the Reich

November 22, 1932

President. As a general rule, a parliamentary government is formed by the leader of one of the parties in a position to form a majority or a coalition; it is comprised of members of these parties; and it essentially pursues goals upon which the Reich President has only limited and indirect influence.—Accordingly, the head of a party, and at the same time, the head of a party who claims exclusiveness for his own movement, cannot be the head of a presidential cabinet.

3. When he was first appointed, Reich Chancellor Brüning formed a pronouncedly parliamentary cabinet with the parties' support which only then was gradually converted to a type of presidential cabinet when the Reichstag was no longer capable of functioning as a legislative body and Herr Brüning had won the full confidence of the Reich President. The various changes in his Cabinet during his term in office were brought about first and foremost in compliance with the wishes of the Reich President to project an outward manifestation of this transformation of his Cabinet to a presidential cabinet in the persons of the ministers, and to avoid the impression of a rule by the Center by making respective personnel changes. Naturally a parliamentary government under your leadership could also develop into a presidential cabinet in a similar fashion in the course of time.

4. Von Papen's Cabinet was a true presidential cabinet which only resigned because it was unable to procure a majority in Parliament to approve of and/ or tolerate its measures. Hence a new presidential cabinet would only then constitute an improvement were it able to eliminate this flaw and simultaneously possessed the qualities of von Papen's Cabinet (non-partisan leadership and constitution without a party program, enjoying the particular confidence of the Reich President).

5. In view of these deliberations, dear Herr Hitler, the request addressed to you by the Reich President can only be that of forming a parliamentary majority cabinet. The Reich President arrived at this decision after his talks with the party leaders had shown that it would be possible to form a majority in the Reichstag for a cabinet under your leadership and you yourself were confident in your conference on November 19 that you could create a majority for a government you formed and procure an Enabling Act from the Reichstag for your government. The "prerequisites" for the formation of such a government which the Reich President cited in response to your question are not in conflict with a parliamentary solution. In keeping with the governmental practice which he and his predecessors in office have consistently upheld, the Reich President has imposed certain basic demands upon each cabinet to date; in other respects, the conferences which the Reich President has held with the various party leaders have served to show that there is no fundamental opposition to these demands. Nonetheless, in the event that one of the prerequisites for forming a government of which the Reich President has informed you should prove to constitute a decisive obstacle to procuring a stable majority, this should be the subject matter of the requested report on the outcome of your deliberations.

With the utmost respect, I remain yours very truly,

Dr. Meissner

Upon receiving this letter, Hitler was free to draft his regrets, citing the most meticulous constitutional deliberations he could find. Objectively speaking, his observations were indeed closer to the truth than not, for there actually was only one possible way of establishing an authoritarian government according to the Constitution: by means of an Enabling Act passed by the Reichstag.

Hitler's letter to State Secretary Meissner of November 23 read as follows:

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I may take the liberty of replying to your letter of yesterday as summarized in the following three points:

A. I object to your definition of the meaning and character of a presidential cabinet as follows:

The claim that a presidential cabinet can be more non-partisan than a parliamentary cabinet is disproven first of all by the type of evolution such a cabinet undergoes and secondly by the limitations of its capacity to function as well as by the respective method applied. If a presidential cabinet is forced to govern by virtue of Article 48, then this cabinet requires—as you yourself have admitted—if not the prior consent, then all the more the subsequent approval of a parliamentary majority. This parliamentary majority will always be expressed in terms of parties, given our constitutional life as a whole. Thus it is equally dependent upon a majority in the parties themselves as a parliamentary cabinet. Hence a statesman heading such a cabinet must either enjoy or gain the confidence of the majority of the Reichstag just as much as he requires, as a matter of course, the confidence of the Reich President. Incidentally, a recent judgment of the Constitutional Court confined the application of Article 48 to quite specific cases²⁸⁴ and limited periods, which means that the fulfillment of government obligations in general can no longer be based solely upon this Article. Thus in future, it will be the task of a chancellor who—under the pressure of the crisis and the decisions to be made in respect to it—regards the cumbersomeness of parliamentary procedure as a dangerous check to secure for himself a majority for an Enabling Act limited in terms of use and restricted in terms of time. The potential success of such an attempt will be all the greater, on the one hand, the more authoritarian the position of this man is; conversely, it will be all the more difficult, depending upon how much weight the parliamentary power he already has at his disposal carries.

It is of no consequence whether a government program appears to be partisan or non-partisan. Rather, the essential thing is that the program is right and that it leads to success. I protest against the position that a program which is right in and of itself cannot be implemented because it constitutes the property and body of thought of a certain party and therefore must be rejected by a presidential government which, of necessity, must maintain its non-partisan role. However, since it is a general rule that programs will always attract people who then unavoidably manifest themselves in groups as parties, it follows that in the future only those programs could be implemented which—

in order to maintain the non-partisan role—are not backed by any adherents. How a parliamentary majority can be brought about to tolerate such a program is a puzzle to me, and it was also in attempting to solve this same puzzle that Herr von Papen failed.

On the other hand, I have stated that I reject this type of leadership because it inevitably leads nowhere and, at the most, can resort only to the bayonet as its final defense. I have, in addition, upheld the conviction that, given the prerequisite of the Reich President's confidence, I, if anyone, would be most capable of avoiding such a catastrophe, for after all, my Party already has two thirds of the number of deputies required for toleration at its disposal. The step from 200 to 300 deputies will be easier than the one from 50 or 60 to 200.

B. You inform me, Mr. Secretary, that the Reich President now desires a one-hundred-percent parliamentary solution. This means that I am first to agree upon a program with the parties, proceed to find a majority, and then initiate the formation of a government in a purely parliamentary sense on the basis of this majority. First of all, I must note at this time that I should have been assigned this task prior to September 12, 1932. It certainly would have been easier to accomplish at that time!²⁸⁵

However, it cannot be accomplished at all if the assignment of this task is linked to conditions which hinder its accomplishment. For if the course to be taken is a strictly parliamentary route, then no requirements can be imposed other than those given in the Weimar Constitution itself.

Accordingly, the first priority is a parliamentary majority (Article 54), both in terms of assigning the task of forming the government and of putting together a cabinet for the government's program. Other requirements can only then be imposed to the extent that same are compatible with the Constitution.

Due to the fact that the Reich President appoints the Reich Chancellor and the Reich Ministers, he naturally has the last word in respect to the list of ministers. However, the requirement that appointments to the Foreign Office and the Reich Ministry of Defense are at the sole personal discretion of the Reich President is not compatible with Article 53 of the Constitution. The Foreign Minister and the Reich Minister of Defense can only be appointed on the recommendation of the Reich Chancellor. This is the only way it is possible to lay down the guidelines for policy at home and abroad for which, after all, he bears the responsibility to the Reichstag pursuant to Article 56. This is not altered by the fact that the Reich President is the international representative of the Reich; that he enters into alliances and other conventions with foreign powers on behalf of the Reich; that he accredits and receives envoys (Article 45); and that he exercises supreme command over the whole of the Reich's Armed Forces (Article 47). The Constitution (Article 50) requires that all orders and decrees of the Reich President—in respect to the Armed Forces as well—must be counter-signed by the Reich Chancellor or the competent Reich Minister in order to be valid.

Establishing an economic program, ruling out the reinstatement of the dualism between the Reich and Prussia, no limitations on Article 48—these are all conditions which the Reich President is only entitled to impose, given a cabinet based upon a parliamentary majority, in accordance with the provisions

of Article 68 et seq., i.e. by way of legislation. If you are now stating, Mr. Secretary, that every cabinet has been subjected to certain basic demands in keeping with the governmental practice which the Reich President and his predecessors in office have upheld to date, I may reply as follows:

1. Never before in this sense and to this extent;

2. Never before was Germany's catastrophic situation comparable to the present in domestic, foreign or economic terms, and thus the full authority of a Reich Chancellor was never needed as badly before as it is now; and

3. I may nonetheless point out that at no time have such grave incursions been made into the parliamentary system of government as under Herr von Papen's presidential cabinet, and I am now asked to submit these subsequently to the parties for parliamentary finding, i.e. toleration and approval. To parties which have fought these same measures to the utmost out of an instinct of self-preservation! And all that at a time in which the position of these parties is made even stronger by the fact that it is said, first of all, that I do not possess the particular confidence of the Reich President and secondly, that I am to proceed on the strictly parliamentary coalition course!

C. You write, dear Mr. Secretary, that the preliminary discussions with the other party leaders have already served to indicate their willingness to agree to these reservations. In any case, Mr. Secretary, these statements have not been laid down in writing. The talks which Reichstag President Göring has held with the other parties (before the Reich President had assigned this task to me) have revealed the opposite. Commentary in the official party correspondence of one of the parties required to form a majority coalition (the Bavarian People's Party) is also indicative of this view. The promise that I would inform the Reich President of the reasons, should my negotiations fail, does nothing to change the fact that one would simply—and rightly—conclude that I was unable to accomplish a task I had taken on.

The resultant consequences for the National Socialist Movement and thus for the German Volk as a whole only stand to reason. I have made a most sincere effort to weigh the task and the conditions over and over again, but I have nonetheless come to the conclusion, just as my entire staff has done, that this task cannot be accomplished given its inherent contradictions. Thus I have refrained from establishing contact with any of the parties, and I may therefore request that you, Mr. Secretary, might be so kind and convey the following highly deferential message to His Excellency, the esteemed Herr Reich President:

I cannot accept the task assigned to me on Monday, the 21 st instant, by the Reich President due to its inherent impracticability, and thus I may return same to the hands of the Reich President.

In view of the hopeless situation of our Vaterland and in view of the ever-increasing misery and the obligation of each and every German to do his utmost to prevent the Volk and the Reich from becoming mired in chaos, I would nevertheless like to place the National Socialist Movement with the faith, the power and the hope of German youth at the disposal of the venerable Reich President and Field Marshal of the Great War. Thus, completely dispensing with all of the terms which lead only to confusion, I may propose the following positive action:

November 23, 1932

1. The Reich President shall instruct me to submit, within forty-eight hours of receiving his request, a short program containing the measures to be taken in terms of domestic, foreign, and economic policy.

2 Subsequent to receiving approval for this program, I shall submit a list of ministers to the Reich President within a further twenty-four hours.

3. In addition to retaining other ministers from the present Government, I will propose to the Reich President that General von Schleicher, whom I know to enjoy the Reich President's personal trust, be appointed to the Reich Ministry of Defense and Freiherr von Neurath be considered for the Reich Foreign Ministry.

4. The Reich President shall then appoint me as Reich Chancellor and confirm the ministers in office which I have proposed and he has approved.

5. The Reich President shall assign to me the task of fulfilling the constitutional requirements for the work of this cabinet and shall, for this purpose, grant me those powers which have never before been denied even parliamentary chancellors in such critical and difficult times.²⁸⁶

6. I pledge that, fully devoting my person and my Movement to the cause, I will sacrifice myself for the salvation of our Vaterland.

Thanking you, dear Mr. Secretary, for transmitting this message, I remain with the utmost respect, faithfully yours,

Adolf Hitler

On November 23, Hitler conferred once more with General Schleicher with the knowledge of the Reich President.

Hitler and Schleicher, both aspiring candidates to the chancellorship, each preferred to allow the other priority, hoping that he would soon prove himself incapable, thus enabling the remaining candidate to present himself as the only possible solution. Schleicher described himself as "the last man the Reich President has."²⁸⁷ Although a brilliant tactician himself, Schleicher had met more than his match in Hitler.

Because of his refusal to form a parliamentary cabinet, Hitler was in a position to force Schleicher to become Chancellor. Hence he was careful to refrain from making any concessions at this conference and adhered to his prior standpoint.

Indeed, he had nothing to lose. What could Hindenburg do? He would hardly consider reappointing von Papen, and even if he did, one knew what to expect.²⁸⁸ Perhaps Hitler's mention of General von Schleicher in his letter of November 23 as someone who "enjoyed the Reich President's personal trust" had been meant as a hint to the Old Gentleman to appoint this man to the job.

It did not take long for Hindenburg—or rather Meissner—to reply to Hitler's letter. The State Secretary wrote to Hitler on November 24 as follows:

November 24, 1932

Dear Herr Hitler,

I am honored to reply to your letter of yesterday at the instructions of the Reich President as follows:

1. The Reich President understands from your reply that you see no chance of success for the formation of a parliamentary majority government and thus are returning to him the task he had assigned to you. In respect to the grounds you cited for your refusal, the Reich President would have me note that, in view of the remarks of the leaders of the Center and the Bavarian People's Party and also in view of your own remarks in the discussion of November 19, he was led to assume the opposite, i.e. that it was in fact possible to form a majority in the Reichstag. Moreover, the Reich President is even less able to recognize an "inherent contradiction" in his request in view of the fact that my explanatory letter of November 22 explicitly pointed out the possibility of a further consultation should one of the prerequisites mentioned by the Reich President prove to be a decisive obstacle to your negotiations.

2. The Reich President thanks you, Herr Hitler, for your willingness to assume the leadership of a "presidential cabinet." However, he does not believe that he could justify it to the German people if he granted presidential powers to the leader of a party which has repeatedly stressed its exclusive character and which has taken a predominantly negative stance in respect to himself as a person as well as in respect to the political and economic measures he deems requisite. Under these circumstances, the Reich President must fear that a presidential cabinet headed by you is bound to develop into a party dictatorship with all its respective consequences, leading to an extreme aggravation of the antagonisms within the German people; and the fact of having brought this about would be something for which he could neither take the responsibility before his oath nor before his own conscience.

3. Now that, to the deep regret of the Reich President, you have categorically refused both in the conferences with him to date and in the discussion you had yesterday with the Reich Minister of Defense, General von Schleicher, held with the Reich President's knowledge, to take any part within or outside of a new government, regardless under whose leadership this government may be, the Reich President no longer expects any positive results from further written or oral discussions on this question. Irrespective of this, the Reich President would like to repeat the statement made to you in the last discussion on Monday that his door is always open to you and he will always be willing to hear your views on the questions of the day; for he does not wish to relinquish the hope that, with time, it will be possible to win you and your Movement to cooperate with all of the other constructive forces in the nation. With the greatest respect, I remain dear Herr Hitler, faithfully yours,

Dr. Meissner

Hitler had expected an answer along these lines. Apparently, Hindenburg was not overly disappointed in Hitler's maneuver. He would not have welcomed a parliamentary majority government, and perhaps the fact that Hitler was so adamant in insisting on a presidential cabinet

increased the Old Gentleman's respect for him: it was a concept which, after all, had been Hindenburg's idea in the first place. In any case, the fact remained that he had assured Hitler his door would always be open to him.

The duplicating machines in Hitler's office were already operating at maximum capacity to copy the entire correspondence and rush it to the press before the Wilhelmstrasse could do so.²⁸⁹ First Hitler quickly dictated a closing letter to Meissner, for he naturally wanted the last word in this political farce.

Dear Mr. Secretary,

There are a few final observations I must make upon receiving your letter containing the Reich President's rejection of my proposal for solving the crisis.

1. I did not say that I felt there was no chance of success for the attempt to form a parliamentary majority government; rather, I described it as an impossibility as a result of the conditions attached to it.

2. I pointed out that, if conditions were in fact imposed, these necessarily had to be compatible with the Constitution.

3. I did not insist upon the leadership of a presidential cabinet, but submitted a proposal for solving the crisis of the German Government which has no connection with this term.

4. As opposed to others, I have constantly stressed the necessity of a constitutionally admissible cooperation with the representation of the Volk and explicitly pledged that I wished to work exclusively in accordance with these legal requirements.

5. Not only did I not demand a party dictatorship; just as in August of this year, I continue to be willing to conduct negotiations with all of the other parties in question in order to establish a foundation for a government. These negotiations were doomed to failure because it was intended regardless to maintain von Papen's Cabinet as a presidential cabinet at any cost.

It is thus not necessary to desire to win my cooperation with other constructive forces in the nation, for I have already done everything humanly possible in that respect this summer, in spite of great animosity. However, I refuse to perceive this presidential Cabinet as a constructive force. And until now, I have been correct in my assessment of the actions of this Cabinet and the failure of this Cabinet's actions.

6. As a result of this realization, I have also continued to warn against an experiment which will ultimately lead to naked violence and must fail because of it.

7. Above all, I was not willing and will never in future be willing to place the Movement I have created at the disposal of interests other than those of the German Volk. In this respect I feel responsible to my conscience, to the honor of the Movement I head, and to the existence of millions of Germans who have, as a result of the recent political experiments, been led only deeper into impoverishment.



I Correspondence with Hindenburg and Meissner

Hitler dictating a reply to the press chief of the NSDAP, Otto Dietrich, in the Kaiserhof Hotel in Berlin (November 1932).

Photo: Domarus archives



II General Kurt von Schleicher
at his desk in 1932. In the background his secretary, von Bredow. Both were murdered on June 30, 1934.



III Gregor Strasser
NSDAP Reichsorganisationsleiter,
in 1932. Murdered on June 30, 1934.

November 24, 1932

In other respects, I may ask you to convey as always my sentiments of utmost devotion to His Excellency the Reich President.

With the greatest respect, I remain faithfully yours,

Adolf Hitler

Using a somewhat less deferential tone, Hitler issued the following proclamation to the Party on November 25:²⁹⁰

National Socialists! Party Comrades!

Following merely a brief observation of the actions of von Papen's Cabinet, I prophesied what, according to my insight and conviction, would be the results; now they have come to pass.

When Herr von Papen promised to reduce the unemployment figure by two million by the onset of winter; when he pretended to alleviate the economic misery; when he pledged that he would solve the problems at home and abroad—countless Germans were instantly filled once more with trusting confidence. I issued a warning then, and I was more than right to do so. The economic misery has not lessened, unemployment is rising, Bolshevism is spreading throughout Germany, the isolation of the Reich in the rest of the world is almost complete.

Never before has a cabinet in Germany held as much power, but never before has a government failed as has this small, exclusive class of our Volk.

Today millions of the followers of our Movement will be inwardly grateful to me for not allying the Party which contains the last reserve of German faith, German power, and German hope with this ill-fated political and economic amateurism.

I will be even less able to do this in future.—I know that this Government will continue its disastrous work. At the moment, I cannot prevent this. But one thing I will prevent, as long as I live, is that our only Movement be abandoned to this regime.

They summoned me to Berlin to take part in remedying the government crisis but wanted all along to do nothing but save von Papen's Cabinet and subject me to a repeat of August 13. We National Socialists would once more have been given the honor of polishing this Government's dulled finish by being allowed to contribute one or two National Socialist Ministers. I then took the stand which I had to take as the leader of our Movement.

Germany is what we want to save, not von Papen's Government!

Because this time I took precautions to avoid a repeat of August 13, I was requested to bring about a parliamentary solution which had been rendered an impossibility from the very start by virtue of the conditions attached to it as a precaution. I nonetheless decided, in view of the great distress of our Volk, to make an offer which might clarify the interior motives of all those involved.

The offer was rejected—thus, I believe, exposing the objective of the Reich President's advisors.

Hence I may repeat today what I already stated on the evening of the election: this system must be broken in Germany, or else it will break the German nation.

Thus the struggle will continue, and he who has followed the path this Cabinet has taken from June to today with both eyes open knows who must and will be the victor.

Adolf Hitler

The next two days, Hitler spoke with Hugenberg and other leaders in the Party.²⁹¹ On November 27, he delivered another campaign speech in Weimar in view of the approaching local elections in Thuringia. There he stated:²⁹²

The Reich President has been in power for seven years now. The results of his work lie before us. I do not know how long they think this can go on. Another seven years? It is possible that the advisors who counsel the Reich President will still be there then, a last, tiny island in the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin. But by then the German Volk will have gone to waste, and I see no reason why an entire nation should perish for the sake of such advisors.

I did not force myself upon the gentlemen in Berlin. But if they do summon me, then I demand that they only impose conditions upon me which are absolutely worthy of a man who wants and in fact is to assume such a responsibility. But one may only assume the responsibility if one can justify to one's own conscience the conviction that one is really able to accomplish the task, given the powers linked to this position.

That which they think they can offer me today is something for which no one can accept the responsibility.

Now a new cabinet will come; a cabinet with a few external modifications, but the same spirit. And in a few months the end will be worse than the beginning is today. Then the hour will come when they will have to turn to us a third time.

Hitler expressed similar thoughts in an interview with a representative of the *London Daily Express*.²⁹³

On November 29, Hitler received a message in Munich from Schleicher, summoning him to Berlin. Hitler chose instead to travel to Weimar for the Thuringian campaign.²⁹⁴ He was willing only to receive an intermediary from Schleicher and was careful to demand that an officer was sent this time.

On December 1, a Lieutenant Colonel Ott²⁹⁵ came to the Elephant Hotel in Weimar and informed Hitler of Schleicher's intention of assuming the chancellorship. Hitler subjected the Lieutenant Colonel to a nearly three-hour long monologue,²⁹⁶ in which he elaborately expounded his various objections to Schleicher's appointment and explained his alleged fears that this would put the Reichswehr in an exposed position. Naturally, Hitler was not so naive as to believe that his flow of words would prevent Schleicher from taking office; in fact, he had no qualms about Schleicher's becoming "Winter Chancellor." His

address to Ott constituted a carefully thought-out step in a larger plan to alienate the leading officers of the Reichswehr from Schleicher and to inform them of the political aims he would realize after acceding to power. This plan had priority over the Thuringian election campaign, particularly after Schleicher was appointed Chancellor on December 2. Although Hitler did deliver a number of speeches there (in Greiz and Altenburg on December 1,²⁹⁷ in Gotha and Jena on December 2,²⁹⁸ and in Eichsfeld and Sonneberg on December 3²⁹⁹), he then proceeded to Berlin and, on December 4, composed a voluminous letter to Colonel von Reichenau, Chief of Staff of the First Division in East Prussia.³⁰⁰

Using the specific situation in East Prussia in respect to military policy as an excuse, he dwelt for pages on domestic and foreign policy in Germany and the necessity of an “inner, mental armament.” After criticizing the Reichswehr’s contacts with Russia,³⁰¹ he arrived at the crux of the matter, namely Schleicher:

I hold General von Schleicher’s present cabinet to be particularly unfortunate because the very person at its fore must of necessity be even less able to comprehend this question than any other. This problem of the inner, mental armament of the nation cannot now—just as it never could before—be solved by an army, but rather only by a *Weltanschauung*. Allowing the army [to] become involved in this task makes it appear biased to the eyes of many just as, conversely, this serves, to the eyes of the masses, to compromise the task itself. For neither the police nor the military have ever destroyed *Weltanschauungen*, much less built up *Weltanschauungen*. However, without a *Weltanschauung*, no human structure can be maintained for any length of time. *Weltanschauungen* are the social contracts and the foundations required to build up large-scale human organizations. Therefore, in contrast to our statesmen today, I perceive the German tasks of the future as the following:

1. Overcoming Marxism and its consequences to the point of total extinction. Establishment of a new unity of spirit and will in the Volk.
2. Universal spiritual, moral and ethical armament of the nation on the basis of this new *weltanschaulich* unity.
3. Technical armament.
4. Organizational registration of the power of the Volk (*Volkskraft*) for the purpose of national defense.
5. Attaining legal recognition in the rest of the world for the new situation which has already been brought about.

Not surprisingly, this type of program would greatly impress Reichswehr officers. Hitler closed his letter on the following note:

(...) East Prussia can only be saved if Germany is saved. It is plain that Schleicher’s new Cabinet will once more delay and impede this one and only possible deliverance [namely Hitler’s accession to power].

Hitler reserved a few further blows to Schleicher for the initial sessions of the new Reichstag on December 6 and 7.

First of all, however, the National Socialist deputies were infused with a dose of Hitler's rhetoric and sworn in. In his speech on December 5, Hitler also remarked upon the outcome of the local Thuringian election the day before. Compared with the election of July 31, the NSDAP had once again suffered losses. Hitler denied any real loss of votes, drew statistical parallels and claimed:³⁰²

The more the events press for a decision, all the more sacrifices are called for in the fight. The only thing that matters in this fight is who leads the last battalion onto the battlefield.

Parallel to these remarks, Hitler stated during World War II:³⁰³

The war can last as long as it wants—but the last battalion on the field will be German!

This type of thinking may have been appropriate at home, for the NSDAP was, in fact, the largest of all parties in Germany; however, it was purely utopian when applied to a war, even on the basis of sheer numbers. When the Germans were down to their last battalion, their enemies still had entire armies at their disposal.

The newly elected Reichstag convened for the first time on December 6. This time Hitler had made certain that his party nominated the chairman by seniority: the 82-year-old General von Litzmann, known as the "Lion of Brzeziny."³⁰⁴ At a time when the highest-ranking German statesmen were generals, Hitler could demonstrate that he suffered no disadvantage: he, too, could produce generals if needed. The tough old soldier Litzmann was an enthusiastic admirer of Hitler and offered to be of assistance,³⁰⁵ certainly with the best of intentions, in any way he could.

Litzmann's address to the Reichstag was an indictment of Hindenburg for having vested his unqualified confidence in men like Hermann Müller, Brüning and von Papen, but having rejected Hitler. He accused the Reich President of attempting to evade the curse of history for having driven the German Volk to despair and placed it at the mercy of Bolshevism, while all the time the savior (Hitler) had been standing by.

With the support of the Center and the Bavarian People's Party, Göring was then elected president in spite of the nay-votes of the Communists, the Social Democrats, and the German Nationalists. In his maiden speech, Göring expressed the deep regret of the National Socialists that the appointment of the Reich Minister of Defense as

Chancellor had made the Reichswehr into a bone of political contention. Following these two insults to Schleicher, Hitler scored a further point against the new Chancellor on the second day of the Reichstag's session. Pursuant to Article 51 of the Constitution, the Chancellor was the representative of the President until new elections took place. If Hindenburg were to die, Schleicher would be Chancellor, President and Minister of Defense in one, which virtually amounted to military dictatorship.

In order to prevent this, Hitler had a National Socialist draft bill introduced providing that, in future, the President of the Reichsgericht³⁰⁶ was to represent the Reich President. During the debate, a German Nationalist deputy, von Freytag-Loringhoven, objected and proposed that the Reich President be granted the right to appoint his own representative in a political last will and testament.

However, this was rejected, and the NSDAP's motion was passed with a two-thirds majority. Only the Communists and the German Nationalists had voted against the bill.

Hitler made a mental note of Freytag-Loringhoven's idea and utilized it at Hindenburg's death in 1934 and when drawing up his own will in 1945, although in both instances he violated the Constitution and the bill of representation passed at his own instigation in 1932.

The National Socialists used a loophole in the standing orders to delay the motion submitted by the Communists for a vote of no confidence against Schleicher's Cabinet and then declared a recess before it could be discussed. Hitler wanted to sit back and watch Schleicher fidget through the winter months in office. The NSDAP and the KPD together had an absolute majority in the Reichstag: they could pass a vote of no confidence any time they chose—and when Hitler decided the time was right. Everything appeared to be in good order. But then the bomb Schleicher had planted went off.

Like every presidential chancellor, the new man in office was forced to seek a tolerating majority in the Reichstag. He had approached the Center, the Social Democratic unions and, because he could not come to terms with Hitler, he had also turned to Strasser in the hope that he might be able to win the support of at least some of the National Socialist deputies for his government program.

Strasser had met with Schleicher on December 3 without Hitler's consent and discussed the question of joining the Cabinet as Vice Chancellor. Gregor Strasser was a queer fish. Politicizing apothecary that he was, he would have fit better in a bourgeois party, but there he

would probably have had little chance of success. His political and economic ideas³⁰⁷ represented a conglomeration of notions taken from a wild cross-section of programs, and he constantly changed them to suit the situation. Strasser had risen within the Party to become *Reichsorganisationsleiter* (Head of Political Organization) and he undoubtedly did possess organizational talent. He also enjoyed a certain following in the upper party echelons, but only as long as Hitler was absent. Strasser had never completely understood that only one person—namely Hitler—made decisions in the National Socialist Party. The fact that Strasser believed he might become a minister under Schleicher without Hitler's consent demonstrates how little he fathomed the man and his Party. Ultimately, he paid for this mistake with his life.³⁰⁸

As though he were a member of a bourgeois association, Strasser composed a letter to Hitler on December 8, after having exchanged some words with him, in which he resigned from all of his party posts. Apparently he expected Hitler to recall him immediately and plead with him on bended knee to resume his duties. He completely failed to realize what a sacrilege he had committed by resisting Hitler's will.

Hitler, on the other hand, had realized all too well that Strasser's behavior indicated a severe crisis both within the Party and in public opinion. After the loss of the election, a series of further signs of disintegration seemed to indicate that the Party's course was on a rapid decline. Initially, Hitler slumped into such a depression that he even stated to Goebbels:³⁰⁹

If the Party ever falls apart, I will take a gun and end it all in a minute.

But he soon recovered. At his instructions, the Reich Press Office of the NSDAP issued the following statement:³¹⁰

With the Führer's permission, Pg. Gregor Strasser is granted sick leave for the next three weeks. Any further conjectures in this connection are incorrect and have no basis in fact.

Then he recalled his persuasive powers of oratory and convened a gathering of the National Socialist deputies to the Reichstag and all available Gauleiters and party inspectors at the palace of the Reichstag President. He had resolved to take the sentimental route this time and delivered a one-hour talk in which, almost in tears, he narrated the sad account of the profound disloyalty of which he had been made a victim. If one can believe eyewitness reports, he went so far as to threaten suicide if he was not sworn absolute loyalty and blind obedience on the

spot. The speech was a tremendous success: every single person present hastened to raise his hand to pledge unswerving loyalty to Hitler. Strasser was totally stripped of his following. Even his closest friend, Gottfried Feder, renewed his vow of loyalty to Hitler.³¹¹

The *Völkischer Beobachter* published the following report of the scene:³¹²

The Führer then delivered an address to the parliamentary party which closed with the observation that the power and strength of the NSDAP lay first and foremost in the loyalty, in the solidarity unto death, upon which any attacks would certainly be dashed to pieces.

Göring stated that not only the leaders and deputies of the NSDAP, but the entire Movement as well were rallying around their Führer with moral support in this hour. The entire Party then spontaneously formed a circle around the Führer and gave him thunderous ovations. Every single member of the Party felt the need to make a personal solemn vow of loyalty to the Führer. Furthermore, the Reichstag party formally submitted the unanimous statement that they stood solidly behind their Führer, Adolf Hitler.

At the same time, the *Völkischer Beobachter* also published declarations of loyalty from all Gauleiters and Landesinspektors, the NSDAP deputies in the Prussian Landtag, the SA and SS with Chief of Staff Röhm, Gottfried Feder and others.

Hitler had succeeded in creating a rhetorical masterpiece in his sentimental speech of December 9, and he made effective use of this type of bathetic appeal once again two years later³¹³ when a crisis split the Reichswehr and the SS.

Just as he had exploited the SA crisis in fall of 1930,³¹⁴ Hitler similarly capitalized on the Strasser affair to enhance his own absolute power within the Party. Then he had taken on the post of *Oberster SA Führer*, *OSAF* (Supreme Commander of the SA) and appointed Ernst Röhm Chief of Staff; now he took over the political organization himself and nominated the devoted Robert Ley as leader of staff. The respective announcement was issued on December 9:³¹⁵

Decree

1. From today onwards until further notice I am assuming the leadership of political organization.

2. I hereby appoint the former Reichsinspekteur II, Robert Ley, as my leader of staff for political organization.

3. On Wednesday, December 13, I will issue new guidelines and orders respective to the appeal of November 6, 1932 toward bringing about an increase in the Movement's power.

Berlin, December 9, 1932

Adolf Hitler

Berlin, December 9, 1932

Adolf Hitler

Hitler wasted no time in launching a new speechmaking campaign designed to erase the bad impression the Strasser crisis had left throughout the country. The very next day found him at the microphones, albeit at internal party rallies, for the Government had declared a truce until January 2. However, this did not constitute any real hindrance, for the press made certain that Hitler's words met with an adequate response in the public.

On December 10, Hitler stated before 15,000 *Amtswalters* (party officials) in Breslau (Messehof):³¹⁶

The Movement has a right to be in power, and I will never sell this right. You will not be able to find anyone in our Movement who will sell it for less. This Movement stands unshakable in German history as firmly as a rock in the ocean.

The speculation that the Movement is disintegrating is not called for. Yesterday the NSDAP crushed the false hopes of our opponents in Berlin. The Movement stands fast and unshaken.

Even if our opponents may have defeated us in terms of figures at the last Reichstag election, we will pay them back next year with interest and compound interest. I believe that we will confront the gentlemen in March once more in an open battle.

On December 11, Hitler spoke at Amtswalter conventions in Dresden (Zirkus Sarrasani), Chemnitz (Kaufmännisches Vereinshaus), and in Leipzig (Zoo), where he announced:³¹⁷

I am the one who has fixed the price of the Movement. No one will offer it at less than that. But if anyone should ever be found to do so, he would be lost in the Party within an hour and would have no Movement behind him. We will not allow ourselves to be lured into the den of intrigue where the others are experts at the game.

Time will not wear me down. Certainly we lost thirty seats, but in the meantime our opponents have lost two governments! And the new Cabinet will not last any longer. We will regain those thirty seats. Our supply of recruits is larger than theirs, and I will place this task first and foremost and without any consideration to myself.

On January 2 the *Burgfriede* will be over, and on the third we will be back in the thick of the fight.

There was no need to mention Strasser's name, for it was obvious to whom he was referring.

On December 15, Hitler announced the dissolution of various party posts and offices. His aim in doing so was to crush Strasser's political apparatus and obliterate every trace of his work.

On December 16, Hitler spoke to the NSDAP in the Prussian

December 16, 1932

Schleicher had attacked due to the remarks he had directed against Hindenburg. Hitler's retort to Schleicher's programmatic radio speech of December 15 was: "*Ist das alles?*" Schleicher's era, just as those preceding it, was destined to be but a short episode in the history of the nation.

We have the youth; we have greater courage, a stronger will, and more tenacity. What else do we need to win?

On December 17 and 18, Hitler delivered speeches on the same topic at further Amtswalter conventions in Halle, Magdeburg, and Hamburg.³¹⁹

He stated in Halle:

Today we are the strongest political party in Germany. If our opponents are really serious about reaching agreement, then I ask them: why have you not, my advocates and patrons in the bourgeois camp, allowed [me] the power which you would not have hesitated to grant to any SPD *Bonzen* (big shots) to date? I will not allow myself to be treated worse than "the organizers of treason."

Do you believe that it would have been more advantageous for our Movement had we been torpedoed together with von Papen? I have never perceived Reich Government as the Verdun of the Western Front. It is not our job to do things like put ruined states back in order and then allow ourselves to be kicked for it in the end. We have already experienced that, for example in Thuringia. I protest most strongly against the accusation that we have only made mistakes. Had my work consisted of nothing but mistakes, how could seven men have turned into a Movement of millions?

I will never be able to act like any arbitrary party leader who one day turns up at a college lecture because his business has gone bankrupt. I am not fighting in order to make concessions, and much less to capitulate.

On December 20, Hitler denied reports published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Vorwärts*.³²⁰

The December 19 edition of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and other newspapers reported that I stated to the Amtswalters in Halle that I had "punished" Gregor Strasser; that I had been particularly lenient in the first conflict with the Strasser brothers; and that now the punishment must be all the more severe. The reports go on to say that, when I then had each of the Amtswalters solemnly swear eternal obedience to me, a fight broke out and the opposition forced its way into the hall.

This report in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* is pure fabrication from beginning to end. I did not touch upon the Strasser case in any way whatsoever. The name Gregor Strasser was not mentioned. It goes without saying that the "opposition" did not force its way into the hall, and it follows that no fighting (*Prügelei*) took place; it could well have been, however, that the police cleared rampaging Communists off the streets.

Adolf Hitler

For a fact, Hitler regarded the Strasser affair as a closed case. He added the postscript on June 30, 1934.

The year 1932 was coming to an end, and Hitler's struggle for power was also nearing its close. During the preceding twelve months, he had succeeded in eliminating nearly all of his opponents: first Groener, then Brüning, then von Papen. Schleicher, although a dangerous adversary, was isolated and would fall sooner or later. The Communists had become fair game on public streets. The despised Social Democratic rulers in Prussia had lost their influence. The politicians of the Center, ousted from their key positions, were now willing to accept Hitler's chancellorship. A wedge had been driven into Hindenburg's dislike for Hitler. Von Papen had been forced to learn, from the lessons of August to November, that it was no longer possible to accomplish anything without Hitler and that he therefore had to be given his way.

When von Papen left the chancellory, Hindenburg—with tears in his eyes—gave him a portrait signed “Ich hatt' einen Kameraden.”³²¹ In reality, he did not lose this comrade at all. Von Papen continued to live in the Reich Chancellor's quarters and came and went at the Reich President's as he chose. It would not take long for Hindenburg to realize that it was now necessary to turn to Hitler. The fruits of the “struggle” were ripe for harvesting. And it was high time for Hitler to reap his crops: the world economic crisis was coming to an end, and in Geneva Germany had been granted military equality on December 11. The chaos at home and abroad could not last much longer.

At times, Hitler himself had doubted whether his domestic struggle would be successful. The fact that he did triumph in the end filled him with a sense of satisfaction from which he drew the rest of his life. It served as a recurrent theme in his speeches, particularly during the Second World War. In reality, this “triumph” had caused him more than a great satisfaction: it had been tantamount to a genuine psychological fixation which brought with it lasting consequences for his later deeds and decisions.

While Hitler had occasionally confessed in 1932 that he, too, was capable of making mistakes, his surprising domestic success instilled in him the conviction that he would always be right in the end. Any thought he contemplated, any goal he set was programmed to become reality, just as his tremendous undertaking of gaining power in Germany had proven possible. Regardless of the extent to which people might entertain doubts as to the feasibility of Hitler's ideas, regardless of how strongly the entire world opposed them—in his opinion, the year 1932

had proven that he was absolutely incapable of erring, for Providence had decreed that he should always be right. This December of 1932, the *Gottmensch* Hitler had been born.

Later he once stated that he had “used up his best years”³²² in vying for power within Germany. This was certainly not the case in terms of his physical condition, for his vitality showed no indication whatsoever of lessening from 1933 onwards. One might, however, speculate that the price he paid in the course of 1932 was his last morsel of foreign policy sense—if ever he had had such a thing to start with.

The consequences which Hitler drew from the events of 1932 demonstrated that he had completely lost contact with reality. He believed that he need only treat the Russians as he had treated the German Communists, and the British as he had the German Nationalists, and world power would simply fall into his hands as a result.

The year 1932 is not only the key to Hitler’s ascent to power, but also to his foreign and military policy, which he based upon the principle: “I hold the firm conviction that this battle will end not a whit differently from the battle I once waged at home!”³²³

THE YEAR 1933

Major Events in Summary

On January 30, 1933, Hitler finally achieved the success he had been denied throughout the year 1932: he was made Reich Chancellor and head of a presidential cabinet.¹ Unlike his two predecessors, Papen and Schleicher, he was able to secure a majority in parliament by insisting upon new Reichstag elections. The experiences of the preceding months had shown that the support of the Reich President alone was not a sufficiently reliable basis for governing the country. However, as Hitler had pledged repeatedly in October 1932,² he was determined, come what may, not to relinquish control of the government he had finally taken over.

To “take power swiftly and with a single stroke,”³ was his declared goal. The post which Hitler had assumed was that of responsible leader of German politics as defined by the Weimar Constitution. And now that he was in power, he intended, without further delay, to set aside those parts of this same Constitution which limited the scope of his power and granted other public figures and groups a basis for claiming their own constitutional rights and exercising political influence.

“We will amend the Constitution in a strictly constitutional manner,” Hitler had still claimed in 1932,⁴ warning his opponents to refrain from seizing power by force or violating the Constitution. In practice, he now proved rather lax in observing constitutional rules. Indeed, there was little reason to abide by the law, for his predecessors had already demonstrated the extent to which Article 48 could be exploited to defeat the Constitution’s own purposes.

The decree of the Reich President toward “Restoring Order to the Government in Prussia” (*Herstellung geordneter Regierungsverhältnisse in Preussen*), promulgated on February 6,⁵ constituted one such flagrant breach of the Constitution and moreover an open contravention of the judgment of the Constitutional Court of October 25, 1932. Hitler was careful to have this decree—which dissolved the Prussian Landtag—counter-signed by Papen: one of the few cases in which Hitler allowed Papen to act as his proxy in exercising the functions of Reich Chancellor. The next step was the “Decree for the Protection of the Volk

and the State" (*Verordnung zum Schutz von Volk and Staat*) promulgated on February 28.⁶ Not only did this law provide that, if law and order were jeopardized, all of the articles of the Weimar Constitution could be rescinded (e.g. inviolability of the individual and the home; privacy of postal communications, etc.); moreover, the Reich Government (in reality, the Reich Minister of the Interior) was delegated the right normally held by the Reich President alone to appoint Reich Commissars in the German Linder and assume the authority vested in public offices. After March 5, Hitler made respective use of this possibility in all those Linder not governed by the National Socialists.

The next breach of the Reich Constitution followed on March 12, 1933. Article 3 provided that the colors of the Reich be black-red-gold. Hindenburg and Hitler decreed on March 12⁷ by virtue of an edict of the Reich President that the black-white-red and the swastika flag were to be hoisted jointly "until the question of the Reich colors has been definitively settled."

With the majority required to amend the Constitution, the Reichstag passed the "Law for Removing the Distress of Volk and Reich" (*Gesetz zur Behebung der Not von Volk and Reich*) on March 24 ("Enabling Act")⁸ which provided that, in future, the Reich Government was to be empowered to enact laws and the Chancellor, not the President, was to draw up and promulgate new legislation. The Constitution could be amended by government decree insofar as the amendment did not concern the institutions of the Reichstag or the Reichsrat as such. Allegedly, the rights of the Reich President were to remain inviolate, but alone the fact that it was now the Reich Chancellor who drew up legislation substantially limited the President's powers. Furthermore, whereas the question of succession to the office of Reich President had been anchored in the Constitution, the Enabling Act contained no respective guarantees.⁹

Two new laws passed by the Reich Government deprived the Länder of power: the "First Coordination Law of Länder and Reich" (*Vorläufiges Gesetz zur Gleichschaltung der Länder mit dem Reich*) of March 31¹⁰ vested the legislative power of the Landtage in the Land Governments and established the former in the same proportions as those resulting from the Reichstag election of March 5. The "Second Coordination Law of Länder and Reich" (*Zweites Gesetz zur Gleichschaltung der Länder mit dem Reich*) of April 7¹¹ introduced Reich Governors (*Reichsstatthalters*) in all of the Länder who were empowered to appoint the Land Governments. In Prussia, the largest Land, Hitler personally assumed

the office of Reichsstatthalter. This served to abolish the Reichsrat as well, the local government which was allegedly to remain inviolable pursuant to the Enabling Act.

The next step was the elimination of trade unions, political parties and leagues. The union offices had already been closed on May 2, and on May 10 Hitler decreed the formation of a new National Socialist organization for the workers, the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, DAF (German Labor Front), and appointed Robert Ley as its head.

The Communist Party had participated one last time in the election of March 5. However, the elected deputies were prohibited from taking office. A law passed on May 26 seized the assets of the KPD. While the Communist Party was not officially prohibited, the Social Democratic Party was abolished by decree on June 22. The assets of the SPD and the Reichsbanner had already been seized on May 10.

On June 21, the German National Fighting Leagues (*Kampfverbände*) were dissolved. A section of the Stahlhelm was integrated into the SA and the rest placed under Hitler.

On June 27, the German National People's Party (DNVP; participated in the 1933 elections as "Kampffront Schwarz-Weiss-Rot") dissolved; Hugenberg resigned as Reich Minister.

The remaining parties announced their own dissolutions in short succession: the German State Party (former German Democratic Party, DDP) on June 28; the Christian Socialist People's Service (Christlich-Sozialer Volksdienst, CSV) and the German-Hanoverian Party (DeutschHannoversche Partei) on June 30; the Party of People's Justice (Volksrechtspartei, VRP) on July 1; the German People's Party (DVP) and the Bavarian People's Party (BVP) on July 4; and the Center Party on July 5.

On July 14, Hitler passed a law stipulating that the National Socialist German Workers' Party constituted the only political party in Germany and that any attempt to establish a new party was punishable with penal servitude of up to three years.¹²

Hitler could have been well pleased with his success in having taken power "swiftly and with a single stroke." But subsequent developments showed that he was in no way satisfied with what he had achieved and continued his inexorable labors to expand his power.

By comparison, his methods were much more lax in the economic sector. He granted the economists and departmental ministers a relatively free hand while strictly prohibiting any currency manipulation. The long accumulated energy of German labor quickly regained its momentum in Hitler's economic program of repairing buildings,

constructing roads, boosting private enterprise with government commissions, promoting motorization, etc. This and the waning Depression united to ban quickly the economic misery which had plagued Germany for so many years. The majority of the Germans, who had long been victimized by poverty, were thus quite satisfied with Hitler's government and paid little attention to his legislative measures to eliminate dissenting political parties and suppress political opponents.

Abroad, the developments inside Germany were naturally viewed with concern. The foreign press openly criticized Germany's evolution to a one-party system or, more precisely, to a dictatorship under Hitler.

Infuriated by this criticism, Hitler decreed a boycott of all Jewish businesses in Germany. He regarded a measure of this sort as an appropriate means for bringing pressure to bear on his foreign opponents, and its success seemed to justify his expectations.¹³

The Concordat with the Vatican, concluded on July 8, not only helped Hitler to move the Center Party to proclaim its dissolution but also strengthened his position abroad.¹⁴

On the other hand, he desired to avoid any consolidation in Germany's foreign policy. Domestic chaos had brought him to power; chaos abroad would, so he hoped, allow him to attain his foreign policy goals. If the world or, more specifically, the League of Nations accepted Germany's claims for equality, revision of the Treaty of Versailles, etc., he would no longer be able to make demand upon demand, armed with the demeanor of injured innocence which he used to justify both his aims and his methods.

Hitler was thus assiduous in his efforts to put into practice the equality of rights for Germans resolved by the Major Powers on December 11, 1932. On October 14 he kept the promise made in his foreign policy speech to the Reichstag on May 17¹⁵ and declared Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference.¹⁶ As usual, he succeeded in killing two birds with one stone. He had long been irked by the Reichstag elected on March 5, for it still contained deputies of the German Nationalists, the Center Party, etc., albeit as guests of the NSDAP. Now he had the Reichstag dissolved, allegedly in order to procure the people's stand on a possible withdrawal from the League of Nations. Of course a plebiscite would have served this purpose just as well, if not better.

But Hitler wanted a Reichstag composed solely of National Socialists, and this he achieved in the new elections of November 12. 1933 was a successful year for Hitler in every way. Unlike Mussolini, he was not

forced to either fight for the absolute domination of his party or to negotiate with the Vatican for compensation.¹⁷ Within a few short months, Hitler was able to take over every major position of power with the exception of Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. But in order to achieve this, he had had to spend five times as long combatting much stronger resistance until he, like Mussolini, ultimately became Head of Government.

Report and Commentary

1

In his “New Year’s Proclamation to the National Socialists and Party Comrades,”¹⁸ following the usual recapitulation and forecast, Hitler stressed that under no circumstances would he retreat from his previous demands concerning a formation of the government.

Today, more than ever, I am determined to the utmost not to sell out our Movement’s right of the firstborn for the cheap substitute of a participation in a government devoid of power. That protest of the astute that we should come from inside and through the back door and gain gradual success is nothing but the same protest which bade us, in 1917 and 1918, to reach an understanding with irreconcilable opponents and then to debate with them peacefully in a League of Nations. Thanks to the traitors from within, the German Volk surrendered itself to this advice. The Kaiser’s lamentable advisors believed that they should not oppose him. But as long as the Almighty gives me life and health, I will defend myself to my last breath against any such attempt and I know that, in this resolve, I have the millions of zealous supporters and fighters of our Movement behind me who did not hope, argue and suffer with the intention of allowing the proudest and greatest uprising of the German Volk to sell its mission for a few ministerial posts!

If our opponents invite us to take part in a government like this, they are not doing it with the intention of slowly but surely putting us in power, but rather in the conviction that they are thus wresting it from us forever!

Great are the tasks of our Movement for the coming year. But the greatest task of all will be to make it as clear as possible to our fighters, members, and followers that this Party is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end. They should realize that the organization, with all its greatness and beauty, only has a purpose, and thus the justification to exist, when it is the eternally unforbearing and belligerent herald and advocate of the National Socialist idea of a German Volksgemeinschaft to come!

Everything which this Movement calls its own—its organizations, whether in the SA or the SS, in the political leadership, or the organization of our peasants and our youth—all of this can have only the single purpose of fighting for this new Germany, in which there will ultimately be no bourgeoisie and no more proletarians, but only German *Volksgenossen*.

January 1, 1933

This is the greatest task with which our Volk has been confronted for more than a thousand years.

The movement which accomplishes this task will engrave its name for all eternity in the immortal book of the history of our nation.

Thus in the face of the red flood, the dangers in the East and France's eternal threat; in the midst of need and wretchedness, misery and desperation, we, my party comrades, SA and SS men, National Socialist peasants and National Socialist youth, shall clench our fists even more firmly about our banner and, with it, march into the coming year.

We shall be willing to sacrifice and fight, and would rather pass away ourselves than allow that Movement to pass away which is Germany's last strength, last hope, and last future.

We salute the National Socialist Movement, its dead martyrs and its living fighters!

Long live Germany, the Volk and the Reich!
Munich, December 31, 1932

Adolf Hitler

In this New Year's message, Hitler cited the peasants in the same breath with the SA and the SS. Indeed, the peasants were his largest asset at that time, comprising the bulk of his voters.

In a lengthy address¹⁹ held on January 3 at a Convention of the NSDAP on agricultural policies in Munich, Hitler underlined the special significance of the peasantry for the National Socialist Movement. With a certain amount of bluntness, he proclaimed that the theory of *Blut and Boden* (blood and soil) applied not to domestic, but rather to foreign policy. Here he was referring to the acquisition of new land and soil which he had propagated in *Mein Kampf*. On January 3, Hitler declared in part as follows:

The fulfillment of the fundamental idea of national policy reawakened by National Socialism which is expressed in the theory of *Blut und Boden* will be accompanied by the most thorough and revolutionary reorganization which has ever taken place.

Our demand for strengthening the basic racial principles of our Volk, which this term signifies and which at the same time includes safeguarding the existence of our Volk in general, is also the determining factor in all of the aims of National Socialist domestic and foreign policy.

Once we have succeeded in purging and regenerating our Volk, foreign countries will very soon realize that they are confronted with a different Volk than hitherto.

And thus the prerequisites will be given for putting our own land and soil in thorough order and securing the life of the nation on our own for long years to come. The development in world economics and politics which automatically leads to an increasing blockade against our exports in international markets makes a major, fundamental transposition an absolute necessity. Even if today's rulers shut their eyes to this fact, the chronic cause of our grave

economic need and appalling unemployment is nevertheless an indisputable reality. Either we eliminate this cause and accomplish the required reorganization with vigor and energy in good time, or fate will bring it about by force and destroy our Volk. If we succeed in putting the basic principle of *Blut und Boden* into practice at home and abroad, then for the first time we, as a Volk, will not be tossed at the mercy of events, but rather will then master circumstances on our own.

Just as the peasant who sows each year must believe in his harvest without knowing whether it may be destroyed by wind and weather and his work remain unrewarded, so must we too have the political courage to do what necessarily must be done—regardless of whether success is already in sight at the moment or not. The German peasant in particular will understand even more of our National Socialist struggle in future than hitherto. But if the German peasant, the foundation and life source of our Volk, is saved, then the entire nation will once again be able to look ahead to the future with confidence.

On January 4, two politically significant conferences took place in Germany: one in Berlin and the other in Cologne.

In Berlin, the aged Reich President conferred with Gregor Strasser, to whom he had been introduced by Reich Chancellor von Schleicher. It appears that Hindenburg formed a quite good personal opinion of Strasser. But what was he to do with this renegade Reichstag deputy who had lost all support since his break with Hitler?

The conference—and its sequel on January 11—produced no tangible results. Hindenburg and Schleicher could not make up their minds whether or not to appoint Strasser Vice Chancellor.

In Cologne, Hitler and von Papen met at the home of banker Kurt Freiherr von Schröder²⁰ on January 4. Hitler had kept this meeting secret from most of his Unterführers, choosing only his secretary, Rudolf Hess, the Reichsführer SS, Heinrich Himmler, and his economic advisor, Wilhelm Keppler, to accompany him.²¹ Keppler, who was incidentally also to play an instrumental role in the *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938, had arranged the conference.

It would be false to assume that financial matters were discussed at the Cologne meetings attended only by Hitler, von Papen and Schröder. Hitler despised money and regarded it as beneath his dignity to discuss financial problems. He had enough followers who relieved him of making such distasteful requests. Upon hearing Hitler speak, a great number of affluent Germans opened their wallets of their own accord to donate to the lofty national causes he espoused.

The three partners to the talks in Cologne discussed other matters, namely when and how Hindenburg could be moved to appoint Hitler Reich Chancellor. Freiherr von Schröder had already made a lauded

contribution toward this end in November by forwarding to Hindenburg a memorandum, drawn up by leading German economists, which decidedly supported Hitler's chancellorship.²²

Von Papen, who had experienced Hitler's animosity at first hand from August to November 1932, had since dismounted his high horse and was now willing to acknowledge Hitler's leadership. His dealings with Schleicher may have accelerated this change of attitude. It is nonetheless quite possible that Schleicher was not favored with a single word at the discussions.

The joint communiqué issued by Hitler and Papen on January 5, after news of their conference in Cologne had leaked to the press, read as follows:²³

In response to the false conjectures widely circulated in the press concerning the meeting between Adolf Hitler and the former Reich Chancellor von Papen, the undersigned hereby state that the discussion was exclusively limited to questions regarding the possibility of a major national and political united front, and that in particular the respective views of the parties on the Reich cabinet presently in office were not discussed in any way, as the talk was of a general nature.

Hitler's contribution to the subject matter discussed at this meeting is most clearly evidenced by the speech he gave on the same evening, i.e. January 4, in Detmold, marking the start of the election campaign to the Landtag in Lippe, for—as we have seen—his remarks in political negotiations differed little from his proclamations in public rallies.

He stated in Detmold as follows:²⁴

What brought the National Socialist Movement into being is the yearning for a true community of the German Volk which inspired our nation's best for centuries. This Movement gives us something we cannot express in words, but rather only sense, and it is something we know must be done.

Fate has given us the great task of eliminating the disunity of the German Volk, the roots of its misfortune. Simple emergency decrees passed down from above by means of legislation cannot remedy this plight. The important thing is not that today those in the Wilhelmstrasse imagine that they are governing the National Socialists; what counts is who has conquered the German individual. If today I were given the alternative of becoming Reich Chancellor but not being able to win more workers than hitherto, or on the other hand, not to rule but to win over millions of new working people to the nation within the course of the coming months, I would say: "Keep the government, I am reaching for the Volk! Sooner or later, with this Volk, I will surely unlock the door to the Wilhelmstrasse!"

When we fight for the German individual, we are doing it not with the ultimate goal of securing his vote, but rather because we want to reeducate him

January 4, 1933

and move him to take on the great fateful task of uniting as a Volk and thus liberating the nation.

Yet the Movement can only fulfill this one great mission if it uncompromisingly exterminates the things which tear our Volk apart. And when the bourgeoisie run our Movement down and ask, "Why do you attack the bourgeoisie as well as the Marxists?" then my answer to them is: Because there would be no Marxists, and would never have been any, had the bourgeois parties not existed previously.

The bourgeois parties would be happy to have only a fraction of the faith, idealism and sense of sacrifice our Movement calls its own. Where would the bourgeoisie be today were it not for this brown army, this brown bulwark, this brown wall!

My opponents have had a generation's time. At least they should refrain from criticizing me. I have worked for thirteen years, spent thirteen years in struggle or in prison for Germany and have created the Volksgemeinschaft of this Movement. What have my critics—who also could have taken on these tasks—accomplished in this same space of time?

All that is good in the ideas of our opponents in power today was stolen from us, and whatever is not from us is not even deserving of criticism. Schleicher's government will be a continuation of Papen's government and will end where Papen's government ended.

I have refused to become a minister without portfolio not because I shy away from the responsibility, but rather because that path does not lead to the goal. In any case, it certainly would have been easier to stand before a microphone every four weeks and read off what an entire ministry has accomplished.

And when people say to me that I should have entered the government and come to power through the back door, then I can only say that I have never learned how to play behind the scenes and I never want to learn it!

I will never allow myself and the Movement to be fobbed off with half-measures, and if they say: then we'll dissolve once more. Do it! It doesn't bother us! It is in any case the German individual we have to fight for.

Neither can the threat of exhausting the voters scare us. In the end, it makes no difference what percentage of the German Volk makes history. The only important thing is that we are the last ones who make history in Germany!

And by the way, when they talk about decline, they should not deceive themselves: the wave will return! The Movement will continue to present its ideas to the people over and over again until they are under our spell.

We will not tire and will continue resolute on our path until the finish. In the end, with our faith, our sacrifice, and our willpower, we will triumph after all.

And thus this election will also take us one step further on the road which leads us upwards to the liberation of Germany!

Hitler's remarks to the effect that he had never learned to "play behind the scenes" and never even known the desire to do so appears rather curious in light of the secret conference he had held with Papen

only shortly before. But the main emphasis of both the Detmold speech and his statements in Cologne lay in the sentence: "The [National Socialist] wave will return!"

November and December 1932 doubtlessly brought an ebb in the flood of National Socialist votes, and Hitler's opponents—including Schleicher—were already gloating in anticipation of what they felt to be the certain decline of the NSDAP.

Hitler's discussions in Cologne alone could not have brought about a change in the political situation: a change required obvious proof of his unbroken popularity and a new advance on the part of the NSDAP.

Hitler was determined to turn the Lippe election results of January 15 into a decisive criterium, similar to the Landtag election in Oldenburg on May 29, 1932, which was to tip the scales and oust the Chancellor.

Tireless as always in election campaigns, for the next ten days Hitler spoke in every corner of the small Land of Lippe-Detmold. In Leopoldshöhe and Örlinghausen he stated on January 5:²⁵

I believe in the triumph of our Movement, because I believe in the future of Germany. Those in power today have projects and plans but not the strength to realize them. I, on the contrary, have laid the groundwork and forged the weapon for the future. The future belongs to whoever wins over and reorganizes the Volk.

Each unsuccessful attempt to break up the Movement by internal strife only proves once again the hardness and iron determination of our community. We were not invited to join the government so that the Movement could accomplish its goals, but rather so that the others could accomplish their goals in spite of the Movement.

I choose not to take the back way, but to step out, freely and openly before the Volk. The men at the top will lose cabinet after cabinet against us until they are forced to give way, not from behind, but from ahead.

We are fighting constantly and everywhere, at every corner, every hour of the day! What is happening now is not the uprising of Germany, but rather an attempt to misuse the uprising of Germany.

A Reich is coming, born of the power of this Movement, and the signs of this coming Reich will be the signs of the Movement.

On January 6, Hitler spoke in Augustdorf and Horn,²⁶ on January 7 in Calldorf and Hohenhausen, and on January 8 at the Schwalenberg Castle.²⁷ In an interview that day with his press chief, Otto Dietrich, Hitler emphasized that any new government would have to include himself as Chancellor. At the same time, he once more confirmed his discussion with Papen:²⁸

Question: The crux of the public attacks and propaganda of your opponents aimed at the very fact of your political leadership appears to revolve around the recurring claim that your consistent opposition to even the present governments—which are in fact endeavoring to gain your support—is rooted in an attempt by you and your Movement to avoid assuming responsibility in the State. Does this argument have any basis in fact?

Answer: No! The fact that our opponents can still afford to make claims of that type is only conceivable as a result of the lack of political training on the one hand and the unfathomable forgetfulness of our intellectual classes in particular on the other. In point of fact, my demand was none other than the transfer of personal responsibility to the NSDAP. However, this naturally requires that the Party then be given the leadership it deserves. To expect me to assume responsibility for what others do is simply ridiculous. The present powers-that-be would never have dared to set a trap like this for the Social Democrats, for instance, and we will show and educate these gentlemen that we too are to be treated decently. Incidentally, I made a simple but straightforward proposal to the Reich President in November for solving the German crisis. If, at that time, the Reich President believed—thanks to the advice of those around him—that he could not answer for giving me the responsibility, then today these men are also responsible for the sad consequences and all the misery which must be suffered by the German Volk due to this refusal.

Question: Is the oppositional press correct in claiming that you, Herr Hitler, have sought contact with Herr von Papen? What is your position particularly in response to the claim that you had attempted to establish a connection via Herr von Papen to the powers in heavy industry allegedly backing him?

Answer: It is obvious that I have not attempted to establish contact with Herr von Papen. But it is equally obvious that I do not allow anyone to dictate with whom I may speak or not speak. I am a politician and shall, if I regard it as expedient, have any talks I choose. I have no intention of letting the rags of any Reich Chancellor who happens to be in office tell me what to do. Germany's heavy industry is a part of the German economy. For that reason I do not need to make "contact" with it any more than with any other economic group. And when a politician like myself has to reckon with all existing factors, he cannot simply charm them away. However, if ever I feel the need in future to take up special contact with any economic group, I certainly do not require a special advocate. National Socialism is also a factor whose existence cannot be ignored. All that gossip and overblown fuss in the press because of the Cologne talks is merely the product of a guilty conscience and the fear resulting from it.

Question: How do you rate the chances for success of the program providing work for the unemployed (Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm) developed by Schleicher's government, the implementation provisions of which have now been disclosed?

Answer: Such programs do not exist for their own sake. Thus I refrain from any judgments on those types of problems and will rather judge only their effects on the German economic crisis in general. But the measures taken by Schleicher's cabinet will not eliminate this crisis.

January 9, 1933

On January 9, Hitler delivered another campaign speech in Lage (Lippe)²⁹ and then drove to Berlin. The official reason was cited as a visit to the new office buildings of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the paper had been appearing in Berlin as well since January 1 (Berlin and Northern Germany editions). In reality, however, Hitler's presence in Berlin was designed to document once more that he was at the very threshold of power, and it did in fact provoke a great deal of gossip. Schleicher's uncertainty increased daily.

On the return trip from Berlin to the Lippe election campaign, Hitler gave another interview with Otto Dietrich:³⁰

Question: The gutter press in Berlin has been circulating new rumors by the hour regarding your temporary stay in Berlin. Now that your alleged visit with the Reich Chancellor as the reason for your visit has been proven a mere invention of this same press, the papers are now fabricating stories about money problems of the NSDAP, about a Swedish loan, for the Party negotiated in Berlin, and more of the same. What was the real reason for your trip to Berlin?

Answer: My visit to Berlin had been planned for more than two weeks to make use of my one-day break in the Lippe election campaign. Aside from the talks with the Reichstagspräsident Göring and other leading party comrades, its main purpose was a tour of the office buildings and a visit to the editors of the *Völkischer Beobachter*. Since newspapers friendly to the present government have already told their readers—yesterday, to be exact—about important clandestine talks which supposedly took place in the evening, I will disclose the location of this “conference.” At the time in question, I was at the opera, once more enjoying a marvelous performance of Verdi's *La Traviata*. I might also note that the positively hysterical preoccupation with my personal doings exhibited by a certain Berlin newspaper is the best indication of the real position which the NSDAP has, contrary to the claims made by this very press.

Question: Who, in your opinion, are the men behind this press campaign?

Answer: I believe that the government press office in Berlin is the source of this political drivél.

Question: People with sharp ears have been writing and saying lately that you, Herr Hitler, are willing to drop your well-known basic demands for taking over the government due to “fear of a dissolution of the Reichstag and new elections.” The reason for this is cited as the claim that the NSDAP is presently in a difficult and tactically unfavorable position. Do you intend to make a statement regarding this question?

Answer: Jawohl. Those allegations are equally stupid and ridiculous inventions. I have so often explained my basic attitudes in regard to the formation of government in depth that the Berlin rags seem to be the only ones with memories short enough to have forgotten them. But it does serve to shed a revealing light on the position of the government. It is not the National Socialist

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Party which is in trouble, but rather Schleicher's cabinet. What I prophesied in November has finally come to pass. Thus there is no need for me to fear new elections—the *Herrschaften* will see for themselves on January 15—the government is the one who should be anxious. At any rate, the present cabinet will not accomplish its goal, but I will accomplish mine.

On January 11, Hitler gave another election speech in Lemgo (Lippe), noting:³¹

We will enter the government as soon as we are given both responsibility and leadership! And when they say to us that we will not succeed, then why is it that, when I visit Berlin, the entire Jewish press is as excited as if a comet had crashed to earth?

The struggle goes on! We shall triumph!

On January 12, further campaign speeches in Lipperode and Bad Schlangen followed.³²

In the midst of Hitler's preparations for taking over power, the leader of the SA Gruppe Franken, Wilhelm Stegmann, could no longer wait, and announced his support for radical and illegal methods.

Hitler addressed this party comrade, who lived in Schillingsfürst, in the following telegram on January 12:³³

Because you have chosen to disregard the personal warning I gave you and once again gravely violated the interests of the Party, I hereby not only confirm your dismissal from office previously pronounced by Chief of Staff Röhm, but moreover strip you of your rank as further punishment.

On January 13, Hitler published a statement against the "flood of lies" disseminated by the press:³⁴

In the last few days, the press well-disposed toward the government of the Reich has systematically publicized a flood of untrue allegations about the NSDAP and myself. Among other things, it is alleged that current NSDAP party revenues do not cover current expenditures;

that, for this reason, West German industrialists had also made an "attempt at negotiating" between the former Reich Chancellor Herr von Papen and myself;

that I was willing to accept the political demands of the industrialists in exchange for money;

that I was attempting to procure money from the government in exchange for pledging to tolerate Schleicher's cabinet; and that I had taken out a loan with a Swedish banker by the Jewish name of Markus Wallenberg of four million Reichsmark for myself or the NSDAP in exchange for corresponding securities and political promises.

All of these allegations are completely fictitious and fabricated from beginning to end.

Adolf Hitler

On January 13, Hitler gave election speeches in Barntrup and Blomberg (Lippe), and on January 14 he spoke in Bad Salzuflen.³⁵

The elections to the Landtag in Lippe-Detmold brought the desired results: compared to the election of November 6, the NSDAP fared better at the polls, receiving 38,000 votes to the 33,000 in November and thus 39.6% of the electorate. The Communists lost votes. Thus a right-wing government was able to be formed.

In spite of Lippe's insignificant size, it could not be denied that the NSDAP, the "brown wave," had once again swelled in proportion. The voters who had swayed between the NSDAP and the KPD had obviously once again turned to Hitler.

Hitler's arguments to the effect that he alone could avail to build a dam against Bolshevism had apparently been confirmed once more in Lippe.

Right-wing circles including Hindenburg were similarly impressed by the election results, which seemed to make a right-wing majority a distinct possibility in the Reich as well.

In the following days, Hitler took pains to reinforce this impression. On January 15 and 16 he spoke to the SA and Gauleiter Conventions in Weimar,³⁶ interpreting the Lippe election results on January 16 with the following words:

Whether one achieves triumphs or not and to what extent one achieves them—that is determined, given the right aims, exclusively by the will to triumph and the diligence and labor invested in this triumph. Lippe is proof!

The example of Lippe was also later exploited as proof that Hitler would win the Second World War: he had the willpower needed to triumph.

On January 18, Hitler once more met with Papen for a conference in Berlin.

Hitler had planned a major demonstration for the 22nd of January in memory of the late *Kampfbred* (fight song) composer and SA Sturmführer Horst Wessel, which was to impress upon the Reich capital that his fighting formations, the SA and the SS, were so strong and fear-inspiring that they could march unhindered through the 'red' quarters of Berlin, past the Karl Liebknecht Haus (the Communist headquarters) and across the Bülowplatz.

Everything went according to schedule. There were no serious disruptions to the rank and file of the 35,000 SA men marching through the streets. Following the parade, a memorial ceremony was held at Horst

Wessel's grave at the Nikolai Cemetery, where Hitler made the following remarks:³⁷

Every Volk which struggles to the fore from utter misery and defeat to cleanse and liberate itself also produces vocalists who are able to put into words what the masses bear in their innermost hearts. It is thus that the powerful *Volksbewegung*, the Movement of Germany, has also found the voice able to express what the men in rank feel. With his song, which is sung by millions today, Horst Wessel has erected a monument to himself in ongoing history which shall prevail longer than stone and bronze.

Even after centuries have passed, even when not a stone is left standing in this great city of Berlin, one will be mindful of the greatest German liberation movement and its vocalist.

Comrades, raise the flags. Horst Wessel, who lies under this stone, is not dead. Every day and every hour his spirit is with us, marching in our ranks.

At 6:30 p.m. on the same day, January 22, Hitler spoke before capacity crowds at the Berlin Sportpalast, delivering an address to the party officials (Amtswalters).

In a certain sense this speech warrants special note, for Hitler had also scheduled a private conference for the evening of January 22 with the son of the Reich President, Colonel Oskar von Hindenburg.³⁸

For this reason, Hitler consciously created the impression at the Sportpalast that he had already assumed office and was drawing up plans for the first measures to be instituted. He characterized himself as nothing less than the man who had succeeded in perfecting the time-honored concept of the Prussian Land. At the same time, he did not hesitate to concede that even he could err and make mistakes. However, it was to be the last time he made such an admission in public. He stated in part as follows:³⁹

Today we see more clearly perhaps than ever before the necessity of the existence of the Party and the National Socialist Movement which has become an integral part of German history. When descent, tradition and conceit rip human beings apart, a political will must somehow reunite them.

The accomplishments of this Movement to date consist of no more than what Prussia did long ago after the decline of the old German Empire: to counter the fragmentation of life in Germany in myriad groups, associations, and parties once more with one great unified will of the nation.

This mission of establishing a new platform, upon which every German who has the will to devote himself to his Volk may tread, has been assigned to our Movement and, in fourteen years of struggle, it has already been accomplished to a large extent, and we shall finish it.

It is our great goal to build a foundation guaranteeing the life of our Volk for many centuries to come.

An immense project which we must accomplish on our own, an immense task, for our structure must be a structure for the centuries. Anything great requires struggle, and the path to freedom is a path of struggle. Resistance is there to be broken.

One can steel one's own strength only by combatting the opposition's resistance, and it is only in overcoming this resistance that the justification for our final victory lies. It is essential that our government establish a regiment deeply rooted in the Volk itself and not floating in the clouds and forging plans which can never become reality.

Only when the unity between leadership and following has been reestablished and has evoked the power which lies deeply rooted in the *völkisch* soil, will a regiment be capable of performing great tasks.

But when one is fighting such a heroic battle for the inner uplifting of a Volk, then a steadfastness is required in the face of all those who, blinded by the questions of the day, believe they can find another way which is easier and leads more quickly to success.

We should not be led to believe that tactical dodges can replace principles. Steadfastness—that is primarily the job of the leaders; particularly at crucial moments, it is the leaders who must personify the conscience of the nation, its past and its future.

They must not then give way, not be cowardly nor stoop to motivate their cowardice with empty words. At moments such as these, the leaders must force themselves to make a heroic decision and break the neck of defeatism.

However, when an organization chooses to perform the most difficult tasks, it must make certain that the will of the Volk is expressed in a single voice. A movement can only feel itself called upon to accomplish the greatest of things when it inscribes above its door the words:⁴⁰

Party comrades, national comrades, when you enter here, you must fuse your will with the will of millions of others, then you must merge with this great will. You must become a man and entrust yourself to a leader.

Even I can err and make mistakes, but the decisive point is who has the fewest errors to show in the end. I have chosen this task because I would never in my life have been capable of choosing anything else and never will choose anything else, because it is natural for me that this is my life's work, and with it I either rise or fall.

I will never burden my party comrades with any labor or sacrifice which I would not be willing to shoulder myself, if necessary, be it a prison sentence or be it life itself.

In all probability, these were the same reflections which Hitler presented to Colonel von Hindenburg on the evening of January 22. It is likely that he also pledged his eternal gratitude to the Hindenburg line should the Old Gentleman appoint him Chancellor. And in view of the so-called *Osthilfe* scandal,⁴¹ this was doubtless important. But Hitler would hardly have proceeded so blatantly that one could accuse him of using "a mixture of bribes and blackmail."⁴²

The two men conferred alone at the residence of Joachim von Ribbentrop⁴³ in Berlin-Dahlem. Hindenburg's State Secretary, Dr. Otto Meißner, was also invited, and Göring imparted to him highly confidential information concerning the planned government of the national front. The National Socialists demanded the office of Chancellor, the Reich Ministry of the Interior (for Frick), and a further ministerial post (for Göring).

The other right-wing parties were to be given access to all of the other ministries, and respective appointments were to be made by the Reich President. It is incomprehensible why the State Secretary suddenly found the demands of the National Socialists "moderate" and judged them to be a "concession."⁴⁴ The Nazis wanted the most significant and powerful ministries, and Hitler's demands had not changed from those of November and August of 1932.

After the speeches and conferences on January 22, Hitler could afford to sit back and watch the situation develop. On January 23, he held another conference with Schacht at the Kaiserhof Hotel and delivered a two-hour address on the present political situation to the leaders of the Berlin SA and SS.⁴⁵

In the evening he stepped to the podium before a conference of Amtswalters in Frankfurt an der Oder (Schützenhaussaal) and declared:⁴⁶

The rootlessness and disunity of the present government's economic policy is only a reflection of its own ideological rootlessness and disunity. What I am accusing them of is the fact that their actions are so perfectly unsystematic and haphazard.

We have the Volk behind us, but they are backed merely by their own conceit. Wiping out centuries of rotten tradition and prejudice is a larger task than forming a new government. The mission which Providence has assigned to the National Socialist Movement is that of elevating Germany once more.

If we once again succeed in making Germans out of proletarians and the bourgeoisie, then Germany's future is secure. And if, in light of this goal, I judge a certain government to be fitting, then I will create this government, and no other! I do not believe in advances! It has to be an honest game in which we give the others our strength and, in exchange, they give us the corresponding power.

When people tell me that we would have risen to power in three months at any rate [albeit without holding the Chancellorship in the government], then I answer: then I would rather wait these three months. Have no illusions about the ironclad structure of our Party.

I know that the army of 100,000 under my leaders is as loyal to me as I am loyal to the Movement.

This Movement possesses perseverance, steadfastness, straightforwardness, determination, and boldness. We have once again taken our flag in our fist to continue the struggle with more energy than before on the way to the *Endsieg*.

Schleicher's downfall could only be a matter of days. With the votes of the National Socialists, the Center and the Bavarian People's Party, the Reichstag Council of Elders (*Ältestenrat*) resolved on January 20 to convene the Reichstag on January 31. This date—at the latest—marked Schleicher's downfall, for a vote of no confidence was a certainty. Schleicher was aware of this, particularly as the German Nationalists had declared their opposition to him on January 21. Thus he attempted, on January 23 and 28, to procure an order of dissolution from Hindenburg. His efforts were to no avail.

Events took the course which had been predetermined for weeks: faced with Hindenburg's stance, Schleicher was forced to announce his resignation on January 28. Hindenburg instructed von Papen to clarify the political situation. That Sunday (January 29) was spent in compiling a new list of ministers.

The rumor that Schleicher had planned a putsch using the Potsdam garrison to march against the Wilhelmstrasse⁴⁷ served to accelerate the formation of a new government and to summon Lieutenant General Werner von Blomberg, Commander of Military District (Wehrkreis) I in East Prussia and delegate at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, as the new Reich Minister of Defense to report to Berlin immediately. He was sworn in even before the other cabinet members on January 30.⁴⁸

Hitler's demands regarding cabinet membership were met. Hindenburg declared his confidence in Hitler on the morning of January 30. There was only one hurdle yet to be overcome: the new Reichstag elections, for which he required Hugenberg's consent. Hitler was determined to insist on this point, even at the expense of losing the entire government formation. Hugenberg knew what a new election would mean: it would give Hitler the decisive—if not absolute—majority and make him independent of the Reich President. In the presence of the entire staff of ministers, Hitler addressed Hugenberg at length and gave his word that this cabinet would remain together for all time. Hitler kept the Reich President waiting twenty minutes beyond the time scheduled for swearing in the cabinet. Finally, under pressure from von Papen as well, Hugenberg succumbed.⁴⁹ Hitler had prevailed.

Now that the worst was over, Hindenburg's blessing could be obtained. After Hitler, all of the other ministers swore the prescribed

oath. Subsequently, the new Reich Chancellor made a short speech to Hindenburg regarding the national aims of the cabinet and his intention to reestablish normal procedures of parliamentary government.⁵⁰

The public was officially notified as follows:⁵¹

The Reich President has designated Herr Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor and made the following new appointments to the Government upon his request: Former Reich Chancellor von Papen as Vice Chancellor and Reich Commissar for the Land of Prussia;

Freiherr von Neurath as Reich Foreign Minister;

Former Minister of State and Member of the Reichstag Dr. Wilhelm Frick as Reich Minister of the Interior;

Lieutenant General Freiherr von Blomberg as Reich Minister of Defense;

Graf Schwerin von Krosigk as Reich Minister of Finance;

Privy Finance Councillor and Member of the Reichstag Alfred Hugenberg as Reich Minister of Economy and for Food and Agriculture;

Franz Seldte as Reich Minister of Labor;

Freiherr von Eltz-Rübenach as Reich Minister of Postal Services and Reich Minister of Transportation;

President of the Reichstag Göring as Reich Minister without portfolio and Reich Commissar for Air Traffic;

Reich Minister Göring was appointed Prussian Minister of the Interior;

Reich Commissar for Programs for the Unemployed Gereke has retained his post;

Appointment to the Reich Ministry of justice remained subject to alteration.

The Reich Chancellor took up negotiations on Monday with the Center and the Bavarian People's Party.

The first cabinet meeting took place at 5:00 p.m. that afternoon.

Hitler had made a smart move in appointing National Socialist Walther Funk⁵² as Press Chief of the Reich Government on January 30, 1933. Funk was a native of East Prussia and had been editor-in-chief of the conservative *Berliner Börsenzeitung* for ten years. He was well acquainted and on familiar terms with Reich President von Hindenburg. As Press Chief of the Reich Government, it became his appointed duty to report to the Reich President on the current political situation. Funk's words carried just as much if not more weight than von Papen's with Hindenburg.

Much has been said and written concerning the cabinet Hitler formed on January 30, 1933 and its constitutionality. Even today, there

is little consensus regarding this government, and the views range from its characterization as a “coalition cabinet,” a “duumvirate” and a “presidential cabinet.”

However, contemporaries’ impressions of what Hitler’s cabinet was or may have been are less important than the actual constitutional character of this body.

The government was by no means a coalition government in the parliamentary sense of the word. The National Socialists, the German Nationalists and the Stahlhelm had indeed united to form a “government of national concentration” or, respectively, of “national uprising,” as it was officially termed.⁵³ However, only the National Socialists and German Nationalists—not the Stahlhelm—were represented in parliament as parties. In the Reichstag elected on November 6, 1932, the National Socialists and the German Nationalists did not have the absolute majority required for a parliamentary coalition government.

A duumvirate, i.e. a government in which two men, in this case the Reich Chancellor and the “Vice Chancellor,” would both exercise the same powers, was a constitutional impossibility. Article 56 of the Weimar Constitution provided that the Reich Chancellor alone was to determine the principles of policy.

The cabinet formed on January 30, 1933 was, in essence, a presidential cabinet⁵⁴ in the truest sense of the term.

From the very first hour, Hitler had enjoyed the confidence of the Reich President, as any presidential chancellor must. As early as November 1932, he had made it clear that he would only assume the post of Chancellor if given the President’s vote of confidence and the same powers granted to Brüning and von Papen.⁵⁵ He would never have been willing to enter the government on January 30, 1933 unless these conditions had been met.

What are the characteristics of a presidential cabinet? The laws were not promulgated by the Reichstag, but rather took effect by means of “emergency decrees” issued by the Reich President pursuant to Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution and counter-signed by the Reich Chancellor and the respective departmental minister. This is indisputably a mark of the cabinet Hitler formed on January 30, 1933. One look at the *Reichsgesetzblatt* of 1933, Part I, shows that dozens of laws of all types were promulgated between January 30 and the enactment of the Enabling Law on March 24, 1933 by emergency decree of the Reich President, counter-signed by Chancellor Hitler and the respective departmental minister. Even after the Enabling Act had been passed, laws

were enacted—for the last time on March 30, 1933⁵⁶—with the aid of such emergency decrees.

On a parliamentary basis, Hitler could have become Chancellor as early as November 1932. At that time, Hindenburg had been willing to assign him the task of forming a government, for Hitler headed the largest party in the Reichstag. Hitler refused, however, because every single law would have had to be approved by parliament. Moreover, he would have become dependent upon the Center Party.

Hitler was to attempt to convince the Reichstag to tolerate the cabinet he had formed on January 30. In essence, however, this demand constituted a normal condition to which every head of a presidential cabinet had been subjected (Brüning, Papen, and Schleicher). Each of his predecessors had initially regarded such a toleration as possible but then failed nonetheless due to lack of parliamentary support.

Hitler was the first presidential chancellor who immediately took up the task of obtaining a majority in parliament. Although he had the confidence of the Reich President, he knew from the experience of his predecessors that this could change quickly. Under the circumstances prevailing at the time, he could have achieved parliamentary support or toleration by the Center and the Bavarian People's Party, but he regarded this as too unstable, considering that the support of the Center would doubtlessly be short-lived.

Hitler wanted to be absolutely certain: in spite of Hugenberg's initial resistance and by ignoring the Center's willingness to negotiate, he forced new Reichstag elections. What had been denied Schleicher, i.e. the dissolution of the Reichstag, was granted the Reich President's new intimate friend, the presidential chancellor Adolf Hitler.

Hitler knew the Weimar Constitution better than his co-players and adversaries. Thus there was no need for him to make good his publicly declared intention of stepping down from the government controls.

Von Papen's position in the new cabinet was just as insignificant as the Constitution had intended it to be. The Weimar Constitution did not provide for a "vice chancellor" wielding any significant influence, but rather merely for a "deputy chancellor," who only had any real function when the Chancellor was incapacitated by illness or absent. The post was usually filled by the senior minister or one of the other ministers in the cabinet. But even then, political leadership was the responsibility of the Reich Chancellor. Only in the summer of 1932, when the question of allowing the National Socialists to participate in Reich Government arose, did von Papen conceive of instituting a ministerial post solely for

the office of “vice chancellor,” the holder of which would exercise no significant influence in the ongoing process of government, but who would, at least, bear a decorative title.

It is the irony of fate that von Papen of all people, the one who had wanted to shelve Hitler in the powerless position of vice chancellor in 1932, was now allotted this position under Hitler.

Von Papen had the strictly constitutional role of “deputy chancellor” and was allowed, during Hitler’s few absences from January 31 to March 30, 1933, to counter-sign a number of the Reich President’s emergency decrees. His alleged right to be present at every report made by the Chancellor to the President was, if at all anchored in writing, without any constitutional significance whatsoever.

Hitler was in no way obligated to take von Papen with him every time he visited the Reich President. The Weimar Constitution did not provide that the Reich Chancellor required a nursemaid; this would, of course, have been ridiculous. In any case, von Papen seems to have made little use of his purported “right” to be present at Hitler’s reports. In view of his enthusiasm for Hitler, at least in the first few months following the *Machtergreifung*, he most probably would not have dared to interrupt Hitler, much less attempted to influence or sway the Reich President in Hitler’s presence.

On January 30, von Papen was also appointed Reich Commissar for Prussia; this position, however, was surrounded by controversy.

By virtue of the coup of July 20, 1932, the lawful authority of Braun, the Minister-President of Prussia, had been sharply curbed. The Constitutional Court (*Staatsgerichtshof*) had reversed a number of these measures in its judgment of October 25; a further trial was still pending. In essence, the Reich Commissar’s functions were limited to the Prussian police, and these happened to be the same functions which were to be exercised by Göring according to the minister list of January 30. Thus von Papen had little say in Prussia and Hitler, by dissolving the Prussian Landtag by force, ultimately secured that Göring, and not von Papen, was given the post of Minister-President in Prussia.⁵⁷

No amount of quibbling about the nature of the cabinet formed on January 30, 1933 can change the fact that Hitler was given the decisive position of power, namely the leadership of the Reich Government, a position for which he had fought nearly fourteen years. Hitler and all of his followers were convinced from the first day that the Third Reich had come into being on January 30, 1933.

January 30, 1933

On this very first day, January 30, Hitler issued the following proclamation:⁵⁸

National Socialists! My Party Comrades!

A fourteen-year-long struggle, unparalleled in German history, has now culminated in a great political triumph.

The Reich President von Hindenburg has appointed me, the Führer of the National Socialist Movement, as Chancellor of the German Reich.

National leagues and parties have united in a joint fight for the resurrection of Germany.

The honor witnessed by German history of now being able to take a leading part in fulfilling this task I owe, next to the generous resolve of the Field Marshal, to your loyalty and devotion, my party comrades.

You followed me on cloudy days as unerringly as in the days of good fortune and remained true even after the most crushing defeats, and it is to that fact alone we owe this success.

Enormous is the task which lies before us. We must accomplish it, and we shall accomplish it.

Of you, my party comrades, I have only one major request: give me your confidence and your devotion in this new and great struggle, just as in the past, then the Almighty as well will not deny us His blessings toward reestablishing a German Reich of honor, freedom and domestic peace.

Berlin, January 30, 1933

Adolf Hitler

The news of Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor evoked a positive ecstasy of joy among the many millions of National Socialists throughout Germany on the afternoon and evening of January 30. For three and a half hours, SA, SS and Stahlhelm formations in Berlin marched through the Wilhelmstrasse by torchlight, passing Hindenburg and Hitler, who waved and watched the hundreds of thousands of men filing by from the windows of their chambers.

Not only Berlin, but every major German city staged a similar spectacle. For millions of Germans, a better age seemed to be dawning. For long years they had hoped for this day and so often, apparently so close to their goal, been disappointed. Now that their Führer had seized power, there would be an end to all want.

It should be noted here that, of the millions of Hitler's adherents, a substantial number were idealists. They actually believed Hitler when he stated that Marxist parties were to blame for the entire economic misfortune which gripped the country. They were of the firm conviction that, in serving in the SA and other party organizations, they were serving their Vaterland. Many of Hitler's followers in this period had for years made sacrifices for their ideas; they had suffered oppression,



IV **January 22, 1933**

Hitler speaking at the memorial ceremony for Horst Wessel at the Nikolai Cemetery in Berlin.

Photo: Domarus archives



V February 1, 1933

Hitler making his first radio speech from the Chancellory office.

Photo: Copress-Verlag Hoffmann & Hess



VI Hitler delivering his first address before the Reichstag

Reading of the Government's statement of policy in respect to the Enabling Act on March 23, 1933. Sitting on the government hench are: von Papen, Neurath, Frick, Schwerin von Krosigk, Hugenberg, and Seldte.

Photo: Domarus archives

professional setbacks and dismissals, and had often risked their lives for the national goals Hitler supposedly advocated. Even granted a certain amount of exaggeration in the statistics of the party press, a good number did in fact sacrifice life and property and served sentences as political prisoners. There were, of course, disreputable elements among the ranks of the National Socialists prior to 1933 and those who used violence after the *Machtergreifung*. They were unable to withstand the temptation which lurks wherever power is exercised.

However, the bulk consisted of idealists who had been blinded by Hitler's nationalistic speeches, and they were most disappointed and affected by his unrestrained politics of power and war. They had followed Hitler in trusting confidence, but he exploited them ignominiously.

There were still a few credulous believers among those who became members of the Party between January 31 and April 30, 1933, but there were also many opportunists—called the *Märzgefallene*—who were maneuvering for positions. Those who joined after the four-year membership ban had been lifted in 1937 did so either out of fear that their careers might suffer or because they were unable to comprehend the developments which had, by that time, taken on a quite distinct shape.

The men of the SA and NSKK had the least advantages, for, from 1934 onwards, they regarded their service as a national duty or rather as a reserve duty training exercise; at the same time, they neither solicited nor were given much public recognition. The SS, however, evolved to become an exclusive organization which Hitler reserved for his secret goals.

2

Typically enough, the first declaration Hitler drew up as new Reich Chancellor and responsible leader of German politics at home and abroad was addressed to Austria. On January 31, he sent the following telegram to the Austrian Chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss:⁵⁹

Called upon by the Reich President to head the German Government, I hasten to convey to you, Mr. Chancellor, my warmest wishes for the welfare of our German brothers in Austria.

Dollfuss replied the same day:

May I, Herr Reichskanzler, respectfully request that you accept my sincere thanks for the kind notification of your calling to the head of your Reich Government. While most warmly thanking you on behalf of Austria for the best wishes for our welfare, at the same time may I reciprocate with my heartfelt wishes for the welfare of the entire German Volk.

Hitler's speech in Munich on "National Socialism and Art" which had been scheduled weeks in advance for January 31⁶⁰ now had to be cancelled due to his new position in Berlin. His most pressing task at the moment was to outwit the Centrists who were willing to take part in a coalition government. Had Hugenberg caused further difficulties because of the dissolution of the Reichstag, Hitler would have had no choice but to allot to the Center Party the vacant post of Minister of justice in exchange for a temporary toleration in the Reichstag.

As things stood, however, Hitler's January 31 conference with Monsignor Ludwig Kaas, the leader of the Center Party, was a mere matter of form. Kaas dared to confront Hitler afterwards with a few questions concerning the Government's labor program, and this moved Hitler to promptly announce to the cabinet that it was impossible to reach any consensus with the Center.

February 1, 1933

On February 1, Hindenburg signed the decree dissolving the Reichstag, "now that the formation of a working majority has proven impossible."⁶¹

Franz Gürtner, Minister of Justice up to that time and a longtime patron of Hitler,⁶² was reconfirmed in office.

However, Hitler addressed a letter to the leader of the Center Party in which, clothed in his convoluted style, he coupled insult and injury with his best wishes for close personal relations with the Prelate.⁶³

Berlin, February 1, 1933

My dear Monsignor,

Yesterday I took note of your letter with great interest. The purpose of the conference was to determine whether, and under what conditions, the Center Party would be willing to grant the new Reich Government of National Concentration a working term limited to one year free of the vicissitudes of parliamentary obstruction.

I felt this was necessary, for I perceive this government to be the last and only chance to ward off, by constitutional means, the danger of degeneration of the Volk and Reich.

I believe that I understood you correctly, my dear Monsignor, in concluding from this conference that the Center is presently of the opinion that the current composition of the cabinet fails to provide a sufficiently broad base for its own direct participation in the Government.

In your letter, my dear Monsignor, you pose so many extremely specific questions that detailed answers could only serve any purpose if and when the fundamental condition, i.e. whether or not one can count on this one-year-term for the undisturbed work of the Reich Government, is clarified in advance.

However, this is not the case. Thus I have gathered that a respective binding promise or similar guarantee of the last constitutionally possible prerequisite today for productive work cannot be given on the part of the Center.

Thus, at the moment, there is no need for any further discussion on the points which you, my dear Monsignor, have cited. A discussion of the points cited without the result I have requested would, in the final analysis, lead to a fruitless as well as—on my part—unwelcome embitterment. For nevertheless I dare to continue hoping even today that, if not now, then perhaps at a not too distant point in time an expansion of our front toward eliminating the impending domestic dangers in our Volk could take place.

Due to the fact that, to my chagrin, I am therefore unable to conclude from your letter any clear statement on the question of a guaranteed term for the work of the new government which I regard as a prerequisite; and due to the fact that time is of the essence and I wish, before God and my conscience, to use any and all opportunities to make it possible that the new government can take on its work of saving the nation within the framework of the Constitution, I see no other choice but to suggest to the Reich President that he himself address one last appeal to the German Volk.

February 1, 1933

In the hope and with the request that the personal contacts established with your party friend Dr. Brüning and yourself, my dear Monsignor, will not be broken off for this reason,

I remain yours faithfully,

Adolf Hitler

Late in the evening of February 1, at 10:00 p.m., Hitler spoke for the first time in a radio broadcast. He dressed in his dark blue suit and black tie, as had been his practice in 1932 on the occasion of important speeches.⁶⁴

Hitler read his first proclamation as German head of government, a Proclamation of the Reich Government to the German Volk:⁶⁵

More than fourteen years have passed since that ill-fated day when, blinded by promises at home and abroad, the German Volk lost sight of the most valuable assets of our past and of our Reich, its honor and its freedom, and thus lost everything. Since those days of treachery, the Almighty has withheld His blessing from our Volk. Dissension and hatred have made their way into our midst. In the profoundest distress, millions of the best German men and women from all walks of life watch as the unity of the nation vanishes and dissolves in a muddle of political and egotistical opinions, economic interests and differences in Weltanschauung.

As so often before in our history, Germany has presented a picture of heartbreaking disunity since that day of revolution. We were never given the promised equality and fraternity, and we have lost our liberty. The disintegration of the unity of spirit and will of our Volk at home was followed by the disintegration of its political standing in the world.

Imbued with burning conviction that the German Volk entered the great fight in 1914 without a thought to any guilt on its part and filled only with the burdensome care of having to defend the Reich from attack and preserve the freedom and the very existence of the German Volk, we see in the shattering fate which has plagued us since November 1918 merely the product of our disintegration at home. However, the rest of the world as well has been shaken no less by major crises since then. The historical balance of power, which once played no small part in bringing about an understanding of the necessity for internal solidarity of the nations, with all its positive economic consequences, has been done away with.

The insane conception of victors and vanquished destroys the confidence between nations and with it world economy. But the misery of our Volk is appalling! The starving millions of unemployed proletarians in industry are being followed by the impoverishment of the entire *Mittelstand* and artisan professions. When this disintegration ultimately reaches the German peasants, we will be confronted by a catastrophe of unfathomable dimensions. For not only will a Reich disintegrate at the same time, but also a two-thousand-year-old inheritance of valuable, the most valuable assets of human culture and civilization. The warning signs of this approaching disintegration are all about us. In a single gigantic offensive of willpower and violence, the Communist

method of madness is attempting to poison and disrupt the Volk, which is shaken and uprooted to its innermost core, with the aim of driving it toward an age which would be even worse in relation to the promises of today's Communist spokesmen than the period we have now left behind us in relation to the promises of those same apostles in November 1918.

Beginning with the family and ranging through all of the concepts of honor and loyalty, *Volk und Vaterland*, culture and economy, all the way to the eternal foundation of our morality and our faith: nothing has been spared by this negating, all-destroying dogma. Fourteen years of Marxism have ruined Germany. One year of Bolshevism would destroy Germany. The richest and most beautiful cultural areas of the world today would be transformed into chaos and a heap of ruins. Even the suffering of the last decade and a half could not be compared to the misery of a Europe in whose heart the red flag of destruction had been hoisted. May the thousands of wounded, the innumerable dead which this war has already cost Germany serve as storm clouds warning against the coming tempest.

In these hours when we were overcome by a powerful anxiety as to the existence and the future of the German nation, the aged leader of the World War appealed to us men in the national parties and leagues to fight under him once more as we had at the front, this time at home, in unity and loyalty for the salvation of the Reich. The venerable Reich President has allied himself with us in this noble sense, and therefore we shall vow to God, our conscience and our Volk as national leaders that we may resolutely and steadfastly fulfill the task thus conferred upon us as the National Government.

The inheritance we have taken on is a terrible one.

The task which we must accomplish is the most difficult ever posed to German statesmen within the memory of mankind. But our confidence is unbounded, for we believe in our Volk and in its imperishable virtues. Peasants, workers, and bourgeoisie must all join together to provide the building blocks for the new Reich.

The National Government will therefore regard it as its first and foremost duty to reestablish the unity of spirit and will of our Volk. It will preserve and defend the foundations upon which the power of our nation rests. It will extend its strong, protecting hand over Christianity as the basis of our entire morality, and the family as the germ cell of the body of our Volk and State. It will reawaken in our Volk, beyond the borders of rank and class, its sense of national and political unity and its resultant duties. It will establish reverence for our great past and pride in our old traditions as the basis for the education of our German youth. Thus it will declare a merciless war against spiritual, political and cultural nihilism. Germany must not and will not drown in anarchistic Communism.

It will replace turbulent instincts with national discipline as the guiding rule of our life. In doing so, it will devote great care to those institutions which constitute the true guarantors of the power and strength of our nation.

The National Government will perform the immense task of reorganizing the economy of our Volk with two great four-year plans:

Salvation of the German peasant in order to maintain the food supply and thus the basis of life in our nation.

Salvation of the German worker in an enormous and all-embracing attack on unemployment.

In fourteen years, the November parties have ruined the German peasantry. In fourteen years they have created an army of millions of unemployed. The national government will, with iron determination and unshakable persistence, implement the following plan:

Within four years the German peasant must be rescued from impoverishment.

Within four years unemployment must be finally overcome.

At the same time, this will lay the groundwork for the recovery of the rest of the economy.

The National Government will couple this gigantic task of reorganizing our economy with the task and accomplishment of reorganizing the Reich, the Länder, and the communities, both in administrative and fiscal terms.

Only then will the concept of a federal preservation of the Reich become a full-blooded, real-life certainty.

The concept of a compulsory labor service and the settlement policy number among the cornerstones of this program.

Securing daily bread, however, also includes the performance of social duties for the sick and the aged.

In an austerity administration, promoting employment, maintaining our peasantry, as well as exploiting individual initiative also give the best guarantee for avoiding any experiments which would endanger our currency.

In terms of foreign policy, the National Government regards preserving the right to live and thus regaining the freedom of our Volk as its highest priority. By being resolute in bringing about an end to the chaotic state of affairs in Germany, it will assist in restoring to the community of nations a state of equal worth and thus, however, also a state with equal rights. The Government is impregnated with the immensity of the duty of advocating, together with this free and equal Volk, the preservation and maintenance of a peace which the world needs today more than ever before.

May the understanding of all others assist us in fulfilling this, our most sincere wish, for the welfare of Europe, and more, for the welfare of the whole world. As great as is our love for our army as the bearer of our arms and the symbol of our great past, we would be happy if the world, by limiting its own armaments, would never again make it necessary for us to increase ours. However, if Germany is to experience this political and economic revival and conscientiously fulfill its obligations to the other nations, one decisive step is required: overcoming the Communist infiltration of Germany.

We men of the Government feel that we are responsible to German history for reestablishing the great and orderly body politic and thus finally overcoming class madness and class struggle. It is not any one class we look to, but rather the German Volk, its millions of peasants, bourgeois and workers, who will together either overcome the problems of these times or succumb to them. Resolved and true to our oath, we will thus—in view of the present Reichstag's inability to support this work—ask the German Volk itself to take on this task we call our own.

February 1, 1933

Reich President von Hindenburg has called upon us and given us the order to use our own unity to restore to the nation the chance for recovery.

Thus we now appeal to the German Volk to take part in signing this deed of reconciliation.

The Government of the National Uprising wants to work, and it will work. It was not this government which led the German nation into ruin for fourteen years; this government wants to lead the nation to the top once more.

It is determined to pay the debt of fourteen years in four years.

But it cannot make the work of reconstruction dependent upon the approval of those who are to blame for the collapse.

The Marxist parties and their fellow travellers have had fourteen years to prove their prowess.

The result is a heap of ruins.

Now, German Volk, give us four years, and then pass judgment upon us!

True to the order of the Field Marshal, we shall begin. May Almighty God look mercifully upon our work, lead our will on the right path, bless our wisdom, and reward us with the confidence of our Volk. We are not fighting for ourselves, but for Germany!

This was the first time a large segment of the German public outside the National Socialist Movement heard and read one of Hitler's proclamations.

The bourgeoisie, which had witnessed Hitler in the non-Nazi press to date as an uneducated ribald and proletarian agitator, was visibly impressed. Many Germans, however, refused to believe Hitler capable of such a proclamation and suspected that his advisors had written the text. It proved a fatal error from the very start that those in power in Germany failed to take accurate stock of Hitler's personality. People believed that he was incompetent and totally unintelligent; they assumed his oral and written remarks to be the work of others and believed him to be under the influence of certain Unterführers or industrialists and obscure backers.

Thus it must be stressed yet again that Hitler had no need for outside assistance in writing speeches and letters. He even refused to make use of the customary drafts of government proclamations prepared by his staff, but rather consistently used his own words. Since 1919 he had allowed no one to correct, much less influence, his preconceived ideas. Goebbels, Göring, Hess, Ribbentrop, Strasser, and Röhm had no influence whatsoever on this man, as little as did, subsequently, Raeder, Dönitz, Blomberg, Keitel, Jodl, Brauchitsch, Rommel, or any of the other German generals, politicians or diplomats. Hitler was never at the receiving end; he was the one who influenced others. Thus it is only characteristic of this trait that a great number of the party leaders,

diplomats and generals held completely different personal views of the problems of the day than Hitler did and that, when Hitler had spoken with them, they subordinated their own views and adopted his in the belief that Hitler's opinions were most likely the better of the two.

It is absurd to assume that von Papen drafted the Reich Government proclamation of February 1, 1933.⁶⁶ One must bear in mind that Hitler had been doing nothing else but composing these types of proclamations and speeches for years.

The proclamation of February 1 is thoroughly consistent with his style.⁶⁷ In any case, prestige considerations would never have allowed him to accept any draft other than his own. He wanted to demonstrate to the cabinet members from the very first that his word was now the only one which carried weight.

Hitler expressed his gratitude to his party comrades for their congratulations in the following announcement:⁶⁸

On the occasion of my appointment to Reich Chancellor, I have received countless congratulatory wishes from my party comrades. Unfortunately, I am not able to thank each and every one, so I may take this opportunity to express my warmest thanks to all of my loyal party comrades.

Berlin, February 1, 1933

Adolf Hitler

Subsequent to Hitler's seizure of power and the National Socialist celebration rallies, a number of bloody clashes occurred in Berlin and other areas of the Reich in which a number of National Socialists were killed or injured. Although Hitler welcomed these incidents, he wanted to delay police action against the Communists and his other adversaries in the hope that this might encourage them to engage in even more flagrant breaches of law and order.

Thus he issued the following proclamation on February 2:⁶⁹

Party Comrades! Men of the SA and SS!

Thirteen years long you have followed me with a discipline seldom witnessed.

The Communist murder organization has been agitating against the national uprising for days.

Keep calm! Preserve order and discipline! Do not allow yourselves to be confused into ignoring my order by spies and provocateurs! The hour for crushing this terror will come.

Adolf Hitler

On February 2, Hitler issued a set of guidelines for the approaching Reichstag election campaign to the party leadership in Berlin.⁷⁰

On the same day he introduced himself as the new Reich Chancellor to the Reichsrat, the representation of the German Länder, and held the following speech:⁷¹

We have taken on the task of government in perhaps the most difficult period in German history. It requires a strong belief not to succumb to doubt in such an hour, but rather to look ahead to the future with confidence and hope. Three factors make up our motivation: first of all, we have confidence in the strength and the industriousness of the German Volk; secondly, we are confident in the capabilities of this Volk and its ingenuity which has, throughout history, repeatedly found ways to survive; lastly, in spite of all the crises and catastrophes, we see before us German soil, German land. And if past generations were able, in defiance of the vicissitudes of fate, ultimately to create from these three sources of strength this great Reich we once witnessed, then it must be possible, and the new government is convinced of this, it must be possible for us as well to nurture this same greatness from these same roots and one day create it anew.

In doing so, we do not only want to use these eternal foundations as the basis for our *völkisch* existence; we also naturally want to use all of the accomplishments and traditions developed in the course of recent history as our basis. We prefer not to see these accomplishments and traditions only in the isolated areas of culture or economics, but naturally in the field of our civic life as well. We do not want to disregard the building blocks which many centuries of German history have created for this Reich; on the contrary: we do not, for instance, want to make the mistake of regulating and centralizing everything which can be regulated and centralized, but rather wish to keep in mind that only those things are to be accomplished uniformly which are absolutely necessary. We would be grateful to be able to count on the assistance of the Länder; we do not want lip-service, we want real support; and we are determined to do everything possible in return, in order to maintain the viability of these historic building blocks of the German Reich. This will become all the more possible the more the Reich and the Länder join forces in the great realization of the urgent need of our time. I myself come from the south, am a citizen of a Northern German State, but I regard myself as a German and live in German history. I do not want to blindly ignore the great and historic deeds and accomplishments of this history but on the contrary, wish to respect everything which past generations have accomplished, including the historical formation of our nation, in the hope that so many more coming generations will also respect what it is we propose to accomplish.

In closing, the Reich Chancellor asked the Reichsrat members for their cooperation in the manner required, so his words, "from all of us in the times of need." Hitler's noteworthy reference to the fact that he came from the south but was a citizen of a Northern German State⁷² admittedly did not suffice to convince the members of the Reichsrat of his federalistic attitude. The body he had addressed was composed, in

the majority, of Social Democrats and members of the Center Party, for the old Prussian cabinet under Braun still presided and the Länder in southern Germany did not have right-wing governments.

The Social Democrat and Ministerial Director Arnold Brecht thus replied to Hitler's speech in his capacity as the deputy of Prussia and felt obliged to remind the Chancellor to adhere to the Constitution, to demand that a constitutional government be reestablished in Prussia, and to lecture Hitler on the causes of unemployment.

Hitler chose not to make any further comment and actually offered his hand when taking his leave from the Social Democrats; inwardly, he was seething and vowed to do away with this Reichsrat as soon as possible. The *Völkischer Beobachter* commented on the session with the headline: "Brecht tries to teach Hitler a lesson!"⁷³

To change the composition of the Reichsrat, new elections to the Prussian Landtag were required; this would enable a right-wing government to take power. Hitler regarded this reelection as a necessity at any rate due to von Papen's post as Reich Commissar.

As early as February 2, the National Socialists in the Prussian Landtag had, according to Hitler's instructions, introduced a motion for the dissolution of the Parliament. The motion did not pass, for the Center naturally felt no urge to relinquish its own key position in this Parliament.

The same reasons caused the failure of another attempt on Hitler's part to make progress in Prussia. The Prussian Constitution provided that a Landtag could be dissolved by a majority resolution of a so-called "triumvirate" composed of the Minister-President (Braun, SPD), the President of the Landtag (Kerrl, NSDAP), and the President of the Staatsrat made up of deputies from the Prussian provinces. This last office was held by the Mayor of the City of Cologne at that time, Konrad Adenauer (Center Party), who naturally voted with Braun to defeat the National Socialist Kerrl and quash the dissolution. Force was the last and only resort. By means of the decree of the Reich President toward "Restoring order to the Government in Prussia" of February 6⁷⁴ which not only constituted a violation of the Constitutions of both the Reich and Prussia, but also contravened the judgment of the Constitutional Court of October 25, 1932, Minister-President Braun was divested of any authority he still exercised and this authority transferred to Reich Commissar von Papen.

In this case Hitler was gladly willing to step back and allow Papen to sign the notorious decree as "deputy to the Reich Chancellor." If ever the matter were taken before the Constitutional Court, which was, after

all, a possibility, then Hitler would doubtlessly have dumped the responsibility on Papen. Although Braun did in fact file suit with the Constitutional Court, proceedings were delayed until the elections on March 5, and Braun's emigration that same day completely changed the constellation. Together with Kerrl, von Papen dissolved the Prussian Landtag. It was the only significant act he accomplished as Reich Commissar for the Land of Prussia in the months from February to April.

But the necessities of domestic policy had not distracted Hitler from his long-term military and foreign policy aims. In order to reach these goals—i.e. acquiring new territories in the East, establishing a Greater German Reich and eliminating France by entering into alliances with England and Italy—he most of all required the aid of the Reichswehr.

On February 3, Hitler made a speech to the Commanders of the Army and the Navy at the Berlin apartment of the Chief of Army Command, Infantry General von Hammerstein-Equord, in which he outlined his general principles. The *Völkischer Beobachter* published the following report of this event:⁷⁵

On the occasion of an invitation from the newly appointed Minister of Defense, Werner von Blomberg, Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler took the opportunity to speak to a major gathering of the highest-ranking Reichswehr officers on the subject of his political aims. Reich Minister of Defense von Blomberg had convened all of the high-ranking generals and representatives of the Navy to this first official contact between the Reichskanzler and the Wehrmacht Command. The Reichskanzler gave a detailed speech on the political situation and the coming developments in Germany which the new Reich Government proposes to bring about.

This meeting is particularly important in light of the new chapter in politics opened on January 30. It demonstrated the close ties between the policy of the new government and the duties of the Wehrmacht, whose key role in preserving the external security of the German Volk will, under the new government, play a more manifest role than hitherto.

Hitler's remarks were reported only in summary form, but their substance was quickly disseminated by those who had heard the speech. No obligation to maintain secrecy had been imposed.⁷⁶

On February 3, Hitler told the Reichswehr generals, as he often did subsequently, that the Army would remain the sole bearer of arms in the Reich; that he by no means envisioned fusing the Army with party formations such as had been done in Italy by the Fascist Militia. The will to fight had to be reinforced with all available means, while Marxist and pacifist views were to be exterminated. Hitler's primary aim was to repeal the Treaty of Versailles and its restrictions on the German military.

He also declared that he would invest every penny he could spare in the Army.

No German head of government after 1918 had made the Reichswehr such an attractive proposition. Thus it comes as no surprise that even those officers who had viewed Hitler with skepsis hitherto were enthusiastic about his views and suppressed any misgivings they might have had.

The promises Hitler made to the Generals in the first few days following his seizure of power were, in fact, put into practice step by step: the elimination of all restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles; the reintroduction of general conscription; the reinstatement of the General Staff; a new Air Force; battleships for the Navy; heavy artillery and tanks for the Army; and the elimination of any and all limitations on military spending imposed by national or international authorities.

When Hitler later granted promotions and freely distributed decorations and money, he succeeded in creating among the Generals devoted paladins who were even willing to tolerate patiently the former corporal's unjust accusations, rude insults and schoolmasterly reprimands without a word of contradiction.

Hitler required not only the support of the Reichswehr, but backing from England and Italy as well. On the same day he spoke to the German Generals—February 3—he therefore granted a number of interviews with English, American and Italian journalists.

Here his remarks were naturally more cautious. He demanded that he first be given four years' time; only then could a balance be drawn on the work he and his government had accomplished. With the air of an honest man he proclaimed that no one wanted peace more than he himself and the German Volk.

The first journalist ushered in was the representative of the *Giornale d'Italia*, which published the interview in an evening edition that same day⁷⁷ In the interview, Hitler stressed the necessity of friendly relations between Germany and Italy.

Italy as well demands recognition of its right of existence. For this reason, both nations are, from their very natures, in the same position and striving for the same goals. Thus it is that much easier to come to a consensus regarding the solution of the major questions concerning both peoples. Everything will be done from the German side which is requisite toward bringing about such agreement.

Hitler closed by hailing the Italian nation, to whose ideals his own were, as he stated, closely related.

The subject matter of the press conference held with representatives of the English and American Press was summarized in an interview with the Associated Press.⁷⁸

First of all, the Chancellor pointed out that the leftist parties had had a completely unrestricted hand for fourteen years.

“Just look at the outcome today,” he exclaimed to us. “Give us four years, the constitutional term for a Reichstag, and then let the country pass judgment on us.”

In reply to a request for an explanation of the Government’s Four Year Plan, Reich Chancellor Hitler stated: “I am glad that you have asked this question. Had I wanted to deliver a propaganda speech for my party, I would have been able to guarantee that unemployment will disappear by March 15 and that agriculture will be restored to its former position by May 1. However, I am more honest than most of my opponents are and have therefore made no such promises. It is impossible to set the ship of government on the right course so quickly. That requires time. Four years is all I ask.”

The Chancellor added with a smile: “Don’t forget that I am persistent, I have strong nerves. Were I not filled with determination, I would not be standing here before you today.”

Following this short conference, a number of correspondents from the English and American press were received, to whom the Chancellor declared:

I hope that the world is aware of what is happening in Germany. There can be no compromise here. Either the red flag of Bolshevism will be planted before long, or Germany will find its way back to its own. I appeal to the world press not to pass premature judgment on the events happening now. I ask that you judge the new government on the basis of its accomplishments and regard these accomplishments as a whole and not pick them apart into isolated fragments.

The Chancellor added special emphasis to these remarks and continued in a louder voice:

I have been described as a man who holds bloodthirsty, inflammatory speeches against foreign states, and the world is now astounded at my moderation. Gentlemen, I have never held an inflammatory speech. On the contrary: my speeches, even those I held ten or twelve years ago, testify to this. Anyone who, like myself, knows war also knows how much energy war consumes. One can only surmise what a future war might bring. Thus no one wants peace more than I do, more than the German Volk does. However, we must insist that we are given rights equal to those of the other nations and are allowed to take our fitting place in the world, just as any American would demand the same for his own country. I cannot imagine that any other patriot would think differently regarding his country than we do regarding ours. Naturally my own interest lies with Germany.

On February 5, Hitler—attired in his brown shirt—attended a funeral service for SA Sturmführer Maikowski and Senior Police Officer Zauritz in the Berlin Cathedral. Both men had been shot in political riots following the torchlight procession of January 30.

Afterwards he flew to Munich and, upon his arrival, issued the following announcement:⁷⁹

Munich, February 5

The Reich Press Office of the NSDAP announces as follows:

Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler landed in Munich at nightfall on a flight from Berlin. The Führer is visiting Munich primarily for personal reasons, and, in addition, to prepare the election to the Reichstag. As is known, the leadership of the National Socialist Movement will also remain in Munich in future. Adolf Hitler, who also has an extraordinary personal attachment to Munich, will maintain his actual residence here.⁸⁰

Incidentally, the Führer receives no salary as Reich Chancellor; due to the fact that he earns his own income as a writer, he has waived claim to his salary as Reich Chancellor.

Hitler had announced his intention of waiving his salary claim prior to his seizure of power.⁸¹ Given German bureaucracy, it proved quite difficult, as it had the year before in Brunswick, to reroute the money for other purposes.

One interview which Hitler gave to the reporter from the *Daily Mail*, Colonel Etherton, met with disapproval upon its publication; Hitler thereupon had the following “authentic text” published in the *Völkischer Beobachter*.⁸²

Berlin, February 13

On February 6, the Reich Chancellor granted an interview to the English Colonel Etherton, who was acting as a representative of the *Daily Mail* and other associated organs of the press.

However, the interview which had been given to Colonel Etherton in writing after the conference was not published in the *Daily Mail* on February 12, but in the *Sunday Express*, in a completely distorted version containing arbitrary changes and additions, which had neither been brought to the attention nor received the approval of the competent German authorities. Evidently, the writer used fragments from a former interview and falsely attributed other remarks to the Reich Chancellor.

We hereby publish the text of the interview, which began with Colonel Etherton’s question to the Reich Chancellor as to his views on disarmament. The Reichskanzler: “Every German Government is naturally of the opinion that disarmament is worth striving for with all our might—not some kind of disarmament bogged down in restrictive clauses, but rather an honest and forthright one.

“The solution of this difficult problem depends mainly upon how the Anglo-Saxon peoples, i.e. the British and the Americans, view this question and how much they really plan to work to make disarmament a reality.

“For Germany’s part, it has made its contribution to the solution of this problem not only in theoretical terms: it has actually disarmed a gigantic army to such an extent that only a disproportionately small force remains.”

In reply to the question of what the Reich Chancellor thinks of the Treaty of Versailles, he stated:

“The Treaty of Versailles is a misfortune not only as regards Germany, but also as regards other peoples. It is an unfortunate mistake to want to divide the world into victors and vanquished; the attempt to make such a division undermines mutual trust among peoples, which also pervades the economy, an area which has been done the greatest injustice by virtue of this Treaty; in regard to the chances for improving this miscalculated Treaty, we are combatting all damaging differences of opinion between the nations which it has brought about.

“Certainly one can differentiate, shortly after a war, between the victors and the vanquished, but this can never, ever serve as a basis for a world order.

“I believe that we are not alone in crying out for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, that one day the whole world will join in this cry. In any case, every German Government will demand that the injustice provided for in this Treaty is righted.”

In answer to the question as to how the Reich Chancellor believes France will react to these endeavors, the Chancellor replied that, at present, he is still hoping that Paris will also recognize how untenable the Treaties of 1919 are.

Asked to comment on the continual French armament, Reichskanzler Hitler stated: “I believe not only we, but the other states as well, are surprised at the amount of money the French have at their disposal for which they seem to have no purpose. We demand that the existence of every nation be secured to the extent required by its environment. For our part, we also have the right to demand this as laid down in the records of the League of Nations, and we will demand it.

“The situation as it is today has never before existed in history. Even in 1814, when the allies united against the imperious attempt to force Europe to subject itself to French domination, although they crushed Napoleon’s rule, no one insisted that France be branded as forever vanquished and stripped bare of all its rights.”

Asked about the so-called “Polish Corridor,” the Reich Chancellor noted that, in his opinion, this constituted a particularly grave injustice to the German nation.

In regard to the problems of Communism, he added in closing that this was not a question involving a foreign state, but rather the manifestation of an infiltration which presented a domestic problem. He was of the opinion that Communism must be overcome, and exterminated in Germany in order to facilitate peaceful development and allow the German nation to flourish once more.

On February 8, Hitler was back in Berlin to speak before the leaders of the German press.⁸³ He wanted to win their approval for the new restrictions on the right of freedom of assembly and freedom of the press which he had just imposed with the “Emergency Decree for the Protection of the German Volk” (*Notverordnung zum Schutz des deutschen Volkes*) of February 4,⁸⁴ and thus was more than gracious.

He and the Reich Government were in no way interested in gagging the press, he declared. However, the Reich Government must be able to expect the press to concede that the new men in power had the good intention of doing their best for *Volk und Vaterland*. Hitler launched on an excursion through history and recapitulated faulty judgments on the part of the German press in the period from 1859 to 1871 and in regard to Richard Wagner. His interest now, so he stated, lay in protecting the current press from making similar errors. At the end of his speech, however, he changed his tune and declared that extremely drastic measures were called for against those who wilfully attempted to harm Germany [i.e. Hitler].

As has been evidenced, the initial week following Hitler’s advent to power was so packed with all sorts of activities that Hitler had been unable to indulge in his favorite pastime, i.e. speaking to the masses.

However, he more than made up for this now by attending numerous rallies.

On February 10, Hitler spoke for the first time as Reich Chancellor at the Berlin Sportpalast, the scene of so many of his appearances during the ‘time of struggle.’

It was there he had for years blamed the “November Criminals” for Germany’s misfortune. He had been the most zealous advocate of the “stab-in-the-back” theory, according to which those men who had taken over the government in November 1918 following the military collapse of the Empire had robbed the German Army of their victory. In reality however, the Supreme Command of the Imperial Army, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, had been the ones who—as early as September 1918—had demanded an armistice within 24 hours, recognizing that the German Army could no longer withstand the enemy’s attacks. By that time, the question of how long the German front could hold out against the united world powers was only a matter of simple arithmetic.

Hitler had warned the “November Criminals” that, when he took power, he would “let their heads roll.”⁸⁵ Now that he had become Chancellor, it might have been interesting to see which alleged “November Criminals” he would prosecute. But in this first speech after January 30—

and in all subsequent speeches—it became evident that he would do nothing of the sort, for the “November Criminals” had been only an opportune figment of his imagination.

Hitler concentrated on new grievances: the chaos the Weimar parties had left behind after fourteen years in office, and the “crime of inflation,” a theme which was certain to elicit applause from the entire audience. The inflation which had plagued Germany after the First World War was generally regarded as a fraud, and the German people led to believe that they had been robbed of their hard-earned savings by an obscure group of exploiters, Jews and enemy aliens. Even today, many are still unaware of the fact that war, due to loss of production and the disruption of money values, is perforce accompanied by a currency devaluation which affects both victors and vanquished, although the vanquished are naturally hit harder by the blow to their economy. This phenomenon did not occur for the first time after World War I; it has been manifested after every war since the introduction of monetary currency.

Those listening to Hitler in the Berlin Sportpalast and throughout Germany (every radio station broadcast the speech) on this February 10, 1933 naturally had no idea what Germany would be like twelve years later. They were still impressed by Hitler’s recapitulations of the past and prophecies for the future. Following the obligatory “party narrative,” the long-winded recapitulation of the period of struggle since 1919, he turned to rail against the economic policies of the Weimar system parties:⁸⁶

Then they committed the crime of inflation, and after this rampage on the part of their Minister Hilferding, a ruinous usury set in.

Outrageously exorbitant interest rates, which should never have been allowed to go unpunished in any state, are now part and parcel of the “social” Republic, and this is where the destruction of production begins, the destruction wreaked by these Marxist theories of economics as such, and moreover by the madness of a taxation policy which sees to the rest; and now we witness how class upon class are collapsing, how hundreds of thousands, gradually driven to despair, are losing their livelihoods; and how, year after year, tens of thousands of bankruptcies and hundreds of thousands of compulsory auctions are taking place. Then the peasantry starts to become impoverished, the most industrious class in the entire Volk is driven to ruin, can no longer exist, and then this process spreads back to the cities, and the army of unemployed begins to grow: one million, two, three, four million, five million, six million, seven million; today the number might actually lie between seven and eight million.

They destroyed what they could in fourteen years of work, and no one did anything to stop them.

Today this distress can perhaps be best illustrated by a single comparison. One Land: Thuringia. Total revenues from its communities amount to 26 million marks. This money must suffice to defray the costs of their administration and cover the maintenance of their public buildings as well as everything they spend for schools and educational purposes. This money must cover what they spend on welfare. A total of 26 million in revenues, and welfare support alone requires 45 million.

That's what Germany looks like today! Under the rule of these parties who have ruined our Volk for fourteen years. The only question is, for how much longer? Because of my conviction that we must begin with the rescue work now if we do not want to come too late, I declared my willingness on January 30 to make use of the Movement—which has meanwhile swelled from seven men to a force of twelve million—toward saving the German *Volk und Vaterland*.

Our opponents are asking about our program.⁸⁷ My national comrades, I could now pose the question to these same opponents: "Where was your program?" Did you actually intend to have happen what did happen to Germany? Was that your program, or didn't you want that? Who prevented you from doing the opposite? Surely they do not intend to now suddenly recall that they bear the responsibility for fourteen years. However, we shall both remind and reproach them and thus make certain that their conscience may not rest, that their memory does not fade.

When they say, "Show us the details of your program," then my only answer is this: any government at any time would presumably have been able to have a program with a few concrete points. But after your fine state of affairs, after your dabbling, after your subversion, the German Volk must be rebuilt from top to bottom, just as you destroyed it from top to bottom! That is our program! And a number of great tasks tower before us. The best and thus the first item on our program is: we do not want to lie and we do not want to con. This is the reason why I have refused ever to step before this Volk and make cheap promises. No one here can stand up against me and testify that I have ever said that Germany's resurrection was only a matter of a few days. Again and again I preach: the resurrection of the German nation is a question of recovering the inner strength and health of the German Volk.

Just as I myself have now worked for fourteen years, untiringly and without ever wavering, to build this Movement; and just as I have succeeded in turning seven men into a force of twelve million, in the same way I want and we all want to build and work on giving new heart to our German Volk. Just as this Movement today has been given the responsibility of the leadership of the German Reich, so shall we one day lead this German Reich back to life and to greatness. We are determined to allow nothing to shake us in this conviction.

Thus I come to the second item on our program. I do not want to promise them that this resurrection of the German Volk will come of itself.

We are willing to work, but the Volk must help us. It should never make the mistake of believing that life, liberty and happiness will fall from heaven. Everything is rooted in one's own will, in one's own work.

And thirdly, we wish to have all of our efforts guided by one realization, one conviction: we shall never believe in foreign help, never in help which lies

outside our own nation, outside our own Volk. The future of the German Volk lies in itself alone. Only when we have succeeded in leading this German Volk onwards by means of its own work, its own industriousness, its own defiance, and its own perseverance—only then will we rise up, just as our fathers once made Germany great, not with the help of others, but on their own.

The fourth item on our program dictates that we rebuild our Volk not according to theories hatched by some alien brain, but according to the eternal laws valid for all time. Not according to theories of class, not according to concepts of class. We can summarize our fifth item in a single realization:

The fundamentals of our life are founded on values which no one can take away from us except we ourselves; they are founded on our own flesh and blood and willpower and in our soil. *Volk und Erde*—those are the two roots from which we will draw our strength and upon which we propose to base our resolves. And this brings us thus to our sixth item, clearly the goal of our struggle: the preservation of this Volk and this soil, the preservation of this Volk for the future, in the realization that this alone can constitute our reason for being. It is not for ideas that we live, not for theories or fantastic party programs; no, we live and fight for the German Volk, for the preservation of its existence, that it may undertake its own struggle for existence, and we are thereby convinced that only in this way do we make our contribution to what everyone else so gladly places in the foreground: world peace.

This peace has always required strong peoples who strive for and protect it. World culture is founded upon the cultures of the different nations and peoples. A world economy is only conceivable if supported by the economies of healthy individual nations.

In starting with our own Volk, we are assisting in the reconstruction of the entire world in that we are repairing one building block which cannot be removed from the framework and structure of the rest of the world.

And another item reads: because we perceive our highest goal to be the preservation of our Volk, enabling it to undertake its own struggle for existence, we must eliminate the causes of our own disintegration and thus bring about the reconciliation of the German classes. A goal which cannot be achieved in six weeks or four months if others have been laboring at this decay for seventy years. But a goal which we always keep in mind, because we shall rebuild this new community ourselves and slowly eliminate the manifestations of this disintegration. The parties which support this class division can, however, be certain that as long as the Almighty keeps me alive, my resolve and my will to destroy them will know no bounds. Never, never will I stray from the task of stamping out Marxism and its side effects in Germany, and never will I be willing to make any compromise on this point.

There can be only one victor: either Marxism or the German Volk! And Germany will triumph!

In bringing about this reconciliation of the classes, directly and indirectly, we want to proceed in leading this united German Volk back to the eternal sources of its strength; we want, by means of an education starting in the cradle, to implant in young minds a belief in a God and the belief in our Volk. Then we want to resurrect this Volk on the foundation of the German peasants, the

cornerstones of all *völkisch* life. When I fight for the future of Germany, I must fight for German soil and I must fight for the German peasant. He renews us, he gives us the people in the cities, he has been the everlasting source for millenniums, and his existence must be secured.

And then I proceed to the second pillar of our national tradition: the German worker—the German worker who, in future, shall no longer and must no longer be an alien in the German Reich; whom we want to lead back to the community of our Volk and for whom we will break down the doors so that he, too, can become part of the German Volksgemeinschaft as one of the bulwarks of the German nation. We will then ensure that the German spirit has the opportunity to unfold; we want to restore the value of character and the creative power of the individual to their everlasting prerogatives. Thus we want to break with all the manifestations of a rotten democracy and place in its stead the everlasting realization that everything which is great can originate only in the power of the individual and that everything which is to be preserved must be entrusted once more to the ability of the individual. We will combat the manifestations of our parliamentary and democratic system, which leads us to our twelfth item—restoring decency to our Volk. In addition to decency in all areas of our life: decency in our administration, decency in public life, and decency in our culture as well, we want to restore German honor, to restore its due respect and the commitment to it, and we want to engrave upon our hearts the commitment to freedom; in doing so, we desire to bestow once more upon the Volk a genuinely German culture with German art, German architecture, and German music, which shall restore to us our soul, and we shall thus evoke reverence for the great traditions of our Volk; evoke deep reverence for the accomplishments of the past, a humble admiration for the great men of German history.

We want to lead our youth back to this glorious Reich of our past. Humbled shall they bow before those who lived before us and labored and worked and toiled so that they could live today. And we want most of all to educate this youth to revere those who once made the most difficult sacrifice for the life of our Volk and the future of our Volk. For all the damage these fourteen years wrought, their worst crime was that they defrauded two million dead of their sacrifice, and these two million shall rise anew before the eyes of our youth as an eternal warning, as a demand that they be revenged. We want to educate our youth to revere our time-honored army, which they should remember, which they should admire, and in which they should once more recognize the powerful expression of the strength of the German nation, the epitome of the greatest achievement our Volk has ever accomplished in its history.

Thus this program will be a program of national resurrection in all areas of life, intolerant against anyone who sins against the nation, but a brother and friend to anyone who has the will to fight with us for the resurrection of his Volk, of our nation.

Therefore I today address my final appeal to my Volksgenossen:

On January 30, we took over government. Devastating conditions have descended upon our Volk. It is our desire to remedy them, and we will succeed in doing so. Just as we have eliminated these adversaries despite all the scorn, we shall also eliminate the consequences of their rule.

To do justice to God and our own conscience, we have turned once more to the German Volk. It shall now play a helping role.

It will not deter us should the German Volk abandon us in this hour. We will adhere to whatever is necessary to keep Germany from degenerating. However, it is our wish that this age of restoration of the German nation be associated not only with a few names, but with the name of the German Volk itself; that the government not be working alone, but that a mass of millions come to stand behind this government; that the government have the will, with the aid of this backing, to fortify us once again for this great and difficult task. I know that, were the graves to open today, the ghosts of the past who once fought and died for Germany would float aloft, and our place today would be behind them. All the great men of our history, of this I am certain, are behind us today and watch over our work and our labors.

For fourteen years the parties of disintegration, of the November Revolution, have seduced and abused the German Volk. For fourteen years they wreaked destruction, infiltration, and dissolution. Considering this, it is not presumptuous of me to stand before the nation today and plead of it: German Volk, give us four years' time and then pass judgment upon us. German Volk, give us four years, and I swear to you, just as we, just as I have taken this office, so shall I leave it.

I have done it neither for salary nor for wages; I have done it for your sake! It has been the most difficult decision of my life. I dared to make it because I believed that it had to be.

I have dared to make this decision because I am certain that one cannot afford to hesitate any longer.

I have dared to make this decision because it is my conviction that our Volk will finally return to its senses and that, even if millions might curse us today, the hour will come in which they will march with us after all, having recognized that we really wanted nothing but the best and had no other goal in sight than serving what is, to us, most precious on earth.

Hitler was brazen enough to claim that it had been "the most difficult decision of his life" to become Reich Chancellor—although he had 'struggled' for fourteen years for nothing other than this very post! As a matter of fact, however, he frequently proclaimed in subsequent years that one thing or another had been "the most difficult decision of his life."⁸⁸

In his speech, Hitler cited program item no. 1 as "We do not want to lie and we do not want to con!" As long as things are going well, it is, of course, not difficult to tell the truth. However, when Hitler's star began to wane in the Second World War and the difficulties refused to end, he conned his way through no less than other governments had done before him and led the people to believe that there was still some way out, quite cognizant of the fact throughout that the situation was hopeless. He even lied in this speech on February 10 when he promised:

“German Volk, give us four years, and I swear to you, just as we, just as I have taken this office, so shall I leave it.”

This oath was nothing but perjury, for he had declared in October 1932: “When I once enter the government, I do not intend to leave it”⁸⁹ or “If we do one day achieve power, then we will hold onto it, so help us God.”⁹⁰

It was out of the question that Hitler would submit to the judgment of the people or much less consider stepping down four years later—or in 1945. Throughout 1937, a year in which Hitler would have had nothing to fear from the people’s judgment, not a single plebiscite or election took place, although he had declared a few short months before his ascent to power: “Just as the peasant must till his field year after year, so must a statesman till his Volk [by means of plebiscites].”⁹¹

Hitler had something special in mind for the closing of his speech on February 10, 1933. He ended his address, which had lasted for several hours, by paraphrasing the Protestant version of the Lord’s Prayer,⁹² evidently with the design—as a Catholic—of impressing the Protestants:

For I cannot divest myself of my faith in my Volk, cannot disassociate myself from the conviction that this nation will one day rise again, cannot divorce myself from my love for this, my Volk, and I cherish the firm conviction that the hour will come at last in which the millions who despise us today will stand by us and with us will hail the new, hard-won and painfully acquired German Reich we have created together, the new German kingdom of greatness and power and glory and justice. Amen.

It appears that Hitler took pains to earn the title of “Nazi Padre” (*Nazi-Feldprediger*) bestowed upon him by the Social Democratic press years before.

On February 11, Hitler made an appearance of a completely different nature. Festively attired in a cutaway coat, he inaugurated the opening of the International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition on the Kaiserdamm in Berlin. It was the first time a Reich Chancellor had opened an exhibition of this sort, and the magnates of the automobile industry were flattered by the honor. Their satisfaction increased when Hitler presented himself not only as a respectable and responsible statesman but as a knowledgeable expert on motorization as well.

His speech commenced with a lengthy perspective on the evolution of the various means of transportation in general and Germany’s outstanding contribution to this field in particular.

Proceeding to more practical questions, he declared:⁹³

As I am today given the honor of speaking to you at the request of the Reich President, my dear Gentlemen of the [automobile] industry, I would not want to neglect conveying to you my opinion regarding what I believe to be necessary toward promoting what is probably today's most important industry.

1. Separation of the state motor traffic syndicate from the present realm of transportation. The automobile, by its very nature, is more closely affiliated with the airplane than with the railroad. Automobiles and airplanes have a common basis in the motor industry. Without the development of, for instance, the diesel engine for motor traffic, it would have been practically impossible to lay the necessary groundwork for its utilization in aviation.

2. Gradual reduction of the tax burden.

3. Institution and implementation of a large-scale roadbuilding program.

4. Promotion of sports events.

Just as the horse and cart once burned their trails and the railroad built its required track network, so must motorized traffic be supplied with the requisite roads. In the past, one attempted to measure a people's standard of living in terms of track kilometers; in the future, road kilometers for motorized traffic will replace this yardstick.

These are momentous tasks which are also part of the program for the reconstruction of the German economy!

Now I would like to thank you on behalf of the Reich President and the Reich Government for everything you have accomplished in the meantime on your own initiative. We are able to view this attractive exhibition today thanks to three factors which I would like to recall here:

You businessmen and leaders of industry and commerce have possessed the boldness not to abandon the struggle even in these troubled times, but to take up the fight against the foreign automobile industry, which is, in part, so much better situated.

But I would also like to thank the countless German designers and technicians whose genius is creating wondrous works of human invention. It is regrettable that our Volk is rarely given the opportunity to become acquainted with these nameless men who, by designing our cars, not only make hundreds of thousands of individuals happy, but have also opened up new and comfortable means of transportation for millions across the board of motorized traffic.

And I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to that great army of our German workers, whose industriousness and ability and tremendous conscientiousness in their work makes it possible to transform technological ideas into machines which can be described as real masterpieces of precision as well as aesthetic beauty.

Lastly, I wish to commemorate the German Volk. May it, as well, fully appreciate the work, industriousness and genius of so many efforts. May it here, as well, revere its German masters of brains and brawn, and may it never forget that many tens of thousands of our Volksgenossen are without work and have the right to expect that the entire Volk remember these comrades and, out of solidarity with their need, recognize their brotherhood with German workers.

With this hope, I hereby with proud confidence declare this Automobile Exhibition on behalf of the Reich President open to the public.

Following this successful speech to the heads of the auto industry, Hitler changed back to his brown uniform and flew to Kassel for a speech celebrating the inauguration of the Adolf Hitler Haus on February 11. In essence, he repeated the remarks he had made in the Sportpalast the day before in a somewhat revised form and added:⁹⁴

The age of international solidarity is over. The national solidarity of the German Volk will take its place!

On February 12, Hitler attended a memorial ceremony in Leipzig commemorating the 50th anniversary of Richard Wagner's death; he did not, however, make any remarks on the occasion.

On February 14, Hitler received representatives of the entire National Socialist press in the Reich Chancellory and outlined what he expected of them, namely:⁹⁵

The education of the entire German press to perceive of service to the Volk as its governing principle, from which the press derived the justification for its very existence as a public facility.

In the place of irresponsible sensationalism and angling for popularity, which unfortunately continued to dominate a major part of Germany's press even today, the German press was to establish as its future goal a genuine means of expression and a true reflection of German life and spirit.

He would, the Chancellor stated, support the German press in accomplishing these great tasks, which unfortunately had frequently been subordinated to other interests by a major part of the press today, just as he would, in regard to the type of journalism which abused its freedom to operate in a public scope for anti-national agitation or tolerated and covered up for these types of elements in its own ranks due to misconceived solidarity, bring those feelings to bear which this type of journalism deserved.

On the same day, Hitler instructed an assembly of SA and SS leaders in Berlin as to the particulars of their role in conducting the election campaign.⁹⁶

On February 15, Hitler addressed associations of war victims (*Kriegsopferverbände*) at a reception in the Reich Chancellory and declared that he would "tackle the problem of victims of war at its very roots."⁹⁷

That evening he continued his election campaign in Stuttgart. Württemberg was still governed by the Center Party, and Hitler was keen to settle accounts with its head, President Bolz, as a standin, so to speak, for the entire Center. Bolz had issued a statement rejecting Hitler's new government on the grounds that he, Bolz, supported freedom. Now Hitler replied to him in the heart of Stuttgart:⁹⁸

I can understand when a State President judges that the hour has come for a confrontation with the new age. I am gladly willing to excuse the less than objective phrases which were used in this context, for it is not difficult to understand the internal uneasiness and nervousness of this man, of this representative of days past. Thus I would like to refrain from replying in kind; I prefer to answer objectively and dismiss each charge step by step.

In reply to State President Bolz' accusation that we have dealt in nothing but empty words for twelve years, I may state:

It was not we who were in power for these twelve years, but rather the State President's party. The Volk will certainly have realized by now which side was voicing these empty phrases. Twelve years constitute conclusive evidence; otherwise the others would not have joined us. In these long years of rule by the State President's party, we have witnessed disintegration in every single sector.

It astounds me that a representative of the Center is trying to tell us something about freedom. Did our Movement not go through an outrageous chain of suppression and gagging for thirteen years at the hands of those who address us like this today? Was that freedom, when our Movement was punished and suppressed for its national aspirations? When our fighters were thrown into prison, when the shirts of our SA men were ripped off their backs, when our press was ruthlessly prohibited and when we were made to suffer everything else in these thirteen years? Those who made no mention of our freedom for fourteen years have no right to talk about it today. As Chancellor I need only use all those means once used against the friends of the nation. I need only use one law for the protection of the national state, just as they made a law for the protection of the Republic back then, and then they would realize that not everything they called freedom was worthy of the name.

And when these parties claim today that at least a gradual improvement had been in the offing, all I can say is that this did not come about because of them, but rather because this young Movement had come to life. If there is a people in Geneva who is well-disposed to us today, it is not they, but we who are to thank for initiating this development. Today they say that Christianity is in danger, that the Catholic faith is threatened. My reply to them is: for the time being, Christians and not international atheists are now standing at Germany's fore.

I am not merely talking about Christianity; I confess that I will never ally myself with the parties which aim to destroy Christianity. Fourteen years they have gone arm in arm with atheism. At no time was greater damage ever done to Christianity than in those years when the Christian parties ruled side by side with those who denied the very existence of God. Germany's entire cultural life was shattered and contaminated in this period.

It shall be our task to burn out these manifestations of degeneracy in literature, theater, schools, and the press—that is, in our entire culture—and to eliminate the poison which has been permeating every facet of our lives for these past fourteen years.

And were their policies in the economic sector Christian policies? Was the inflation which accompanied their rule supposed to be a Christian undertaking?

Were the destruction of the German economy, the impoverishment of the artisan class, the collapse of the farms, the unrelenting increase in unemployment, all of which we witnessed for fourteen years, acts of Christianity?

And when today you say: we need a few more years to change this situation, then I answer: no, now it is too late for you to change things. You had fourteen years, during which the heavens gave you all the power you needed to demonstrate what you were capable of. You have failed on every count: your work has wrought only one long string of horrible aberrations.

When today we are told that we have no program, my answer is:

For two years now this other Germany has subsisted on burglaries from our store of ideas.

All of the plans for providing work for the unemployed, for labor service, etc.—they are not the work of State President Bolz; they come from our program of reconstruction from which they have been extracted, thus making their implementation outside of the framework of the program a complete impossibility. I repeat that our fight against Marxism will be relentless, and that every movement which allies itself to Marxism will come to grief with it. We do not want an internal war between brothers, and we regard as our allies all those wishing to join in our work of reconstruction. But let there be no doubt of one thing: The time of international Marxist-pacifist infiltration and destruction of our Vaterland is over.

On March 5, the German Volk is called upon once more to make its own decision. It shall decide whether it wishes to relive the last fourteen years, or march with us into a future we shall form with the power which lies within us. I am willing to extend my hand to anyone who wishes to help us, even to those who have been blinded hitherto.

I will refrain, in this campaign, from using funds allotted for combatting crime, although I would have more reason to do so than the others.

But together with my allies, I am determined to not allow Germany under any circumstances to revert to the rule of the recent past.

Germany must never again and shall never again fall back into the hands of those who have been its undoing.

Hitler made it very clear in this speech that, should the election on March 5 fail to result in a majority for his cabinet, “under no circumstances” would he resign; on the contrary, he would take action against the remaining Länder Governments of the Weimar regime. “The day will come when even Herr Bolz will be forced to step down,”⁹⁹ he declared in Stuttgart on February 15. However, he did not have this passage printed in the *Völkischer Beobachter*.

On February 16, Hitler was back in Berlin; on February 17, he delivered a campaign speech in the Dortmund Westfalenhalle.¹⁰⁰

On February 18, Hitler attended conferences in Munich, and on the following day he once again held a campaign speech, this time in the Cologne Exhibition Hall.¹⁰¹

On February 20, Hitler addressed leading industrialists assembled at the Reichspräsidentenpalais in Berlin for a change.¹⁰² Here he again left no doubt that the results of the March 5 election would have no impact whatsoever on the direction German Government had taken.

In the next few days, Hitler once more granted interviews to foreign journalists. To the representative of the *Budapest Hirlap* he disclosed that the NSDAP would capture at least three million votes in the March 5 election.¹⁰³ However, mindful of his false prognosis regarding the first round of presidential election in 1932, he added:

But in any case the figures are of no interest to me, our victory is a certainty, an absolute certainty.

Hitler relayed his greetings to the “brave and chivalrous Hungarian nation” and stressed the friendly relations between the two countries and the similar fate of Germany and Hungary after the World War.

In his interview with Louis P. Lochner of the Associated Press,¹⁰⁴ Hitler also made a point of noting Germany’s friendly attitude toward America and voiced his support for the redemption of private foreign debts. He went into depth on the problem of the militia, stating as follows:

The compulsory labor service to which we aspire has nothing in common with a militia. A militia should serve as a form of national defense. The concept of compulsory labor service originated in the catastrophic economic need and its resultant unemployment. Compulsory labor service is designed primarily to prevent hundreds of thousands of our young workers from helplessly degenerating on our streets. However, providing a general education in the world of work will also help to bridge the gap between class differences. As a National Socialist, I regard a general compulsory labor service as a means of providing an education in respect for work. Our young people should learn that work ennobles man.

In the year 1919, Germany suggested that we be given permission to establish a militia. At that time, we were required to establish a professional army with a compulsory twelve-year term of conscription. Thus Germany has no reserves with military training worthy of mention. Now people have suddenly begun talking about abolishing the professional army and installing a militia. It is my feeling that this is only happening in order to distract from the real core of the issue. Not the type of defense system, but rather the question of equal rights is decisive. If this question is settled, general and reasonable disarmament worldwide will become a possibility; for no one will be willing to claim that the world is made to suffer from the fact that Germany has only a ridiculously small professional army and no militia at all.

The world is made to suffer from the fact that the Treaty of Versailles provides for the concept of two different types of rights to be established for all

eternity. This ridiculous division of the nations into victors—who have a right to exist—and vanquished—who have a lesser right to exist—is untenable and leads to general mistrust and in turn to an added strain on military armaments. Personally, we could not care less which systems of defense the other nations choose to implement.

Professional armies, for all we care; but we do care whether one nation has a force of 100,000 without reserves, while another, together with its allies in case of war, has a force of over twelve million. And we do care whether one nation has been disarmed of all technical weapons while another has at its disposal the most modern offensive weapons available and is thus more than ten times superior.

The Treaty of Versailles stipulated that we were to disarm—not so that a discussion about defense systems would take place thirteen years later, but so that other peoples would be in a position to disarm as well. We have been waiting for this disarmament now for more than ten years.

While Hitler himself sharply attacked the Center Party by “settling accounts” with Bolz in Stuttgart, he frowned upon similar assaults on the Center being made by his party comrades. He knew that this might all too easily result in a disastrous conflict with the Catholic Church, for he had not forgotten the lessons of the *Alldeutsche* in Austria and Bismarck in Prussia. In addition, he did not yet know how long he would need the Center. Thus he issued the following proclamation to the Party:¹⁰⁵

National Socialists!

Provocative elements are attempting, under the guise of the Party, to discredit the National Socialist Movement by disrupting and breaking up Center Party assemblies in particular. I expect all National Socialists to distance themselves from these designs with utmost discipline. The enemy who must be felled on March 5 is Marxism! It is against Marxism that we must concentrate our entire propaganda and thus the entire election campaign.

If, in the course of this campaign, the Center chooses to support Marxism by attacking our Movement, then I will attend to the Center in any given case and party these attacks and settle the matter.

And another thing: do not attend our opponents’ assemblies, but instead contribute to making our own assemblies tremendous demonstrations of the awakening nation!

National Socialists! You have prepared the German *Erhebung* for the past fourteen years, you must complete it today!

Berlin, February 22, 1933

Adolf Hitler

On February 24, Hitler held another major election speech at the Munich Exhibition Grounds, after having spoken shortly before at festivities celebrating the anniversary of the Party in the Festsaal of the Hofbräuhaus which were attended by 2,000 old party comrades.¹⁰⁶

The “party narrative,” an elaborate recapitulation of the evolution of the NSDAP from seven men to a movement of millions, naturally took up a major portion of the speech. Then Hitler proceeded to comment on a peculiar remark made by Councillor of State Schäffer¹⁰⁷ in Forchheim on February 22 to the effect that any Reich Commissar appointed to Bavaria would be arrested at the border.

Even if there are people who believe they need to threaten to draw a Main Line,¹⁰⁸ this matter is neither Bavarian nor South German; but rather a single party’s politics. These politics no longer exist—on the contrary: if ever the attempt to broach this question is repeated, Bavaria will be the one to shatter and destroy it.

And you might take note of one thing: I myself am, given my forefathers, my birth, and my descent, a genuine Bavarian. For the first time since the Reich was founded, Bismarck’s status has been placed in the hands of a Bavarian.¹⁰⁹

I hold myself responsible, as God is my witness, that nothing which has been entrusted with this status will ever again fall into ruin.

The last segment of Hitler’s speech in Munich was devoted once again to his claim that he would submit his government to the judgment of the people and refrain from building himself a villa in Switzerland and opening a bank account there; that he would even allow the Volk to crucify him were it dissatisfied with him.

When today the opponents say, how can it be that you have control of the government? I could reply, how can it be that you are still around? I know that, in Germany today, there exists the possibility of having a majority in the negative sense of the word. But no combination is better for positive work than the one we have now. If others wish to join in this work—be our guests; I have not withheld my consent. However, if anyone says to me in one and the same breath: I would like to take up with you, but I reserve the right to take up with Marxism, too; then I have to say: No!

And above all: I will not allow myself to be ‘tolerated’ by other parties! I will answer to the German Volk, not to the parties!

In four years I will once more lay myself open to Germany and the German Volk whom the others have driven to ruin. The Volk shall then form its judgment, take its decision and pass sentence upon me, and then, for all I care, it can crucify me if it finds I have not done my duty. I did not take this post for my own personal advantage or in order to secure any personal benefits for myself. I have put this promise into practice countless times, and this will also be the case in future. I will never build myself a villa in Switzerland or open a bank account there! I will stand by my Volk and be willing to answer to it once more after these four years. I will stand with the Volk and am grateful for any assistance.

However, it is my wish that this Volk help itself in this task, so that one day it may not be said that only one or only a handful fought for German freedom,

but rather: in the end, the Volk joined the great struggle and put its faith in it and its trust and marched with the others and assisted in turning a time of wretchedness and misery and need into a time of freedom and glory after all, so that this Germany, a Germany of disintegration and shame, indeed once again became what we once knew and what we want our children to come to know one day.

Do your duty! In doing so, you are assisting in bringing back that Germany we once took on from our fathers! We must make up for yesterday's misdeeds! It is our task to make certain that the pages in German history which cite and bear witness to our disintegration are torn in half by our hands and that one day German youth will experience the new Reich. From need and misery and wretchedness and depravity shall arise a new German Reich of which we can be proud, and which has given us the freedom to give our people their daily bread and thus peace on earth!

Hitler closed his speech with this histrionic flourish, a mixed bag of phrases taken from the Lord's Prayer and the angel's message to Bethlehem, but this time he omitted the final touch, the "Amen" he had added on February 10 in Berlin. He knew his limits in the Catholic city of Munich. On February 25, Hitler held a further campaign speech in Nuremberg.¹¹⁰

As of February 27 he was back in Berlin. The fifth of March was nearing steadily. After the election, Hitler planned to take immediate action against the non-National Socialist Länder Governments. He already had the draft of an emergency decree set aside for the occasion, which would allow him to appoint Reich Commissars without having to call upon Hindenburg in each case.

The decree giving Hitler a free hand was the "Decree for the Protection of the Volk and the State," to be enacted in the event of Communist acts of violence. As early as February 2, he had hinted at his intentions in a proclamation to the SA:¹¹¹

The hour for crushing this [Communist] terror is coming.

On February 27, 1933, the Reichstag building went up in flames,¹¹² and on February 28, Hindenburg signed the prepared emergency decree.¹¹³ It was short and to the point, suspending all of the Articles of the Weimar Constitution which could be rescinded in states of emergency,¹¹⁴ instituting the death penalty for crimes of high treason, conspiracy to assassinate, and similar plots, and authorizing the Reich Government to assume the powers of any Supreme Land Authority. This authorization was definitely of the greatest importance for Hitler. The other measures could, for the most part, have been derived from prior

statutory regulations—particularly considering that Göring held authority over the Prussian police and had appointed tens of thousands of SA and SS men as auxiliary police on February 25. He had also filled the most important posts—Oberpräsident and Chief of Police—with loyal National Socialists. The Social Democratic holders of these offices offered as little resistance to Göring as they had to Papen's dismissals from office on July 20, 1932. They were satisfied to retain their pensions.

On February 28, Hitler sent the following letter to the Commissar of the Reich for the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, Reich Minister Göring:¹¹⁵

In yesterday's dastardly attack on the Reichstag building bearing the signature of a criminal Communist hand, the prompt action of the Berlin Fire Department, the circumspect direction of its leadership, and the self-sacrificing duty performed by individual firemen aided in averting, within the space of a few hours, the immediate danger of the complete destruction of the building and in holding the fire in containment.

It was also the active initiative of the police which made it possible to go about the work of extinguishing the fire without disruption and to conduct a successful investigation into the crime.

I am glad to take this opportunity to extend my special thanks and my warmest appreciation to all those who took part in the rescue operation, and I request that you, Herr Minister, bring this gratitude to the attention of the Berlin Fire Department and Police.

Adolf Hitler

On March 1, Hitler made his report on the political situation to the Reich President. He also received a delegation from the National Socialist workers' organization, the *Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellenorganisation*, NSBO (National Socialist Factory Cell Organization), and declared in his address¹¹⁶ that the elimination of Marxism was of vital importance for the life interests of German workers.

He judged this reminder appropriate in light of the arrests of "Marxist" KPD and SPD working class leaders which had been taking place since February 28, allegedly in order to counter an imminent coup on the part of the Communists. Subsequently, Hitler rejoined the election campaign. He spoke on March 1 in Breslau in the Jahrhunderthalle.¹¹⁷ This was followed by speeches in Berlin (Sportpalast) on March 2¹¹⁸ and Hamburg on March 3.¹¹⁹

Hitler's March 4 speech in Königsberg¹²⁰ was broadcast on the radio as well. Throughout Germany, marches and torchlight processions were held on this "Day of the Awakening Nation," culminating in the loud-speaker transmission of Hitler's speech.

February 28, 1933

To the customary “party narrative” and the settlement of accounts with the parties of the Weimar Republic, Hitler added the following words:

In the end, we do not live for ourselves alone; rather, we are responsible for everything which those who lived before us have left behind, and we are responsible for that which we shall one day leave behind to those who must come after us. For Germany must not end with us.

3

The election results of March 5 showed gains for the NSDAP amounting to 5.5 million voters, and the Party received 43.9% of all votes cast (44.5% of the seats in parliament); the Kampffront Schwarz-Weiss-Rot (DNVP) received approximately 8%.

Although Hitler had not achieved an absolute majority, he had brought about a right-wing majority which made his government independent of the Center Party. For the first time since 1918, the German Reichstag contained a right-wing majority, and for the first time a presidential cabinet had secured the absolute majority in parliament. The seats in the Reichstag elected on March 5 were allocated as follows (the figures in parentheses reflect the results of the Reichstag elections on November 6, 1932):

NSDAP	288	(196)
SPD	120	(121)
KPD	81	(100)
Center	73	(70)
Kampffront SchwarzWeissRot (DNVP)	53	(52)
Bavarian People's Party	19	(20)
German People's Party	2	(11)
Christian Socialist People's Service	4	(5)
German State Party	5	(2)
German Peasants' Party	2	(3)
Thuringian Agrarian League	—	(2)
German Hanoverian Party	—	(1)
Total	647	(583)

Hitler had taken nineteen mandates from the Communists and around twelve from the smaller right-wing parties. However, he did not score a major breakthrough with the traditional voters of the Weimar

parties (the SPD, the Center together with the Bavarian People's Party, and the German State Party). Thus the substantial gains on the part of the NSDAP came from the ranks of non-voters who had previously abstained from politics. They had perhaps long been attracted to Hitler but doubted that he would ever come to power. Furthermore, those who had swayed between the NSDAP and the KPD chose to cast their ballots for Hitler this time.

Any amendments to the Constitution and passing a respective Enabling Act would, of course, require the support of the Center and the Bavarian People's Party. Even though elected KPD deputies would be prevented from assuming their mandates, the right-wing parties were unable to achieve the requisite two-thirds majority (378 of 566 votes without the KPD; 432 of 647 including the KPD). Thus the cooperation of the Center and the BVP was required, and therefore the KPD deputies could have been allowed to take office if all that was at stake was the Enabling Act.

However, by taking over the KPD votes in both the Reichstag and the Prussian Landtag, Hitler secured the absolute majority for the NSDAP. At any rate, he intended to abolish all of the parties except his own in the long run, and began now with the KPD.¹²¹

The election results of March 5 constituted a thorough success for Hitler. He hardly could have expected to receive more votes. Contrary to his usual habit, he refrained on this occasion from issuing a triumphant proclamation to his party comrades, the SA, and the SS. He preferred giving his SA and SS forces the opportunity to stage revolutionary-styled operations throughout the country—to hoist swastika and black-white-red flags on public buildings, to arrest undesirable persons, and to take revenge upon previous rulers who had been particularly harsh in their treatment of NSDAP members. It was only to be expected that violence and brutality would accompany these crusades. When people who have been oppressed, whether in Germany or any other country of the world, are suddenly given power without any binding restrictions, excess is the inevitable product. This power is abused, in that the former suppressors are made victims, with victims becoming, at times, even more cruel masters.

Hitler was well aware of this, but remained unconcerned. At the time he was preoccupied with installing Reich Commissars in all of the non-National Socialist Länder. Frick took care of this by issuing the simple order to comply with the Emergency Decree for the Protection of the Volk and the State of February 28. Hamburg's Reich Commissar was

appointed on the evening of that March 5. On March 6, Bremen, Lübeck, and Hesse followed; on March 8, Schaumburg-Lippe, Baden, Württemberg, and Saxony; and on March 9, Bavaria.

If it had once been believed abroad that there would be active resistance to Hitler's cabinet and its measures from Bavaria, this now proved to have been wishful thinking. In spite of all the words lost to the contrary, Bavaria had consistently complied with the wishes of the Reich Government since 1871 and never officially supported separatist activities.

In 1923, Otto von Lossow, Reichswehr Commander in Bavaria, had requested directives from Berlin as to how he should counter Hitler's putsch attempt. He was told: "Crush it!" In 1933, the Reichswehr Commander in Bavaria—more specifically, his Chief of Staff, Colonel Wäger¹²²—asked Berlin how Bavaria should react toward Reich Commissar General von Epp. The reply was: "Keep the Reichswehr off the streets!" The only difference was that now, in 1933, Hitler was Reich Chancellor instead of the upstart rebel he had been in 1923.

Neither in Bavaria nor in any other Land had there been the slightest resistance to the appointment of the Reich Commissars. Hitler was thus finally able to issue the triumphant proclamation which was still outstanding to his adherents on March 10:¹²³

Party Comrades! Men of the SA and SS!

A tremendous upheaval has taken place in Germany! It is the fruit of the most difficult of struggles, the most dogged persistence, and of the utmost discipline.

Unprincipled characters, mostly Communist spies, are attempting to compromise the Party with individual actions which are not in any way related to the great task of the national uprising and can only damage and belittle the accomplishments of our Movement. In particular, there are attempts to bring about a conflict between the Party, or Germany, and foreign countries by harassing foreigners in cars flying foreign flags. Men of the SA and SS! You must apprehend such creatures yourselves immediately and call them to account for their actions; you must turn them over to the police without delay, regardless of who they may be.

As of today, the National Government has the executive power over all of Germany in its hands. This means that the national uprising will continue to be carried out methodically and under control from above. Only in instances when these orders meet with resistance or when, as was the case in the past, surprise ambushes are made on individual men or marching formations, should this resistance be immediately and thoroughly broken. Harassment of individuals, the obstruction of cars, and disruptions to business are to be put to an absolute stop.

Comrades, you must make sure that the National Revolution of 1933 does not go down in history as a counterpart to the revolution of the *Rucksack Spartakisten*.¹²⁴ And one more thing: never let yourselves be distracted for one second from our watchword, which is the destruction of Marxism.

Berlin, March 10, 1933

Adolf Hitler

Hitler made reference in this proclamation to the Communist provocateurs who had allegedly infiltrated the SA. He was thus able to dismiss attacks led by party comrades or members of the SA as “Communist” disruptions. If it was not the Jews, then it was the Communists who were the source of all evil.

On March 11, Hitler once more delivered a campaign speech, this time for the local election in Prussia scheduled for March 12. He spoke at the Berlin Exhibition Grounds and, after repeating his standard tirade against the Marxist parties, declared as follows:¹²⁵

We have now been in power for six weeks, and in these six weeks we have driven the Germans onward to an enormous effort. And now we face a new election. This will be the last one for many years to come. It is no coincidence that, in these few weeks, unemployment in Germany has receded. It is the miracle of growing faith. The strength which Germany needs to survive its struggle for existence will return, and from this strength will come justice and honor and with them, one day, freedom.

The German nation will find its way back to its own by combining its efforts; but we will bear one thing in mind: nothing in this world is free. And so we shall fight and work.

Hitler began preparing the next step on his way to autocratic rule: the introduction of a new national flag—the swastika. In order to make the Reich President amenable to the breach of the Constitution which this entailed,¹²⁶ the black-white-red flag of the Empire had to be given equal status with the swastika, at least for the time being, as new Reich flags. As a gesture designed to express how much the National Socialists apparently respected the old black-white-red banner, on March 10 Hitler issued the following order to the Party regarding the *Volkstrauertag* (Day of National Mourning)¹²⁷ two days later.¹²⁸

As the soldiers of the old Army once gave their lives for the black-white-red flag of the old German Reich, we wish to honor them on this day by allowing only this flag, which was their banner then, to fly from all the public buildings of the Reich. It is the flag of the old Army and the World War.

Our swastika is the flag of the National Revolution and the national uprising.

Berlin, March 10, 1933

Adolf Hitler

The expression “national uprising” (*nationale Erhebung*) was now replaced by the more colorful “National Revolution” as the official term. Later, this was in turn to become the “National Socialist Revolution.”

At the activities held on the *Volkstrauertag* in Berlin on March 12 (memorial performance at the National Opera, laying wreaths at the war memorial *Unter den Linden*, and a marching salute of the Reichswehr), Hitler, in a pose of deepest reverence, consistently gave precedence to the Reich President. He had every reason to be grateful to Hindenburg, who had actually penned his signature on the decree promoting the swastika and the black-white-red flag to national flags.

At the close of the ceremonies, Hitler made the following radio announcement to his party comrades and the German Volk, issuing this decree which, to many, came as a great surprise:¹²⁹

On behalf of the Reich President I announce to the German Volk the following decree of the Reich President:

‘On this day, on which the old black-white-red flag flies at halfmast throughout Gennany in honor of our war dead, I hereby decree that, from tomorrow onwards and until the question of the Reich colors has been definitively settled, the black-white-red and the swastika flag are to be hoisted jointly. These two flags unite the glorious past of the German Empire with the powerful renaissance of the German nation. United shall they personify the power of the State and the inner solidarity of all the national circles within the German Volk. The military buildings will hoist only the Reich war ensign.

Berlin, March 12, 1933 The Reich President: von Hindenburg’

With this decree, the Reich President has, of his own doing, directed that, until a definite decision has been made, the flag of the national uprising shall fly henceforth on the public buildings and buildings of state—side by side with our memorable, honorable and traditional flag, the flag of the German Empire.

National Socialists who are listening to me in this hour, men of the SA and SS!

Thus this marriage constitutes visible external evidence of the triumph of the National Revolution. It must fill all of us in this historic hour, when we have just returned from ceremonies for our dead comrades, with both a feeling of deep gratitude for the magnanimous decision of the Field Marshal, and with proud satisfaction.

Our fourteen-year struggle for power has now come to its visible, symbolic close. Now it is up to us to make sure that, from now on, this power can no longer be shaken by any means whatsoever.

As your Führer, and on behalf of the Government of the National Revolution, I hereby call upon you to support the honor and thus the dignity of the new regime in the manner required to ensure that it will also one day prevail in German history with honor and dignity. And this day, the day on

which all executive power was passed to the hands of national Germany in a symbolic sense as well, marks the beginning of the second stage of our fight.

From now on the struggle for purging the Reich and establishing order in it will be methodical and controlled from above.

Thus I command you to exercise the strictest and blindest discipline from now on. There must be no more isolated operations from now on. Only in those instances when the enemies of our national uprising resist our statutory decrees with force or any of our men or our marching formations are assaulted shall the resistance of these elements be immediately and most thoroughly broken. But now it is our task to give the entire German Volk and also, above all, our economy the feeling of unconditional security. Whoever attempts from now on to disrupt our administration or business life by staging isolated operations is consciously attacking the National Government. Today we are responsible for the Reich, because it has been delivered into our hands.

My party comrades!

You have fought in fourteen years of struggle for the Germany which is now coming into being. Today the flag of this struggle has received the sanction of the State. But it is also evidence of how far your discipline and subordination has led us. It alone can now lead us onwards. Our triumph is so great that we are incapable of harboring petty vindictiveness. Should the enemies of the national uprising attempt any type of resistance, then the will of the Government of the National Revolution will instantly force it to its knees, and you will receive the orders.

Beware of the provocateurs and spies from the Communist Party, who, according to the proof we have available today, have been sent to infiltrate our formations!

Thanks to the insight we have now gained into the doings of this band of organized criminals, we will nevertheless eliminate them within the shortest space of time in any case. And I wish to couple my command that the purity and thus the honor of our national uprising be protected with my thanks to you for the overwhelming loyalty, discipline and sacrifices which you have demonstrated and made until now. In a few short weeks, mainly by virtue of your efforts and your work, one of the greatest upheavals Germany has ever known has taken place. This will be made apparent to the German Volk by means of the decrees of the Reich Minister of the Interior, Dr. Frick, which I may hereby announce to the public:

'In celebration of the triumph of the National Revolution, all public buildings of the Reich shall flag the colors ordered by the Reich President for three days, starting on Monday!'

My party comrades! Long live the National Revolution, long live our dearly beloved German Volk and our proud German Reich!

After this broadcast, Hitler flew to Munich and accepted the homage of the party formations which received him at the Oberwiesefeld airport. It was the first time he was wearing a brown tunic.

In reply to the welcoming address given by Reich Commissar General von Epp, Hitler stated:¹³⁰

Fourteen years ago, it was here that I began the struggle, the first stage of which has now been completed.

What centuries have longed for in Germany, but were never able to achieve, has now become reality:

The *Gleichschaltung* of the political will of the Länder with the will of the nation has come to pass.

It is our desire and our conviction to ensure with all our might that this will remain so from now on.

I am happy that, this time, this historic event originated in the German South. This time the land of the Bavarians has once more professed its faith in German unity.

In these past few days, Bavaria has taken its place in the great front of the awakening nation.

The political prerequisites for the renaissance of Germany have now been created.

Now it is time to combine our efforts for the task ahead. No one shall be able to hold us back, and I am certain that as a result of these efforts, one day, in addition to freedom, good fortune will return to the German Vaterland.

We do not intend to rape the Länder, but rather, by our joint efforts and our coordinated will, we shall restore the German Länder in future to the position and station to which history and tradition entitles them.

However, this is only possible if the German Länder are under the protection and shield of a united Reich.

We have just arrived from the Reich capital. The Reich President has ordered that, in future, two flags shall wave over Germany:

The old black-white-red flag of the glorious past and the swastika, the flag of our national uprising. Their community shall be a symbol for the restoration of our national power, which is personified here on the field in our unique Wehrmacht and our leagues.

In them is growing the greatest community of the German people who want to join the ranks for the German Reich and its Länder!

Following this speech, Hitler launched on a triumphal drive through the streets of Munich to the Feldherrnhalle. There he laid down a huge laurel wreath in memory of those killed in his 1923 putsch. The banner bore Hitler's dedication:

"But you have triumphed in the end!"

Hitler now had control of the entire executive branch of government. The police in all of the German Länder were at his command, and the larger Länder also had at their disposal a substantial number of standing police units quartered in barracks. These units were of a pronounced military character, being equipped not only with steel

helmets and rifles, but also with machine guns and lightweight combat cars. At Hitler's orders, Göring now began to build a billeted Land Police, the likes of which had never before existed in this field. Its officers were dependable National Socialists. The troop was clad in gray-green uniforms, and the strength of its numbers and military equipment was soon so great that, were the Reichswehr ever to dare to launch a putsch against Hitler, it would have been able to effectively party such an attack.¹³¹

For his own personal protection, Hitler created the *SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler*, an elite military regiment composed of hand-picked SS men. This first Waffen SS unit, from which entire divisions and army corps were later to emerge, was placed under the command of SS Obergruppenführer Sepp Dietrich¹³² and stationed in Berlin-Lichterfelde with four batallions. The Leibstandarte subsequently took the place of the guards who had hitherto been recruited for the Reich Chancellor from the ranks of the police or the Reichswehr.

At the same time, Hitler set about reinforcing National Socialist influence in the Reich Cabinet. On January 30, he had given his word of honor that this cabinet would stay together for all time and never undergo any changes. He had actually been serious, for he believed himself quite capable, by persistent persuasion, of making dedicated National Socialists of these ministers.

There was much talk in the period from 1933 to 1945—and prior thereto—about the so-called National Socialist Weltanschauung. A number of Hitler's Unterführers, among them Alfred Rosenberg¹³³ and Heinrich Himmler, made an honest effort to institute a type of National Socialist religion, a revival of the Nordic-Germanic Wotan cult, etc. However, these efforts produced few tangible results.¹³⁴

Hitler left Rosenberg and Himmler to their own ways, but only because their missionary activities constituted a means for inciting people to rid themselves of their previous religious ties. In essence, though, he regarded these actions as mere nonsense. It was his belief that anyone was a dedicated National Socialist who was willing to sanction everything the Führer said, even if it was the exact opposite of what Hitler had proclaimed at an earlier date.

Since Hitler had acceded to power, it no longer required any effort to instill this view in his subordinates as well as his ministers. The submissiveness to authority which characterized German thinking made it quite normal for the majority of citizens to agree with whatever the Government or the Chancellor said, unless they were influenced to judge otherwise by some institution or another, such as the Church.

However, Hitler was not prepared to accept this type of 'dedicated' National Socialist in his cabinet. There he needed reliable, 'tried and true' National Socialists, i.e. those who had proven themselves during the period of domestic struggle and at that time had already accepted Hitler's word as law, even when appearances were against him.

Göring and Frick were two such reliable National Socialists. On March 13, Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to appoint a further reliable National Socialist, namely Dr. Joseph Goebbels, to a ministerial post. He was given the newly created Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, which was to preside mainly over the press, radio, and film. Goebbels believed himself to be an expert in cultural matters and would have preferred the post of Minister of Popular Culture,¹³⁵ but Hitler rightly judged him less capable in that field and chose instead to later appoint¹³⁶ the National Socialist Studienrat (secondary school teacher) Bernhard Rust to head the newly formed Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Popular Culture.

Another loyal subject during the time of struggle had been Dr. Hjalmar Schacht. It was Hitler's desire that he reassume the office of Reichsbank President, and it took little effort to persuade the former President Dr. Hans Luther¹³⁷ to resign on March 16: he was appointed Ambassador to Washington in exchange. However, this evoked a negative echo from abroad, for an international convention in force at the time prescribed that the Reichsbank was under the immediate control not of the government, but of a board of directors, which had not been approached for its consent to the appointment.

Therefore, on March 20, Hitler issued the following statement to the press in Berlin regarding Dr. Luther's resignation:¹³⁸

In parts of the press, the news of the resignation of the former Reichsbank President, Dr. Luther, has been accompanied by editorial comments which are not supported by the facts. Dr. Luther's resignation took place within the course of the overall restructuring presently taking place. It was effected at his own request, due to the fact that the Reich, in and of itself, would in no way have been able to prompt the resignation of the Reichsbank President.

Dr. Luther himself made no reference to these international conventions, but rather explicitly stated that, despite them, German interests and thus the German Government were his sole guiding authority. The conference with Dr. Luther was therefore marked by an extraordinary loyalty to the Government on the part of the retiring Reichsbank President.

On March 20, Hitler procured the consent of his entire cabinet to the Enabling Act. On the same day he twice issued guidelines prescribing

the conduct to be adopted by the Gauleiters and the National Socialist deputies in the Reichstag and the Landtag in the forthcoming sessions of parliament. He made two separate speeches before the two groups in Berlin.¹³⁹

The first session of the Reichstag was to be opened on March 21 in the garrison church in Potsdam. Hitler had chosen the first day of spring for its symbolic value, i.e. as the beginning of a new spring for the German Volk. An added reason was that the first Reichstag of the Prussian German Empire had also been opened on March 21.¹⁴⁰ "Potsdam Day" was the first of many 'national' holidays bestowed upon the German Volk until 1945, each of which was, as a rule, accompanied by impressive ceremonial pomp.

Potsdam Day began with services in the Lutheran Nikolai Church and the Catholic parish church. In the latter, a special armchair had been installed in front of the altar for the Catholic Chancellor Adolf Hitler. However, he chose not to attend, visiting instead the graves of National Socialist soldiers with Goebbels.

This snub to the Catholic clergy was not motivated by religious considerations. In the initial years of his rule, Hitler occasionally attended Catholic services, e.g. the requiem for the deceased Polish Marshal Pilsudski in the Hedwig Cathedral in Berlin in 1935. Hitler's absence on March 21 was designed to teach the Catholic Church once and for all that it should comply with his wishes in future and pose no obstacles to the reorganization of Germany.

It was in this sense that Hitler issued the following official statement:¹⁴¹

The Catholic Bishops of Germany have, in the most recent past, issued a number of announcements which the Catholic priesthood has put into practice and according to which leaders and members of the National Socialist German Workers' Party have been described as deserters of the Church who, as such, are barred from receiving the sacraments. These announcements have not been retracted to date, and the Catholic priesthood continues to adhere to the practice prescribed therein.

Thus the Chancellor, much to his disappointment, does not feel in a position to be able to attend the Catholic service in Potsdam. During the official services, the Chancellor, accompanied by the Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels, to whom the same applies, visited the graves of his murdered SA comrades at the Luisenstadt Cemetery in Berlin. He laid a wreath on the graves with the inscription: "To my dead comrades."

The ceremonious act of state commenced at noon in the garrison church whose crypt contained the remains of the Prussian Kings

Frederick William I and Frederick the Great. The church bells played the melody “*Üb immer Treu and Redlichkeit.*”

Thus it would seem that Hitler was carrying on the best of German traditions and virtues. The Prussian spirit of Frederick the Great and the military tradition of the Kaiser, symbolized by Reich President von Hindenburg in his Marshal’s uniform, gave their blessings to the new Germany as personified in Hitler.

Only Reichstag members of the right-wing parties, the Center (with the Bavarian People’s Party), and the splinter parties were seated inside the church. The Social Democratic deputies had refused to take part in the ceremony. The rest of the church was well filled with prominent public figures, among them Crown Prince Wilhelm, Field Marshal von Mackensen, Colonel General von Seeckt, and others.

Hindenburg turned the rostrum over to Hitler after his own speech, and the Chancellor, attired in a festive cutaway coat, delivered the following address:¹⁴²

Herr Reichspräsident! Deputies, Ladies and Gentlemen of the German Reichstag!

For years our Volk has borne a heavy burden.

After a period of proud uprising, of rich blossoming and flourishing in every area of our life, now—as so often in the past—need and poverty have again come upon us.

Despite industriousness and the will to work, despite drive, wide knowledge and the best of intentions, millions of Germans today are trying in vain to earn their daily bread. The economy is desolate, finances are shattered, millions are without work. The world knows only the deceptive outer appearance of our cities; it does not see the wretchedness and the misery.

For the last two thousand years these changing fortunes of fate have accompanied our Volk. Again and again ascent has been followed by decay. The causes have always been the same. The German is a victim of internal decay: divided of spirit, fragmented of will and thus powerless to act, he becomes too weak to assert his own life. He dreams of justice written in the stars and loses his footing on earth.

But the more Volk and Reich have become divided and thus the protection and shield of national life weakened, all the more constant has been the attempt to make a virtue out of necessity. The theory of the separate values of our tribes suppressed the realization of the necessity of a joint will. In the end, the Germans were left only with the path leading inwards. As a Volk of singers, poets and philosophers, it dreamed of a world in which the others lived, and only when it was inhumanly defeated by need and misery did there spring, perhaps from the arts, the yearning for a new *Erhebung*, for a new Reich and thus for a new life.

When Bismarck allowed the cultural aspirations of the German nation to be followed by political unification, it seemed to signify an end to the long period

of discord and internal war between the German tribes for all time. True to the proclamation of the Kaiser, our Volk participated in multiplying the values of peace, culture, and human ethos. It has never detached the feeling of its strength from a deeply felt responsibility for the community life of the European nations.

During this period when the German tribes were unified in terms of both politics and power, the dissolution of the Weltanschauung of the German Volksgemeinschaft set in which we are still suffering from today. And this internal disintegration of the nation once again became, as has so often been the case, the ally of the world around us. The November 1918 Revolution marked the end of a struggle which the German nation had taken up in the most sacred conviction that it was protecting only its freedom and thus its right to exist.

For neither the Kaiser, nor the Government, nor the Volk wanted that war. It was only the disintegration of the nation, the universal collapse which compelled a weak generation, against its better judgment and against its most sacred inner conviction, to accept the allegation of war guilt.

However, this collapse was followed by disintegration in every sector. Our Volk sank lower and lower in terms of political power, morals, culture, and economy.

The worst thing was the conscious destruction of belief in one's own strength, the disgracing of our traditions, and thus the annihilation of the basic principles of a firm trust.

Since then, our Volk has been shattered by crises without end.

But the rest of the world has not become happier or richer either by politically and economically dislodging one of the major components of its community of states. The utter folly of the theory of eternal victors and vanquished gave birth to the utter absurdity of reparations and, as a consequence, the disastrous state of the world's economy.

While the German Volk and the German Reich thus became mired in internal political conflict and discord and the economy drifted into ruin, a new group of Germans gathered, Germans who, with faithful trust in their own Volk, wished to form it into a new community.

It was to this young Germany that you, Herr Generalfeldmarschall, entrusted the leadership of the Reich in your magnanimous decision of January 30, 1933.

In the conviction that the German Volk should also give its consent to the New Order of German life, we men of this National Government addressed a final appeal to the German nation.

On March 5, the Volk made its decision and the majority gave us their vote. In a unique *Erhebung*, it has restored the national honor within a few short weeks and, thanks to your understanding, Herr Reichspräsident, consummated the marriage between the symbols of old glory and young strength.

When the National Government now, in this solemn hour, makes its first appearance before the new Reichstag, at the same time it professes its unshakable will to take on the great task of reorganizing the German Volk and the Reich and to carry through this task with determination.

With the knowledge that it is acting in accordance with the will of the nation, the National Government expects the parties in parliament, after fifteen years of German misery, to rise above the confines of a doctrinaire, party-oriented way of thinking and submit to the iron rule imposed upon us all by this misery and its imminent consequences.

For the task which Fate requires of us must rise to tower above the scope and basic nature of the petty substitutes of day-to-day politics.

We want to restore the unity of spirit and will to the German nation!

We want to preserve the everlasting foundations of our life: our Volkstum and the energies and values inherent therein.

We want to subordinate the organization and leadership of our State once more to those basic principles which have been the prerequisites for the glory of people and nations at all times.

We want to combine a confidence in the basic principles of our way of life—which are healthy because they are natural and right—with a consistency of political development at home and abroad.

We want to replace eternal indecision by the steadfastness of a government which shall thus once more give to our Volk an unshakable authority.

We want to take into consideration all the experiences—in both individual and community life as well as in our economy—which have proven useful to the welfare of the people in the course of millenniums.

We want to restore the primacy of a policy destined to organize and lead the nation's struggle for existence.

But we also want to include all of the truly living powers of the Volk as the supporting elements of the German future; we want to make a sincere effort to unite those with good intentions and ensure that those who attempt to injure the German Volk receive their due.

We want to rebuild a different community from the German tribes, from the stations, professions, and classes which have existed until now. This community shall have the ability to bring about the just balance of vital interests demanded by the future of the entire Volk. Peasants, bourgeoisie, and workers must once more unite to become one German Volk.

This Volk shall then for all eternity act as custodian of our faith and our culture, our honor and our freedom.

To the world, however, in justice to the victims of the War, we wish to be sincere friends of a peace which shall ultimately heal the wounds with which all are afflicted.

The Government of the national uprising is determined to fulfill the task it has assumed before the German Volk. Thus it is addressing the German Reichstag today in the fervent hope of finding in it a support for the implementation of its mission. May you, Ladies and Gentlemen, recognize the meaning of these times as elected representatives of the Volk in order that you may contribute to the great task of our new national uprising.

We have today a hoary head in our midst. We salute you, Herr Generalfeldmarschall.

Three times you have fought on the battlefield of honor for the existence and the future of our Volk.

As a lieutenant in the Royal Army, you fought for German unity; in the armies of the old German Kaiser for the glorious creation of the Reich; and in the greatest war of all times as our Field Marshal for the continued existence of the Reich and for the freedom of our Volk.

You were there to witness the evolution of the Reich, you saw before you the work of the Great Chancellor, the miraculous ascent of our Volk, and you have finally led us during the great age which Fate has allowed us to witness and fight in.

Today, Herr Generalfeldmarschall, Providence has given you the privilege of being the patron of the new *Erhebung* of our Volk. And this, your wondrous life, is for us all a symbol of the indestructible vitality of the German nation. Thus the youth of the German Volk and all of us who perceive your consent to the task of the German uprising to be a blessing may thank you. May this power also communicate itself to the new representation of our Volk now opened.

And may Providence also bestow upon us the courage and the persistence which we sense all about us in this place hallow to every German, as humans fighting for the freedom and glory of our Volk at the feet of the bier of its greatest King.

After Hindenburg had laid wreaths on the sarcophagi of the Prussian Kings, a parade of Reichswehr formations and national leagues (SA, SS, Stahlhelm, etc.) marched through the streets and past Hindenburg for several hours. Hitler and his ministers stood modestly a few rows behind the military guests of honor.

Only at 5:00 p.m. did the initial session of the new Reichstag commence in the temporary parliament building, the old Kroll Opera House in Berlin. Although Hitler despised parliamentarism, he donned his best behavior and took his place as an NSDAP deputy with the others. He joined in electing the Reichstag Presidium, which was composed of Göring as President, Esser as Vice President (Center), Graef (DNVP), and Zörner (NSDAP).

The logistics of constituting the assembly were settled quickly. The next session on March 23 commenced with a statement of policy delivered by Hitler and the presentation of the "Law for Removing the Distress of People and Reich"¹⁴³ for passage. Hitler had proposed this so-called "Enabling Act" in his correspondence with Otto Meissner as early as November 1932¹⁴⁴ as the only possibility of ruling out that the Reichstag might reverse emergency decrees.

In future, the Reich Government was to be authorized to promulgate laws on its own authority (Article 1). The Reich President no longer even drew up the bills; the Reich Chancellor was also to assume this job in future (Article 3).

Thus the Reichstag and the Reich President were, for all practical purposes, eliminated for four years. But not only that: the laws passed by the Reich Government were allowed to deviate from the Constitution “to the extent that they do not concern the institutions of the Reichstag or Reichsrat as such. The rights of the Reich President shall remain inviolate” (Article 2).

Hitler had made a fine distinction between the Reichstag and the Reichsrat on the one hand and the Reich President on the other. The institutions of the Reichstag and the Reichsrat were to be preserved (although now that the National Socialist Länder Governments had been established, the Reichsrat no longer exercised any restraining function). However, there were no guarantees provided to secure the office of Reich President anchored in the Constitution, the election procedure, or the question of representation in case of incapacity or death—merely the rights were to remain inviolate.

This fine distinction was to have grave consequences, particularly in light of the certainly imminent death of the 85-year-old Reich President. Hitler was authorized to simply assume the powers of the Reich President which thus did, in fact, remain “inviolable.”

Clad in a uniform and brown shirt, Hitler submitted the following policy statement on the Enabling Act to the Reichstag on March 23:¹⁴⁵

Ladies and Gentlemen of the German Reichstag!

By agreement with the Reich Government, today the National Socialist German Workers' Party and the German National People's Party have presented to you for resolution a notice of motion concerning a “Law for Removing the Distress of Volk and Reich.” The reasons for this extraordinary measure are as follows:

In November 1918, the Marxist organizations seized the executive power by means of a Revolution. The monarchs were dethroned, the authorities of Reich and Länder removed from office, and thus a breach of the Constitution was committed. The success of the revolution in a material sense protected these criminals from the grips of justice. They sought moral justification by asserting that Germany or its government bore the guilt for the outbreak of the War.

This assertion was deliberately and objectively untrue. In consequence, however, these false accusations in the interest of our former enemies led to the severest oppression of the entire German Volk, and the violation of the assurances given to us in Wilson's Fourteen Points then led to a time of boundless misfortune for Germany, that is to say the working German Volk.

All the promises made by the men of November 1918 proved to be, if not acts of intentional deception, then no less damnable illusions. The “achievements of the Revolution” were, taken in their entirety, agreeable for only the

smallest of fractions of our Volk, but for the overwhelming majority, at least insofar as these people were forced to earn their daily bread by honest work, they were infinitely sad. It is understandable that the survival instinct of those parties and men guilty of this development invents a thousand euphemisms and excuses. An objective comparison of the average outcome of the last fourteen years with the promises once proclaimed is a crushing indictment of the responsible architects of this crime unparalleled in German history.

In the course of the past fourteen years, our Volk has suffered deterioration in all sectors of life, which could inconceivably have been greater. The question as to what, if anything, could have been worse than in these times is a question which cannot be answered in light of the basic values of our German Volk as well as the political and economic inheritance which once existed.

In spite of its lack of mobility in political feelings and positions, the German Volk itself has increasingly turned away from concepts, parties, and associations which, in its eyes, are responsible for these conditions.

The number of Germans who inwardly supported the Weimar Constitution in spite of the suggestive significance and ruthless exploitation of the executive power dwindled, in the end, to a mere fraction of the entire nation.

Another typical characteristic of these fourteen years was the fact that—apart from natural fluctuations—the curve of developments has shown a constant decline. This depressing realization was one of the causes of the general state of despair. It served to promote the insight into the necessity of thoroughly rejecting the ideas, organizations, and men in which one gradually and rightly began to recognize the underlying causes of our decay.

The National Socialist Movement was thus able, in spite of the most horrible oppression, to convert increasing numbers of Germans in terms of spirit and will to defensive action. Now, in association with the other national leagues, it has eliminated the powers which have been ruling since November 1918 within a few short weeks and, by means of a revolution, transferred public authority to the hands of the National Government. On March 5, the German Volk gave its approval to this action.

The program for the reconstruction of the Volk and the Reich is determined by the magnitude of the distress crippling our political, moral and economic life. Filled with the conviction that the causes of this collapse lie in internal damage to the body of our Volk, the Government of the National Revolution aims to eliminate the afflictions from our *völkisch* life which would, in future, continue to foil any real recovery. The disintegration of the nation into irreconcilably opposite Weltanschauungen which was systematically brought about by the false doctrines of Marxism means the destruction of the basis for any possible community life.

The dissolution permeates all of the basic principles of social order. The completely opposite approaches of the individuals to the concepts of state, society, religion, morality, family, and economy rips open differences which will lead to a war of all against all. Starting with the liberalism of the past century, this development will end, as the laws of nature dictate, in Communist chaos.

The mobilization of the most primitive instincts leads to a link between the concepts of a political theory and the actions of real criminals. Beginning with

pillaging, arson, raids on the railway, assassination attempts, and so on—all these things are morally sanctioned by Communist theory. Alone the method of individuals terrorizing the masses has cost the National Socialist Movement more than 350 dead and tens of thousands of injured within the course of a few years.

The burning of the Reichstag, one unsuccessful attempt within a large-scale operation, is only a taste of what Europe would have to expect from a triumph of this demonical doctrine. When a certain press, particularly outside Germany, today attempts, true to the political lie advanced to a principle by Communism, to link Germany's national uprising to this disgraceful act, this can only serve to strengthen my resolve to leave no stone unturned in order to avenge this crime as quickly as possible by having the guilty arsonist and his accomplices publicly executed!

Neither the German Volk nor the rest of the world has become sufficiently conscious of the entire scope of the operation planned by this organization. Only by means of its immediate action was the Government able to ward off a development which would have shaken all of Europe had it proceeded to its disastrous end. Several of those who fraternize with the interests of Communism both within and outside of Germany, motivated by hatred for the national uprising, would themselves have become victims of such a development.

It will be the utmost goal of the National Government to stamp out and eliminate every trace of this phenomenon, not only in the interest of Germany, but in the interest of the rest of Europe.

It will not lose sight of the realization that, in doing so, it is not the negative problem of this organization with which it is dealing, but rather the implementation of the positive task of winning the German worker for the National State. Only the creation of a real Volksgemeinschaft, rising above the interests and conflicts of *Stände und Klassen*, is capable of permanently removing the source of nourishment of these aberrations of the human mind. The establishment of such a solidarity in Weltanschauung in the body of the German politic is all the more important, for only this will make it possible to maintain friendly relations with the non-German powers without regard to the tendencies or Weltanschauungen to which they are subject, for the elimination of Communism in Germany is a purely domestic German affair. It should be in the interests of the rest of the world as well, for the outbreak of Communist chaos in the densely populated German Reich would lead to political and economic consequences particularly in the rest of western Europe, the proportions of which are unfathomable. The inner disintegration of our Volksgemeinschaft inevitably resulted in an increasingly alarming weakening of the authority of the highest levels of leadership. The sinking reputation of the Reich Government—which is the inevitable product of unstable domestic conditions of this type—led to ideas on the part of various parties in the individual Länder which are incompatible with the unity of the Reich. The greatest consideration for the traditions of the Länder cannot erase the bitter realization that the extent of the fragmentation of national life in the past was not only not beneficial, but positively injurious to the world and life status of our Volk.

It is not the task of a superior national leadership to subsequently surrender what has grown organically to the theoretical principle of an unrestrained unitarianization. But it is its duty to raise the unity of spirit and will of the leadership of the nation and thus the concept of the Reich as such beyond all shadow of a doubt.

The welfare of our communities and Länder—as well as the existence of each German individual—must be protected by the State. Therefore the Reich Government does not intend to dissolve the Länder by means of the Enabling Act. However, it will institute measures which will guarantee the continuity of political intention in the Reich and Länder from now on and for all time. The greater the consensus of spirit and will, the lesser the interest of the Reich for all time in violating the independent cultural and economic existence of the separate Länder. The present habit of the Governments of the Länder and the Reich of mutually belittling each other, making use of the modern means of public propaganda, is completely outrageous. I will under no circumstances tolerate—and the Reich Government will resolve all measures to combat—the spectacle of ministers of German Governments attacking or belittling each other before the world in mass meetings or even with the aid of public radio broadcasts.

It also results in a complete invalidation of the legislative bodies in the eyes of the Volk when, even assuming normal times, the Volk is driven to the polls in the Reich or in the individual Länder almost twenty times in the course of four years. The Reich Government will find the way to ensure that the expression of the will of the nation, once given, leads to uniform consequences for both the Reich and the Länder.

A further reform of the Reich will only ensue from ongoing developments. Its aim must be to design a constitution which ties the will of the Volk to the authority of a genuine leadership. The statutory legalization of this reform of the Constitution will be granted to the Volk itself.

The Government of the National Revolution basically regards it as its duty, in accordance with the spirit of the Volk's vote of confidence, to prevent the elements which consciously and intentionally negate the life of the nation from exercising influence on its formation. The theoretical concept of equality before the law shall not be used, under the guise of equality, to tolerate those who despise the laws as a matter of principle or, moreover, to surrender the freedom of the nation to them on the basis of democratic doctrines. The Government will, however, grant equality before the law to all those who, in forming the front of our Volk against this danger, support national interests and do not deny the Government their assistance.

Our next task, in any case, is to call upon the spiritual leaders of these destructive tendencies to answer for themselves and at the same time to rescue the victims of their seduction.

In particular, we perceive in the millions of German workers who pay homage to these ideas of madness and self destruction only the results of an unforgivable weakness on the part of former governments who failed to put a stop to the dissemination of these ideas, the practical implementation of which they were forced to punish. The Government will not allow itself to be shaken by

anyone in its decision to solve this problem. Now it is the responsibility of the Reichstag to adopt a clear standpoint for its part. This will change nothing as to the fate of Communism and the other organizations fraternizing with it. In its measures, the National Government is guided by no other factor than preserving the German Volk, and in particular the mass of millions making up its working populace, from unutterable misery.

Thus it views the matter of restoring the monarchy as out of the question at present in light of the very existence of these circumstances. It would be forced to regard any attempt to solve this problem on the part of the individual Länder as an attack on the legal entity of the Reich and take respective action.

Simultaneously with this political purification of our public life, the Reich Government intends to undertake a thorough moral purging of the German *Volkskörper*. The entire system of education, the theater, the cinema, literature, the press, and radio—they all will be used as a means to this end and valued accordingly. They must all work to preserve the eternal values residing in the essential character of our Volk. Art will always remain the expression and mirror of the yearning and the reality of an era. The cosmopolitan contemplative attitude is rapidly disappearing. Heroism is arising passionately as the future shaper and leader of political destinies. The task of art is to give expression to this determining spirit of the age. *Blut and Rasse* will once more become the source of artistic intuition. The task of the government, particularly in an age of limited political power, is to ensure that the internal value of life and the will of the nation to live are given that much more monumental artistic expression in culture. This resolve entails the obligation to grateful appreciation of our great past. The gap between this past and the future must be bridged in all sectors of our historical and cultural life. Reverence for the Great Men must be instilled once more in German youth as a sacred inheritance. In being determined to undertake the political and moral purification of our public life, the government is creating and securing the requirements for a genuinely profound return to religious life.

The advantages in personnel policy which might result from compromises with atheist organizations do not come close to offsetting the results which would become apparent in the general destruction of basic moral values.

The National Government perceives in the two Christian confessions the most important factors for the preservation of our *Volkestum*. It will respect any contracts concluded between these Churches and the Länder.

Their rights are not to be infringed upon. But the Government expects and hopes that the task of working on the national and moral regeneration of our Volk taken on by the Government will, in turn, be treated with the same respect.

It will face all of the other confessions with objective fairness. However, it cannot tolerate that membership in a certain confession or a certain race could mean being released from general statutory obligations or even constitute a license for committing or tolerating crimes which go unpunished. The Government's concern lies in an honest coexistence between Church and State; the fight against a materialist Weltanschauung and for a genuine Volksgemeinschaft equally serves both the interests of the German nation and the welfare of our Christian faith.

Our legal institutions must above all work to preserve this Volksgemeinschaft. The irremovability of the judges on the one hand must ensure a flexibility in their judgments for the welfare of society on the other. Not the individual but the Volk as a whole must be the focal point of legislative efforts. In future, high treason and betrayal of the Volk (*Landes- und Volksverrat*) will be ruthlessly eradicated. The foundations on which the judiciary is based can be none other than the foundations on which the nation is based. Thus may the judiciary always take into consideration the difficult burden of decision carried by those who bear the responsibility for shaping the life of the nation under the harsh dictates of reality.

Great are the tasks of the National Government in the sphere of economic life.

Here all action shall be governed by one law: the Volk does not live for the economy, and the economy does not exist for capital, but capital serves the economy and the economy serves the Volk!

In principle, the Government protects the economic interests of the German Volk not by taking the roundabout way through an economic bureaucracy to be organized by the State, but by the utmost promotion of private initiative and a recognition of the rights of property.

A fair balance must be established between productive intention on the one hand and productive work on the other. The administration should respect the results of ability, industriousness and work by being thrifty. The problem of our public finances is also a problem which is, in no small part, the problem of a thrifty administration.

The proposed reform of our tax system must result in a simplification in assessment and thus to a decrease in costs and charges. In principle, the tax mill should be built downstream and not at the source. As a consequence of these measures, the simplification of the administration will certainly result in a decrease in the tax burden. This reform of the tax system which is to be implemented in the Reich and the Länder is not, however, an overnight matter, but one to be contemplated when the time is judged to be right.

As a matter of principle, the Government will avoid currency experiments.

We are faced above all with two economic tasks of the first order. The salvation of the German peasant must be achieved at all costs.

The annihilation of this class in our Volk would bring with it the most severe consequences imaginable. The restoration of the profitability of the agricultural operations may be hard on the consumer. But the fate which would descend upon the entire German Volk should the German peasant perish would stand no comparison with these hardships. Only in connection with the profitability of our agriculture which must be achieved at all costs can the problems of stays of execution or debt relief be solved. Were this to prove unsuccessful, the annihilation of our peasants would inevitably lead not only to the collapse of the German economy per se, but above all to the collapse of the German *Volkskörper*. The maintenance of its health is, however, the first requirement for the blossoming and flourishing of our industry, German domestic trade, and the German export industry. Without the counterweight of the German peasantry, Communist madness would already have overrun Germany by now and thus

conclusively destroyed the German economy. What the entire economy, including our export industry, owes to the healthy common sense of the German peasant cannot be compensated by any kind of sacrifice in terms of business. Thus our greatest attention must be devoted to the further settlement of German land in future.

Furthermore, it is perfectly clear to the National Government that the removal of the distress in both agricultural and urban economy is contingent upon the integration of the army of unemployed in the process of production.

This constitutes the second and most monumental economic task. It can be solved only by a general pacification in implementing sound natural economic principles and all measures necessary, even if, at the time, they cannot expect to enjoy any degree of popularity. The creation of jobs and compulsory labor service are, in this connection, only isolated measures within the scope of the offensive as a whole.

The attitude of the National Government toward the *Mittelstand* is similar to its attitude toward the German peasants.

Its salvation can only be effected within the scope of general economic policy. The National Government is determined to find a far-reaching solution to this problem. It recognizes its historical task of supporting and promoting the millions of German workers in their struggle for their rights to exist. As Chancellor and National Socialist, I feel allied to them as the former companions of my youth. The increase in the consumer power of these masses will constitute a substantial means of reviving the economy. While maintaining our social legislation, the first step to its reform must be taken. In principle, however, every worker shall be utilized in the service of the public. The stagnation of millions of human working hours is madness and a crime which must inevitably lead to the impoverishment of all. Regardless of which values would have been created by the utilization of our surplus work force, for millions of people who today are going to waste in misery and distress, they could represent essential values of life. The organizational capabilities of our Volk must and will succeed in solving this problem.

We know that the geographic position of Germany, with her lack of raw materials, does not fully permit *Autarkie* for our Reich. It cannot be stressed too often that nothing is further from the Reich Government's mind than hostility to exporting. We know that we need this connection with the world and that the sale of German goods in the world represents the livelihood of many millions of German Volksgenossen.

But we also know the requirements for a sound exchange of services between the peoples of the earth. For years, Germany has been compelled to perform services without receiving counter-services. Consequently, the task of maintaining Germany as an active partner in the exchange of goods is less a question of commercial than of financial policy. As long as we are not accorded any settlement of our foreign debts which is fair and appropriate to our strength, we shall unfortunately be forced to maintain our foreign exchange control policy (*Devisenzwangswirtschaft*). For this reason, the Reich Government is also obligated to maintain the dam built against the flow of capital across the borders. If the Reich Government allows itself to be guided by these principles,

one can surely expect the growing understanding of the foreign countries to ease the integration of our Reich in the peaceful competition of the nations.

The first step toward promoting transportation with the aim of achieving a reasonable balance of all transportation interests—a reform of the motor vehicle tax—will take place at the beginning of next month. The maintenance of the Reichsbahn and its reintegration under Reich authority, which is to be effected as quickly as possible, is a task which commits us not only in an economic, but also in a moral sense. The National Government will give every encouragement to the development of aviation as a means of peacefully connecting the peoples to one another.

For all this activity, the Government requires the support not only of the general powers in our Volk, which it is determined to utilize to the furthest possible extent, but also the devoted loyalty and work of its professional civil service. Only if the public finances are in urgent need will interferences take place; however, even in such a case, strict fairness shall have the highest priority in governing our actions.

The protection of the frontiers of the Reich, and with them the life of our Volk and the existence of our economy, is now in the hands of our Reichswehr which, in accordance with the terms imposed upon us by the Treaty of Versailles, can be regarded as the only really disarmed force in the world. In spite of its small size prescribed therein and its totally insufficient arms, the German Volk can regard its Reichswehr with proud satisfaction. This slight instrument of our national self-defense came into existence under the most difficult conditions. In its spirit, it is the bearer of our best military traditions. With painstaking conscientiousness the German Volk has thus fulfilled the obligations imposed upon it in the Peace Treaty; what is more, even the replacement of ships in our fleet to which we were authorized at that time has—I may be allowed to say, unfortunately—been carried out only to a small extent.

For years Germany has been waiting in vain for the redemption of the promise to disarm given us by the others. It is the sincere desire of the National Government to be able to refrain from increasing the German Army and our weapons insofar as the rest of the world is also finally willing to fulfill its obligation of radically disarming. For Germany wants nothing except equal rights to live and equal freedom.

However, the National Government wishes to cultivate this spirit of a will for freedom in the German Volk. The honor of the nation, the honor of our Army, and the ideal of freedom—all must once more become sacred to the German Volk!

The German Volk wishes to live in peace with the world.

It is for this very reason that the Reich Government will use every means to definitively eliminate the separation of the peoples on earth into two categories. Keeping open this wound leads the one to distrust, the other to hatred, and in the end to a general feeling of insecurity. The National Government is willing to extend a hand in sincere understanding to every people which is determined to once and for all put an absolute end to the tragic past. The distress of the world can only come to an end if the appropriate foundation is created by means of stable political conditions and if the peoples regain confidence in one another.

To deal with the economic catastrophe, the following is necessary:

1. an absolutely authoritarian leadership at home to create confidence in the stability of conditions;
2. safeguarding peace on the part of the major nations for a long time to come and thus restoring the confidence of the people in one another; and
3. the final triumph of the principles of common sense in the organization and leadership of the economy as well as a general release from reparations and impossible liabilities for debts and interest.

We are unfortunately confronted by the fact that the Geneva Conference, in spite of lengthy negotiations, has not yet reached any practical result. The decision to institute a real disarmament measure has repeatedly been delayed by questions on technical detail and by the introduction of problems which have nothing to do with disarmament. This procedure is unsuitable.

The illegal state of unilateral disarmament and the resulting national insecurity of Germany cannot last any longer.

We recognize it as a sign of responsibility and good will that the British Government has, with its disarmament proposal, attempted to finally move the Conference to arrive at speedy decisions. The Reich Government will support any efforts aimed at effectively implementing general disarmament and securing Germany's long-overdue claim for disarmament. We have been disarmed for fourteen years, and for the past fourteen months we have been waiting for the outcome of the Disarmament Conference. Even more far-reaching is the plan of the head of the Italian Government, who is making a generous and foresighted attempt to ensure the smooth and consistent development of European politics as a whole. We attach the most earnest significance to this plan; we are willing to cooperate with absolute sincerity on the basis it provides in order to unite the four great powers, England, France, Italy, and Germany, in peaceful cooperation to courageously and determinedly approach those tasks upon the solution of which Europe's fate depends.

For this reason we feel particularly grateful for the appreciative warmth which has greeted Germany's national uprising in Italy. We wish and hope that the concurrence of spiritual ideals will be the basis for a continuing consolidation of the friendly relations between the two countries.

Similarly, the Reich Government, which regards Christianity as the unshakable foundation of the ethics and morality of the Volk, places great value on friendly relations with the Vatican and attempts to develop them. We are filled with a feeling of empathy for the troubles and distress of our *Brudervolk* in Austria. In all its doings, the Reich Government is conscious of the connection between the fate of all German tribes. The attitude toward the other individual foreign powers is evident from what has already been said. But there as well, where the mutual relations are already encumbered with difficulties, we shall endeavor to reach a settlement. However, the differentiation between victor and vanquished can never be the basis of an understanding.

We are nonetheless of the conviction that a settlement of this sort in our relations to France is possible if both governments really attack the problems confronting them with farsightedness. In regard to the Soviet Union, the Reich Government is determined to cultivate friendly relations which are productive

for both parties. The Government of the National Revolution above all views itself capable of such a positive policy with regard to Soviet Russia. The fight against Communism in Germany is an internal affair, in which we will never tolerate outside interference. The national political relations to other powers to which we are related by mutual interests will not be affected by this. Our relationship with the other countries shall continue to warrant our most earnest attention in future, in particular our relationship to the major countries overseas, with which Germany has long been allied by friendly ties and economic interests.

We have particularly at heart the fate of the Germans living outside the borders of the Reich who are allied to us by language, culture, and traditions and who fight hard to retain these values. The National Government is resolved to use all the means at its command to support the rights internationally guaranteed to the German minorities.

We welcome the plan of the World Economic Conference and approve of its meeting soon. The Reich Government is willing to contribute to this Conference in order to finally achieve positive results.

The most important question is the problem of our short-term and long-term indebtedness abroad.

The complete change in the conditions of the commodity markets of the world requires an adaptation. Only by means of trusting cooperation is it possible to really remove the widespread problems. Ten years of honest peace will be more beneficial for the welfare of all nations than thirty years of drawn-out stagnation in the terms of victor and vanquished.

In order to place itself in a position to fulfill the tasks falling within this scope, the Government has had the two major parties, the National Socialists and the German Nationalists, introduce the Enabling Act in the Reichstag. Some of the planned measures require the approval of the majority necessary for constitutional amendments. The performance of these tasks and their completion is necessary. It would be inconsistent with the aim of the national uprising and it would fail to suffice for the intended goal were the Government to negotiate with and request the approval of the Reichstag for its measures in each given case. In this context, the Government is not motivated by a desire to give up the Reichstag as such. On the contrary: it reserves the right, for the future as well, to inform the Reichstag of its measures or to obtain its consent.

The authority and the fulfillment of the tasks would suffer, however, were doubts in the stability of the new regime to arise in the Volk. The Reich Government views a further session of the Reichstag as an impossibility under the present condition of a far-reaching state of excitation in the nation. Rarely has the course of a revolution of such great magnitude run in such a disciplined and unbloody manner as the *Erhebung* of the German Volk during these past weeks. It is my will and my firm intention to provide for this smooth development in future as well.

However, this makes it all the more necessary that the National Government be accorded that position of sovereignty which is fitting, in such an age, to put a halt to developments of a different sort. The Government will only make use of this authorization insofar as this is requisite for the implementation of

vital measures. The existence of neither the Reichstag nor the Reichsrat is endangered. The position and the rights of the Reich President remain inviolate. It will always be the first and foremost task of the Government to bring about inner consensus with his aims. The existence of the Länder will not be abolished. The rights of the Churches will not be curtailed and their position vis-à-vis the State will not be altered. The number of cases in which there is an internal necessity for taking refuge in such a law is, in and of itself, limited. All the more, however, the Government insists upon the passage of the bill. Either way, it is asking for a clear decision. It is offering the parties of the Reichstag the chance for a smooth development which might lead to the growth of an understanding in future. However, the Government is just as determined as it is prepared to accept a notice of rejection and thus a declaration of resistance. May you, Gentlemen, now choose for yourselves between peace or war!

The gentlemen chose peace, or so they were led to believe.

The deputies of all the parties had only domestic policy in mind while they listened to Hitler's remarks on his government. The National Socialists were already accustomed to complying with Hitler's every wish. The German Nationalists and the other right-wing parties were pleased that the Socialists, i.e. the "Marxists," would be prevented from taking any part in government. The Center was happy that the indispensable role it had played in bringing about an absolute majority in every government since 1918 had at least prevailed in regard to achieving the two-thirds majority. The democratic German State Party wanted to prove that it took its name seriously and was genuinely supportive of the State. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, were naturally in no position to approve of Hitler's bill, for he had announced their removal from all public offices and even threatened their extermination in countless speeches.

Not a single deputy voiced objections to the Chancellor's foreign policy program. The entire Reichstag, including the Social Democrats, declared its unanimous consent¹⁴⁶ both in this session on March 23 and in a further session on May 17—in spite of the fact that Hitler's foreign policy program represented the largest threat to the nation.

The terms of Germany's domestic policy, i.e. whether or not the Germans engaged in a civil war, whether the country was governed by a dictatorship or a democracy—even whether or not the Jews were persecuted—were questions which received only marginal attention abroad. Never would any of these domestic matters have incited foreign powers to launch a military intervention against Hitler. Conversely, the foreign policy aims of the German Government did indeed command attention abroad.

The flattering words with which Hitler addressed England, France, Italy, and the Soviet Union in his March 23 statement of policy carried no real weight. The real blueprint revealing his future foreign policy was the program he had laid down in *Mein Kampf* and expounded in numerous earlier speeches. Even if one dismissed as unrealistic folly the idea of a new German Reich formed by conquering *Lebensraum* in the East, there still remained Hitler's goal of disposing of the Treaty of Versailles—an all too real element of his foreign policy program.

There is a general reluctance in Germany to think an uncomfortable matter through to its final consequences. Hitler's program of abolishing the Treaty of Versailles ultimately meant a restoration of the borders of 1914; this, however, entailed war with Poland; war with Poland also meant war with the Western Powers—and hence Germany's military ruin. The deputies did not dwell on these unpleasant thoughts on March 23. Spokesmen for party after party, the Social Democrats included, stood up and declared their respective party's consensus with Hitler's statements on foreign policy. After all, no one wanted to seem anti-national. Ever since 1914, the German Social Democratic Party had lowered its colors whenever the talk had turned to nationalism for fear of being judged unreliable in national matters.

The speech denouncing Hitler's Enabling Act delivered by the Social Democratic deputy Otto Wels was remarkably weak. It might have been expected that he would at least take a stand against the "stab-in-the back" legend; for although Hitler had refrained from mentioning it in his policy statement, he had repeated it often enough in other speeches. Wels chose instead to demonstrate how very 'national' he and the Social Democrats had conducted themselves since 1918. His remarks were confined to domestic issues. Wels protested against the persecution suffered by his fellow party members throughout the country. In touching this topic, however, he made himself vulnerable to counter-attacks, for the Social Democratic rulers, particularly in Prussia, had not exactly been gentle in their treatment of National Socialists during the preceding years.

Thus Hitler took advantage of this chance to settle this special account with the Social Democratic Party one last time. He took notes during Wels' speech and, at its close, once more stepped to the rostrum. If anyone still harbored the suspicion that Hitler had a ghostwriter prepare his speeches, he now learned the error of his ways. No one could have written a rejoinder to Wels' unscheduled speech in that short time.

Below are the speeches of both Wels and Hitler as recorded in the stenographic minutes of the Reichstag:¹⁴⁷

President Göring: Deputy Wels has the floor.

Wels (SPD), Deputy: Ladies and Gentlemen! We Social Democrats approve of the Reich Chancellor's foreign policy demand of German equality of rights even that much more emphatically because we have advocated it from the very beginning.

("Hear, hear!" from the Social Democrats)

I may take the liberty, in this context, of making the personal remark that I was the first German to oppose the untruth of Germany's blame for the outbreak of the World War before an international forum, to be precise, at the Bern Conference on February 3, 1919.

("Hear, hear!" from the Social Democrats)

No basic principle of our party has ever been able or will ever be able to hinder us from representing the just claims of the German nation to the other peoples of the world.

("Bravo!" from the Social Democrats)

The day before yesterday, the Reich Chancellor made a remark in Potsdam to which we also subscribe. He said, "The utter folly of the theory of eternal victors and vanquished gave birth to the utter absurdity of reparations and, as a consequence, the disastrous state of the world's economy." This statement applies to foreign policy; it applies no less to domestic policy.

("Hear, hear!" from the Social Democrats)

Here too the theory of eternal victors and vanquished is, as the Reich Chancellor has noted, utter folly.

But the Reich Chancellor's remark also recalls another remark which was made on July 23, 1919 in the National Assembly. It was said at that time, "We may be stripped of power, but not of honor."¹⁴⁸

(Calls of approval from the Social Democrats)

It is clear that the opponents are after our honor, there is no doubt of that. But it will remain our belief to the last that this attempt at divesting us of our honor will one day rebound on those who instigated this attempt, for it is not our honor which is being destroyed in the worldwide tragedy.

("Hear, hear!" from the Social Democrats; shouts of "Who said that?" from the National Socialists)

That is part of a statement which a government led by Social Democrats submitted before the whole world on behalf of the German people, four hours before the Armistice ran out, in order to block any further enemy advances. This statement constitutes a valuable complement to the remark made by the Reich Chancellor.

No good can come of a dictated peace;

("Hear, hear!" from the Social Democrats)

and this applies all the more to domestic affairs.

(Renewed calls of approval from the Social Democrats)

A real Volksgemeinschaft cannot be established on such a basis. That requires first of all equality of rights. May the Government guard itself against crude

excesses of polemics; may it prohibit incitements to violence with rigorousness for its own part. This might be achieved if it is accomplished fairly and objectively on all sides and if one refrains from treating defeated enemies as though they were outlaws.

(“Hear, hear!” from the Social Democrats)

Freedom and life they can take from us, but not honor.

(Applause from the Social Democrats)

Considering the persecution the Social Democratic Party has suffered recently, no one can fairly demand or expect of it that it cast its vote in favor of the Enabling Act introduced here. The elections of March 5 have resulted in a majority for the parties in government and thus given them the opportunity to govern, strictly as laid down in the letter and the intention of the Constitution. But where this opportunity is given, it is coupled with an obligation.

(“Hear, hear!” from the Social Democrats)

Criticism is beneficial and necessary. Never in the history of the German Reichstag, however, has control over public affairs vested in the elected representatives of the people been eliminated to the extent to which this is now the case

(“Hear, hear!” from the Social Democrats)

and will be even more so by means of the new Enabling Act. This type of governmental omnipotence is destined to have even more grave consequences due to the total lack of flexibility in the press.

Ladies and Gentlemen! A devastating picture has often been painted of the state of affairs prevailing in Germany today. As always in such cases, there is no lack of exaggeration. As far as my party is concerned, I wish to state that we did not ask for any intervention in Paris; we did not send off millions to Prague; we did not disseminate exaggerated news abroad.

(“Hear, hear!” from the Social Democrats)

It would be easier to counter such exaggerations if the type of reporting which differentiates between right and wrong were admissible at home.

(Calls of approval from the Social Democrats)

It would be even better if we were able, with a clear conscience, to attest to the fact that the stability of the law has been restored for all.

(Renewed calls of approval from the Social Democrats)

And that, Gentlemen, is up to you.

The gentlemen of the National Socialist Party call the Movement they have unleashed a National and not a National Socialist Revolution. The only connection between their Revolution and Socialism has been confined until now to the attempt to destroy the Social Democratic Movement which has constituted the pillar of the Socialist body of thought for more than two generations,

(Laughter from the National Socialists)

and will continue to do so in future. If the gentlemen of the National Socialist Party intended to perform Socialist deeds, they would not need an Enabling Act to do so.

(“Hear, hear!” from the Social Democrats)

You would be certain of an overwhelming majority in this forum. Every motion

you made in the interests of the workers, the peasants, the whitecollar employees, the civil servants, or the *Mittelstand* would meet with overpowering if not unanimous approval.

(Calls of approval from the Social Democrats; laughter from the National Socialists)

But you nevertheless first want to eliminate the Reichstag to proceed with your Revolution. Destroying what exists does not suffice to make up a revolution. The people expect positive achievements. They are awaiting drastic measures to combat the economic distress prevalent not only in Germany, but everywhere in the world.

We Social Democrats have borne joint responsibility in the most difficult of times and have been stoned as our reward.

(“Hear, hear!” from the Social Democrats; laughter from the National Socialists)

Our achievements in reconstructing the State and the economy and in liberating the occupied territories will prevail in history.

(Chorus of assent from the Social Democrats)

We have created equal rights for all and socially oriented labor legislation. We have aided in creating a Germany in which the path to leadership is open not only to counts and barons, but also to men of the working class.

(Renewed assent from the Social Democrats)

You cannot retreat from that without exposing your own Führer.

(Cheering and applause from the Social Democrats)

Any attempt to turn back the wheels of time will be in vain. We Social Democrats are aware that one cannot eliminate the realities of power politics by the simple act of legal protests. We see the reality of your present rule. But the people’s sense of justice also wields political power, and we will never stop appealing to this sense of justice.

The Weimar Constitution is not a Socialist Constitution. But we adhere to the basic principles of a constitutional state, to the equality of rights, and the concept of social legislation anchored therein. We German Social Democrats solemnly pledge ourselves in this historic hour to the principles of humanity and justice, of freedom and Socialism.

(Calls of approval from the Social Democrats)

No Enabling Act can give you the power to destroy ideas which are eternal and indestructible. You yourself have professed your belief in Socialism. Bismarck’s Law against Socialists has not destroyed the Social Democratic Party. Even further persecution can be a source of new strength to the German Social Democratic Party.

We hail those who are persecuted and in despair. We hail our friends in the Reich. Their steadfastness and loyalty are worthy of acclaim. The courage of their convictions, their unbroken faith—

(Laughter from the National Socialists; “Bravo!” from the Social Democrats)

are the guarantees of a brighter future.

(Renewed cheering from the Social Democrats; laughter from the National Socialists)

President Göring: The Reich Chancellor has the floor.

(Thunderous applause and cries of "Heil!" from the National Socialists)¹⁴⁹

Hitler left his seat on the government bench and strode to the podium for the second time that day; he pointed an accusing finger at the Social Democratic deputies and began:

*Spät kommt ihr, doch ihr kommt!*¹⁵⁰

(Calls of approval from the National Socialists)

The pretty theories which you, Mr. Deputy, have just expounded here have been addressed to world history a little too late.

(Amused assent from the National Socialists)

Perhaps these realizations, put to practice years ago, would have made the complaints you have today superfluous.

You declare that the Social Democratic Party subscribes to our foreign policy program; that it rejects the lie of war guilt; that it is against reparations. Now I may ask just one question: where was this fight during the time you had power in Germany?

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

You once had the opportunity to dictate the law of domestic behavior to the German Volk. You were able to do it in other areas. It would have been equally possible to infuse in the German Revolution, which you played a part in initiating, the same momentum and the same direction which France once infused in its uprising in the year 1870.

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

It would have been at your discretion to shape the German uprising into one of true national character, and you still would have had the right, had the flag of the new Republic not returned triumphant, to say: we did everything in our power to avoid this catastrophe by a final appeal to the strength of the German Volk.

(Calls of approval from the National Socialists and the German Nationalists)

At that time you avoided the fight; now you suddenly feel an urge to talk about it to everyone around you.

You state that being stripped of power does not mean being stripped of honor. You are right; that does not necessarily have to be the case. Even if we were divested of our power, I know we would not be divested of our honor. Thanks to having been oppressed by your party, our Movement had been stripped of power for years; it has never been stripped of honor.

(Thunderous applause from the National Socialists)

It is my conviction that we shall inoculate the German Volk with a spirit that, in view of the Volk's defenselessness today, Mr. Deputy, will certainly never allow it to be stripped of its honor.

(Calls of approval from the National Socialists and the German Nationalists)

Here, too, it was your responsibility, you who were in power for fourteen years, (Cries of "Oh, no!" from the Social Democrats)

to ensure that this German Volk had set an example of honor to the world. It was your responsibility to ensure that, if the rest of the world insisted upon suppressing us, at least the type of suppression the German Volk was subjected to would be one of dignity. You had the opportunity to speak out against all of the manifestations of disgrace in our Volk. You could have eliminated this treason just as easily as we will eliminate it.

(Cheering from the National Socialists and German Nationalists)

You have no right to even associate yourself with this claim; for you should never, at that hour when every revolution would have constituted the concurrence of the offenses of treason and high treason, have given your support, even indirectly, to such acts. And you should have prevented the German Volk from being subjected to a new constitution drawn up at the beck and call of foreign countries. That has nothing to do with honor, allowing the enemy to dictate one's own internal structure.

(Cheering and clapping from the government parties)

And, moreover, at that time you should have professed your faith in the German tricolor and not in the colors on the handbills the enemy threw into our trenches,

(Renewed cheering from the right)

because more than ever in an age of distress and suppression by the enemy must one show one's pride and even more pledge one's support to one's Volk and the symbols of one's Volk. You would still have had the opportunity, even if the environment had forced us to denounce everything which had formerly been sacred to us, to allow the national honor to be evidenced to the world in domestic policy.

("Hear, hear!" from the right)

You say: equal rights! Just as we desire it abroad, we also desire it at home. It was for these 'equal rights,' Herr Wels, that we fought for fourteen years! You ignored these equal rights as far as national Germany was concerned! So do not talk to us today about equal rights!

(Loud cheering from the right)

You say that the vanquished should not be labelled outlaws. Well, Mr. Deputy, we were outlaws as long as you were in power.

(Renewed thunderous applause from the National Socialists; protests from the Social Democrats; a cry of "Severing!" from President Göring)

You talk about persecution. I think there are few of us here present who were not forced to pay in prison for the persecution you practiced. Few of us here present who were not made to feel the effects of that persecution in acts of harassment a thousand times over and incidents of suppression a thousand times over!

(Calls of approval from the right)

And in addition to those of us here present, I know a company of hundreds of thousands who were at the mercy of a system of persecution which vent itself on them in a disgraceful, even in a positively despicable manner! You seem to have totally forgotten that, for years, our shirts were ripped off our backs because you did not approve of the color.

(Loud jeers from the National Socialists)

Let us stay within the realm of reality! Your persecution has made us strong! You also said that criticism is beneficial. We will take criticism from anyone who loves Germany. But we will take no criticism from anyone who worships the Internationale!

(Repeated waves of loud cheering)

Here too, you have come to your realization a good deal too late, Mr. Deputy. You should have recognized the beneficial power of criticism when we were in the opposition. Back then, you had not yet been confronted with these words; back then our press was *verboten* and *verboten* and again *verboten*; our assemblies were banned; we were not allowed to speak, and I was not allowed to speak—and that went on for years! And now you say criticism is beneficial!

(Laughter from the National Socialists; shouts from the Social Democrats; the President's bell calling for order)

President Göring: Stop talking and listen to this for once!

(Cries of "Bravo!" from the National Socialists)

Hitler, Reich Chancellor: You complain that in the end the world is told untrue facts about the state of affairs in Germany. You complain that the world is told that every day dismembered corpses are turned over to the Israelite cemeteries in Berlin. How that torments you; you would be so glad to do justice to the truth! Well, Mr. Deputy, it must be child's play for your party, with its international connections, to find out the truth. And not only that. These past few days I have been reading the newspapers of your own Social Democratic sister parties in German-Austria. No one is hindering you from disseminating your realization of the truth there.

(Cries of "That's already been done!" from the Social Democrats)

I would be curious as to how effective the power of your international connections really will be in this case as well.

(Amusement on the part of the National Socialists; shouts from the Social Democrats)

Would you please let me finish, I didn't interrupt you either!¹⁵¹ I have read your paper in the Saar, Mr. Deputy, and it does nothing other than commit constant acts of treason, Deputy Wels,

(Indignant shouts from the National Socialists)

it is constantly attempting to discredit Germany abroad,

(Jeers and cries of "*Gemeinheit!*" ("Dirty trick!") from the National Socialists)

to shed a bad light upon our Volk with lies to the rest of the world.

You talk about the lack of stability of the law. Gentlemen of the Social Democratic Party! I too witnessed the Revolution in 1918. I really do have to say that if we did not have a feeling for the law, we would not be here today, and you would not be here either!

(Shouts of "Bravo!" from the National Socialists)

In 1918 you turned against those who had done nothing to harm you.

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

We are restraining ourselves from turning against those who tortured us and humiliated us for fourteen years.

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

You say the National Socialist Revolution has nothing to do with Socialism, but rather that its "Socialism" exists only in the sense that it persecutes the "only pillar of Socialism in Germany," the SPD.

(Laughter from the National Socialists)

You are sissies, Gentlemen, and not worthy of this age, if you start talking about persecution at this stage of the game. What has been done to you? You are sitting here and your speaker is being listened to with patience.

(Cries of "Hear, hear!" and amusement on the part of the National Socialists)

You talk about persecution. Who has been persecuting you?

("Hear, hear!" from President Gbring)

You say you are the only pillar of Socialism. You were the pillar of that mysterious Socialism of which, in reality, the German Volk never had a glimpse.

(Cries of "Hear, hear!" and amusement on the part of the National Socialists)

You are talking today about your achievements and your deeds; you are speaking of all the things you intended to do. By your fruits shall ye, too, be known!

(Tumultuous approval and applause from the National Socialists)

The fruits testify against you!

(Protest from the Social Democrats; laughter from the National Socialists)

If the Germany you created in fourteen years is any reflection of your socialist aims, then all I can say is give us four years' time, Gentlemen, in order to show you the reflection of our aims.

(Calls of approval from the National Socialists)

You say: "You want to eliminate the Reichstag to proceed with your Revolution." Gentlemen, if so, we would not have found it necessary to first go to this vote, to convene this Reichstag, or to have the draft of this bill presented. God knows we would have had the courage to deal with you some other way as well!

(Thunderous, long drawnout cheering and applause from the National Socialists)

You also said that we cannot ignore the Social Democratic Party because it was the first one to clear these seats for the Volk, for the working people, and not only for barons or counts. In every instance, Mr. Deputy, you are too late! Why did you not advise your friend Grzesinski of your views in good time, why did you not tell your other friends Braun and Severing, who accused me for years of being nothing more than a house painter's apprentice!—

(Enthusiastic assent and indignant jeers from the National Socialists; protest from the Social Democrats; countering cries of "Of course that's what you said!" from the National Socialists)

For years you claimed that on your posters.

(Renewed protest from the Social Democrats; cries of "Quiet!" from the National Socialists; the President's bell calling for order)

President Göring: Now the Chancellor is getting even!

(Approval from the National Socialists)

Hitler, Reich Chancellor: And in the end I was actually threatened that I would be driven out of Germany with a dog whip!¹⁵²

(Jeers from the National Socialists)

We National Socialists will now clear the path for the German worker leading to what is his to claim and demand. We National Socialists will be his advocates; you, Gentlemen (addressing the Social Democrats), are no longer necessary!

(Cries of "Hear, hear!" and long drawnout, thunderous applause from the National Socialists)

You also state that not power, but a sense of justice is crucial. We have attempted to awaken this sense of justice in our Volk for fourteen years, and we have succeeded in awakening it. However, I now believe on the basis of my own political experiences with you—

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

that unfortunately, justice alone is not enough—one has to be in power, too!

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

And do not mistake us for a bourgeois world! You think that your star might rise again! Gentlemen, Germany's star will rise and yours will fall.

(Loud cries of "Bravo!" and "Heil!" from the National Socialists; long drawnout cheering, also from the galleries)

You say you were not broken during the period of Socialist legislation. That was a period in which the German workers saw in you something other than what you are today. But why have you forgotten to mention this realization to us?!

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

Everything that becomes rotten, old, and weak in the life of a people disappears, never to return.

(Assent from the right)

Your death knell has sounded as well, and it is only because we are thinking of Germany and its distress and the requirements of national life that we appeal in this hour to the German Reichstag to give its consent to what we could have taken at any rate.

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

We are doing it for the sake of justice—not because we overestimate power, but because we may thus one day perhaps more easily join with those who, today, may be separated from us but who nevertheless believe in Germany, too.

(Calls of "Bravo!" from the National Socialists)

For I would not want to make the mistake of provoking opponents instead of either destroying or becoming reconciled with them.

(Cries of "Bravo!" and "Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

I would like to extend my hand to those who, perhaps on other paths, will also come to feel with their Volk in the end,

(Cries of "Bravo!" from the Center Party)

and would not want to declare an everlasting war,

(Renewed cries of "Bravo!")

not because of weakness, but out of love to my Volk, and in order to spare this German Volk all what will perish with the rest in this age of struggles.

(Renewed shouts of "Bravo!" from the National Socialists and the German Nationalists)

That you may never misunderstand me on this point: I extend my hand to everyone who commits himself to Germany.

(Cries of "Bravo!")

I do not recognize the precepts of the Internationale.

(Cheering from the National Socialists and German Nationalists)

I believe that you (addressing the Social Democrats) are not voting for this bill for the reason that you, in your innermost mentality, are incapable of comprehending the purpose which thereby imbues us.

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

I believe, however, that you would not do this were we really what your press abroad today makes us out to be,

("Hear, hear!" from the National Socialists)

and I can only say to you: I do not even want you to vote for it! Germany will be liberated, but not by you!

(Long drawnout, thunderous cries of "Heil!" and cheering from the National Socialists and in the galleries. Applause from the German Nationalists. Repeated waves of thunderous applause and cries of "Heil!")

It was to be the first and only time Hitler took part in a debate before the Reichstag and, at least from 1932 onwards, before the public.

The snub he had delivered to the Chairman of the Social Democratic Party naturally elicited the highest acclaim, both in the right-wing parties and among the members of the Reich Government. Even the normally reserved Hugenberg was openly enthusiastic and thanked Hitler at the cabinet meeting on March 24 "on behalf of the other cabinet members for the impressive and successful appearance in the Reichstag, but most of all for the brilliant rebuff of that Marxist leader, Wels."¹⁵³

The further course of the Reichstag session on March 23 brought no other incidents. The deputies Kaas (Center Party), Ritter von Lex (BVP), Reinhold Meier (German State Party), Simpfendorfer (CSV), and Göring (NSDAP) subsequently declared the consent of their respective parties to the Enabling Act, which was then passed with a total of 441 votes (all of the parties with the exception of the SPD) to the 94 votes of the Social Democrats. The Reichsrat, now composed exclusively of National Socialist Länder representatives, passed the bill unanimously the same day.

It is pointless to speculate what Hitler would have done had the Enabling Act not secured the required two-thirds majority. Such a situation would certainly not have presented an obstacle to his plans for governing the country; he had said as much in no uncertain terms on various occasions. As early as August 6, 1932, Goebbels had recorded Hitler's intentions in his diary on the occasion of the then forthcoming government negotiations. He had noted:¹⁵⁴ "If a Reichstag rejects an Enabling Act the Führer demands, it will be sent home."

March 24, 1933

In all probability, Hitler would have continued governing with the aid of emergency decrees pursuant to Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution. He had no need to fear interference from the Reichstag due to its right-wing majority. At the next opportunity, he would have announced new elections in order to procure a two-thirds majority in the Reichstag, as had been done in October/November 1933.¹⁵⁵

4

Abroad, the consequences of the new Enabling Act had been perceived more clearly than in the ranks of the non-National Socialist parties in Germany. The commentaries of the foreign press were less than friendly and aroused Hitler's anger. According to his preconception, so-called *Weltjudentum* (world Jewry) was to blame.

As is generally known, Hitler believed in the existence of a secret Jewish world government which influenced all of the governments around the globe to act in its interests; above all, this entity was determined not to allow the German Volk to come to the fore. On the other hand, he believed the solidarity of Jewry throughout the world was so strong that it would be willing to make concessions in order to alleviate any hardships the Jews in Germany might be made to bear.

Therefore Hitler was convinced that he need only harass and threaten the German Jews, and foreign governments would be persuaded to yield in their attitude towards Germany and Hitler: world Jewry would instruct these governments to act accordingly.

Without delay he went to work on setting a warning example. As Reich Chancellor, he had until now been extremely reserved on this point, rarely exhibiting his anti-Semitic attitude. Since January 30, even the Party and the National Socialist press had, on Hitler's orders, refrained from treating the Jewish problem in their customary fashion. This policy was to undergo a radical change.

From March 26 to March 28, Hitler conferred with his *Untersführers* in Berchtesgaden and Munich in order to outline an operation against German Jews to commence on April 1, with the expressly announced aim of thus putting pressure on world Jewry and foreign governments.¹⁵⁶ On March 28, Hitler issued the following appeal to all party organizations of the NSDAP to boycott the Jews:¹⁵⁷

National Socialists! Party Comrades!

After fourteen years of inner conflict, the German Volk—politically overcoming its ranks, classes, professions, and confessional divisions—has effected an *Erhebung* which put a lightning end to the Marxist-Jewish nightmare.

In the weeks following January 30, a unique national revolution took place in Germany.

In spite of long years of exceedingly severe suppression and persecution, the masses of millions which support the Government of the National Revolution have, in a very calm and disciplined matter, given the new Reich leadership legal cover for the implementation of its reform of the German nation from top to bottom. On March 5 the overwhelming majority of Germans eligible to vote declared its confidence in the new regime. The completion of the national revolution has thus become the demand of the Volk.

The Jewish-Marxist *Bonzen* deserted their position of power with deplorable cowardice. Despite all the fuss, not a single one dared to raise any serious resistance.

For the most part, they have left the masses they had seduced in the lurch and fled abroad, taking with them their stuffed strongboxes.

The authors and beneficiaries of our misfortune owe the fact that they were spared—almost without exception—solely to the incomparable discipline and order with which this act of overthrowing was conducted.

Hardly a hair of their heads was harmed. Compare this act of self-discipline on the part of the national uprising in Germany with, for instance, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which claimed the lives of over three million people, and you will begin to appreciate what a debt of gratitude the criminals guilty of the disintegration in Germany would owe the powers of the national uprising. Compare the terrible battles and destruction of the Revolution of these very November Men themselves: their shooting of hostages in the years 1918 and '19; the slaughtering of defenseless opponents—and you will once again perceive how enormous the difference is between them and the national uprising.

The men presently in power solemnly proclaimed to the world that they wanted to live in international peace. In this, the German Volk constitutes a loyal *Gefolgschaft* (following). Germany wants neither worldwide confusion nor international intrigues. National revolutionary Germany is firmly resolved to put an end to internal mismanagement!

Now that the domestic enemies of the nation have been eliminated by the Volk itself, what we have long been waiting for will now come to pass. The Communist and Marxist criminals and their Jewish-intellectual instigators, who, having made off with their capital stocks across the border in the nick of time, are now unfolding an unscrupulous, treasonous campaign of agitation against the German Volk as a whole from there. Because it became impossible for them to continue lying in Germany, they have begun, in the capitals of the former Entente, to continue the same agitation against the young national uprising which they had already pursued at the outbreak of the War against the Germany of that time.

Lies and slander of positively hairraising perversity are being launched about Germany. Horror stories of dismembered Jewish corpses, gouged-out

eyes, and hacked-off hands are circulated for the purpose of defaming the German Volk in the world for a second time, just as they had succeeded in doing once before in 1914. The animosity of millions of innocent human beings, peoples with whom the German Volk wishes only to live in peace, is being stirred up by these unscrupulous criminals. They want German goods and German labor to fall victim to the international boycott. It seems they think the misery in Germany is not bad enough as it is; they have to make it worse!

They lie about Jewish females who have supposedly been killed; about Jewish girls allegedly being raped before the eyes of their parents; about cemeteries being ravaged! The whole thing is one big lie invented for the sole purpose of provoking a new world-war agitation!

Standing by and watching this lunatic crime any longer would mean being implicated.

The National Socialist Party will therefore now take defensive action against this universal crime with the means which are capable of striking a blow to the guilty parties.

For the guilty ones are among us, they live in our midst and day after day misuse the right to hospitality which the German Volk has granted them.

At a time when millions of our people have nothing to live on and nothing to eat, while hundreds of thousands of German brain-workers degenerate on the streets, these intellectual Jewish men of letters are sitting in our midst and have no qualms about claiming the right to our hospitality.

What would America do were the Germans in America to commit a sin against America like the one these Jews have committed against Germany? The National Revolution did not harm a hair of their heads. They were allowed to go about their business as before; but mind you, corruption will be exterminated, regardless of who commits it. Just as belonging to a Christian confession or our own Volk does not constitute a license for criminals, neither does belonging to the Jewish race or the Mosaic religion.

For decades, Germany indiscriminately allowed all aliens to enter the country. There are 135 people to one square kilometer of land in this country. In America there are less than 15. In spite of this fact, America saw it fit to set quotas for immigration and even exclude certain peoples from immigrating. Without any regard to its own distress, Germany refrained for decades from instituting these measures. As our reward, we now have a clique of Jewish men of letters, professors and profiteers inciting the world against us while millions of our own Volksgenossen are unemployed and degenerating.

This will be put to a stop now!

The Germany of the National Revolution is not the Germany of a cowardly bourgeois mentality.

We see the misery and wretchedness of our own Volksgenossen and feel obliged to leave nothing undone which can prevent further damage to this, our Volk.

For the parties responsible for these lies and slander are the Jews in our midst. It is they who are the source of this campaign of hate and lies against Germany. It would be in their power to call the liars in the rest of the world into line.

Because they choose not to do so, we will make sure that this crusade of hatred and lies against Germany is no longer directed against the innocent German Volk, but against the responsible agitators themselves.

This smear campaign of boycotting and atrocities must not and shall not injure the German Volk, but rather the Jews themselves—a thousand times more severely.

Thus the following order is issued to all party sections and party organizations:

Item 1: *Action Committees for a boycott against the Jews*

Action Committees are to be formed in each *Ortsgruppe* (local chapter) and organizational body of the NSDAP for conducting a practical, organized boycott of Jewish businesses, Jewish goods, Jewish doctors, and Jewish lawyers. The Action Committees shall be responsible for ensuring that the boycott does not do any harm to innocent parties but instead does all the more harm to the guilty parties.

Item 2: *Utmost protection for all foreigners*

The Action Committees shall be responsible for providing the utmost protection for all foreigners, without regard to their religion and origins or race. The boycott is a purely defensive action which is aimed exclusively at the *Judentum* in Germany.

Item 3: *Boycott propaganda*

The Action Committees shall immediately popularize the boycott by means of propaganda and enlightenment. Basic principle: no good German is still buying from a Jew or allowing the Jew or his henchmen to offer him goods. The boycott must be a universal one. It will be borne by the entire Volk and must hit Jewry where it is most vulnerable.

Item 4: *The central management. Pg. Streicher*¹⁵⁸

In cases of doubt, one is to refrain from boycotting businesses until informed otherwise by the Central Committee in Munich. The Chairman of the Central Committee is Pg. Streicher.

Item 5: *Surveillance of newspapers*

The Action Committees shall keep the newspapers under sharp surveillance in order to ascertain the extent to which they are participating in the enlightenment crusade of the German Volk against the Jewish smear campaign of atrocities (*Greuelhetze*) abroad. If newspapers are not doing so or doing so only within a limited scope, it is to be seen to that they are instantly removed from every building inhabited by Germans. No German man and no German business is to continue advertising in such newspapers. These papers must become victims of public contempt, written for fellow members of the Jewish race, but not for the German Volk.

Item 6: *Boycott as a means of protecting German labor*

In conjunction with the factory cell organizations of the Party, the Action Committees must carry the propaganda of the enlightenment concerning the effects of the Jewish smear campaign of atrocities for German labor and thus for the German worker into the factories, enlightening the workers in particular as to the necessity of a national boycott as a defensive measure for the protection of German labor.

Item 7: *Action Committees down to the last village!*

The Action Committees must be driven into the smallest villages in order to hit especially the Jewish traders on the flatlands.

As a basic principle, it should be stressed that the boycott is a defensive measure which was forced upon us.

Item 8: *The boycott is to commence on April 1!*

The boycott shall not begin in a dissipated fashion but abruptly. For this reason all preparations are to be made instantly. The SA and SS will be given orders to set up guards to warn the population not to set foot in Jewish shops from the moment the boycott begins. The beginning of the boycott is to be publicized on posters and in the press, in handbills, etc.

The boycott shall commence abruptly at 10:00 in the morning on Saturday, April 1. It will be maintained until an order from the Party leadership commands that it be discontinued.

Item 9: *Demand of the masses for restricted admission*

In tens of thousands of mass assemblies which are to reach as far as the smallest village, the Action Committees shall organize the demand for the introduction of a restriction to the number of Jews employed in all professions which should be relative to their proportion in the German population. In order to increase the impact of the action, this demand is initially to be confined to three areas:

- a) admission to the German secondary schools and universities;
- b) the medical profession;
- c) the legal profession.

Item 10: *Enlightenment abroad*

Another further task of the Action Committees is to ensure that every German who upholds any connection whatsoever abroad shall make use of this to circulate in letters, telegrams, and telephone calls in an enlightening manner the truth that law and order reigns in Germany; that it is the single most ardent wish of the German Volk to be able to pursue its work in peace and live in peace with the rest of the world; and that it is fighting the battle against the Jewish smear campaign of atrocities purely as a defensive battle.

Item 11: *Calm, discipline, and no acts of violence!*

The Action Committees are responsible for ensuring that this entire battle is conducted with the utmost calm and the greatest discipline. Refrain from harming a single hair of a Jew's head in future as well! We will come to terms with this smear campaign simply by the drastic force of these measures cited. More than ever before it is necessary that the entire Party stand behind the leadership in blind obedience as one man.

National Socialists, you have wrought the miracle of sending the November State cartwheeling in a single offensive; you will accomplish this second task the same way. International *Weltjudentum* should know one thing:

The Government of the National Revolution does not exist in a vacuum. It is the representation of the working German Volk. Whoever attacks it, is attacking Germany! Whoever slanders it, is slandering the nation! Whoever fights it, has declared war on 65 million people! We were able to come to terms with the Marxist agitators in Germany; they will not force us to our knees, even

if they are now proceeding with their renegade crimes against the people from abroad.

National Socialists! Saturday, at the stroke of ten, *Judentum* will know upon whom it has declared war.

National Socialist German Workers' Party / Party Leadership

Contrary to his accustomed practice, Hitler hesitated to sign his name to this proclamation, opting instead to use the more anonymous "Party Leadership." But his style and attitude are evident in every line; only the eleven individual items seem in part to be the work of Goebbels'.¹⁵⁹ Hitler appointed the well-known, violently anti-Semitic Julius Streicher, Gauleiter in Nuremberg, to head the action, and made all the necessary arrangements on March 28 in Munich.

On March 29 he issued another proclamation from Munich to the NSDAP in Bavaria urging Party members to restrain from independent action. Reich Commissar von Epp, the proclamation stated, was to represent the sole authority in Bavaria and the court of last instance—for the Party as well.¹⁶⁰

Afterwards, Hitler flew to Berlin to attend the cabinet meeting. There he openly declared that he was the originator of the boycott action against the German Jews.

The *Völkischer Beobachter* printed the following report of Hitler's address to the cabinet:¹⁶¹

Berlin, March 29

Today's Reich cabinet meeting, the first which is to pass far-reaching resolutions on the basis of the Enabling Act, was opened by Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler with a declaration on the present political situation. The Führer commented on the defensive measures against the Jewish atrocity propaganda abroad. It had been necessary to organize the defense, the Führer stated, because otherwise it would have come from the Volk itself and perhaps taken on undesirable forms.

By means of this organization, the defense measure itself would stay under control and molestation motivated by personal grievances as well as acts of violence would be prevented.

However, *Judentum* must, according to the Führer, realize that a Jewish war against Germany would hit *Judentum* in Germany itself with full force.

On April 1, the SA and other Party forces set up guards in front of Jewish businesses, doctors' practices, law offices, etc. and prevented customers—to the extent that any even dared to make an appearance—from entering. The reaction abroad seemed to lend support to Hitler's theories. The foreign press took great pains to demonstrate reserve in

commenting on the new situation in Germany, albeit not because “world Jewry” had instructed them to do so, but rather because they sympathized with the German Jews and did not wish to aggravate their situation.

On April 4, Goebbels was able to draw the following balance:¹⁶² “Atrocity propaganda abroad has abated quite appreciably. Therefore the cabinet has resolved to refrain for the time being from renewing the boycott, but will keep it in readiness as a standing threat.”

Thus the German Jews remained a means with which Hitler could exert pressure abroad. They were to be exploited as such until their extermination in the Second World War.

In the meantime, Hitler continued his *Gleichschaltung* measures toward depriving the German Under of power. On March 31, the “First Coordination Law of Länder and Reich”¹⁶³ was promulgated, which granted the Under Governments legislative powers and reestablished both the Landtage and local assemblies in accordance with the election results of March 5.

The “Second Coordination Law of Länder and Reich”¹⁶⁴ followed on April 7. Reichsstatthalters were installed in all the German Under and given the task of appointing the Under Governments. Hitler personally assumed this office in Prussia and naturally appointed Göring, not Papen, as Minister-President.

The other Reichsstatthalters were selected from the ranks of the NSDAP Gauleiters, who now also began to steadily assume executive power in their respective Gaus, either as Reichsstatthalter or as District President (in the larger Under) or Oberpräsident (in Prussia).

Gleichschaltung permeated the cabinet level as well. Hitler’s financial expert Fritz Reinhardt was appointed State Secretary in the Reich Ministry of Finance on April 1. Former Colonel Konstantin Hierl, head of the Office for Labor Service (*Amt für Arbeitsdienst*) in the NSDAP Reich leadership, advanced to State Secretary for Voluntary Labor Service. Even in the course of this large-scale political restructuring, Hitler did not neglect to deliver his accustomed oratories.

On April 5, clad in a dark suit, he addressed the German Agricultural Council in the Berlin Herrenhaus,¹⁶⁵ above all acknowledging the part played by the German peasant in contributing to his *Machtergreifung*.¹⁶⁶

Herr Präsident! Gentlemen!

The fact that we are able today to meet once more under the old black-white-red flag and under the symbol of the national renaissance in Germany is

April 5, 1933

due in no small part to the German peasant, who has perhaps made the greatest contribution to this historic turning point in our destiny.

Believe me, the uprising which lies behind us would not have been possible had not a part of the Volk in the country always stood in our ranks. It would have been impossible to gain those initial positions which lent the weight of legality to our actions in the cities alone. Thus the German Volk has the German peasant to thank for the renewal, the uprising, and hence also the drastic change which will lead to the general recuperation of conditions in Germany.

The fact that German peasantry has today found a great amalgamation will, in future, tremendously facilitate the work of the government, for it shall then act in the knowledge that the enormous masses of its peasant Volk are standing by it. I believe that there is not a single man in this government who is not imbued with the most sincere desire for this closest cooperation. We simultaneously perceive in the accomplishment of this task the salvation of the German Volk in the future, not for 1933 or 1934, but for the most distant times to come. We are willing to now initiate and, in the next few years, implement the measures which we know will be recognized and judged to be basically right by future generations.

There was no question that the head of the Agricultural Policy Office of the NSDAP, Richard Walter Darré,¹⁶⁷ was to assume the leadership in all peasant organizations.

On April 6, Hitler delivered a relatively long address before the associated non-local (German) press in Berlin,¹⁶⁸ in which—in addition to relating the standard “party narrative”—he went into philosophical deliberations on the mission of the press, love of truth, and nihilism. He closed by drawing the following conclusion:

For this very reason we recognize the significance of the press much more clearly than our predecessors did. However, may the press also recognize the significance of a regime which, by righting general conditions in Germany, is bringing about the moral and political, and hence also the economic ascent without which the press cannot exist for long.

Thus I for my part would also like to warmly welcome you, Gentlemen, as representatives of the non-local German press and thank you for what you have already accomplished in terms of giving our Volk a good education, and I warmly invite you to take part in a work which is sure to one day nobly prevail in German history.

For, even though ages of greatness always alternate with ages of disintegration in our Volk, the final judgment of history on the actions of humanity will nonetheless be passed by the spirit of *Lebensbejahung* (affirmation of life).

One day it will be our judge, and it will one day be forced to ascertain that day and night, in sleep and in waking, one single idea dominated our thoughts: *Deutschland*.

April 8, 1933

On April 8, Hitler issued the “Law on the Reconstruction of the Professional Civil Service” (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*) which in reality constituted a means of removing civil servants who were politically unreliable from the National Socialist perspective. Those dismissed from office were at least allowed to retain their pensions.

On the same day, Hitler held a major speech at an SA roll call in the Berlin Sportpalast. The address was broadcast by every station and could thus be heard by the SA forces which had assembled throughout the country. Goebbels described the event as “the greatest mass roll call the world has ever seen.”

Hitler stated in part as follows:¹⁶⁹

The great age for which we have hoped fourteen years long has now dawned. Germany has now awakened.¹⁷⁰ Everything has come to pass which we, sensing and foreseeing, had prophesied in these fourteen years, not due to a gift of those around us or the mercy of our adversaries, but rather to our own power.

So did I begin back then to breed, in a small organization, what was to become the national substance of the coming Reich: people who detach themselves from their surroundings; who thrust far from them all the petty things of life which appear so important; who recall once more a new and greater task; who have the courage to already openly display that they want to have nothing to do with all the eternally dividing and subversive concepts which poison the life of our Volk.

We have fostered in ourselves an allegiance (*Gefolgschaftstreue*), this blind obedience all the others know nothing about and which has given us the strength to survive everything.

We have practiced, too, the virtue of courage. Today millions are streaming into our great front. However, they must for the most part first learn what this brown army has practiced for many years. They must all first learn to take upon themselves what tens of thousands of our comrades have taken upon themselves and paid for with their blood, with their lives. If this Movement were not so boundless in its discipline, those who today complain of sacrifices demanded of them would perhaps have more to complain about. The Movement has, by means of utmost discipline, become its own master, with Germany in mind.

We have also instilled the virtue of steadfastness, of eternal perseverance. It is to this steadfastness we owe our triumph today. We must learn from this for the future.

Fate wants to test us—whether the German Volk is to live and become great or whether the end of our Volk is at hand.

There is one thing we know now: though centuries may pass, these eagles and these symbols are linked with the ascent of Germany for all time. If we maintain the same discipline, the same obedience, the same comradeship, and

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the same unbounded loyalty in the future as well, then nothing will ever be able to eradicate this Movement from Germany.

It was here that Hitler's false doctrine began to take shape: the heresy that, given steadfastness, discipline, bravery, and blind obedience, anything in the world was attainable, even the most impossible aims. The National Socialist *Machtergreifung* after fourteen years of struggle was proof positive, he claimed.

In this speech, Hitler also once more evoked the image of a god enthroned above the clouds (Providence, Fate) who plans to test the German Volk to ascertain whether or not it is really brave and steadfast. If the Volk passes the test, this god will make it great. If not, its end is at hand. This address further marks the beginning of Hitler's obsession with characterizing his measures as designed for the "centuries." Soon these were to become "millenniums."

On April 11, Hitler sent a letter to the Reich President on the dual occasion of assuming the office of Reichsstatthalter in Prussia and von Papen's release from office as Reich Commissar for the Land of Prussia.

Ostensibly, von Papen was exceedingly pleased about his dismissal and had written to Hitler on April 7: "You, Herr Reichskanzler, shall now be in a position, as was once Fürst Bismarck, to coordinate the policies of the largest of the German Länder with those of the Reich. Now that the new law has given you the opportunity to appoint the Prussian Minister-President, I may respectfully ask that you inform the Reich President that I most humbly return to his hands the office of Reich Commissar for the Land of Prussia. Most respectfully yours, Your obedient servant, von Papen."

Hitler gladly complied with this request and wrote to Hindenburg:¹⁷¹

My esteemed Herr Reichspräsident!

Vice Chancellor von Papen has sent me a letter which I enclose and of which you will be so kind as to take note. Herr von Papen had already informed me some days ago that he had come to an agreement with Minister Göring to the effect that he would resign of his own volition as soon as, by means of the new law coordinating the policy in the Reich and the Under, the uniformity of the leadership of government business in the Reich and Prussia was safeguarded.

On the evening following the promulgation of the new law providing for the appointment of Reichsstatthalters, Herr von Papen saw that this goal had been achieved and thus requested that I proceed to appoint the Prussian Minister-President, whereby he placed himself fully at the disposal of the Reich Government for further services.

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In assuming the temporary leadership of Prussia during this difficult time, Herr von Papen has, since January 30, rendered a great service in promoting the idea of policy coordination in the Reich and the Länder. His work in the cabinet, at the disposal of which he is now placing his entire efforts, is so infinitely valuable and my personal relationship with him so warm and friendly that I am sincerely looking forward to the great assistance which is thus bestowed upon me.

With the highest esteem,

Adolf Hitler

The friendly words which Hitler dedicated to the Vice Chancellor served two functions: on the one hand, they were designed as a consolation for Hindenburg, in the event that he should begin to wonder why Papen was being maneuvered out of Prussia; on the other hand, the praise constituted a reward for the willingness with which Papen strove to fulfill Hitler's every order. As a rule, Hitler was not sparing in his use of flattery and, if necessary, of money and endowments as well.

On the same day, Hitler sent Göring the following telegram:

With effect as per today's date I hereby appoint you Minister-President of Prussia. I may request that you be so kind and assume the duties of this office on April 20 in Berlin.

I am happy for this opportunity to demonstrate to you my trust and my gratitude for the services which you have rendered in support of the new uprising of the German Volk for over ten years as a fighter in our Movement; for the victorious execution of the National Revolution as temporary Minister of the Interior in Prussia; and, last but not least, for the unique loyalty with which you have bound your destiny to mine.

Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler

Göring was in Rome at the time. On the following day, i.e. April 12, he, as well as Papen, was received by Pope Pius XI. The preparations for the conclusion of a concordat between the Vatican and the Reich were already underway.

Hitler proceeded by car to Munich on April 12, making a stop in Bayreuth, where he spoke with Mrs. Eva Chamberlain.¹⁷²

On April 19, the eve of his birthday, Hitler was given the freedom of the Free State of Bavaria and responded with an address to the members of the State Government and the City of Munich in the Grütznerstube of the Munich City Hall.¹⁷³ This state ceremony on the part of the Bavarian Council of Ministers, he declared [with reference to his imprisonment in the fortress of Landsberg in 1924], had served to make good what had once been inflicted upon him. He was happy that today all the rest of Germany once more regarded Bavaria with respect.

For the first time, Hitler's birthday on April 20 was celebrated as a national holiday throughout Germany. All public buildings were decorated with flags, as were most private dwellings. Hindenburg sent his birthday greetings in the following telegram:¹⁷⁴

On this day I commemorate with sincere gratitude the great patriotic work which you have accomplished and which still lies before you. Loyal to you in the desire to once again lead our *Volk und Vaterland* onwards and out of the misery of these times, I may extend to you my warmest wishes for your continuing efforts as well as for your personal welfare. In comradeship I remain, Respectfully yours,

von Hindenburg

Hugenberg also sent a telegram and published a tribute to the Führer in the newspaper *Der Tag*. Even Monsignor Kaas, who had travelled to Rome for the concordat negotiations, sent his "sincere congratulations and best wishes, and the assurance of unfailing cooperation."

Hitler returned to Berlin for a short sojourn on April 21. On April 22, he was back in Munich, delivering a major speech at a convention of NSDAP leaders.¹⁷⁵ Following the customary "party narrative," Hitler proclaimed that the National Socialist Movement would withstand any and all enemies in order to prevail for millennia. The Revolution, so he claimed, would be finished only when the entire German world had been completely reshaped, both internally and externally.

When Hitler said "the entire German world," he most certainly meant the entire world *per se*. He stated verbatim as follows:

It is not the ones who are half-hearted and neutral who make history, but rather the people who take the struggle upon themselves. In that our Movement marched and continues to march with double-quick pace, it has in it the power to prevail against every enemy and achieve victory. The Movement has taken on two thousand years of German history and culture. It will become the bearer of German history and German culture of the future. It will ensure that new, unforgettable documents are created which will continue to award the Volk its place among the circle of great civilized peoples in world history. We are not working for the moment, but for the judgment of millennia.

In these last few days of April, Hitler was able to score yet another successful power play. Reich Minister Franz Seldte declared in a radio speech on April 27 that he had joined the NSDAP and was placing himself and the association of former frontline soldiers he headed, the *Stahlhelm*, under Hitler's leadership.¹⁷⁶ The second leader of the association, former Lieutenant General Theodor Duesterberg, had been forced to resign.

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On the occasion of Hitler's birthday, numerous streets in Germany were named after him. Hitler appeared, however, to be little gratified by these gestures and issued the following declaration to the press on April 27:¹⁷⁷

In numerous communities and cities recently, streets and squares have been renamed. Although I greatly appreciate the honor bestowed upon me by connecting my name with such streets and squares, all the more I may request that one refrain from changing historic names. We must not fall prey to the mistake made in 1918. Each generation should connect only that with itself which it has itself created. It is our bounden duty to erase the names of the November Criminals from our public streets and squares; their former names shall be restored to them. In future, the national revolution may only connect its name and the names of its leading men to what it achieves on its own.

Adolf Hitler

This is one area in which Hitler apparently was unable to enforce his will, as is witnessed by the abundance of "Adolf Hitler Streets" and "Adolf Hitler Squares" in the 'historic' quarters of German cities between 1933 and 1945.

On April 27, Hitler appointed Rudolf Hess, his long-standing secretary and Chairman of the Central Political Commission of the NSDAP, as his Deputy in party matters. The decree read as follows:¹⁷⁸

I hereby appoint the Chairman of the Central Political Commission, party comrade Rudolf Hess, as my Deputy and grant him the authorization to make decisions on my behalf in all questions of party leadership.

Adolf Hitler

Hitler was later to regret having made this appointment.¹⁷⁹

On April 27, it was also disclosed that Hitler's long-standing attorney, Dr. Hans Frank, who had held the post of Bavarian Minister of justice since March 1933, had been appointed Reich Commissar for the *Gleichschaltung* of the judiciary in the Länder and the amendment of the legal system on April 22.¹⁸⁰

On April 29, Hitler made an appearance at Starnberg Lake and went on a short flight with the giant flying boat 'Dornier Do X', at the time the world's largest aircraft. He sat in the cockpit and allegedly took over the flight control for periods at a time.¹⁸¹

In order to effect the next step toward further consolidating his power, Hitler turned to the unions, whose fate had been discussed in the newspapers throughout the month of April. Hitler's aim could be no other than the full-scale elimination of these "Marxist" organizations. However, he intended to lessen the shock to the German workers by

means of noble speeches and demonstrations. He knew that, in the words of Karl Bröger,¹⁸² “the poorest son of Germany” was also its “most loyal” and would not, if robbed of his former leaders, be reluctant to reply to a “national” call. This “most loyal son of Germany” was to be rewarded for his cooperation by a special honor.

By means of a bill passed on April 10,¹⁸³ Hitler had declared May Day—formerly the day reserved for the Marxists’ anti-capitalist demonstrations—the “Day of National Labor.”

Hitler had ordered that momentous events be scheduled in Berlin for May 1, 1933. The festivities commenced with a youth rally in the *Lustgarten* at 9:00 a.m. Hitler had arranged that Hindenburg deliver a speech so that he might witness for himself the joyful enthusiasm with which German youth welcomed the new Germany. Following the jubilantly received address given by the Reich President, which had ended with a triple chorus of “Hurrah!”, Hitler—in a light-colored trenchcoat—stepped to the balustrade and shouted:¹⁸⁴

German boys! German girls! Three cheers for our Reich President, Field Marshal von Hindenburg, the great soldier and leader of the World War: *Er lebe hoch, hoch, hoch!*

It is evident that Hitler took pains to do things in a fashion amenable to Hindenburg and thus avoided the three “Sieg Heil!” cheers customary with the National Socialists. His ulterior motive also lay in stressing the contrast between himself, the lord and master, the omniscient and all-organizing Führer, and the Field Marshal, the personification of an age now past.

At noon, Hitler received delegations of workers dispatched from all areas of the Reich itself and from Austria, Danzig, and the Saar. In the afternoon he introduced the delegations to the Reich President.¹⁸⁵

In the interim, hundreds of thousands had gathered at the Tempelhofer Feld. Goebbels estimated the crowd at one and a half million; the Eher Verlag cited the figure as two million.¹⁸⁶

At 8:00 p.m., Hitler delivered a major speech there, expounding once again his old theory that the political and social misery of the German Volk was due solely to its lack of unity. His speech climaxed in the words:

German Volk, you are strong when you are one. German *Volk*, you are not second-class, even if the world wants you to be a thousand times over. German Volk, forget fourteen years of disintegration and rise up to two thousand years of German history!

Following is a verbatim account of the speech:¹⁸⁷

German Volksgenossen!

*Der Mai ist gekommen.*¹⁸⁸ That is how a German folksong puts it. And for many centuries, the first day of May was not only symbolic of spring's arrival in the countryside; it was also a day of joy, of festive spirits and sentiments. There came a time when this day was enlisted for other purposes, and the day of new life and hopeful joy was transformed into a day of quarrel and internal strife. A dogma which had seized hold of our Volk attempted to transform the day of awakening nature, of the visible approach of spring, into a day of hate, of fraternal strife, of discord, and of suffering. Centuries passed by this German country, and this day seemed more and more destined to document the division and disunity of our Volk. But there finally came a time of reflection, too, after the deepest suffering had seized our Volk, a time of turning inward and for German people to come together again.

And today we can once more join in singing the old folk song: "*Der Mai ist gekommen.*" Our Volk's awakening has come to pass. The symbol of class conflict, of never-ending strife and discord, is now becoming once again the symbol of the great unity and uprising of the nation. And thus, for all time to come, we have chosen this day when nature awakens as the day of regaining our own power and strength and, at the same time, the productive work which knows no limits, which is not bound to unions or factories or offices; work we wish to recognize and promote wherever it is performed in a positive sense for the very existence and the life of our Volk.

The German Volk has a gruesome crisis behind it. But it is not as though this were due to lack of industry, no! Millions in our Volk are working like before. Millions of peasants are walking behind their plows as in the past, millions of workers are standing at the workbench, hammering to the sound of the ringing anvil. Millions in our Volk are working, and millions more want to work, but they cannot! Tens of thousands voluntarily put an end to an existence which, for them, holds only grief and misery. They have traded it for the next world, in which they hope for something more and better. Appalling suffering and misfortune have descended upon us and brought, in their wake, despondency and even despair. And we now ask ourselves, why?

It is a political crisis. The German Volk has become disintegrated internally, its entire vitality is being used up in the internal struggle. The ability to build on the power of one's own will has dwindled, people's faith in the power of the individual has diminished. Millions are eyeing the rest of the world in the hope that it will bestow upon them good fortune and well-being. The Volk is disintegrating, and its vitality, its power to assert its own life, is fading with this disintegration. We see the consequences of this class conflict around and within us, and we want to learn from this. For there is one thing we have recognized as the primary requirement for the recovery of our Volk: the German Volk must once again come to know itself!

The millions of people divided into professions, separated into artificial classes which, infested by arrogance of rank and class madness, are no longer able to understand each other—they must find their way back together! A

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gigantic, tremendous task—we know it! But when madness has been upheld and preached as a political idea for seventy years, when the destruction of the Volksgemeinschaft has been the political rule for seventy years, then it is difficult to seek to change people's minds overnight. We must not allow this to let us become despondent and despair. What one man has built, another can tear down; what human madness once created can be overcome by the power of reason.

We know that this process of coming to know and understand each other cannot be a matter of weeks or months or even of a mere few years. We do, however, have the unshakable will to accomplish this great task before German history, we have the resolution to lead German people back together, and if necessary, to force them back together.

That is the meaning of May Day which shall be celebrated in Germany from now on and throughout the centuries so that all those who are active in the great machinery of our productive national work may join together and extend their hands to one another once a year in the realization that nothing can be accomplished unless everyone contributes his share of work and efforts. And thus, as our motto for this day, we have chosen the sentence, "Honor the work, and respect the worker!"

For millions, it is difficult to overcome all the hate and misunderstandings which have been artificially cultivated in the past and find their way back together. There is one realization which allows us to tread this path more easily. Take a person who is working, wherever it may be—he should and must not forget that his Volksgenosse, who is doing his duty just like him, is indispensable; that the nation does not subsist on the work of a government, of a certain class or in the products of its intelligence, but rather lives from the mutual and harmonious work of all! When millions believe that the type of work itself is any indication of the worthiness of those who execute it, this is a bitter mistake. There are many tens of thousands among us who want to make respect for the individual dependent upon the type of work he does. No! Not what he does, but rather how he does it must be the decisive factor. The fact that millions among us are industrious year in, year out, without ever being able to hope to gain riches, or even only to achieve a life without cares—that should oblige everyone to support them all the more. For it is their idealism and their devotion alone which make it possible for the whole to exist and live. It would be a sorry fate if today this idealism in our Volk were to fade and the value of an individual were to be judged solely by the external fortunes of life which have fallen to his lot. The value of our Volk would then no longer be great and its term of existence would not be long.

It is useless to explain to the worker that he is important or to prove to the peasant the necessity of his existence; useless to approach the intellectual, the mental worker, in order to make him understand the importance of what he does. It is necessary to teach each rank and class the significance of the other ranks and classes. And therefore we want to go forth into the cities to proclaim to them the necessity and the essentiality of the German peasant and go out into the country and to our thinkers and teach them the significance of the German working class. We want to go to the worker and to the peasant to teach them

that there can be no German life unless there is a German spirit; that they all must unite to form a great community: spirit, mind and hand, worker, peasant, and burgher.

This First of May shall also convey to the German Volk the realization that industry and work alone do not make up life if they are not wed to the power and the will of a people. Industry and work, power and will—only if they join forces, only when the strong fist of the nation is raised to protect and shelter the work, only then can real blessings result. And this day shall also make the German Volk conscious of one thing: German Volk! You are strong when you are united, when you banish from your heart the spirit of class conflict and your discord. You can place an enormous power behind your work if you unite that work with your entire *Volkstum's* will to live!

We dream of a State of the German Nation which is capable of once more securing our Volk's daily bread on earth, and we know that this requires the concentrated force of the nation. Though today Marxism scoffs that this will never work, we will provide proof that it does. My friends! Things that are great in this world are never free. One must fight bitterly for everything; similarly, it will not be an easy matter for the uprising of the Volk to become reality: it, too, requires an inner struggle. We should not complain today; we know that we will earn this uprising, will earn the freedom of our Volk. And then it will be proven that Marxism was no more than mere theory and, as such, attractive and seductive, but in reality incapable of bringing real profit and good fortune to a people.

This First of May shall document that we do not intend to destroy, but rather plan to build up. One should not choose the most beautiful spring day of the year as a symbol of fight, but as a symbol of constructive work; not as an embodiment of decay and thus disintegration, but only of *völkisch* solidarity and thus of rising up. It is no coincidence that our opponents, who claim to have been celebrating this day for seventy years now and who have been in power in Germany for fourteen years have not, in spite of everything, succeeded in gaining hold of the German Volk on this day as we have done from the very beginning. The Volk unconsciously perceives in its core that any celebration of the Marxist type was contrary to the springtide season. It did not want hate, it did not want struggle, it wanted uplifting! And today the Volk senses it: the First of May has recovered its true, intrinsic meaning. That is the reason why millions throughout Germany are joyfully pouring forth to bear witness to a will which desires to take part in the reconstruction of the nation. And while we observe this holiday for the first time today, let us call to mind our aims for the time which lies before us: without faltering shall we struggle to ensure that the power captured by the new concept, the new political faith in Germany, will never again fade, but instead grow stronger and stronger.

We want to fight to ensure that this new idea rises above all of Germany and gradually captivates the entire German Volk in its spell. With courage and determination, we want to defend this flag of the resurrection of our Volk against anyone who believes he can tear it down. We want to reawaken our Volk's self-esteem and self-confidence and attempt to increase them on a permanent basis. We know the time which lies behind us and those who

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typified it. They intentionally inoculated our Volk with the idea that it was, as a whole, inferior in the world, incapable of great deeds, not worthy of the rights accorded all others. They artificially cultivated inferiority complexes because this corresponded to the inferiority of the parties which seduced this Volk for long years. We want to release the Volk from this spell, want to continually impress upon it this belief:

German Volk! You are not second-class, even if the world wishes it so a thousand times over. You are not of lesser value, of lesser significance. German Volk, remember what you are, remember your past and the accomplishments of your fathers, of your very own generation! Forget fourteen years of disintegration, and rise to two thousand years of German history!

We have called out to you this way, my Volksgenossen throughout Germany, from the first day onwards to instill in all of you this conviction from a feeling of inner solidarity: Germans! You are a strong Volk if you will yourself to be strong!

The millions who are demonstrating in Germany today will return home with the feeling of a newly won inner power and unity. I know, my comrades, that tomorrow your tread will be firmer again than it was yesterday. For all of us feel it: today it may be possible to rape the nation, to put it in chains—but it is no longer possible to break or humiliate it! Thus it is also our desire on this day to fortify the confidence not only in yourself, German Volk, no, but the confidence in your government, too, which feels bound to you and is a part of you, which belongs to you, which fights with you for your life, which has no other purpose but to make you, German Volk, free and happy once more.

And finally, today our solidarity is to be documented for all time by an act. When we first presented the idea of compulsory labor service to the public, the representatives of the dying Marxist world raised a great outcry, declaring, "That is a new attack on the proletariat, an attack on work, an attack on the life of the worker!" Why did they do that? They knew very well that it would never be an attack on work and much less an attack on the worker, but merely an attack on a terrible prejudice, namely that manual labor is inferior. We want to wipe out this prejudice in Germany. At a time when millions in our ranks live without any comprehension of the significance of manual labor, we want to bring the German Volk, by means of compulsory labor service, to the realization that manual labor does not discredit, does not degrade, but rather, just as any other activity, does honor to him who performs it faithfully and honestly.

It remains our firm decision to lead every single German, be he who he may, whether rich or poor, whether the son of scholars or the son of factory workers, to experience manual labor once in his lifetime so that he can come to know it, so that he can here one day more easily take command because he has learned obedience in the past. We intend by no means to eliminate Marxism only in an external sense. We are resolved to remove its very foundations. We want to spare coming generations the mental confusion it causes.

Mental and manual workers must never be allowed to be on opposite sides. For this reason we are exterminating that feeling of arrogance which so readily befalls the individual and makes him look down upon comrades who "only" stand at the workbench or the machine or walk behind the plow. Not only must

every German become acquainted at least once with this type of work, but vice-versa, too: the manual worker must realize that mental work is also necessary. And he must be taught that no one has the right to look down upon others, to imagine oneself something better; rather, each must be willing to join the great community.

This year for the first time we will turn this great ethical concept, which we connect with the *Arbeitsdienst*, into reality.¹⁸⁹ And we know that when forty years have passed, the term manual work will have undergone a change in meaning for millions of people, just as the term *Landsknecht* has come to be replaced by the concept of the German soldier.

This year we will also accomplish the great task of liberating creative initiative from the disastrous influences of majority resolutions. Not only in parliament, but in the economy as well. We know that our economy cannot advance unless a synthesis can take place between the freedom of the creative spirit and the obligation to the Volk as a whole. Thus it will also be our task to give to the treaties the meaning they deserve. Man does not live for the sake of treaties; treaties are there in order to make it possible for man to live. And finally, this year we will endeavor to finish the first lap on the way to an organic management of the economy, and we will proceed on the basic realization that there is no advancement which does not begin at the root of national, *völkisch* and economic life: the peasant. There begins the path which leads to the worker and further on to the intellectual.

Thus we will begin with our husbandman and, as first priority, lead his business back to health. We know that this is the foremost prerequisite for the recovery of the rest of the economy. The opposite has been done now for fourteen years. And we are witnessing the results. It has helped neither the urban dweller nor the worker nor the *Mittelstand*—they have all been forced to the brink of destruction.

And this leads to yet another task: the elimination of unemployment by a program providing employment. We are dividing this employment program into two parts. First of all, there is private provision of employment. Before the year is over, we will have set out to accomplish a work of greatness, a work which will put German structures and buildings back in order and thus provide work for hundreds of thousands. At this time and in this place, we want to direct our appeal to the German Volk for the first time: German Volk! Do not believe that the problem of providing employment will be solved in the stars. You yourself must lend a hand toward solving it. You must do everything you can out of understanding and trust to provide work. Each and every person has the duty not to hesitate to provide that which he requires; not to wait to produce what he will once have to produce. Every entrepreneur, every property owner, every businessman, every private person has the duty to bear German labor in mind. Since today the world is circulating untrue allegations against us, since German labor is being denounced, we must expect each German to take on his work. This is an appeal which, directed to millions of individuals, is best able to provide work for millions of people. We will also attempt to provide public employment opportunities on a large scale within the current year. We are installing a program which we do not want to pass on to posterity, the program

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of building a new road system, a gigantic undertaking which will require billions. We will sweep away resistance and make a great beginning. We will thereby introduce a series of public work projects which will help to steadily decrease the unemployment rate.

We want to work and we will work! However, in the end everything depends upon the German Volk itself, on you, on the confidence you place in us; it depends on the force of your belief in the national State. Only when you all unite in the single will to save Germany will the German individual be able to find his salvation in Germany. We know that we still have tremendous difficulties to overcome. We also know that all human labors are doomed to fail if they are not blessed by the light of Providence. But we do not belong to those who comfortably rely on a hereafter. Nothing will be given us for free. Just as, for us, the road from the past fourteen years to the present day has been a road of incessant struggle, a road which often led us near despair, the road to a better future will also be difficult. The world is persecuting us, it is turning against us, it does not wish to recognize our right to live, does not want to admit that we have a right to protect our homeland.

My German Volksgenossen! The fact that the world is so against us is all the more reason why we must become a unified whole; all the more reason for us to continually assure the world: you can do whatever you want! But you will never break us, never force us to submit to any yoke! You will no longer be able to wipe out the cry for equal rights in our Volk! The German Volk has come to its senses. It will no longer tolerate people in its midst who are not for Germany! We want to earn the renewed ascent of the nation by honest means, through our industry, our persistence, our unshakable will! We are not asking of the Almighty, "Lord, make us free!" We want to take an active part, to work, to accept one another as brothers and unite in a common struggle so that one day the hour will come when we can step before the Lord and have the right to ask of Him, "Lord, You can see that we have changed. The German Volk is no longer a Volk of infamy, shame, self-reproach, faintheartedness, and little faith. No, Lord, the German Volk is once again strong in its will, strong in its persistence, strong in bearing any sacrifice. Lord, we will not give You up! Now bless our fight for our freedom and thus our German *Volk und Vaterland!*"

In this closing section of his speech, Hitler led the German Volk, in a manner of speaking, before the heavenly throne of the 'German God above the clouds,' who was to judge whether it had mended its ways. Endowed with godlike authority, Hitler then gave the Germans general absolution for every sin committed in the past and, using nearly the same words Jacob once used,¹⁹⁰ he asked for God's blessing for the approaching freedom fight of the German Volk.

This groundwork having been laid, it was practically only a matter of executing God's will when Hitler undermined the work of the devil on May 2 and ordered that all of the offices of the evil Marxist union organizations be shut down and their assets seized.

To erase any remaining doubts as to the legality of this procedure, the following official notice was published:¹⁹¹

Competent sources have reported that the action taken against the free unions is definitely in line with the battle against Marxism proclaimed by the Führer, Adolf Hitler. The Reich Government has taken the position that one cannot allow Marxism to hide behind the unions and continue the battle in this camouflage. The measures were not directed against the worker as such but rather were to serve the purpose of securing the funds and ensuring full rights for the worker.

These domestic measures did not distract Hitler from his foreign policy concerns in the slightest. As early as April 28, he had dispatched the German Ambassador, Nadolny, to Geneva with eight proposals for amendments to the British plan for gradually restoring equality of rights to Germany. The tone and contents were such that a consensus was impossible, and the Western Powers' reaction was, as Hitler had naturally foreseen, a staunch refusal. In any case, he had little use in the future for too much willingness on the part of the West to accommodate his wishes. For the time being, Hitler was more interested in the East and devoted his attention to the Polish Ambassador in Berlin, Alfred Wysocki, to whom he made conciliating assurances in a conference on May 2.¹⁹² Behind the scenes, he was preparing a German-Polish friendship treaty.

Hitler granted Sir John Foster Fraser of the London *Daily Telegraph* an interview¹⁹³ in which he mainly defended himself against the accusation that Germany wanted war.

No one in Germany who went through the War wants to repeat that experience. The physical training of young German men is [rather] designed to revive their masculine virtues (*Mannestugenden*) and their love of the Vaterland and to strengthen them in a moral sense.

He hopes, as he stated, that the appeal of the Treaty of Versailles can be effected by peaceful means. The plan of German overseas expansion which perhaps existed before the War had been relinquished. Germany did not wish, he stated, to enter into competition with England at sea. The fate of Germany was dependent not on colonies or dominions, but on its Eastern borders.

One must admit that Hitler here stated the aims of his future foreign policy in terms as unvarnished as those he used in *Mein Kampf* no overseas expansionism, but instead expansionism in Europe—beyond Germany's borders to the East!

Hitler had stressed in numerous speeches that no title existed which was greater than his own name.¹⁹⁴ Apparently this fact had not penetrat-

May 4, 1933

ed to the professors of the Stuttgart Institute of Technology. They had the audacity to offer Hitler an honorary doctorate, perhaps on the assumption that conferring this honor upon Hitler might make him more socially acceptable, as this had been customary practice with numerous Social Democratic Ministers. Hitler gave them a proper rebuff in the following official notice:¹⁹⁵

Berlin, May 4, 1933

Adolf Hitler has informed the Board of the Technische Hochschule Stuttgart that he requests that it refrain from nominating him for an honorary doctor, because he does not contemplate accepting honorary doctorates as a matter of principle.

As a consolation to those who insisted on mourning the loss of the unions, Hitler issued the following proclamation to establish a foundation for "victims of labor" on May 4:¹⁹⁶

A memorable day has passed: the first holiday celebrating national labor. In overwhelming rallies which have never before seen their equal, the German Volk avowed its respect for German labor and the German workers. This miraculous avowal was eloquently expressed in thousands of demonstrations throughout Germany. But this historic day shall not be allowed to pass without the elemental expression of the Volk's emotions having found a lasting expression and without this idealistic avowal having found its material reflection in a gesture of gratitude.

Seven German miners, members of the working class to whom the lot of the most difficult work has fallen, were the victims of a dreadful accident on the eve of May 1 and fell on the field of labor.¹⁹⁷ Widows and orphans have been robbed of their providers. The death of these heroes should give the entire nation occasion to establish a foundation out of which, from now on, the families of all soldiers of labor who fall on the field while fighting for their daily bread will be guaranteed sufficient means of existence. It must no longer be allowed to happen in future that such victims of labor must rely on the meager benefits of public welfare. Rather, it is the bounden duty of all Germans—and in particular of those with means at their disposal—to do their best and everything in their power.

I hereby call upon you to establish a foundation for the victims of labor! In the future it shall provide support for the surviving dependents of all German workers who have met with accidental death in their trades. This foundation cannot be too large. It must become a visible symbol of the respect of the German Volk for national labor and a monument to the indissoluble community of all classes and ranks.

Contributions to this foundation can be paid into the account "Foundation for the Victims of Labor" at the Reichs-Kreditgesellschaft, Berlin W 8, Account No. IIIb 49.

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The appropriation of the funds will be determined by an honorary committee composed of the following persons: Walther Schuhmann, Fritz Thyssen, and Dr. Emil Georg von Stauss.

Berlin, May 4, 1933

The Reich Chancellor: Adolf Hitler

Indefatigable in his speechmaking, Hitler spoke at a rally of 45,000 SA men in Kiel on May 17.¹⁹⁸ Just as Christ once said to his Apostles, “You are in me, and I am in you,”¹⁹⁹ Hitler imparted to his followers in the SA:

Just as I am yours, so you are mine! Just as I have no other aim but to make Germany strong and free once more, so must your will fuse with mine. You once stood behind me, disciplined and faithful, when we were stripped of our brown shirts. You kept calm then. Today I am also asking you to bear that in mind and remain calm in the future.

I believe that, when we look back fourteen years and draw a comparison with today’s miracle, we have reason to be satisfied.

To expect more from the future would be unjust. What has come to pass in these three months must be rated as a miracle, and what will come to pass in future should not be any less. Our struggle goes on!

Comrades! We are now approaching a difficult time. The whole of life will never be anything but a struggle. You were born of the struggle, so do not hope for peace tomorrow or the day after.

We must continue our battle for the inner self of the German being. We desire neither war nor bloodshed, but we do want the right to life, the right to freedom.

It is our desire that the German Volk shall not be treated as a pariah.

The future will be hard. It will be a great success for our flag if you remain what you have been in the past: the ancient, iron Guard of the Revolution, faithful and disciplined as was once the soldier of the German Volk.

On May 10, Hitler announced the institution of the German Labor Front with the following decree:²⁰⁰

I hereby appoint the staff leader of the Political Organization of the NSDAP, Dr. Robert Ley, as leader of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront. I appoint Gauleiter Forster (Danzig) as leader of the associations of salaried employees. The leader of the NSBO, Schuhmann, is hereby appointed leader of the workers’ associations.

Berlin, May 10, 1933

Adolf Hitler

On the afternoon of the same day, Hitler delivered a lengthy speech at the first congress of the German Labor Front in the conference hall of the Prussian Council of State.²⁰¹

Here he indulged in endless “philosophical” deliberations on the business structures in the economy, the depersonalization of property, and, as a matter of course, the “Marxist” union organizations.

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Marxism as a world view of decomposition has with keen insight recognized that the trade union movement offered the possibility of waging the offensive against the State and against human society in the future with an absolutely devastating weapon. But not, of course, to help the worker—what is the worker in any country to these international evangelists? Nothing at all! They don't even see him. They themselves are not workers, they are litterateurs, alien to the Volk, an alien mob (*volksfremdes Pack!*)

The speech also contained the obligatory attacks on the November Criminals. In point of fact, Hitler still owed a trial to these alleged traitors; he had wanted to see their “heads roll.”²⁰² However, he seemed unable to locate the responsible individuals. But allegedly their ranks had swelled to the extent that he would have been forced to “strike tens of thousands dead.”

The sum of want, suffering and misery which has passed through millions of small workers' families and small households since then [1918] is something for which the Criminals of November 1918 cannot be excused. So they have nothing to complain about. We have not taken revenge. Had we wanted to take revenge, we would have had to strike tens of thousands dead.

In the further course of his protracted speech, Hitler characterized himself as the only one who really knew all of the classes in Germany; hence he was the only person who could be their “honest broker.”²⁰³

Personally, I am against accepting any honorary titles, and I do not believe that one will ever be able to accuse me of much in this respect. I do not do what is not absolutely necessary for me to do. I would never want to have visiting cards printed with the titles which are so ceremoniously conferred upon people in this earthly world. I would not want to have anything else on my gravestone but my name. But perhaps my own peculiar biography has made me more capable than anyone else of understanding and comprehending the essence and life as a whole in the various German classes—not because I have been able to look down on this life from above, but because I have experienced it myself, because I have stood in the midst of this life, because Fate, on a whim or perhaps guided by Providence, threw me into this broad mass of Volk and people. Because I myself worked for years in the building trade and was forced to earn my own living. And because I once again stood in this broad mass for years as an ordinary soldier, and because life then raised me into the other classes of our Volk so that I also know these better than countless others who are born into these classes. Thus perhaps Fate chose me above all others to be—I may apply this term to myself—the honest broker, a broker honest to all sides. I have no personal interest; I am neither dependent upon the State nor upon a public office; neither am I dependent upon the economy or industry or any kind of union. I am an independent man, and I have set myself no other goal than to serve the German Volk to the best of my power and ability—and above all to serve the millions of people who have perhaps been hit hardest thanks to their

simple trust, their ignorance, and the baseness of their former leaders. I have always held to the opinion that there is nothing finer than to be an advocate of those who are not capable of defending themselves.

However, Hitler only set himself up as an advocate of the oppressed Germans whenever it suited his plans at home or abroad. He chose to ignore the fate of the Germans whom he sent to concentration camps and who were similarly “not capable of defending themselves,” just as he was blind to the lot of foreign people. Without pausing for breath, Hitler went on to attack the intellectuals he so despised:

I know this broad mass of my Volk and would like to say only one thing to our intellectuals: any Reich built only upon the classes of intellect is a weak construction!

I know this intellect: perpetually brooding, perpetually inquiring, but also perpetually uncertain, perpetually hesitating, vacillating, never firm! He who would construct a Reich on these intellectual classes alone will find that he is building on sand. It is no accident that religions are more stable than the various forms of government. They generally tend to sink their roots deeper into the earth; they would be inconceivable without this broad mass of people. I know that the intellectual classes are all too easily seized by the arrogance that rates this Volk according to the standards of its knowledge and its so-called wisdom; yet there are things here which even the understanding of the prudent²⁰⁴ fails to see because it is unable to see them. This broad mass of people is certainly often dull and certainly backward in some respects, not as nimble, not as witty, not as intellectual. But it does have one thing: it has faith, it has persistence, it has stability.

Obviously Hitler could more easily identify with these qualities than with sober “intellectual” reflection, a sound knowledge of history and a detached assessment of Germany’s power in comparison to the power of other nations. Hitler was incapable of praising the German workers as he had the peasants on April 5,²⁰⁵ for the former had played only a minor role in his ascent to power. He did, however, want to mention the fact that even “lesser Volksgenossen” had contributed to his triumph.

I can clearly say: the triumph of this Revolution never would have come had my companions, the broad mass of our lesser Volksgenossen, not stood behind us with tremendous faith and unshakable persistence. I could not imagine anything better for our Germany than if it were to succeed in leading these people who are now standing outside our fighting ranks into the new State and shape them into a sturdy foundation for the new State.

The poet once said: “Germany will be at its height when its poorest sons are its most faithful citizens.” I have now come to know these poorest sons for four and a half years as musketeers in the Great World War; I came to know those

who perhaps had nothing to gain for themselves, and who were heroes simply by virtue of the call of their blood, out of a feeling of belonging to their Volk. No Volk has more right to erect monuments to its unknown musketeer as much as our German Volk. This unshakable Guard which stood firm in countless battles, which never wavered and never yielded, which gave us a thousand demonstrations of tremendous courage, of faith, of willingness to sacrifice, of discipline, and of obedience, is one we must conquer for the State, one we must win over for the coming German Reich, our Third Reich. This is perhaps one of the most valuable things we can give this Guard.

Because I know this Volk better than anyone else who also, at the same time, knows the rest of the Volk, in this case I am not only willing to assume the role of honest broker, but am also happy that Fate is able to cast me for this part. I shall never in my life have greater pride than when, at the end of my days, I am able to say: I have gained the German worker for the German Reich.

On May 12, Hitler visited the 76-year-old Benedictine abbot Albanus Schachleitner, who had retired to live in Feilnbach near Bad Aibling, and congratulated him on the 50-year anniversary of his taking orders.²⁰⁶ Schachleitner had variously come out in public support of Hitler and thus was particularly suited to influence the Catholic population as a propaganda figure, much as the military pastor and later Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller served to sway the Lutherans to the National Socialist cause.

Hitler had convened the Reichstag for May 17 in order to submit a statement of foreign policy on behalf of the government. This act of state was prompted by the May 11 resolution of the Geneva Disarmament Conference according the German *Wehrverbände*, i.e. the SA, the SS, the Stahlhelm, etc., military status in the planned restructuring of the Armed Forces. At that time the Western Powers intended to install a system of militias throughout Europe designed to take the place of the standing armies.

Hitler was an avowed enemy of any type of militia, as he had already made clear in *Mein Kampf*.²⁰⁷ Soldiers conscripted for a two-year period were, to his mind, the only force with which he could accomplish his plans of conquering the East.

The Geneva resolution of May 11 did not, however, constitute the sole reason for Hitler's foreign policy speech of May 17: he also needed an alibi for his planned withdrawal from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference.

This speech was the first of many similar speeches to follow until 1939. On each respective occasion, Hitler went into great detail in illustrating how faithfully Germany had fulfilled its disarmament obliga-

tions under the Treaty of Versailles and, on the other hand, how disgracefully the other powers had behaved, above all France and its allies. He juggled figures and columns as he was so fond of doing, citing the millions of German rifles, carbines, machine guns, pieces of artillery, and shells which had been destroyed and enumerating, in contrast, nearly every single aircraft, reserve aircraft, armored vehicle, and gas grenade in the other nations' stockpiles.

Notwithstanding the fact that most of the figures could not be verified, they served their purpose of impressing his listeners. In other respects, it may be noted that Hitler's arguments were by no means pure invention and not totally lacking justification. The Treaty of Versailles did indeed contain an abundance of petty and degrading provisions. The eastern border had been drawn haplessly, and in the West a demilitarized zone stretched from the border to fifty kilometers east of the Rhine—a landstrip over which Germany did not have full sovereignty. The Treaty of Versailles was a conglomerate of half-measures for both Germany and its neighbors. It is revealing to note that Hitler was not alone in referring to it as the Disgraceful Treaty of Versailles (*Schandvertrag*). Foch, the victorious French Marshal,²⁰⁸ shared this view and fought what he held to be the injustice done to France in establishing the 1919 borders until he died. He further regarded the demilitarization of the Rhineland as worthless unless the bridges over the Rhine were under the control of France or the allied powers; later, his views were verified by events.

From France's perspective, the regular army of 100,000 men which the Treaty of Versailles had accorded Germany represented an imminent threat, for every single officer and man was trained as a cadre leader or subleader and thus together this body formed the framework for a future conscription army. This logic lay behind France's proposals for establishing militias and its refusal to disarm. Placards posted throughout France in 1932 proclaimed: "France has been through four invasions in 100 years. France does not need to disarm!"²⁰⁹

In the course of 1932 and 1933, the Western Powers had come to realize that it was necessary to amend the Treaty of Versailles and hence had initiated negotiations to find an acceptable solution. Were they to reach consensus, Hitler would have been robbed of arguments for his planned use of force, and thus he summoned up all of his powers of oral persuasion in order to prevent any agreement from being reached. True to his belief that domestic and foreign policy were of one cloth, he had acquainted himself with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles as

thoroughly as he had previously gained a complete grasp of the articles of the Weimar Constitution. He intended to justify his military plans by citing the injustice of the Treaty of Versailles, thereby setting himself up as the apostle of peace and branding the other nations as the guilty parties who had been unwilling to accept his well-meant proposals. Hitler deployed this tactical approach for the first time on May 17, 1933.

His speech also marked the beginning of another new phase: on May 17, Hitler spoke to a Reichstag which, although still containing representatives of the SPD, the Center, and the right-wing parties in addition to the NSDAP, for the first time had to play the new role Hitler had assigned to it: that of acting as forum for the speeches he was delivering not only to the German Volk, but to the entire world.

This already became evident in the opening sentences of his speech to the Reichstag, which follows verbatim:²¹⁰

Deputies, Ladies and Gentlemen of the German Reichstag!

In the name of the Reich Government I have asked the Reichstag President to convene the Reichstag so that I may take a stand before this forum on the questions which today affect not only our Volk but the entire world.

The problems which you know so well are of such great significance that not only political pacification, but the economic salvation of all are contingent upon finding a satisfactory solution.

When I express the desire on behalf of the German Government that the handling of these problems be totally removed from the sphere of passion, I do this not least of all in the realization dominating us all, namely that the crisis of our time owes its deepest origin alone to those passions which dimmed the insight and intelligence of the nations after the War.

For all of the problems causing today's unrest lie anchored in the deficiencies of the Peace Treaty, which was unable to provide a judicious, clear and reasonable solution for the most important and most decisive questions of the time for all ages to come. Neither the national problems nor the economic—not to mention the legal—problems and demands of the peoples were solved by virtue of this Treaty in a manner which would allow them to withstand the criticism of reason for all time. Thus it is understandable that the idea of a revision is not only an integral part of the lasting side effects of the consequences of this Treaty; indeed, the necessity of revision was foreseen by its authors and hence given a legal foundation in the Treaty itself.

When I deal briefly here with the problems this Treaty should have solved, I am doing so because the failure in these areas inevitably led to the subsequent situations under which the political and economic relations between nations have been suffering since then.

The political problems are as follows: in the course of many centuries, the European nations and their borders evolved from concepts which were based exclusively upon the idea of a political State as such. With the triumphant assertion of the national idea and the principle of nationalities in the course of

the past century, the seeds of numerous conflicts were sown as a result of the failure of States which had arisen under different circumstances to take these new ideas and ideals into account. At the end of the Great War, there could have been no greater task for a real peace conference than to undertake, in the clear recognition of this fact, a territorial and political reorganization of the European States which would do justice to this principle to the greatest possible degree. The more closely the borders between peoples coincided with the borders between States, the more this would have done away with a whole series of future potential conflicts. In fact, this territorial reorganization of Europe, taking into account the actual borders between peoples, would have constituted the solution in history which, with a view to the future, might have allowed both victors and vanquished to perceive that the blood sacrifices of the Great War were perhaps not completely in vain, for they might have served the world as the foundations for a real peace.

As it was, solutions were chosen—partly due to ignorance, partly to passion and hatred—which contained the perpetual seed of fresh conflicts in their very lack of logic and fairness.

The economic problems the conference was to have solved are as follows: The present economic situation in Europe is characterized by the overpopulation of the European West and, in the land comprising this territory, by the dearth of certain raw materials which are indispensable for the customary standard of living in these very areas with their ancient culture. Had one wished to bring about a certain pacification of Europe for the humanly foreseeable future, it would have been necessary—instead of relying upon the unproductive and dangerous concepts of penance, punishment, reparation, etc.—to rely upon and take into account the deep realization that lack of means of existence has always been a source of conflict between peoples. Instead of preaching the precepts of destruction, one would have had to initiate a reorganization of the international, political and economic relations which would have done justice to the vital needs of each individual people to the fullest possible extent.

It is unwise to deprive a people of the economic resources necessary for its existence without taking the fact into consideration that the population dependent upon them must of necessity continue to live in this territory. It is absurd to believe that one is performing a useful service to other peoples by economically destroying a people numbering 65 million. Peoples who would proceed in such a manner would very soon, under the laws of nature linking cause and effect, come to experience that they would be subjected to the same catastrophe which they intended to impose upon another people. One day the concept of reparations and their enforcement will become a classic example in the history of nations of the extent to which disregard for international welfare can be damaging to all.

As it was, reparation politics could be financed only by German exports. The export industry of the creditor states was made to suffer to the same extent to which Germany, because of the reparations, was regarded as a sort of international export company. Hence the economic advantages of the reparation payments could bear no relation to the damage caused to the individual economies by these reparations.

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The attempt to avoid this development by compensating for the limits placed on German exports by means of granting loans to make the payments possible lacked circumspection and was ultimately wrong. For the conversion of political debts to private obligations led to an interest requirement, the fulfillment of which unavoidably produced the same results. However, the worst of the matter was that the development of domestic economic life was artificially checked and destroyed. Competition in the world markets by a constant undercutting of prices led to an overintensification of rationalizing measures in the economy.

The millions of our unemployed constitute the final consequence of this development. Were one inclined to limit the reparation obligations to deliveries of goods, this would result in no less substantial damage to the domestic production of the peoples profiting from them. This is because deliveries of goods in the magnitude in question are not conceivable without acute danger to the continued existence of the peoples' own production.

The Treaty of Versailles is to blame for having inaugurated a period in which the mathematical genius of finance is bringing about the demise of economic reason.

Germany has fulfilled these obligations imposed upon it, in spite of their inherent lack of reason and the foreseeable consequences, so faithfully as to be virtually suicidal.

The international economic crisis is the indisputable proof of the correctness of this statement.

The plan of restoring a general international sense of justice was no less destroyed by the Treaty.

In order to justify all of the measures of this edict, Germany had to be branded as the guilty party. This is a procedure which is, however, just as simple as it is impossible. This would mean that in future, the vanquished will always bear the blame for conflicts, for the victor will always be in a position to simply establish this as a fact.

This procedure therefore assumed a terrible significance because, at the same time, it served as a reason for transforming the relative strength existing at the end of this War to a lasting legal status. The concepts of victor and vanquished were hence made to constitute the foundations of a new international legal and social order.

The degradation of a great people to a second-rate, second-class nation was proclaimed in the same breath with which a League of Nations was called into being.

This treatment of Germany could not lead to a pacification of the world. The disarmament and defenselessness of the vanquished which was considered necessary—an unheard of procedure in the history of the European nations—was even less suited to diminish the general dangers and conflicts; rather, it led to a state of affairs consisting of those perpetual threats, demands and sanctions which threaten to become, by virtue of the continual unrest and insecurity they cause, the death of the entire economy. If, in the lives of peoples, every consideration of the risks involved in certain actions is omitted, unreason will all too easily triumph over reason. At any rate, until now the League of Nations has

been incapable of providing appreciable assistance to the weak and unarmed on such occasions. Treaties which are concluded for the pacification of the lives of peoples in relation to one another have any real meaning only when they are based upon a genuine and honest equality of rights for all. And this is the main reason for the turmoil which has dominated the world for years.

Finding a reasonable and lasting solution to the problems existing today lies in the interests of all. No new European war would be capable of bringing about anything better in place of the unsatisfactory conditions of the present.

On the contrary: the use of any type of violence in Europe could not serve to create a more favorable political and economic situation than exists today. Even if a fresh violent European solution were a decisive factor in solving the problems, the final result would be an increase in the disturbance to the balance of power in Europe, and therefore, one way or another, the seed of further conflicts and complications would be sown.

New wars, new uncertainty, and a new economic crisis would be the consequences. The outbreak of such madness without end would, however, lead to the collapse of today's social and political order. A Europe sinking into Communist chaos would give rise to a crisis of unforeseeable proportions and unpredictable length.

It is the earnest desire of the National Government of the German Reich to prevent such an unpeaceful development by means of its honest and active cooperation.

This is also the real meaning behind the radical change which has taken place in Germany. The three factors which dominate our revolution do not contradict the interests of the rest of the world in any way.

First: preventing the impending Communist subversion and constructing a *Volkestaat* uniting the various interests of the classes and ranks, and maintaining the concept of personal property as the foundation of our culture. Second: solving the most pressing social problems by leading the army of millions of our pitiful unemployed back to production. Third: restoring a stable and authoritarian leadership of the State, supported by the confidence and will of the nation which will finally again make of this great Volk a legitimate partner to the rest of the world.

Speaking now, conscious of being a German National Socialist, I would like to proclaim on behalf of the National Government and the entire national uprising that, above all, we in this young Germany are filled with the deepest understanding of the same feelings and convictions and the justified demands of the other nations to live. The generation of this young Germany, which until now has come in its lifetime to know only the want, misery and distress of its own Volk, has suffered too dearly from this madness to be capable of contemplating subjecting others to more of the same.

In that we are devoted to our own identity as a Volk in boundless love and faith, we also respect the national rights of other peoples on the basis of a common conviction and desire from the very bottom of our hearts to live with them in peace and friendship.

Thus the concept of Germanization is alien to us. The mentality of the past century, on the basis of which it was believed possible to make Germans of

Poles and Frenchmen, is foreign to us, just as we passionately reject any respective attempt in the opposite direction. We view the European nations as a given fact. The French, the Poles, etc. are our neighbors, and we know that no historically conceivable event can change this reality.

It would have been fortunate for the world had these realities been given due consideration in respect to Germany in the Treaty of Versailles. For the object of a genuinely lasting treaty should not be to cut open fresh wounds or keep existing ones open, but rather to close and heal the wounds. A judicious handling of the problems could easily have arrived at a solution in the East which would have accommodated both the understandable claims of Poland as well as the natural rights of Germany. The Treaty of Versailles failed to provide this solution. In spite of this, no German Government will of its own accord violate an agreement which cannot be eliminated without being replaced by a better one.

Yet this recognition of the legal character of such a treaty can be merely a general one. Not only the victor, but the vanquished as well has claim to the rights accorded it therein. But the right to demand a revision of the Treaty lies anchored in the Treaty itself. The German Government wishes to base the reasons for and the extent of its claims on nothing other than the present results of past experiences and the incontestable consequences of critical and logical reasoning. The experiences of the last fourteen years are both politically and economically unequivocal.

The misery of the peoples was not alleviated; instead, it increased. The deepest root of this misery lies, however, in the division of the world into victor and vanquished as the intended permanent basis for all treaties and any future order. The worst effects of this order are expressed in the forced defenselessness of one nation in the face of an exaggerated armament on the part of the others. The reasons why Germany has been staunchly demanding universal disarmament for years are as follows:

First of all, the demand for equality of rights expressed in actual facts is a demand of morality, right and reason; a demand which was acknowledged in the Treaty itself and the fulfillment of which was indissolubly tied to the demand for German disarmament as a starting point for world disarmament.

Secondly, because conversely the degradation of a great Volk cannot be maintained in history forever but must of necessity one day come to an end. How long is it believed to be possible to impose such an injustice upon a great nation? What is the advantage of the moment worth in comparison to the ongoing developments of centuries? The German Volk will continue to exist, just as the French and, as we have learned from historical evolution, the Polish have done. What significance and what value can the successful short-term oppression of a people of 65 million have in comparison to the force of these incontrovertible facts? No State can have a greater understanding of the newly established young European national States than the Germany of the National Revolution which has arisen from the same will. It wants nothing for itself which it is not prepared to accord to others.

When Germany today lodges the demand for genuine equality of rights in respect to the disarmament of the other nations, it has a moral right to do so

given its own fulfillment of the treaties. For Germany did disarm, and Germany performed this disarmament under the strictest international control. Six million rifles and carbines were handed over or destroyed; the German Volk was forced to destroy or surrender 130,000 machine guns, huge amounts of machine gun barrels, 91,000 pieces of artillery, 38.75 million shells, and an enormous supply of other weapons and munitions.

The Rhineland was demilitarized, the German fortresses were pulled down, our ships surrendered, the aircraft destroyed, our military system was abandoned, and thus the training of reserves prevented. Even the most needed weapons of defense were denied us.

If, in the face of these indisputable facts, anyone should come forward today, citing truly pitiful excuses and pretexts and claiming that Germany did not comply with the Treaty and had even rearmed, I must reject this view at this time for being as untrue as it is unfair.

It is equally incorrect to claim that Germany has not complied with the provisions of the Treaty in respect to personnel. The allegation that the SA and the SS of the National Socialist Party are connected in any way with the Reichswehr in the sense that they represent formations with military training or army reserves is untrue!

A single example serves to illustrate the irresponsible thoughtlessness with which such allegations are made: last year in Brünn, members of the National Socialist Party in Czechoslovakia were put to trial. Sworn experts of the Czech Army claimed that the defendants maintained connections to the National Socialist Party in Germany, were dependent upon it and thus, as members of a popular sports club (*Volkssportverein*), were to be equated with members of the SA and SS in Germany which constituted a reserve army trained and organized by the Reichswehr.

At the same time, however, the SA and SS—just as the National Socialist Party itself—not only had no connection with the Reichswehr whatsoever: on the contrary, they were regarded as organizations hostile to the State and persecuted, banned, and finally dissolved. And even beyond that: members of the National Socialist Party and those belonging to the SA and SS were not only excluded from all public offices—they were not even allowed to take on employment as simple workers in an army company. Nonetheless, the National Socialists in Czechoslovakia were given long prison sentences on the basis of this false view. In reality, the SA and the SS of the National Socialist Party have evolved totally without aid, totally without financial support from the State, the Reich, or even less the Reichswehr; without any sort of military training and without any sort of military equipment, out of pure party political needs and in accordance with party political considerations. Their purpose was and is exclusively confined to the elimination of the Communist threat, and their training, which bears no connection to the Army, was designed solely for the purposes of propaganda and enlightenment, mass psychological effect, and the crushing of Communist terror. They are institutions for instilling a true community spirit, overcoming former class differences, and alleviating economic want.

The Stahlhelm came into being in memory of the great age of the common experiences at the front, to nurture established traditions, maintain comrade-

ship, and finally also to protect the German Volk from the Communist revolution which has been threatening the Volk since November 1918, a threat which admittedly cannot be fathomed by countries who have never had millions of organized Communists as we have and have not suffered at the hands of terror as Germany has. For the real objective of these national organizations is best characterized by the type of struggle in which they are actually engaged, and the toll this has taken. As a consequence of Communist slayings and acts of terror in the space of only a few years, the SA and SS suffered over 350 dead and about 40,000 injured. If today the attempt is being made in Geneva to add these organizations which exclusively serve domestic purposes to the Armed Forces figure, then one might as well count the fire brigades, the gymnastics clubs, the security corps, the rowing clubs, and other sports organizations as members of the Armed Forces, too.

However, when at the same time the trained annual contingents of the other armies of the world are not included, in contrast to these men totally lacking in military training; when one deliberately overlooks the armed reserves of the others while commencing to count the unarmed members of our political associations, we have before us a procedure against which I must lodge the sharpest protest!

If the world wishes to destroy confidence in what is right and just, these are the best means of doing so.

On behalf of the German Volk and the German Government, I must make the following clear: Germany has disarmed. It has fulfilled the obligations imposed upon it in the Peace Treaty to an extent far beyond the limits of what can be deemed fair or even reasonable. Its army consists of 100,000 men. The strength and character of its police is internationally regulated.

The auxiliary police instituted in the days of the Revolution is exclusively political in character. In those critical days, it replaced the other part of the police which, at the time, the new regime suspected of being unstable. Now that the Revolution has been successfully carried through, this force is already being depleted and will be completely dissolved even before the year is over. Germany thus has a fully justified moral right to insist that the other powers also fulfill their obligations pursuant to the Treaty of Versailles. The equality of rights accorded to Germany in December has not yet become reality. Since France has repeatedly asserted that the safety of France must be given the same consideration as Germany's equality of rights, I would like to pose two questions in this regard:

1. So far, Germany has accepted all of the obligations in respect to security arising from the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the Kellogg Pact, the Treaties of Arbitration, the Pact of NonAggression, etc. What other concrete assurances are there which Germany could assume?

2. On the other hand, what security does Germany have? According to the information of the League of Nations, France alone has 3,046 aircraft in service while Belgium has 350, Poland 700, and Czechoslovakia 670. In addition, there are innumerable quantities of reserve aircraft, thousands of armored vehicles, thousands of pieces of heavy artillery, and all of the technical means required to conduct warfare with chemical gases. Doesn't Germany have more reason,

in view of its lack of defenses and weapons, to demand security than the armed states united by alliances?

Germany is nonetheless prepared at any time to assume further obligations to ensure international security if all other nations are willing to do so as well and Germany also benefits from this step. Germany would also be more than willing to disband its entire military establishment and destroy those few weapons still remaining at its disposal, were the bordering nations to do the same without exception. However, if the other States are not willing to comply with the disarmament provisions imposed upon them by the Peace Treaty of Versailles, then Germany must, at the very least, insist upon its demand for equal treatment. The German Government sees in the British plan a possible basis for the answer to these questions. However, it must demand that it not be forced to destroy an existing military institution without being granted at least qualitatively equal rights. Germany must demand that any commutation of the military institution in Germany—an institution we do not want in Germany, but one which was forced upon us from abroad—is performed only to the extent of the actual disarmament performed concurrently by the other States.

In this connection, Germany is essentially willing to agree to a transitional period of five years to bring about its national security in the expectation that, subsequent thereto, Germany will be accorded genuine equality with the other States. Germany is also perfectly prepared to completely abandon offensive weapons if, within a certain period, the armed nations destroy their own offensive weapons in turn and the use of such weapons is banned by international convention. It is Germany's sole desire to maintain its independence and be in a position to protect its borders.

According to a statement made in February 1932 by the French Minister of War, a large portion of the colored French troops are available for immediate use on the French mainland. He therefore has explicitly included them in the home forces.

Thus it is only fair to take the colored forces into account as an integral part of the French Army in the disarmament conference as well. Although one refuses to do this, one nevertheless proposes counting associations and organizations as part of the German Army which serve purely educational and sporting purposes and are given no military training whatsoever. In the other countries, there is no question of these types of associations being counted as part of military strength. This is obviously a completely impossible procedure. Germany would also be willing at any time, in the event that an objective international arms control board is created, to subject the associations in question to such control—given the same willingness on the part of the other States—in order to demonstrate to the whole world its wholly unmilitary character. Furthermore, the German Government will reject no ban on arms as being too drastic if it is likewise applied to the other States.

These demands do not mean rearmament, but rather a desire for the disarmament of the other States. On behalf of the German Government, I may once again welcome the farsighted and just plan of the Italian Head of State to create, by means of a special pact, close relations of confidence and cooperation between the four major European powers, Great Britain, France,

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Italy, and Germany. Mussolini's view that this would serve as a bridge to facilitate an understanding is a view with which the German Government agrees out of its most deeply seated convictions. It desires to oblige to the fullest possible extent if the other nations as well are inclined to genuinely overcome any difficulties which may stand in the way.

Thus the proposal made by the American President Roosevelt, of which I learned last night, deserves the warmest thanks of the German Government. The Government is prepared to consent to this method for solving the international crisis, for it is of the opinion that, if the question of disarmament is not solved, permanent economic reconstruction is inconceivable. It is willing to make a selfless contribution to this task of restoring the political and economic state of the world to order. It is also, as I have stressed in the beginning, of the conviction that there can only be one great task in our time: securing peace in the world.

I feel obliged to state that the reason for today's armament in France or Poland can under no circumstances be the fear of these nations of a German invasion. For such a fear would only be justified by the existence of modern offensive weapons. But these modern offensive weapons are exactly the ones which Germany does not have: it has neither heavy artillery nor tanks nor bombers nor poisonous gases.

The only nation which has reason to fear an invasion is the German nation, which is not only barred from having offensive weapons, but even restricted in its right to possess defensive weapons and prohibited from erecting fortifications on its borders. Germany is prepared to renounce offensive weapons at any time if the rest of the world does the same. Germany is willing to join any solemn pact of non-aggression, for Germany's concern is not offensive warfare, but its own security.

Germany would welcome the opportunity suggested in President Roosevelt's proposal of incorporating the United States in European relations in the role of guarantor of peace. This proposal signifies a great consolation to all those who wish to seriously cooperate toward maintaining peace. Our one most fervent desire is to contribute toward permanently healing the wounds inflicted by the War and the Treaty of Versailles. And Germany will take no path other than that which is recognized by the treaties themselves as just. The German Government wishes to engage in peaceful discussions with the other nations on all difficult questions. It knows that, given any military action in Europe, even if it be completely successful, the losses thus incurred would bear no relation to the gains.

Under no circumstances, however, will the German Government and the German Volk allow themselves to be coerced into signing anything which would constitute a perpetuation of Germany's degradation. Any attempt to influence the Government and the Volk with threats will be to no avail. It is conceivable that, contrary to everything which is right and moral, Germany could be raped; it is, however, inconceivable and out of the question that such an act could be accorded legitimacy by means of our own signature.

The attempt has been made in newspaper articles and regrettable speeches to threaten Germany with sanctions, but a method as monstrous as this can only

be the punishment for the fact that, by demanding disarmament, we are asking that the treaties be fulfilled. Such a measure could lead only to the ultimate moral and factual invalidation of the treaties themselves. But even in that case, Germany would never give up its peaceful demands. The political and economic consequences—the chaos which such an attempt would cause in Europe—would be the responsibility of those who resorted to such measures to fight a people which is doing no harm to the world.

At this point Hitler revealed the ulterior purpose of his entire speech: laying the groundwork for Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference.

Any such attempt, any attempt at doing violence to Germany by means of forming a simple majority against the unequivocal spirit of the treaties could only be dictated by the intention of excluding us from the conferences. But today the German Volk possesses enough character to refrain, in such an event, from forcing its cooperation upon the other nations; it would rather, albeit with a heavy heart, draw the only possible conclusions.

It would be difficult for us to remain a member of the League of Nations as a Volk subjected to constant degradation. The German Government and the German Volk are aware of the present crisis. For years, warnings have come from Germany to desist from the methods which have inevitably produced this political and economic state of affairs. If the present course is held and the present methods are continued, there can be no doubt as to the final result. Seeming political successes on the part of individual nations will be followed by all the more severe economic and hence political catastrophes affecting all. We regard it as our first and foremost task to prevent this.

These words were motivated by Hitler's apprehension that the Western Powers might take military action against Germany should it withdraw from the League of Nations. Hence he judged it expedient to close his speech with a flourish of bathos, deploring the bitter hardships of the German people and citing the number of suicides committed since 1919.²¹¹ He continued:

No effective action has been undertaken to date. The rest of the world tells us that one did, in fact, harbor a certain amount of sympathy for the former Germany; now at least we have become acquainted with the consequences and effects of this "sympathy" in Germany and for Germany!

Millions of lives destroyed, entire trades ruined, and an enormous army of unemployed—an inconsolable wretchedness, the extent and depth of which I would like to convey to the rest of the world today in a single figure:

Since the day when this Treaty was signed, which was, as a work of peace, to be the foundation for a new and better age for all peoples, there have been 224,000 people in our German Volk who, moved almost exclusively by want and misery, have chosen to take their own lives—men and women, young and old alike!

These incorruptible witnesses are an indictment against the spirit and fulfillment of a treaty, from the effects of which not only the rest of the world, but also millions of people in Germany once expected salvation and good fortune (*Heil and Segen*). May this also serve to make the other nations understand Germany's unshakable will and determination to finally put an end to an era of human aberration in order to find the way to an ultimate consensus of all on the basis of equal rights.

After the speech, the Reichstag gave its unanimous approval to Hitler's statement of policy. Even the Social Democrats consented with one voice—then again, they had already stood behind Hitler's foreign policy as early as March 23. This vote of approval on May 17 was to be their last appearance before being swept off the political stage.

To increase the impact of his "Peace Speech," Hitler attended a naval maneuver in Kiel on May 22. There he appealed to the onshore marine troops to "do everything in their power for the Vaterland"²¹² and paid visits to the battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* and the cruiser *Leipzig*.

On May 27, Hitler delivered a radio speech from Munich on the upcoming Volkstag elections in the Free State of Danzig which also dealt mainly with foreign policy. The address was designed to whet Poland's appetite to enter into an alliance with Germany. Hitler apparently felt no scruples about stating that he would "never attempt to subjugate foreign people."

This was a prelude to his speech of September 26, 1938, in which he exclaimed: "We do not want any Czechs at all."²¹³

5

On May 27, 1933, Hitler proclaimed:²¹⁴

Just as we National Socialists strongly reject the notion of trying to make Germans of foreign peoples, we fanatically oppose the attempt to forcefully remove the German from his Volk. Just as we are moved by the realization that war brings suffering and misfortune upon people, our love for our homeland obliges us to stand up on their behalf. National Socialism does not advocate a policy of correcting borders at the expense of foreign peoples. We do not want a war for the sole purpose of perhaps bringing several million people to Germany who do not even want to and never can be Germans. We will never attempt to subjugate foreign peoples who harbor only hate for us at the price of sacrificing on the battlefield millions who are dear to us and whom we love. For this reason alone we are all the more devoted to what belongs to our Volk, is of our blood, and speaks our language.

The Volkstag election in Danzig on May 28 resulted in an absolute majority for the NSDAP, enabling the National Socialists to form a government there with the Center on June 20.²¹⁵ The President of the Danzig Landbund, Dr. Hermann Rauschning, became President of the Danzig Senate (head of government). Rauschning had used his connections to make a not insubstantial contribution to the National Socialist cause in Danzig; moreover, Hitler harbored an enormous liking for him.²¹⁶

Now a second German State had joined the Reich in becoming National Socialist and coming under Hitler's rule. In the Saar, the process of building a "German Front" under NSDAP leadership took somewhat longer.²¹⁷ In Austria, Chancellor Dollfuss attempted to set up an antiparliamentary dictatorship with fascist methods to prevent an *Anschluss* with Hitler's Reich.

Meanwhile, the process of *Gleichschaltung* in Germany continued. On May 30, Hitler wrote a letter of gratitude to the Reich Commissar of Justice, State Minister Hans Frank,²¹⁸ thanking him for forming a united

front in the German legal sector by bringing fourteen associations under the control of the League of Nationalist Socialist German Jurists.

On June 4, Hindenburg and Hitler jointly issued an appeal for donations to the German Red Cross, the “Day of Sacrificial Thanks (*Opferdank*) to the German Red Cross 1933.”²¹⁹

On June 8, Hitler delivered an address at a reception held for British Royal Air Force Officers in Berlin, where he was quoted as having stated that “as a German soldier, he had had the opportunity during the war in Flanders to admire and respect the accomplishments of the English pilots.”²²⁰

On June 14, Hitler spoke to National Socialist Reichsleiters and Gauleiters who were attending a *Führer*tagung in Berlin.²²¹ In this speech, Hitler dwelt mainly on the future relationship between the NSDAP and the State and was quoted as having said that

[—] the National Socialist Movement, which had grown up fighting, was the best thing Germany had to show for itself.

The law of the National Revolution had not yet lost effect. Its dynamics still dominated Germany’s development today, and its inexorable course would lead to a completely new order of German life.

He was of the firm conviction that this gigantic work of our Movement, propelled by tremendous idealism, would outlast centuries and nothing would ever be able to eliminate it.

On June 16, after once more addressing the convention, Hitler took the floor at the inauguration of a new NSDAP *Führerschule* (school of leaders) in Bernau.²²² Formerly, the institution had been run by the General Federation of German Unions (Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, ADGB).

On June 17, Hitler received Hungarian Minister-President Gömbös at the Reich Chancellory in Berlin.²²³ Gömbös was the first Head of State to visit Hitler, setting off a continuous series of state visits from Hungary all the way up to 1945.

On June 18, Hitler attended the Central German SA Roll Call in Erfurt, accompanied by Gömbös.²²⁴

The assembly of approximately 70,000 members of the SA, SS and Hitler Youth took place in connection with new action against the Social Democrats on the one hand and the Stahlhelm on the other. At a reception in the Erfurt City Hall, Hitler stated:

Just as we have taken possession of this city today, we have also overcome the Social Democratic movement as it manifested itself in Erfurt,²²⁵ I am particularly pleased to accept the freedom of the city with very special thanks.

The reception was followed by a parade of the brown columns across the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Platz lasting several hours.

The same day, Hitler announced the nomination of Baldur von Schirach, the *Reichsjugendführer* of the NSDAP, to the position of Youth Leader of the German Reich.²²⁶

By virtue of this appointment, Schirach became head of a public office which presided over all of the youth associations and similar organizations in the entire Reich. This facilitated the speedy establishment of the Hitler Youth as the one and only youth organization in Germany.

The *Wehrverbände* were naturally to be subsumed under a single organization in like fashion. For this purpose the German Nationalist *Scharnhorstbund* and the *Jungstahlhelm*²²⁷ were both integrated into the HJ and the SA. Hitler had succeeded in convincing their leaders, in particular Franz Seldte, of the national necessity of such a measure, and he rewarded this cooperation with the following proclamation of June 26:²²⁸

National Socialists! Men of the SA and SS! Men of the Jungstahlhelm!

An aim which has been pursued steadily for fourteen years has now been accomplished. With the subordination of the Jungstahlhelm to my command as Supreme Commander of the SA and the integration of the Scharnhorstbund in the Hitler Youth, the unification of the political fighting movement of the German nation has been carried out and completed.

The SA, the SS, the Stahlhelm and the HJ will now and for all time comprise the sole organizations which the National Socialist State recognizes as responsible for the political education of our youth and our men.

It was understandable that, in the years following the Revolution, resistance against the November Traitors and their disastrous regime was attempted in the most diverse corners of our German Vaterland.

Independently and without any knowledge of each other, the men rose up and organized parties and associations to fight the Marxist State.

Doubtless they all wanted only the best. However, if Germany was to be saved, this could be done only by one single movement and not by thirty different ones. The future of our Volk does not depend upon how many associations stand up for this future but whether or not one is successful in subordinating the desires of many to a single will and thus effectively uniting them in one movement. Just as the German Reichswehr was once forced to eliminate the Freikorps, in spite of the many merits of individual units, in order to once again give the German Volk a single army, the National Socialist Movement was no less forced to eliminate the countless federations, organizations and associations, regardless of their merits or lack of merits, in order to finally construct for the German Volk a single uniform organization built upon its political will.

A great number of the best of Germans failed to comprehend this task, and many others did not wish to understand it.

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Today the meaning and hence the necessity of this tremendous fight is clear to anyone who loves our Volk and believes in its future.

Thus in past years, we have been forced to suppress numerous associations purely out of these considerations. Similarly, we will also prevent the emergence of any new association which would only serve to perpetuate the old fragmentation. The inalterability of this decision imposes upon us the obligation to be just. Therefore it is our desire as Germans and National Socialists to honestly acknowledge the difference which existed between the other associations and the Stahlhelm. We are willing to admit that the hundreds of thousands of German men who had served as soldiers at the front were drawn into this organization and thus withdrawn from the system. However, in the hour in which the fate of Germany turned, the foremost leader of this association (Bundesführer) declared his support for the National Socialist Revolution.

Now this man has drawn the final conclusions from the historical developments and decreed that, with the exception of the traditional association of the old front-line soldiers, the entire younger generation of the Stahlhelm is to be subordinated to the SA, and the Scharnhorstbund is to be integrated into the Hitler Youth and placed under my command.

My SA leaders and SA comrades! This decision will one day be judged in German history to have been an extremely rare proof of a truly magnanimous, national outlook. What might otherwise have only been achieved after years of disagreements and drawn-out struggles—which in turn would have used up German power—has been resolved by the insightful deed of a man who has been sitting next to me in loyal solidarity in the cabinet since January 30.

Our further order, that in future the remaining traditional association of the old front-line fighters would recognize no other party membership than that of the National Socialist Movement, finally provides me with the opportunity to lift the membership ban on our part.

In view of this great development, I feel moved to first of all thank you, my old comrades in the Party, the SA and the SS, from a heart which is overflowing, for the boundless loyalty with which you have stood by me in good times and in bad through so many years. This is attributable primarily to your steadfastness. You were once fanatic fighters against the old system, and today you are the unshakable guards of the National Socialist Revolution.

Second, I would also like to now thank those who voluntarily took what was certainly no easy decision to relinquish their proud independence for the sake of a greater community.

And thus for the first time I may welcome the comrades of the Jungstahlhelm who are now marching in our ranks.

From this day onwards, I order all leaders and SA and SS men to accept the men of the Stahlhelm who have entered our community as comrades and to include them in the eternal bond which binds us and which shall never be broken. No matter what memories the past holds, for you and me, nothing counts but the great future to which we have committed ourselves.

If we have succeeded, in the course of many years, in converting millions of former Marxists, in leading them to us, in admitting them into our ranks, then

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certainly we must and will be able to take on national men who come out of another camp to enter into a bond of amity with us as friends and as comrades. I thus expect of every National Socialist that he recognize the magnitude of this historic development and contribute, by his own behavior, to bringing about the most profound fusion between ourselves and the newcomers as quickly as possible.

Men of the SA, SS and Stahlhelm, to our wonderful National Socialist Movement and our German Volk: Sieg Heil!

Munich, June 26, 1933

Adolf Hitler

As Hitler indicated in this proclamation, he felt it was time to dissolve all of the parties—with the exception, of course, of his own. The KPD had virtually disappeared; its leadership was in concentration camps, along with numerous leading SPD members. The SPD's newspapers had been banned and all political activity on the part of the SPD prohibited. When the Social Democratic Party was finally banned as being treasonous and hostile to the State on June 22 by decree of the Reich Minister of the Interior, the act served only to confirm a *fait accompli*.

Hitler chose a different procedure to rid the country of the bourgeois parties. In 1933, Germany found itself in a state of intoxication similar to that of 1914, when the exclamation made by William II—"I no longer recognize parties, I recognize only Germans!"²²⁹—was jubilantly received. At that time, this remark had had no further impact upon the existence of the parties as such.

In June and July of 1933, however, Hitler was able to exert such influence on the chairmen and members of the bourgeois parties in numerous private meetings that they resolved the dissolution of their parties of their own accord for the sake of the nation.

On June 27, the German National People's Party (Kampffront Schwarz-Weiss-Rot) resolved its own dissolution by a 56 to 4 vote of its leadership. On June 28, the German State Party (the former German Democratic Party) announced its dissolution; on July 2, the Christian Socialist People's Service disbanded, followed by the German People's Party and the Bavarian People's Party on July 4 and the Center on July 5.

The fact that the Center and the Bavarian People's Party were moved to disband was doubtless the result of Hitler's concentrated powers of persuasion, particularly if one calls to mind the role which the Center had played in the German Empire and the Weimar Republic. Hitler had argued that, in view of the forthcoming concordat with the Vatican, the objectives of the Center had been accomplished and thus the party itself was superfluous.²³⁰

One of the few statesmen who appeared to be able to resist Hitler's rhetoric was Hugenberg.

Whereas Hindenburg, Papen, Seldte, Blomberg, Neurath, and the other bourgeois cabinet members had learned, since January 30, to heed only Hitler, Hugenberg would not be made into a devoted National Socialist who upheld Hitler's every word.

Although Hugenberg did not in fact openly oppose Hitler—he was too much of a patriot for this—he did feel it was appropriate to seize the opportunity afforded by a difference of opinion with Neurath during the World Economic Conference in London²³¹ to announce his resignation as Minister in June 1933. This, of course, ran completely contrary to Hitler's wishes, for he wanted to maintain the alliance of January 30 in his own way, i.e. all of the ministers who had been sworn in at that time were to remain in the cabinet for the time being. They would then be assigned National Socialist Secretaries of State; subsequently, they would also turn over their offices to proven National Socialists while remaining in the cabinet as purely token figures demonstrating national unity.

In respect to Hugenberg, Hitler had envisioned that, for the time being, he was to turn over the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to Walter Darré and accept a National Socialist Secretary of State in the Ministry of Economics.

In a lengthy conference on June 27, Hitler used every means at his disposal to move Hugenberg to reconsider.²³² He praised him, alternately pleading with him and appealing to Hugenberg's patriotic sense of duty; ultimately he threatened to throw thousands of German Nationalist adherents in jail—all in vain. Hugenberg remained steadfast. Following this discussion, the Privy Councillor was not sure whether he might indeed be arrested or secretly murdered, but Hitler did have a certain amount of restraint in such matters.

He even respected those who were able to resist his powers of oral persuasion and uphold their own opinions, on the condition, however, that they did not join the opposition or conspire to overthrow him. In later years, Hitler even sent Hugenberg birthday telegrams.²³³

On June 29, Hitler had no choice but to betake himself to Neudeck to visit the Reich President and discuss the situation resulting from Hugenberg's unpleasant resignation. Already accustomed to taking Hitler's advice, Hindenburg accepted his proposals without objection. In any case, he himself had never been particularly partial to Hugenberg.²³⁴

The following communiqué was published on Hitler's meeting with Hindenburg:²³⁵

Berlin, June 29

According to official reports from Neudeck, in response to the Reich Chancellor's proposal, Reich President von Hindenburg has granted Dr. Hugenberg, Reich Minister of Economy, Food and Agriculture, release from his offices per his request and appointed the Director General of the Allianz Insurance Company, Kurt Schmitt, as Reich Minister of Economics, and the Peasant Leader Darré as Reich Minister of Food and Agriculture. Reich President von Hindenburg also ordered the temporary retirement of the Secretary of State for the Reich Ministry of Economics, Paul Bang, and appointed Dipl. Eng. Gottfried Feder Secretary of State for the Reich Ministry of Economics.

Reliable sources indicate that the Secretary of State for the Reich Ministries of Food and Agriculture von Rohr, will remain in office.

The leaders of German industry took little note of Hugenberg's resignation and certainly had no objection to Schmitt's appointment. As noted above, Hitler had granted them substantial leeway and explicitly stated at a meeting of the Association of German Newspaper Publishers in Berlin on June 28²³⁶ that it would run completely counter to Germany's economic tasks were only state-owned newspapers to be published.

In respect to NSDAP members who tended to act on economic matters without authorization from above, Hitler took drastic measures, as illustrated in the following notice to the NSDAP's Reich Press Office issued June 29:²³⁷

Berlin, June 29, 1933

The Reich Press Office of the NSDAP hereby announces the following: former Party Comrades retired Captain Cordemann, retired Captain von Marwitz, retired Captain Wolf, and retired Captain Zucker, all of Berlin, have attempted by means of telegrams and telephone calls to Gauleiters, chambers of commerce, business enterprises, etc. to rob the Führer of the freedom to make necessary decisions. By order of the Führer, they were immediately dismissed from office and excluded from the Party. At the Chancellor's orders they were arrested and sent to a concentration camp.

In this way Hitler could demonstrate to the German people that only those were put into concentration camps who had truly earned a sojourn at a corrective institution: either the evil Communists or those who had chosen to disregard the Führer's wise commands—even if they were members of the Party.

On July 2, Hitler delivered a speech at a *Führeritagung* of the SA, SS and Stahlhelm in Bad Reichenhall, in which he paid tribute to the

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generous attitude Seldte had demonstrated in linking his organization to the SA and SS.²³⁸ Seldte himself took a vow of loyalty. After the convention had been closed, Hitler issued the following order on July 3:²³⁹

Under the leadership of the Chief of Staff of the SA, a convention of high-ranking SA and SS leaders took place in Bad Reichenhall from July 1 to July 3, to which the Bundesführer, Seldte, and numerous high-ranking leaders of the Stahlhelm were invited.

The convention, which was designed particularly to promote the mutual acquaintance of leaders fighting in a single front, was characterized by a spirit of sincerity and comradeship.

The common goal and the personal solidarity of the newly created soldierly front hold the promise of a lasting fighting community.

In agreement with Bundesführer Seldte, I thus order as follows:

The entire Stahlhelm will be placed under the command of the Supreme SA Command and reorganized according to its guidelines.

At the orders of the Supreme SA Command, the Jungstahlhelm and the sports units will be restructured by the Stahlhelm offices in accordance with the units of the SA.

This transformation must be concluded by the date still to be determined by the Supreme SA Command.

The Bundesführer shall issue the requisite commands in respect to the remaining sections of the Stahlhelm.

As a demonstration of the solidarity of the Stahlhelm with the National Socialist Movement, these sections of the Stahlhelm shall wear a field-gray armband with a black swastika on a white background.

I hereby bestow upon the Jungstahlhelm and the sports units which are part of my SA the armband of their organization and the national emblem to be worn on their caps between the cockades.

The implementation provisions will be issued by the Chief of Staff.

Adolf Hitler

The fact that such “generous” orders on Hitler’s part were nothing but transitional measures toward the complete elimination of the Stahlhelm was to become increasingly evident throughout the following two and a half years.

After the Center Party had been dissolved on July 5, Hitler regarded the political struggle for power within Germany as settled for the time being. Although he had declared that the Revolution would not be ended until a new order had been established both within and without the entire German world,²⁴⁰ with regard to the economy he felt it was expedient to temporarily shift his focus, as illustrated in an address to the Reichsstatthalters in Berlin on July 6:²⁴¹

The political parties have now been eliminated in full. The achievement of external power must now be followed by internal education. Care must be

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taken to avoid making purely formal decisions in a rush and expecting this to bring a lasting solution. People are easily capable of bending an outer form into one bearing the stamp of their own ideas.

A change, of course, can only be made when the persons required for such a change are present. More revolutions have succeeded in the initial onslaught than successful revolutions brought to a standstill.

The revolution is not a permanent state of affairs, and it must not be allowed to develop into any such permanent state. The river of the revolution which has been released must be channelled into the safe bed of evolution. The most important thing in this connection is the education of the individual. Today's conditions must be improved and the people embodying them must be instilled with a National Socialist concept of the State. Thus a businessman may not be dismissed if he is a good businessman but not yet a National Socialist, particularly if the National Socialist appointed in his place does not understand anything about business. In business, ability alone must be the decisive factor.

It is the task of National Socialism to ensure the development of our Volk. However, we should not be searching to see if there is anything left to revolutionize; rather, it is our task to secure position after position, to hold our positions and to make exemplary appointments to these positions in a gradual process. In doing so, we must focus our actions on the space of many years and think in terms of relatively long periods of time. Theoretical *Gleichschaltung* will not enable us to provide bread to workers. Moreover, history will not judge us according to whether we have dismissed and jailed the largest possible number of businessmen, but rather according to whether we have been able to provide work.

Today we have the absolute power to enforce our will everywhere. But we must also be able to replace those who are dismissed with better people.

In the long term, security in terms of power politics will be all the greater, the more we are able to underpin it economically. It is the task and the responsibility of the Reichsstatthalters to ensure that no arbitrary organizations or party offices claim for themselves governmental authority, dismiss individuals or make appointments to offices, for these are matters in which the Reich Government—and in respect to the economy, the Reich Minister of Economics—alone is competent. The Party has now become the State. All power lies in the authority of the Reich. It must not come to pass that the main emphasis in German life be transferred back to individual areas or, much less, individual organizations. Authority is no longer anchored in any partial area of the Reich, but in the concept of the German Volk itself!

In no way did Hitler regard himself as a religious reformer, a fact he had clearly stated in *Mein Kampf*. His sole aim was earthly omnipotence. As long as the Christian churches in Germany relinquished all claim to power in a political and social sense and refrained from exerting any influence on schools and youth organizations, they were free to conduct as many religious ceremonies in their churches as they wished. He was even willing to grant them substantial funding, while hoping in

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exchange for active support in the national “expansion,” i.e. future wars, in particular the crusade against the heathen Bolshevist Russia. Primarily, it appeared that the Protestant Church in Germany would be most willing to reach the internal consensus Hitler wanted. However, unexpected resistance soon arose which led to the establishment of a “Confessional Church” (in addition to the “Church of German Christians” which Hitler promoted).

Ultimately, Hitler scored higher with the Catholic Church. With few exceptions, the German Catholic bishops and clergy had rejected Hitler from the very beginning. They were relatively immune to nationalistic slogans and justifiably concerned about the future of their youth groups and other organizations. Turning a deaf ear to Hitler’s promises, they simply refused to partake of his seeming generosity. The Vatican followed a different policy, for it had gathered experience in dealing with a nationalistic dictatorship, and the Italian Church had not fared badly under Mussolini in spite of the loss of its youth organizations.

Hitler’s offer to conclude a Concordat thus fell on fertile ground in Rome; it was something which had come to pass neither in imperial Germany nor during the Weimar Republic. The Vatican felt it was wiser to secure the continued existence of the Catholic Church than to be forced to deal with open persecution and suppression.

On July 8, the Concordat between the German Reich and the Holy See was signed. German clergy showed little enthusiasm upon hearing the news. Hitler, however, was all the more elated, particularly since the act was bound to make a positive impression on neighboring countries, above all Poland. He issued the following order on the same day:²⁴²

By virtue of the conclusion of the Concordat between the Holy See and the German Reich Government, there is, in my view, sufficient guarantee that from now on the members of the Roman Catholic confession in the Reich will place their services unreservedly at the disposal of the new National Socialist State. Thus I hereby decree:

1. The dissolution of those Catholic organizations recognized in the present agreement whose dissolution was performed in the absence of an order of the Reich Government shall be repealed immediately.

2. All sanctions imposed upon priests and other leaders of these Catholic organizations shall be discontinued. Any repetition of such sanctions in future is inadmissible and will be punished in accordance with the laws in force.

I am happy in the conviction that an epoch has now come to an end in which, unfortunately all too often, religious and political interests became trapped in a seemingly irreconcilable polarity.

The agreement concluded between the Reich and the Catholic Church will serve, in this sector as well, to bring about the peace required by all.

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It is my strong hope that the settlement of the questions which concern the Protestant confession will very soon comprise a happy close to this act of pacification.

Adolf Hitler

Hitler sent the following telegram to von Papen:²⁴³

Please accept my most sincere congratulations and gratitude, Herr Vizekanzler, on the successful conclusion of the new agreement between the German Reich and the Catholic Church.

With kind regards,

Adolf Hitler

On July 9, Hitler addressed a meeting of the SA in Dortmund on the tasks of the future:²⁴⁴

Our foremost task consists of the following: we have power. No one can put up any resistance to us today. But now we must educate the German individual for this State. An enormous piece of work will begin for the coming decades of the German Volk.

Our second task is: we see in Germany an enormous army of people who are without work and thus without a reliable source of daily bread. The past State ruined the entire economy in fifteen years. Seven million people lost their jobs. We have always declared that we are fighting not for some pale theories, but for the continued existence of our Volk.

Now we must master one of the greatest tasks ever assigned to statesmen. We must eliminate unemployment.

We are the largest organization which has ever existed in Germany, but not only that: today we are the only organization. The fact that we have eliminated everything else has burdened a tremendous responsibility upon us. We cannot load it on other people's shoulders. This great responsibility forces us to lead this Movement in such a way that we are able to hold our own before history at all times and later generations will look back on this time with pride. But this Movement is also the German Volk's only hope and its only faith in the future.

Now that we have raised our flag throughout Germany as the flag of the State, we are obliged to ensure that nothing happens which might dishonor this flag. The flagbearer is responsible for the honor of the flag. I bid you gather together, my men of the SA and SS, and you of the Stahlhelm who have joined us, rally around this symbol of evolving life and of the resurrection of our Volk!

We must be the ones to fulfill the great tasks, for there is no one besides us who could do it. Only despair would come after us. Millions of unemployed have confidence in us. They perceive in us the only ones who can save them from their need and misery. We will win the victory, for this victory is everything, it is Germany itself.

As mentioned above, Hitler experienced some difficulties in attempting to steer the Protestant Church onto the course of the new national politics. On July 11, however, it appeared that the conflicts

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within the individual Protestant faiths had been settled by a new constitution. Hitler thus addressed the following congratulatory telegram to Ludwig Müller, military pastor and future Reich Bishop:²⁴⁵

Berlin, July 12

I was happy to hear that the constitution has now been completed. May this serve to provide the foundation for the unity and freedom of the Protestant Church.

Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler

Hitler also made use of this occasion to send the following telegram to Hindenburg:²⁴⁶

Esteemed Herr Reichspräsident,

After the Constitution of the German Protestant Church was completed yesterday, the negotiations to settle the conflict in the Prussian church were similarly brought to a close in a manner satisfactory to both the State and the Church.

The internal freedom of the Church, which is one of my particular concerns, will be placed beyond doubt by removing the State's commissars and deputy commissars. The internal reconstruction of the Land Churches will be brought to a speedy close by free choice of the Protestant parishioners in accordance with Church law. I am happy, Your Excellency, to be able to report that it is now guaranteed that the wish which you, I and all those involved have cherished for the pacification of Protestant church life will be fulfilled within the very near future.

In respectful devotion,

Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler

On July 12, Hitler delivered a speech to Gauleiters, the spokemen of the NSBO at the Land level, and the newly appointed *Treuhänder der Arbeit* (trustees of labor).²⁴⁷ Here he once again asked that restraint be exercised vis-à-vis the German businessmen.

“We have conquered the land with fighting; now we must till it with peace.” The political power had to be captured swiftly and in a single stroke, he said. In the economic sector, however, other laws of evolution were in force. Here one was forced to proceed step by step without radically smashing what existed and without endangering our own vital foundations.

Now Hitler focused a part of his attention on foreign policy. The new President of the Danzig Senate, Hermann Rauschnig, had been in Warsaw on July 3 and visited the Polish Minister-President for the first time. On July 13, Hitler received Alfred Wysocki, the Polish Ambassador to Berlin, to demonstrate yet again his good will.²⁴⁸

July 16, 1933

Prompted by the signing of a virtually ineffectual Four Power Pact in Rome to preserve peace (between Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany), Hitler sent a telegram to Mussolini on July 16, which was designed to flatter the Italian dictator:²⁴⁹

Berlin, July 16

The signing of the Four Power Pact which has just taken place gives me a welcome opportunity, Your Excellency, to extend to you my warmest gratitude that this Pact, which owes its existence to the statesmanlike initiative of Your Excellency and which cements the amity between our two countries, has now been brought to a happy close after difficult negotiations. Particularly in view of today's world situation, this commitment of the four powers to mutual cooperation and understanding constitutes a ray of hope in the lives of the peoples of Europe.

Hitler

On July 16, Hitler delivered two speeches at what was known as the "Saxon Meeting," the Gau Party Congress in Leipzig.²⁵⁰

There he stated before 25,000 Amtswalters:

The religions and the Churches will maintain their freedom. But we are in charge of politics.

At the monument commemorating the Battle of the Nations of 1813, Hitler announced to 140,000 men of the SA, SS and the Stahlhelm:

Today we are not leading a mere thirteen or seventeen million, but the entire Volk, and hence the gigantic task accrues to us of training the millions of people who do not yet inwardly belong to us to become soldiers of this Third Reich, to become soldiers of our Weltanschauung.

On July 16, Hitler instituted a general council of businessmen comprised, in addition to Robert Ley and other Party Unterführers, of the businessmen who had long been attached to Hitler,²⁵¹ ranging from Fritz Thyssen to Baron von Schröder.

On July 19, Hitler sent a letter to military pastor Müller, prompted by the upcoming church elections.²⁵² He then spoke with the President of the Geneva Disarmament Conference, Henderson, at the Regina Hotel in Munich on July 20.²⁵³

On July 22, Hitler decided to deliver his own remarks on the Protestant elections which were to follow the next day. He spoke in a radio broadcast from Bayreuth, where he was attending the annual Festival.²⁵⁴

July 22, 1933

When I take a stand on the elections in the Protestant Church, I am doing so exclusively from the standpoint of a political leader, i.e. my concern lies not with questions of faith, dogma, or doctrine. Neither the Catholic nor the Protestant nor the Russian Orthodox Church has ever or will ever be able to halt the advance of Bolshevism.

Hitler then proceeded to the subject of the Concordat with the Vatican:

As a National Socialist, it is my most cherished desire to be able to reach an agreement with the Protestant Church which is no less equivocal. However, this presupposes that, if at all possible, a single Reich Church take the place of the multiple Protestant Churches.

Although the church elections on July 23 did bring positive results for the German Christians, resistance against Nationalist Socialist church leadership remained strong in the Protestant Churches in the Länder, particularly in those under the Bishops Meiser (Bavaria), Wurm (Württemberg) and Marahrens (Hanover).

Ultimately, Hitler gave up the fight and left them to their own ways, although he did have a number of Protestant pastors imprisoned or sent to concentration camps, among them Niemöller and Lilje, for having, in his view, put up too much resistance.

Hitler stayed in Bayreuth until the end of July 1933, leaving the Festival only when his presence was urgently required elsewhere as, for instance, on July 26, when he delivered an address to 470 members of the Italian Fascist Youth Organization in Munich at 9:00 a.m. and then attended the funeral of Admiral von Schroeder (the "Lion of Flanders") at 2:00 p.m.²⁵⁵ By 5:00 p.m. he was back in Bayreuth. On July 29, he attended a reception held by Frau Winifred Wagner, and on July 30, he visited the graves of Richard, Cosima and Siegfried Wagner. The following account of this visit was published:²⁵⁶

On Sunday morning [July 30], the Reich Chancellor and his staff visited the graves of Richard and Cosima Wagner in the park grounds of Haus Wahnfried and the grave of Siegfried Wagner in the municipal cemetery. Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler laid impressive flower arrangements on the graves in memory of the master, his wife and his deceased son which were decorated with black-white-red silk ribbons with the name of the Reich Chancellor embroidered in gold lettering.

On the afternoon of July 30, Hitler spoke at the 16th German *Turnfest* (Gymnastics Festival) in Stuttgart.²⁵⁷ The tenor of his speech was: "The battle of life is not won by the weak, but by strong men!"

It gave him the opportunity to once more rail against intellectuals:

A Volk which is upright and healthy will also never succumb to the mistakes which a brain overtaxed by one-sided use so easily makes. Intelligent peoples without courage and strength have always been degraded to mere tutors to the healthier races. Their interesting styles of writing are a poor substitute for the lost right to live which nature has always perceived only as the power of standing up for one's own life.

On August 6, Hitler delivered a three-hour address to Reichsleiters and Gauleiters at the Obersalzberg in which he touched upon every subject he held to be of current interest.²⁵⁸

This time Hitler introduced his party narrative with the remark that he was speaking at an "historic site," for it was here that he had conceived of his plans for the November 1923 uprising of the Party. In this speech and in many speeches to follow, Hitler attempted to portray the unsuccessful putsch as having been the right decision at the time. Since he had achieved power, he had convinced himself of his infallibility to such an extent that the failure of 1923 became a constant thorn in his flesh. Now he claimed that, had he not launched his attack at that time, "the others" would have launched their own, and this would have been tantamount to the end of the Reich. In the course of his speech, Hitler left no doubt that the Party was "determined to defend its power by every means." A *Reichsparteitag* (Reich Party Congress) would take place every two years,²⁵⁹ and the Party would "erect the hierarchy of its leadership to a senate composed of the oldest, most reliable and most loyal party comrades."²⁶⁰

With regard to the unemployment problem, the Führer stated that the purpose of the State was not to distribute pensions, but to provide work. When one reflected in which situation the nation might find itself were it to make practical use of the tremendous working potential which lay fallow (nine billion working hours annually) for our Volk, only then could one gauge how much blame accrued to those who governed before us. The NSDAP would, he said, take up and solve this decisive question, which constituted a moral obligation.

The Führer then went into detail in regard to the planned mammoth roadbuilding project which would bear witness, even after centuries, to the boldness and the accomplishments of the National Socialist Movement. He was convinced that posterity would one day refer to our time as an epoch of the most radical spiritual changes in the history of mankind.

On August 12, Hitler took part in a Richard Wagner Celebration at Neuschwanstein, at which he was given the freedom of Hohenschwangau. Expressing his gratitude in an address,²⁶¹ Hitler described

himself, as he did in regard to all great Germans, as having consummated the plans of Ludwig II. He expressed his conviction

that despite all criticism of these structures built by Ludwig II, the fertilization of the arts and the stimulation of tourism had nonetheless given rise to much good, which meant that the work of the King deserved recognition: "It was the protest of a genius against wretched parliamentary mediocrity. Today we have translated this protest into action and finally eliminated this regime."

On the following days, Hitler held various conferences on economic policy at the Obersalzberg: on August 15 he spoke with Reich Minister of Economics, Dr. Schmitt, the President of the Reichsbank, Dr. Schacht, State Secretary Dr. Lammers, and a number of other economic experts; on August 18 he met with Göring and State Minister Esser. This latter discussion dealt with questions of aviation and tourism.²⁶² The Obersalzberg was already becoming a branch office of the Reich Chancellery.

On the afternoon of August 18, Hitler conducted a discussion on the forthcoming Reich Party Congress in the Hotel Deutscher Hof in Nuremberg.²⁶³

At a convention of SA and SS leaders at the Rheinhotel Dreesen in Bad Godesberg on August 19, Hitler delivered a two-and-a-half-hour address, commenting, among other things, on the relationship between the SA and the Reichswehr:²⁶⁴

All organizations were to clearly structure and differentiate their own functions, he stated. The relationship existing between the SA and the Army was the same as that of the political leadership to the Army. Neither was an end of itself; rather, both served only one end: that of preserving our Volk.

Based upon this concept of *Volkstum*, he rejected the Germanization of other peoples and nations alien to our Volk, for this would never mean an invigoration or strengthening, but at most a weakening of the racial core of our own Volk.

At this convention of SA leaders, Hitler—who had previously appeared bareheaded in uniform—donned a brown peaked cap, adorned only with the national eagle emblem and lacking the customary cockade.²⁶⁵

Hitler had scheduled a large rally at the Tannenberg Monument in East Prussia in memory of the battle which had taken place there in 1914. At this occasion he planned not only to commemorate the two battles of Tannenberg in 1410 and 1914, but also to pay a personal tribute of gratitude to Hindenburg. He directed Göring to give the Old Gentleman the gift of the Prussian Domain of Langenau and the Preussenwald forest and to install a tax-free manor, "Hindenburg-Neudeck."

At this act of state on August 27, Hitler held the following speech after Göring had read the deed of gift:²⁶⁶

Herr Generalfeldmarschall!

Nineteen years have passed since those tremendous days when the German Volk, for the first time in centuries, once again received tidings of the name of Tannenberg which is so brightly lit by the radiance of glory. An uncertain fate hung menacingly over the Volk and the Reich at that time. Through no fault of their own, our men were forced to protect Germany with their lives from the attacks of an overwhelmingly superior power. Exhibiting incomparable heroic courage, the armies attacked in the West and held their few divisions in the East. And nevertheless, the numerically superior forces of our Russian opponent forced their way deep into German territory, destroying everything in their path. Large areas of East Prussia fell prey to the destruction. The prayers of millions born of fears and troubles rose up to the Almighty.

Salvation came with the name "Tannenberg," for not merely a battle was fought here; rather, the fate of Germany took a decisive turn, East Prussia was liberated and Germany was rescued. This day marked the beginning of that tremendous series of battles in the East which overwhelmed Russia as a warring nation, showered the German Armies with immortal glory, and obliged the German Nation to forever owe loyal gratitude, Herr Generalfeldmarschall, to your name.

For regardless of how the heroic struggle for Germany was to end, the Great War bestowed upon our Volk for all time the proud feeling of once having made immortal sacrifices for the freedom and life of the Vaterland. In future, however, history will be unable to comprehend that a Volk, after having lost a war which it never wanted, was shamefully oppressed and humiliatingly mistreated only because it would not relinquish its freedom without a fight, but instead attempted, with unutterable suffering and sacrifices never to be equaled, to defend its right to live and the independence of its soil.

At that time, Herr Generalfeldmarschall, fate allowed me, to my good fortune, to join and fight in the ranks of my brothers and comrades for the freedom of our Volk as a simple musketeer. Today, moved to the bottom of my heart, I feel it is a merciful gift of Providence that I may here, on the soil of the most glorious battlefield of the Great War, speak for the united German Nation and on its behalf express to you, Herr Generalfeldmarschall, in deepest reverence the gratitude of all. We are happy that we may celebrate this great day of the German Volk with him who once bestowed this day upon us.

The German Reich Government is acting for the German Volk in expressing the fervent wish that your name, Herr Generalfeldmarschall, live on forever in our Volk not only by virtue of the deed, that not only the stones of this monument shall speak of you, but that along line of living witnesses closely tied to this home soil will also tell of their great ancestor.

The German Reich Government, as representative of the national honor and in fulfillment of the debt of national gratitude, has resolved and made law that the plot of land in this province which is today connected with your name, Herr Generalfeldmarschall, shall remain free from the public duties of the Reich

and the Länder as long as it remains bound to the name of Hindenburg by a male heir.

Hindenburg showed his appreciation by appointing Göring General of the Infantry on August 30. To prevent the appointment from attracting too much attention and perhaps prompting opposition in the ranks of the Reichswehr, Blomberg was simultaneously appointed Colonel General. The following official notice was published on August 31:

With effect as per yesterday's date, the Reich President has promoted the Reich Minister of Defense, Infantry General von Blomberg, to the rank of Colonel General. Within the framework of other promotions, he also conferred upon the Prussian Minister-President, former Captain Göring, Knight of the Pour le mérite, the rank of General of the Infantry in recognition of his extraordinary merits both in war and peace, by virtue of which he is entitled to wear the uniform of the Reich Army.

Göring's promotion from Captain to General of the Infantry—bypassing five military ranks—was in all probability a unique incident in the annals of German military history.

With the exception of the later SS generals, Göring was the only Wehrmacht General who achieved his rank as a result of a revolutionary step. The astounding thing was that it was not Hitler, but the imperial Field Marshal von Hindenburg who made this highly unusual appointment.

After the successful rally in Tannenberg, Hitler immediately headed west on August 27 and, after a flight of some hours, arrived at another national monument, the Niederwald Monument near Rüdesheim, which had been erected in memory of the triumphant campaign of 1870/71. Several thousand Saarlanders had gathered for the occasion, and Hitler was in the right frame of mind to deliver a nationalistic speech.²⁶⁷

German Volksgenossen! My dear Saarlanders!

I have come here first of all to bring you greetings from the province which has maintained unshakable loyalty to Germany in the distant East. A tragic and undeserved fate has struck our East Prussia. Separated from the homeland, two million Germans are loyally standing watch to hold, with their will and their basic convictions, the bridge which has been broken off geographically. Today, an uplifting ceremony took place at the Tannenberg Monument, not only in memory of the great past, but also bearing solemn witness to the fact that there exists a will to preserve what is ours, to preserve the sacred memories, but also to preserve the rights of the present. One of these rights of the present is the return of the Saar territory to the Reich!

Of course—and you who are here, my friends, will perhaps know this best—Germany now is no longer the same as the Germany which evolved in a time

when the Saar was temporarily taken from the Reich; rather, it is a Germany of honor, a Germany conscious of its national rights and obligations.

When the Battle of Tannenberg was won, it was a symbol for the tremendous power of a unified nation. When the Saar was lost to the Reich, it was as a consequence of the loss of this inner unity. It is our unshakable will to restore this inner unity of the nation which we lost in the collapse of November 1918. For fifteen years this goal has been all at once our wish, our prayer, and our idea, and today we can say that our prayer has been answered, our wish fulfilled. Our will has made reality of what had to come about in Germany in order to preserve our Volk from final ruin. Today those around us are talking about terror in Germany, about violence. That is neither terror nor violence, it is destiny. The whole of Germany is rising up!

We have liberated Germany from the rape of those who did not want a strong Germany! We have liberated Germany from the rape and the terror of those who consciously rent it apart because they were able to control this Volk only by destroying its unity. What you witness now in Germany is one Volk and one Reich no longer experiencing party rule and party strife.

It is not the German Volk which yearns for former conditions, but a handful of people who were living off the misfortune of the nation and the inner conflicts of the German Volk.

If we have said it once, we have said it a hundred times: we want peace with the rest of the world. We ourselves have experienced the dreadfulness of war. None of us wants it. None of us wants foreign property. None of us wants to annex foreign people. But what God has given to the Volk belongs to the Volk. And if treaties are to be sacred, then not only for us, but also for our opponents. The treaties clearly provide that the Volk of the Saar is entitled to choose its own fate.

I know that, when the hour comes, the voice of the nation will encompass every single individual, and he will go and cast his vote for the German Vaterland.

We are gladly willing to discuss all economic matters with France. We are gladly willing to reach compromises with France. But there is one point upon which there can be no compromise: the Reich can neither abandon you, nor can you abandon Germany.

On August 30, Hitler proceeded to Nuremberg to attend what was called the "Reichsparteitag des Sieges" (Reich Party Congress of Victory).

In view of the triumphant mood of 1933, this demonstration on the part of the NSDAP was understandable—but Hitler intended to turn it into an annual affair. This congress and those following up until 1938 were yet further occasions for him to experience the intoxication of his power over hundreds of thousands and even millions of people, and to indulge in his passion for speaking at mass rallies. The scale of the event grew from year to year; the parades became more and more tremen-

dous; mammoth stone towers were built only to serve as huge flagpoles. An oversized convention hall was to eclipse all existing comparable structures throughout the world. It remained only a torso when the harsh realities of 1939 put an end to Hitler's rhetoric spectacles and shows of numbers.

To the other participants, these rallies were significantly less pleasant than to Hitler. They housed in tents, stood for hours on end, and marched in endless processions. Although some of them might have regarded the rally as an experience, most of them were more interested in the circumstances surrounding the congress itself—the visit to a big city, the many attractions and amusements, the fireworks, etc.—than in its political contents. Well aware of this, Hitler demonstrated a generosity rivalled only by the Catholic Church on its illustrious pilgrimages.

Hitler's speeches at these conventions were, however, usually among the weakest he delivered. The annual Party Congress was only accorded any real significance if it coincided with some other important occurrence, e.g. the Sudeten crisis of 1938.²⁶⁸ In general, Hitler's outpourings at these annual gatherings were so mediocre that even his most fanatic followers submitted to them as to an ordeal, despite the abundance of "Heil!" cheers and applause. The fact was, these speeches were not motivated by any real events, and the never-ending sequence of retrospectives and forecasts were as tedious as the lectures on art and culture, subjects he presented much better on other occasions—and in *Mein Kampf*. It would certainly be accurate to state that Hitler's speeches at the Party Congresses did not, in contrast to his addresses on other occasions, convert any new followers to the National Socialist cause.

The speeches and proclamations were delivered in a ritual form, to which the six Party Congresses from 1933 to 1938 adhered:

- initial address at the reception in the Nuremberg City Hall
- proclamation upon the opening of the Party Congress, read by the Munich Gauleiter Adolf Wagner²⁶⁹
- speech at the convention on culture; addresses to the individual formations (Political Leadership, NS Frauenschaft, Hitler Youth, SA, and SS, and later the Labor Service and the Wehrmacht)
- speeches to the Diplomatic Corps and address at the final convention.

This work cites the publication of Hitler's respective speeches at the Party Congresses but refrains from citing the contents unless they contain new views of any significance.

On August 30, 1933, Nuremberg's Mayor Liebel handed over a print of Dürer's copper engraving, "Knight, Death and Devil," to Hitler at a reception in the City Hall. Hitler expressed his thanks and said:

I have resolved to order that our Parteitag will take place in this city now and for all time.²⁷⁰

On September 1, Hitler's proclamation was read at the opening of the Party Congress.²⁷¹ It closed with an appeal to the love of truth, which Hitler upheld only as long as he and his rule fared well. Later, as times grew worse and worse, the practical application of this principle underwent a change. But in 1933, at this "Congress of Victory," he had no trouble stating:

Power and the brutal use of force can accomplish much, but in the long run, no state of affairs is secure unless it appears logical in and of itself and intellectually irrefutable. And above all: the National Socialist Movement must profess its faith in the heroism which prefers any degree of opposition and hardship to even once denying the principles it has recognized as right. It may be filled only by a single fear, namely that one day a time might come when we are accused of insincerity or thoughtlessness. The heroic idea must, however, be constantly willing to renounce the approval of the present if sincerity and truth so require.

Just as the hero has renounced his life to live on in the Pantheon of history, so must a truly great movement perceive in the rightness of its concept, in the sincerity of its actions the talisman which will safely lead it from a transient present to an immortal future.

Here Hitler had vowed never to give up his preconceived views on foreign policy. And to the detriment of the German people, he remained true to this pledge.

At the "Convention of Culture" on September 1, Hitler took the podium himself and held forth at length on the character and aims of art as he had done in *Mein Kampf*. This time he also voiced his own antipathy to modern art:

The fact that something has never existed before is no proof for the quality of an accomplishment; it can just as easily be evidence for an inferiority which has never existed prior thereto. Thus if a so-called artist perceives his sole purpose in life as presenting the most confusing and incomprehensible portrayals of the accomplishments of the past or the present, the actual accomplishments of the past will nevertheless remain accomplishments, while the artistic stammerings of the painting, music, sculpture, and architecture produced by these types of charlatans will one day be nothing but proof of the magnitude of a nation's downfall.

On September 2, Hitler stated to the foreign diplomats present

that he would be happy if the gentlemen would leave Nuremberg with the impression that the National Socialist Rule in Germany was not a rule of force or, much less, tyranny, but that here the voice of the Volk truly found its innermost and deepest expression.

On the same day, Hitler proclaimed to the assembled Hitler Youth:

You, my boys, you are the living Germany of the future, not some empty idea, not some faint shadow, but the blood of our blood, the flesh of our flesh, the spirit of our spirit, you are the future of our Volk personified.

Hitler flattered the political leaders at an Amtswalter roll call on September 2 when he said they were a hierarchy of leaders standing solid as a rock in the bustle of life, stating:

It is your duty to ensure that every German, regardless of class and regardless of origins, be put through this *weltanschaulich* and political school which you represent.

In reality, one could only graduate from this so-called *weltanschaulich* and political school if one was willing to take every word Hitler said at face value.

On September 3, Hitler once again assumed the role of a padre in his address to the SA and SS. He spoke of the community of great faith which had assembled before him and once more granted absolution for the sins of the past.

The Party Congress of our Movement has always been a great military parade of its men, its men who are determined and willing to not only uphold the discipline of the community of the Volk in a theoretical sense, but to put it into practice. A community with no respect to origin, class, profession, assets, or education. A community which has come together, united in a single great faith and in a single great will, united not only for one rank, not for parties, not for professions, and not for classes, but united for our Germany.

Fourteen years of want, misery and humiliation lie behind us. In these fourteen years, however, a new, miraculous ideal has also asserted itself in our German Volk. We National Socialists have every right to say: when everyone became disloyal, we remained loyal and became truly loyal—an alliance of unswerving loyalty, unswerving comradeship, and if the Goddess of Fortune turned away from our Volk for fourteen years, we know it was because our Volk had itself to blame. But we also know that she will turn her gaze upon us once more when we have atoned for our guilt. May Heaven be our witness: the guilt of our Volk is extinguished, the crimes punished, the disgrace blotted out! The Men of November have been felled, and their tyranny is over.

In order to lend this rally more mystical force, Hitler consecrated—as he would every year until 1938—the new flags and standards of the SA and SS by touching them with the *Blutfahne* (Blood Flag) which had been carried at the march to the Feldherrnhalle in 1923 and allegedly been drenched in the blood of the martyrs to the cause.²⁷²

In his closing address to the Party Congress, Hitler waxed eloquent on the goals and objectives of the Movement, the failure of the bourgeoisie, racial selection, and the allegedly planned leadership hierarchy. At the same time he found it expedient to mention the future role he intended to play in foreign politics as the peoples' preserver from Bolshevism. Personally, Hitler saw no real danger from that corner, for he held Bolshevism to be extremely primitive and capable of being easily and quickly crushed with brutal force. Hence he stated on September 3:

Communism is not a higher evolutionary stage, but the most primitive basic form of shaping peoples and nations.

In his closing remarks, he once again returned to the idea of his “European mission” to protect the peoples from Bolshevism.

In devoting ourselves in this way to caring for our own blood, a blood which Fate has entrusted to us, we are best helping to protect other peoples from diseases which spread from race to race and from Volk to Volk. If a single Volk were to fall prey to Bolshevism in Western or Central Europe, this poison would continue its corrosive work and devastate today's oldest and most beautiful cultural possession on earth. In taking this fight upon itself, Germany is but fulfilling, as so often in its history, a truly European mission.

The Reichswehr was represented at this Party Congress in 1933 by only a handful of senior officers. At that time, a “Wehrmacht Day” did not yet exist. On September 5 and 6, Hitler thus visited the Fifth Division of the Reichswehr near Ulm, accompanied by the new Reichswehr general Göring.²⁷³

On September 13, the “Winter Relief (*Winterhilfe*) project against hunger and cold” was instituted by the Reich Ministry of Propaganda in Berlin. Hitler delivered the following address:²⁷⁴

Gentlemen!

For many years we have fought at home against the idea of international Marxist solidarity. We perceived in this supposed international solidarity only the enemy of a truly national attitude, a phantom which drew men away from the only reasonable solidarity there can be: from the solidarity eternally rooted in the blood.

But we have also always been conscious of the fact that one cannot eliminate this idea without having another take its place. Thus the motto governing this great act of assistance must be the phrase, "National Solidarity."

We have smashed international Marxist solidarity within our Volk in order to give the millions of German workers another and better solidarity in exchange. It is the solidarity of our own Volk, the indivisible bond not only in good times, but also in bad; a bond not only with those who are blessed by good fortune, but also with those who are dogged by fate.

If we correctly understand this idea of national solidarity, we must understand it as an idea of sacrifice, i.e. if someone says it is too much of a burden, that one is constantly required to give, then the only reply is: "But that happens to be the meaning of a true national solidarity." Taking cannot be the meaning of any true national solidarity.

If one part of our Volk has come to suffer hardships due to circumstances for which all are responsible, and the other part, spared by fate, is willing of its own volition to take upon itself only a part of this hardship which has been forcefully imposed upon the other, all we can say is: a certain amount of hardship should be intentionally imposed upon a part of our Volk so that this part may aid in making the hardships of the other more bearable. The greater the willingness to make such sacrifices, all the more quickly will the hardships of the other side be able to be reduced.

Every person must understand that giving only has any real value, in the sense of bringing about a true Volksgemeinschaft, when the act of giving involves a sacrifice on the part of the giver. This is ultimately the only way to build up the superior solidarity to which we must aspire if we want to overcome the other solidarity.

When this Volk has correctly grasped the fact that these measures must mean sacrifice to everyone, then these measures will not only result in alleviating material want but will also produce something much more tremendous—the conviction that this community of the Volk is not merely an empty phrase, but something which is really alive. We need this community more than ever in the difficult struggle of the nation. Were Germany blessed by good fortune, it might be able to be accorded somewhat less significance. But when we are made to endure difficult times, we must be conscious of the fact that these can only be overcome if our Volk holds together like a single block of steel.

We will only be able to achieve this if the masses of millions who are not blessed by good fortune are given the feeling that those who are more favored by fortune feel with them and are willing to voluntarily make a sacrifice in order to document to the entire world the indivisible solidarity of our Volk.

Whatever the German Volk sacrifices today will—and everyone can be assured of this—be refunded to our Volk in kind, with interest and compound interest; for what are material sacrifices made voluntarily in contrast to the greatest gift, namely the gift of being a joint, unified Volk which feels that it belongs together, which is willing to set upon its earthly path of destiny as one and to fight a united struggle? The blessing which comes from this mutuality, from this national solidarity, is much greater and much more beneficial than the

sacrifice which the individual person makes for its sake. This campaign against hunger and cold must stand under the motto: we have smashed the international solidarity of the proletariat, and in its place we shall build the living national solidarity of the German Volk.

On September 20, Hitler spoke to the members of the newly established General Council of the German Economy (Generalrat der Deutschen Wirtschaft) in Berlin²⁷⁵ and explained his economic policy, which greatly differed from Brüning's system of educating the people to exercise modesty in their needs.

The economy is now once again able to make long-range plans, because with this government there is no danger that it will be gone tomorrow or the day after.

Two million people have been reintegrated in the production process. The Reich Government is convinced that this success can only be permanent if unemployment is combatted by a continuous series of vigorous offensives and fanatical persistence. If we succeed in halting the seasonal remigration of the masses of workers in fall and winter, a new general attack can be launched in spring with every hope of success. In order to achieve this, new and more extensive measures are required. It is the task not only of the Reich Government, but of the economy as well to accomplish the educational work which is of primary importance here.

It is most necessary to combat the ideology of modesty of needs, the systematic reduction of demand, i.e. the cult of primitivism stemming from Communism. This Bolshevik ideal of the gradual regression of civilization's claims must inevitably result in the destruction of economy and of life as a whole.

It is an ideology founded in a fear of one's neighbor, in a dread of somehow standing out, and is based upon a spiteful, envious cast of mind. This code of regression to the primitive state leads to cowardly, anxious acquiescence and thus presents a tremendous threat to mankind.

The decisive thing is not that all limit themselves, but rather that all endeavor to make progress and improve their lot. The German economy can only exist given a definite rate of demand and a definite cultural requirement on the part of the German Volk.

Here Hitler adapted his tone to suit the leaders of German industry; in a speech on September 23 before a gathering of German Autobahn workers near Frankfurt am Main, he made an effective presentation of his theory, which was doubtlessly correct at the time, of creating work and increasing consumption.²⁷⁶ When the first sod was turned in preparation for the initial Autobahn connecting Frankfurt and Heidelberg, Hitler exclaimed: "*Deutsche Arbeiter, ans Werk!*" (German workers, to work!) The program he developed exhibited parallels to the embankment project in Goethe's *Faust*:²⁷⁷

September 23, 1933

Ministers, Presidents of the Reichsbahn and the Reichsbank! Statthalters, Gauleiters, Party Comrades, and German Workers!

Today we stand at the threshold of a tremendous task. Its significance not only for German transportation, but in the broadest sense for the German economy, too, will come to be appreciated in full only in the course of future decades. We are now beginning to build a new artery for traffic! Aspects of modern traffic will be given deserved and necessary consideration in the development of the German motorway system. In future decades, transportation will be coupled with these great new roads which we now plan to build throughout Germany. The first step toward this goal is 6,400 kilometers long.

I know that this gigantic project is only conceivable given the cooperation of many; that this project could never have evolved had the realization of its greatness and the will to turn it into reality not seized hold of so many, all the way from the Cabinet and the Reich Government, up to the German Reichsbank and the German Reichsbahn.

At the same time we are fighting the most severe crisis and the worst misfortune which have descended upon Germany in the course of the past fifteen years.

The curse of unemployment, which has condemned millions of people to a degrading and impossible way of life, must be eliminated!

It is quite clear to us that the battle against unemployment cannot become a complete success overnight, but we are also aware of the fact that this battle must be waged under any circumstances. We are determined to take it up, for we have taken a vow to the nation to resolve this crisis.

Back then we asked for four years, and we plan to turn these four years to the benefit and advantage of our German Volk and, above all, of the German worker. Workers, I myself was often attacked for my origins during the period of my struggle for power in Germany by those who pretended to represent the interests of the workers. At that time people were fond of saying: what does that ex-construction worker and painter want? I am happy and proud that Fate forced me to tread this path. In this way perhaps I have gained a greater understanding for the German worker, for his character, for his suffering, but also for that which makes up the vital necessities of his life.

In beginning this project today, I am acting on these feelings, on these experiences from my own life; therefore I also know that what is beginning today with a celebration will mean toil and sweat for many hundreds of thousands. I know that this day of celebration will pass and that the time will come when rain, frost and snow will make the work trying and difficult for everyone. But it is necessary: this work must be done, and no one will help us if we do not help ourselves.

In my view, the most productive way of leading the German Volk back into the process of work is to once again get German industry going by means of great and monumental projects.

In taking on a difficult task today which you must continue in the hard times which fall, winter and spring will bring, you are ensuring that hundreds of thousands more will receive work in the factories and workshops by virtue of your increased buying power. It is our goal to slowly increase the buying power

of the masses and thus to provide orders to the centers of production and get German industry off the ground again.

Therefore I ask you to constantly bear in mind that today it is not at our discretion to choose the work to be done. I ask you to bear in mind that we are living in an age which perceives its very essence in work itself; that we wish to build up a State which values work for its own sake and holds the worker in high regard because he is fulfilling a duty to the nation; a State which aims, by means of its labor service, to educate everyone—even the tender sons of high-born parents—to hold work in high regard and to respect physical labor in the service of the Volksgemeinschaft.

I know that this great process of inwardly welding our Volk together cannot be completed overnight. Even we are incapable of doing away with what has gradually disintegrated, become deformed and distorted in the course of thirty, forty, fifty or a hundred years within a few months. The biases have been too deeply implanted in the people to be forgotten overnight. But they will forget. It is our task to build this resolve on the concept of respecting work, no matter what it may be. Fate has not allowed us the freedom to pick and choose the type of work that fits our fancy.

We want to educate the Volk so that it moves away from the insanity of class superiority, of arrogance of rank, and of the delusion that only mental work is of any value; we want the Volk to comprehend that every labor which is necessary ennobles its doer, and that there is only one disgrace, and that is to contribute nothing to the maintenance of our Volksgemeinschaft, to contribute nothing to the maintenance of the Volk itself. It is a necessary transposition which we will effect not with theories, not with declarations or with wishes and hopes, but which we will effect only by life itself, in that today we are setting millions of people to the task of restoring health to the German economy.

In setting hundreds of thousands to work which is great, monumental, and of—I would like to say, eternal—value, we shall ensure that the product is no longer separated from those who have created it. In the future one should not only think of those who have planned or drafted it as engineers, but rather also of those who, by their industry, by their sweat, and by work which was just as hard, have translated the plans and the ideas into reality for the benefit of the entire Volk. Thus, in this hour I cannot hope for anything better than that it be not only the hour when the construction of this, the greatest road network in the world, was initiated, but that this hour also be, at the same time, a milestone for the construction of the German Volksgemeinschaft, a community which will bestow upon us as Volk and as State all that we may rightfully demand and expect from this world.

And so I ask of you: go to work now! Construction must begin today! Let us commence the task! And before many years have passed, a gigantic work shall bear witness to our service, our industry, our capability, and our determination: *Deutsche Arbeiter, ans Werk!*

On September 23, Hitler also delivered a speech at a Stahlhelm rally in the Hanover Municipal Hall. His remarks were totally along the lines of “we soldiers of the front.”²⁷⁸

Each of us knows one thing: we have become what we are only because of what we went through out there.

On September 28, Hitler spoke to Reichsstatthalters gathered in the Reich Chancellory, stating in no uncertain terms that they were to uphold the authority of the Reich and ensure the smooth functioning of the administration at all costs.²⁷⁹

In the meantime, Hitler was planning his foreign policy coup of withdrawing from the League of Nations. The League's regular session had opened on September 25. Hitler dispatched Neurath and Goebbels to Geneva in order to demonstrate how much effort he was allegedly expending toward solving the existing problems. More interesting, however, than Goebbels' statement to 200 foreign journalists there were the meetings which Neurath and Goebbels had with the English and Polish Foreign Ministers, Simon and Beck. On September 29, Hitler abruptly recalled his envoys and met with Neurath in Berlin for a conference on September 30.²⁸⁰

At home, Hitler bestowed yet another "national holiday" on the Germans: *Erntedankfest* (harvest festival), which was to be celebrated to pay homage to German peasantry at the start of October on the Bückeberg, a mountain near Hamelin.²⁸¹

On the morning of October 1, Hitler received 100 peasant delegations from throughout the Reich and once more stressed the solidarity between the National Socialist Movement and the peasants in his speech:²⁸²

To us, the German peasant is not only a class, but a representative of German vitality and thus also of the German future. We perceive in the German peasant the source of national fertility, the foundation of our national life.

In the afternoon, Hitler delivered a speech to the crowds of peasants gathered on the Bückeberg:²⁸³

German Volksgenossen! My German Peasants!

A change of historic dimensions has taken place in Germany since the crops were harvested last year. A State of the parties has fallen; a State of the Volk has arisen. Perhaps only a future age will be able to fully appreciate the extent of the radical change which has taken place in these past eight months. We are all too bound by the spell of this age which is rushing forwards to be able to gauge its progress by drawing comparisons.

What seemed impossible but a few years ago has now become possible. What millions held to be a lost cause has today become reality.

That which attempted to defy this force has been overthrown. A revolution roared through the German countryside, smashing a system, stirring up our

Volk to its innermost depths. It should surprise no one that the class most strongly seized by this powerful movement was the one which constitutes the supporting foundation of our Volk.

The starting point for National Socialism's views, positions, and decisions lies neither in the individual nor in humanity. It consciously places the Volk at the center of its entire way of thinking. For it, this Volk is a phenomenon conditioned by blood in which it perceives the God-given building block of human society.

The lone individual is short-lived; the Volk is lasting. While the liberal world outlook, by according the individual a god-like status, must of necessity lead to the destruction of the Volk, National Socialism wishes to preserve the Volk as such, if necessary at the expense of the individual. It requires a tremendous educational effort in order to make clear to the people what initially appears to be a difficult lesson in order that they may realize that in the discipline of the individual lies a blessing not only for the whole, but ultimately also for the individual himself.

An undertone of concern was audible in this speech. Hitler feared severe complications and even military action as a result of his planned withdrawal from the League of Nations. Events proved his apprehension unfounded. Without explaining exactly which "difficult decisions" he had to make, he proclaimed:

Fate has delivered us into a difficult age and thus also assigned us the holy task of making difficult decisions, if necessary. We know how great the misery is throughout the entire German Volk. We are determined to use every means which human intelligence can discover to fight it.

Near the end of his address, Hitler worked himself up into a state of intoxication by dwelling on the colossal dimensions of his flock of peasants on the mount. He raved:

Thus you, my peasants, have assembled at the largest rally of its kind which has probably ever taken place on earth. However, it should not only be a demonstration of your power, but also a visible display of the will of your leadership. By means of the celebration of labor and the celebration of the harvest, we wish to consciously document the spirit which dominates us and the path which we are determined to take. May the size of this demonstration instill in everyone a sense of mutual respect and the conviction that no class alone, but only all united, will be able to survive.

May this feeling of solidarity between city and country, between peasants, manual laborers and mental workers continue to swell to become the proud consciousness of a tremendous unity. We are one Volk; we want to be one Reich.

On October 2, Hitler flew to East Prussia, visited Graf von Dohna at his Finckenstein Castle and proceeded to Neudeck at 6:00 p.m. to

congratulate the Reich President on his 86th birthday. He required Hindenburg's consent not only for his planned withdrawal from the League of Nations, but also for the dissolution of the Reichstag.

Hitler had long been irked by the Reichstag elected on March 5, for it still contained deputies from the other right-wing parties and the Center sitting in for the NSDAP. What he needed was a "captive audience" in the truest sense of the word, a completely National Socialist Reichstag which was at his beck and call and would pass amendments to the Constitution which went beyond the scope of the Enabling Act and, moreover, also serve as a forum for his future outpourings on foreign policy. It seemed a convenient opportunity to submit the withdrawal from the League of Nations to a plebiscite and at the same time dissolve the Reichstag, although in fact this was purely a matter of domestic policy and had nothing whatsoever to do with the plebiscite.

Hindenburg having consented to go along with his plans, Hitler could leave Neudeck well satisfied.

On October 4, he spoke at the convention of German jurists in Leipzig and stated:²⁸⁴

The totalitarian State will not tolerate any difference between law and morality. Only within the framework of a Weltanschauung can and will a judiciary be independent.

On Saturday, October 14, Hitler announced his decision to withdraw from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations. This action marked the beginning of his Saturday foreign policy coups.²⁸⁵ Hitler naively believed that Anglo-Saxon statesmen took their weekends so seriously as to be deaf to world affairs from Friday to Monday; hence the earliest time at which they could take any action against Hitler would be Monday morning—and by then it might well be too late for effective measures. The official announcement read as follows:²⁸⁶

Berlin, October 14

In view of the unreasonable, humiliating and degrading demands of the other Powers in the Geneva Disarmament Conference, the Reich Government has today resolved to no longer participate in the Disarmament Conference negotiations. At the same time, the Reich Government hereby announces the withdrawal of the German Reich from the League of Nations.

In order to give the German Volk an opportunity to take its own stand on questions involving the fate of the German nation, the German Reichstag is to be dissolved by decree of the Reich President of October 14 and new elections scheduled for November 12, 1933. Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler will speak on all German radio stations this evening.

At a press conference, Goebbels also read Hitler's proclamation to the German Volk on October 14:²⁸⁷

Filled with the sincere desire to perform the task of the peaceful, domestic reconstruction of our Volk and its political and economic life, former German governments, confident of being granted their deserved equality of rights, declared their willingness to enter into the League of Nations and take part in the Disarmament Conference. Germany was bitterly disappointed. Despite our willingness to strictly carry out the disarmament, initially undertaken by us, to the very last consequence, if necessary, other governments could not make up their minds to uphold the promises which they had signed in the Peace Treaty. The fact that Germany was consciously denied any and all real moral and objective equality of rights was a constant humiliation to the German Volk and its government. The Reich Government having again declared its willingness, after German equality of rights had been granted on December 11, 1932, to once more take part in the negotiations of the Disarmament Conference, it was made clear in public speeches and statements delivered directly to the Reich Foreign Minister and our delegates by the official representatives of the other States that the Germany which exists today could no longer be granted this equality of rights. Due to the fact that the German Reich Government perceives in this action a both unjust and degrading discrimination of the German Volk, it does not, under these circumstances, feel itself able to participate any longer as a second-class nation without rights of its own in negotiations which can only result in further dictates. While once more professing its unshakable desire for peace, the German Reich Government must announce, in view of the unreasonable, humiliating and degrading demands, to its deepest regret that it is forced to leave the Disarmament Conference. Thus it will also announce its withdrawal from the League of Nations. It is submitting this decision it has made, together with a new declaration of its belief in a policy of a truly honest will for peace and a willingness to reach an understanding, to the German Volk for its opinion and is expecting from it a declaration of the same love and readiness for peace, but also the same concept of honor and the same determination.

As Chancellor of the German Reich, I have thus proposed to the Reich President that, in order to visibly demonstrate the unanimous will of the Government and the Volk, this policy of the Reich Government be submitted to a national plebiscite and the German Reichstag be dissolved in order to provide to the German Volk the opportunity to elect those deputies best capable of giving the Volk the guarantee of a consistent representation of its interests as sworn representatives of this policy of peace and uprightness.

As Chancellor of the German Volk and Führer of the National Socialist Movement, I am convinced that the entire nation will come to stand united as one man behind a vow and a decision born equally of a love to our Volk and a regard for its honor as well as of the conviction that the final pacification of the world which all require can only be achieved when the concepts of victor and vanquished are replaced by the acceptable application of equal vital rights for all.

Adolf Hitler

A proclamation of the Reich Government to the German Volk was also published at the same time.²⁸⁸

The German Reich Government and the German Volk are united in the will to practice a policy of peace, responsibility and understanding as the foundation of all its decisions and its every action.

The German Reich Government and the German Volk thus reject violence as being an inappropriate means to remedy existing differences of opinion within the existing community of States.

The German Reich Government and the German Volk renew their vow to gladly consent to any real world disarmament and at the same time pledge their willingness to destroy every last German machine gun and dismiss every last man from the Army insofar as the other peoples decide to do the same.

The German Reich Government and the German Volk are bound together in the sincere desire to soberly weigh all questions involved by way of negotiations and to attempt to solve them together with the other nations, including all our former opponents, for the purpose of overcoming the war psychosis and in order to finally restore sincerity to our relations with one another.

The German Reich Government and the German Volk thus declare their willingness at all times to secure the peace of Europe by concluding long-term pacts of non-aggression with other continents, to contribute to Europe's economic welfare and to take part in the new general reconstruction of culture.

The German Reich Government and the German Volk are filled by the same concept of honor, which requires that the granting of equality of rights to Germany constitutes the indispensable moral and objective precondition for any participation of our Volk and its Government in international institutions and treaties.

The German Reich Government and the German Volk are hence of one mind in deciding to withdraw from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations for as long as this genuine equality of rights is denied our Volk.

The German Reich Government and the German Volk are resolved to take upon themselves any crisis, any persecution, and any hardship rather than to sign treaties in the future which must be unacceptable for any man of honor and any honor-loving Volk, and the results of which would lead only to a perpetuation of the want and misery of the conditions under the Treaty of Versailles and thus to the collapse of the civilized community of the States. The German Reich Government and the German Volk do not intend to take part in any arms race put on by the other nations; they demand only that measure of security which guarantees for the nation the peace and liberty to perform its work peacefully. The German Reich Government and the German Volk are willing to secure these justified demands of the German nation by way of negotiations and treaties. The Reich Government addresses the following question to the German Volk:

Does the German Volk approve of the policy of its Reich Government presented here, and is it willing to declare that this is the expression of its own view and its own will, and to bear solemn witness to it?

As if these proclamations were not sufficient, on Saturday evening Hitler also delivered a long wireless address in which he repeated the reasons for his decisions.

Once more he utilized the rhetorical stratagems which had met with such success in his speeches on domestic matters, believing that they would be equally effective in foreign policy.

The “party narrative” was expanded to contain a sweeping account of the difficult path which Germany had taken since 1918. Hitler told how Germany, believing in Wilson’s Fourteen Points, had fulfilled the Treaty of Versailles to the letter and disarmed, only to suffer one humiliating disappointment after another at the hands of the victorious powers. Germany did not want weapons; it wanted only equality of rights.

Repeating his claim that he never wanted to win over an alien people, Hitler emphatically rejected the possibility of war.

The fact that the German youth and the National Socialists were marching in columns of four was merely a preventive measure designed to protect the German Volk from Communism.

The present Reich Government, so he insisted, was composed of men of honor, which made it all the more unbearable that Germany was being refused genuine equality of rights.

Hitler stated that as early as in his “Peace Speech” in May, he had declared that under these circumstances Germany would no longer be in a position to maintain its membership in the League of Nations or take part in international conferences. To his chagrin, he was forced now to appeal to the German Volk to reaffirm its government’s love of peace by a gigantic *Friedens und Ehrkundgebung* (rally for peace and honor). Hitler spoke on the radio verbatim as follows:²⁸⁹

In November 1918, when the German Volk lowered its arms in trusting faith in the assurances laid down in President Wilson’s Fourteen Points, an ill-fated struggle came to a close for which individual statesmen, but certainly not the peoples of the world might be held responsible. The German Volk fought so valiantly only because it was of the sacred conviction that it had been unjustly attacked and was thus justly engaged in battle. The other nations had no conception of the magnitude of the sacrifices which the Volk—left almost entirely on its own—was forced to make. If in these months the world had stretched out its hand in fairness to its prostrate opponent, humanity would have been spared much suffering and countless disappointments.

The German Volk experienced the deepest disappointment. Never before had a vanquished nation made such a sincere effort to help heal the wounds of its opponents as the German Volk had in the long years it fulfilled the dictates

burdened upon it. And the fact that all of these sacrifices were unable to bring about a real pacification of the peoples was due only to the nature of a treaty which, by attempting to perpetuate the concepts of victor and vanquished, had to perpetuate hatred and enmity as well.

The peoples had a right to expect that a lesson would be learned from this, the greatest war in world history, the lesson of how little—particularly for the European nations—the size of the sacrifices corresponded to the size of what could possibly be gained. Therefore, when the German Volk was required in this Treaty to destroy its arms in order to make general world disarmament possible, a great number believed that this was no more than a symbol for the spreading of a redeeming realization.

The German Volk destroyed its weapons! Relying upon the contractual fidelity of its former enemies at war, it fulfilled the treaties with a truly fanatical loyalty. On water, on land, and in the air, immeasurable quantities of war materials were dismantled, destroyed or scrapped. At the request of the dictating powers, a small professional army with wholly inadequate military equipment took the place of what had once been an army of millions. However, at that time the political leadership of the nation was in the hands of men whose spiritual roots lay exclusively in the world of the victorious nations.

The German Volk had a right to expect that, for this reason alone, the rest of the world would keep its promise just as the German Volk had worked, in the sweat of its labor, with thousandfold hardships and unspeakable privations, to fulfill its own contractual obligation.

No war can become the permanent condition of mankind. No peace can be the perpetuation of war. At some point, victors and vanquished must find their way back to the community of mutual understanding and trust. For a decade and a half, the German Volk hoped and waited for the end of the War to also become at last the end of hatred and enmity. The purpose of the Peace Treaty of Versailles, however, did not appear to be that of granting mankind final peace, but rather to preserve in it undying hatred.

The consequences were unavoidable. When justice ultimately gives way to violence, a permanent insecurity will disrupt and check the flow of all normal functions in the lives of peoples. When the Treaty was signed, it was completely forgotten that the reconstruction of the world cannot be guaranteed by the slave labor of a violated nation, but only by the trusting cooperation of all, and that the foremost prerequisite for this cooperation lies in overcoming the war psychosis; that furthermore the problematic question of the blame for the War cannot be cleared up historically if the victor has the vanquished sign a confession of guilt as a preface to a peace treaty; rather, that the contents of such a dictate most clearly prove who, in the end, are the guilty parties!

The German Volk is deeply convinced that it is in no way to blame for the War. It may well be that the other parties involved in this tragic misfortune also harbor the same conviction. If so, it is all the more necessary to everywhere endeavor to ensure that this general conviction of guiltlessness is not allowed to become a permanent enmity for all time, and that the memories of this catastrophe of the peoples are not artificially conserved for this purpose; to endeavor that an unnatural perpetuation of the concepts of "victor" and

“vanquished” does not result in eternally unequal rights which fill one side with understandable arrogance and the other, however, with bitter wrath.

It is no coincidence that, following such a long period of artificially extended illness, humanity is certain to show certain effects.

A shocking collapse of economic life was followed by a no less threatening collapse of politics in general.

But what sense would the World War have had at all if its consequences are manifested solely in an endless series of economic catastrophes not only for the vanquished, but also for the victors? The welfare of the peoples has not improved, and their political image and their human satisfaction have certainly not become any more profound or deep! Armies of unemployed have developed into a new class in society. And just as the economic structure of the nations has been shaken, so, too, are their social structures gradually beginning to weaken.

Germany suffered most from these effects of the Peace Treaty and the widespread insecurity it caused. The number of unemployed increased to a third of those normally engaged in the working life of the nation. That means, however, that in Germany, counting family members, approximately twenty million people of a total of sixty-five million were heading toward a hopeless future without any means of existence. It was only a matter of time until this army of the economically disinherited would of necessity have become an army of fanatics politically and socially alienated from the rest of the world.

One of the oldest lands of culture in today’s civilization stood, with over six million Communists, at the brink of disaster, and only a blase lack of comprehension would be capable of ignoring this fact. Had Red rebellion raced through Germany like a firebrand, the civilized countries in Western Europe may well have come to the realization that it is not immaterial whether the outposts of a spiritual, revolutionary, and expansionist Asian world empire stood watch at the Rhine or on the North Sea or whether peaceful German peasants and workers, in sincere solidarity with the other peoples of our European culture, wish to earn their bread by honest work.

In snatching Germany from the brink of this catastrophe, the National Socialist Movement saved not only the German Volk but also made a historic contribution to the rest of Europe.

And this National Socialist Revolution is pursuing only one aim: restoring order in our own Volk, providing work and bread for our starving masses, proclaiming the concepts of honor, loyalty and decency as elements of a moral code of ethics which can bring no harm upon other peoples, but rather is of benefit to all. Had the National Socialist Movement not been the representative of a body of ideal concepts, it would not have been able to save our Volk from the final catastrophe. It has remained true to this body of concepts not only throughout the period of its struggle for power, but also in the period it has been in power! We have attacked and combated every type of depravity, infamy, deception, and corruption which has accumulated in our Volk since the ill-fated Treaty of Versailles.

This Movement is committed to the task of restoring loyalty, faith and decency to their rightful position, without respect of person. For eight months

we have been waging a heroic battle against the Communist threat to our Volk, the decomposition of our culture, the subversion of our art, and the poisoning of our public morality. We have put an end to denial of God and abuse of religion. We owe Providence humble gratitude for not allowing us to lose our battle against the misery of unemployment and for the salvation of the German peasant. In the course of a program, for the implementation of which we calculated four years, of a total of six million unemployed, more than two and a quarter million have once again been made part of the useful process of production within scarcely eight months.

The best witness for this tremendous accomplishment is the German Volk itself.

It will prove to the world how strongly it stands behind a regime which knows no aim other than, with acts of peaceful labor and civilized culture, to make a contribution toward rebuilding a world which today is spiritually unhappy.

This world, however, which we are not harming and from which we desire only that it let us labor in peace, has been persecuting us for months with a flood of lies and slander. Although the Revolution which took place in Germany did not, unlike the French or Russian Revolutions, butcher hecatombs of humans and murder hostages, and did not, unlike the uprising of the Paris Commune or the Soviet Revolutions in Bavaria and Hungary, destroy cultural monuments and works of art—on the contrary, it did not smash a single storefront window, did not loot a single shop, and did not damage a single building—unscrupulous agitators are spreading a flood of tales of atrocity which can only be compared with the lies fabricated by these same elements at the beginning of the War!

Tens of thousands of Americans, English, and French were in Germany during these months and were able to conclude from what they saw with their own eyes that there is no country in the world with more law and order than present-day Germany, that in no other country of the world can person and property be more highly respected than in Germany, but that, perhaps, too, in no other country of the world is there a fiercer battle being waged against those who, as criminal elements, believe they are at liberty to give free rein to their lowest instincts to the detriment of their fellow men. These parties and their Communist accomplices are the ones who are endeavoring today as emigrants to try to turn honest and decent peoples against one another.

The German Volk has no reason to envy the rest of this world for this gain. We are convinced that a few years will suffice to make the honor-loving members of the other peoples thoroughly conscious of the inner value of these unworthy elements who, effectively hiding behind the flag of political refugees, fled the territories where each had practiced his own degree of economic unscrupulousness.

But what would this world say about Germany if, for the benefit of a character who had attempted to set the British Parliament on fire, we had an investigative farce staged here, the sole purpose of which could only be to place British justice and its judges on a level lower than that of such a scoundrel? As a German and a National Socialist, I would have no interest in Germany in supporting the cause of a foreigner who attempts to undermine the State or its

laws in England or even puts a torch to the architectural symbol of the English Constitution. And even if this character were—may God preserve us from the shame—a German, we would not cover him, but deeply regret that we had had to meet with such misfortune, and would harbor but one wish: that British justice would unmercifully deliver humanity from such a pest.²⁹⁰

However, we possess enough honor to be indignant over a spectacle which, initiated by obscure elements, is to serve the purpose of shaming and degrading the highest German court. And we are very saddened at the thought that these methods are used to stir up animosity and alienate peoples of whom we know that, inwardly, they tower above these elements. Peoples whom we should hold in high regard and with whom we would like to live in honest friendship.

These corrupting and inferior characters have succeeded in bringing about a psychosis in the world, the inner pathological and hysterical duality of which can be demonstrated quite vividly. For these very elements which, on the one hand, complain of the 'oppression' and 'tyrannization' of the 'poor' German Volk by the National Socialist rulers, declare on the other with a brazen lack of concern that the protestations of love of peace in Germany are of no significance because they are uttered merely by a few National Socialist Ministers or the Reich Chancellor, while an uncontrolled war-fever is rampant among the Volk. That is the way they do things: the German Volk is presented to the world as either regrettably unhappy and oppressed or as brutal and aggressive, whatever the occasion requires.

I perceive it as a sign of a nobler sense of justice that, in his most recent speech, the French Premier Daladier found words of conciliatory understanding for which countless millions of Germans are inwardly grateful to him. National Socialist Germany has no other wish but to steer the competition of the European peoples back to those areas in which they bestowed upon the entire human race in the most noble and mutual rivalry those tremendous assets of civilization, culture, and art which enrich and beautify the appearance of the world today.

Similarly, we have been moved to hope by the promise that the French Government under its present head does not intend to offend or humiliate the German Volk. We are overcome by the mention of an all too sad truth, namely that both of these great peoples have so often in history sacrificed the blood of their best youths and men on the battlefield. I am speaking on behalf of the entire German Volk when I affirm that we are all filled by the honest desire to eradicate an enmity which means sacrifices that are in no proportion to any possible gains.

The German Volk is convinced that its military honor has remained pure and unblemished in thousands of battles and skirmishes, just as we view the French soldier only as our old and yet glorious opponent. We and the entire German Volk would all be happy at the thought of sparing our children and our children's children what we had to witness and endure ourselves as honorable men in long and bitter years of pain and suffering. The history of the last 150 years should, in the course of all its vicissitudes, have taught both peoples one thing: namely that essential changes are no longer possible, regardless of the

blood sacrificed to bring them about. As a National Socialist, I, and with me, all my followers, refuse on the basis of our national principles to conquer the people of a foreign nation—who would not love us in any case—at the price of the blood and lives of those who are dear and precious to us.

It would be a tremendous event for the entire human race were the two peoples willing to ban force from their common life once and for all.

The German Volk is willing to do this. In that we openly lay claim to the rights accorded us by the treaties themselves, I also want to declare just as openly that, in Germany's view, there are no further territorial conflicts between the two countries. Once the Saar has returned to the Reich, only a lunatic could conceive of the possibility of a war between the two States, a war for which, seen from our perspective, there would no longer be any morally or reasonably justifiable grounds. For no one would have a right to expect that millions of young lives be destroyed for the sake of making a problematic correction—both in terms of extent and value—of the present borders!

The French Premier asks why German youth are marching and falling into line; the answer is, not in order to demonstrate against France, but in order to show and document that very political formation of will which was necessary to overcome Communism and will be necessary to keep Communism at bay. In Germany there is only one bearer of arms, and that is the Army. And conversely, there is only one enemy for the National Socialist Organization, and that is Communism.

The world will have to come to terms with the fact that, to protect itself from this threat, the German Volk chooses the forms for its internal organization which alone guarantee success. While the rest of the world entrenches itself in indestructible fortresses, puts together huge aircraft squadrons, constructs giant tanks, and molds enormous guns, it cannot talk about a threat because German National Socialists, totally unarmed, are parading in columns of four and by doing so are constituting an outward manifestation of the German Volksgemeinschaft and its effective protection!

If the French Premier Daladier raises the further question of why Germany is demanding weapons which will be eliminated sooner or later in any case, he is in error.

The German Volk and the German Government have not demanded any weapons at all; they have demanded equality of rights.

If the world resolves that all weapons are to be destroyed down to the very last machine gun, then we are willing to join such a convention immediately. If the world resolves to destroy certain weapons, we are willing to renounce them from the very beginning. But if the world grants to every nation the right to possess certain weapons, then we are not willing to allow ourselves to be excluded on principle as an inferior nation. If we honorably uphold our respective conviction, we are more decent partners to the other nations than if we were willing, contrary to our conviction, to accept humiliating and degrading conditions. For we are pledging an entire Volk with our signature, while the dishonorable and characterless negotiator will be rejected by his own people.

If we are to enter into treaties with the English, the French or the Polish, we desire from the start to conclude them only with men who think and act on

behalf of their nations one hundred percent as English, French or Polish. We want to conclude treaties with nations, not sign pacts with negotiators. And if today we turn against an unscrupulous propaganda campaign, we are doing so only because not the agitators, but unfortunately the peoples will have to atone for the sins of this worldwide poisoning (*Weltvergiftung*) with their blood.

The former German governments confidently entered the League of Nations in the hopes of finding in it a forum for a just balance of the interests of the nations and a sincere reconciliation, particularly with former opponents. However, the prerequisite was that equal rights finally be restored to the German Volk.

The same prerequisite applied to Germany's participation in the Disarmament Conference. The degradation of a member of such an institution or conference to one which does not enjoy equality of rights is an unbearable humiliation for an honor-loving nation of 65 million people and a no less honor-loving government! The German Volk has more than fulfilled its obligations to disarm. It is now time for the armed states to do no less in fulfilling their respective obligations.

The German Government is not taking part in this conference in order to negotiate additional cannons or machine guns for the German Volk, but to contribute, as a party with equal rights, to the general pacification of the world. Germany has just as much right to security as the other nations. When the English Minister Baldwin regards it as a matter of course that England's talk of disarmament can only be conceived as the disarmament of more highly armed States parallel to its own arms buildup to a certain common level, it would be unfair to heap accusations upon Germany if, being a conference member with equality of rights, it ultimately holds the same view in respect to itself. This demand on the part of Germany cannot in any way constitute a threat to the other powers. For the defense systems of the other nations are built to withstand the strongest offensive weapons, while Germany demands not offensive weapons, but merely those defensive weapons which will not be prohibited in future but rather granted to all nations. And here as well, Germany is willing from the very beginning to be satisfied with a numerical minimum which is in no proportion to the gigantic offensive and defensive weapons of our former opponents.

The deliberate degradation of our Volk, however, which consists of the fact that every people of the world is granted a self-evident right denied to us alone, is something we experience as the perpetuation of a discrimination which is, for us, unbearable.

I already stated in my Peace Speech in May that, to our greatest regret, we would no longer be in a position to remain a member of the League of Nations or to take part in international conferences under such conditions.

The men leading Germany today have nothing in common with the salaried traitors of November 1918. We all once did our duty to our Vaterland and risked our lives just as any decent Englishman and any decent Frenchman did. We are not responsible for the War and not responsible for what happened during it, but conscious only of a responsibility for what any man of honor would have been forced to do for his people in this crisis and what we did, in fact, do.

October 14, 1933

We are devoted to our Volk with a boundless love, and it is out of this same love, from the bottom of our hearts, that we desire to reach an understanding with the other peoples and shall, if this is at all possible, also attempt to do so. However, as representatives of an honest nation with an individuality of its own, it is impossible for us to belong to institutions under conditions which can only be borne by the dishonest. As far as we are concerned, it may be that there once were men who believed themselves capable of being part of such international pacts in spite of this burden.

It is futile to discuss whether they were the best of our Volk, but one thing is certain: that namely the best of our Volk were not standing behind them. But the world can have only one interest: to negotiate with honorable men and not with a nation's criminals, and to enter into treaties with the former and not with the latter; however, it then must, for its part, do justice to the honor and sentiment of such a regime, just as we are grateful for being able to deal with men of honor.

This is all the more necessary because only in such an atmosphere can measures be found which lead to a genuine pacification of the peoples. For the spirit of such a conference must be one of honest cooperation; otherwise the outcome of all these attempts is doomed to be failure from the very onset.

Having concluded from the declarations of the official representatives of a number of major States that they presently do not contemplate true equality of rights for Germany, it is presently also not possible for this Germany to continue to impose itself upon other nations from a position of such unworthiness.

The threats of force, if translated into reality, could constitute nothing but violations of law. The conviction is deeply rooted in the German Government that its appeal to the entire German nation will prove to the world that the Government's love of peace and its concept of honor constitute the entire Volk's yearning for peace and concept of honor.

In order to document this claim, I have decided to request the Reich President to dissolve the German Reichstag and, in new elections coupled with a plebiscite, to give the German Volk the opportunity to make a historic vow, not limited to an approval of the principles of the Government, but documenting unreserved unanimity with them as well. May this vow serve to convince the world that the German Volk allies itself completely with its government in this struggle for equality of rights and honor, and that both are filled in their innermost depths by no other desire than to help end a human epoch of tragic aberrations, regrettable discord and fighting between those who, as inhabitants of the culturally most significant continent, also have a common mission to fulfill in the future for the whole of mankind.

May this tremendous rally of our Volk for peace and honor succeed in providing that prerequisite in the internal relationships between the European States which is necessary to end not only centuries of discord and strife, but also to build anew a better community: the recognition of a higher, common duty arising from common equal rights!

Rhetorically speaking, this was certainly not a bad speech. It fulfilled its purpose in respect to the German Volk and smaller countries which looked up to Germany in either admiration or fear.

However, this speech—as all those which followed it—did not impress Hitler's intended audience, the Anglo-Saxon powers. Great Britain and America judged Hitler not by his words, but by his actions. They were willing to refrain from interfering with the dictator as long as his operations were essentially confined to domestic policy, and they even gave him the benefit of the doubt if his demands appeared to be motivated by considerations of international law. On the other hand, they were determined to strike as soon as Hitler fired the first shot.

This was the basic attitude of the Western Powers, which no degree of talented oratory could do a whit toward altering. Hitler never understood this, believing that the West refrained from reacting to his foreign policy measures from 1933 to 1938 as a direct result of his eloquence. He believed that the British were so naive that, like the German Nationalists before them, they would succumb to his sophistry, being incapable of self-directed action. Thus Hitler was dumbfounded upon receiving England's declaration of war on September 3, 1939.

In essence, Hitler's speech on October 14, 1933 and his error as to its effects abroad—both real and supposed—marked the beginning of his fatal foreign policy and thus of his downfall.

6

To further stress his “peaceful” intentions, Hitler had scheduled a “Day of German Art” in Munich for October 15 in connection with a ceremony to lay the cornerstone for a new art museum, the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst*.²⁹¹

This event also afforded him an opportunity to pointedly demonstrate to Hindenburg that the forthcoming Reichstag election would in no way infringe upon the rights of the Reich President as Commander in Chief of the Reichswehr. For this purpose, Hitler had the Press office issue the following notice on the “Day of German Art”:²⁹²

The Reichswehr guard of honor will not be called to assembly at the reception for the Führer on the occasion of the cornerstone ceremony at the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst* on October 15 at the express wish of the Führer, for he desires that this high military honor remain reserved for the Reich President and the high military officers.

At the ceremony, Hitler received numerous guests of honor, among them the papal nuncio, Vasallo di Torregrossa, who graced him with the friendly remark: “For a long time I did not understand you, but I have been making an effort for quite some time. Now I understand you.”²⁹³

Hitler delivered the following address on the occasion:²⁹⁴

It is wonderful to live in an age which assigns great tasks to its people. When the Government of the National Uprising assumed the responsibility, it also assumed the obligation to accomplish those tasks we see before us and around us. A Volk has fallen apart and is to be rebuilt. Today we do not want to quarrel about the misfortune which befell us, about the catastrophe which overcame us. We wish only to recognize that what was broken must be erected anew so that decay can be transformed to something new and alive.

Want and misery came upon our Volk with terrible force. A proud economy, once thriving and rich, seems to be falling into ruin. The scarcity of work condemns millions of industrious people to idleness. The process of proletarianization is pulling one rank of our Volk after another down into its depths. The

foundations of our society are crumbling, and the fists of those bringing still further destruction are pounding at the very gates of the temples of our faith. Turmoil and conflict at every turn.

Germany defenseless and without rights, the Volk filled with despondency and despair! Fate has assigned us the wonderful task of fighting in this crisis, of filling the hearts of these despondent people once more with faith and confidence, of restoring order to the economy, of giving work back to the millions of people who are laid off, of snatching the classes back from the brink of destruction, of building a new society and stopping its enemies with a fist of iron, of protecting the nation and its material, moral and cultural assets from the elements of destruction. A bold and proud mission!

Man shall not live by bread alone. When we regard the rebuilding of our Volk as the task of our age and our lives, we see not only an ailing economy, but also an endangered culture; not only the suffering of the flesh, but also the suffering of the soul, and we can only envision that the German Volk will rise anew if German culture and above all German art emerge once more. Today we are consummating a symbolic deed. In a single night, a tragically interlocking chain of coincidence, blame and unknown factors destroyed a structure which will always be associated with the creative productivity not only of this city, but of the entire German nation. Treasures of German sentiment and German art fell prey to the flames. But that which was lost to destruction in those few hours cannot mean destruction for all time to come. In painfully parting with what has been lost, we confidently begin to build the new with our sights set on the future.

A "Haus der Deutschen Kunst" shall rise up. The old Glass Palace, for many decades a characteristic feature of this city, is to be transformed into a monument to our age. Young Germany is constructing a special building to house its art.

However, in bestowing this structure for German art upon the City of Munich, it is honoring the person who once, as Bavarian King, did this city the service of making it one of the shrines to German art. In that we all appreciate the great contribution which this shrine to German artistic production and German artistic life can credit to its account, we are heeding not only the voice of our hearts, but also the precept of fairness which dictates that we choose this very city to be the center of a new artistic productivity and a new artistic life for all time to come.

We are one Volk; we want to be one Reich! Just as we are fanatic in our commitment to the greatness of this Reich, to its peace, and to its honor as well; so, too, will we be adamant in not tolerating that any arbitrary spirit of discord be allowed to threaten the unity of the nation or that an ignorant eccentricity weaken the political will: so, too, will we be strong in our devotion to the individuality of our German regions and our desire to cultivate the richness of the diversity of our inner life.

If today I have the proud fortune to be able to help lay this cornerstone, then I hope that, in doing so, I am showing this city and this country the way to the future. Discord and petty, envious quarrels with the other brothers in our great German Vaterland will make us unable to recognize the independent life of

Bavaria and its capital, but we can see it if we shift our gaze to the indissoluble alliance with the entire German Volk and the great contribution which this line and this city here are making to the greatness of the Reich and the greatness of the German nation. And therefore we want to remain true to the individuality of this city. Since Berlin is the capital of the Reich; Hamburg and Bremen are the German shipping capitals; Leipzig and Cologne the capitals of German trade; and Essen and Chemnitz the capitals of German industry, so should Munich once more become the capital of German art.

It will thus find its way back to its own real greatness. We must now fulfill, to the joy and for the benefit of the entire German Volk, what a lineage failed to understand: may this city recall to mind its real mission of being a shrine of the sublime and the beautiful, that it may once again be proven true that one has to have seen this city to know Germany.

It is in this spirit that we wish to lay this cornerstone for the first fair building of the new Reich, in thanks to a German architect, in trust to the City of Munich, and dedicated to German art.

On October 16, Hitler congratulated the Reichsstatthalter General von Epp on his 65th birthday and then proceeded to Berlin, where he had scheduled a convention of party leaders for October 18. He was still not certain whether or not his withdrawal from the League of Nations would give rise to military action against Germany. As was common among World War I veterans—in view of Germany's inability to defeat France from 1914 to 1918 as it had within a few months in 1870/71,²⁹⁵—Hitler at that time held the French to be strong adversaries whom he expected to react as he would in their place.²⁹⁶

Even in his initial address to the Reichswehr generals on February 3, he had mentioned the possibility of an early invasion by France to prevent Germany's rearmament. In response to his blow of October 14, he was expecting a French invasion, at least in the territories of the Rhine.

Hitler discussed these problems in great detail in his address to the party leaders attending the Berlin convention on October 18.

The *Völkischer Beobachter* published only a general account of this address, the main part of which read as follows:²⁹⁷

Our Volk, he stated, would be visited by a deep and sacred gravity in the coming weeks. Its enthusiasm was based not on some superficial enthusiasm of the moment, but on the innermost realization of the consciousness of its being right.

The great work of reconciliation which National Socialism had begun was now, he said, to reach its culmination. We would even accommodate our former domestic adversaries and extend our hand to them as a symbol of the struggle of the entire nation if they proved that they too were believers in German honor and love of peace.

However, there is more exact information available on the contents of this speech, i.e. in the report issued by the Gau Press Office Chief, F.H. Woweries, at a press conference which followed in Frankfurt am Main.²⁹⁸

Hitler then gave all party leaders to understand how serious Germany's situation abroad was at the time and that France, unless it had weakened in the interim, would hardly tolerate Germany's action. Everything depended upon the Party's avoiding even the slightest appearance of revenge or chauvinism and refraining from giving France any further reason for military intervention. He himself, he stated, could only say, "If I were Propaganda Minister for France—poor Germany!"

At the same time, Hitler prohibited his fighting formations in the demilitarized Rhineland²⁹⁹ from wearing their uniforms until after the election on November 12. This was an astounding move, particularly because he had vehemently protested against the SA uniform bans in the past—especially shortly before plebiscites; now he voluntarily stripped them of their brown shirts.

This was a further demonstration of Hitler's total lack of scruples. In banning uniforms, he indirectly admitted that his SA formations did, after all, have military character and also made it clear that he would not hesitate to sacrifice the interests of the SA for the sake of military advantages.

Ultimately, Hitler's precautions proved unnecessary: there was no military intervention before or after November 12. As usual, however, Hitler misunderstood the West. Since his own concepts of foreign policy, formed in 1919 and never altered, had little to do with reality, he was incapable of correctly assessing the reactions his policies prompted abroad.

Neither France nor Great Britain was willing to take military action against Germany for its withdrawal from the League of Nations. The decision to let Germany join in 1926 had marked a break with the past. If Germany was now no longer interested in belonging to the League, that was its own concern—but not enough reason to justify armed intervention.

Hitler took this lack of action on the part of the West to be evidence in support of his new theory, i.e. that the French and the British had ceased being heroic peoples and would thus keep still or make only feeble protests on paper when he launched his expansionist offensives in the East. The extent of Hitler's misjudgment of the British mentality is reflected in an October 18 interview with the well-known correspond-

ent of the *Daily Mail*, Ward Price. Hitler repeated his claim that Great Britain and Germany were “related nations,” “both great Germanic peoples.”

Hitler’s answers to the journalist’s precise questions were evasive and trivializing, and his circumlocution served only to reinforce the distrust of the British. Hitler nonetheless naively regarded Ward Price as friendly to—and even sympathizing with—his cause, until the journalist published *I Know these Dictators* in 1937 (German edition in 1939) and Hitler was taught the error of his ways.

The interview of October 18 read as follows:³⁰⁰

Question: It might interest Your Excellency to know that there are indications in London that your personal popularity with the British public has increased enormously since last Saturday.

Lord Rothermere, with whom I spoke on the telephone yesterday evening, told me that when your picture was shown in the news in London cinemas on Monday evening animated applause broke out. It is, however, a fact that within certain circles in the British public and press, Germany’s sudden withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference has given rise to distrust and concern.

It would greatly contribute toward assuaging these fears were the Reich Chancellor to allow me to ask him genuinely objective questions in this connection.

First of all, I would like to cite the speech of the Undersecretary in the Ministry of War, Duff Cooper, who said that “no people in the history of the world has ever prepared for war with the enthusiasm with which the German Volk is now doing so.”

It would be futile to deny that this view is widespread in England. Which answer can be given to this?

Answer: At one time, on August 4, 1914, I was deeply unhappy that both great Germanic peoples who had lived in peace side by side for so many hundreds of years, through all the aberrations of human history, were now thrown into war. I would be happy were this lamentable psychosis to come to an end and the two related nations were to find their way back to their old friendship.

The allegation that the German Volk is enthusiastically preparing for war is, for us, a simply inconceivable misjudgment of the meaning of the German Revolution.

We leaders of the National Socialist Movement were soldiers at the front, almost without exception. I would like to see a former front-line soldier who enthusiastically prepares for a new war! We are devoted to our Volk with a fanatic love, just as every decent Englishman is also devoted to his people. We are educating German youth to combat internal vices and primarily to fight the Communist threat, the extent of which had not, and probably still has not, been grasped in England. Our revolutionary songs are not songs aimed against the other peoples, but songs promoting fraternity at home and combatting class conflict and self-conceit; songs for work and bread and for the national honor.

The best evidence of this is the fact that, prior to our accession to government, our exclusively political SA was most terribly persecuted by the State; it even happened that our followers were not only not allowed to enter the Army, but not even allowed to work as laborers in military factories.

Question: The suspicion that Germany's ultimate objectives are warlike rests on the following considerations.

People believe that the National Socialist Government is educating the German Volk in the view that it has a serious and real quarrel with France which can only be mended by a German victory.

Answer: The National Socialist Movement is not educating the Volk in the view that it has a real or serious quarrel with France, but rather to love its own people and to believe in the concepts of honor and decency.

Do you think that we are only educating our youth, which is our entire future and to which we are all devoted, to let it be shot to bits on the battlefield? I have already stressed so often that we have no reason to be ashamed of the military accomplishments of our Volk at war.

Question: There is another widespread opinion to the effect that Germany's armaments have already progressed much further than is publicly admitted. For instance, there are claims that the German Government has acquired munitions factories in Sweden, Holland, and other countries in which large supplies of war materials are kept in stock to be brought over the German border immediately given the threat of war.

Answer: These opinions are ridiculous. Where are these factories in Sweden, Holland, and other countries which we have supposedly acquired as munitions factories? Our enemies abroad always have the most detailed news about what, in their belief, has happened in Germany. It surely would be mere child's play for them to finally come out and say which factories we have acquired in Holland and which in Sweden. As far as I know, there are no National Socialists in power in Sweden, and none in Holland. It would not be difficult for intelligence agencies to find out which Dutch or Swedish factory is manufacturing and storing munitions for Germany. At any rate, they would have to be relatively large warehouses. Every normal soldier knows from the war how large a normal munitions store is even for a single army corps. And all of this is supposed to be kept hidden from the eyes of an inquiring environment?

And what is more, presumably we are going to get these munitions to Germany by air in case of war, or would France issue passes to our ships? No. The whole thing is too ridiculous, but unfortunately it is sufficient to blacken the reputation of a Volk which wants nothing but what it is entitled to in a world that is, in reality, nothing but a gigantic arms factory.

Question: Although the use of heavy field artillery was prohibited in the Peace Treaty, there are claims in France that artillery men of the Reichswehr are being trained in the use of heavy artillery at the German coastal fortifications. It may be that these accusations will be made official within the next few weeks. Would it not be advantageous for the Reich Chancellor to publicly take a stand on this in advance?

Answer: Do you really believe that we allow ourselves the luxury of training the artillerymen of our Army of one hundred thousand to use the heavy artillery at the coastal fortifications so that they can then shoot fieldguns?

At our Königsberg fortress, we have received permission for only a ridiculously limited number of heavy guns, and naturally men are being trained to use them. In other respects, however, the Army unfortunately does not have sufficient field artillery, and we would rather train men on artillery with which they would have to fight than on artillery we do not even have!

Question: A further cause for concern is the view that Germany's admitted intention of one day repossessing the Polish Corridor is not compatible with preserving the peace. Under which conditions does the Reich Chancellor believe it possible to undertake negotiations toward this aim?

Answer: No one in his right mind could describe the solution to the problem of the Corridor as one of the particularly spectacular accomplishments of the Peace Conference. The only purpose this solution could serve is that of making Germany and Poland enemies for all time.

None of us is even considering starting a war with Poland because of the Corridor. We would all like to hope that both nations will one day dispassionately discuss and negotiate the problems they have. It can then be left for the future to decide whether the two nations can find a practicable mode and a solution acceptable for both sides.

Question: The expression, "Volk ohne Raum" (people without space) has given rise to some uncertainty. By which means does the Reich Chancellor envision a possibility for Germany's territorial expansion?

Does the recovery of Germany's former colonies form one of the Government's goals? If so, which colonies would come under consideration, and would Germany be satisfied with a system of mandates, or would Germany demand full sovereignty?

Answer: Germany has too many people for its area. It is in the world's interest not to deny a great nation the vital necessities of life. For us, the question of allocating colonial territories, no matter where, would never be a question involving war. We are of the conviction that we are just as capable of administering and organizing a colony as other peoples are. However, we do not perceive these questions as containing any problems at all which might concern world peace in any way, for they can only be solved by means of negotiations.

Question: In certain circles in Britain, it is expected that the present government will reveal itself to be a prelude to the restoration of the imperial family. Would it be possible for the Reich Chancellor to define his standpoint on this question?

Answer: The government which is in power in Germany today is working neither for the monarchy nor for the republic, but rather exclusively for the German Volk.

Everywhere we look we see want, misery, unemployment, disintegration, and destruction at every turn. To eliminate this is the mission we have set ourselves.

Question: Since Your Excellency's government took power, the Weimar Constitution has been amended de facto in particular cases without ever having been formally invalidated. Does the Reich Chancellor contemplate effecting a constitutional amendment on a different basis?

Answer: I once stated that I intended to fight only with legal means. I have also adhered to this statement. The entire reorganization of Germany took place in a "constitutionally admissible manner." Naturally it is possible and also probable that we will submit the overall results of the reorganization presently taking place as a new constitution to the German Volk for a strike ballot.

As I must, in any case, stress that there is no government in existence at present which has more right than we do to claim that it is a true representative of its people!

Thus we have nothing to make good in this respect, either. The only thing we were ashamed of were the men who left the Vaterland out on a limb in the time of our worst crisis. These persons have been eliminated without exception. The fact that German youth once again possess a feeling of honor fills me with joy. But I do not see why that should mean a threat to another nation. And I refuse to see why a nation which usually thinks as fairly as England does could inwardly blame us for this. I am convinced that, had England met with the same misfortune as Germany, even more English would be National Socialists than is the case with us. We do not want a "quarrel" with France, but rather an honest willingness to negotiate—on a basis, however, that can be accepted by a Volk with a feeling of honor. And besides, we want to be able to live!

Question: A large part of the German youth is presently being trained in military discipline in labor camps (Arbeitslager) or as members of the SA and other formations. Even if the German Government is not planning to effect this training for the eventuality of a war, there is fear in France and, in part, in England that the development of a military spirit in young Germans could lead to the consequence that they will one day demand that the military knowledge they are now acquiring be put to practical use.

Answer: Neither in the labor camps, nor in the SA, nor in the subordinate formations is the German youth being equipped with military knowledge which could act as an incentive for them to one day exploit this knowledge. In view of this, how much more reason would Germany have to complain that, year after year, millions of recruits in the other countries are given genuine military training? Our labor service is a tremendous social institution which, at the same time, also serves to reconcile the classes. We have taken an army of young people who were going to waste on country roads and made of it a productive work force. We are educating hundreds of thousands of others, who had already been corrupted in the big cities when they were still very young, in our youth organizations and SA formations to become upstanding members of human society. Whereas before our time, German streets and squares were controlled by Communism and the entire Volk was suffering from the bloody terror of this arsonist pack, we have now restored safety, law and order. That is the achievement of my SA.

Question: Does the Reich Chancellor look upon the League of Nations as an institution which has outlived its purpose, or can he imagine certain conditions under which Germany would be inclined to consider returning to the League of Nations?

Answer: If the League of Nations continues on its present course and grows more and more to become a syndicate promoting the interests of certain States against the interests of others, I do not believe it has a future. In any case, Germany will never again join or take part in an international organization if it is not recognized as a completely equal factor. We know that we lost a war. But we also know that we defended ourselves courageously and bravely as long as we possibly could. We are men enough to realize that, after having lost a war, whether or not one was to blame, one naturally has to bear the consequences. We have borne them! But that now, as a Volk of 65 million people, we are to be permanently and repeatedly disgraced and humiliated is something we cannot bear. We cannot bear this perpetual discrimination, and as long as I live, I shall never, as a statesman, put my signature on a treaty which I would never sign as a man of honor in private life either, even if it were to mean my ruin! For I would also never want to put my signature on a document knowing in the back of my mind that I would never abide by it! I abide by what I sign. What I cannot abide by, I will never sign.

Question: Does Germany thus regard itself as released from the existing international obligations on the grounds that it has not been accorded equal treatment?

Answer: Whatever we have signed we will fulfill to the best of our ability.

Question: Could the Reich Chancellor give the British public some indication of his plans for relieving the economic misery in Germany in the coming winter?

Answer: We are approaching a very hard winter. Of a total of more than six million unemployed, we have led more than two and a quarter million back to production within eight months. It is our task, if in any way possible, to prevent a dropoff from occurring in winter. In spring we want to launch a new general offensive against unemployment.

For this purpose, we have been instituting a number of measures from which we expect an adequate amount of success. Parallel to relieving the economy of unbearable taxes, generally restoring trust, eliminating a great number of laws hampering the economy which were inspired to a greater or lesser degree by Marxism, there is a large amount of work being created. Since our roads are, to some extent, insufficient and to some extent in disrepair, a network of approximately six and a half thousand kilometers of roads for motorized traffic are being built and work has already been started this winter with tremendous energy. The financing is to be accomplished by means of our taxes on motor vehicles and fuel and by charging tolls.³⁰¹ There is a whole series of further major projects—the building of canals, dams and bridges—which are running concurrently.

We have expended an extraordinary amount of effort toward promoting the fertility of our soil and the settlement of land connected to it.

For the winter period, the sum of approximately two and a half billion, which has been raised in a combination of public and private funds, will be utilized for the repair of our buildings, some of which urgently require renovation work. The idea is that the State make a financial contribution corresponding to the amount which it would otherwise have to bear as the costs of unemployment.

In order to help young people, we will bring them together in labor camps and assign to them meaningful tasks, admittedly for very little pay, but for sufficient upkeep. They do not yet have families of their own and thus can easily be accommodated in barracks and similar lodgings at their worksites.

By means of special measures, we are making it possible, by establishing families, for young girls to be taken out of the production process and for men to gradually take their places. However, since need will nonetheless still be very great, we have organized the gigantic *Winterhilfswerk* which asks our rural population in particular to help the poor and needy industrial and urban population by supplying foodstuffs.

It is a huge exchange organization and hence, at the same time, a tie between the city and the country.

By means of this organization, we will at least provide the absolute minimum amounts of fuel and foodstuffs and, in part, clothing to approximately six million people. In any case, we are doing our utmost to ensure that at least the worst effects of hunger are brought to a halt.

Until now, thanks to the Peace Treaty of Versailles, an average of approximately 20,000 people per year in Germany have been forced by need and despair to take their own lives.³⁰²

You will understand that a government and a Volk facing such tasks can desire nothing other than rest and peace. And with it, finally, equality of rights.

On October 22, Hitler set off on another large-scale speechmaking tour which was, to him, an integral part of any election campaign. His discourses contained constantly new variations of his ideas on domestic and foreign policy and the alleged reasons behind Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations.

Hitler launched the election campaign on October 22 with two consecutive speeches in front of the Befreiungshalle in Kelheim³⁰³ on the occasion of a parade by the SA. He stated:

This monument of unification is a symbol for us of that to which we aspire in our struggle: *ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Wille*.

On the afternoon of the same day, Hitler spoke at a reception in the Regensburg City Hall.³⁰⁴ A campaign speech in the Berlin Sportpalast followed on October 24,³⁰⁵ at which Hitler solemnly declared:

For my part, I declare that I would rather die at any time than sign something which, in my most sacred conviction, I hold to be unbearable for the German Volk.

I bid the entire German Volk: if ever I were to err here, or should the Volk ever be of the opinion that it cannot agree with my actions, then it may have me executed. I will calmly stand firm!

He finished his speech with the claim that he had never before asked for votes:

And so I ask you, this one time—in fact, for the very first time in my life—give us your votes. Bring every Volksgenosse to the ballot boxes, that he may take part in deciding the future of his Volk. For the first time in fourteen years I am now asking you to cast your vote for equal rights, for honor and for real peace, and at the same time cast your vote for a new Reichstag which will be the guarantor of this policy. For one cannot lastingly save a Volk economically if it is politically and morally going to ruin. We have only one goal on earth: not hatred of other peoples, but love to the German nation!

On October 25, Hitler delivered a campaign speech in Hanover (Kuppelhalle).³⁰⁶ On October 26, he declared in a speech in Cologne (Messehalle):³⁰⁷

I did not fear my opponents when I was not in power. I do not fear them now, either. It is not for me that you have to go to the polls, but for yourselves! I am not the one who needs support. I am strong and firm enough! Your Reich needs your support.

A campaign speech in Stuttgart (Municipal Hall) followed on October 28.³⁰⁸ The next morning Hitler spoke in Neumarkt (Upper Palatinate) at the unveiling of a Dietrich Eckart Memorial there.³⁰⁹

On October 30 at 6:00 p.m. he spoke in Frankfurt am Main, where he stated:³¹⁰

I say, “No, thank you” to agreements which I am to pay for with my honor. And when people say we will be isolated, my answer is: rather honorably isolated than tolerated without honor.

It is my conviction that the German Volk has too much character to think other than its government; that it cannot make any other decision in this historic hour than with the word, “yes.”

He held it expedient to add a sentimental note to his words, and therefore continued:

There was no other way. I do not have any cannons, I only have you, my Volksgenossen, and with you I must fight for and win these rights for Germany. You must stand behind me; we must hold together. We can only wage the battle if we are a united team.

You must all see that we are living in a great and historic age, an age which a Volk is capable of enduring only if it asserts its will uniformly and unanimously in this world, and this will be of benefit not only to the German Volk.

Following his speech, Hitler attended a *Meistersinger* performance in the Frankfurt Opera House.

A campaign speech scheduled for October 30 in Würzburg was cancelled. Instead, Hitler granted Karl von Wiegand, a representative of the American Hearst Press, an interview on October 31, in which he told the American journalist “that he had most strictly forbidden members of the Party abroad to carry on National Socialist propaganda. The necessary consequence of such propaganda would be to endanger the friendly relations of foreign Powers with Germany.”³¹¹

On November 1, Hitler resumed his speechmaking campaign, speaking in Weimar (Weimarahalle),³¹² where he stated:

I did not become Reich Chancellor to act any differently than I had preached for fourteen years. We profess to being the type of people who mean what they say.

The following day, Hitler declared at a speech in Essen (Exhibition Grounds):³¹³

I will never sign anything knowing that it can never be upheld, because I am determined to abide by what I sign.

At 8:00 p.m. on November 4, Hitler delivered a campaign speech in Breslau (Messehof),³¹⁴ and on November 5, he spoke in Elbing (Maschinenhalle),³¹⁵ where he proclaimed:

I do not need any *Volksvotum*. I have fought for the Volk for fourteen years. I would like the German Volk to now appear as a witness for the veracity of our statements.

When landing in Elbing, Hitler’s triple-engined Junkers D 2600 plane (“Immelmann”) sank into the soft earth, which meant that the next day Hitler had to leave from Danzig. Pilot Hans Baur, who had already flown Hitler with the D 1720 on the “Flights over Germany” in 1932, was now completely at Hitler’s disposal and acted as his pilot until 1945.³¹⁶

On the flight from Danzig to Kiel on November 6, the aircraft lost its bearings as a result of malfunctioning radio direction finding equipment, and the fact that Hitler recognized the city of Wismar helped Baur to regain his orientation; the plane’s fuel barely lasted to the Travemünde landing field. This incident served as a basis for a legend according Hitler supernatural powers.³¹⁷ In the Nordostseehalle in Kiel on November 6, Hitler stated:³¹⁸

If, in view of the achievements of the last nine months, our opponents say, “Yes, but there could be a setback!” my answer is: my life up to now has been a struggle, but I have never yet capitulated, and I have reached the goal.

I may remind you of November 6, 1932. Then, too, the false prophets came and predicted our downfall. But for me and for us all, setbacks have never been anything but lashes of the whip driving us onwards all the more. They have never resulted in our capitulation.

On November 7, Hitler had Göring deliver a letter to Mussolini in Rome in which he thanked the Duce for his efforts “on behalf of a fair handling of international relations” and “informed him of the Reich Government’s position in respect to disarmament.”³¹⁹

November 8 marked the commencement of festivities in Munich commemorating the Putsch of 1923 and the march to the Feldherrnhalle. Hitler began his memorial speech in the Bürgerbräukeller on November 8 with the remark that he had acted ten years before “on the dictates of a force majeure” and had in no way rebelled against the Wehrmacht.³²⁰

My Comrades, my German Volksgenossen!

When, ten years ago today, the attempt was made in Germany for the second time³²¹ to overcome the State of shame, the State of German misery, this attempt was not made without reflection. When grown men are willing to commit and, if necessary, sacrifice their lives of their own free will for a certain goal, this is not a thoughtless gesture. It was done under the duress of the most bitter German crisis, in the hope of possibly being able to nevertheless avert this crisis. We know that this uprising of our Volk failed back then. A few hours later, the preconditions upon which it had based its hopes were no longer given. For I can repeat today exactly what I said then at the trial.

Never did we conceive of carrying out an uprising against the Wehrmacht of our Volk. With it, we believed, it would have been possible. Some describe the collapse which then took place as a tragedy of fate; today we would like to call it Providence and the wisdom of Providence. Today, ten years later, we know that we took up our task with pure hearts, incredible determination, and with personal courage, too. But today we also know—better than we did then—that the time was not yet ripe.

And nonetheless I am convinced that all of those who did what they did at that time were made, by the dictates of a force majeure, to act as they did.

In the further course of his speech, Hitler stressed that naturally he had made the right decision in any event. How could it have been otherwise?

Back then we opened the ears of the nation to the young Movement on this evening and the following day; we opened the eyes of the entire German Volk, and we equipped the Movement with the heroism it later needed. And above all:

This evening and this day, they made it possible for us to fight legally afterwards for ten years. Do not be mistaken: had we not acted then, I never

would have been able to found, form and maintain a revolutionary movement and stay legal doing it.

They said to me, and they were right: you are talking like the rest and you will do as little as the rest have done. But this day, this decision, made me able to see it through for nine years in spite of all the opposition.

Hitler maintained that he had never contradicted himself and would also adhere to a strict course as Chancellor.

I do not know how many hundreds of times I have stood here, but one thing I do know is that, these hundreds of times, I have never retracted what I have said, but always continued on a strict course. I have done so for fourteen years, and now that Fate has finally made me Chancellor, I should suddenly turn back? No!

Naturally Hitler did not turn back until the bitter end—but in the years until 1945, the Germans were to be given ample opportunity to hear him contradict himself.

On November 8, Hitler took part in various gatherings of *Alte Kämpfer*, including meetings in the Braunes Haus (*Stosstrupp Hitler*) and the Sternecker, the birthplace of the NSDAP.³²² At midday on November 9, the march from the Bürgerbräukeller over the Ludwig Bridge to the Feldherrnhalle—which had ended so badly in 1923—was reenacted. Hitler and the surviving members of the original march, including the Freikorps fighters (absenting General Ludendorff) silently trod the same fateful path through the streets of Munich.

It was doubtless an impressive demonstration: the grave men clad in their brown shirts, the hushed masses, the burning pylons fronting the streets, and everything against the backdrop of a gray November day. The carillon in the City Hall was playing the Horst Wessel Song when the columns reached the Marienplatz. A salute was fired when their head arrived at the Feldherrnhalle, followed by one minute's silence.

The Reich's and Bavaria's rulers had gathered on the steps of the Feldherrnhalle, among them officers of the Reichswehr and officers of the Bavarian Police Force, which had fired the shots at Hitler's followers a decade before. After being welcomed by Gauleiter Wagner, Hitler strode to the podium on the uppermost step of the Feldherrnhalle, gazed down at his *Alte Kämpfer* filling the large Odeonsplatz, and delivered the following commemorative speech:³²³

Men of the German Revolution! My Old Guard!

When we first took up the political fight in 1919, we did it as soldiers. All of us had before honorably done our duty for Germany. Only when the homeland broke down and the political leadership pitifully surrendered what millions had

paid for with their blood did we resolve to take up the fight in the homeland itself, based upon the conviction that the sacrifices of the soldier must be in vain if the political leadership becomes weak.

Because the Revolution of November 1918 violated the laws then in force, it could not expect us to acknowledge it as a legal and binding condition. At that time we men and political soldiers declared war on it, determined to overthrow those responsible for that November and, sooner or later and in one way or another, to call them to account for their actions.

Hence we marched in November 1923, filled by the faith that it could be possible to erase the shame of November 1918, to exterminate the men who were to blame for the unutterable misfortune of our Volk. Fate decided differently back then. Today, ten years later, we can make a dispassionate assessment of that period. We know that, at the time, we were acting according to the commands of Fate and that we were all probably tools of a force majeure.

It was not to be: the time was not yet ripe. What caused us the most pain back then was the rift which separated the powers which once had us, too, in their ranks, and the powers which the nation needed in order to become free once more.

At that time the rift hurt, and we had only one hope: that time would heal this inner wound again, that the brothers who were hostile to each other at the time but, in the end, really wanted only to fight for one Germany, might grow once more to form the community we had experienced for four and a half years. Ten years have passed, and today it makes me happiest of all that yesterday's hope has now become reality, that we are now standing together: the representatives of our Army and the deputies of our Volk; that we have again become one and that this unity will never again break apart in Germany. Only that has given the blood sacrifice a meaning, so that it was not in vain. For what we were marching for then is what has now become reality.

Were the dead of November 9 to rise again today, they would shed tears of joy that the German Army and the awakening German Volk have now joined to form a single unit. For this reason it is right to keep our memories of that time alive, and right to unveil this day a memorial to that time. Those of us whom Fate allowed to survive wish to couple our thanks to the comrades of that time with our thanks to the comrades of the four years preceding it, that we ourselves may now fulfill the yearning and the hope of that time by doing our own duty!

Fate has shown to us the path from which we will never stray. In this hour when we once again assemble for our Volk, we want to renew our faith in this German Volk, in its honor, in its equal rights, but also to renew its will for peace and its love of peace. It is painful to lose the best of a Volk; over and over again, the best have always been the ones who have had to meet the enemy in battle. And thus today we also wish to affirm, from our innermost conviction, our belief in the concept of peace; we want to be cognizant of how difficult the sacrifices are which the fight requires, but moreover we again want to couple this love of peace with our resolve to courageously defend at all times the honor of the nation, the freedom of the nation, and its equality of rights.

When unveiling this memorial, I wish to once more thank all those who have faithfully fought for the German resurrection throughout all these long

years, each in his place; I wish to thank the tens and hundreds of thousands of comrades in the Movement, to thank the men of the other associations who, marching along other routes, came to join us in the end, and I also wish to thank those who led the Wehrmacht into the new State.

In uniting the entire power of the nation today, we are finally giving the dead eternal peace: for that is what they were fighting for, and that is what they died for! And with this in mind we shall now unveil the memorial.

A small bronze memorial was then unveiled which had been erected at the side entrance arch facing the residence. Hardly any of those present were not impressed and moved by this ceremony in some way. Doubtless it had its justification, and the old fighters of 1923 could not be blamed for honoring their dead now that they had gained the victory. Hitler, however, planned to make a permanent event of this commemoration ceremony, although it actually only made sense in 1933 and perhaps also in 1935 when the corpses were laid out at the Königsplatz.

The memorial march was to take place annually from 1935 onwards. Hitler needed this triumphant spectacle to quiet his inner pessimism, for it served to demonstrate how, against all odds, he had been able to recover from the catastrophic defeat of 1923 to win ten years later; consequently—so his logic—he would always win in the end.

Hitler also believed that this improbable victory gave him the right to demand *Treue bis in den Tod* (loyalty unto death) from his followers—a further reason for the perennial ceremonies at the Feldherrnhalle. On the evening of every November 9, the recruits of the SS *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* would gather and, at Hitler's orders, pledge their oath before the memorial to be willing at all times to give their blood and their lives for him.

At 9.00 p.m. on the evening of November 9, 1933, Hitler conducted this ceremony for the first time. Approximately 1,000 members of the Leibstandarte, 100 men from the *Stabswache Göring* and fifty members of the *Stabswache Röhm* had assembled on the square, complete with steel helmets and rifles.³²⁴

The ceremonies began with a chorale sung by the elite soldiers in attendance. A band played. Then came Hitler:³²⁵

I demand of you that you lay down your lives just as the sixteen men who were killed at this very spot. Your lives must have no other purpose but loyalty. These dead are your examples, and you shall be the unattainable [!] examples to the others.

Hitler then personally recited the wording of the oath for the men to repeat. As a rule, he never left out any opportunity to impress upon each individual his obligation and duty to unreservedly sacrifice his life for the Führer.

November 9, 1933 also gave Hitler a chance to finally eliminate the Freikorps—which he had never liked, for they had never submitted to his complete control—and the traditions surrounding them. They were allowed to march one last time and hand over their old flags to the SA; then, for all practical purposes, they expired. There was no reason for Hitler to uphold their traditions, for he had been victorious and he alone constituted the consummation of all national dreams. On the practical side, Hitler believed the Freikorps devoid of any real military value.³²⁶

At 1:00 p.m. on November 10, Hitler made a campaign speech³²⁷ to the workers of the Siemens plant in Berlin-Siemensstadt. Perched atop a huge assembly drum in the dynamo works and sporting a combination of uniform trousers and boots with a dark-colored civilian jacket,³²⁸ he proclaimed to his audience that he was one of them.

In my youth I was a worker as you are, and I worked my way up through industry, through learning and, I might add, through starving.

What is a title to me? I do not need any titles: my name, which I have acquired under my own power, is my title.

I would like only for posterity to one day bear out that I decently and honestly endeavored to translate my program into reality.

We have worked throughout these nine months and achieved great things. When I came, Germany had 6.2 million unemployed, and now there are only 3.71 million. For nine months, that is an accomplishment worth mentioning.

But if I want to provide work and bread to the German Volk, if I want to put it back in order, then I can only do it if it has peace and quiet. People should not expect that I would be so mad as to want a war.

I do not know how many foreign statesmen actually took part in the War. I did. I know war. But among those who are agitating against Germany today and slandering the German Volk—this is one thing I do know—not a single one has ever even heard the hiss of a traveling bullet.

Naturally it was fitting, in view of his audience, to say a few words against the emigrants and the former German princes, and of course to criticize the German parties.

We are against people wanting to judge the character of a Volk on the basis of its emigrants. We do not judge the other peoples according to those who grumble about their countries here in ours. The valuable ones are those who work and are productive, not the international gypsies.

I am setting the affirmation of the entire nation and my own statement against this clique, which is also the reason for the appeal for November 12! For many centuries foreign countries have counted on having allies in Germany.

It was the unprincipled princes who betrayed their peoples cold as ice; then it was the parties, Weltanschauungen—they always had allies.

Now I want to show our opponents that they no longer have any allies in Germany.

On November 12, Hitler submitted the following ballot-paper to all German voters:

Do you, German man, and you, German woman, approve of the politics of your Reich Government, and are you willing to declare that they are the expression of your own view and your own will and to bear solemn witness to this? Yes/No

The Reichstag election proposal of the only existing party was also disclosed:

Reichstag election:

National Socialist German Workers' Party (Hitler Movement)

Adolf Hitler,

Rudolf Hess, Dr. Wilhelm Frick, Hermann Göring, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Ernst Röhm, R. Walther Darré, Franz Seldte, Franz von Papen, Alfred Hugenberg.

Von Papen had now dropped behind Seldte, for the latter had joined the Party. Hitler had insisted that Hugenberg appear on this list even though he no longer held his ministerial post in the Government.³²⁹ The national pact of January 30, 1933 was to be intact externally, and Hitler's vanity would not tolerate Hugenberg's stepping out of line.

The outcome of the plebiscite of November 12 was as follows: 40.5 million yeas (95.1 percent) and 2.1 million nays (4.9 percent). The remaining votes were invalid (0.75 percent).

The single list of NSDAP candidates for the Reichstag received 39.6 million votes; 3.3 million ballotpapers were invalid. The new Reichstag was composed of 661 National Socialist deputies.

On the day following the plebiscite, Hitler issued the following proclamations to the Volk and the Party:³³⁰

German Volksgenossen!

For fifteen years, filled by an inextinguishable confidence in the inner value of the German Volk, I have faithfully fought for its future. Today, from a heart overflowing, I thank the millions of German Volksgenossen for the historically unique affirmation of a true love of peace and likewise of our honor and our eternal equality of rights.

With that, my staff and I wish to do our duty with new strength, courage, and undauntedness.

Berlin, November 13, 1933

Adolf Hitler

National Socialists, my Party Comrades!

An incomparable victory has been won. The German Volk owes it primarily to your faithful loyalty and your ne'er-tiring labors. Men of our organization, of our propaganda department, of the SA, the SS, and the Stahlhelm: supported by the activities of our youth, our women, countless party comrades, and our press, you have accomplished tremendous things within less than four weeks. The unique greatness of this success is the greatest recognition for all of you. The salvation of the Vaterland will one day be your reward.

Berlin, November 13, 1933

Adolf Hitler

On November 14, von Papen addressed a meeting of the cabinet, stating that the Chancellor's genius had made it possible to create a Reich united in hope and faith from what had been an inwardly torn and hopeless Volk. November 12, he claimed, would mark a turning point in German history.³³¹

Hitler thanked him and stressed that the most difficult task of the Reich cabinet had now been accomplished, as had been evidenced in the results of the plebiscite and the election of the preceding Sunday.

Following the speeches, the cabinet—acting on Hitler's proposal—nominated von Papen as the Reich Government's representative in the Saar. Hitler had finally achieved his aim of a purely National Socialist Reichstag. He made the—for him—common mistake of assuming that this meant he had a free hand abroad as well. Great Britain and France had bided their time from October 14 to November 12, refraining from any active intervention. Hitler interpreted this as proof that they were incapable of making "heroic" decisions and were willing to accept Germany's unlimited armament and its expansionism in the East.

Hitler immediately acted upon his—albeit false—conclusion. Now that he had disposed of the troublesome tie to the League of Nations, he could rearm without the necessity of disguising the fact and activate his foreign policy in the East, above all by increasing his efforts to establish the alliance with Poland that he had been planning for some months. As early as November 15, Hitler received the new Polish Ambassador, Lipski, in order to "put German-Polish relations back on a normal track"; in the wording of the official report, this meeting marked the second round of the negotiations which had been taking place for months and which had now "produced tangible results in the form of a mutual declaration of non-aggression."³³²

Hitler led the Polish to believe that their security could only be guaranteed by the neighboring German Reich, not by the far-removed English and French. He intended to proceed with Poland as Italy, in his view, had proceeded against Austria-Hungary:³³³ because Italy was initially incapable of launching a successful military offensive against the despised Austro-Hungarian Empire, it first entered into the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy), thus gaining time to build up its arms, only to then attack Austria when the opportunity arose, as in 1915.

This was Hitler's concept of the purpose of an alliance: gaining time to build up more arms in order to launch a successful offensive against one's ally—a recipe he used with Poland (1934 to 1939) and the Soviet Union (1939 to 1941).

Germany's courting of Poland in November 1933 naturally caused suspicion in France. To allay these fears, Hitler granted an interview on his future "peace policy" to Fernand de Brinon, the foreign correspondent of the French business periodical, *L'Information*. "It is an insult to me when people continue to say that I want war," he claimed indignantly. "I alone decide Germany's politics, and when I give my word, it is my practice to keep it." *Le Matin* published the following report on Hitler's remarks to de Brinon:³³⁴

The Reich Chancellor had declared, the special reporter stated, that he had consistently upheld the same attitude. He desired dialogue and mutual agreement, because he perceived them to constitute the guarantee for peace.

It was his desire that a true peace be concluded between loyal opponents. He had stated this repeatedly but only received words of distrust in reply. However, his will had not altered. "I believe," the Reich Chancellor said, "that the result of the plebiscite gives fresh strength to my desire. When Stresemann or Brüning negotiated then, they could not claim that the German Volk was behind them. But I have the whole of Germany behind me! I have not concealed from the Volk what I wanted. The Volk approved of my policy."

The talk then turned to the Franco-German problem. Reich Chancellor Hitler, Brinon writes, believes in the necessity of a Franco-German dialogue. "I am of the opinion," the Chancellor is reported as having said, "that, once the question of the Saar—which is German land—has been resolved, there is nothing which can bring Germany and France in conflict with each other. Alsace-Lorraine is not in dispute. But how often do we have to repeat that we neither want to absorb what does not belong to us, nor do we want to be loved by anyone who does not love us! In Europe there is not a single matter of dispute which could justify a war. Everything can be settled by the governments of the nations if they possess a feeling for their honor and responsibility. There is a Poland imbued with patriotic sentiment and a Germany no less devoted to its traditions. There are differences of opinion and matters of friction between

them, arising from a bad treaty, but nothing which would make it worth sacrificing precious blood, for it is always the best who are killed in battle. That is why a friendly, neighborly agreement is possible between Germany and Poland. It is an insult to me when people continue to say that I want war. Am I supposed to be insane (*wahnwitzig*)? War? It would not settle anything, but only make the world situation worse. It would mean the end of our elite races, and in the course of time one would witness how Asia would take root on our continent and how Bolshevism would triumph. How could I want a war when we are still bearing the burdensome consequences of the last war and will continue to be made to feel them for another thirty or forty years to come?

"I do not think of the present, I think for the future. I have a long domestic labor ahead of me. I have restored the concept of honor to the Volk. I also want to give it back its joy of living.

"We are combatting misery. We have already succeeded in driving down unemployment. But I want to accomplish better things! I will need years to get there. Do you think that I want to destroy my work by a new war?"

In this context, the reporter pointed out the external manifestation which was evident in Germany: the joy and the glorification of strength.

The Reich Chancellor replied that Germany must be capable of defending itself. His program could be summarized as follows:

No Germans for a new war, but the entire Volk for the defense of its Vaterland. The youth in Germany were marching in rank and file and wearing the same clothes because they personified the New Order and its guarantee.

The talk then turned to the means by which the Franco-German problem could be solved.

According to de Brinon, the Reich Chancellor stated: "How can two neighboring countries enjoying equal rights reach an agreement? My Vaterland is not a second-class nation, but a great nation which was subjected to unbearable treatment. If France is contemplating basing its own security on Germany's inability to defend itself, then there is nothing it can do, for the times when this was possible have come to an end. However, if France wishes to conclude an agreement as a basis for its security, I am willing to listen to anything, understand anything, and do anything. There is little doubt as to which equal rights Germany is asking for. The practical implementation can be effected in steps, and the details can be negotiated. But they say to me: certainly, equality, but no equality without counterperformance. What counterperformance? It should finally be made known what the French mean by the word security!"

In response to de Brinon's remark that France would like to be certain that no new difficulties will arise once the problems are settled once and for all, the Chancellor stated: "I alone decide Germany's politics, and when I give my word, it is my practice to keep it."

"What more is required? I did not inherit a throne, but I have a doctrine to uphold. I am a person who acts and assumes his share of the responsibility. I pledge myself as security for the Volk which I lead and which gives me strength. But let us talk about French security! If someone would tell me what I can do for it, I would gladly do it if it does not mean dishonor or a threat to my country. An English journalist wrote that, in order to quiet things down in Europe, an

agreement would have to be reached by Germany and France, and France would have to be given the additional security of a defensive alliance with England. If it is an alliance of this sort, I will gladly sign it: for by no means do I intend to attack my neighbors. Poland has realized this by now, but because Poland lies further east than France, it knows us better!”

In response to the question whether Germany would return to Geneva, the Reich Chancellor, de Brinon reported, replied: “In leaving Geneva, I performed an act of necessity, and I believe that, in doing so, I contributed toward clarifying the situation.

“We will not return to Geneva. The League of Nations is an international parliament in which the power groups are at odds against one another. The misunderstandings were only heightened there instead of being resolved.

“I am willing at any time—and I have proven this—to enter into negotiations with governments which want to talk to me.”

On November 20, Hitler retired to the Obersalzberg to recuperate from the election campaign.

On November 26, the new leisure organization of the German Labor Front came into being, greeted by speeches from Ley, Goebbels, and Hess. It was modeled after the Italian *Dopo lavoro* organization and was christened—at Hitler’s request—as the National Socialist Community *Kraft durch Freude, KdF* (Strength through joy).

This organization was designed not to actually bring “joy” to the German Volk or to fulfill some whim of Hitler’s, but with the ulterior motive of contributing, in a subordinate role, to his military and foreign policy goals.

In an address commemorating the fourth anniversary of the *Kraft durch Freude* organization in 1937, Ley quoted the words Hitler had used when appointing Ley to head it in 1933:³³⁵

Make sure for me that the German Volk has sound nerves. This is my desire, because I want a healthy Volk with strong nerves—for great politics are only possible given a Volk which does not lose its nerve!

On November 27, Hitler proceeded to Nuremberg to deliver a political speech in which he sharply attacked the Austrian Government. At a border incident on November 23, the Reichswehr soldier Philipp Michael Schuhmacher of the 21st Infantry Regiment (Nuremberg) had been shot and killed by an Austrian border patrol.

Hitler took up this incident not only to rail against the Austrian regime but also to proclaim the dead Reichswehr infantryman a “martyr (*Blutzeuge*) for the New Germany.”

Schuhmacher’s burial at the Nuremberg Westfriedhof was given the trappings of an act of state. Reich Minister of Defense General von Blom-

berg delivered an address and laid down a wreath from the oldest soldier of the Army, Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

Then Hitler began his speech, which was cited as follows in the *Völkischer Beobachter*.³³⁶

“My dear, dead comrade! I have come here as representative of those forty million Germans of November 12. Their spirit, the spirit of the German Volk, is standing here at this grave. With this wreath, the German Volk is giving its young German soldier the last salute. For they all have affirmed the ideal this soldier served and for which he was forced to sacrifice his young life. I know that a wave of pain and bitterness is passing through all of Germany in these days. But I also know that, above all at the bier of this victim, this dead young German soldier, we may uphold the conviction that he was not killed in vain.”

In reference to the remarks of the Reich Minister of Defense, the Chancellor stated: “The Wehrmacht has, in this dead man, a martyr for the New Germany.” The entire German Volk would regard him as a martyr for the German cause. He believed that what we all yearn for would result from this casualty. In a raised voiced, the Chancellor called out: “The murderers of this German soldier are not identical with the millions of our tribal brothers on the other side of the border. If these tribal brothers were given an opportunity to raise their voices of their own will, they would solemnly dissociate themselves from the murderers and the principles which gave rise to this bloodguilt. I am convinced that the affirmation over there would be no other than what it already is today here in the Reich.”

“Therefore, however, this death may not become a source of new bitterness,” the Führer stressed, “but must become a witness to faith, a witness to this new German community.”

“I am also laying this wreath on behalf of German youth which is to perceive in this death not only another example for themselves, but at the same time a solemn reminder of what the Vaterland requires of the individual and what the individual must be willing to give to the Vaterland.”

“When German youth affirms its belief in this same spirit which is contained in the living personification of this dead soldier’s sacrifice, the suffering and pain we are experiencing today can and will one day give rise to a better future for our Volk.”

In Hitler’s opinion, the special task which fell to German youth was sacrificing their lives for their country.

On November 28, an important step was taken toward a further *Gleichschaltung* of the German press.

Wolffs Telegraphisches-Büro (WTB) and Hugenberg’s *Telegraphen-Union* (TU) were absorbed into the new National Socialist *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* (DNB).

On December 1, Hitler enlarged the Reich cabinet by appointing two additional National Socialists: Rudolf Hess, the deputy of the Führer, and Ernst Röhm, SA Chief of Staff.

For this purpose, a “Law to Secure the Unity of Party and State” (*Gesetz zur Sicherung der Einheit von Partei und Staat*) was passed.³³⁷ The terms “national uprising” and “national revolution” were now replaced by the official title, “National Socialist Revolution.” The law provided as follows:

§1

Following the triumph of the National Socialist Revolution, the National Socialist German Workers’ Party is now the representative of the German concept of the State and is inextricably bound to the State.

It is a corporation under public law. Its statutes are to be determined by the Führer.

§2

In order to guarantee the closest cooperation between the offices of the Party and the SA and the public authorities, the Deputy of the Führer and the SA Chief of Staff shall become members of the Reich Government.

Hess and Röhm were sworn in on December 4 by Hindenburg as Reich Ministers without portfolio.

On December 11, Hitler spoke in the plenary hall of the Prussian Landtag, addressing the deputies of the NSDAP who now comprised the entire parliament. Hitler praised the outcome of the November 12 plebiscite, which he had achieved solely on the basis of a foreign policy issue, as a campaign triumph for the NSDAP. The *Völkischer Beobachter* published a report on the speech:³³⁸

The Volk had, the Führer stated, not only said “yes” to the government, but also to the party in power. Fate had delivered all of the power into the hands of a single movement; the NSDAP had attained that for which it had been fighting for fourteen years, but it had also assumed a tremendous responsibility to history, for upon it rested the fate of the entire German nation, and it was now to fulfill what centuries had longed and yearned for.

“One day we will all be weighed together and judged together; either we will pass this test together, or the future will condemn us all.”

History, he said, should one day talk of us as a generation of men who were bold, courageous, unwavering, and tough in thinking only of their Volk. The Führer recalled the bold principles, completely detached from the past, which have borne our gigantic struggle until now. Today the important thing, he stated, was to draw the final consequences. The task of the new Reichstag was to 1) use its authority to support the great constructive efforts of the National Socialist leadership of State; and 2) constitute a living bond to the Volk by means of the Party. The Volk, which was being led nobly and decently, would, in the long term, come to exhibit its most noble and decent virtues. The Volk must, he said, realize through its leaders that the regime in power was unified and of one piece, in all fundamental questions a single, sworn community.

On December 12, the new Reichstag convened for the first time. Göring naturally was elected President; the First Vice President was Hanns Kerrl, formerly President of the Prussian Landtag, and the Second Vice President Hermann Esser, formerly President of the Bavarian Landtag. The election of these new vice presidents indicated that Hitler planned to soon dispense with the parliaments of the Länder.³³⁹

The same day, Hitler addressed the crew of the Köln,³⁴⁰ a cruiser which had just returned to Wilhelmshaven following a long overseas voyage. He made it clear to the officers and their men what an “enormous change had taken place in Germany in the meantime, which very few had envisioned possible one year ago.”

On December 14, Hitler took initial steps toward organizing the Olympic Games to be held in Berlin in 1936 and issued the following proclamation:³⁴¹

Today I have granted my final approval for the commencement and completion of the structures on the stadium grounds. With this, Germany is being given a sports arena the likes of which are to be found nowhere in the world. The fact that the completion of the planned large-scale construction work is creating many thousands of man-days is something which fills me with particular joy.

However, buildings alone are not sufficient to guarantee that German sports are accorded a position in the international competitions which corresponds to the world prestige of our nation. Much more significant is the unified, committed will of the nation to choose the best competitors out of all Germany's Gaue and to train and steel them so that we may pass the forthcoming competition with honors.

A no less important task is the sustained and lasting attention to physical exercise in the entire German Volk as one of the most important cultural assets of the National Socialist State. We will make of this a permanent basis for the spirit of the New Germany in the physical strength of its Volk.

The *Reichssportführer* (Reich Sports Leader) is solely responsible to myself and the competent Reich Minister of the interior for the successful accomplishment of these two tasks. I ask all organizations, official bodies, etc. to grant him every possible support and encouragement.

Berlin, December 14, 1933

Adolf Hitler

On December 23, Hitler had cause for great annoyance. Although the Fourth Criminal Division of the Reichsgericht in Leipzig did pronounce the death sentence for van der Lubbe in the Reichstag Fire trial, it acquitted the Communist Reichstag deputy Torgler and the Bulgarian defendants Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev.

Upon their release, the acquitted were immediately taken into protective custody. The official notice read: ‘Immediately following the

pronouncement of the judgment, the defendants were informed that they would be held at the disposal of the Reich Minister of the interior and taken into protective custody (*Schutzhaft*).³⁴²

After having arranged this matter to his satisfaction, Hitler was free to take part in a Christmas celebration sponsored by SA and SS members in Munich, where he gave a short speech.³⁴³ It was Hitler's custom to spend Christmas Eve in total isolation in his Munich apartment, devoted to sentimental brooding in memory of his niece, Geli Raubal.

On December 31, Hitler sent letters of recognition to his Unterführers to commemorate the close of the "Year of the National Socialist Revolution."³⁴⁴ Of these, perhaps the letters to Hess and Röhm are most significant in light of the fates of these two men.

To the Deputy of the Führer, Rudolf Hess:

My dear Rudolf Hess,

You are one of my oldest fellow fighters. Since 1920, you have placed your loyalty and your skill at my disposal and thus at the disposal of the Movement. First as leader in the SA, then as my closest friend, later as Chairman of the Central Party Commission, today as my deputy in the Movement. Through joy and pain, and even in prison, you have shared these long years with me. On the day marking the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, I must thank you, my dear Hess, from the bottom of my heart for the so very great contribution you have made to the Movement and the German Volk.

In long and true friendship and grateful regard, Your Adolf Hitler

To Chief of Staff Röhm:

My dear Chief of Staff,

The fight of the National Socialist Movement and the National Socialist Revolution was made possible only by the consistent suppression of the Marxist terror by the SA.

If the Army is to guarantee the protection of the nation abroad, it is the task of the SA to secure the victory of the National Socialist Revolution, the continued existence of the National Socialist State and the community of our Volk at home.

When I summoned you,³⁴⁵ my dear Chief of Staff, to your present position, the SA was going through a serious crisis.³⁴⁶ It is primarily thanks to you that, in the space of only a few years, this political instrument was able to develop the force which made it possible for me to finally win the struggle for power by overcoming the Marxist opponent.

At the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, I feel compelled to thank you, my dear Ernst Röhm, for the immortal service which you have done to the National Socialist Movement and the German Volk and to assure you how grateful I am to Fate to be able to call such men as you fighting comrades (*Kampfgenossen*).

In true friendship and grateful regard, Yours, Adolf Hitler

Other letters which Hitler sent read as follows:

To Minister-President Göring:

My dear Göring,

When the Party first attempted to win power in the State in November 1923, you, as Commander of the SA, created, in an extraordinarily short time, the instrument with which such a fight might be ventured. It was utmost necessity which forced us to act, and wise Providence which denied us success back then. After your serious injury, as soon as circumstances allowed, you came to stand at my side as the most loyal fellow fighter in the struggle for power. You made a significant contribution toward establishing the prerequisites for January 30.

Thus I feel compelled to thank you at the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, my dear Party Comrade Göring, from the bottom of my heart for this great contribution you have made to the National Socialist Movement, the National Socialist Revolution, and thus to the German Volk.

In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

To Reich Leader of Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels:

My dear Dr. Goebbels,

The offensive against the old system and the parties and Weltanschauungen supporting it was only able to be successful in terms of power because an inspired propaganda had already bombarded the positions, laying them open for attack. Its job was to make the people lose faith in their previous world and be ripe for a new one.

When I summoned you to Berlin, my dear Dr. Goebbels, an almost non-existent National Socialist organization was faced with an overwhelming force of opponents.

You deserve credit for the conquest of this city for the Movement. Beyond that, you have made the Party's propaganda into the tremendously sharp weapon which has served, in the course of the years, to fell one opponent after another.

At the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, I thus feel compelled to thank you, my dear Doctor Goebbels, for the truly great contribution which you have made to the National Socialist Movement, its triumph, and thus to the entire German Volk.

In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hilter

To Reichsführer SS Himmler:

My dear Party Comrade Himmler,

In the time of the most difficult crises of our Movement, I was obliged to create a special protective organization for the Party: the SS. As an elite selection of the most loyal and zealous supporters, it was to enable the leadership to represent the interests of the Party with no consideration to individuals.

December 31, 1933

You deserve credit for developing these few defense units into an enormous organization unique of its kind. Thus you have given to the National Socialist Revolution a blindly devoted raiding party and to the National Socialist State an unshakable political guard which incorporates the race concept of our Movement in its own flesh and blood.

At the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, it is thus a pleasure for me to thank you, my dear Party Comrade Himmler, from the bottom of my heart for the truly great contribution which you have made to the National Socialist Movement and thus to the German Volk.

In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

To the Leader of the Labor Front, Dr. Ley:

My dear Dr. Ley,

It was the task of the National Socialist Party not to attempt to shatter the other parties with the wrong means, but instead to draw the people away from them by means of a tremendous enlightenment and anchor them in the new Movement by means of an exemplary organization. You deserve credit for having made a loyal and outstanding contribution toward developing this organization at a difficult time, my dear Party Comrade Dr. Ley. In particular, the integration of what were once Marxist worker masses into our world which is organized in National Socialist terms will be associated with your name for all time.

At the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, I thus feel compelled, Dr. Ley, to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the truly great contribution which you have made to the National Socialist Movement and thus to the German Volk.

In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

To Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg:

My dear Party Comrade Rosenberg,

One of the foremost requirements for the victory of the National Socialist Movement was the spiritual demolition of the sphere of thought which was hostile to us. You, my dear Party Comrade Rosenberg, have not only consistently waged the offensive against this sphere of ideas since the time of Dietrich Eckart, but also made an enormous contribution by politically and conceptually heading the official Party organ to ensure that every phase of our political fight was saturated with a uniform Weltanschauung.

At the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, I thus feel compelled to thank you, my dear Party Comrade Rosenberg, from the bottom of my heart for the truly great contribution which you have made to the Movement and thus to the German Volk.

In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

To Reich Treasurer Schwarz:³⁴⁷

My dear Reich Treasurer,

The National Socialist Movement was only capable of waging the battle for power thanks to your brilliant organization.

You deserve credit for creating the administrative and financial foundations of our organization.

My dear Party Comrade Schwarz! In the long years of our struggle, thanks to your self-sacrificing labors, you have secured the funds for the Movement which it so urgently required to conduct its fight.

At the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, I thus feel compelled to thank you, my dear Party Comrade Franz Schwarz, from the bottom of my heart for the truly great contribution which you have made to the Movement and thus to the German Volk.

In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

To the Publisher and Reichsleiter Amann:³⁴⁸

My dear Amann,

The victory of the National Socialist idea strongly depended upon its potential for relaying our Movement's body of thought to a large number of party comrades by a centrally organized body of writings. You, my dear Party Comrade Amann, placed yourself at my disposal as one of the first of my former fellow soldiers.

You deserve credit for the organizational development of the Movement in 1923. The development of our enormous central publishing house was, however, your very own achievement.

Thus you have provided me the basis for implementing written propaganda which gained decisive significance not only in the time of our Movement's offensive, but also after the victory had been won.

Therefore it is a pleasure for me to thank you, my dear Party Comrade Amann, at the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution for the truly great contribution which you have made to the National Socialist Movement and thus to the German Volk.

In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

To Reich Youth Leader Baldur von Schirach:

My dear Schirach,

No matter what we expect from a mature Germany, it can only come to pass if we train our youth accordingly. Thus the inclusion of our youth in our Weltanschauung constitutes the only guarantee for the fulfillment of our tasks with respect to this Weltanschauung. I once asked you, my dear Party Comrade Schirach, to take over the task of heading and reorganizing our student and youth movements. The enormous development of the National Socialist Youth

December 31, 1933

Movement is your achievement and will be associated with your name for all time.

At the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, I thus feel compelled, my dear Party Comrade Schirach, to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the extraordinary contribution which you have made to the

National Socialist Youth Movement and thus to the future of the German Volk. In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

To Reichsleiter Buch:³⁴⁹

My dear Party Comrade Buch,

In the long years of building up the internal organization of our Movement, I assigned to you the difficult task of contributing to the internal stability of the Party by establishing a party jurisdiction and taking on the role of arbitrator and judge. My dear Party Comrade Buch, with your work, which entailed extraordinary sacrifices and deprivations and was barely visible to your environment, you have done an exemplary job of fulfilling your important mission.

At the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, I thus feel compelled, my dear Party Comrade Buch, to express my thanks to you from the bottom of my heart for the so very great contribution which you have made to the Movement and thus to the German Volk by your selfless devotion and labors.

With true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

Seldte was also sent such a letter. Hitler had come to regard him almost as one of the “old fighters.”

To the Reich Minister of Labor:

My dear Party Comrade Seldte,

One of the most difficult tasks lay in establishing a unified national front by combining the forces which pursue the same goals along the one great line. You, my dear Party Comrade Seldte, deserve the credit for the fact that the largest national association following the National Socialist Party succeeded in fusing with us to become a single unit. The integration of the Stahlhelm in the SA will be highly honored for all time as a rare example of a national duty and will live on amidst those who took part in the National Revolution of 1933 to make the uprising of the German Volk a success.

At the close of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, I thus feel compelled to thank you, my dear Party Comrade and fellow soldier Seldte, for your generous attitude and thus for the very great contribution which you have made to the national uprising and thus to the German Volk.

In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

Hitler had a right to be satisfied with his own contributions to making 1933 a success. Not only had the year brought him the long-awaited accession to power; it had also afforded him the opportunity to eliminate all of Germany's political parties with the exception of his own. He had been able to dissolve the unions, divest the German Länder of their power, and form a Reichstag comprised exclusively of National Socialists. He had succeeded in reducing the power of the Catholic clergy by concluding the Concordat with the Vatican and had substantially limited the activities of the Catholic organizations and associations. The press had been largely centralized and placed under his direction.

In terms of foreign policy, he had disengaged himself from all international ties and laid the groundwork for an alliance with Poland. Germany had begun to rearm. In Danzig, a National Socialist Government had been installed, and in the Saar the National Socialists had formed a German front.

Unemployment had already decreased sharply due to the economic stimuli, and as a result most Germans were satisfied with Hitler's rule, believing that the "magnificent days" were now coming which William II had heralded in another time.³⁵⁰

THE YEAR 1934

Major Events in Summary

Hitler entered the year 1934 less triumphantly than might have been expected after the many successes he had scored in 1933. He was preoccupied with the question of succeeding Hindenburg, for it was obvious that the 86-year-old President would hardly live out the year. To Hitler, it was equally apparent that he was the only conceivable choice to take the Old Gentleman's place.

At first glance, there was no real reason for Hitler's apprehension. The wording he had chosen in the Enabling Act of March 23/24, 1933 gave him every right to assume the functions of the Reich President's office at Hindenburg's death.¹ In addition, Hitler had at his disposal a Reichstag which would pass any constitutional amendment he chose. Thirdly, there could be no doubt that, even in the event of a regular presidential election, he would win an absolute majority on the first ballot.

Even if Hindenburg were to designate his successor in his will and thus influence the outcome of an election, Hitler was convinced that he was capable of swaying the Reich President to designate him as his heir.

Hitler's fears had less to do with the office of head of state than with the corresponding position of Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. He had no desire to hold this position merely as a figurehead, as Ebert had done,² but wanted to actually exercise supreme military command in the planned expansions. The key question was whether or not the Generals would accept a former corporal as their superior. At the time Hitler still regarded the upper echelons of the German Army as some sort of Olympian gods.

Although the experiences of 1923 had taught him that the German Generals were not political personages but loyal subjects of the respective head of state and the respective government, in a military sense he perceived them in 1933 and 1934 as burning with desire to enter into Valhalla as war heroes and, not unlike bloodhounds straining on their leashes, eager to sink their teeth into the next best enemy.³ As was often the case in fundamental matters, Hitler was greatly mistaken in his assessment of the military attitude of the Generals.⁴

In 1934, in any case, he was primarily interested in impressing them and winning their unreserved support for his cause, also in view of his plans to institute general conscription with a two-year term of service immediately after the Saar referendum. As has been variously stressed above, Hitler detested the type of paramilitary training practiced in the militias and military organizations. It was his belief that a two-year military service constituted the sole instrument with which he could translate his military aims into reality.⁵

Thus he was strongly disinclined to accept the plans for a militia drawn up by Chief of Staff Röhm and the former leaders of the Freikorps. Hitler and the Generals were united in rejecting Röhm, albeit for different reasons. The Reichswehr was afraid of the very thing Röhm intended: that the *Gleichschaltung* of the Party and the State would be extended to include its own ranks. This *Gleichschaltung* had been carried through in nearly every other area in 1933: the Reichsleiters had become Reich Ministers, the Gauleiters Reichsstatthalter or District Presidents; the Reich Youth Leaders of the NSDAP had risen to become Youth Leaders of the German Reich; the Reichsführer SS was gradually advancing to become the Chief of Police of all of the German Länder, and various leaders in the SS were taking over high positions in the police hierarchy. What could be more logical than that the SA divisions, which already bore the regiment numbers of the former imperial army, would become regiments in a new militia—unless they were completely absorbed in the National Socialist Armed Forces.

It was only too understandable that Röhm was eyeing the post of Reich Minister of Defense and wanted at least to achieve the rank of general. After all, he too had been a captain like Göring, who had advanced from this rank to general of the infantry, and he had even become a lieutenant colonel in Bolivia.

Hitler believed it necessary to prove his solidarity with the Reichswehr by drastic measures. He compensated for his feelings of military inferiority by committing an act of horrendous brutality: he resolved to cold-bloodedly murder his closest friends, the best-known of the SA leaders, for the sake of impressing the German Generals. He did not even flinch at having his Chief of Staff, who had used his connections to greatly aid Hitler's ascent to power, executed without trial. It was only a few months before that he had reassured Röhm of his "proud friendship."⁶

Admittedly, he also made practical use of the occasion to do away with a number of men who had become too loud in their opposition:

Gregor Strasser, General von Schleicher, General von Bredow, the former General State Commissar, Dr. Kahr; the leader of Catholic Action, Ministerialdirektor (undersecretary) Dr. Klausener; von Papen's associates, Herbert von Bohse and Dr. Edgar Jung; and many others.

"I have given them a rap on the knuckles which will smart for quite some time," Hitler declared to his confidant Rauschnig in connection with these measures.⁷

The incidents of June 30, 1934 marked an incisive turning point in the history of the Third Reich, for with them the former concept of a constitutional state was now not only practically, but also formally dismissed and superseded by the precept that whatever Hitler demanded or executed now constituted what was legal.

The Reichswehr was not alone in giving its consent to Hitler's elimination of the SA leaders by its actions and lack thereof. The Reich President, the cabinet, and the Reichstag were also accomplices who demonstrated that they accepted whatever Hitler pronounced as right without criticism or opposition.

Having once entered the vicious circle of using violence as a political weapon, Hitler logically kept to the same means in dealing with domestic problems and, consistent with his policy of what worked at home would work abroad, in his dealings with other countries as well. He was given the first chance to put this into practice scarcely a month later. In Danzig, a National Socialist Government had been installed in the last election, and in the Saar, a German Front under National Socialist leadership had been established by agreement. In Austria, however, playing the legal trump card had not enabled him to win the trick. In July 1934 he judged it high time to gain a foothold there by force.

However, the attempted coup in Vienna on July 25, 1934 proved a dismal and bloody failure, and Hitler left his comrades to their fate—for which he was directly responsible—without batting an eyelid. A few days later Hindenburg died, and Hitler became Head of State in Germany. Once more he declared that the struggle for power had now come to an end.⁸

Hitler had triumphed yet again, but at the same time had struck a blow to the very roots of his own authority and, for the first time, done permanent damage to the confidence placed in him by his followers. Neither the Party nor the State would ever completely recover.

Hitler's flow of words, which had constituted a veritable torrent in 1932 and 1933, slowed noticeably in 1934. It was as though, now that he

had let his mask fall, he was reticent to appear in public unless it was absolutely necessary.

Report and Commentary

1

Hitler's "New Year's Proclamation to the National Socialists and Party Comrades"⁹ contained the usual recapitulation and forecast. The future held only one aim: to restore to the German Volk its "honor," by which Hitler meant rearmament and the reinstatement of general conscription.

And so the goal of our fight for the German nation in an external sense as well is none other than that of restoring to our Volk honor and equality of rights and of making a sincere contribution to avoiding future bloodshed, which we former soldiers of the World War can envision only as a new catastrophe of the nations in a Europe which has gone mad. [—]

Thus we leave behind us the Year of the German Revolution and enter into the Year of the German Restoration as National Socialists with the mutual pledge to be a sworn community, filled by the single ardent desire to be allowed to serve our German Volk for the benefit of its peace and good fortune.

On January 1, the Reich President held his customary reception for the diplomatic corps. Following the ceremony, Hindenburg received the Reich Government to extend his New Year's wishes. Hitler, dressed in a tailcoat, made the following speech:¹⁰

Herr Reichspräsident!

At the end of a fateful year, the members of the Reich Government have today come to you, Herr Reichspräsident, to put into words through me the sentiments of gratitude and esteem which move not only the Government, but also the entire German Volk in these hours. When you, Herr Reichspräsident, appointed the new Reich Government on January 30, 1933 and assigned to me the noble task of its leadership, it signalled the departure of the German Volk for a more honorable and better future, because the decision you made then, Herr Reichspräsident, had as its consequence that tremendous unity of spirit and will in our Volk and between it and its leadership which was expressed in such memorable and historic terms on November 11.

The German Volk has been fortunate to experience this unity it had lacked for so long and which, beginning with you, Herr Generalfeldmarschall, extends

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all the way to German youth. In an age of the most difficult economic and political crises, the power which flows from this community has enabled us all to stabilize the structure of the Reich, to increase the authority of the Government and respect for the law, to put a stop to the religious, moral and cultural disintegration of our Volk, and to not only halt the economic collapse, but in many areas to even bring about an energetic turn for the better. Motivated and strengthened by the confidence and approval which you, Herr Reichspräsident, gave to me and the Government, we were able, while preserving the honor and equality of rights of the German Volk, to practice policies which were and always will be aimed solely at establishing a genuine and honest peace. In this connection, we feel that it is a particularly merciful act of Fate that we have you, Herr Reichspräsident, the supreme protector of our plans and our deeds, as a witness who can and must prove to the entire world the sincerity of our intentions.

Thus I am speaking here and now not only on my own behalf and on behalf of the Reich Government, but on behalf of the entire German Volk in expressing our deepest and most respectful gratitude for the developments of this year which you, venerable Field Marshal and President of the German Reich, have sponsored, and we may combine our thanks with the heartfelt wish that the Almighty God may protect and look after your life and health in the coming year and give you His blessings to the Reich's good fortune, for to serve this Reich, in the deepest solidarity and with your confidence, is the good fortune and uttermost satisfaction of all the members of the German Reich Government.

Hindenburg responded to this speech as follows:

Herr Reichskanzler! Gentlemen!

The year 1933 led Germany away from inner discord, away from party quarrels, away from the polarization of interests and upwards to a nationally conscious unity and to a belief in itself. Based upon this new spirit, the Reich Government, in cooperation with German business, has succeeded in once again providing work for millions of willing hands and in restoring to those who are still waiting for employment the hope that they will not be idle forever. And in this regained consciousness of an indivisible common destiny, the German Volk called to life the great voluntary *Winterhilfswerk* and thereby provided protection from hunger and cold to those of our brothers suffering deprivation. In this way the German crisis, which was an almost hopeless burden only a year ago, could be alleviated to a large extent.

This reversal is primarily your achievement, Herr Reichskanzler; it is the result of your energetic leadership and the devoted work of your staff. Thus above all in this hour, when we look back upon the past year and cast a glance ahead to the new one, it is my heartfelt desire to express my deeply felt gratitude for everything which you have done for our German Volk and the Vaterland. I must equally thank you, my dear Ministers, and all those in the Reich Government and throughout the country for their contribution to this reconstruction.

May the year 1934 continue to lead us to new heights on the firm foundation which we have regained by our cooperation with several nations. May it bring

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us the final victory (*Endsieg*) over economic need and unemployment at home and lead us onward on the way to true peace, the peace of honor and equality of rights abroad.

So let us now, with a firm confidence in the German future and God's help, enter into the new year and continue our joint labors for our beloved Vaterland!

On January 14, Hitler delivered a speech in Lemgo (Lippe), commemorating the decisive electoral victory at the Landtag election in Lippe-Detmold in 1933,¹¹ closing his remarks with the words:

For fourteen years we fought for power. Now we will fight for the next fourteen years for Germany and on Germany's behalf. And if Heaven is on our side in this fight, we want to see if we cannot lead Germany to rise in these fourteen years to the significance to which we have led the Party in the past fourteen years. We expect from the other nations only that they allow us to find our own salvation.

On January 21, Hitler sent his condolences by telegram to the widow of his chief architect, Professor Paul Troost,¹² who had suddenly passed away.

On January 22, Hitler spoke in Berlin to SA leaders headed by Chief of Staff Röhm who had gathered at the chancellory following a convention in Friedrichsroda.¹³ Dwelling primarily on the educational duties of the SA in respect to the National Socialist Weltanschauung, he omitted discussing the question of the SA's future.

Hitler attended Troost's burial on January 24 at the Munich Nordfriedhof.¹⁴ Contrary to his customary habit, he not only appeared at the funeral ceremony itself, but accompanied the casket to the grave. During his stay in Munich, he issued the following party decree:¹⁵

At the suggestion of the Staff Leader of the PO, I hereby assign to party comrade Alfred Rosenberg the supervision of the entire spiritual and *weltanschaulich* training and education of the Party and all coordinated associations as well as of the organization *Kraft durch Freude*.

This shall have no effect upon the functions of the Reich Training Director Pg. Otto Gohdes.

Munich, January 24, 1934

Adolf Hitler

Rosenberg had doubtless hoped for a ministerial post, perhaps even the office of Minister of Culture, but Hitler fobbed him off with this wordy but meaningless appointment, never having appeared to particularly care for Rosenberg and his mystic philosophy, which at the time did not suit the Führer's political and military attitude. Aside from Rosenberg's relatively insignificant role as publisher of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, he had no real influence in the Party and the State in subsequent years until

Hitler named him Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern (Russian) Territories in 1941, an appointment for which Rosenberg certainly had not pressed.

On January 25, Hitler received the Polish Ambassador, Josef Lipski, at the chancellory for the final conference prior to signing the forthcoming agreement with Poland.¹⁶ The same day, he also received Reich Bishop Müller and the Protestant Land Bishops at the chancellory to gain an insight into the position of the Protestant Church.¹⁷ Hitler reported the results of both conferences to the Reich President.

The ceremonial signing of the ten-year pact between Germany and Poland took place on January 26.¹⁸ The pact attracted considerable attention, for it ran contrary to the anti-Polish mentality manifest in Germany since Bismarck's time and even as early as the partitioning of Poland. The National Socialists celebrated this newly-gained friendship with Poland as a miracle of diplomatic statesmanship. Under certain circumstances, the pact may have had its positive sides, had it been taken—and meant—seriously. Further developments revealed Hitler's ulterior motive of gaining time in order to later turn against his ally with an utter lack of scruples.

On January 27, the *Frankfurter Volksblatt* published a conversation between Hitler and the writer Hanns Johst on the concept of the 'Bürger.' When Hitler took a stand against the so-called 'Bürger,' or bourgeoisie, he usually had the intellectuals in mind, whose skepticism of his prognoses for the future never failed to enrage him. However, Hitler by no means rejected the bourgeois way of life: his private hopes and expectations and his needs in terms of accommodations and daily life were, in essence, those of the *Kleinbüfugertum* (lower middle class or petite bourgeoisie).

According to Johst, the discussion ran as follows:¹⁹

Question: The Bürger' is feeling increasingly distressed in respect to the romantic idea of peace of mind, his own peace of mind. So would you, Herr Reichskanzler, allow me to ask quite openly: what is your position on the 'Bürger'?

Answer: I believe it would be a good thing if we first detach the concept of the 'Bürger' from the extremely unclear ambiguity which surrounds it and mutually establish an unambiguous definition of what we understand by the term 'Bürger.' I need only cite the 'Staatsbürger' (citizen) and the 'Spießbürger' (Philistine) to name two members of this species.

Question: Do you mean to say the 'Staatsbürger' is the man who stands up for his State politically no matter what, and the Spießbürger' is the type who calls himself apolitical for fear of losing his peaceful existence and, acting the

Philistine, uses the well-known practice of sticking his head in the sand to avoid being an eyewitness to political conditions?

Answer: That's exactly what I mean. One section of the bourgeois world and the bourgeois Weltanschauung enjoys acting the part of being completely disinterested in political life. These people have not progressed beyond the prewar position that politics has its own forms of existence far removed from their normal life in society and is to be practiced by a special caste engaged and predestined for that purpose. These people, armchair politicians, enjoy criticizing you as part of a general mood or motivated by personal interest, but they will never take on any representative, public responsibility. My Movement, as an expression of will and yearning, encompasses every aspect of the entire Volk. It conceives of Germany as a corporate body, as a single organism. There is no such thing as non-responsibility in this organic being, not a single cell which is not responsible, by its very existence, for the welfare and well-being of the whole.

Thus in my view there is not the least amount of room for apolitical people. Every German, whether he wants to be or not, is by virtue of his being born into German destiny, by the fact of his existence, a representative of the form of existence of this very Germany. In upholding this principle, I am turning every class conflict around and at the same time declaring war on every concept of caste and consciousness of class.

Question: That means that you will not tolerate any flight into private life, whereas the bourgeois likes to take refuge in being a private person? You are forcing everyone to take on the position of a 'Staatsbürger'?

Answer: I reject shilly-shallying (*Drückebergerei*) about decisions! Every single German must know what he wants! And he must take a stand for what he wants!

Since 1914, I have devoted my life to fighting. First as a soldier, blindly obedient to the military leadership. When this leadership allowed itself to be locked out of the power sphere of command in 1918, I took a close look at the new political command and recognized in it the true face of Marxism. With that began my fight against the politics of this theory and its practice.

Question: You encountered Marxist parties and the indifference of the middle class. You were regarded as part of the bourgeois right-wing.

Answer: This evaluation of my life's work leaves room for two errors. My entire energy was devoted from the beginning to overcoming the leadership of the state by parties, and secondly—although this is logical and obvious from the origins of my uprising—I must never be understood in bourgeois terms.

In the quarrel of the parties, it became evident that the discussion was being conducted under false appearances. It is wrong, you see, that the bourgeois parties have become the employers and for the Marxists to call themselves proles and employees. There are just as many proles among the employers as there are bourgeois elements among the employees.

The bourgeois—allegedly for the sake of the Vaterland—are defending property, a capitalistic value. Thus from a Marxist point of view, love of one's country is not dumb, but rather capital's greed for profit. On the other hand, the

international character of Marxism is regarded by the middle class as speculation for a world economy in which there is only state administration and no longer any private property.

The member of the bourgeoisie avoids this division of the Volk into opposing interest groups by hiding behind the superficial and zealous optimism of his daily paper and allowing himself to be educated “apolitically.” The lessons are organized very nicely according to the taste of his majesty, Gullible Fritz (*Majestät Zipfelmütze*), placid and peaceful. People are reverting step by step. The compromise serves over and over again to ban controversy literally from the face—but only the face—of the planet, and the end, the end is a political matter somewhere in the distance which is better left alone to preserve the peace, of course. But the fact that this peace was not a peace at all, but a daily defeat, a daily victory of consciously political Marxism—it is for the recognition of this fact that National Socialism is fighting.

National Socialism takes for itself the pure idea from each of these two camps. From the camp of bourgeois tradition, it takes national resolve, and from the materialism of the Marxist dogma living, creative Socialism.

Volksgemeinschaft: that means a community of all productive labor, that means the oneness of all vital interests, that means overcoming bourgeois privatism and the unionized, mechanically organized masses, that means unconditionally equating the individual fate and the nation, the individual and the Volk.

I know that liberal bourgeois concepts are highly developed in Germany, the bourgeois man rejects public life and has a deep-seated aversion toward what goes on in the streets. If he weakens in his resolve for any length of time, this public life, the street, will destroy the ideal of his four walls.

In cases like this, attack is the best form of defense.

I am not responsible for the fact that the central command of the German State was taken over by the street in 1918. However, the bourgeoisie does not have the slightest reason to suspect that I was the drummer who sounds the reveille, for if the bourgeoisie had slept through the facts of history, it would have awakened too late, awakened to a political state of affairs which is called Bolshevism and which is the mortal enemy of the concepts of the middle class. The Russian Revolution was up in arms against the middle class as bourgeoisie, and in Germany the decisive battle of this Weltanschauung has just been lost.

The fact that all of Germany is enlightened as to Bolshevist imperialism, that not a single German can say, “I knew nothing of it,” but can resort only to the lame excuse, “I didn’t believe it”—that is and always has been my commitment and the basic principle of all of my loyal followers.

Question: Inasmuch as you were forced by the Weimar Constitution to organize along party lines, you called your movement the National Socialist Workers’ Party. In my opinion, you are thus giving the concept of the worker priority over the concept of the bourgeoisie.

Answer: I chose the word “worker” because it was more natural and recaptured with every element of my being, and because I wanted to recapture this word for the national force. I did not and will not allow the concept of the worker to simply take on an international connotation and

become an object of distrust to the bourgeoisie. In a certain sense, I had to “naturalize” the term worker and subject it once again to the control of the German language and the sovereign rights and obligations of the German Volk. Similarly, I will not tolerate that the correctly used and essentially understood concept of the ‘Bürger’ is spoiled. But I believe the ‘Bürger’ is called upon to ensure this.

Question: In the Weltanschauung of National Socialism, there are therefore only the ‘Staatsbürger’ and the worker. And all people are either both, or neither, and thus parasites in the life of the State.

Answer: Certainly, I feel this is a significant comparison, for this alone enables us to dispense with the entire superficial vocabulary of unnecessary arrogance caused by parliamentarianism and all of that liberalism. The ‘Spießbürger’ must become a citizen of the State; the Red comrade must become a Volksgenosse. Both must, with their good intentions, ennoble the sociological concept of the worker and raise the status of an honorary title for labor. This patent of nobility alone puts the soldier and the peasant, the merchant and the academician, the worker and the capitalist under oath to take the only possible direction in which all purposeful German striving must be headed: towards the nation.

Only when everything that happens within the entire German community happens with a view to the whole does the whole, in the changing currents of political effects, in turn become capable of taking on the positive and productive leadership of all of the individual units, classes and conditions.

Leadership is always based upon the free will and good intentions of those being led. My doctrine of the Führer concept is therefore quite the opposite of what the Bolsheviks like to present it as being: the doctrine of a brutal dictator who triumphs over the destruction of the values of private life. Thus as Reich Chancellor I am not discontinuing my activities as a public educator; on the contrary: I am using every means provided by the State and its power to publish and make known my every word and deed with the goal of winning the public with this openness for every single decision of my national will by proof and conviction. And I am doing this because I believe in the creative power and the creative contribution of the Volk.

Question: In other words, Herr Reichskanzler, in the Volk you perceive the myth of a fusion of the worker and the ‘Bürger,’ just as you perceive the State as the malleable instrument of the Volk? If I may state it quite openly, you see the instrument of the State in the hand of the Volk, and you thus see in your own chancellorship the sovereignty of the Volk as consecrated to the name of Adolf Hitler!

Answer: I hope that this dialogue serves as an enlightenment to the broad circles of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois man should stop feeling like some sort of pensioner of tradition or capital and separated from the worker by the Marxist concept of property; rather, he should strive, with an open mind, to become integrated in the whole as a worker, for he is not a member of society at all in the distorted sense in which he was persecuted as a hostile brother within the ranks of the Volk. He should base his classic bourgeois pride upon his

citizenship and, in other respects, be modestly conscious of his identity as a worker.

For everything which does not feverishly press for work and affirm its faith in work is condemned to extinction in the sphere of National Socialism.

On January 29, Hitler succeeded in placing the *Kyffhäuserbund*, the Federation of German Veterans Associations, under National Socialist leadership. Former Artillery General von Horn resigned as its Bundesführer, making room for the Supreme Landesführer of the Second SA Reserve, former Colonel Reinhardt, who was later promoted to become SS Gruppenführer.²⁰

On January 30, the members of the Cabinet gathered at the chancellory with von Papen as their spokesman to congratulate Hitler on the first anniversary of the *Machtergreifung*. Hitler expressed his thanks in a speech,²¹ stressing that “there was probably not another cabinet in the whole world which cooperated as homogeneously and with such trust as the German Reich Cabinet.”

Hindenburg received the Reich Chancellor for a private conference on the occasion.²² He had also thanked him for his achievements in the previous year in a separate handwritten letter.

The Reichstag convened at 3:00 p.m. to receive a statement of policy. Dressed in his brown tunic, Hitler commenced his speech with the following words:²³

Deputies! Men of the German Reichstag!

Today in retrospect we call the year 1933 [sic!] the Year of the National Socialist Revolution, and one day an objective assessment of its incidents and events will judge it right to put this name down in the history of our Volk. What will be regarded as decisive is not the moderate form in which this revolutionary change took place externally, but the inner greatness of the transformation this year has brought to the German Volk in every sector and in all facets of its life.

In the space of barely twelve months, one world of ideas and institutions was eliminated and another put in its place. What happened in this short space of time before our very eyes was still regarded and described as a fantastic utopia on the very eve of the memorable day of January 30, 1933 by the certainly overwhelming majority of our Volk and in particular by the supporters, spokesmen and representatives of former conditions.

However, such a miraculous historic event would truly be inconceivable had the command which brought it about been due only to the whim of some capricious human spirit or even a quirk of fate. No. The prerequisites for this event have necessarily evolved and resulted from the developments of many long years. A horrible crisis cried out for a remedy. So that the hour was waiting only for a will ready to fulfill the historic undertaking.

With this introduction, Hitler drew a picture of himself as a man resolved to act, with the stature of a personage in world history, the type of figure who fulfilled the yearnings of a line of philosophers of German culture from Hegel to Oswald Spengler.

Hitler then launched upon a one-hour version of his "party narrative," beginning as usual with the period of struggle since 1919 and, this time, culminating in the events of 1933.

After having meted out a few blows to the Churches, above all to the Protestant Church, he stated:

The State has dealt no less radically with the two Christian confessions. Filled by the desire to secure for the German Volk the great religious, moral and ethical values anchored in the two Christian confessions, we have eliminated the political organizations while, at the same time, reinforcing the religious institutions. For an agreement with the powerful National Socialist State is more valuable to a Church than the conflict between denominational political associations which, in view of the policy of compromise necessitated by their coalition, are forced to spiritually abandon a truly inward, religious education and stabilization of the Volk in order to pay for personal advantages to party members.

However, we all harbor the expectation that the merger of the Protestant Land Churches and confessions to form a German Protestant Reich Church might truly satisfy the yearning of those who believe that, in the muddled dividedness of Protestant life, they must fear a weakening in the power of the Protestant faith.

This year the National Socialist State has clearly demonstrated its high regard for the strength of the Christian faiths, and hence it expects the same high regard on the part of the confessions for the strength of the National Socialist State! [—]

Thus at this time I would like to protest against the theory which has been advanced again recently that Germany could only be happy under the rule of its traditional princes.

No! We are one Volk, and we want to live in one Reich.

And those who sinned against this principle so often in the past in German history were not able to credit their mission to God's merciful will but instead, as history has taught us, unfortunately all too often to the expedient favor and support of their worst enemies.

In this year, we have thus consciously enforced the authority of the Reich and the authority of the Government against those infirm descendents and heirs to the politics of the past who believed themselves capable of declaring their traditional resistance to the National Socialist State.

It was one of the happiest hours of my life when it became clear that the entire German Volk was granting its approval to a policy which exclusively represented its interests.

With all due respect to the values of the monarchy and in all esteem to the truly great emperors and kings of our German history, the question of perma-

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nently shaping the structure of the State of the German Reich is completely beyond discussion today. No matter how the nation and its leaders may one day decide, there is one thing they should never forget: he who personifies Germany's highest peak receives his calling from the German Volk and is obligated to it alone!

For my part, I regard myself merely as an agent of the nation engaged to implement those reforms which will one day enable it to make the final decision on the permanent constitution of the Reich.

Hitler had never seriously advocated the reinstatement of the monarchy.²⁴ Now and again, when he judged it opportune in light of his respective audience, he indulged in nebulous allusions to a monarchical constitution for the Reich, possible perhaps in some distant future. By no means was he willing, however, to accept the idea that this might come to pass during his own lifetime. His speech of January 30 made this unequivocally clear to those who persisted in clinging to this type of "misplaced" hope.

He now turned his attention to his enemies at home—whom he perceived to be primarily the intellectuals, but also the reactionaries—and gave them a foretaste of the "rap on the knuckles" of June 30.²⁵

The fact that our activities during this past year were nonetheless put under fire from countless foes is only natural. We have borne this burden in the past and will also be able to bear it in the future. Degenerated emigrants, who for the most part quitted the scene of their former operations not for political, but for purely criminal reasons because the changed atmosphere had given them cause for alarm, are now attempting to mobilize a gullible world against Germany with truly villainous dexterity and a criminal lack of conscience, but their lies will catch up with them all the faster now that tens of thousands of respectable and honorable men and women are coming to Germany from other countries and can compare with their own eyes the accounts delivered by these internationally "persecuted" parties with the actual reality.

Furthermore, the fact that a number of Communist ideologists believe it necessary to turn back the tide of history and, in doing so, make use of a subhumanity (*Untermenschentum*) which mistakes the concept of political freedom for the idea of allowing criminal instincts free rein will similarly cause us little concern. We were able to deal with these elements when they were in power and we were in the opposition. In the future we will be even more certain of being able to deal with them because they are now in the opposition and we are in power.

A number of our bourgeois intellectuals as well are of the conviction that they cannot accept the hard facts. However, it is much more useful to have this rootless intellectuality as an enemy than as a follower. For these persons turn away from all that is healthy, and all that is diseased awakens their interest and is given their support.

I would also like to add to the ranks of the enemies of the new regime the small clique of those whose gaze is incorrigibly directed backward, in whose eyes the peoples are nothing other than abandoned trading posts who are only waiting for a master so as to find, under his divine guidance, the only possible inner satisfaction. And last of all, I add that little group of *völkisch* ideologists who believe that it is only possible to make the nation happy by eradicating the experiences and consequences of two thousand years of history to start out on new trails, clad, so to speak, in their “bearskins.”

All of these opponents taken together, in numerical terms, scarcely amount to 2.5 million people, in contrast to the more than forty million who profess their faith in the new State and its regime. These two million are not to be rated as opposition, for they comprise a chaotic conglomeration of the most diverse opinions and views, utterly incapable of pursuing any type of common goal, and capable only of joining in rejecting today’s State.

Hitler then shifted the focus of his offensive to opportunists and the hereditarily ill, to whom he announced “genuinely revolutionary measures”:

More dangerous than these, however, are the two categories of people whom we must perceive as a genuine burden to our present-day Reich and the Reich of tomorrow.

First of all, there are the political birds of passage who alight wherever the crops are being harvested in summer. Spineless, weak characters—yet true opportunists who pounce on every successful movement, and endeavor by overloud clamor and more than perfect behavior to avoid or answer from the very start the question of their past origins and activities.

They are dangerous because they attempt to satisfy their purely personal and egotistical interests behind the mask of the new regime and, in doing so, become a genuine burden to a Movement for which millions of decent people spent years making the most difficult sacrifices without ever even having conceived of the idea that they could ever be repaid for the suffering and deprivation which they had taken upon themselves for their Volk.

Purging the State and the Party of these importunate parasites will be an important task, particularly for the future. Then many inwardly decent people, who were unable to come to the Movement earlier, often for understandable and even cogent reasons, will also find their way to it without having to fear being mistaken for such dubious elements.

And another heavy burden is the army of those who were born into the negative side of the *völkisch* life due to their hereditary predisposition.

Here the State will be able to take genuinely revolutionary measures. The National Socialist Movement deserves great credit for having launched, by way of legislation as early as last year, an initial offensive against this threat of the gradual disintegration of the Volk.²⁶ When objections are raised—particularly from the denominational quarter—and opposition is offered to this legislation, I am forced to reply by saying that it would have been more effective, more decent and above all more Christian not to have stood by those

who deliberately destroyed healthy life instead of rebelling against those who have no other goal but to avoid disease from the very onset.

Apart from that, whatever is allowed to happen in this sphere not only constitutes an act of cruelty against the innocent victims themselves, but is also an act of cruelty against the Volk as a whole. If the development were allowed to progress at the rate of the last hundred years, the number of those dependent upon public welfare would one day threaten to approach the number of those who ultimately would be the only support for the preservation of the community.

It is not the Churches who must feed these armies of the unfortunate, but the Volk. Were the Churches to state their willingness to take those suffering from hereditary illnesses into their care and keeping, we would gladly be willing to dispense with their sterilization. But as long as the State is condemned to raise gigantic, annually increasing sums—today already exceeding the mark of 350 million—from its citizens toward maintaining these regrettable hereditarily ill people in the nation, then it is forced to resort to that remedy which both prevents that such undeserved suffering be passed on in the future and also prohibits that millions of healthy persons are often deprived of the bare necessities of life in order to artificially preserve the lives of millions of ill people.

Men of the German Reichstag! No matter how great the results of the Year of the National Socialist Revolution and leadership of State were, one fact is even more significant: namely, that this great transition could take place in our Volk first of all with what was absolutely lightning speed, and secondly almost totally without bloodshed.

It is the fate of the overwhelming majority of all revolutions to completely lose their footing in rushing to storm ahead, only to be dashed to pieces after all somewhere in the end when meeting up with the hard facts. However, our leadership of the national uprising has been, for the most part, so exemplary as to bar comparison with practically every other in history with the exception of the Fascist Revolution in Italy.

The reasons for this lie in the fact that it was not a Volk driven to despair and otherwise disorganized which raised the flag of revolt and laid the torches to the existing State, but a brilliantly organized movement with followers who had become disciplined in long years which waged the battle. The National Socialist Party and its organizations deserve undying credit for this; the brown Guard is to thank for it. It prepared the German uprising, carried it through and completed it almost without bloodshed and with an incomparable methodicalness.

This miracle, however, was also inconceivable without the voluntary and absolute consent of those who aspired to identical goals as leaders of similar organizations or who, as officers, represented the German Wehrmacht.

It is a unique historic example of how such a sincere attachment could form between the powers of the Revolution and the responsible leaders of an utterly disciplined Wehrmacht in the service of the Volk which is comparable to that between the National Socialist Party and myself as its leader on the one hand and the officers and soldiers of the German Army and Navy on the other.

Whereas the Stahlhelm increasingly came to join National Socialism in these twelve months to finally most fairly express this fraternity in a fusion with it, the Army and its leadership has, in this same space of time, stood by the new State in unconditional loyalty and allegiance and actually first made the success of our work possible before history.

For it was not a civil war which could save Germany, but only the unanimous uniting of all those who, even in the worst years, had not lost their faith in the German Volk and the German Reich.

At the closing of this year of the greatest domestic revolution and as a special sign of the enormous, unifying power of our ideal, I may note that in a cabinet which contained only three National Socialists in January 1933, today all of the ministers are still doing active duty with the exception of one man who left of his own volition and who, to my great pleasure, was elected on our list, a real German patriot, in this auditorium.²⁷ Thus the men of the government formed on January 30, 1933 have also accomplished in their own ranks what they demanded from the entire German Volk: disregarding earlier differences to work together for the resurrection of our Volk and the honor and freedom of our Reich. The struggle for the inner reorganization of the German Volk and Reich, which was best expressed in the fusion of Party and State and of Volk and Reich, has not yet been completed.

True to our proclamation when our Government took office one year ago, we will continue the struggle. Thus the tasks of our domestic intentions and actions are already lined out for the future: strengthening the Reich by uniting all powers in an organizational form which finally accomplishes what has been neglected for half a millennium as a result of selfishness and incompetence. Promotion of the welfare of our Volk in all spheres of life and civilized culture.

The German Reichstag will be called upon within the next few hours to pass a new law to give the Government further legal authorization to continue the National Socialist Revolution.²⁸

Hitler then discussed Germany's relations with other States, namely Russia, France, and above all Poland and Austria, wasting noticeably few words on Italy and England, countries which he especially would have liked to gain as allies.

In principle, the German Government is proceeding on the assumption that, in respect to the character of our relations with other countries, it is naturally of no consequence which type of constitution and form of government the peoples choose to adopt for themselves. It is each and every Volk's very own private matter to determine its domestic life at its own discretion. However, it is thus also the absolutely private matter of the German Volk to choose the spiritual contents and the constructive form of its organizations and leadership of State according to its own wishes.

For many months we have been painfully forced to observe that the difference which is evident between our world view and that of other nations has been used as an excuse not only to heap numerous unjustified accusations upon the German Volk and the German Reich, but also to view it with a completely unfounded distrust.

We have not adopted these views. In the past twelve months, we have made a sincere endeavor to cultivate the relations of the German Reich to all other States in the spirit of reconciliation and willingness to compromise, even if there were great, even irreconcilable differences between us and the concept of the State in these countries.

In regard both to States with a democratic structure and States with anti-democratic tendencies, we were consistently motivated by the single aim of finding ways and means to balance the opposites and bring about international cooperation.

This is the only explanation for the fact that, in spite of the great difference between the two prevailing Weltanschauungen, the German Reich also endeavored this year to cultivate amicable relations with Russia. In his last major speech, Herr Stalin expressed the fear that forces hostile to the Soviets might be acting in Germany; I must, however, take this opportunity to correct this opinion by saying that Germany will tolerate Communist tendencies or even propaganda just as little as German National Socialist tendencies would be tolerated in Russia.

The more clearly and unambiguously this fact is evidenced and respected by both States, the more natural it will be to cultivate the interests which both countries have in common. Hence we also welcome the endeavors toward a stabilization of relations in the East by a system of pacts if these are guided less by factors of a tactical and political nature and more designed to contribute to strengthening peace.

For this reason and in order to make good these intentions, the German Government has endeavored from the very first year onward to establish a new and better relationship with the Polish State.

When I took over the government on January 30, the relations between the two countries appeared to me more than unsatisfactory. There was danger that the obvious differences, which had their origins, on the one hand, in the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and, on the other, in the resultant tension on both sides, would gradually harden to become a relation of enmity which, if allowed to persist, could all too easily have taken on the character of a burdensome political heritage for both sides.

But such a development, aside from the latent danger it holds, would comprise a hindrance for any beneficial cooperation between the two nations for all time to come.

The Germans and the Polish will have to come to terms respectively with the facts of each other's existence. Thus it is more feasible to regulate a state of affairs which a thousand years were incapable of eliminating and will, after us, also fail to eliminate in a manner which will provide the largest possible profit for both nations.

It also appeared to me to be necessary to use a concrete example to illustrate that differences which quite evidently exist must not be allowed to prevent that, in the lives of nations, the form for mutual intercourse be found which is more beneficial to peace and hence to the welfare of the two nations than the political—and ultimately economic—paralysis which inevitably results from the permanent lying in wait of mutual distrust.

It also appeared to me to be right to attempt, in such a case, to acknowledge and deal with the problems affecting the two countries in a frank and open exchange of views between the two than to keep entrusting this task to third and fourth parties. In other respects, be the future differences between the two countries what they may: the catastrophic consequences of attempting to remove them by warfare would be in no proportion to any possible gains!

The German Government would thus be happy to meet with this same generous attitude in the leader of the present Polish State, Marshal Pilsudski, and to lay down this mutual realization in an agreement which will not only be equally advantageous to the Polish and the German Volk but also represent a major contribution toward preserving general peace. The German Government is willing and ready to cultivate economic relations with Poland within the scope of this agreement, so that here, as well, the period of unprofitable reserve can be followed by a time of advantageous cooperation.

The fact that the National Socialist Government in Danzig was also able to bring about a similar clarification of its relations with its Polish neighbor this same year fills us with particular pleasure.

In contrast, to the great regret of the German Reich Government, the relations of the Reich to the present Austrian Government are not satisfactory. The blame does not lie with us. The allegation that the German Reich is planning to do violence to the Austrian State is absurd and can neither be substantiated nor proven.

It is, however, obvious that a single idea which seizes the entire German nation and moves it to its very depths will not halt before the border posts of a country which not only, in terms of its Volk, is German, but which also, in terms of its history as the Ostmark, comprised an integral part of the German Reich for many centuries; whose capital had the honor, for half a millennium, of being the seat of the German emperors; and whose soldiers fought side by side with the German regiments and divisions as recently as the World War.

Even apart from this, there is nothing peculiar about this fact when one considers that nearly all revolutionary thoughts and ideas in Europe have always made themselves felt hitherto beyond the borders of individual countries. For instance, the ideas of the French Revolution extended beyond the borders between States to inspire the peoples throughout Europe, just as today the National Socialist idea has naturally been seized upon by the German element (*Deutschtum*) in Austria out of an instinctive intellectual and spiritual association with the entire German Volk.

If the present Austrian Government considers it necessary to suppress this movement by utilizing every means at the State's disposal, then this is, of course, its own affair. However, it must then also personally assume the responsibility for the consequences of its own policy and answer for them. The German Reich Government only came to the obvious conclusions concerning the actions of the Austrian Government against National Socialism at that point when German citizens living in Austria or visiting there as foreigners were affected.

The German Reich Government cannot be reasonably expected to send its citizens as guests to a country whose Government has unmistakably made clear that it considers National Socialists, in and of themselves, undesirable elements.

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Just as we would be unable to count on American and English tourists coming to Germany if these tourists had their national emblems and flags torn away from them, the German Reich Government cannot accept that those Germans who visit another country—and a German country at that—as foreigners and guests are subjected to this disgraceful treatment, for the national emblems and the swastika flags are symbols of today's German Reich. And Germans who travel abroad today, with the exception of the emigrants, are always National Socialists!

When the Austrian Government complains that Germany restrains its citizens²⁹ from traveling to a country whose Government is hostile even to the individual member of a Weltanschauung which here constitutes the prevailing one, it might take into consideration that, were these measures on Germany's part to be avoided, this would necessarily result in conditions which would, in fact, be unbearable. Since the modern German citizen is too proud and too self-confident to allow his respected national symbols to be torn down without resistance, there is no alternative but to spare such a country our company.

I must emphatically reject the Austrian Government's further allegation that the Reich would even plan, much less carry through, any such type of attack against the Austrian State.

The fact that tens of thousands of Austrian political refugees in Germany today are taking an avid interest in the events in their homeland may, in terms of its effects, be regrettable; however, the Reich is all the more incapable of preventing this since the rest of the world has hitherto not been able to put a stop to the activities of certain German emigrants abroad in respect to developments in Germany.

If the Austrian Government is complaining of political propaganda against Austria supposedly emanating from Germany, the German Government has a right to complain of the political propaganda being carried on against Germany in the other countries by political emigrants living there.

The fact that the German press is published in the German language and thus can also be read by the population of Austria is, perhaps, regrettable for the present Austrian Government, but this cannot be changed by the Reich Government. However, the fact that German newspapers are published in the millions in non-German countries and shipped to Germany would constitute genuine grounds for the German Government to protest, for there is no explanation for the fact that, for instance, Berlin newspapers are published in Prague or Paris.

How difficult it is to prevent political emigrants from taking action against their mother country is most clearly evident in the fact that even where the League of Nations is sovereignly responsible for the doings of a particular country, the activities of these circles of emigrants against their former mother country evidently cannot be stopped. Only a few days ago, the German State Police arrested another sixteen Communists at the border of the Saar who were attempting to smuggle large quantities of treasonous propaganda material from that domain of the League of Nations into the German Reich. If something of this sort is allowed so close to the source, one can hardly blame the German Reich for alleged incidents of a similar nature.

The German Reich Government also refrains from lodging any further complaint against the neighboring States based upon the anti-German propaganda of the emigrants which is tolerated there and has gone so far as to institute the performance of a judicial farce mocking the highest German court, a circumstance which ultimately resulted in a wild campaign of boycotts continuing even today. The German Reich Government can refrain from filing suit because it feels that it is the unshakable representative and trustee of the will of the German nation. It has preserved domestic security by not omitting to appeal to the German Volk several times in the space of one year, for its own peace of mind and for the purpose of enlightening the rest of the world, to have this trust confirmed by way of a plebiscite while by no means having been forced to do so.

It would instantly invalidate the attacks being directed against the present Austrian Government were it to finally decide to similarly call upon the German Volk in Austria to ascertain before the whole world whether its will is identical with that of the Government.

I do not believe that, for instance, the Government of Switzerland—a country with millions of citizens of German nationality—could have any complaint to make of any attempts on the part of German circles to interfere with its domestic affairs. It appears to me that this is based upon the fact that the government in existence there evidently enjoys the trust of the Swiss people and thus has no reason to blame domestic difficulties on motives of foreign policy.

Without wishing in the least to interfere in the internal affairs of other States, I nonetheless believe that I must say one thing: no regime can prevail for any length of time with force alone.

Thus it will always be a primary concern of the National Socialist Government of the Reich to ascertain over and over again the extent to which the will of the nation is personified in the government at its fore. And in this sense, we 'savages' are truly the better democrats.

In other respects, while myself being proud and happy to affirm my faith in the Austrian *Bruderland* as my homeland and the homeland of my fathers, I must protest against the idea that the German temperament of the Austrian Volk would require any stimuli at all from the Reich.

I believe that today I still know my homeland and its Volk well enough to know that the throbbing which fills the 66 million Germans in the Reich also moves its own hearts and senses.

May Fate decree that, in the end, a way may nevertheless be found out of this unsatisfactory state of affairs and to a truly reconciling settlement. The German Reich is willing at all times, given full respect to the free will of Austrian *Deutschtum*, to extend its hand to a real understanding.

In this review of foreign policy, I cannot omit mentioning my pleasure at the fact that the almost traditional friendship to Fascist Italy which National Socialism has consistently cultivated and the high esteem which the great leader of that people is also accorded in our country have been further and variously reinforced in the relations between the two States in the past year. The German Volk feels grateful for the many proofs of the both statesmanlike and objective

fairness which modern Italy has demonstrated toward it at the Geneva negotiations as well as subsequent thereto.

The visit of the Italian State Secretary, Suvich,³⁰ to Berlin has given us the opportunity to exhibit, for the first time, an indication of these sentiments for the Italian people—whose Weltanschauung is so close to our own—and for its outstanding statesman.

Just as the National Socialist Government of the Reich endeavored to come to an understanding with Poland this year, we have similarly made an honest attempt to reduce the differences between France and Germany and, if possible, to find the way to a final understanding by reaching a general settlement.

The fight for German equality of rights which, because it is a fight for the honor and the rights of our Volk, is one we will never give up, could, in my opinion, be terminated in no better way than in a reconciliation of the two great nations which have so often shed the blood of their best sons on the battlefield in the past centuries without effecting any essential and permanent change in the facts of the matter.

Thus I also believe that this problem cannot be viewed only through the spectacles of cold professional politicians and diplomats, but that it can be permanently solved only by the warm-hearted resolve of those who perhaps once faced each other as enemies but who, in their high regard for each other's bravery, might find a bridge to the future which must rule out a repetition of past suffering if Europe is not to be driven to the brink of disaster.

France fears for its security. No one in Germany wants to threaten it, and we are willing to do everything to prove this. Germany demands its equality of rights. No one in the world has the right to deny this to a great nation, and no one will have the power to prevent it for any length of time.

However, for us, the living witnesses of the horrors of the Great War, nothing is further removed from our thoughts than to make any sort of connection between comprehensible sentiments and demands and a desire to once more put the forces of the nations to the test on the battlefield, an act which necessarily would result in international chaos.

Motivated by these sentiments, I have attempted, in the spirit of the necessary and desired cooperation between both nations, to bring about a solution to questions which otherwise are all too liable to cause a fresh ignition of the passions at play.

My proposal that Germany and France might already now mutually settle the problem of the Saar originated in the following considerations:

1. This is the only territorial question still open between the two countries. When this question is solved, the German Government is willing and determined to accept not only the letter but also the spirit of the Locarno Pact, for there would no longer be any territorial problem between France and Germany in its view.

2. In spite of the fact that a plebiscite will result in a tremendous majority for Germany, the German Government fears that, in the course of preparations for the plebiscite, national passions will flame up, urged onward by fresh propaganda and fueled particularly by irresponsible circles of emigrants; in view of

the already certain result, this would not be necessary and is hence to be deplored.

3. Regardless of the outcome of the plebiscite, it will in any case necessarily leave behind the feeling of defeat for one of the two nations. And even if the bonfires would be burning in Germany, from the viewpoint of a reconciliation between the two countries, we would be happier if a solution equally satisfactory to both sides could be found in advance.

4. We are of the conviction that, had France and Germany provided for and resolved this question beforehand by mutually drafting an agreement, the entire population of the Saar would have enthusiastically approved of this solution with an overwhelming majority and with the consequence that the request of the population of the Saar to cast its vote would then have been granted without one of the two nations in question having to be made to experience the outcome of the plebiscite as a victory or a defeat, and without providing a new opportunity for propaganda to obstruct the mutual understanding budding between the German and French peoples.

Thus today I still regret that, for their part, the French are not inclined to accept this idea. However, I am not relinquishing hope that nevertheless the will to achieve a genuine reconciliation and to once and for all bury the hatchet will grow consistently stronger in the two countries and win out in the end.

If this succeeds, the equality of rights unwaveringly demanded in Germany will no longer be perceived in France as an attack against the security of the French nation, but as the self-evident right of a great Volk with which it not only maintains amicable political relations, but with which it also has so infinitely many economic interests in common.

We gratefully welcome the endeavors of the Government of Great Britain to place its assistance at the disposal of promoting these amicable relations. We will do our best to examine the draft of a new disarmament proposal given to me yesterday by the British Ambassador in the spirit which I endeavored to explain in my speech in May as being the guiding principle in our foreign policy.

When the German Government was forced to decide this year to withdraw from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations, it did so because the developments surrounding the question closest to Germany's heart of granting equality of rights in connection with international arms control were no longer compatible with what I had to establish in May as the inalterable basic demand not only for the national security of the German Reich but also for the national honor of our Volk.

At this time, I can only once again repeat to the world that there is no threat and no force which could ever move the German Volk to relinquish its claim to the rights which can never be denied to a sovereign nation.

But I can further pledge that this sovereign nation has no other desire than to gladly invest the power and the weight of its political, ethical and economic values not only toward healing the wounds inflicted upon the human race in times past, but also in the interests of a cooperation between the civilized nations which, as a British statesman has rightly stated, through the products of their intellect and labors, are what make life in this world a beautiful thing and genuinely worth living.

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After one year of the National Socialist Revolution, the German Reich and the German Volk have become inwardly and outwardly more mature to assume that share of the responsibility for the prosperity and good fortune of all peoples which is allotted to such a great nation by Providence and hence cannot be denied it by human beings.

The willingness to fulfill this genuinely international obligation cannot be expressed in any symbol more fitting than in the person of the aged Marshal who, as an officer and victorious leader, waged wars and battles for the greatness of our Volk and today, as President of the Reich, is the most venerable guarantor for the task of peace so important to all of us.

2

At the conclusion of Hitler's speech, the Reichstag unanimously passed the following law:³¹

Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich of January 30, 1934.

The plebiscite and the Reichstag election of November 12, 1933 have proven that the German Volk has overcome all internal borders and differences to become molten together in an indissoluble inner unity.

Hence the Reichstag has unanimously approved the following law which is hereby promulgated with the unison of the Reichsrat, it having been determined that the requirements for legislation amending the Constitution are fulfilled:

- Article 1: The representative bodies of the Volk in the Länder shall be dissolved.
- Article 2: (1) The jurisdiction of the Länder shall pass over to the Reich.
(2) The Land Governments shall be subordinate to the Reich Government.
- Article 3: The Reichsstatthalters shall be subordinate to the supervision of the Reich Minister of the Interior.
- Article 4: The Reich Government shall be entitled to lay down new constitutional law.
- Article 5: The Reich Minister of the Interior shall issue the ordinances and administrative regulations requisite for the implementation of the Law.
- Article 6: This Law shall come into effect at the date of its promulgation.

The passage of this law required a two-thirds majority in the Reichstag, because it affected the institution of the Reichsrat (representative body of the Länder) which had been guaranteed in the Enabling Act of March 24, 1933.

By completely divesting the German Länder of their power and assigning their jurisdiction to the Reich, Hitler accomplished the real purpose behind the much talked-about *Reichsreform*, the redivision of the Reich into other, more easily controlled administrative districts, and

hence could dismiss the subject from then on. His sole interest in the reform had lain in ruling out any possibility that a new concentration of power might arise in one of the German Länder and constitute a threat in the event of difficulties at home or abroad.

As far as Hitler was concerned, the Land Governments were free to stay on as pure administrative bodies, and they actually did remain in existence until 1945. With the exception of a few isolated reforms (e.g. the Greater Hamburg Law, the Greater Berlin Law, the transformation of several Prussian government districts into Prussian provinces, etc.) the Reichsreform sank into oblivion.

In Austria, Hitler later made certain that every trace of the Austrian Federal Government and the Federal States were erased and Reichsgaue and Reichsstatthalters installed in their place. Similar measures were undertaken in the Sudetenland, Danzig and the other eastern territories.

On February 2, Hitler spoke at a convention of Reichsleiters and Gauleiters in Berlin, once more repeating his alleged intention of instituting a leadership hierarchy.³²

“Laying the unshakable foundations of the leadership hierarchy will serve to solve and safeguard the question of the party leadership for all time,” he declared.

In order to lend further emphasis to the anti-monarchic passages of his Reichstag speech, Hitler had the Reich Minister of the Interior dissolve and ban all monarchistic associations on February 3.³³

On February 7, Hitler presented himself to students in Berlin as a real thinker.³⁴ Speaking on the occasion of the passage of a student constitution in the Philharmonie building, he made use of the pretentious and abstract style then common among certain philosophy professors.

Hitler expounded at length upon the many-facetedness of the German intellect and upon Marxism and the concept of race, once more invoking the spectre of an imminent Bolshevist takeover in Europe.

If allowed to triumph in Europe, in the next five hundred years Communism would necessarily bring about the complete annihilation of even the last vestiges of the fruits of that Aryan spirit which, providing the roots of culture and in its many-faceted boughs and branches, has bestowed upon the entire world the general foundations of our culture and thus our truly human foundations in the millenniums upon which history has shed light.

Just as Hitler demonstrated to this audience that his own rhetoric was up to par with that of academic professionals, he adapted his tone on February 14 to address construction workers at a roofing ceremony at

the chancellory,³⁵ where the Chancellor's quarters were being modified. "Every type of work is a service to the Volk," he declared. Meanwhile, the Dollfuss regime in Austria was under fire from an armed uprising led by the Republican *Schutzbund* (Defense League), a Social Democratic organization of armed troops. Open civil war raged in Vienna and other parts of the country for days until Dollfuss put a bloody end to the revolt by resorting to military force, directing artillery attacks against working class housing in Ottakring, Meidling, Simmering, and elsewhere and sentencing many to death.

Hitler made his views on the events in Austria public in an interview with Ward Price, the special reporter of the *Daily Mail*. In his remarks, Hitler indulged in juggling figures as he was wont to do, this time with the aim of stressing the lack of bloodshed and relative innocence of the National Socialist Revolution in contrast to other uprisings.

The interview granted to Ward Price, which also touched upon the topics of Russia and Poland, was published in London on February 18 and cited in the February 19 edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter* as follows:³⁶

Hitler had replied that some people believed the German National Socialists had something to do with the unrest in Austria. This, he stated, was absolutely false.

"We sympathize neither with Herr Dollfuss nor with his opponents. Both sides are using the wrong methods. Nothing of permanence can be achieved by the violent methods to which they have resorted."

It had been impossible for the Austrian Socialists to achieve power by proceeding as they had, the Chancellor stated. It had been equally impossible for Dollfuss to draw the opponents over to his side by using the means he had.

Everyone knew that it was possible to raze buildings using shell fire, but these methods would never convince an opponent, they would serve only to embitter him. The only way to make a revolution successful lay in gaining a hold on one's opponent by persuasion.

"That is what we have achieved in Germany. Herr Dollfuss, on the other hand, attempted to carry out a coup d'état. He violated the Constitution and his methods were doomed to fail from the beginning."

Assuming one had proceeded in like fashion in Germany, what would have been the result? In Austria, Hitler noted, 1,600 persons had been killed and four to five thousand wounded. Germany's population was eleven times that of Austria's, which meant that Germany would have had 18,000 dead and 50,000 wounded.

"What are the facts? The total number of our adversaries killed in the disturbances amounted to twenty-seven, while the number of wounded was 150. Among them was not a single woman nor a single child. Not one building was destroyed, not one shop raided.

“Germany’s critics will say, ‘That may well be, but the Austrian Socialists were heavily armed!’”

So were the German Communists, Hitler continued. All kinds of weapons imaginable had been found in their possession.

The reason why the German Communists had not made use of these weapons was due to the fact that they had been won over to the cause of the National Socialists by persuasion, he said.

The proof for this lay in the election of this past November, in which a mere two million people had voted against the new regime, although previously the German Communists had numbered six million and the Social Democrats seven million. The remaining eleven million former opponents of National Socialism had not been suppressed, but converted.

The correspondent asked the Chancellor whether the developments in Austria would influence Germany’s attitude toward that country. Hitler replied:

“By no means, the policies I uphold are determined solely by German interests.”

Naturally the incidents of this week would serve to strengthen the position of the present Austrian Government, but on the other hand the number of Austrian National Socialists would increase. He was expressing only his private and personal view, Hitler stated, but it was his conviction that particularly the workers of Austria would side with the National Socialist cause as a natural reaction against the violent methods the Austrian Government had used against them.

The correspondent then remarked to the Chancellor that the German peace pact with Poland had come as a great surprise to the world and that several people were interpreting it as his intention to establish a basis for a joint attack on Russia by Germany and Poland with the aim of territorial expansion.

Hitler had laughed incredulously and stated:

‘ . . . What? We take territory from Russia? Ridiculous!’

The correspondent interjected that, ten years before in his book, *Mein Kampf* Hitler had recommended acquiring new territory in Russia as a home for future German settlers, but that the decrease in the birth rate which had taken place since then had halted the growth of the German population, so that the necessity of a larger area was now of lesser importance.

In the further course of the interview, Hitler had said that all prior attempts to lay the groundwork for a lasting peace in Europe had failed because public opinion had held that Poland and Germany were irreconcilable enemies. He had never held this view. The first thing he had done after achieving power had been to take steps to initiate negotiations with Poland.

He had found that the Polish statesmen were very magnanimous and just as peacefully minded as he himself. The gulf which had been regarded as unbridgeable had now been crossed. The two nations had come closer together, and it was his sincere hope that this new understanding would signify that Germany and Poland had permanently abandoned the idea of resorting to arms not only for ten years, but for all time.

In respect to the situation within Germany, the Chancellor had stated that many thousands who had been in the concentration camps had already been

released, and he hoped that even more would be freed. They had been interned not as an act of revenge—as had been the case in Austria—³⁷ but rather because these opponents were not to be allowed to disrupt the process of restoring Germany's political health. They had been given time to change their views. As soon as they were willing to take a pledge to relinquish their hostile attitude, they would be released.

The reporter countered with the question, "Do you intend to free Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev?" and Hitler replied, "The court has pronounced its judgment; the sentence will be carried out." The correspondent stressed that these had been the exact words of Hitler's response.

"Do you believe," the correspondent continued, "that these people will be released and brought beyond the German border?"

Hitler had replied, "They certainly will."³⁸ He had added that he nevertheless believed that their release did not reflect the will of the German Volk, but the court's judgment would be carried out.

On February 19, Hitler persuaded the Reich President to adopt the sovereign symbol of the NSDAP for use in the Armed Forces. This was made public in the following official notice:³⁹

In order to demonstrate the alliance between the Wehrmacht and the Volk and State, in accordance with the Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich and at the request of the Minister of Defense, the Reich President has issued a decree adopting the sovereign symbol of the NSDAP for use in the Wehrmacht as well.

There was nonetheless no discernible connection between the Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich and the use of this party emblem by the Armed Forces, unless the step was taken in line with the "continuation of the National Socialist Revolution" which Hitler had cited in his January 30 speech.

The action itself was doubtless revolutionary, for at that time the insignia of the NSDAP—eagle with swastika—which was to be worn only on the uniform cap and above the right breast pocket of the tunic, was an internal Party symbol and by no means the national emblem of the State.⁴⁰

There was every indication that Hindenburg, Blomberg and the entire Reichswehr were rushing to outdo the party organizations themselves in promoting the National Socialist Revolution. The German warships also began to fly the swastika at their bows as of this date.

On February 21, Hitler received the British Lord Privy Seal, Anthony Eden—who was later to become Foreign Minister—for a discussion on disarmament policy at the Reich Chancellery. According to Bullock,⁴¹ Hitler offered to reduce the forces of the SA by two thirds and to see to it that the remainder neither possessed arms nor were given military training—proposals which Hitler repeated in April 1934.

The developments of the following years revealed what such ‘magnanimous gestures’ were actually worth, and thus they are to be accorded little real significance here. Nonetheless, Hitler had given a further indication⁴² of the fact that his primary interest lay in the future of the Reichswehr and not in that of the SA, and in this respect it is not surprising that Röhm was not particularly overjoyed at noting the obvious inclinations of his “OSAF” when these proposals were published in the Prague newspapers.

On February 24, Hitler traveled to Munich for the Party’s anniversary. There he attended a concert of the National Socialist Reich Symphony Orchestra in the Tonhalle before proceeding to the Festsaal of the Hofbräuhaus to deliver his annual memorial speech with a lengthy version of the ‘party narrative.’⁴³ in respect to the tasks of the future, he declared that the Party must be filled by the idea of its exclusivity and by the basic principle: “We will not tolerate any political manifestation other than our own in Germany!”

Once more he announced his intention to conduct plebiscites on an annual basis and to courageously submit to the judgment of the people. Of course Hitler only had the courage to do so as long as things were going well and he had no reason to fear the findings of the people. Even in 1935 and 1937 he opted to waive conducting referendums of this kind so as not to “till” the Volk “like the peasant does his field.”⁴⁴

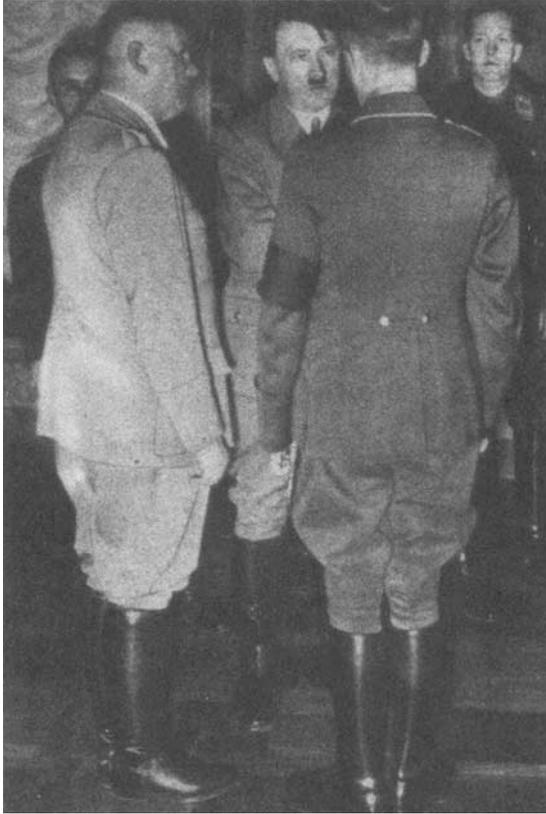
However, on February 24, 1934 he could still afford to boast:

On November 12 last year the Volk made a unique and miraculous affirmation, the greatest which has ever been given to a Movement in this world: we are of the conviction that it will be bestowed upon us again and again, if we again and again fight and struggle for this Volk. Hence we are also of the conviction that we must stand up before this Volk many times over. We are experiencing now, in another State, what happens when one no longer has the courage to step before the nation and ask it for its affirmation.

Things must never be allowed to progress so far in this country that, out of fear of rejection, we might have to resort to violence! We wish to bear in mind at all times that the powers of the German Volk must not be allowed to be squandered at home. Hence in future we want to give the Volk the opportunity to pass judgment upon us at least once a year.

Just as we have stepped before the Volk in tens of thousands, nay hundreds of thousands of rallies to ask for its ballot again and again, we must also continue this fight in the future in tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of rallies and meetings with the purpose of addressing an appeal to the entire nation at least once every year.

If the appeal ends badly, no one shall be able to say the Volk is to blame, but instead know that the Movement has become lethargic, that the Movement



VII Hitler conferring with Röhm
and other SA leaders on January 22, 1934 in the
Reich Chancellory (following the convention in
Friedrichsroda).

Photo: Domarus archives



VIII **Speech to Autobahn workers**

Hitler speaking on March 21, 1934 in Unterhaching at the commencement of construction work on the Autobahn segment from Munich to the border (at Salzburg).

Photo: Domarus archives

is no longer really fighting, that the Movement has lost its contact with the Volk. And then this will enable us to learn once more to go forth among the Volk once again. This is where our power lies, and no politician can stand up to the world with more than what he has behind him.

Fate has taken from us the cannons, the machine guns, the planes, and the tanks, and this obligates us all the more to at least gather the entire Volk around us.

This is also the greatest conceivable policy of peace. He who represents an entire Volk will carefully consider the consequences which might easily ensue from a fight thoughtlessly started! He who has only a small clique to call his own and must fear being eliminated by the Volk might be inclined to give in to the temptation to compensate for an absence of internal successes by external ones.

We do not need any successes in foreign policy to win the Volk for our cause, for the Volk belongs to us. He who feels that an entire Volk as a whole is behind him will be careful not to thoughtlessly squander this blood, and he will consistently aim to promote the interests of the Volk with the instruments of peace, work and culture which the intellect has given to man. He will only appeal to the power of the nation in dire emergencies. However, he who knows that the Volk is behind him and does indeed have the Volk behind him can face even troubled times with confidence.

If we take a stand for true peace between nations, we can also require that the German Volk not be denied what every decent Volk has a right to demand. That is why we are just as fanatic advocates of peace as we are advocates of equal rights and hence of the vital rights of the German nation.

Following his speech at the Hofbräuhaus, Hitler proceeded to the Ausstellungspark (Theresienhöhe) to deliver a similar appeal to 6,072 political Amtswalters there.⁴⁵

On February 25, the “greatest swearing-in in history” took place under Rudolf Hess’ supervision in Munich: 795,000 Party Amtswalters, 130,477 Hitler Youth leaders, 43,062 BDM leaders, 1,900 leaders of the NSD Sudetenbund, and 18,500 leaders of the Labor Service swore their allegiance to Hitler by means of a joint radio broadcast. In the cities and villages across the country, the Amtswalters etc. had assembled for the ceremony; Hess, speaking nationwide on radio, recited the oath for them to repeat.⁴⁶ Hitler’s obsession with gigantic numbers and events had obviously spread to the entire Party by this time!

Hitler himself spent February 25 in Berlin, where he took part in the festivities in honor of the new “Heroes’ Memorial Day.” This holiday fell on the second Sunday of Lent and was dedicated to the memory of those who died in the First World War. It had previously been called the Volkstrauertag, but a ‘Day of National Mourning’ was naturally out of the question: dying for the Vaterland was no cause for mourning, but an

occasion for rejoicing over the new heroes Hitler was to grant German youth ample opportunity to become. The new name of *Heldengedenktag* was even anchored in a law passed on February 27.⁴⁷

At the festivities at the State Opera, the Minister of Defense, General von Blomberg, delivered a memorial speech while Hindenburg, dressed in his Marshal's uniform, and Hitler, wearing a cutaway, listened from their box. At the close of the program, Hitler rose from his seat and called out:⁴⁸

Soldiers! Ladies and Gentlemen!

Three cheers for our immortal German Volk, and its leader in the Great War, the President of the German Reich, Field Marshal von Hindenburg: *Hoch! Hoch! Hoch!*

Infantry General Göring as well naturally played various roles fitting his position of prominence at the State Opera, the laying of the wreath at the memorial, and in the parade.

On February 28, Hitler addressed the Reichswehr generals⁴⁹ and announced his plans of putting together a modern, armed people's army. He also spoke of the danger of economic relapses in Germany and intimated that offensives against the West and the East might be necessary to "create new Lebensraum." In this connection, he planned to make only domestic use of the SA or, at the outside, assign to it the task of border patrol.

On March 1, Hitler received King Boris III of Bulgaria for a lengthy conference in the Reich Chancellory.⁵⁰

The same day, the Landesleiter of the German Front in the Saar, Pirro, issued a statement proclaiming that the Social Democrats and Communists in the Saar had now joined the German Front.

Hitler traveled to Leipzig on March 6, where he first visited the Saxon Exhibition (*Sachsenfleiss*) and then attended the Technology Fair and the Saar Exhibition.

The primary purpose of his visit, however, was to participate in a Richard Wagner memorial service combined with the laying of a cornerstone. Frau Winifred Wagner was also in attendance.

After the welcoming address delivered by the Mayor of Leipzig, Carl Goerdeler,⁵¹ Hitler strode to the lectum and made the following speech:⁵²

Frau Wagner! Mr. Mayor! German Men and Women!

The greatness of nations has always been the sum of the total worth of its great men.

We Germans can be happy that many great sons have not only established and raised the value of our own Volk, but moreover have also made an everlasting contribution to the immortal work of the spiritual and cultural life of the whole world.

One of these men who, personifying the essence of what is best in our Volk, rose from national German greatness to international renown is Richard Wagner.

The greatest son of this city, the most tremendous master of our Volk's tones.

In attempting today to erect an earthly monument of stone to this man who himself created the fairest monument by virtue of his own endowment, we all foresee that it can and will be no more than a transitory symbol of our love, esteem and gratitude. For we all believe that one thing is certain: when not a stone of this monument is left standing as a witness to the master, his music will continue to ring out.

Mr. Mayor, you have asked me to ceremoniously lay the cornerstone of the Richard Wagner National Monument in Leipzig. In complying with your request, I am not acting as an individual, a man whom Fate has so deeply honored with this rare mission, but on behalf of countless of the best German men and women who perceive in me their spokesman and leader and whose deep sentiments I will attempt to express at this moment.

For today's German generation is trying, after having been purified by decades of confusion and raised in boundless misery, to find the way back to its own great master. It no longer wishes to have anything in common with that thankless age when the desire and the will of one of the greatest sons of our Volk was ignored not only in a symbolic sense, but in reality, too, and business was carried on as usual. This generation is drawing from the everlasting power of our Volk in that it is making its way back to the best of our minds.

Thus as early as the second year of the national uprising, it has found its way to this city to place anew at the feet of this immortal genius of its great son the deeply-felt gratitude of the nation through me, the Chancellor of the Reich, on this day, the day upon which the cornerstone for this monument is laid.

With the sincere vow to comply with the desire and the will of the great master to ensure that his immortal works live on in everlasting beauty so that future generations may also enter the wondrous world of this tremendous poet of sound, I hereby lay the cornerstone for the German National Monument to Richard Wagner as eternal witness and perpetual reminder of this.

When he laid the cornerstone, Hitler spoke in a voice choked with tears. The *Völkischer Beobachter* commented: "The Führer was visibly moved at these words."

On March 7, Hitler was back in Berlin for the opening of the International Automobile Exhibition in the Exhibition Halls on the Kaiserdamm.

In his speech on the occasion, he proclaimed that Germany's fuel supply would be secured in future on a national (i.e. synthetic) basis and

March 7, 1934

also announced the creation of a Volkswagen. The German automobile industry was reluctant to take on this project, for it had hitherto adhered to the principle of manufacturing distinctive high-quality vehicles and was disinclined to turn to mass production. Hitler cured them of these individualistic ideas, declaring:⁵³

The Government will be persistent and rigorous in continuing the program announced last year. It will give to the entire automotive sector the strong impulse it needs to overcome the general preconceptions on the one hand and the lethargy on the other. It will attempt to continue to directly and indirectly decrease taxes for the automobile owner. In addition to extending the tremendous Autobahn road network, the Reich is determined to devote practical attention to improving the existing major roads. The Reich Government will provide every possible support to the development of the automobile industry. Above all, it will continue its endeavors to establish a close and profitable link between this most recent means of transportation and the large existing transportation institution of the Reichsbahn. The problem of securing and producing fuel on a national basis will be solved!

Gentlemen, I do not need to paint a picture for you of the consequences of the existing attitude and the measures which have resulted from it.

There is no clearer proof of the effectiveness of our actions in the past year than the international Automobile Exhibition of 1934 in Berlin, which was organized literally as fast as lightning and which has become such a wonderful success.

Above all, it gives me the indestructible confidence that the commercial adroitness of our great plants, the ingenuity of our technicians and the miraculous productivity of our German manual laborers and precision workers will doubtless succeed in accomplishing the great tasks which still lie before us. And these tasks are not small.

Gentlemen, if we really want to increase the number of automobile owners in Germany to a figure in the millions, this is only possible if we adapt the price to the financial capabilities of the mass of millions of potential buyers in question.

The German Government desires that the German Volk take an animated interest in motorized vehicles, and it follows that the economy must design and build the right vehicle for the German Volk.

Only a few months ago, German industry succeeded, by fabricating a new *Volksempfänger* (people's radio), in introducing and selling an enormous number of radio sets on the market. I would cite the most significant task of the German automotive industry as that of increasing production of the one car which will necessarily open up a class of buyers numbering millions, for only if we are able to win over the broadest possible masses for this new means of transportation will its economic and social advantages be indisputable.

What German industry has accomplished in the years behind us is admirable. There is no country in the world showing greater progress in the construction of new automobiles than Germany. All the way from small models to the most modern racing cars, from trucks with diesel engines to motorcycles:

everywhere we see new paths being taken and truly ingenious ideas becoming reality. It should be noted that this Automobile Show is not the product of long planning, but shows a random sample of our industry's products.

When I invite the German Volk to review and inspect this random sample, I am doing so with the conviction that it will acknowledge with joyful pride this further proof of what its engineers, merchants and workers have once again accomplished. But I do not wish to let this opportunity pass without once more drawing the attention of every German to the many millions of those who even today have not yet found a way to earn their daily bread by their own labors.

It is the duty of every German to declare his solidarity with these Volksgenossen and to contribute, by his every action and his behavior, towards giving the new spiritual and physical workers of our Volk employment and thus a means of existence.

March 17 is the 100th anniversary of the day upon which the builder of the first automobile first glimpsed the light of day. In addition to Benz, we must also regard Daimler not only as the inventor of the first automobile engine, but also as the founder of the first and hence oldest automobile factory in the world. What a tremendous development has taken place between that fateful December 16, 1883, when an automobile engine was patented for the first time in the world, and today! Who can doubt that we will succeed in carrying on this wonderful development for the benefit of our entire German Volk?

And furthermore, we perceive in this new means of transportation an element of human cooperation which, extending far beyond the borders of an individual nation, ties nations together.

At a time when all of us have but the one earnest desire to heal the wounds of the past decades in peaceful cooperation with the other nations, we are happy to give to the world a visible demonstration of the background of the problems which concern us today and proof of the skill with which we master them.

Thus I am happy and proud to declare the International Automobile Exhibition of 1934 in Berlin open to the public.

On March 11, Hitler spoke at an act of state commemorating the first anniversary of the NSDAP's accession to power in Bavaria. The speech was held in the Ausstellungspark on the Theresienhöhe in Munich and climaxed in Hitler's proclaiming:⁵⁴

The capital of art and of our Movement is and always will be Munich!

One week later, on March 19, Hitler again spoke in Munich at what was called a "Revolution Roll Call for the *Alte Kämpfer*."⁵⁵

In his speech, Hitler went into long explanations of the concepts of liberalism, Marxism and *Reaktion*—all of which had been overcome by National Socialism. Here again he stated, "The Revolution must go on!" and delineated the position of the NSDAP as opposed to the other parties.

The victory of a party is a change in government; the victory of a Weltanschauung is a revolution which changes the very core and character of a Volk's constitution. One cannot become a National Socialist within a single year; it requires many years, and generations may well come and go before we have implanted the symbol of the Reich's victory in every heart. And only then will the National Socialist Revolution have been successfully completed and the German Volk saved at last.

In view of these remarks, it is impossible to seriously uphold the opinion that Röhm alone had developed the idea of a "second Revolution" or a "continuation of the Revolution." It was Hitler himself who fanned the flames in order to gain a mean excuse for later murdering the SA leadership.

In a speech marking the "beginning of the second battle for work (*Arbeitsschlacht*) on March 21 in Unterhaching near Munich, Hitler also attacked the domestic enemy, a favorite target of the SA as well.⁵⁶

The eternal pessimists and habitual carpers have never saved a Volk, but they have in fact destroyed numerous peoples, States and Empires.

Hitler delivered this speech at a construction site on the new Autobahn from Munich to the border (Salzburg) and dwelled mainly on the government's employment program, "the greatest Germany has ever known."

The fight for saving the Mittelstand is primarily also a fight against unemployment. This is the one gigantic problem which we are to solve and in view of which everything else must come second.

It was not quite true that Hitler treated all other matters as secondary to this problem. However, of all his measures, curbing unemployment constituted the primary interest of the German people and, in particular, of the German workers.

Hitler had closed his speech of September 23, 1933 marking the beginning of work on the first Autobahn in Frankfurt am Main with the words, "German workers, to work!" His speech in Unterhaching closed with the command, "German workers, begin!"

On March 22, Hitler once again summoned the Reichsstatthalters to the Reich Chancellory and admonished them to render him their unconditional subordination.⁵⁷

You are not representing the Länder to the Reich, but the Reich to the Länder.

Hitler's next public statement was made in an interview with Louis P. Lochner, an Associated Press correspondent, published on April 4.⁵⁸

He presented himself as an opponent of what was termed 'secret diplomacy' and claimed that one could have unreserved faith in what he said. His sole aim was to eliminate unemployment, and he was extremely concerned with the question of how he could protect Germany from enemy attacks. The interview was cited as follows:

Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler pointed out at the beginning of the interview that he was a staunch advocate of personal interchange, of "man-to-man diplomacy." He would most prefer, he said, being able to speak privately with the responsible leaders of the most important nations, including America.

The antiquated diplomatic method of exchanging notes defeated its own purpose, which was evidenced in the fact that, despite the endeavors of the diplomats, in 1914 the nations had skidded into the biggest war in history, although—in his own personal opinion—the diplomats had been most astonished of all when the War had, in fact, broken out.

The Führer continued: "Any representative of a foreign power will find, when he confers with me, that I am absolutely frank in stating what Germany is willing to do and that I do not make my demands any higher than is necessary. For instance, if I say that we need a Wehrmacht of 300,000 men, I will not condescend to reduce the number to 250,000 afterwards.

"I want to make Germany's word and signature respected once more.

"Under no circumstances will I subject to a *Diktat*. If I have once become convinced that a certain course is the only right course for my Volk, I will adhere to it, come what may. And what I do, I do openly. For instance, I will never be capable of outwardly accepting 150,000 men as a sufficient force for our Reichswehr and then secretly train and equip another 150,000 men."

Speaking of the armament problems resulting from France's refusal to adopt the English, Italian and German position, the Reich Chancellor stated:

"No one would be happier than I were the world to disarm. We want to devote all of our energies toward productive ends. We want to lead our unemployed back to work.

"Then we intend to raise each individual's standard of living. We want to drain our swamps, reclaim and improve unproductive land, if possible put our Volk in a position to provide for its own needs, enable the peasant to reap the maximum from his soil, put the manufacturer and industrial worker in a position to work as productively as possible, supply our country as far as possible with man-made substitutes for the raw materials it lacks. By building roads, digging canals, draining swampland, and installing dams and sluices, we are accomplishing constructive work which has a right to claim our energies.

"As a statesman who is responsible for the welfare of his country, I cannot allow Germany to be exposed to the danger that one of its neighbors might attack it or drop bombs on our industrial plants, or wage a so-called preventive war only in order to distract from its own internal difficulties. For this reason only—and for none other—do we demand a Wehrmacht which fulfills the requirements of a genuine defense."

In response to the question whether 'work for all' meant that a proletarian levelling would take place, in other words whether the Reich Chancellor would

be satisfied if, by stretching the available work, each person would in fact be assured of a certain minimum income, but that larger incomes would then disappear, the Reich Chancellor replied: "Just the opposite! Naturally the first step must be to eliminate the scourge of unemployment. However, as soon as our Volk has work again, buying power will also increase, and then the logical next step is an increase in the standard of living. We do not want to become a primitive Volk, but one with the highest possible standard of living. In my opinion, the Americans are right in not wanting to make everyone the same but rather in upholding the principle of the ladder. However, every single person must be granted the opportunity to climb up the ladder. I also believe that it is absolutely right that an invention should first be the property of the inventor; however, his endeavors must be aimed toward having his invention benefit the general public.

"The first windowpane was a luxury article, but today everyone wants glass. It has become an article of daily use. The first light bulb was a luxury article, but its inventor aimed at making it available to everyone. The aim and the purpose of all progress must be to make a Volk as a whole, and humanity as a whole, happier than before."

Subsequently, in the words of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, Lochner "was allowed" to pose "a number of questions for the purpose of making Adolf Hitler's personality more comprehensible to the American people."

A notable feature is the extent to which Hitler boasted of the "blind" devotion of his staff (including, of course, the Reich Ministers), who had subordinated themselves to his wishes "in an admirable way." "The world has never witnessed a more wonderful example of blind empathy than that which my staff provides," he declared.

Lochner's initial question was: "Mr. Chancellor, what is your attitude toward criticism, both personal and that in the press?"

The Chancellor replied: "Do you know something else? That I have surrounding me an entire staff of experts thoroughly versed in economic, social and political life whose sole purpose is to criticize? Before we pass a law, I show these men the draft and ask them, 'Would you tell me what is wrong with this, please?' I do not want them to simply say amen to everything. They are of no value to me if they are not critical and do not tell me which defects might, under certain circumstances, detract from our measures. I am similarly not in support of the press simply printing only what it has been instructed to print.

"It is no pleasure to read newspapers which all have almost exactly the same text. In the course of time, our editors will be so trained that they will be able to make their own valuable contributions to building the nation. However, there is one thing of which I can assure you: I will never tolerate a press whose exclusive aim is to destroy what we have undertaken to build up.

"If an editor's policy is to hold up his own interesting Weltanschauung in contrast to ours, may he take note that I will then equally make use of the

modern opportunities afforded by the press in order to combat him. I will allow the agents of foreign powers no opportunity whatsoever. People like these agents are infringing upon their right to hospitality. I warmly welcome foreign correspondents who report what they see and hear in Germany objectively and without bias. However, each and every correspondent should make it a matter of his own concern, for his own sake and for the sake of his reputation as a journalist, not to expose himself to the risk of having to deny his own reports because he has failed to correctly assess the effectiveness of our regime. Bear in mind that the press was forced to change its opinion of Richard Wagner.”

“Whereas on the one hand, I want criticism,” the Chancellor continued, “on the other I insist that those who work for the welfare of the entire Volk must have the security of knowing that they can go about their work in peace. The mistake of the systems which preceded our own lay in the fact that none of the ministers nor anyone in public office responsible to the State knew how long they would be at the helm. This had as a consequence that they were able to neither do away with the deplorable state of affairs their predecessors had left behind nor dare to concern themselves with questions involving the future. I assured the gentlemen when I took over the government—even those who were not members of my Party—that they could be certain of the stability of their offices. As a result, they were all enthusiastic and wholeheartedly devoted to what they were doing, and their sights were set solely on a constructive future.”

Lochner then asked, “Mr. Chancellor, it has occasionally been said that, among the gentlemen in your immediate vicinity, there are those who would like to take your place. It is claimed, for instance, in respect to one of your most prominent staff members that he attempts to thwart your measures.”

Describing his own impressions after having posed this question, Lochner wrote: “The Chancellor’s features became illuminated. It was as though the faces of the various men who had been closest to him in the struggle were passing by his mind’s eye, and what he saw there pleased him.”

The Führer replied: “Of course I know that you are asking this question in order to clarify my relationship to my staff and not because you are personally questioning their loyalty. It would really be slanderous to insinuate that any one of the men who have stood by me year after year had any desire to get me out of the way.

“The world has never witnessed a more wonderful example of blind empathy than that which my staff provides. Perhaps the reason why this type of story comes into being lies in the fact that I have not surrounded myself, so to speak, with washouts, but with real men. Washouts have no backbone. They are the first to collapse when things are going badly. The men around me are strong and upstanding men. Each of them is a person of stature, each has his own will and is filled with ambition. If these men were not ambitious, they would not be where they are today. I welcome their ambition.

“When such a group of powerful personalities comes together, it is inevitable that some friction may ensue. But never has a single one of the men who have given me their allegiance attempted to force his will upon me. On the contrary: they have subordinated themselves to my wishes in an admirable way.”

Lochner's final question was: "Mr. Chancellor, in the days before you came to power, you were always among the people and had constant personal contact with them. When you go anywhere today, the streets are decorated, you are given welcoming addresses, you are greeted by the chief authorities. How do you nevertheless manage to keep your finger on the pulse of the nation? How do you maintain contact with the man on the street?"

With an almost boyish laugh, the Führer replied: "First of all, you should see what my lunch hour is like upstairs in this building. You would see how new faces appear there every day. My home is like a Central Station. My home is always open to my fellow fighters, regardless of how plain and simple their circumstances may be. Our organization reaches all the way down to the smallest village, and the men of my retinue come from all over to visit me in Berlin.

"We sit at the table and, with time, they tell me their cares and problems. Then again, there are naturally many other opportunities to come into contact with the Volk. I have mentioned this only as a typical example. However, I would like to stress one thing: although I listen to all of these minor cares and put together a composite picture of the whole from a wealth of details, I never allow my overall view to become clouded. I must constantly keep my sights focused on our primary aim and pursue this goal with unwavering tenacity. I am not equally satisfied with every single detail. Admittedly, I am forced to leave it to my staff to settle the minor matters.

"We are pursuing great aims. Our primary task consists of adhering to this method. I need four years to translate the first segment of our program into reality. Then I will require another four years for the next segment, and so on. We are striving for an important, a better, and a happier Germany."

Hitler's preface to the Italian edition of *Mein Kampf* was published on March 26. The book itself was being printed by the Milan publishing company, Bompiani. The preface read as follows:⁵⁹

Peoples who fight for lofty national ideas lead strong lives and look forward to a rich future. They have taken their fate into their own hands. Hence the sums of their composite powers do not seldom comprise values which enjoy international prestige and are more beneficial for the mutual coexistence of the peoples than the "immortal ideas" of liberalism which confuse and destroy the relations between nations.

Fascism and National Socialism, both related in their basic Weltanschauungen, are called upon to blaze new trails to productive international cooperation. To comprehend their purpose and their nature means to promote peace in the world and, with it, the welfare of the nations.

3

From April 11 to April 15, Hitler took part in a short voyage with the armored vessel *Deutschland* in Norwegian waters.⁶⁰ He was accompanied by Minister of Defense General von Blomberg, the Commander in Chief of the German Navy, Admiral Raeder, and other high-ranking Reichswehr officers.

There is no doubt that many significant matters were discussed in the course of the long, uninterrupted conferences which Hitler held with the generals at sea, including the future of the Reichswehr, the planned reinstatement of general conscription, and particularly the future position of the SA. Bullock⁶¹ is inclined to believe that Hitler used this opportunity to arrange for his own succession as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces after Hindenburg's death, in exchange for suppressing Röhm's plans and eliminating the SA as a power factor.

The time factor might well be right. The fact that Hitler did make such a promise is evidenced in an interview which the Chief of the Ministerial Office in the Ministry of Defense, General von Reichenau, granted to Stanislas de La Rochefoucauld of the *Petit Journal* in early August 1934.⁶² Reichenau stated verbatim: "The Reich Chancellor kept his word when he nipped Röhm's attempt to integrate the SA into the Reichswehr in the bud. We are devoted to him because he has proven himself a true soldier. The Army admires him for his personal courage, and I may stress the remark he made recently: 'The Reichswehr can depend on me as I depend on it.'"

The point is that Reichenau, who was doubtlessly well-informed by virtue of his position as State Secretary to the Minister of Defense, made no mention of a putsch plan but spoke merely of Röhm's attempt to integrate the SA into the Reichswehr. The Reichswehr might have been pleased at the prospect of gaining this additional support at its base; in any case, such an attempt did not, at that time, constitute high treason

April 11, 1934

as long as the reverse—integration of the Reichswehr into the SA—was not at stake. But Röhm's ideas ran counter to both the marked consciousness of rank uniting the Reichswehr Generals and Hitler's military plans. Ostensibly, however, this sufficed as a reason to dispose of him.

On April 17, Hitler attended the SS Spring Concert at the Berlin Sportpalast⁶³ with Blomberg and Röhm, the respective spokesmen for the Reichswehr and the SA. Hitler sat between the two men, already eyeing Röhm at his right as a doomed person. It was to be the last time he appeared in public with the head of the SA.

On the same day, Hitler received the Gauführers of the *Winterhilfswerk* in the Reich Chancellory and thanked them in a speech for their work in the preceding months.⁶⁴ He intimated that the *Winterhilfswerk* would become a permanent institution even after the present crisis had been overcome.

The *Winterhilfswerk* is to alleviate the misery which cannot be alleviated by official measures. It shall also contribute to educating the Volk in socialist thinking. In the affluent Germany of the pre-war age, it was not possible to establish such an organization. In months of the most intensive propaganda, pre-war Germany obtained a total of no more than seven million marks in donations for the zeppelin project, although it was a cause involving the entire Volk.

In a single winter, we have raised 320 million marks in an impoverished Germany. This enormous sum is not only an accomplishment in and of itself, but also proof of the spirit of sacrifice which abides in our Volk.

Hindenburg sent the following birthday message to Hitler on April 19:⁶⁵

Dear Herr Reichskanzler!

May I extend my best wishes for your 45th birthday tomorrow. In grateful acknowledgement of your constructive work for *Volk und Vaterland* in the past, may I express my heartfelt desire that you may be granted many more years of blessed work and personal well-being! In loyal comradeship and with warm regards, I remain yours faithfully,

von Hindenburg

The Reichswehr also sent a birthday message,⁶⁶ in which Blomberg wrote that the barracks of the First Battalion of Infantry Regiment 19 (Munich), one of the traditional troops of the famous List Infantry Regiment in which Hitler had fought as a volunteer, was to be given the name "Adolf-Hitler-Kaserne."

On the occasion of Hitler's birthday, Chief of Staff Röhm issued an order of the day containing no evidence whatsoever of any planned action against Hitler.⁶⁷

April 20, 1934

The Supreme Commander of the SA, Adolf Hitler, today celebrates his 45th birthday. For us political soldiers of the National Socialist Revolution, he personifies the following:

What Germans have been yearning for since they first walked onto the stage of history and which two millenniums of German evolution did not accomplish, he has made reality: a Volk which has outgrown the conflicts of rank, class and confession to become united in a united Reich! Born of his spirit, under his flags, the SA has marched for a National Socialist Germany. Struggle and want, sacrifice and death have bound us to him in a community which nothing and no one can break or separate. We were, we are and we always will be proud and honored to be at all times his most loyal followers, upon whom the Führer can depend and build in good times and all the more in bad. On this day when, forty-five years ago, Fate bestowed upon the nation in him its savior, the brown and black battalions of the SA present their compliments to their Supreme Commander and renew their oath: to follow in his footsteps and perform his work in unwavering loyalty and never-faltering obedience—to be at the fore, in spirit and deed, at the reconstruction of the State and the evolution of the Germans as a Volk—to serve National Socialist Germany with body and soul unto death. Heil the Führer of the Germans! Heil the Supreme Commander of the SA, Adolf Hitler!

Berlin, April 20, 1934

The SA Chief of Staff
Ernst Röhm

On Hitler's birthday, Göring appointed Himmler to the post of Chief of the Secret State Police (*Geheime Staatspolizei*, *Gestapo*) in Prussia. Himmler's predecessor, Rudolf Diels, became District President in Cologne. All of these steps were mere foreshadowing of what was to come on June 30.

Hitler, who had received the Bulgarian Minister-President Mushanov in Berlin the day before, spent his birthday traveling from Berlin to Munich by car. He made various stops: in the Fichtel Mountains, in the northern part of the Franconian Jura, and near Eichstätt. He was welcomed at each stop by delegations of the BDM, Labor Service, and SA.⁶⁸

On April 24, Hitler was back in Berlin, where he issued a statement of thanks for the many "well-meaning birthday wishes."⁶⁹

The health of the Reich President was declining steadily, and von Hindenburg was unable to personally take part in the festivities on the "National Holiday of the German Volk" as he had the year before at the youth rally in the Lustgarten and the reception of the workers' delegations.

On April 30, the Reich President and the Reich Government issued a joint appeal to the German Volk which had undoubtedly been composed by Hitler:⁷⁰

April 30, 1934

For the first time in our history, the inner fraternal strife has been settled and the unity of all Germans achieved. That for which our fathers yearned for centuries has thus become reality. Upon this foundation, the German Volk has accomplished great things in the past year. With the weapons of peace, triumphant battles have been won against want and misery, against unemployment and despair. Today's generation can feel proud that it has done its whole duty and thus will prevail before the judgment of German history. We owe our gratitude to the entire German Volk for this unprecedented accomplishment which is unique in history. The nation has every right to celebrate its national holiday on May Day with pride and inner satisfaction.

Berlin, April 30, 1934

The Reich President:
von Hindenburg

The Reich Government:
Adolf Hitler

The festivities began in Berlin with a youth rally in the Lustgarten. Representing the Reich President, Hitler delivered the address, stating in part as follows:⁷¹

If we want a strong Germany, you must one day be strong, too. If we want a powerful Germany, you, too, must one day be powerful. If we want an honorable Germany, you must one day uphold this honor. If we want order in Germany, you must maintain this order. If we want to once again create a loyal Germany, you yourselves must learn to be loyal. You are the Germany of the future, and thus we want you to be what this Germany of the future must and will be.

Therefore you must also avoid anything which impressed the stamp of dishonor upon the Germany of the past. You must cultivate the spirit of the great community. The German Volksgemeinschaft is anchored in you. For many centuries, people longed for what has become reality today. The nation expects you to be worthy of this great age. Above all, that is what this old, good Germany expects, a Germany which once made incalculable sacrifices for the Reich and the nation. Above all, this is what the great representative of this Germany of old, who has today become the benefactor and patron of our Volk, expects. Therefore let us greet the man who, for us, personifies three generations and in whom we see a symbol of the immortal life-force of the German Volk: to the German Volk, the German Reich, and our Reich President, Field Marshal von Hindenburg: *Heil! Heil! Heil!*

At midday, Hitler received thirty-three workers' delegations from throughout the Reich, as well as a large delegation of National Socialists from the Saar, and made short speeches at both receptions.

In the afternoon, he attended the solemn session of the Reich Chamber of Culture, where Goebbels delivered a speech, and then proceeded to the Tempelhofer Feld.

If there had been between one and one-and-a-half million people assembled here the previous year, in 1934 there were even more who

poured out of the factories to flock to this mass demonstration—reportedly a total of two million workers.⁷²

Hitler commenced his speech⁷³ with a long version of the ‘party narrative’ before launching into a vigorous attack upon the zealotry with which “malicious elements” in Germany gave vent to their dissatisfaction.

Only a person who is better able to solve a problem is justified to criticize. We have come to terms with the problems in Germany better than our former opponents and current critics. We thus do not intend to allow the necessary authority accorded to the nation’s leadership to be attacked by those who perceive nihilism as the only fitting framework for their own futile activities. Whenever criticism becomes an end in itself, chaos must be its ultimate consequence. And just as we defend ourselves against these critics in order to preserve confidence in the nation’s leadership, we for our part also want to do everything to reinforce this confidence.

Millions of people who want to take an active part in reconstruction have offered me their support. Millions of our former opponents are today standing in our ranks and, thanks to their work and thanks to their skill as helpers in our reconstruction, are held in no less regard than our own longstanding party comrades. I may affirm before the German Volk that we do not perceive the nature of our authority in the effectiveness of cannons and machine guns, but rather in the actual confidence vested in us.

And just as we struggled as a Party for the trust and confidence of the Volksgenossen for fifteen years, we are now struggling and will continue in the future to struggle for the trust and confidence of the nation. For the belief that we—who were once laughed at and mocked—will one day be able to save the German Volk from misery and ruin was not founded in a confidence in the strength of any power we had, but based exclusively in a trust in the inner value of our German Volk. It is the blood-based essence of our nation which has prevailed again and again throughout so many centuries, which we knew and which thus never let us despair. For this reason, too, we will allow no one to destroy the trust placed in these values. The despondent weakling who sees the great events of our age only from the perspective of his own inadequacy can keep complaining, for all we care, but he should not confuse others.

In this past year, we have thus eliminated all those organizations which we were forced to regard as breeding grounds for phenomena which undermine the self, cause discord in the Volk, and lead ultimately to national and economic ruin. When we initiated the destruction of the German party system on May 2 of last year by taking over the unions, we did so not in order to rob any Germans of their useful representative bodies, but in order to liberate the German Volk from those organizations whose greatest damage lies in the fact that they were forced to encourage that damage be done in order to justify the necessity of their own existence.

Thus we have delivered the German Volk from an infinite amount of internal strife and discord which was of benefit to no one except those directly interested, but was a constant source of fatal harm to the entire Volk. Perhaps

there are some employers and entrepreneurs who today are unwilling to comprehend why we have proclaimed this May Day a public holiday for which the employer must pay wages. An explanation is called for, and I would like to give it to you here:

In the past, the German economy paid hundreds of millions of marks per year for the strife and discord between organizations which had torn employee and employer apart and transformed them into hostile advocates of two different causes. The total losses of national assets caused by strikes and lockouts were enormous. The National Socialist State has eliminated these primitive and senseless methods of reconciling economic interests. The resultant savings to the economy are extraordinary. It is only a very small sacrifice when, in return, the employers pay wages to their employees for a day which is to be the symbol of the fact that these conflicts have been overcome and that a true Volksgemeinschaft has been created.

In this past year, we began to establish this Volksgemeinschaft not only in a purely theoretical sense; we have also endeavored to secure the practical foundations it requires. For it is not sufficient to overcome unemployment as such, to simply train new workers; rather, it is necessary to gradually enlighten the millions of our Volksgenossen as to the nature of the new concept of work. More than one year ago, the National Socialist Party was victorious in Germany. All power and authority in the State is now in the hands of this organization. Millions of people voluntarily subjected themselves to it, and millions of others were brought into line. However, that does not mean that all of them became National Socialists. The purpose of the National Socialist idea—to put together a Volksgemeinschaft by overcoming rank, profession, class, and confession—is not fulfilled by simply registering with a party. One can become a party comrade by subscribing, but one can only become a National Socialist by adapting one's perception, by urgently appealing to one's own heart.

The National Socialist State is resolved to build the new German Volksgemeinschaft; it will never lose sight of this goal and, even if only gradually, it is certain to reach it. The gigantic organizations of our Movement, its political institutions as well as the organizations of the SA and SS, the structure of our Labor Front, and the State Organizations of our Army are all national and social melting pots in which, albeit gradually, a new German individual is being formed. What we do not successfully accomplish with the present generation we will achieve with the coming one. For just as doggedly as we have fought and fought again for the adult man and the adult woman, we shall fight for German youth. It is growing up in a different world and will be the first to do its share to build another world. In our National Socialist Youth Organization, we have created the school for the education of the individuals who will people a new German Reich.

With faith in their hearts and a strong sense of purpose, this youth will one day be a better link in our Volk's genealogical chain than we ourselves were and perhaps can be today.

The national May Day holiday, which we are celebrating today throughout Germany, plays a special and enormously significant role in this program of

forming our Volk anew. All of us talk about human culture and personal achievements, but only very few perceive in them the joint product of mental and physical strength. In the course of the centuries, it became all too customary to talk about the entrepreneur, the artist, the builder; to extol the technicians and to praise the engineers; to admire the architects; to follow the work of chemists and physicists with astonishment—but most of the time the worker was forgotten. People talked about German science, German craftsmanship, German economy as a whole, and they only ever meant one side of it. And that is how it came about that the most loyal helper of all was not only forgotten, but ultimately lost.

When you regard the symbol of today's celebration⁷⁴ which a German artist created for us, then it should convey to you the following: sickle and hammer were once the symbols of the German peasant and the German worker. The arrogance and lack of reason of a bourgeois age abandoned and lost these symbols. Ultimately, Jewish international litterateurs stole the tools of hard-working people and nearly succeeded in exploiting them for their own designs and purposes. The National Socialist State will overcome this ill-fated development. The hammer will once more become the symbol of the German worker and the sickle the sign of the German peasant, and the intellect must form with them an indissoluble alliance, just as we have been preaching and propagating it for a decade and a half. Therefore we have gathered together this day not only to celebrate German labor, but also to celebrate a new German individual. Just as an entire year has been praised in thousands of announcements, articles in the press, and speeches of the mental workers, today we wish to partake in celebrating the fame of that army of millions who—as unknown and nameless soldiers of work—have, by the sweat of their brow, made a loyal contribution in the cities and the country, on the fields, in the factories, and in the workshops, to produce those goods which rightfully elevate our Volk to join the ranks of civilized nations in the world and allow it to prevail in honor. And it is thus also our will that, on this day every year for all eternity, the entire German Volk may be conscious of what it has in common and, leaving behind it any disputes, may once more join hands in inner acknowledgement of its common alliance which we call the German Volksgemeinschaft.

But we do not wish to allow this day to pass without once more demonstrating in complete unanimity to the entire world our Volk's joint claim to the vital right we all have. From its venerable Reich President all the way down to each and every worker and each and every peasant, the members of the German Volk have but one single desire: to become happy and blessed, each in his own way and by his own labors. The Volk has no notion of revenge and does not strive for conquests. It wishes to extend its hand to every nation in understanding and reconciliation. However, it will never waver in upholding its own right to live, and will defend it against any foe. Above all, it will never relinquish its claim to being a Volk with equal rights, but it is likewise willing at all times to make sacrifices more than equal to those which other nations are also willing to make toward the preservation of peace and welfare on this planet.

We want you, my German Volksgenossen, to celebrate this May Day with us in this hour in our tens of thousands of cities, towns and villages, but we also

May 1, 1934

want you not to forget to humbly thank Him who allowed our work to prosper so well throughout the entire year, and we want to ask Him not to withhold His blessings from our Volk for the future as well. Above all, however, may Providence allow our most ardent wish to come true: that our German people come closer and closer together in mutual consideration and mutual understanding in order to finally attain that goal for which our Volk has fought for millenniums and for which many generations suffered and millions had to give their lives: a free German Volk in a strong German Reich.

In honor of the occasion, Hitler appointed the Prussian Minister of Culture, Bernhard Rust, to the post of Reich Minister of Science, Education and Popular Culture on May 1. Such a ministry had never existed before, and both Goebbels and Rosenberg had aspired to its head. Hitler solved this problem by transforming the Prussian Ministry of Culture into a Reich Ministry. At the same time, he appointed Frick Prussian Minister of the Interior, thus creating the impression of having not only promoted the unity of Prussia and the Reich which Hindenburg wanted but also of having taken yet another step in reforming the Reich. In this context, Hitler wrote the following letter to Göring:⁷⁵

My dear Göring,

As early as March 17 of this year, you proposed to me that the Reich Minister of the Interior, Dr. Frick, be entrusted with performing the duties of the office of Prussian Minister of the Interior. Placing your own personal interests secondary to those of the great work of the Reich reform, you expressed the desire to be released from your duties as Prussian State Minister and Minister of the Interior.

I have now complied with your wishes. Please find enclosed a certificate of dismissal from your post as Prussian State Minister and Minister of the Interior. I feel compelled in this context to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude for everything which you have accomplished in this post. You yourself have correctly pointed out that you have now solved the special problems involved in the administration of internal Prussian affairs, a task which I had assigned to you at the beginning of the National Socialist Revolution. You have accomplished this task with great circumspection and vigor. If now, retaining your office as Prussian Minister-President, you retire—corresponding to your own wish—from your post as Prussian Minister of the Interior and allow Dr. Frick, the Reich Minister of the Interior, to take your place, I know that this will serve—corresponding to your own wishes—to promote the great goals of the Reich reform in a particularly fitting way.

In true friendship and grateful regard,

Your Adolf Hitler

As early as May 2, it became evident that, although he had surrendered the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, Göring had by no means relinquished command of the militant associations of the Prussian Land Police.⁷⁶ Thus the following official notice was published:⁷⁷

Berlin, May 2. According to reports of the Official Prussian Press Agency, the responsibilities within the Prussian administration were clarified some time ago to the extent that the high command over the Land Police was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Minister-President. Thus Minister-President Göring has been accorded authority since then which hitherto had been granted to the Minister of the Interior. The routine business of the Land police is still being conducted by the head of the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior. He is directly subordinate to the Minister-President in respect to the affairs of the Land Police.

Hitler had already drummed up a stronger revolutionary spirit in March at his "Revolution Roll Call for the *Alte Kämpfer*," and in May and June he deliberately provoked a high degree of excitability among party members. If SA men in particular, motivated and encouraged by the multitude of propaganda against "killjoys, faultfinders, saboteurs, and agitators," lost control, this would make it all the easier for him to justify his actions in murdering Röhm and the leadership of the SA and the former Freikorps. Apparently the murders had already been slated for June 30 at this time.

On May 3, Hitler had Goebbels publish the following official notice:⁷⁸

Following the tremendous demonstrations on May Day, which documented even more clearly than in the previous year the community of all honest workers, the Reichspropagandaleitung of the NSDAP has ordered that a large-scale propaganda action in respect to public meetings be undertaken which will be aimed particularly against the killjoys and fault-finders, the rumor-mongers and good-for-nothings, and the saboteurs and agitators who still believe that they can disrupt the clear reconstruction work of National Socialism. Beginning with the first days of May and until June 30 [!], public meetings, demonstrations and rallies shall shake up the Volk like drumfire against this nuisance which must be disposed of once and for all. In accordance with the methods practiced in times of fighting, the meetings will encompass everyone down to the very last village, gain in tempo with each passing week, with an even harder relentlessness in their demands, and completely eclipse all previous actions in terms of decisiveness and results.

On May 7, Hitler sent a telegram to the Mayor of Saarbrücken, thanking him for the freedom of the city with the following words:⁷⁹

The honor bestowed upon me by the City of Saarbrücken on the Day of National Work afforded me great pleasure. I hereby accept with sincere thanks the freedom of the city, a city which did not allow itself to be surpassed by any other city in respect to its German loyalty.

The working Volk in the Saar can be assured of my care from the day of reunification onwards.

Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler

May 7, 1934

On May 7, Hitler received a delegation from the Japanese Navy under the leadership of Vice Admiral Matsushita.⁸⁰ On the same day he made a speech before 400 NSDAP editors who had gathered at the Kaiserhof Hotel in Berlin.⁸¹

Again on May 7, Hitler sent his condolences per telegram to Buggingen (Baden), where a disastrous mining accident had taken place.⁸²

On May 16, he made a speech at the Second Labor Congress in the auditorium of the Prussian Herrenhaus in Berlin⁸³ which closed with the words:

We will never violate the peace, but let no one believe himself capable of conquering us in peacetime without resistance.

On May 17, Hitler received a delegation of German craftsmen in Berlin headed by the Reich Master Craftsman, Schmidt, and accepted a contribution to the "Adolf Hitler Welfare Donation Fund."⁸⁴

May 27 to 30 Hitler attended the Reich Theater Festival in Dresden, where he stayed at the Bellevue Hotel.⁸⁵ On May 27, he attended a performance of *Tristan und Isolde* and spoke with the main actors and the stage crew. The following day, he honored the Dresden Infantry School with a visit lasting several hours and spoke there with high-ranking Reichswehr officers. Apparently this was the real motive behind his visit to the city, for the action against the SA leadership planned for June 30 primarily concerned the territories with military significance under the control of the SA groups Berlin-Brandenburg, Mitte (Saxony), Silesia, Pomerania, and Ostmark.⁸⁶

On May 29, Hitler toured the Reichsstatthalter's offices, the City Hall, and the State Opera and at 3:00 p.m. delivered a short speech to SA leaders at the Bellevue.

On May 30, Hitler met with the composer Richard Strauss and received a delegation of BDM members from Siebnitz. He also spoke briefly to a group of Saxon Kreisleiters.

In the afternoon he returned to Berlin, where he received the Skagerrak Guard of Honor formed by the Navy every year on the anniversary of the sea battle. This year it was comprised of officers and crew members of the cruiser *Köln* who gathered in the Reich Chancellory. Hitler made use of this opportunity⁸⁷—and every other which was afforded him at the time—to express his solidarity with the Reichswehr.

In early June,⁸⁸ Hitler conferred with Röhm in Berlin for five hours, a fact he later disclosed in his speech of July 13,⁸⁹ in which he allegedly expressed his fears of a "national Bolshevik action" on the part of the SA.

June 4, 1934

I then further explained to him that I had heard rumors of plans to include the Army in the framework of this scheme. I assured Chief of Staff Röhm that the claim to the effect that the SA was to be dissolved was a malicious lie, that I could not make any comment whatsoever in respect to the lie that I myself was planning action against the SA.

Even according to Hitler's version of the talk, which certainly was trimmed for his own purposes, it is evident that Röhm apparently had reason to complain about rumors of hostility against the SA. The news of Hitler's offer to England to reduce the SA by two thirds were by no means pure invention.⁹⁰ Hitler claimed that he had informed Röhm of "totally unacceptable excesses" and demanded "thorough eradication" (*restlose Ausmerzung*).

According to Hitler, the Chief of Staff had left the conference with the promise of taking care of the matter; however, in reality, he had then begun preparing Hitler's own demise.

It is a futile endeavor to speculate what Hitler and Röhm actually said to one another, for there were no witnesses and no record was drawn up. Thus it is recommendable to adhere to the factual consequences summed up in the speech:

1. Röhm declared his willingness to immediately take "sick leave" and retired to Bad Wiessee for this purpose.

2. For the month of July, the entire SA was to take leave; merely a small number of leaders and men were to maintain business operations in the various offices. In exchange, these persons were to be given leave in June.

Although Röhm was not willing to comply with Hitler's proposal to transform the SA into a pure sports association,⁹¹ he did remain loyal to the Führer and had no intention of disobeying his orders as Strasser had done in December and January of 1932/33. He walked unsuspectingly into the trap Hitler had constructed with diabolical cunning.

Hitler was a coward by nature; the various 'tests of courage' to which he submitted himself during his lifetime were dictated only by his will and thus appeared more staged than natural. More often than not, he was interested primarily in creating the impression of being courageous, and the 'tests' were planned so as to rule out any possibility of failure or real danger. The steps Hitler took against Röhm constitute a typical example, both in the planning and in the action itself, of this type of behavior.

Hitler made long and careful preparations for his strike against Röhm and the SA leadership and planned everything down to the last detail.

June 4, 1934

The “action against the fault-finders and saboteurs” cited above, which Hitler had scheduled for the period from May 3 to June 30, comprised one element. He undoubtedly expected SA men to step out of line, thus giving him an excuse for carrying out his plans, particularly in light of the explosive tension existing between the SA and the Stahlhelm at the time.

Furthermore, Hitler wanted to take every precaution and, if possible, rule out any danger of resistance. To do this, it was necessary to remove Röhm from his accustomed surroundings and persuade him to take lodgings in a normal hotel for a protracted stay at a spa.

The date had been fixed for June 30, a Saturday: Hitler preferred scheduling his more controversial actions on weekends,⁹² for he could launch surprise attacks and need not fear major public reactions before Monday.

Hitler personally summoned the SA leaders to a convention at Bad Wiessee on June 30, proceeding on the—correct—assumption that he could thus most easily arrest the unsuspecting men without danger of resistance.

He had also instructed Röhm to put the majority of the SA on leave for a full month from July 1, with uniforms being banned for this period. These measures reduced the danger of an uprising among the SA after the news of the liquidations became public. The normal behavior exhibited by Röhm and the SA leaders serves, however, to show that by no means had they believed their Führer capable of such actions.

After his five-hour talk with Hitler, Röhm had the following notice published:⁹³

Berlin, June 7, 1934

The Press Office of the Supreme Command of the SA reports that the chief of Staff of the SA, Reich Minister Ernst Röhm, has been granted sick leave for several weeks. The Chief of Staff was ordered by his physicians to take this leave for the purpose of undergoing a health cure which has proven necessary.

In order to preclude any misinterpretations to which this may give rise, the Chief of Staff has asked that it be made known that he will continue to exercise the duties of his office in full when he has been restored to full health.

Following its well-earned July leave and fortified anew, the SA will likewise continue to accomplish its great tasks in the service of the Führer and the Movement as before.

On June 8, Röhm issued the following order from Munich:⁹⁴

I have decided to follow the advice of my physicians and take a health cure in order to fully regain my physical powers, which have been weakened in the past weeks as a result of a painful nervous disorder. The head of the Leadership Office, Obergruppenführer von Krausser, will represent me in my absence.

June 8, 1934

The year 1934 will demand the full power of all of the fighters in the SA. Thus I recommend all SA leaders to commence scheduling leave even in June. In particular, all those SA leaders and men who must be available for work in July should be granted leave in June.

Hence the month of June will be a time of complete relaxation and rest for a limited number of SA leaders and men, and the month of July will provide the same to the bulk of the SA.

I expect that, on August 1, the SA will be completely rested and strengthened and stand ready to serve the honorable tasks which Volk and Vaterland have a right to expect of it. If enemies of the SA are nurturing false hopes that the SA will not return—or only return in part—after its leave, they may enjoy their shortlived hopes for the time being. With time and in the manner which appears appropriate, they will receive the answer they deserve.

The SA is and will remain Germany's destiny.

The Chief of Staff: Röhm

Röhm's closing words were undoubtedly addressed to the circles of the Reichswehr who harbored the hope that the SA would be dissolved—a fact of which Röhm was fully aware. He set off for Bad Wiessee to take up quarters in the Hanselbauer Hotel⁹⁵ situated at the shore of the Tegernsee, where he settled in to enjoy a few weeks of vacation and sun.

On June 4, the Council of the League of Nations in Geneva had unanimously approved of January 13, 1935 as the date for the Saar plebiscite. It was the earliest possible date on which the plebiscite could be scheduled.⁹⁶

Another of Hitler's demands had been fulfilled. At that time he had apparently already conceived of the plan of announcing the reinstatement of general conscription immediately after the Saar had returned to the Reich. Every day counted, for he wanted to call as many men as possible to arms in 1935 in order to have them fully trained in time for his expansion campaigns. Hitler's satisfaction at the early plebiscite date is evidenced in a letter he wrote to von Papen on June 7:⁹⁷

Finally the date has been fixed for the plebiscite in the Saar. On this occasion I must express to you, Herr von Papen, as the person assigned by me to represent the interests of the Saar, my most sincere thanks. The self-sacrificing and untiring work which you have done in fighting for the return of this territory to the German Vaterland has brought the fairest reward for all Germans and hence also for you.

With trusting and grateful regards, Yours faithfully, Adolf Hitler

On June 9, Hitler sent his greetings to the German Red Cross from Berlin on the occasion of Red Cross Day on June 10.⁹⁸

June 11, 1934

On June 11, the newspapers contained the first indications of a forthcoming meeting between Hitler and Mussolini.

The reasons why Hitler desired such a meeting became clear only several weeks later. There was no doubt in Hitler's mind that the planned murder of Röhm and other public figures would give rise to a catastrophic mood in Germany. Thus, so he believed, it was necessary to arrange for some sort of conspicuous success with which to repair the damage done to the prestige of the National Socialist regime. The most obvious and certain way to score these vital points was by a National Socialist takeover in Austria; however, in the short time available, this could only be accomplished by a violent coup.

It would have facilitated Hitler's plans if Mussolini had been supportive or at least disinterested. However, at that time it was highly improbable that the Italian dictator would exhibit such behavior, for he maintained good relations with Austria in the economic sector as well and regarded the neighboring State almost as a satellite.

Goebbels traveled to Warsaw on June 13, and the following day, at 8:20 a.m., Hitler flew to Venice where he arrived shortly after 10:00 a.m. in the company of Foreign Minister von Neurath.

It was the first time Hitler visited a foreign country under normal circumstances. The time he spent in the occupied part of France and in Belgium during World War I could not leave him with any real impression of foreign countries and peoples. Although he had put his above-average power of retention to use committing the maps of the major European capitals to memory and learning the details of all of Europe's culturally significant architectural monuments,⁹⁹ his actual knowledge of foreign mentalities and the real power relationships in Europe and the world were confined to what is taught in elementary schools.

He who had taken every opportunity to criticize the German bourgeoisie as bigoted and ignorant behaved, whenever he was not taking part in political conferences or giving speeches, no differently from a German Philistine on his various visits to Italy until 1943.

Upon landing in Venice on June 14, Hitler sent the following telegram to the Italian King, Victor Emmanuel III:¹⁰⁰

As I set foot on Italian soil, I may address my respectful compliments to Your Majesty in the hope that my meeting with the head of Your Majesty's Government may contribute to the welfare of our two friendly countries and to the world peace for which all nations so yearn.

Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler

When the 'Immelmann D 2600' touched down at the San Niccolò airfield, Hitler was the first passenger to disembark. He immediately strode over to greet Mussolini, who was waiting a few steps away with his entourage. The Führer wore civilian clothes, a light-colored gabardine coat and felt hat; *Il Duce* was dressed in the black uniform of the Italian Fascists. The two dictators shook hands and then boarded a motorboat to cross the lagoon and take the *Canale Grande* to the Grand Hotel, where Hitler was staying for his two-day sojourn.

At Mussolini's invitation, Hitler lunched with him in the royal Villa Pisani in Strá, where the two heads of government then talked in private for two hours following their meal.¹⁰¹

Towards evening, Mussolini returned the visit, spending a short time in the Grand Hotel with Hitler. At 10:00 p.m. the host and his guest attended a concert featuring works by Verdi and Wagner in the courtyard of the Doge's Palace.

Early the next day, Hitler toured the *Biennale*, the International Art Exhibition, and returned to his hotel, where he received a number of National Socialist Amtswalters working in the Foreign Organization for Italy.

At 11:00 a.m. he proceeded to St. Mark's Square, where Mussolini treated him to a parade of Fascist militia organizations. Apparently the Italian dictator was not aware of Hitler's aversion to militias.

A lunch reception at the Lido Golf Club followed at 1:00 p.m., sponsored by the Italian Secretary of the State Department at that time, Fulvio Suvich.

Afterwards Hitler and Mussolini once again met privately for two hours. Since the Duce spoke German, the presence of an interpreter was not required.

The two dictators strolled back and forth under the palm trees, but their conference was not characterized by quite the unanimity Hitler had expected.

Captain Baur, who watched the two from a distance, saw that their talk occasionally flared into excited discussion and that they stamped their feet for emphasis.¹⁰² Their topic was undoubtedly the Austrian question, and Hitler's flow of words made little impression on the Italian head of government who, at that time, was somewhat sensitive about Italy's neighbor to the north, Mussolini could still afford to be patronizing and treat Hitler with a certain amount of condescension. In the course of later years, he would learn how to listen and realize that he was the one who had to be subordinate.

June 14, 1934

A huge rally was scheduled for 5:00 p.m. in St. Mark's Square. Mussolini had arranged for special trains to bring in 70,000 Blackshirts: evidently he interpreted Hitler's visit to Venice as a tribute to his own politics. Lavish in his use of bombastic phrases, Mussolini declared:

A meeting has taken place these past few days here in Venice upon which the attention of the world was focused, but I say to you Italians and to all those beyond our borders that Hitler and I have met here not to rework, much less to alter the political map of Europe and the world onto add any more grounds for unrest to those which are already a cause of unrest to all nations from the farthest corner of the orient to the farthest corner of the occident. Rather, we have joined in the attempt to drive away the clouds which darken the horizon of political life in Europe.

Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law and Press Chief of the Italian Government at the time, took a much more sober view of the meeting at the ensuing press conference in the Danieli Hotel.

According to Ciano, no concrete agreement had been reached; instead, the two statesmen had merely discussed the political situation in general terms and had, in this context, held largely corresponding views. As a result, further personal contact had been found desirable, Ciano reported.

In respect to disarmament, there had been unanimity that, when Germany had finally achieved genuine equality of rights, it could return to the League of Nations. Ciano stated that Mussolini and Hitler had also discussed Austria and agreed that, given the guarantee of Austrian independence, it was desirable to reestablish normal relations between Germany and Austria.

It was not difficult to read between the lines of this commentary that Mussolini was unwilling to make any concessions to Hitler in the Austrian question. The meager joint communiqué issued by the two heads of state was equally revealing.¹⁰³

Venice, June 15, 1934

The Italian head of government and the German Reich Chancellor today continued and concluded their review of the questions of general politics and the problems directly involving their own countries in a spirit of friendly cooperation. The personal relations between the two heads of government which have thus been initiated will be maintained in future.

On the evening of June 15, Mussolini was Hitler's guest at dinner in the Grand Hotel. A final conference took place at 11:00 p.m. in the Excelsior Hotel at the Lido. The next morning, Mussolini saw his guest to the airport, where Hitler boarded his flight at 8:15 a.m.

June 16, 1934

When the plane passed over the Italian border, Hitler sent the following telegrams to the King and Mussolini:¹⁰⁴

Over the Alps, June 16, 1934

His Majesty, the King of Italy

Upon leaving the fair country of Italy I may present to Your Majesty, together with my most humble thanks for the hospitable reception, my most respectful compliments.

Adolf Hitler

His Excellency Benito Mussolini, Venezia

May I once more express my most sincere thanks for the kind hospitality and the extremely friendly reception I enjoyed and, upon leaving Italy, send you warm regards.

Adolf Hitler

On June 17, Hitler delivered a speech at the Party Congress of the Gau of Thuringia in Gera.¹⁰⁵

The Führer was in a vile temper and let loose a barrage of insults at his assumed and real adversaries. It was obvious that he was still irked by the meager results of his talks with Mussolini. The German Volk, he declared, was “not some worthless pack which can be kicked around by anyone and everyone.” He labelled the founders of the Weimar Republic “insane fools” and ultimately focused his wrath on his reactionary critics, calling them “little worms” and “little pygmies,” who would come to feel his fist if necessary, “the fist of the nation which is clenched and will smash anyone who dares to make even the slightest attempt at sabotage.” Hitler stated verbatim as follows:

However unqualified our love for peace, however little Germany wishes for war, we will stand up all the more fanatically for German freedom and the honor of our Volk. The world must know: the period of *Diktats* is past! Just as, on the one hand, we do not intend to exert pressure on another people, on the other we will defend ourselves against any further attempt to subject the German Volk to continuous pressure. We do not have the feeling that we are an inferior race, some worthless pack which can and may be kicked around by anyone and everyone; rather, we have the feeling that we are a great Volk which only once forgot itself, a Volk which, led astray by insane fools, robbed itself of its own power and has now once more awakened from this insane dream.

Let no one believe himself capable of immersing this Volk in such a dreamstate again within the next thousand years; this lesson, which we have learned in such a terrible way, will be a historical reminder to us for millenniums. What happened to us through our own fault will not be allowed to happen to the German Volk a second time!

My Volksgenossen, I wish only to bid and remind you to perceive the strength of our Volk in our inner unity of will, in our unity of spirit and our

June 17, 1934

common way of thinking. Rest assured that strength is expressed not so much in divisions, in cannons and in tanks, but that it is ultimately expressed in the community of a single *Volkswille*. And further, may you be imbued with the conviction that men must be taught this community and that safeguards must be created for this purpose. Regard our National Socialist Movement as a great safeguard of this kind against the spirit of class conflict, class hatred and class division. Regard the National Socialist Movement and its organizations as one great school of education in achieving this community. Cling to this Movement, fight for it: in doing so, you are fighting for the German Volk and for the German Reich! For one thing is certain: the fate of the German Volksgemeinschaft is bound to the existence of this Movement; the fate of the German Reich, however, depends upon the stability of the German Volksgemeinschaft.

We are all aware that we are not an end in and of ourselves. The Party, the SA and the SS, the political organization, the Labor Service, the youth organizations—all of them are a means to the end of welding our body politic together and thus developing the powers inherent in our Volk to a truly peaceful, culturally advancing and also materially prosperous work.

It has been eight years since I first spoke in this city. What tremendous progress! In spite of all polarities, in spite of all resistance, in spite of all the doubters, in spite of all the carpers, in spite of all the critics: the Movement is great. Who can doubt that the coming years will bring about the same progress? Back then it was a handful of people who believed that the endeavor would succeed. Today there are millions who fanatically vouch for this endeavor, who profess their faith in it. And if, in the course of eight years, starting with a handful of men in this city too, this victory was achieved, then in the coming years and decades this victory will deepen, and all the little pygmies who fancy that they will be able to do anything to stop it will be swept away by the force of this common idea. For all these pygmies are forgetting one thing, no matter what fault they believe they have found: where is that anything better which could take the place of what is now? Where are they hiding what they would put in its place? It is ridiculous when such a little worm tries to fight such a powerful renewal of the Volk. Ridiculous, when such a littly pygmy fancies himself capable of obstructing the gigantic renewal of the Volk with a few empty phrases.

What would happen if these little carpers achieved their goal? Germany would once more fall apart as it fell apart before. But we can assure them of this: they did not have the power before to prevent the uprising of National Socialism, and now the German Volk has awakened, and never again will they be able to lull it back to sleep!

The Party and its organizations will ensure that the blood victims and the sacrifices of the last fourteen years were not in vain. They should know that! They can carp as long as they want; it is all the same to us.

But if they should ever attempt to make even the smallest step toward turning their criticism into a new act of perjury, may they rest assured that what they are facing today is not the cowardly and corrupt bourgeoisie of 1918, but the fist of the entire Volk. It is the fist of the nation which is clenched and will smash anyone who dares to make even the slightest attempt at sabotage.

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It is immaterial whether we exist or not. What is necessary is that our Volk exists. We know what those people made of our Volk. We witnessed it ourselves. Let them not say: we want to do it better the second time around. You have given us one demonstration of how not to do it, and we are showing you now how it has to be done! Germany must live!

Hitler certainly considered von Papen one of these “little pygmies.” On the same day Hitler spoke in Gera, von Papen delivered an address at the annual convention of the University League in Marburg in which he took a stance against a second revolutionary wave. One could not have expected von Papen to know what was really at stake; he was doubtless still loyal to Hitler. Perhaps he had concluded from Hitler’s somewhat nebulous references to revolutionary elements that the Chancellor would soon call his party comrades to order. He certainly had no inkling of the dark scheme Hitler was contemplating; moreover, he felt himself called upon to aid him in repressing all too enthusiastic fighters for the cause.

The speech which von Papen delivered on June 17 was composed by the writer Edgar Jung,¹⁰⁶ who had already given the National Socialists several bitter pills to swallow and who inserted such remarks into the speech as, “Great men are not created by propaganda; they take on stature through their deeds,” or “He who talks of Prussianism should think of selfless service first, “ and “No organization, no propaganda, however excellent it may be, can bring about a lasting increase in confidence. “ But the attack backfired, and the circulation of von Papen’s address was prohibited¹⁰⁷ Edgar Jung was arrested a few days after it had been held and killed on June 30, while von Papen was spared for the time being—Goebbels even made a point of being seen with him at the German Derby in Hamburg on June 24.

The gruesome warning Hitler issued eight days later was to teach von Papen that no one could meddle in the Chancellor’s affairs and escape unpunished.¹⁰⁸

On June 20, Hitler attended the funeral of Göring’s first wife Carin, whose body had been brought from Sweden to be interred at Göring’s new estate, “Schorfheide.”¹⁰⁹

On June 21, Hitler visited the Reich President, who had been at Neudeck since May 5, and submitted a report on his talks with Mussolini in Venice.¹¹⁰

Two days later, Hitler received a delegation of women from the Saar at the Reich Chancellory in the morning¹¹¹ and then retired to the Obersalzberg for a few days of rest prior to his action against Röhm. On

June 24, 1934

June 24, he watched a flight performance of the German Air Sports Association from his Haus Wachenfeld, making two short speeches to the audience and to the pilots who took part in the flight.¹¹²

The remarks made in the next few days by persons who were either accomplices or accessories to Hitler's crime of June 30—Hess, Göring and Blomberg—are of particular interest.

On June 25, Rudolf Hess delivered a speech which was broadcast on the Cologne radio station.¹¹³ Originally, it had been scheduled for the Party Congress in Duisburg the day before but had been cancelled due to bad weather. Hess was fully aware of the fact that Röhm was not a traitor and had acted "in good faith" in pursuing his plans for the militia. However, he also knew that Hitler's strategic plans went in the opposite direction, and placed his entire support behind his Führer. It is nonetheless conceivable that Hess attempted to issue an indirect warning to Röhm in his Cologne speech on June 25, when he declared:

Alone the order of the Führer, to whom we have sworn our loyalty, is decisive. Woe betide anyone who is unfaithful to this vow of loyalty, believing that his revolt will serve the Revolution. Pity unto those who believe themselves the chosen ones who must aid the Führer by revolutionary agitation from below. Adolf Hitler is a revolutionary of the first order and will inwardly remain a revolutionary of the first order. He does not need crutches. Woe betide anyone who makes a crude attempt to trample between the fine threads of his strategic plans under the delusion that he can do it faster. He who does so is an enemy of the Revolution even if he is acting in the utmost good faith. Profiteers would always be the enemies of the Revolution whether they act on behalf of the *Reaktion* or on behalf of Communism.

Göring, to whom Hitler had assigned a particularly bloody part in the performance scheduled for June 30, spoke at an NSDAP convention in Hamburg on June 26.¹¹⁴ In his speech, Göring rejected all notions of restoring the monarchy, declaring that the future form of the State was a matter to be decided by the children and grandchildren of the present generation: "We who are living now have Adolf Hitler!" Then, aiming his invective at the reactionary "interest cliques" and "unproductive critics," he exclaimed:

When one day the cup runneth over, I will strike! We have worked as no one has ever worked before, because we have behind us a Volk which trusts us. Anyone who gnaws away at this trust is committing a crime against the Volk, he is committing treachery and high treason. He who designs to destroy this trust, destroys Germany. He who sins against this trust has put his own head in the noose.

Here Göring was referring not to Röhm and the SA leaders, but to reactionaries such as Schleicher and Strasser, whom he massacred shortly thereafter at Hitler's bidding.

The Reich Minister of Defense, von Blomberg, put the Reichswehr in a state of alert on June 28 and published an article in the June 29 issue of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, entitled "The Wehrmacht in the Third Reich," in which he wrote:¹¹⁵

The Wehrmacht has merged with the State of the German reincarnation, with the Reich of Adolf Hitler. It came as what it was, an inwardly clean, disciplined instrument of power in the hands of its leadership.

It serves this State, which it affirms from an innermost conviction, and it stands by this leadership which restored to it the most noble right to be not only the bearer of arms, but also the body in which the State and the Volk have vested their unlimited trust.

The fighting communities formed in the trenches of the World War, which Adolf Hitler made the foundation of the new Volksgemeinschaft, became the starting point for the great tradition which the Wehrmacht, as heir to the Army of old, will carry on. In a close alliance with the entire Volk, the Wehrmacht, which proudly wears the symbol of the German reincarnation on its helmets and uniforms, stands by the leadership of the State in discipline (*Manneszucht*) and loyalty: the Field Marshal of the Great War, Reich President von Hindenburg, its Commander in Chief, and the Führer of the Reich, Adolf Hitler, who once came from our ranks and will always remain one of us.

On June 28, former Captain Ernst Röhm was expelled from the German Officers' League¹¹⁶—a further indication that everything was minutely planned.

What of the alleged conspirators? Were they whetting their blades to stab their benefactors in the back? The Chief of Staff was still relaxing at the Tegernsee with no premonition of what was brewing. Occasionally he received visitors, among them his friend General von Epp, Reichsstatthalter in Bavaria. Obergruppenführer Heines attended a midsummer's eve celebration and a sports show put on by the 18th SA Brigade at Bad Kudowa in Silesia on June 24 and 25 and afterwards traveled to Bad Wiessee. The leaders of the separate SA groups issued proclamations ordering their members to take leave from July 1. The Berlin SA Gruppenführer Karl Ernst also published a proclamation to this effect on June 26,¹¹⁷ which read in part as follows:

The Chief of Staff has granted vacation leave to the entire SA for the month of July. The SA man is to spend this month, during which the schools are also free, with his family, his wife and his children. This will serve to dismiss any complaints of too many demands and 'too much work, etc.' In order to bring about this desired situation at any price, even against the will of those who

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would withdraw from their families, I have prohibited my formation leaders from scheduling any work whatsoever.

As a further means of helping the SA man to genuinely become a private person for the term of this month of leave, the release from any type of duty is accompanied by a ban on uniforms.

Ernst himself left Berlin for Bremen to take a honeymoon trip with his wife. He was arrested there on June 30, returned to Berlin by plane and shot in Lichterfelde.

Hitler claimed in his speech on July 13 that Ernst had intended to personally supervise the occupation of the Berlin government building by the SA at 5:00 p.m. on June 30.

On June 27, Hitler put the final touches to his plans, and had a state of alert declared for the Reichswehr on June 28. Hitler and Göring went to Essen on June 28¹¹⁸ to attend the church wedding ceremony of the Essen Gauleiter, Josef Terboven. Göring returned to Berlin in the afternoon, while Hitler visited the Krupp works and took a tour of the plant in the company of Alfried Krupp and Professor Goerenz, a member of the Krupp board of directors. Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's personal photographer, was conspicuously absent from Hitler's side during these last days of June, having suddenly traveled to Paris to cover a sports event.¹¹⁹

As a result, the press obtained a number of uncensored photographs depicting Hitler in Essen on June 28 and at his visit to Westphalian labor camps on June 29. The pictures show Hitler in a rumpled leather coat, his hair in disarray, looking exactly what he was: a mentally disturbed, even insane man about to commit murder.

On the evening of June 28, Hitler instructed Röhm's aide, Bergmann, per telephone¹²⁰ to summon all of the high-ranking SA leaders to a meeting. The time and place were noon on June 30, at the Hanselbauer Hotel in Bad Wiessee.

At 10:00 a.m. on June 29, Hitler toured the district *Führerschule* of the Labor Service at Buddenberg near Lünen. There he made a short speech, thanking the Reich leader of the Labor Service, former Colonel Hierl, for his support in building up the Labor Service:¹²¹

That, dear Hierl, has been your great accomplishment. You have created the National Socialist Arbeitsdienst, and for that I may thank you, and for that the German Volk thanks you.

Next on the itinerary was an inspection of the Olfen labor camp. Hitler then interrupted his visit and left for the Rheinhotel Dreesen in Godesberg, where he arrived at 3:45 p.m. Goebels had flown there



IX On the eve of the Röhm Purge

Hitler on June 29, 1934 touring the labor camps in the Buddenberg castle near Lünen (Westphalia).

Photo: Domarus archives



X Hitler's convoy leaving Bad Wiessee
after the arrest of the SA leaders on June 30, 1934. Hitler is riding in the passenger seat of the first car; seated behind him is Goebbels (in the light-colored coat).

Photo: Domarus archives

from Berlin, as had the Commander of the SS Leibstandarte, Sepp Dietrich, whom Hitler ordered to return to Munich.

At 4:00 p.m., Hitler greeted a Labor Service band playing in front of the Dreesen Hotel and was introduced to the Amtsleiters and Kreisleiters of the Gau of Cologne-Aachen.

Around midnight the bands of several Labor Service groups congregated at the side of the hotel overlooking the Rhine to sound the Ceremonial Tattoo. On the opposite riverbank, 600 Labor Service men formed a blazing swastika. Hitler thanked the band conductors and requested the Badenweiler March. The ceremonies ended with a torch-light marching salute of the Labor Service formations, which Hitler received from the hotel balcony.¹²²

At 2:00 a.m., Hitler left for the Hangelar airfield near Bonn to fly to Munich. He was accompanied by his aides Brückner, Schaub and Schreck, and by Goebbels¹²³ and the Reich Press Chief Dietrich.¹²⁴ The plane touched down in Munich at 4:30 a.m.

In the meantime, Himmler had launched his ploys to back up the claim of an attempted coup. Forged handouts had been used to lure several SA divisions out on the streets on the previous evening which had, however, been sent home again by Gauleiter Wagner. SA Obergruppenführer Schneidhuber and SA Gruppenführer Schmidt were summoned to the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior, where they indignantly denied having alerted the SA. Hitler then performed the first “heroic deed” of the day: he stripped the baffled SA leaders of their insignias and had them arrested by the police present at the incident.¹²⁵

At 5:30 a.m., Hitler left for Bad Wiessee by car after SA Obergruppenführer Lutze, who had already arrived on the scene, called to say that the coast was clear, i.e. that the men were fast asleep. In a convoy of several heavy black Mercedes convertibles and sedans, Hitler and his party—which also included Hitler’s SS guard and several police detectives¹²⁶—set off for the hotel.

Approaching from Kaltenbrunn, the convoy arrived at around 6:45 a.m. and drew up in front of the Hanselbauer Hotel. Hitler told the few guests who were already up and about to clear the way or go to their rooms.

He then proceeded to do his “courageous” deed. Accompanied by his aides, several SS men and a number of detectives, he mounted the wooden stairs to the second floor, where Röhm and Heines occupied opposite rooms—numbers 21 and 31—directly adjacent to the stairwell.¹²⁷

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Hitler had the caretaker knock on Röhm's door. When Röhm, clad in pajamas, opened the door, Hitler shouted at him: "You're under arrest!" (*"Du bist verhaftet!"*).

Completely taken aback, Röhm dressed wordlessly and allowed himself to be led to the small foyer of the hotel, where he took a seat near the fireplace between two detectives.

Upstairs in the room across the hall, Heines—a known homosexual—was in bed with a young man. Having been awakened by the sound of voices, Heines attempted to resist when the door to his room flew open. According to eyewitness reports, Hitler fled up into the stairwell for cover, but his towering aide, Brückner, was able to calm Heines. After Heines' arrest, the other SA leaders were taken by surprise in their rooms, arrested and locked in the hotel linen room.

The entire incident had run so smoothly that most of the hotel guests had not noticed anything amiss.

Having accomplished their "courageous" mission, Hitler and his party had coffee in the private quarters of the hotel's owners. Frau Hanselbauer even procured Hitler's permission to bring a cup to the still somewhat dumbfounded Chief of Staff. A chartered bus then stopped before the hotel; the arrested men boarded it and were brought to Stadelheim Prison in Munich. Only Röhm was taken away in a private car. Around 8:00 a.m. Röhm's Staff Guard arrived from Munich, having been summoned to perform guard duty at the meeting scheduled for that day. Hitler emerged from the hotel and explained to the men: "I have assumed the leadership of the SA myself for the day!" He ordered them to drive back to Munich and closed with the words: "I can count on you, can't I?"

The division saluted Hitler with a "Sieg Heil!" and withdrew immediately.

Hitler's cortege set out for Munich via Rottach-Egern. An SS commando was appointed to stop all oncoming cars containing SA leaders on their way to the meeting. A number of them were arrested on the spot, while others were instructed to turn around and join the convoy to Munich. Upon arriving, Hitler first went to the Ministry of the Interior, where he passed on the code word "Kolibri" to Göring, who then launched the Berlin counterpart to the purge. Hitler then proceeded to the Braunes Haus, where the Reichswehr had constructed a blockade in the meantime.

Sepp Dietrich had been stopped in Tölz on his way to Bad Wiessee and instructed to proceed to Kaufering, where a number of SS divisions

of the Leibstandarte had arrived with a Reichswehr transport train. As later became evident, these were the firing squads Hitler had ordered. Dietrich drove the troops to Munich in Reichswehr trucks and went to report to Hitler. To his surprise, he found the Braunes Haus surrounded by Reichswehr soldiers and even had difficulty being allowed through the lines. Having finally gained entrance, he had to wait for several more hours in the aides' office before seeing Hitler.¹²⁸

A number of political and SA leaders had gathered in the Senatorial Room of the Braunes Haus, where Hitler announced Röhm's dismissal and the appointment of Obergruppenführer Lutze as new Chief of Staff.¹²⁹

On July 8,¹³⁰ Rudolf Hess declared in Königsberg that Hitler's speech on June 30 had had "the stature of world history." Hess gave a long account of the day's events at the Braunes Haus and stated: "Back in his office, the Führer pronounces the first sentences."

Thus it cannot be maintained that a type of drumhead court martial was held in the Senatorial Room on June 30 or that the slayings Hitler had ordered had been justified in any way by a prior court judgment. The "Supreme Judge of the German Volk," as Hitler styled himself in his speech of July 13, passed the death sentences sitting alone, without a trial, without any *ratio decidendi*, without a record—but with only his own ends in mind.

As Hess has reported,¹³¹ Hitler himself composed all official reports, notices to the press, proclamations, etc. Every phrase, every word, was his work.

The first "Decree of the Führer" was given to the press at 3:00 p.m. on June 30 and read as follows:¹³²

Munich, June 30, 1934

With effect as per today's date, I have dismissed Chief of Staff Röhm from his post and expelled him from the Party and the SA. I hereby appoint Obergruppenführer Lutze as new Chief of Staff. SA leaders and SA men who do not follow or act contrary to his orders shall be removed from the SA and the Party or put under immediate arrest and sentenced.

Adolf Hitler, Supreme Party and SA Leader

This initial notice revealed both that Hitler expected some resistance and that those who did not step in line would be "sentenced"—to what, was not stated.

The letter Hitler sent to Lutze that same day from Munich read:

June 30, 1934

My dear SA Leader Lutze,

Severe transgressions on the part of my former Chief of Staff have forced me to relieve him of his post. You, my dear Obergruppenführer Lutze, have been for many years a consistently loyal and exemplary SA leader in good times and in bad. When today I appoint you Chief of Staff, I am doing so in the firm conviction that, with your loyal and obedient work, you will succeed in making of my SA the instrument which the nation needs and which I envision. It is my wish that the SA be formed into a loyal and strong member of the National Socialist Movement. Filled with obedience and blind discipline, it must help to build and form the new German.

Adolf Hitler

These notices did not yet reveal to which “severe transgressions” Hitler was, in fact, referring. The impression was created that the Chief of Staff had been guilty of morally unacceptable sexual aberrations, for it was a known fact that he was a homosexual. It was also known, at least within the Party itself, that Hitler had in the past ignored or refused to comment on Röhm’s private affairs, answering respective questions with a shrug of his shoulders or, according to Heinrich Hoffmann, referred to Röhm’s sexual preferences as being a souvenir from his military service in the tropics.

On April 6, 1932, he had dismissed criticism of Röhm as an utterly “disgusting smear campaign” and declared “explicitly once and for all”: “Röhm is now and will remain my Chief of Staff after the elections.”

Even on December 31, 1933, Hitler had published a letter to Röhm in which he had written that he was ‘proud’ to call such men as Röhm his ‘friends.’¹³³

Had Hitler suddenly metamorphosed into a staunch advocate of conventional morality? As evidenced in his next announcement from the Braunes Haus, he did judge it opportune to simulate moral outrage and also to impute treasonous relations with a “foreign power” to Röhm and General Schleicher.¹³⁴

The June 30 statement of the Reich Press Office of the NSDAP read as follows:

For many months now, individual elements have attempted to drive wedges between the SA and the Party and between the SA and the State and to create conflicts. More and more evidence arose in support of the suspicion that these attempts were attributable to a limited clique with a definite purpose.

Chief of Staff Röhm, in whom the Führer had placed a rare trust, did not combat these manifestations but unquestionably promoted them. His known unfortunate predisposition gradually became such an insupportable burden that the Führer of the Movement and Supreme Commander of the SA was driven into an extremely difficult moral dilemma.

Chief of Staff Röhm made contact with General Schleicher without the knowledge of the Führer. In doing so, he made use of the services of an obscure character from Berlin of whom Adolf Hitler most strongly disapproves¹³⁵ as well as those of another SA leader. Due to the fact that these negotiations—likewise, of course, without the Führer's knowledge—ultimately involved a foreign power or, respectively, its representatives, an intervention was no longer avoidable, both from the standpoint of the Party and from the standpoint of the State.

Strategically initiated incidents culminated in the fact that the Führer left Westphalia after he had toured labor camps there, flying from Bonn to Munich at 2:00 a.m. this morning to order that the most seriously incriminated leaders be removed from office and placed under arrest. The Führer proceeded to Wiessee in person with a small escort in order to nip any attempt at resistance in the bud. The act of arresting the men was accompanied by such morally pitiful scenes that every trace of sympathy was necessarily banned. A number of the SA leaders had taken catamites (*Lustknaben*) with them. One of them was surprised in a most revolting (*ekelhaft*) situation and arrested.

The Führer issued the order to ruthlessly eradicate this plague spot. In the future he is no longer willing to tolerate that millions of decent people are incriminated and compromised by isolated persons with pathological leanings.

The Führer issued the order to the Prussian Minister-President Göring to carry out a similar action in Berlin and particularly crack down on the reactionary accomplices to this political conspiracy.

At 12:00 noon, the Führer made a speech to the higher-ranking SA leaders who had convened in Munich, in which he stressed his unshakable alliance with the SA, but at the same time announced his decision to show no mercy from now on in exterminating and destroying (*ausrotten und vernichten*) undisciplined and disobedient characters and asocial or diseased elements. He pointed out that service in the SA was an honorary service for which tens of thousands of upright SA men had made the most difficult sacrifices. He expected from the leader of each SA division that he prove himself worthy of these sacrifices and be a living example to his organization. He also pointed out that he had defended Chief of Staff Röhm for years against the heaviest attacks but that the most recent development had forced him to place all personal feeling second to the welfare of the Movement and to that of the State, and that above all he would eradicate and nip in the bud any attempt to propagate a new upheaval by ludicrous circles of pretentious characters.

Hitler's next press release on June 30 constituted a so-called "eyewitness report" of the incidents at Bad Wiessee and was circulated by the NSK:

As soon as the events and news of the past few days had provided the Führer with certain knowledge of the conspiracy which had been hatched against himself and the Movement, he made the decision to act and to resort to drastic measures. While he had been in Essen and had toured the labor camps in the West German Gause in order to create the outer appearance of absolute

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calm so that the traitors might not be warned, the plan of carrying out a thorough purge had been fixed to the last detail.

The Führer headed the action personally and did not hesitate for a second to stand up to the rebels and call them to account for their actions. Obergruppenführer Lutze was chosen Chief of Staff—in place of Röhm—and included in the action.

Despite the fact that the Führer had spent several days almost totally without sleep, he ordered at 2:00 a.m. in Godesberg that his plane take off from the Hangelar airfield near Bonn and fly to Munich.

The Führer's bearing during this nocturnal journey into the unknown was one of incredible determination. When Hitler and his escort landed at the Munich airfield at 4:00 a.m., he was given the message that the Munich SA had been alerted during the night by its highest command. Using the vulgar and false slogan, 'The Führer is against us; the Reichswehr is against us; SA, out on the streets.'

In the meantime, acting on his own initiative, the Bavarian Minister of the Interior Wagner had relieved Obergruppenführer Schneidhuber and Gruppenführer Schmidt of their command over the SA formations and sent them home.

While the Führer was driving from the airfield to the Ministry of the Interior, the last remnants of the disgracefully deceived and now departing SA formations could still be seen. Schneidhuber and Schmidt were placed under arrest at the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior in the presence of the Führer. The Führer confronted them alone [!] and ripped the shoulder straps off their SA uniforms himself. Accompanied by only a small escort, the Führer left immediately at 5:30 a.m. for Bad Wiessee, where Röhm was staying. Heines was also staying the night at the country house where Röhm was lodging.

The Führer entered the house with his escort. Röhm was personally placed under arrest in his bedroom by the Führer. Röhm wordlessly submitted to being taken into custody and offered no resistance.

In Heines' room directly opposite, a disgraceful picture presented itself to those who entered the room. Heines was in the company of a young man. The repulsive scene which then followed when Heines and his companion were arrested defies description. It sheds sudden light on the conditions surrounding the former Chief of Staff which have been able to be done away with thanks to the determined, brave and intrepid action of the Führer.

The greater part of Röhm's staff was arrested with him. Röhm's Staff Guard, which arrived in Wiessee for relief duty at 8:00 a.m. in trucks, instantly complied with the Führer's words without resistance and spontaneously broke out in a triple chorus of "Heil."

After the arrested men had been taken away, the Führer traveled back along the road from Wiessee to Munich in order to arrest a number of further SA leaders underway who were heavily incriminated and had been journeying to the scheduled SA leadership meeting.

The cars were stopped during the journey and their occupants, to the extent that they were found guilty, were transported to Munich by the Führer's escort. A number of other SA leaders involved in the rebellion were removed from trains at the Munich Central Station and arrested.

Having returned to Munich, the Führer went to see Reichsstathalter Ritter von Epp for a short conference before proceeding to the Ministry of the Interior, from which locale the remaining steps were taken.

Then the Führer spoke to the assembled leadership of the SA in the Braunes Haus. What had been assumed now became a certainty: only very few members of the SS leadership clique had backed these highly treasonous plans, while the bulk of the SA leaders and all of the SA men stand by their Führer in loyalty as one man, as a unified bloc.

What the Führer has accomplished for the SA and for the Movement during these days can be gauged only by those who stood at his side in this short period of tremendous nervous tension and incredible physical exertion. By his own personal behavior, the Führer has once again been a shining example of vigor and loyalty. The fruits of this purge action will be reaped by the German Volk as a whole.

Hitler's moralistic sermons of June 30 pinnacled in the order of the day he issued to Chief of Staff Lutze, which contained twelve demands addressed to the SA.

Certainly many men and leaders in the SA were no angels, and orgies and drunken excesses were by no means rare; homosexual tendencies had never been an unusual phenomenon in all-male organizations, and the SA was certainly not an isolated case at the time.

In respect to luxury, drug abuse, extravagances, etc. Hitler was willing to be extremely magnanimous in overlooking the transgressions of party leaders as long as they demonstrated blind obedience, for instance in the cases of Göring, Ley and, in particular, the notorious "Frankenführer," Julius Streicher.¹³⁶

On June 30, Hitler donned the robes of a fanatic moralist who wanted to "relieve mothers of the fear" that their sons might become morally depraved in the SA or Hitler Youth. "I want to see men as SA leaders, not ridiculous apes," he declared.

The order of the day to Chief of Staff Lutze read as follows:

When I appoint you to the post of SA Chief of Staff today, I expect that you will concern yourself with a number of tasks which I hereby assign to you:

1. I demand from SA leaders the same blind obedience and unqualified discipline which they demand from their SA men.

2. I demand that every SA leader—and every political leader—is conscious of the fact that his manners and his behavior are to be an example to his association and even for our entire following.

3. I demand of SA leaders—and political leaders—that, should they make themselves guilty of any offense by their actions in public, they are to be mercilessly removed from the Party and the SA.

4. I demand particularly of SA leaders that they be an example of modesty and not of extravagance. I do not wish my SA leaders to hold or take part in

costly dinner parties. We were not invited to such events in the past and we still have no business attending them. Millions of our Volksgenossen today still lack the bare necessities of life, they are not envious of those whom Fortune has blessed, but it is unworthy of a National Socialist to further increase the distance between misery and good fortune, which is great enough as it is. I specifically forbid that Party or SA funds or, in fact, any public funds at all be appropriated for such banquets and similar events.

It is irresponsible to hold gourmet dinners (*Schlemmereien*) from funds comprised in part of the pennies of our poorest fellow citizens.

The luxurious staff quarters in Berlin in which, as has been ascertained, amounts of up to 30,000 marks per month were spent for banquets, etc. are to be dissolved immediately.

I therefore prohibit all Party offices from sponsoring such so-called banquets and dinner parties with any type of public funds. And I forbid all Party and SA leaders from attending such functions. Excepted are those obligations which the State requires be met, for which above all the Reich President and, following him, the Reich Minister of the Exterior are responsible. I prohibit all SA leaders and all Party leaders in general from holding so-called diplomatic dinners. The SA leader's task is not to cultivate social prestige, but to do his duty.

5. I do not want SA leaders to take business trips in expensive limousines or convertibles or to use official funds for the acquisition of same. This also applies to the heads of the political organizations.

6. SA leaders and political leaders who become inebriated in public are unworthy of being leaders.

Our ban on carping criticism imposes an obligation to exhibit exemplary bearing. Mistakes can always be forgiven; bad behavior cannot. Hence SA leaders who behave unworthily before the eyes of the public, who rampage about or even promote intemperance shall be immediately removed from the SA without further consideration. I am holding the superior offices responsible for taking vigorous action. From the State authorities I expect that sentences will be harsher in such cases than in the case of non-National Socialists. The National Socialist leaders and, in particular, the SA leaders should be looked upon highly by the Volk. Hence the demands placed upon them are also higher.

7. I expect all SA leaders to help to maintain and fortify the SA as a neat and clean institution. I would particularly like every mother to be able to send her son to the SA, the Party and the Hitler Youth without fear that he might become morally depraved there.

Thus it is my desire that all SA leaders take meticulous care to ensure that transgressions pursuant to § 175¹³⁷ are punished with the guilty party's immediate expulsion from the SA and the Party. I want to see men as SA leaders, not ridiculous apes.

8. I demand of all SA leaders that, in return for my loyalty, they give me their own loyalty and support. I particularly demand that they attempt to find their strengths within the sphere assigned them and not in spheres which belong to others. I demand above all from every SA leader that he exhibit unreserved honesty, loyalty and obedience in his behavior toward the Wehrmacht of the Reich.

June 30, 1934

9. I demand from SA leaders that they require only that degree of courage and sense of sacrifice from their subordinates which they are ready to demonstrate themselves at all times.

Hence I demand that they prove themselves in their behavior and in their handling of the Volksgut which I have entrusted to them as genuine leaders, friends and comrades. I expect that, in their associations as well, they will place virtue before number.

10. And I expect from you as Chief of Staff that the old, loyal party comrades, those who fought in the SA for long years, will not be forgotten. I do not want inflation with a thousand unnecessary but costly staffs, and I want promotions to be based not so much upon abstract knowledge as upon the inborn capability to be a leader, and a loyalty and willingness to make sacrifices which have been tried and proven over the years. In my SA I have a tremendous stock of the most loyal and obedient followers. They are the ones who have conquered Germany, not the clever latecomers of the year 1933 and thereafter.¹³⁸

11. I want the SA man to be trained mentally and physically to be the most proficient National Socialist. The unique strength of this organization lies solely in its being anchored in the Party in a common Weltanschauung.

12. I want obedience, loyalty and comradeship to prevail as guiding principles in this organization. And just as every leader demands obedience from his men, I hereby demand from the SA leaders respect for the law and obedience to my orders.

Adolf Hitler

At 5:00 p.m., Hitler finally found time to receive Sepp Dietrich, the commander of the SS Leibstandarte, and to give him the first round of orders for his firing squads.

Dietrich reported that Hitler was completely confused upon entering the room and that he had never witnessed him in such a state.¹³⁹

Hitler ordered Dietrich to take six non-commissioned officers and a company commander from the Leibstandarte to Stadelheim Prison and to have the SA leaders shot whose names had been checked off on a list submitted by Bormann.¹⁴⁰

Dietrich was an old warhorse from World War I and had been through many a battle. But he was not a criminal. Some of those marked on the list were good friends of his. He nonetheless did not flinch at having them executed without a trial, without sentencing, without any reason other than that Hitler had requested it. This concept of utterly unscrupulous, blind obedience—early established and continuously reinforced—culminated in the extermination of those the “Führer” had deemed *Untermenschen* and vermin carried out during World War II by the SS as willing tools. The SS’ fawning submission to Hitler nearly surpassed the dog-like devotion of Napoleon’s “Old Guard,” which also exhibited almost unbelievable feats of blind obedience.¹⁴¹

June 30, 1934

Hitler's victims at Stadelheim did not grasp why they were being liquidated. Many of them believed that the Reichswehr was behind the slayings, and nearly all of them died—as did Gruppenführer Ernst in Berlin—with a “Heil Hitler!” on their lips.

When Dietrich had reported that the orders had been carried out, Hitler issued the following bulletin to the press:¹⁴²

Munich, June 30

The Reich Press Office of the NSDAP reports: in connection with the unveiling of the conspiracy, the following SA leaders were shot: Obergruppenführer August Schneiderhuber, Munich; Obergruppenführer Edmund Heines, Silesia; Gruppenführer Karl Ernst, Berlin; Gruppenführer Wilhelm Schmidt, Munich; Gruppenführer Hans Hayn, Saxony; Gruppenführer Hans Peter von Heydebreck, Pomerania; Standartenführer Hans Erwin Graf Spreti, Munich.

Hitler left Munich at about 8:00 p.m., arriving at the Tempelhofer Feld in Berlin at 10:00 p.m. Göring and Himmler immediately reported to Hitler on the executions which had been carried out in Berlin in the meantime: Gruppenführer Ernst, General von Schleicher, General von Bredow, Gregor Strasser, Edgar Jung, Erich Klausener (Ministerialdirektor and leader of Catholic Action), and others.

Until now, everything had gone smoothly. But would the Reichswehr accept the murder of Generals Schleicher and Bredow without further ado? Both had been high-ranking officers.

Hitler was not quite sure and decided to summon General Litzmann to the Reich Chancellery. Litzmann, a good-natured, elderly standby of Hitler's, immediately appeared and offered his help as he had done on so many prior occasions. But Hitler's fears proved unfounded. The Reichswehr swallowed its pill; the elimination of the SA leaders was worth the price of two unpopular generals.¹⁴³

The company on guard in Berlin made its way to the Wilhelmstrasse on this Sunday, July 1, at 1:00 p.m., parading in goose-step to the strains of the Badenweiler March as Hitler looked on out of the window. The Reichswehr was expressing its gratitude and paying homage to its leader.¹⁴⁴ Hitler, freshly groomed and with eyes feverishly aglow, saluted the passing columns. Behind him stood General Litzmann.

Hitler had issued the following press release on Schleicher's execution:

Berlin, June 30

It had been ascertained in the past few weeks that the former Reich Minister of Defense, former General von Schleicher, had maintained relations with subversive circles in the SA leadership and with foreign powers which repre-



XI The day after the Purge

Hitler salutes the Reichswehr parading in his honor on July 1, 1934.

Photo: Domarus archives



XII SS guards posted in the Reichstag

In his speech on July 13, 1934, Hitler feared assassination attempts on the part of incensed party comrades.

Photo: Domarus archives

July 1, 1934

sented a threat to the security of the State. This was proof that, in both words and deeds, he had acted in a manner hostile to the State and its leadership.

This fact made it necessary that he be arrested in connection with the entire purge action.

When police officers attempted to arrest him, former General von Schleicher put up armed resistance. In the ensuing exchange of shots, he and his wife—who had attempted to intervene—were mortally wounded.

In Berlin, the executions in the SS barracks in Lichterfelde continued throughout that Sunday. As yet, no decision had been made in respect to Röhm.

Naturally he, too, would have to die without being given a chance to make any statement of defense. On July 1, Hitler ordered that a revolver be brought to Röhm's cell in Stadelheim so that his former Chief of Staff might take the task upon himself. However, Röhm's devotion to Hitler had a limit; he would not commit suicide at the Führer's command as Field Marshal Rommel would later do.¹⁴⁵ He refused; on the other hand, he did not have to think of his family as Rommel did.

When Röhm's time was up, Hitler sent two SS men,¹⁴⁶ the Commander of Dachau, Theodor Eicke, and Sturmbannführer Michael Lippert, Commander of the Dachau guard troops, to the cell, where they shot Röhm point blank as he stood defiantly before them.

Hitler issued the following bulletin on Röhm's shooting:

Berlin, July 1

Former Chief of Staff Röhm was given the opportunity to draw the consequences of his treasonous deeds. He chose not to do so and was summarily shot.

The following decree of the Reich Minister of Defense was issued at the same time. It praised Hitler's alleged courage and stressed the Reichswehr's future devotion to the Führer:

To the Wehrmacht

Berlin, July 1, 1934

Demonstrating soldierly determination and exemplary courage, the Führer himself attacked and smashed the traitors and rebels. The Wehrmacht, in its function as bearer of arms for the entire Volk, far removed from internal political struggles, will express its thanks by devotion and loyalty! In compliance with the Führer's demand, the Wehrmacht will be pleased to cultivate good terms with the new SA with the consciousness of our common ideals. The alert has been cancelled on all fronts.

von Blomberg

On July 2, Hindenburg dispatched telegrams of thanks to Hitler and Göring, which were published the same day:

July 2, 1934

Berlin, July 2

It has been officially reported that Reich President von Hindenburg has sent the following telegram from Neudeck to Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler: "From the reports which I have received, I conclude that you have nipped all treasonous doings in the bud by your own determined action and your brave personal intervention. You have rescued the German Volk from a serious threat. For this may I extend to you my deeply felt gratitude and my sincere appreciation.

With best regards,

von Hindenburg"

Furthermore, the Reich President also dispatched the following telegram from Neudeck to the Prussian Minister-President and Infantry General Hermann Göring:

"I may express to you my thanks and appreciation for your vigorous and successful action in crushing the attempt to commit high treason.

With comradely regards,

von Hindenburg"

The same day, Hitler had the following made public:

Berlin, July 2

Official notice:

The purge action came to an end yesterday evening. No further actions of this type shall take place. Hence the entire operation for restoring and securing order in Germany lasted 24 hours. Complete law and order now reigns throughout the Reich. The entire Volk is standing behind the Führer with tremendous enthusiasm.

In addition, Hitler issued the following order:

The measures taken to crush the Röhm revolt were completed during the night of July 1, 1934.

Anyone who makes himself guilty of an act of violence following this action, regardless of intent, will be handed over to the normal judicial authorities for sentencing.

Adolf Hitler

In the course of July 2, Hitler went to Berlin-Dahlem to visit the Minister of Economics, Dr. Kurt Schmitt, who had been taken ill.¹⁴⁷

A cabinet meeting took place on July 3. Following speeches by Hitler and Blomberg, a law was passed providing that all of the measures taken from June 30 through July 2 were "justified self defense of the State" (*Staatsnotwehr*).¹⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that the measures taken on July 2 were expressly included, although Hitler had just announced that all action taken to crush the so-called Röhm revolt had been completed during the night of July 1.¹⁴⁹

July 3, 1934

Reich Minister of Justice, Dr. Gürtner, who was not a National Socialist but a bourgeois departmental minister, went even further in declaring that this step, i.e. the shooting of defenseless prisoners without a trial, had not only been justified, but moreover constituted a “statesmanlike duty”!

The following official communiqué was issued on the cabinet meeting:

Berlin, July 3

In today’s meeting of the Reich Cabinet, Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler first presented a detailed account of the evolution of the treasonous plot and how it was crushed. The Reich Chancellor stressed that lightning action had been required to rule out the danger that many thousands of human lives would have been destroyed.

Reich Minister of Defense, General von Blomberg, thanked the Führer on behalf of the Reich Cabinet and the Wehrmacht for the determined and courageous action with which he had saved the German Volk from civil war. As a statesman and a soldier, the Führer had demonstrated a stature so great as to call forth a vow of effort, devotion and loyalty in the hearts of every member of the Cabinet and throughout the entire German Volk in this difficult hour.

The Reich Cabinet then granted its approval to a law governing measures for the self-defense of the State; its sole article reads:

“The measures taken to crush the treasonous attacks against the internal and external security of the State on June 30 and July 1 and 2, 1934 are deemed justified as selfdefense of the State.”

The Reich Minister of Justice, Dr. Gärtner, stated in this connection that the emergency measures taken directly prior to the outbreak of any treasonous action were to be deemed not only justified but a statesmanlike duty.

The Reich Cabinet also resolved an amendment to the Law to Secure the Unity of Party and State providing that the Chief of Staff of the SA must no longer be a member of the Reich Government.

This served to dismiss the SA from the position it had held until that point in time: the new Chief of Staff was no longer a Reich Minister. On July 3, Hitler flew to Neudeck to confer with Hindenburg. At the Marienburg airfield he was received and accompanied to his waiting car by a group of Reichswehr officers under the leadership of Major General Wodrich.

In Neudeck, he gave the Reich President an account of the alleged revolt and, according to eyewitness reports, allowed the Old Gentleman to comfort him in his sad regret that bloodshed had been unavoidable.

Hitler returned to Berlin at midday on July 4 to shroud himself in silence for a week. The only news was that he had received the German Ambassador in Ankara, Dr. von Romberg, on July 6.

July 6, 1934

No further details of the executions were given to the press for the time being, which resulted in a daily increase in rumors and a corresponding number of denials which filled the newspapers. On July 3, the Swedish newspaper *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* published an interview with Göring, part of which broached on von Papen as follows:¹⁵⁰

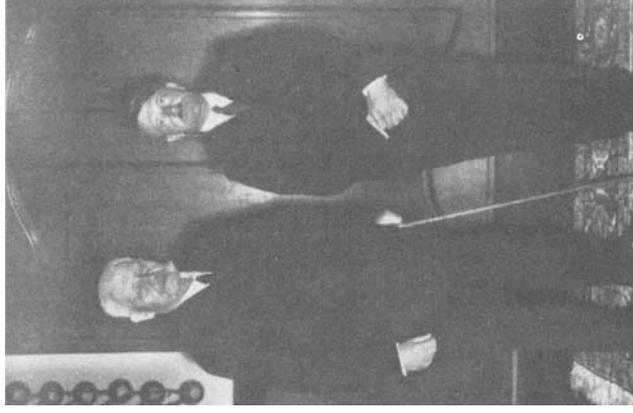
Question: What is Vice Chancellor von Papen's view on the action taken against the SA leaders:

Answer: It is a lie that Papen was arrested. I can also tell you that this will not be done. The action was carried out at the Führer's orders, and Papen was on his side. They were in complete agreement concerning the action itself. I would also like to stress that the action became necessary not only due to the plans for a putsch. Röhm's private life as well as that of the other persons who have now been arrested was such that it meant a scandal for the entire SA. They were a moral cancer which had to be cut out.



XIII Hitler and Mussolini in Venice

on June 14, 1934 upon Hitler's arrival at the San Niccolò airfield.



XIV Hindenburg and Hitler in Neudeck

on July 3, 1934 after the conference on the Röhm Purge.

Photos: Domarus archives



XV Perceptible dissatisfaction

upon learning the outcome of the plebiscite of August 19, 1934. From left to right: Hitler, his aide SA Obergruppenführer Bröckner, Goebbels, Kerrl.

Photo: Domarus archives

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Hitler required some time to manufacture at least somewhat credible explanations for the slayings. His private forum, the Reichstag, did not convene until Friday, July 13, at 8:00 p.m. The only item on the agenda was the reading of a statement of the Reich Government.

Hitler had already done thorough work of peddling the story of the alleged putsch attempt in his many bulletins issued from June 30 to July 3, and this version had been relatively well received by the bourgeoisie. Perhaps not without a certain amount of gloating satisfaction, it reassured itself with the thought that a revolution will always devour its own children.

However, the publicized shooting of von Schleicher and his wife on the grounds of resisting arrest was another matter. Although Schleicher had not enjoyed much popularity, the very idea that he had conspired with Röhm and even maintained treasonable relations with foreign powers seemed highly improbable.

In the meantime, news had leaked out that not only Schleicher, but also his State Secretary (head of the Ministerial Office), Major General von Bredow, had been shot, along with Gregor Strasser; other victims included the former Bavarian General State Commissar Dr. von Kahr; Papen's associates Edgar Jung and von Bose; the leader of Catholic Action, undersecretary in the Reich Transportation Ministry, Dr. Erich Klausener; and the leader of the Catholic sports organization *Deutsche Jugendkraft*, Adalbert Probst.

These names told their own story. Those involved were obviously persons who had at one time aroused Hitler's dislike and whom he thus, with or without reason, regarded as unreliable.

Schleicher had embarrassed Hitler before Hindenburg and the eyes of the public on August 13, 1932 by labelling him unsuitable for the post of Chancellor. Strasser had harbored hopes of becoming Vice Chancel-

July 13, 1934

lor in Schleicher's cabinet without Hitler's permission. Kahr had disappointed Hitler in November 1923 by disassociating himself from the first "national uprising." Jung and von Bose were killed to teach von Papen a lesson once and for all. The Catholics Dr. Klausener and Probst were evidently executed in place of Brüning, whom Hitler also apparently wanted to "rap on the knuckles." In any case, both Brüning and Schleicher had been warned in early June by the well-informed British Secret Service. While Schleicher chose to disregard the tip, Brüning left Germany, going first to England and then to Lugano.¹⁵¹

Hitler did not dream of admitting the real reasons for his actions in the Reichstag speech on July 13 or even consider going into detail naming those whose lives he had ended. Kahr, Klausener and Probst were not even mentioned; neither did he cite von Papen's associates Jung and Bose, but instead vaguely included von Papen himself in a remark referring to men whom he could not remove from their cabinet posts "without the most cogent reasons." The rebels had, so he claimed, threatened to murder von Papen and Seldte.

General von Bredow had been working as a foreign agent for General von Schleicher "in respect to the activities of those reactionary circles which—perhaps without having any direct connection to this conspiracy—allowed themselves to be exploited as a willing subterranean intelligence center for foreign powers."

While the suspicions raised against Bredow were confusing in the least, Hitler offered only the briefest explanation of Gregor Strasser's death: "Gregor Strasser was brought in."

That was the extent of what he had to say in this connection.

In addition to the names which had already been reported, in the further course of his speech Hitler cited SA leaders von Detten, Uhl and Schmidt and also announced, in a passing summary, the executions of 19 high-ranking SA leaders, 31 further SA leaders and members, and three SS leaders. Furthermore, he divulged that thirteen SA leaders and civilians had lost their lives resisting arrest, and three others had committed suicide while five party members and three SS men had been shot for "disgraceful abuse of prisoners in protective custody"—a total of 74 persons. By contrast, in his previous bulletins and even in this speech before the Reichstag, he had cited only fifteen persons by name. However, it was not difficult for his listeners to surmise who the others might be.¹⁵² In view of the frivolous manner in which he informed the Reichstag and the public of the scope and details of the slayings, it was highly improbable that the sum of 74 indeed represented the total

number of victims. This became particularly clear when it was officially announced on August 18 that Göring alone had taken 1,124 persons into protective custody in connection with the so-called Röhm Purge.¹⁵³

In his speech of July 13, Hitler cited dozens of reasons why he had been forced to take action against Röhm and the SA leadership which included everything from moral dissension to alleged rebellion. His real motive—that of winning the sympathy of the Reichswehr—was naturally not among them.

As the self-proclaimed “Supreme Justiciar of the German Volk,” he left no doubt as to the maxim which was to govern German affairs from then on:

Every person should know for all time that, if he raises his hand to strike out at the State [i.e. Hitler], certain death will be his lot.

When the Reichstag session opened on July 13, there were already visible indications of the changes which had taken place since the last session on January 30, 1934. Steel-helmeted SS sentries were stationed next to the podium and throughout the auditorium. Apparently Hitler feared assassination attempts by incensed party comrades. Twelve SA leaders who had been Reichstag deputies were absent, having been slain in the Purge. Reichstag President Göring had exchanged his SA uniform for the dress of the German Air Sports Association.¹⁵⁴

The composition of the government bench also reflected the new state of affairs: Röhm was naturally missing; Reich Minister of Economics Schmitt was absent—albeit due to illness; and von Papen was not in attendance. Foreign Minister von Neurath had taken the Vice Chancellor’s place for the time being. Neither Hitler nor Göring took the trouble to explain von Papen’s conspicuous absence.

Even if the rumors that he had been put under house arrest or received a brutal beating at the hands of the SS were only gross exaggerations, one thing was certain: he would never return to his place next to Hitler on the government bench.

The *Völkischer Beobachter* reported on July 14 that all Reich Ministers had been in attendance at the Reichstag session, listing each deputy separately with the exception of von Papen and Schmitt. The Party’s mouthpiece was well informed: apparently these two men were no longer regarded as ministers.

Strikingly few civilians were in evidence, and those present included General Litzmann who had stood by Hitler so loyally in the Reich Chancellory on July 1.

July 13, 1934

Hitler began his speech with the following words:

Deputies! Men of the German Reichstag!

Acting on behalf of the Reich Government, the President of the Reichstag, Hermann Göring, has called you together today in order to give me an opportunity to enlighten the Volk before this body, the highest appointed forum of the nation, concerning events which will hopefully live on in our history for all time as both a sad reminder and a warning.

Out of a combination of objective circumstances and personal guilt, of human incompetence and human defects, a crisis arose in our young Reich which all too easily may have brought about truly destructive consequences for an indeterminate period of time.

The purpose of my remarks is to explain to you and thus to the nation how they came about and were overcome. The contents of my remarks will be completely frank. Only in respect to scope must I impose upon myself limitations necessitated, on the one hand, by consideration to the interests of the Reich and, on the other, by the boundaries drawn by the feeling of shame.

However, before Hitler proceeded to the stated purpose of his remarks, he warmed up his listeners with a half-hour version of the "party narrative" on his accomplishments since January 30, 1933.

He then elaborately described four groups of people composing what he viewed as the opposition in Germany.

Street riots, barricade fighting, mass terror, and an individualistic propaganda of disintegration today trouble nearly all countries throughout the world. In Germany as well, a few isolated fools and criminals of this type are still making repeated attempts to ply their destructive trade. Since the defeat of the Communist Party, we have experienced, albeit growing constantly weaker, one attempt after another to establish Communist organizations with varying degrees of anarchist character and to put them to work. Their methods are always the same. While portraying the present lot as unbearable, they extol the Communist paradise of the future and, in doing so, are practically only waging war for hell. For the consequences of their victory in a country like Germany could be nothing other than destructive.

However, the trial run of their capability and of the consequences of their rule have, in the concrete case, already produced results so clear to the German Volk that the overwhelming majority, particularly of the German workers, has recognized this Jewish-international benefactor of mankind and inwardly defeated it.

The National Socialist State will wage a Hundred Years' War, if necessary, to stamp out and destroy every last trace within its boundaries of this phenomenon which poisons and makes dupes of the *Volk* (*Volksvernarrung*).

The second group of discontented is comprised of those political leaders who regard their futures as having been settled by January 30 but who have never been able to reconcile themselves to the irreversibility of this fact.

The more Time veils their own incompetence with the merciful cloak of forgetfulness, the more they believe themselves entitled to gradually reintroduce themselves to the mind of the Volk. However, because their incompetence then was not a matter of time but a matter of inborn incompetence, they are equally unable today to prove their worth by positive, useful work but instead perceive their purpose in life as being fulfilled by voicing criticism which is as underhanded as it is false. The Volk does not belong to them either. They can neither seriously threaten the National Socialist State nor seriously damage it in any way.

A third group of destructive elements is made up of those revolutionaries who were shaken and uprooted in 1918 in regard to their relation to the State and who thus have lost all inner connection to a regulated human social order.

They have become revolutionaries who pay homage to the revolution for its own sake and would like to see it become a permanent state of affairs.¹⁵⁵ All of us once suffered from the horrible tragedy that, as obedient and dutiful soldiers, we were suddenly faced by a revolt of mutineers who actually succeeded in gaining possession of the State. Each of us had originally been trained to abide by the laws, to respect authority and to show obedience to the commands and orders it issues, and instilled with an inner devotion to the representatives of the State.

Now the revolution of deserters and mutineers forced us to inwardly disassociate ourselves from these concepts.

We were unable to muster any respect for the new usurpers. Honor and obedience forced us to refuse to obey; love of the nation and the Vaterland obliged us to wage war on them; the amorality of their laws extinguished in us the conviction of the necessity for complying with them—and hence we became revolutionaries. However, even as revolutionaries, we had not disassociated ourselves from the obligation to apply to ourselves the natural laws of the sovereign right of our Volk and to respect these laws.

It was not our intention to violate the will and the right of self-determination of the German Volk, but to drive away those who violated the nation.

And when finally, legitimated by the trust of this Volk, we drew the consequences from our fourteen-year-long struggle, this was not done in order to unloose a chaos of unreined instincts, but with the sole aim of establishing a new and better order.

For us, the revolution which shattered the Second Germany was nothing other than the tremendous act of birth which summoned the Third Reich into being. We wanted to once again create a State to which every German can cling in love; to establish a regime to which everyone can look up with respect; to find laws which are commensurate with the morality of our Volk; to install an authority to which each and every man submits in joyful obedience.

For us, the revolution is not a permanent state of affairs. When a deathly check is violently imposed upon the natural development of a Volk, an act of violence may serve to release the artificially interrupted flow of evolution to allow it once again the freedom of natural development. However, there is no such thing as a permanent revolution or any type of profitable development possible by means of periodically recurring revolts.

July 13, 1934

Among the countless files which I was obliged to read through in the past few weeks, I also found a journal with the notes of a man who was cast onto the route of resistance to the laws in 1918 and now lives in a world in which the law itself appears to provoke resistance; an unnerving document, an uninterrupted sequence of conspiracies and plots, an insight into the mentality of people who, without realizing it, have found in nihilism their ultimate creed. Incapable of any real cooperation, determined to take a stand against any kind of order, filled by hatred of every authority as they are, their uneasiness and their restlessness can be quelled only by their permanent mental and conspiratorial preoccupation with the disintegration of whatever exists at the given time. Many of them stormed the State with us in our early period of struggle, but an inner lack of discipline led most of them away from the disciplined National Socialist Movement in the course of the struggle.

The last remnant seemed to have withdrawn after January 30. Their link with the National Socialist Movement was dissolved the moment this itself, as State, became the object of their pathological aversion. As a matter of principle, they are enemies of every authority and thus utterly incapable of being converted. Accomplishments which appear to strengthen the new German State only provoke their even greater hatred. For there is one thing, above all, which all of these oppositional elements principally have in common: they do not see before them the German Volk, but the institution of order they so abhor. They are filled not by a desire to help the Volk, but by the fervent hope that the government will fail in its work to rescue the Volk. Thus they are never willing to admit that an action is beneficial but are instead filled by the will to contest any success as a matter of principle and to extract from every success any potential weaknesses.

This third group of pathological enemies of the State is dangerous because, until a new order has begun to crystallize from a state of chaotic conflict, they represent a reservoir of willing accomplices for every attempt at revolt.

I must, however, now devote my attention to the fourth group, which on occasion—perhaps even unintentionally—nonetheless plies a truly destructive trade. I am speaking of those who belonged to a relatively small class in society, who have nothing to do and thus find the time and the opportunity to deliver oral reports on everything capable of bringing some interesting—and important—variety to their lives which are otherwise completely meaningless. For while the overwhelming majority in the nation is made to earn its daily bread by toilsome labor, in certain classes of life there are still people whose sole activity consists of doing nothing, followed by more of the same to recuperate from having done nothing. The more pathetic the life of such a drone is, all the more avidly will he seize upon whatever can fill this vacuum with some interesting content.

Personal and political gossip is caught up eagerly and passed on even more eagerly. And because these people, as a result of doing nothing, have no living tie to the masses of the nation's millions, their lives are delimited by the scope of the sphere within which they move.

Every bit of prattle which becomes absorbed by these circles throws its reflection back and forth endlessly as between two distorting mirrors.

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Because their very beings are filled with a nothingness which they constantly see reflected in those like them, they believe that this phenomenon is universal. They mistake the view of their circle for the view of all. Their doubts, they fancy, constitute the troubles of the entire nation.

In reality, this little colony of drones is only a state within the State, without any living contact with life, with the feelings, hopes and cares of the rest of the Volk. However, they are dangerous, for they are veritable germ-carriers for unrest, uncertainty, rumors, allegations, lies, suspicions, slander, and fear, and thus they contribute to creating a gradually increasing tension until, in the end, it is difficult to recognize or draw the natural boundaries between them and the Volk.

Just as they wreak their havoc in every other nation, they do so in Germany, too. They regarded the National Socialist Revolution as a conversation topic just as interesting as, on the other hand, the fight of the enemies of the National Socialist State.

But one thing is certain: the work of rebuilding our Volk and, with it, the work of our Volk itself is only possible if the German Volk follows its leadership with inner calm, order and discipline and above all if it trusts in its leadership. For it is only the trust and the faith placed in the new State which have enabled us to take on and solve the great tasks put to us by former times.

Even though the National Socialist regime was forced to come to terms with these various groups from the very beginning and has, in fact, come to terms with them, a mood has nonetheless arisen in the past few months which, in the end, could no longer be taken lightly.

The prattle of a new revolution, of a new upheaval, of a new uprising—while at first infrequent—gradually took on such intensity that only a foolhardy leadership of state would have been capable of ignoring it. It was no longer possible to simply dismiss as empty chatter what was put down in hundreds and ultimately thousands of oral and written reports. Even three months ago, the leadership of the Party was convinced that it was simply the foolish gossip of political reactionaries, Marxist anarchists and all sorts of idlers, completely lacking any substantiation in fact.

Hitler then began to spin his yarns of the purported putsch planned by Röhm and Schleicher, neglecting to cite a single shred of solid evidence for his fantastic allegations. Indeed, those who could have testified had been silenced forever.

In mid-March I directed that preparations be made for a new wave of propaganda. It was to make the German Volk immune against any new attempts at poisoning. At the same time, however, I also gave certain Party Offices the order to track down the recurring rumors of a new revolution and, if possible, to locate the source of these rumors.

It was found that tendencies had appeared in the ranks of several high-ranking SA leaders which naturally gave rise to serious doubts.

At first, there were only isolated manifestations, the inner connections of which were not yet quite clear.

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1. Against my express order and contrary to reports given me by former Chief of Staff Röhm, the SA had been blown into such proportions as to necessarily endanger the inner homogeneity of this unique organization.

2. Education in the National Socialist Weltanschauung was becoming more and more neglected in the ranks of these certain SA offices I have mentioned.

3. The natural relations between the Party and the SA slowly began to weaken. Methodical steps were taken, by means of which it was ascertained that endeavors were being made to disengage the SA from the mission which I had assigned to it in order to utilize it for other tasks or interests.

4. Promotions to leadership posts in the SA revealed themselves upon review to be based upon a completely one-sided evaluation of purely external capabilities or, in many cases, on a merely assumed intellectual capacity. The greater number of our oldest and most loyal SA men were increasingly neglected when leaders were appointed and posts filled, while those who had enlisted in 1933 and who are not favored with any especial regard within the Movement were incomprehensibly given priority. In some cases, only a few months of uninterrupted membership in the Party or even only in the SA sufficed for promotion to a higher SA office to which an old SA leader was barred access even after many years of service.¹⁵⁶

5. The behavior of these individual SA leaders who, for the most part, had in no way grown to become part of the Movement, was as un-National Socialist as, at times, it was positively revolting. However, it could not be overlooked that these circles contained one source of unrest in the Movement, which lay in the fact that their lack of practical National Socialism attempted to veil itself in quite uncalledfor demands for a new revolution.

I drew Chief of Staff Röhm's attention to this and a number of other problems, but this did not result in any noticeable improvement or even in any recognizable reaction to my censures. In the months of April and May, there was a constant increase in these complaints. For the first time, however, during this period I received reports—with supporting documentation—of discussions which had been held by individual high-ranking SA leaders and which can be described in no other terms than “gross insubordination” (*große Ungehörigkeit*). For the first time, there was undeniable supporting documentation in several cases that references had been made to the necessity of a new revolution in such discussions and that leaders had received instructions to prepare both inwardly and materially for such a new revolution. Chief of Staff Röhm attempted to deny that any of these incidents had in fact taken place, stating that they could be explained as disguised attacks on the SA.

The gathering of evidence for several of these incidents by means of statements of parties involved ended in a most serious maltreatment of these witnesses who, for the most part, came from the ranks of the old SA. As early as the end of April, the leadership of the Party and a number of State institutions concerned were convinced that a certain group of high-ranking SA leaders had deliberately contributed to the alienation of the SA from the Party and other State institutions or at least had failed to prevent this from happening.

Repeated attempts to remedy this through normal official channels failed each time. Chief of Staff Röhm gave me his personal assurance time and time

again that the cases would be investigated and the guilty parties removed and, if necessary, punished. However, no visible change took place.

In the month of May, several Party and State offices received countless complaints of offenses committed by high-ranking and middle-ranking SA leaders which, accompanied by supporting documentation, could not be denied. The offenses included everything from rabble-rousing speeches to intolerable excesses. Minister-President Göring had already previously endeavored in Prussia to give the authority of the National Socialist will of the State priority over the individual wills of certain elements. In other Länder, Party offices and public authorities had been forced, on occasion, to take a stand against certain intolerable excesses. A number of the parties responsible were arrested. I have always stressed that an authoritarian regime bears particularly great responsibilities. If it is demanded of the Volk that it place blind trust in its leadership, that leadership must earn this trust by its achievements and by particularly good behavior. Mistakes and errors may occur in a given case, but they can be eradicated. Bad behavior, drunken excesses, molesting peaceful, upstanding citizens—this is unworthy of a leader, contrary to National Socialism, and detestable to the utmost degree. Thus I have always insisted that higher demands be placed upon the behavior and conduct of National Socialist leaders than upon the other Volksgenossen. He who would command more respect for himself must in turn achieve more. The most basic thing which can be expected of him is that his life not be a disgraceful example to those around him. Thus I do not want National Socialists to be more leniently judged and punished for such offenses than other Volksgenossen; rather, I expect that a leader who forgets himself in this way be punished more severely than an unknown man would under identical circumstances. And I do not wish to make any distinction here between leaders of the political organizations and leaders of the formations of our SA, SS, HJ, etc.

The determination of the National Socialist leadership of State to put an end to such excesses committed by unworthy elements who serve only to heap shame upon the Party and the SA evoked extremely vehement counter-reactions on the part of the Chief of Staff. The first of the original National Socialist fighters, a number of whom had struggled for nearly fifteen years for the victory of the Movement and now represented the Movement as high-ranking State officials in leading positions in our State, were called to account for the action they took against such unworthy elements; in other words, Chief of Staff Röhm attempted to take disciplinary action against these persons, the oldest supporters of the Party, in courts of honor composed in part of the youngest party comrades and even of persons who were not members of the Party.

These conflicts led to very serious talks between Chief of Staff Röhm and myself, in the course of which, for the first time, doubts as to this man's loyalty began to arise in my mind. Although I had rejected any such thoughts for many months, although I had personally protected this man in unshakable loyalty and comradeship for years in the past, warnings gradually began to leave their mark on me—above all, warnings from my deputy in the Party leadership, Rudolf Hess—which, try as I might, I could no longer refute.

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From May onwards, there could no longer be any doubt that Chief of Staff Röhm was involved in ambitious plans which, had they become reality, could have resulted only in the most violent disruptions.

The fact that, throughout these months, I hesitated again and again to make any final decision, was due to the following:

1. I could not simply reconcile myself to the idea that a relationship which I had built upon trust could be nothing but a lie.

2. I still harbored the secret hope of being able to spare the Movement and my SA the disgrace of such a confrontation and to repair the damage without bitter fighting.

However, the end of May brought even more alarming facts to light. Chief of Staff Röhm began to depart, not only inwardly, but with his entire outward behavior, from the Party.

All of the principles with which we had become great lost their validity. The life which the Chief of Staff—and with him, a certain circle of others—began to lead was intolerable from any National Socialist point of view. As if it were not terrible enough that he himself and his circle of devotees broke every single law of decency and modesty, still worse, this poison now began to spread in everincreasing circles.

But worst of all was the fact that, out of a certain common predisposition, a sect gradually began to form in the SA which made up the nucleus of a conspiracy directed not only against the normal conceptions of a healthy Volk but against the security of the State as well.

Reviews conducted in the month of May of the promotions granted in certain areas of the SA resulted in the terrible realization that men had been promoted to positions in the SA without any consideration to their accomplishments within the Movement and the SA for the sole reason that they belonged to the circle of these persons with this particular predisposition. Individual incidents which are well known to you, for instance the case of the Standartenführer Schmidt¹⁵⁷ in Breslau, revealed a state of affairs which could only be regarded as intolerable. My order to intervene was followed in theory, but in fact, it was sabotaged.

Three groups gradually crystallized from the leadership of the SA: a small group, the elements of which were held together by a common predisposition who would stop at nothing and who had blindly delivered themselves into the hands of Chief of Staff Röhm.

In principle, these men were the SA leaders Ernst from Berlin, Heines in Silesia, Hayn in Saxony, and Heydebreck in Pomerania.¹⁵⁸ In addition to these men, there was another group of SA leaders who did not inwardly belong to this circle but felt themselves obligated to obey Chief of Staff Röhm simply from a soldierly point of view. And these were faced by a third group of leaders who made no secret of their inner aversion and disapproval and, as a result, had in part been removed from positions of responsibility while others had been pushed aside and, in many respects, simply disregarded.

At the fore of these SA leaders who were rejected because of their basic decency stood the present Chief of Staff, Lutze, as well as the leader of the SS, Himmler.¹⁵⁹

Without informing me at all and, initially, without even the slightest suspicion on my part, Chief of Staff Röhm had established contact with General Schleicher using as intermediary a thoroughly corrupt swindler, a certain Herr von A., whom you all know.¹⁶⁰ General Schleicher was the man who gave an external framework to Röhm's inner desires. He was the one who upheld and defined in concrete terms the viewpoint that

1. the present German regime was insupportable; that
2. above all, power over the Armed Forces and all national associations was to be united in one hand; that
3. Chief of Staff Röhm was the only man who could be considered for this post; that
4. Herr von Papen would have to be removed, and he was willing to assume the position of Vice Chancellor; and that furthermore, other major changes would have to be made in the Reich cabinet.

As always in such cases, the search for men to make up the new government began, under the condition that I was to be allowed to remain at my post—at least for the time being.

The implementation of these proposals from General von Schleicher was bound to meet with my unconquerable resistance as early as item 2.

It would never have been objectively or humanly possible for me to have given my consent to a personnel change in the Reich Ministry of Defense and to have appointed Chief of Staff Röhm to the vacant post.

First of all, for objective reasons:

For fourteen years, I have consistently upheld that the fighting organizations of the Party are political organizations which have nothing to do with the Army. In my eyes, it would constitute a disavowal of my view and my policies of fourteen years to appoint the leader of the SA to head the Army. In November 1923, I proposed appointing an officer¹⁶¹ to head the Army and not my SA leader at the time, Captain Göring.

Secondly, it would have been humanly impossible for me to ever consent to this proposal on the part of General von Schleicher. When I became aware of these plans, my own view of the inner value of Chief of Staff Röhm was already such that I would all the more never have been able to accept him for this post before my own conscience and for the sake of the Army's honor. However, above all, the supreme head of the Army is the Field Marshal and President of the Reich. As Chancellor, I gave him my oath. His person is inviolate for all of us.

The pledge which I made to him to maintain the Army as an unpolitical instrument of the Reich is binding for me, due both to my innermost conviction and to the fact that I gave my word.¹⁶² However, it would also have been humanly impossible for me to have done such a thing to the Reich Minister of Defense. I myself and all of us are happy to be able to look upon him as a man of honor from head to toe. From the very depths of his heart, he has reconciled the Army with the revolutionaries of old and allied it with their present leadership of State.

He has affirmed his most loyal devotion to that principle to which I will be devoted until my dying breath.

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There is only one bearer of arms in the State: the Wehrmacht. And only one body in which is vested the political will of the Volk: the National Socialist Party.¹⁶³

Any thought of agreeing with General von Schleicher's plans would, on my part, have constituted an act of disloyalty not only to the Field Marshal and the Minister of Defense, but also an act of disloyalty to the Army. For just as General von Blomberg is doing his duty as Minister of Defense in the National Socialist State in the most pronounced sense of the word, the other officers and soldiers are also doing the same. I cannot expect that each of them find his own position within our Movement; but none of them have abandoned their basic position of loyalty to the National Socialist State. Furthermore, without the most cogent reasons, I could not have those men removed who with me jointly made a vow on January 30 to save the Reich and the Volk.

There are certain duties attached to loyalty, duties which we may not and must not breach. And I believe that, above all, the man who has led the nation to unity in his own name must under no circumstances commit an act of disloyalty, for doing so would make all external and internal confidence in good faith disappear.¹⁶⁴

Due to the fact that Chief of Staff Röhm was himself unsure whether attempts in the direction mentioned might not well meet with resistance on my part, the first plan was designed to bring this development about by force. Extensive preparations were made.

1. The psychological groundwork for the outbreak of a second revolution was systematically laid. For this purpose, the SA propaganda offices spread a rumor—penetrating as far as the SA—alleging that the Reichswehr was planning to dissolve the SA, which was later supplemented by the claim that I had unfortunately been personally won over in support of this plan. A lie as pitiful as it is malicious!

2. The SA was now forced to forestall this attack and eliminate, in a second revolution, both the elements of *Reaktion* on the one hand and the resistance of the Party on the other, while entrusting the authority of the State to the leadership of the SA.

3. For this purpose, the SA was to make all necessary material preparations within the shortest time possible. By using pretexts—among other things, by falsely claiming that he intended to implement a social relief plan for the SA—Chief of Staff Röhm succeeded in raising twelve million marks for this purpose.

4. In order to be in a position to concentrate exclusively on delivering the most decisive blows, special terror groups were formed under the name of "Stabswachen"¹⁶⁵ and sworn in for this sole purpose. While an old SA man had starved his way through an entire decade for the Movement, in this case paid troops were formed whose inner character and purpose cannot be more clearly revealed than in the truly horrible criminal records of the elements of which they are comprised, accompanied by the fact that the tried and true SA leaders and SA men were now thrust into the background to make room for politically untrained elements which were better fit for such actions. At certain *Führertagungen* and recreational outings, the SA leaders in question were brought together step by step and given individual treatment; in other words, while the

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members of the inner sect made systematic preparations for the action itself, the second large circle of SA leaders were given only general information to the effect that a second revolution was knocking at the door, that this revolution had the single aim of restoring to me my freedom of action; that hence the new and, this time, bloody uprising—'The Night of the Long Knives,' as it was gruesomely called¹⁶⁶—corresponded to my own aim.

The necessity for action on the part of the SA was explained by drawing attention to my inability to make a decision; this situation could be remedied only by a *fait accompli*. Presumably, these false pretexts were used to assign Herr von Detten¹⁶⁷ the task of making preparations for the action in foreign countries. General von Schleicher personally took care of part of this drama abroad, leaving the practical work to his messenger, General von Bredow. Gregor Strasser was brought in.

In a final attempt early in June, I had Röhm summoned for a talk which went on for nearly five hours and lasted until midnight. I informed him that I had received the impression from countless rumors and innumerable assurances and statements from old and loyal party comrades and SA leaders that preparations were being made by unscrupulous elements for a national Bolshevik action which could only bring unutterable misfortune upon Germany. I further informed him that I had also heard rumors that there were plans to include the Army within the scope of this scheme. I assured Chief of Staff Röhm that the assertion that the SA was to be dissolved was a malicious lie, and that I could make no comment whatsoever on the lie that I intended to take action against the SA, but that I would personally take immediate steps to avert any attempt to allow chaos to arise in Germany, and that anyone who attacked the State would have to count me among his enemies from the very onset. I beseeched him for the last time to take a stand against this madness and use his authority to prevent a development which could only end in a catastrophe one way or another.

I once more voiced my strongest objection to the growing number of unimaginable excesses and demanded that every trace of these elements be wiped out in the SA in order to avoid that the SA itself as well as millions of decent party comrades and hundreds of thousands of old fighters were robbed of their honor by isolated inferior subjects. The Chief of Staff left me with the assurance that a number of the rumors were untrue and others were exaggerated and, in other respects, he would do everything he could to set things right.

The result of the conference was, however, that Chief of Staff Röhm, knowing that under no circumstances could he count on me in his planned undertaking, now proceeded to take steps toward my own elimination.

For this purpose, a larger circle of SA leaders who had been initiated were told that I myself was basically in agreement with the planned undertaking but that I could not afford to become personally involved and wished to be placed under arrest for a period of 24 or 48 hours when the uprising broke out so as to be relieved, by virtue of the *fait accompli*, of the embarrassing incrimination which would otherwise result for me abroad. This explanation is conclusively illustrated by the fact that, as a precautionary measure, the man had already been hired in the meantime who was to carry out my elimination at a later date:

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Standartenführer Uhl,¹⁶⁸ who confessed only a few hours before his death that he had been willing to carry out such an order.

The initial plan for the upheaval was based upon the idea of granting leave to the SA. During this period and due to the lack of available forces, inexplicable riots were to break out along the lines of the conditions of August 1932¹⁶⁹ which would force me to summon the Chief of Staff, who alone would be in a position to restore order, and to entrust to him the executive authority. However, since it had become clear in the interim that under no circumstances could one count on such a willingness on my part, this plan was abandoned and direct action contemplated. Such action was to commence abruptly in Berlin with a raid on the government building and my arrest in order to allow other actions to follow in sequence, supposedly at my bidding. The conspirators proceeded on the assumption that orders given to the SA in my name would not only mobilize the SA throughout the Reich but also serve to bring about an automatic fragmentation of all other opposing forces within the State.

Chief of Staff Röhm, Gruppenführer Ernst, Obergruppenführer Heines, Hayn and a number of others declared before witnesses¹⁷⁰ that initially the bloodiest possible confrontation with their adversaries was to take place, lasting several days. The question as to the financial side of such a development was dismissed with a positively insane lack of concern and the comment that the bloody terror itself would serve to provide the requisite funds one way or another.

I now must deal with only one more idea, namely whether or not every successful revolution constitutes its own justification. Chief of Staff Röhm and his elements explained the necessity of their revolution by citing the fact that this alone could secure the triumph of pure National Socialism. However, at this point I must make it clear for the present and for posterity that these men no longer had any right whatsoever to cite National Socialism as their Weltanschauung. Their lives had become as bad as the lives of those whom we overcame and relieved in the year 1933. The conduct of these men made it impossible for me to invite them to my home or to even once set foot in my Chief of Staff's house in Berlin. It is hard to even fathom what would have become of Germany in the event that this sect had been victorious. The magnitude of the danger was documented all the more strongly by the observations which then entered Germany from abroad. English and French newspapers more and more frequently talked of a forthcoming upheaval in Germany, and increasing numbers of reports indicated that the conspirators had systematically impressed upon foreign countries the idea that the revolution of the true National Socialists was now imminent in Germany and that the existing regime was no longer capable of action. General von Bredow, who procured these connections as foreign agent for General von Schleicher, worked only in respect to the activities of those reactionary circles which—perhaps without having any direct connection with this conspiracy—allowed themselves to be exploited as a willing subterranean intelligence center for foreign powers.

At the end of June, I was thus determined to put an end to this outrageous development, and to do it before the blood of tens of thousands of innocent persons would seal the catastrophe.

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Due to the fact that the danger and the tension which oppressed everyone had grown unbearable and certain bodies within the Party and the State had been compelled by virtue of their assigned duties to take defensive measures, the strange and sudden prolongation of service prior to the SA vacation leave¹⁷¹ aroused my suspicion, and thus I resolved that, on Saturday, June 30, 1 would dismiss the Chief of Staff from office, place him in custody for the time being, and arrest a number of SA leaders whose crimes had come to light.

Because it was doubtful whether, in view of the threat of an escalation, Chief of Staff Röhm would have come to Berlin or anywhere else at all, I resolved to personally travel to Wiessee for the conference of SA leaders scheduled there. Relying upon my personal authority and upon my power of determination, which had never failed me in the hour of need, I planned to dismiss the Chief of Staff from his post at 12:00 noon, arrest those SA leaders principally to blame and, in an urgent appeal, call upon the others to return to their duties.

In the course of June 29, I received such threatening news of the most recent preparations for the action that at midday I was forced to interrupt my tour of the labor camps in Westphalia in order to be available in case of emergency. At 1:00 in the morning I received two extremely urgent alarm bulletins from Berlin and Munich. Namely first of all, that an alert had been issued in Berlin for 4:00 in the afternoon, that the order had already been given for the requisition of trucks to transport what were actually the raiding formations and that this was already being carried out, and that the action was to begin promptly at the stroke of 5:00 as a surprise attack with the occupation of the government building. This was the reason why Gruppenführer Ernst had not traveled to Wiessee but remained in Berlin in order to conduct the action in person. Second of all, an alert had already been given to the SA in Munich for 9:00 in the evening.

The SA formations would not be allowed to return home but were assigned to the alert barracks. That is mutiny!¹⁷² I am the commander of the SA and no one else!

Under these circumstances, there was only one decision left for me to make. If there was any chance to avert the disaster, lightning action was called for. Only ruthless and bloody intervention might perhaps still have been capable of stifling the spread of the revolt. And then there could be no question of the fact that it would be better to destroy a hundred mutineers, plotters and conspirators (*Meuterer, Verschwörer und Konspiratoren*) than to allow ten thousand innocent SA men on the one hand and ten thousand equally innocent persons on the other to bleed to death. For if once the plans of that criminal Ernst were set in motion in Berlin, the consequences were unimaginable! How well the manipulations with my name had worked was evidenced in the distressing fact that these mutineers had, for instance, succeeded in securing four armored vehicles for their action from unsuspecting police officers in Berlin by citing my name, and that furthermore, even before then, the conspirators Heines and Hayn had made police officers in Saxony and Silesia uncertain by demanding that they decide between the SA and Hitler's enemies in the coming confrontation. It finally became clear to me that only one man could and must stand up

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to the Chief of Staff. He had broken his vow of loyalty to me, and I alone had to call him to account for that!

At 1:00 in the morning, I received the last alarm dispatches, and at 2:00 a.m. I flew to Munich. In the meantime, I had already instructed Minister-President Göring that, in the event of a purge action, he was immediately to take corresponding measures in Berlin and Prussia. He crushed the attack on the National Socialist State with an iron fist before it could develop. The fact that this action required lightning speed also meant that very few men were at my disposal in this decisive hour. Then, in the presence of Minister Goebbels and the new Chief of Staff, the action with which you are acquainted was carried out and brought to a close in Munich.

Although I had been willing to be lenient only a few days before, in this hour there was no longer any room for such consideration. Mutinies are crushed only by the everlasting laws of iron. If anyone reproaches me and asks why we did not call upon the regular courts for sentencing, my only answer is this: in that hour, I was responsible for the fate of the German nation and was thus the Supreme Justiciar of the German Volk! Mutinous divisions have always been recalled to order by decimation. Only *one* State did not make use of its wartime legislation, and the result was the collapse of this State: Germany. I did not want to abandon the young Reich to the fate of the old.

I gave the order to shoot those parties mainly responsible for this treason, and I also gave the order to burn out the tumors of our domestic poisoning and of the poisoning of foreign countries down to the raw flesh. And I also gave the order that if the mutineers made any attempt to resist arrest, they were at once to be brutally struck down by force (*sofort mit der Waffe niederzumachen*).

The nation should know that no one can threaten its existence—which is guaranteed by inner law and order—and escape unpunished! And every person should know for all time that if he raises his hand to strike out at the State, certain death will be his lot. And every National Socialist should know that no rank and no position relieves him of his personal responsibility and, with it, his due punishment. I have prosecuted thousands of our former opponents on account of their corruption.¹⁷³ I would have to reproach myself if I were now to tolerate the same phenomenon in our own ranks.

No Volk and no leadership of State can be held responsible if creatures turn up such as those we have known in Germany in the likes of Kutisker etc., just as the French came to know Stavisky,¹⁷⁴ and as we are witnessing them again today with the aim of sinning against a nation's interests. However, any nation which does not find the strength to exterminate such pests makes itself guilty. When people confront me with the view that only a trial in court would have been capable of accurately weighing the measure of guilt and expiation, I must lodge a solemn protest. He who rises up against Germany commits treason.

He who commits treason is to be punished not according to the scope and proportions of his deed, but rather according to his cast of mind as revealed therein. He who dares to instigate a mutiny, thereby violating the principles of good faith and sacred vows, can expect nothing other than that he himself will be the first victim. I do not intend to have the lesser culprits shot and to spare the major culprits. It is not my responsibility to ascertain whether and if so,

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which of these conspirators, agitators, nihilists and well-poisoners of German public opinion and, in a wider sense, of world opinion, too, has been dealt too hard a lot; rather, my duty is to make certain that Germany's lot is bearable. A foreign journalist who is enjoying the right to hospitality has filed a protest on behalf of the wives and children of those shot and expects reprisal from among their ranks. I can give this man of honor only one answer: women and children have always been the innocent victims of criminal acts committed by men. I, too, have sympathy for them, but I believe that the suffering which has been inflicted upon them by the fault of these men is only a tiny fraction compared to the suffering which would perhaps have come upon tens of thousands of German women had this deed been successful. A foreign diplomat has explained that the meeting between Schleicher and Röhm was naturally of a quite harmless nature. I refuse to discuss this matter with anyone. The concept of what is harmless and what is not will never coincide in the political sector.

However, when three traitors arrange and conduct a meeting in Germany with a foreign statesman which they themselves describe as "business," conduct it privately by excluding their staff and keep it concealed from me by the strictest orders, I will have such men shot dead, even if it were true that, at this meeting which was kept so secret from me, they talked only of the weather, old coins and similar topics.

The punishment for these crimes was a hard and severe one.

Nineteen high-ranking SA leaders and 31 SA leaders and members were shot, as were three SS leaders who were accomplices to the plot. Thirteen SA leaders and civilians who resisted arrest sacrificed their lives in the process. Three other lives were ended by suicide.

Five non-SA party comrades were shot for being accomplices.

And last of all, three members of the SS were shot who were guilty of disgraceful abuse of prisoners in protective custody.

In order to prevent the political passion and indignation from spreading to the lynch law in respect to other incriminated parties, once the danger had been removed and the revolt could be regarded as having been defeated, the strictest orders were issued on Sunday, July 1, to refrain from any further reprisals. Hence as of Sunday night, July 1, normal conditions have been restored. A number of acts of violence in no way connected with this action are being handed over to the regular courts for sentencing.

As heavy as these sacrifices may be, they were not in vain if they may serve to bring about once and for all the conviction that every attempt to commit treason against the internal and external security of the State will be broken, without distinction of person. I am confident in my hope in this respect that, if Fate were to dismiss me from my post at any given hour, my successor would not act differently, and were he also made to vacate this post, that the third in line would exhibit no less determination in his willingness to uphold the security of the Volk and the nation.

In view of the fact that, in the two weeks which now lie behind us, a part of the foreign press flooded the world with untrue and incorrect assertions and reports in the absence of any kind of objective and just reporting, I cannot accept the excuse that it was not possible to obtain any other news. In most

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cases, it would have required merely a short telephone call to the competent authorities in order to ascertain the groundlessness of most of these assertions. When, in particular, it is reported that members of the Reich cabinet were among the victims or conspirators, it would not have been difficult to establish that the contrary was the case. The assertion that Vice Chancellor von Papen, Minister Seldte or other gentlemen in the Reich cabinet had had any connection with the mutineers is proven wrong most conclusively by the fact that one of the primary goals of the mutineers included murdering these men. Similarly, all reports of an involvement on the part of any of the German princes or of their prosecution are pure fabrication.

Finally, whereas an English paper has reported in the last few days that I had now had a nervous breakdown, I must note that in this case, too, a short inquiry would have sufficed to learn the truth immediately. I can only assure these anxious reporters that I have never suffered a nervous breakdown, neither in the War nor after the War, but this time I did suffer from the worst breakdown of the good faith which I had placed in a man whom I had once protected to the utmost, a man for whom I had veritably sacrificed myself.

However, at this point I must also confess that my confidence in the Movement—and particularly in the SS—has never wavered. And now my confidence in my SA has been restored to me as well. Three times¹⁷⁵ did the SA have the misfortune of having leaders—the last time, even a Chief of Staff—to whom they believed they owed obedience and who deceived them, men in whom I placed my trust and who betrayed me. However, I have also had three opportunities to witness how, in that moment in which a deed revealed itself to be treason, the traitor was abandoned, left alone and shunned by all. But the behavior of this small group of leaders was just as disloyal as these two National Socialist organizations were loyal to me in the decisive hour. The SS, aching inside, did its highest duty in these days, but no less decent was the behavior of the millions of upright SA men and SA leaders who, standing outside the circle of treason, did not waver for a second in their concept of duty. This gives me the conviction that the newly appointed Chief of Staff of the SA, to whom I am bound by the ties of the old fighting community, will finally succeed in rejuvenating the organizations according to my guidelines and in making of them an even stronger part of the Movement. For never will I consent to the destruction of something which is not only inseparably bound up for all time with the battles and the victory of the National Socialist Movement, but which also deserves immeasurable credit for its contribution to the formation of the new Reich.

The SA has upheld its inner loyalty to me in these days which have been so difficult for both it and myself. It has thus proven for the third time that it is mine, just as I am willing to prove at any time that I belong to my SA men. Within the space of a few weeks, the Brown Shirt will once again dominate German streets and clearly demonstrate to everyone that the life of National Socialist Germany has become all the stronger for having overcome a difficult crisis.

When, in March of last year, our young revolution swept through Germany, it was my foremost endeavor to shed as little blood as possible. For the new State, I offered a general amnesty to millions of my former opponents on behalf

of the National Socialist Party; millions of them have since joined our ranks and are faithfully working with us to rebuild the Reich. I had hoped that it would not be necessary to ever again defend this State with weapons in our hands. But now that Fate has nonetheless put us to the test, all of us wish to pledge to hold fast even more fanatically to that which was first won with so much of our best men's blood and today had to be defended once more with the blood of German Volksgenossen.

Just as, one and a half years ago, I offered reconciliation to our opponents of that time, I would also like to make a bid of forgiveness from now on to all of those who shared the blame for this act of madness. May they all reflect and, in memory of this sad crisis of our recent German history, devote their entire strength to atoning for it. May they now more clearly than before recognize the great task which Fate has assigned to us and which cannot be accomplished by civil war and chaos; may they all feel responsible for the most valuable possession there can be for the German Volk: inner order and peace both within and without! I am likewise willing to assume the responsibility, as history be my witness, for the 24 hours of the most bitter decisions of my life,¹⁷⁶ in which Fate once more taught me to anxiously cling fast with my every thought to the most precious thing we have been given in this world: the German Volk and the German Reich!

Scarcely three years later,¹⁷⁷ Hitler told a completely different tale of the Röhm Purge, stating:

Much to my own regret, I was forced to destroy this man and his following.
[—]

What kind of life would one have in this Volk had the precept of utmost brutal loyalty [to the Army] not been brought to bear here? Where would we be today? Back then, perhaps we might have been able to take a different path. What would we have today? I am not claiming too much when I speak of it [the militia army] as a completely worthless bunch, in military terms. I do not believe in the so-called *levée en masse*. I do not believe that it is possible to create soldiers only by mobilizing what might be called enthusiasm.

Here Hitler stated the real reason behind the Röhm Purge in all frankness: the brutal destruction of those who had supported the militia and utter obeisance to the high-ranking military which was incidentally in favor of the two-year conscription service advocated by Hitler. Gone was the talk of an alleged putsch, gone Hitler's self-righteous indignation at the supposed immorality, the planned assassination of the Führer, and all of the other false motives which Hitler had presented to the Reichstag deputies on July 13, 1934 for hours on end.

Even worse than Hitler's own justifications in this speech were the remarks added by the President of the Reichstag. Turning to face Hitler, Göring declared:

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You have succeeded! You have the trust and, based upon this trust, it is possible for you to do what is required for Germany's reconstruction. However, this trust is also the platform upon which Germany stands today. He who seeks to shake and destroy it is guilty of more than treason to the internal and external security of the State. That is the most colossal crime imaginable, and he who commits it must be destroyed—for he is knocking down the very foundation upon which Germany stands today.

The fact that the Reichstag has today resolved: "The Reichstag grants its approval to the statement of the Reich Government and thanks the Reich Chancellor for his energetic and resolute salvation of the Vaterland from civil war and chaos," is merely an outward expression of what the entire Volk—man for man and woman for woman—would declare today. And if foreign countries presently believe that chaos is descending upon Germany, the German Volk's reply is the single cry: "We will all always approve of everything our Führer does."

This "cry of approval" became the sole measure for everything which was to take place in Germany until 1945. Hitler had, in fact, "succeeded": not a single person holding significant authority in the country now dared to stand up against him. Despite this triumph, the Röhm Purge left its traces.

The middle classes and the Reichswehr most easily reconciled themselves with the incidents of June 30. However, the Party's confidence in Hitler had suffered a major setback. The followers who had previously perceived in him a god-like figure—noble, selfless, devoted exclusively to Germany's welfare—were unable to dispel the dark suspicion that his actions could be motivated by aims of a different nature. It began to become evident that Hitler might be less interested in the German people and the National Socialist Party and more inclined to pursue his own unquenchable thirst for power and his grandiose military plans. Only the most naive party members swallowed the story of the alleged SA revolt. In spite of this creeping disillusionment, Hitler's followers did not voice their feelings publicly: some, because they feared Hitler's reprisals, and others, because they had reaped advantages from the altered situation as, for instance, the SS, which now became a self-sufficient organization, or the political leaders, who were finally rid of the SA's mocking criticism of their ambitious scramble for higher positions and their supposed bourgeois habitudes. But the old, unconditional faith in Hitler which had existed within the Party before the Röhm Purge was gone and could not be reestablished even by Hitler's later success in establishing a Greater German Reich or his successive military conquests early in World War II. The dictator had too clearly revealed his utter ruthlessness, having demonstrated that he

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would not hesitate to brutally dispense with even the most loyal and outstanding followers who stood in his way.

Now, after the successful Reichstag speech, Hitler once more appeared in public. The feared assassination attempts by embittered party comrades did not ensue, and the armed SS guards in the Reichstag proved an unwarranted precaution.

On July 18, Hitler received Graf von der Goltz, one of the leaders of German industry, in the Reich Chancellory.¹⁷⁸

On July 19, he delivered an address before the third-year students of the *Reichsführerschule* of the German Labor Service.¹⁷⁹ The following day he expressed his gratitude to the SS for its assistance in crushing the SA in the following decree:¹⁸⁰

In respect to the great services rendered by the SS, particularly in connection with the events of June 30, 1934, I hereby promote same to the status of a self-sufficient organization within the framework of the NSDAP. The Reichsführer of the SS shall thus be directly subordinate, as shall the Chief of Staff, to the Supreme Commander of the SA. The Chief of Staff and the Reichsführer of the SS both hold the party rank of Reichsleiter.

Munich, July 20, 1934

Adolf Hitler

5

During this time, Hitler also had other business in Munich. As mentioned above,¹⁸¹ he had planned to erase the negative impression the Röhm Purge had left by a violent takeover in Austria. It was a matter of principle to him that the National Socialist Party Organizations in territories belonging to foreign States at the time—such as Danzig, the Saar and Austria—be headed not by local residents who might pursue their own interests, but by loyal “Reich Germans” (*Reichsdeutsche*).¹⁸²

In keeping with this principle, the Reich German Theo Habicht¹⁸³ had been appointed Landesinspekteur of the NSDAP in Austria. Habicht frequented Hitler’s home when he visited Germany and even accompanied him on several flights. There can be little doubt that Hitler ordered Habicht to prepare for a violent coup to overthrow the Dollfuss government. Habicht himself, a modest man in a modest position, would never have dared to initiate such a plan.

The date scheduled for the coup—July 24/25—was well chosen, for Hitler would be attending the Bayreuth Festival and hence could feign innocent surprise when the news reached him.

Hitler arrived in Bayreuth in good time, at 3:00 p.m. on July 22.¹⁸⁴ On July 24, he had a notice to the Party published in the *Völkischer Beobachter*¹⁸⁵ which restricted public gatherings to special cases and also banned all fundraising activities until October 31, 1934.

On July 25 trucks carrying members of the 89th SS Standarte (Vienna) pulled up before the office of the Austrian Chancellor at the Ballhausplatz. The SS men wore the uniforms of the Austrian Army, and the guards allowed them to pass.

The interlopers soon had the entire building under their control. Having hoped to surprise and overpower the Ministers at a meeting of the cabinet, they had postponed their action by one day. However, the meeting had been interrupted and most of the Ministers had already left

the premises. Only Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss and the Minister of Security, von Fey,¹⁸⁶ were still in the building. Two National Socialists, Holzweber and Planetta, approached Dollfuss and shot him. A second division of putschists in uniform seized temporary control of the Vienna radio station RAVAG and were able to broadcast a number of announcements before they could be overwhelmed.

A council of ministers chaired by the Minister of Education, Kurt von Schuschnigg, gave the encircled National Socialists an ultimatum, and they surrendered at 5:00 p.m. The Austrian Envoy in Rome, von Rintelen, who had been involved in the plot, attempted suicide. Holzweber and Planetta were hanged in the courtyard of the Vienna Landgericht on July 31, crying, "Heil Hitler!" to the last.¹⁸⁷

The fact that the attempted coup was crushed quickly was due essentially to reports that Mussolini had dispatched troops to the Brenner Pass and threatened to launch a military invasion were the Austrian Government unable to put down the rebellion.

In Bayreuth, Hitler was immediately informed of the unhappy course his Vienna project had taken. Without displaying the slightest emotion, he abandoned his Austrian SS men to their fates¹⁸⁸ although they had been granted safe-conduct to Germany by the German Ambassador in Vienna, Dr. Rieth. Wiring his condolences on Dollfuss' death, he dismissed Rieth and closed the German-Austrian border. On July 26, he issued the following official announcement:¹⁸⁹

Before last night was out, the Reich Government instituted investigations to determine whether any German office was guilty of direct or indirect involvement in connection with the Austrian incidents. The thorough checking and questioning which came to an end today revealed that no German office was in any way connected with the events and that all orders given after the incidents became public were immediately carried out in full.

In particular, a general blockade of all roads to Austria has been set up in order to prevent any undesired bordercrossing; at the same time, the inmates of the interim camps for Austrian refugees and emigrants¹⁹⁰ have been prohibited from leaving their quarters. Thus not a single person has crossed the border before or after who might be brought into connection with these incidents. A most rigid control resulted in only a single case being ascertained in which an apparently insufficiently strict censoring of reports originating in and being spread from Austria might perhaps have given rise to the contrary impression.

As a consequence, Landesinspekteur Habicht, who was responsible for the reports passed on by the Munich station, was dismissed from his post as Landesinspekteur this morning at 10:00 a.m. and placed on retirement.

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These transparent explanations nonetheless did not suffice to erase the negative impression which the National Socialist coup had made in the rest of the world. Hitler was also aware of this fact and thus conceived of nominating von Papen as special ambassador of the Reich Government in Vienna in the hopes that the appointment of a moderate man of this kind might calm things down. Sending him to Vienna would also formally remove von Papen from his office as Vice Chancellor and divest him of his privileges as special commissioner, a move which Hitler had long desired. He composed the following letter to von Papen:¹⁹¹

Bayreuth, July 26, 1934

Dear Herr von Papen,

Following the events in Vienna, I have been forced to suggest to the Reich President that the German Envoy in Vienna, Dr. Rieth, be dismissed from his post for having allowed himself to be persuaded to comply with the request of the Austrian ministers and the Austrian rebels to consent to an agreement reached by these two parties granting safe conduct to Germany to the rebels, without having consulted the German Reich Government. In doing so, the Envoy involved the German Reich in an internal Austrian affair for no reason whatsoever.

The assassination of the Austrian Federal Chancellor, which the German Reich Government most strongly condemns and regrets, has served to further aggravate the already unstable political situation in Europe through no fault of our own. Thus it is my wish to contribute to easing the tension of the situation as a whole and, in particular, to see to it that relations with the GermanAustrian State are once more steered back to more normal and friendly channels.

For this reason I am addressing my request to you, my esteemed Herr von Papen, to undertake this most important task, for, since the beginning of our cooperation in the cabinet, you above all have enjoyed and still enjoy my utmost and unlimited trust.

Thus I have proposed to the Reich President that you withdraw from the Reich cabinet and be released from your duties as Commissioner for the Saar to be appointed for a limited term to the special mission of taking office as German Envoy in Vienna. In such office, you will be directly subordinate to me. Thanking you once more today for everything which you did long ago for the formation of the Government of the national uprising and have done on Germany's behalf jointly with us since then, I remain faithfully yours,

Adolf Hitler

On July 27, Hindenburg's consent was made public in the following announcement:

Official notice has been given that, following the letter of July 26, 1934 which the Reich Chancellor addressed to Vice Chancellor von Papen, the Reich President has declared his consent to releasing the Vice Chancellor from his duties as deputy of the Reich Chancellor and Commissioner for the Saar in order

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to entrust to him the important task of Envoy for a limited special mission in Vienna as proposed by the Reich Chancellor. Respective agreement to Herr von Papen's appointment was sought today in Vienna.

Apparently, von Papen bore no further grudge against Hitler for slaying his associates Jung and von Bose. Hitler explained to him that it was his patriotic duty to go to Vienna, and von Papen did not hesitate to comply. When the new Austrian Government under Schuschnigg had granted agrément to the new envoy, von Papen left for Vienna with his secretary, Günther von Tschirschky-Boegendorf,¹⁹² who had narrowly escaped being murdered and had just been released from prison.

In order to stress that from now on the National Socialist interpretation of law alone was valid, Hitler issued an announcement on July 27 that Rudolf Hess was to be consulted whenever a bill was drafted.¹⁹³

The signing of the decree appointing von Papen Envoy¹⁹⁴ on July 31 was the Reich President's last official act. For weeks, von Hindenburg's health had been failing rapidly. The prominent surgeon Professor Sauerbruch was constantly in attendance at Neudeck. On July 31, it was announced that Hindenburg's condition had become critical.

On August 1, Hitler paid a final visit to the Reich President, spending some time alone with him. Sauerbruch reports that, upon leaving the sick room, Hitler said to him:¹⁹⁵

The Reich President is only completely conscious for short spells at a time and, in the end, he kept calling me merely "Your Majesty."

By the time he reached the stairs in front of Hindenburg's house, Hitler had put on a doleful expression. Perhaps he did, in fact, regret the death of a man who had done everything "his Chancellor" wished for the past eighteen months.

In the future, Hitler would be forced to make his decisions alone, no longer able to harness the respect and authority accorded to the venerable Field Marshal for his own ends. However, Hitler's sympathies for the "highly esteemed Old Gentleman" ended abruptly where his own interests began, i.e. in the question of succession. Even before Hindenburg's death (!), the cabinet resolved the following law:¹⁹⁶

Law Concerning the Head of State of the German Reich. August 1, 1934.

The Reich Government has resolved the following Law, which is hereby promulgated:

§1

The office of Reich President shall be combined with that of Reich Chancellor. As a consequence, those powers previously accorded to the Reich

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President shall pass to the Führer and Reich Chancellor, Adolf Hitler. He shall nominate his own deputy.

§2

This Law shall come into effect upon the death of Reich President von Hindenburg.

Berlin, August 1, 1934

The law contained the names of all Reich Ministers; even von Papen's name appeared as "deputy of the Reich Chancellor," although he had already been dismissed from this post.

This clear breach of the Constitution, following so shortly upon the heels of the brutal slayings in connection with the Röhm Purge, constituted a further shock to the sense of justice and what was right in Germany.

Hitler's hurry is characteristic for his state of mind: from this point onward, the measures he took were often precipitate, unreflected and, in part, even redundant. The carnage of June 30 would not have been necessary in order to attain his goals, for, after a presidential election, the Reichswehr would have gladly stood at the disposal of Hitler, the new Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, a position which was automatically combined with the office of Reich President. Röhm and the SA leaders would inevitably have conformed to Hitler's will, and the reactionaries, whom he wished to give a good "rap on the knuckles," would have found no opening for active resistance even without the purge.

Thus the law of August 1 was equally superfluous. There was no doubt that Hitler would have won an absolute majority in the first ballot had a presidential election been held in accordance with the Constitution.

But Hitler was taking no chances: he did not wish to allow this key office to be held by another even for a second.¹⁹⁷

At 9:00 a.m. on August 2, Hindenburg expired. Hitler sent his condolences per telegram to Colonel von Hindenburg and his wife as follows:¹⁹⁸

Berlin, August 2, 1934

Deeply moved still by that moment which will remain unforgettable throughout my entire life in which I was able to see and speak with our Field Marshal one last time, I have now received the distressing news.

United with the entire German Volk in the utmost sadness, I may request that you be so kind as to accept my own condolences and those of the nation.

Adolf Hitler

Although Hindenburg had expressed the desire that he be interred next to his wife in a private ceremony, Hitler had the following Reich Law passed on August 2:¹⁹⁹

§1

The German Volk shall provide a state funeral for the deceased Reich President, Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

§2

The competent ministers shall be entrusted with carrying out the state funeral.

The gravesite Hitler had in mind was not disclosed immediately. Only on August 4 was it announced that he had elected the Tannenberg Monument, which had allegedly been chosen “by agreement with the von Hindenburg family.”²⁰⁰ The new Reich President planned to accord his predecessor a maximum of pomp and circumstance and personally see to it that he “entered into Valhalla.”²⁰¹

In the meantime, as early as August 2 Hitler had published an official announcement regarding the oath of allegiance which he demanded from all members of the Armed Forces:²⁰²

Berlin, August 2

Minister of Defense, Colonel General von Blomberg, has ordered that all soldiers of the Wehrmacht immediately pledge an oath of allegiance to the Führer of the German Reich and Volk, Adolf Hitler, pursuant to the Law Concerning the Head of State of the German Reich and Volk. The wording of the oath shall be as follows:

“I swear by God this sacred oath to render unconditional obedience to the Führer of the German Reich and Volk, Adolf Hitler, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and to be willing at all times to risk my life as a brave soldier for this oath.”²⁰³

After the swearing in, there will be a hurrah for the new Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, to be followed by the two national anthems.

Hitler remarked upon his new title in a letter to the Reich Minister of the interior—notwithstanding that he had, of course, often stressed that the greatest title he knew was his own name. In the second half of this letter, he commented on the plebiscite which he had already anticipated and made superfluous in his law of August 1.

The letter read as follows:²⁰⁴

My dear Mr. Minister,

The legal clarification of the question of the head of state made necessary by the national misfortune which has befallen our Volk moves me to issue the following order:

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1. The greatness of the deceased bestowed a unique significance upon the title "Reichspräsident." All of us feel that this title, in view of what it meant to us, is indivisibly bound up with the name of the great man who has passed away. Thus I request that provision be made that I continue to be addressed in official and private intercourse merely as "Führer and Reichskanzler." This arrangement shall remain in effect for all time to come.

2. It is my desire that the assignment of the former functions of the Reich President to me personally and hence to the office of the Reich Chancellor as resolved by the cabinet and admissible according to the Constitution be given the express sanction of the German Volk. Deeply imbued with the conviction that all authority of the State must proceed from the Volk and be confirmed by the Volk in free elections with secret ballots, I request that you immediately present the resolution of the cabinet and any requisite addenda to the German Volk for a free plebiscite.

Berlin, August 2, 1934

Adolf Hitler
German Reich Chancellor

On August 5, Hitler granted an interview to the journalist Ward Price on the occasion of taking over the office of Reich President.

In response to the question whether he intended to remain both Head of State and Chancellor for the rest of his life, Hitler stated: "It will be some time until a national plebiscite deprives the present government of its foundation." In other words, Hitler, who would certainly never have allowed a plebiscite of this type, was not to relinquish the two offices he now held dually as long as he lived. He defended his right to both until the end, and his talk of one day retiring from public life to provide a minimum of supervision for his successor²⁰⁵ was nothing but idle speculation.

Ward Price, who had just returned from covering the execution of the National Socialist putschists in Vienna, succeeded in drawing Hitler out to make a roundabout comment on Austrian "independence." Once more the Führer and Reich Chancellor emphasized his intention of conducting plebiscites on a regular basis "every year." Even in peacetime, he was less than particular about this practice,²⁰⁶ and during the War, there was no talk at all of such "demonstrations of democracy." The interview with the English journalist, which naturally contained Hitler's repeated reference to the two "Germanic nations" (Germany and England), was published as follows:²⁰⁷

The correspondent opened with the following remark: "As eventful as the past few weeks have been for the Reich Chancellor, they have left no mark on his features. In fact, he looks healthier than in February, when I saw him last." The correspondent's first question concerned general armament and international tensions.

Hitler replied: "As far as Germany is concerned, there will be no new war. Germany knows the terrible consequences of war better than any other country.

"Almost all of the members of the National Government know its horrors. They know that it is not a romantic adventure, but rather an atrocious catastrophe. It is the conviction of the National Socialist Movement that war is of no use to anyone and can only result in ruin. We would not profit by a war. For us, 1918 was a lesson and a warning. We believe that the problems of present-day Germany cannot be solved by war. The demands it places upon the rest of Europe do not harbor the danger of such a misfortune, for they are limited to what the other nations consider their most elementary rights. We demand only that our present borders be maintained. We will certainly never fight again, except in self defense. I have repeatedly reassured the French that there will be no further territorial difficulties between us once the question of the Saar has been settled; at our eastern border I have proven our peaceful intentions by concluding a pact with Poland."

The Reich Chancellor continued: "Baldwin once said that Great Britain's defensive border lay, in future, at the Rhine. Perhaps a French statesman might go even further and say that France must be defended at the Oder; Russia might perhaps claim that its national defense line runs along the Danube. In view of this situation, Germany can hardly be reproached for seeking national protection within its borders. To you as an Englishman I may say that, if England does not attack us, we will never have any differences with England, neither at the Rhine nor elsewhere. We do not have any claims upon England."

In response to the correspondent's interim question, "Not even colonies?" the Führer raised his voice to reply:

"I would not demand the life of a single German in order to gain any colony in the world. We know that the former German colonies in Africa are an expensive luxury for England. The expansion of the British air fleet has not given rise to the least bitterness in Germany. The English can double or quadruple their fleet, they can make it any size they choose; it is no affair of ours, because we do not intend to attack them."

The correspondent interrupted to point out that England was building airplanes because it believed that Germany was building up a large air fleet, just as it had built up a large navy before the World War.

Hitler replied: "The English did not feel threatened when France built up a large air fleet. Why should they be excited about German measures for self defense? For us, Great Britain lies outside such considerations. The steps we are taking are designed to do justice to the fact that we may well be surrounded by a ring of powerful enemies on the continent who might one day place demands upon us which we are unable to accept. It is not the volume of arms which brings the threat of war but inequality of arms. That encourages the stronger nations to harbor ambitious plans which the weaker nations cannot tolerate."

The correspondent posed a number of questions on Austria. Hitler replied with feeling:

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“We will not attack Austria, but we cannot prevent Austrians from attempting to reestablish their former ties with Germany. These States are separated only by a line, and on both sides of this line live peoples of the same race.

“If one part of England were artificially separated from the rest, who would prevent its endeavoring to become united once more with the rest of the country? Germany and Austria were united until 1866.”

“Is Your Excellency aspiring to reinstate the Holy Roman Empire?” the correspondent asked.

“The question of the Anschluss,” Hitler declared, “is not a present-day problem. I am certain that the entire affair would be settled if a secret ballot were to take place in Austria. Austrian independence is not at stake, and no one is questioning it.

“In the Austrian Empire of old, the various nationalities professed an affinity to their neighbors of their own race. It is only natural that the Germans of Austria are in favor of a unification with Germany. We all know that this goal is unattainable at present, for resistance in the rest of Europe would be too strong.”

The correspondent mentioned the tremendous power and responsibility which now lay united in Hitler’s hands.

The Führer stated: “Every year I take one opportunity or another to present my powers to the German Volk. It has the chance to confirm them or to deny them. We wild Germans are better democrats than other nations.”

The correspondent asked: “Will you retain the dual office of Head of State and Chancellor for life?”

Hitler replied: “It will be some time until a national plebiscite deprives the present government of its foundation.”

The correspondent said: “Five weeks ago, the world was surprised by indications of a rift in the National Socialist Armed Forces and by the severe measures applied to eliminate it. Are you confident that the Party is a completely unified whole?”

The Führer replied, eyes flashing: “The party is stronger and more solid than ever before!”

The ensuing section of the interview concerned Germany’s economic prospects. Hitler declared he was confident that Germany would make itself independent of raw materials from abroad if forced to do so. He recalled earlier experiences during Napoleon’s Continental Blockade and during the World War.

In respect to world economics as a whole, the Chancellor stated that three things were required for the world’s recovery, namely: maintaining peace, the presence of strong, well-organized governments in each country, and the necessary energy to take on world problems as a whole. The Germans were willing to cooperate with other nations in this respect if they demonstrated the same attitude.

August 5, 1934

In response to a question as to Germany's return to the League of Nations, Hitler declared:

"We left the League of Nations for definite, clearly stated reasons. It was impossible for my government to continue to take part in negotiations in which we were treated on an inferior basis. When our complete equality is recognized, we will perhaps return. The British Government has declared its support of equal armaments, which constitute the major criterion, but unfortunately it has not succeeded in convincing other governments to adopt the same position."

Hitler's next remarks were devoted to the necessity of putting an end to the war psychosis. He said that he had been striving for a better understanding with Great Britain and was continuing to do so. Two Germanic nations should, by the sheer power of natural instinct, be friends. The National Socialist Movement would view a war against England as a crime against the race. He pointed out that English who visited Germany were always able to come to friendly terms with the Germans, and it was desirable that even more English would come in order to satisfy themselves personally as to the circumstances in Germany.

Hitler closed with the remark:

"It is regrettable that our old Marshal Hindenburg has died. Had he lived but a few years longer, he would, I believe, have found a way to make Germany's sincere wish for peace even more evident."

The Reichstag convened at the Kroll Opera in Berlin at noon on August 6 for a session of mourning in tribute to Hindenburg. Hitler delivered the following memorial address:²⁰⁸

Herr und Frau von Hindenburg!
Esteemed Mourners! Deputies, Men of the German Reichstag!

For months now we have been burdened by a gnawing worry. The knowledge of the illness of our highly esteemed Old Gentleman filled millions of German hearts with inner anxiety for the life of a hoary head who was more to us than only Head of State. For this man, whom the Almighty has watched over for nearly 87 years now, had become for all of us the symbolic personification of the indestructible, ever-replenishing vitality of our Volk.

The fateful will of Providence had visibly raised him above the measure of the commonplace. Only when the nation placed its highest rank into his hands did this position attain the highest honors. For all of us, the German Reich President is indivisibly bound up with the venerable name of the departed.

Only now, as we prepare to pay our last respects to the dearly departed, has the true realization of the scope and greatness of this unique life dawned upon us. And we make a humble bow to the unfathomable Will which serves to shape lives by what seems to be mere coincidence or triviality in a manner which the inquiring man only subsequently sees and recognizes in the whole, wonderful framework of necessary coherences.

Reich President Field Marshal von Hindenburg is dead. When we endeavor to explain the sentiments which move the entire Volk to its innermost depths,

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we wish to do so in such a manner as to recall the great deceased in ever more gratitude. Only when, seized by the desire to do justice to history, we begin our inquiry into this figure, are we able to gauge the scope and the contents of a human life of a greatness which is manifested only rarely in the course of centuries.

How much the face of this earth has changed since that October 2, 1847 when Paul von Hindenburg was born! His life began in the midst of a revolution. The lunacy of political Jacobinism refused to allow Europe any peace in those days. The concepts of a new, so-called humanity struggled against the elements and forms of an obsolete order. When the year 1848 came to a close, the bright flames seemed perhaps smothered; however, the inner turmoil had remained.

At that time, the world did not yet know a German Reich or an Italy. Frederick William IV ruled in Prussia. The House of Habsburg controlled not only the German Confederation, but also Venetia and Lombardy. The Balkans were mere tributary provinces of the Turkish Empire.

Prussia itself, just as the other states in the German Confederation, was internally weak and incapable of instilling any genuinely strong idea in the people. The disgrace of Olmütz burns in the hearts of the few true patriots.

Prince William becomes King of Prussia. The young Hindenburg now witnesses the great triumvirate of the political and military reorganization of our Volk. Bismarck, Moltke and Roon enter onto the stage of history!

While the American revolution is triumphantly mastering the Civil War, Prussia's path leads from the Entrenchments of Düppel to Kbnigrätz. And in these regiments marches a young second lieutenant, brave and enthusiastic: Paul von Hindenburg. A piece of shrapnel shatters his helmet, bestowing a baptism of fire upon the young fighter for the unification of the Reich.

Four years later, Fate has elected him to be a witness in the hour marking the birth of the German Reich. When Bismarck finishes making his proclamations on the power and glory of the new State and its will to augment itself by means of the treasures of peace and culture and calls 'long live the Kaiser of the new Reich' for the first time, the rapier of Lieutenant von Hindenburg is also raised and crossed in allegiance to the Kaiser and the Reich.

A life of labor for this new Reich now begins. The great Kaiser dies, a second and a third follow; Bismarck is dismissed; Roon and Moltke take their last breath—but Germany grows as a guarantor of peace and a truly European order. The world is given a new face. In all areas of human development, one revolutionary invention follows upon the heels of the last. Over and over again, what is better takes the place of what is good. Germany becomes a major power.

In constant service to the life of this Reich and our Volk, commanding General von Hindenburg bade his farewell at the age of 64 on March 19, 1911. His term of service seemed to have ended. One of the nameless officers among all of the other tens of thousands who never falter in doing their duty and serving the Vaterland but nonetheless fade into anonymity and are forgotten.

Thus when the World War descended upon Germany and moved the German Volk to rise in resistance, of the sacred conviction that it had been attacked through no fault of its own, the Kaiser called out in a difficult hour to

a man living in retirement, a man who was less to blame for the war and the onset of war than anyone else in this world could be. On August 22, 1914, Hindenburg was assigned the task of assuming supreme command of an army in East Prussia. Eight days later, the German Volk and the world are first told of this appointment and thus become acquainted with the name of the new Colonel General.

Wolffs Telegraphisches Büro makes the following official report: "Our troops in Prussia under the leadership of Colonel General von Hindenburg have defeated the Russian Army advancing from the Narew River in a force of five army corps and three cavalry divisions in a three-day battle in the district of Gilgenburg and Ortelsburg, and are now pursuing them over the border.

Quartermaster General von Stein"

Tannenberg was won. From now on, the greatest battle in world history was indivisibly bound up with this name. Together with his great assistants, he averted the crisis of the year 1916 and, as head of the German Field Forces, saved the nation from destruction many times over. Had the political leadership of our Volk been equal in merit to that of the military, Germany would have been spared the worst humiliation in history.

When the November Revolution finally broke the German Reich and the German Volk after all, the worst catastrophe was at least able to be avoided due to the figure of the Field Marshal, which had already gone down in history.

For a second time, the Commander in Chief retired. And for a second time, he was called upon. On April 26, 1925, the German Volk elected him as President of the Reich and moreover, without suspecting it at the time, as patron of the new national revolution.

And here I now fulfill my obligation to the truth when, overcome by gratitude, I draw the attention of the German Volk to the immeasurable service which the Field Marshal has rendered in history by the reconciliation brought about in his name between the best of Germany's past and a better German future to which we fervently aspire. Since that hour when I was allowed to solemnly swear my oath before this esteemed man as Chancellor of the Reich, I have increasingly sensed the mercy of Fate which has bestowed upon us such a paternal and generous patron.

Like a mystical arc, the life of this figure stretches from the muddled revolution of 1848 along an unfathomably long path to the national uprising of 1933. The German Volk can only be grateful for the dispensation of Providence that its "most German" (*deutscheste*) uprising was placed under the protection and guidance of its most venerable nobleman and soldier. We who did not only have the fortune to know him personally but who, each in his own way, were also allowed to contribute to the miracle of this new resurrection of our Volk wish to cherish the image of this great German in our hearts in grateful remembrance. We shall guard and keep it as a precious inheritance of a great age, and we wish to pass it on to the generations which will come after us.

He who remained so loyal to his Volk deserves to be loyally remembered for all time!

Because Fate has chosen us to lead the Reich and Volk onwards, we can but beg the Almighty to give us the strength to stand up at all times for the freedom

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of the Volk and the honor of the German nation and, in particular, to always mercifully allow us to find the right means to secure the good fortune of peace for our Volk and to preserve it from the misfortune of war, just as the great departed always sincerely and wholeheartedly desired.

Deputies of the German Reichstag! Ladies and Gentlemen! German Volk! In this solemn hour I ask you all to look beyond this transitory moment and into the future. Let our hearts be filled with a single, firm realization:

Reich President and Field Marshal von Hindenburg is not dead. He lives on, for in dying he has come to dwell above us in the company of the immortals of our Volk, surrounded by the great spirits of the past as the everlasting patron of the German Reich and the German nation.

When the mournful strains of Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* had died out, the funeral party went outdoors, where they witnessed yet another sign of the changing times: the Reichswehr gave its first official salute to the new Commander in Chief. The honor guard of the sentry stationed in Berlin paraded past Hitler, who received their salute with hat in hand. But in order to demonstrate to the Generals what Hitler's remark about the "nation's sole bearer of arms"²⁰⁹ really meant, the honor guard was followed by the goosestepping ranks of a squad of honor from the *Landespolizeigruppe General Göring* with steel helmets and fixed bayonets, a squad of one hundred members of the *SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* with steel helmets and rifles, a squad of the militant *Feldjägerkorps*²¹⁰ with steel helmets and fixed bayonets, and an honorary SA storm troop (unarmed). Honorary delegations from the Land Aviation School came next, and the Labor Service, shouldering spades, brought up the rear.

On the morning of August 7, funeral ceremonies for the Reich President commenced in the courtyard of the huge Tannenberg Monument. Hitler had once again conceived of something new: he greeted the bereaved and kissed Frau von Hindenburg's hand, thus reinstituting a ceremony which had no longer been practiced in official German society since 1918.

Needless to say, after all that had happened in the preceding weeks, the gesture was grotesque.

After an address by the Chief of Chaplains (*Feldbischof*) Dr. Dohrmann, Hitler stood before Hindenburg's sarcophagus and delivered the following speech:²¹¹

Herr und Frau von Hindenburg! Esteemed Mourners! Generals, Officers and Soldiers of the Wehrmacht!

A soldier is normally honored twice in his life: following a victory, and following his death.

When the name of the Field Marshal and Reich President first rang out in the German Volk, a long and complete life of fighting and work already lay behind him. As a young officer of the Great King, the 17-year-old fought on the battlefield of Königgrätz and was ordained by his first wound there. Four years later, he is witness to the proclamation of his Royal Commander in Chief to the German Kaiser. In the years thereafter, he aids in shaping the strength of the newly united German Reich. When commanding General von Hindenburg takes his leave on March 18, 1911, he can look back on a full career as a Prussian officer in the service of war and peace.

It was a great age. After centuries of powerlessness, after never-ending confusion and division, the German tribes were united by the brilliant leadership of a single man, the German nation thus created anew. The image of weakness which the Germans had so disgracefully and so often projected in centuries past was replaced by the manifestation of an unsuspected strength. What a wondrous feeling to have played a part in this epoch marking the resurrection of a German Reich by consistently fulfilling one's duty in the storms of battle as well as in the immeasurable work of education and preparation in peacetime! And nonetheless, the name of this man remained unknown to the German Volk as did the names of innumerable other officers. Only a small circle in the nation knows these nameless men who unobtrusively fulfill their duties.

When, three and a half years later, the German Volk first receives word of the name of General Paul von Hindenburg, the tempests of the World War are raging over Europe. In the worst hours, the Kaiser recalled the General from retirement and assigned to him command of the Army in East Prussia. And six days later, the cannons are booming here in the midst of the beautiful countryside of this old Land of the Teutonic Order, and still three days later the churchbells are proclaiming throughout Germany: the battle of Tannenberg has been won. A victory had been achieved which world history is at pains to equal.

And how immense have been the consequences! A precious German Land is snatched from the jaws of further devastation. In deeply-felt gratitude, millions of Germans throughout the Reich are passing on to each other the name of the commander who has performed this miraculous rescue together with his forces. And so much has happened in the space of the twenty years between August 28, 1914 and the present day! A war which made all of our memories and concepts of the past pale to insignificance, an incredible, never-ending series of fights and battles, nervewracking tensions, terrible crises, and victories unequaled. Hope is pitted against despondency, confidence against despair. But again and again the nation is brought to its feet to protect its existence; millions of German men do their duty in loyalty and obedience. For the next century, the German Volk will have no reason to vindicate its military honor.

Never before have soldiers been braver, never before more enduring, never before more willing to sacrifice than were the sons of our Volk in these four and a half years. The miracles of these accomplishments—they are inconceivable if one does not gauge and appreciate the strength of the man himself. A magic power lay in the very name of the Field Marshal who, with his

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armies, ultimately forced the greatest military power in the world to its knees in the Russia of that time. And when—unfortunately, too late—the Kaiser appointed him to head the entire Army, he was able, with his brilliant aides, not only to banish the most severe crisis for the time being but also to rouse German resistance to launch an offensive and win tremendous victories even two years later.

The tragic end of that great struggle cannot be held against this commander in history, but is instead a condemnation of the politicians.

With a God-given loyalty to his duty, the hoary Field Marshal led our regiments and divisions onwards from victory to victory, pinning unfading laurels to their flags.

When the heinous deeds at home broke the resistance, a leader once more retired whose name had been inscribed for all time in the book of World History.

It was the final triumph of the Old Army that, in 1925, the best representative national Germany could find was the soldier and Field Marshal of the World War. And it is one of the miraculous decrees of an enigmatic and wise Providence that the preparation for the uprising of our German Volk was initiated under the presidency of this superlative soldier and servant of our Volk and that, in the end, it was he who opened the gates to the renewal of Germany.

It was in his name that the alliance was established which united the stormy power of the uprising with the best abilities of the past. As Reich President, the Field Marshal became the patron of the National Socialist Revolution and hence of the rebirth of our Volk.

Nearly twenty years ago today, the bells sounded here and echoed throughout Germany for the first time in honor of the name of the Field Marshal. Today, to the peal of these same bells, the nation has accompanied its venerable departed hero back to the great battlefield of his unequalled victory. It is here, in the midst of the slumbering grenadiers of his victorious regiments, that the tired commander shall find his peace. The towers of the castle shall be defiant guards of this, his last great headquarters in the East. Standards and flags shall salute him.

And the German Volk will come to its dead hero to gather new strength for life in times of need, for even when the last trace of this body shall have been obliterated, his name will ever more be immortal.

Dead Commander, enter into Valhalla now!

To mark his accession to the office of Reich President, Hitler passed an Amnesty Law²¹² on August 7, by virtue of which several thousand prisoners were released from protective custody. At the same time it was disclosed²¹³ that, of the 1,124 persons who had been jailed in Prussia in connection with the Röhm Purge, 1,079 had been released while 45 remained in custody. The total number of arrests and executions in Prussia was not revealed.

On August 9, Hitler visited the exhibition “Die Strasse” in Munich (Exhibition Park).²¹⁴

The following day, he appointed the NSDAP Gauleiter of Rhineland-Palatinate, Josef Bürckel, as the new Commissioner for the Saar in von Papen's stead.²¹⁵

Von Hindenburg's will was opened on August 15. It bore the inscription: "My Last Will and Testament. This letter is to be given to the Reich Chancellor by my son." The will was dated May 11, 1934 and began with the words: "To the German Volk and its Chancellor."²¹⁶

The document contained a lengthy discourse on the years 1919 to 1933 and closed with the following section dedicated to Hitler:

I thank Providence that It has allowed me to experience the hour of resurgence in the twilight of my life. I thank all those who have contributed to the work of accomplishing Germany's resurrection in selfless love for their Vaterland.

My Chancellor Adolf Hitler and his Movement have taken a decisive step of historic significance toward the great goal of bringing the German Volk together in inner unity beyond all differences of rank and class. I know that there is much still to be accomplished, and it is my heartfelt desire that the act of national uprising and *völkisch* unification will lead to an act of reconciliation encompassing the Gennan Vaterland as a whole.

I take leave of my German Volk in the firm hope that that which I yearned for in 1919 and which slowly matured to culminate in January 30, 1933 will ripen to the complete fulfillment and accomplishment of the historic mission of our Volk.

With this firm belief in the future of the Vaterland, I can rest in peace.

Berlin, May 11, 1934

von Hindenburg

After World War II, the Denazification Court at Nuremberg²¹⁷ took up the question of whether a second will—which Hitler suppressed—did not indeed recommend the reinstatement of the monarchy and, if so, who had been responsible for the text, in particular for the section devoted to Hitler. Oskar von Hindenburg vehemently insisted that there had been only one text and that its full wording had been published. Von Papen, who had drafted the document, originally maintained a different view, claiming that he had not been responsible for the section addressed to Hitler; however, he was ultimately forced to admit that he might have been the author of these remarks as well. This revised view most probably reflects the truth, for von Papen stated on August 4, 1934 in Neudeck after visiting Hindenburg's bier: "No one acknowledged the historic achievement and human greatness of Hindenburg more highly than Adolf Hitler. We can fulfill Hindenburg's legacy no better than to unite our efforts once more for our immortal Germany and its peaceful European mission."²¹⁸

6

The plebiscite on the combination of the offices of President and Chancellor had been scheduled for August 19. For the first time prior to a plebiscite, Hitler refrained from traversing the countryside on a speechmaking campaign. He was cautious due to the Röhm Purge and to the fact that the plebiscite itself had become a foregone conclusion by means of the law of August 1. His Unterführers were assigned the task of disseminating propaganda for the plebiscite, while Hitler refrained from comment for the time being. Finally he could no longer resist, taking a stand on the issue in Hamburg two days before the referendum. At a reception in the City Hall, Hitler briefly expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome he was shown and then proceeded to the harbor to tour the battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* and the Blohm and Voss shipyard, addressing a few remarks to the workers there.²¹⁹ At a state ceremony in the chamber of the City Hall—notedly not at a mass rally—he delivered a lengthy speech beginning at 8:30 p.m. which was broadcast live.²²⁰

The speech is striking for its unusually defensive and almost plaintive tone of self-justification, which Hitler apparently felt was necessary. Contrary to his usual practice, Hitler did not preface his remarks with the “party narrative,” but rather began diffidently with a circuitous apology for having taken over the office of Reich President without waiting for the results of the plebiscite. Claiming that this step had been “necessary in the interests of the German Volk and Reich” in order not to give foreign countries an opportunity to stir up discontent, he declared:

My German Volksgenossen!

When our venerable Field Marshal and Reich President von Hindenburg closed his eyes for the last time after a blessed life, there were no few people outside the Reich who wished to see in his death the beginning of heavy internal fighting within Germany. Elements with whom we can never become reconciled were literally trembling in a joyful anticipation in which, as has so often been

the case, the wish was father to the thought. "Heavy Rioting in Germany," "National Socialist Movement Threatens to Fall Apart," "Fight between the Party and the Reichswehr," "Differences between the Leaders on Succession"—those were the headlines of a certain press whose "sincere" empathy for the fate of our Volk and our Reich is common knowledge over the world.

These circles were apparently entertaining the pleasant hope that weeks without leadership in the Reich would afford an opportunity to confuse the public both within and outside of Germany by an endless game of conjectures and, by doing so, contribute further to the international insecurity already existing.

In the interests of the German Volk and Reich, this game was interrupted! You can believe me, my Volksgenossen, when I say that otherwise we naturally would have chosen the course of first addressing our appeal to the Volk and then complying with its decision. In such a case, the result would have been no different than now.

By announcing the merger of both offices, the Reich Government—vested with legal authority—did what the Volk itself would have demanded in view of the given circumstances.

My personal opinion regarding this problem is unequivocally and clearly stated in my letter to the Reich Minister of the Interior.

Reich President and Field Marshal von Hindenburg was chosen by Fate to be the great mediator between the Germany of the past and that of the future. In his venerable old age, far removed from all self-centered desires, he was, for all of us, the supra-personal representative of our Volk. In the past year and a half, I have thanked Providence again and again that it decreed that the National Socialist Movement, through me, was able to render its pledge of loyalty to this true father of the nation; that finally, after such heavy battles, It bestowed upon me the generous friendship of the Old Gentleman after all, thus providing the basis for a relationship which brought me happiness and was, moreover, of great benefit to the nation.

The Field Marshal and Reich President was a unique figure and cannot be replaced. His mission as Reich President came to fulfillment in his very person. In the future, no one else shall carry on this title.²²¹ Regardless of how logical, however, the combination of the two functions is, and regardless of how irreproachably the law of the Reich Government settles this matter in conformity with the Constitution, I must nevertheless refuse to derive the right to take this most tremendous step toward the new formation of the German Reich from any previous mandate. No! The German Volk itself shall decide!

I am not anticipating the future and final form of the Constitution of the German Reich in any way when I believe that I will succeed in adding new honor to the title of German Reich Chancellor for the future!

The right to be able to state such a bold opinion is one I derive from nearly fifteen years of labor which—whether voluntarily or involuntarily—will one day be recognized as a transformation and development of historic dimensions.

These opening words had served to dispell Hitler's initial nervousness. But those who had hoped to be spared the long-winded "party

narrative” were disappointed, for Hitler continued: “When, nearly six-
teen years ago, I returned to the homeland as a wounded soldier, I met
with a situation. . .” ad infinitum.

This time, the one-hour narrative did, in fact, strike a new note.
Hitler categorically refused to tolerate any criticism:

I would like to take this opportunity as well to dwell briefly on those who
believe that their freedom of criticism has been unjustly encroached upon. In my
eyes, criticism is not a vital function in and of itself. The world can live without
critics, but not without workers.

I protest that a profession should exist which consists of nothing but acting
the know-it-all without any responsibility of one’s own and of telling
responsible working people what to do and think. I have spent thirteen years of
my life fighting a regime, however not by negative criticism, but with
constructive suggestions as to what should be done. And I did not hesitate a
second to assume the responsibility when the blessed Old Gentleman gave it to
me, and I am now responsible to the entire German Volk. And no action will
take place for which I will not vouch with my life, as this Volk be my witness.
However, I can at least claim before this Volk the same right which every
worker and peasant and entrepreneur can also claim for himself.

What would a peasant say if, while he was laboring in the sweat of his brow,
someone kept strolling around on his farm with nothing else to do but go
around carping, criticizing, and stirring up discontent?

What would a worker do who is standing in front of his machine and is
constantly talked at by someone who has no skills and does nothing but
incessantly carp and find fault? I know they would not tolerate such creatures
for more than a week; they would tell them to go to hell. The organization of
the Movement gives hundreds of thousands of people the opportunity to play a
constructive part in shaping our life as a nation. Any serious suggestions and any
genuine cooperation are welcomed with gratitude. But people whose only
activity is confined to judging and condemning the activities of others without
ever assuming any practical responsibility themselves are people I cannot bear.²²²
In this State, everyone is called upon to fight and work in some way or another.

In this State, there will no longer be a right to carp, but only a right to do a
better job.

Hitler then returned to the topic of the upcoming plebiscite, having
the audacity to maintain that the law combining the two highest offices
in the State had been passed not before, but after Hindenburg’s death,
namely on August 3. This bare-faced lie was apparently designed to erase
the bad impression to which his precipitate action had given rise.

I myself have no other aim in the future than the aim I have had for the
fifteen years lying behind me. I wish to devote my whole life, unto my dying
breath, to one task: making Germany free, healthy and happy once more. Just
as I have viewed the fulfillment of my task in the past as the conquest of the

Germans for this same concept, so will I do today and in the future. That is why the law of August 3 of this year is being presented to the German Volk for its verdict.

We have malicious enemies in the world. Do what we might, a certain international conspiracy will stop at nothing to interpret it as something bad. They permanently subsist on the sole hope that our Volk might once again drown in inner discord. We know our fate throughout the centuries all too well to overlook the consequences. It has always been Germans who have sacrificed themselves as allies of a foreign design. Ambitious noblemen, greedy merchants, unscrupulous party leaders and parties have repeatedly become the shield-bearers of foreign interests against their own Volk. The hope for such aid has thrown Germany into the most severe misfortune of war more than once. History should be a lesson to us.

Thus I feel that it is necessary, in the face of such speculations, to document anew at this time above all the unshakable unity of the German Volk at home and abroad.

It was not for my sake that I asked for this plebiscite, but for the sake of the German Volk. It is not I who requires such a vote of confidence to strengthen or maintain my position, but the German Volk which needs a Chancellor who is accorded such confidence in the eyes of the world. For I am nothing, my Volksgenossen, but your spokesman, and I aspire to be nothing but the representative of your life and the defender of your vital interests.

The burden which a sad fate has imposed upon our Volk is heavy enough. I am not to blame for this crisis, I am only bearing it with you and for you, my Volksgenossen, and even if there is a scattering of blinded Germans who perhaps are gratified at the thought that this crisis might be greater than the power of my resistance, may these lunatics bear in mind that they are gloating not over my own mishap, but over the misfortune of the German Volk.

There are millions of people whom Fate has made dependent upon their leadership and who are defenseless if no one acts as their spokesman, leader or defender. They comprise millions of German peasants who wish to earn their daily bread honestly and industriously, by upright and loyal effort; millions of the most efficient German workers who labor in the sweat of their brows; countless intellectual workers—they comprise the enormous community of working people who would be helplessly abandoned to demise and destruction were a leadership incapable of changing the course of their fate for the better.

There is no cause for me to concern myself with those who perhaps today know better but knew nothing fifteen or twenty years earlier and failed. The Goddess of Fortune has held her cloak over them long enough. For fifteen long years they were unable to find an opportunity to seize hold of it. Now she has turned away from these spirits. Fifteen years ago I pointed out where they had failed, and one and a half years ago I began there.

If they wanted to be fair, after their failure they would have to grant me at least the term of fifteen years they had to prove themselves. And I know it to be a fact: they will not recognize Germany then, just as Germany will not recognize them. And if they further want to be just, they must acknowledge to me that I have been more industrious in these fifteen years than my opponents. For they

had the power and everything which goes with it, while I was forced, starting with nothing, to wage a bitter and difficult battle to gain it.

And all the same, even my most malicious libellers cannot deny that I have never changed in these fifteen years.

Whether in good fortune or in bad, whether in liberty or in prison, I have remained true to my flag, the flag which is now the national flag of the German Reich. And they further cannot claim that I had ever in my life undertaken or omitted any political act for the sake of my own personal benefit.

And they must finally admit that, in general terms, this fifteen-year-long battle of mine was not unsuccessful, but led a movement evolving from nothing to victory in Germany, giving the German Volk a new and better position at home and abroad.

I will gladly answer for and accept whatever mistakes they can prove that I actually made. However, these all lie within the limits set for everyone by the basic fact of human fallibility. But I can point out in this context that I have never in the course of my fight committed an act which I did not hold to be for the benefit of the German Volk.

For since I have become involved in the political fight, I have been governed and guided, so help me God, by a single thought: Germany!

After Hitler had reaped the appropriate applause from the invited guests, he decided to say a few more words to the crowds gathered on the Rathausplatz before the City Hall:²²³

My German Volksgenossen! People of Hamburg!

I have nothing to add to what I have said. I ask the German Volk to do its duty as we have done ours for the past fifteen years, to comprehend that the fate of the Reich is the fate of each individual, and that each person plays a role in shaping the fate of the Reich.

No one is excepted from the crisis of the Reich; no one is spared from the duty to gain control of this crisis. The community of your united efforts is the prerequisite for the success of your government.

For it is nothing which you are not; it cannot invest what you do not provide. Its strength is an indication of the German Volk, and this Volk is but yourselves. It cannot represent your interests today before this world with any means other than by citing your will, which is the will of this regime and of its leadership.

And there may not be a single person who excludes himself from this joint obligation. Every single fate will either be formed anew or come to ruin with it as a result. I address this appeal to the German Volk in an hour which calls upon us to demonstrate that the German Volk is a single unit, indivisibly clamped and bound together, and that it stands behind its leadership as one man whose sole meaning and goal in life is this Volk.

On the eve of the plebiscite, i.e. on August 18, the late President's son, Colonel Oskar von Hindenburg, broadcast the following statement on the radio:²²⁴

My now immortal father himself saw in Adolf Hitler his immediate successor as head of the German Reich, and I am acting in accordance with my father's wishes when I call upon all German men and women to vote that my father's office be passed on to the Führer and Reich Chancellor.

And thus the Marshal's cry sounds from the Tower of Tannenberg still: "Gather together and stand united and firm behind Germany's Führer. Demonstrate inwardly and outwardly that an unbreakable bond firmly encompasses the German Volk in a single will."

The outcome of the plebiscite was, however, less convincing than Hitler and his cohorts had hoped. A "mere" 89.9 percent of the eligible voters cast their ballots for Hitler. More than five million Germans had voted "nay" or submitted invalid ballots. When the first results came in, Hitler, Goebbels, Brücker, Kerrl, and other leaders were visibly dissatisfied.²²⁵ After the plebiscite of November 12, 1933, they had become accustomed to figures of between 95 and 99 percent. Regardless of how ridiculous their insistence upon results of nearly 100% was, in future plebiscites (1936 and 1938) the figures were manipulated in such a way that the dissenting and invalid votes never totalled more than one or two percent.

On August 20, Hitler addressed a letter of gratitude to the Minister of Defense, General von Blomberg,²²⁶ misrepresenting the law of August 1 as dating from August 3—this time in writing.

To the Minister of Defense, General von Blomberg, Berlin

My dear General,

Today, following the German Volk's confirmation of the law of August 3, 1 would like to express my thanks to you and, through you, to the Wehrmacht for the pledge of allegiance which you have rendered to me as Führer and Supreme Commander. Just as the officers and soldiers of the Wehrmacht have pledged themselves to the new State which I personify, I will equally regard it at all times as my foremost obligation to support the existence and inviolability of the Wehrmacht in fulfillment of the testament of the late Field Marshal and true to my own will to establish the Army as the nation's sole bearer of arms.

Berlin, August 20

Adolf Hitler, Führer und Reichskanzler

Hitler wanted the National Socialists to know why they had struggled and sacrificed for fifteen years: namely to make their leader not only Chancellor for life, but President as well. Thus he issued the following appeals to the German Volk and the NSDAP on the same day:²²⁷

National Socialists! German Volksgenossen!

The fifteen-year struggle of our Movement for power in Germany came to an end yesterday. Beginning from the highest point of the Reich, throughout the

entire administration and down to the leadership in the smallest village, the German Reich is now in the hands of the National Socialist Party. This is the reward for immeasurable labors, for countless sacrifices. I thank all those who, by casting their votes yesterday, have contributed toward documenting the unity of State and Movement before the entire world.

It will be my task and the task of us all to consolidate this unity and to win over the few remaining members of our Volk to the National Socialist idea and doctrine in a struggle as brilliant as it will be resolute and persistent.

The resolutions for the implementation of this action have already been passed this evening; the action itself will be carried out with National Socialist speed and thoroughness. Today marks the close of the fight for the authority of the State. But the fight for our precious Volk will go on. The goal stands firm and unshakable: there must and will come a day on which every last German shall carry the symbol of the Reich in his heart as a sign of his belief.

Berlin, August 20, 1934

Adolf Hitler

Party Comrades!

Yesterday's glorious victory of our National Socialist Party is due foremost to your loyalty, your willingness to make sacrifices, and your industry. As political fighters of the Movement, as SA and SS men, as members of our workers', youth and women's organizations, you have rendered a unique service. Filled with boundless confidence in you, I am determined to take up anew and continue waging the battle for the soul and the unity of the German Volk. In this new struggle for our Volk, you will stand beside me as you have in the fifteen years which lie behind us. And just as we succeeded in conquering ninety percent of the German Volk for National Socialism, we will and must be able to win over the last ten percent as well. This will be the crowning glory of our victory.

Berlin, August 20, 1934

Adolf Hitler

On August 20, Hitler traveled to Nuremberg to inspect the Reich Party Congress grounds there.²²⁸ On August 22, he conferred with Hess, Himmler and Lutze at the Obersalzberg on the upcoming Reich Party Congress.²²⁹

On August 26, Hitler first visited the Saar Exhibition in Cologne and then boarded a ship for Koblenz to speak before 400,000 Saarlanders gathered at the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress. This speech gave him an opportunity to comment on the outcome of the plebiscite.²³⁰ Obviously he was still peeved by the less than unanimous results; the ten percent who had not accepted him as head of state were a blow to his vanity, and the "yea" votes had also decreased as compared to the figures of November 12, 1933. Calling upon the Twelve Apostles as self-justification, Hitler stated:

So what do the ten percent adversaries who were attracted to the others prove?

In the past, my Volksgenossen, five Germans had ten different opinions. Today, nine out of ten Germans are of the same opinion. I am therefore confident that we will be capable of winning the tenth man, too, for at any rate you can believe me when I say that the path from the first seven men to 38 million was more difficult than the path from 38 to 42 million will be.

What does it prove anyway if individual parties believe that they must take another course? What does it ultimately prove if one or the other even becomes a traitor? What does it prove if you in the Saar even have among you isolated Germans—unfortunately Germans—who are not worthy of this name? There was a Judas, too, among the Twelve Apostles. Is it surprising that we, too, have such figures? But Christianity won out in spite of this Judas, and the Movement will be victorious in spite of our emigrants.

In other respects, Hitler essentially repeated what he had said at the Niederwald Monument the year before on August 27, 1933, once more stressing, “The question of the Saar is the only territorial question remaining which divides us from France today.”

Only to a much lesser extent did the Saarlanders themselves share Hitler’s satisfaction that the plebiscite for the return of the Saar to Germany²³¹ had been scheduled for an early date, for he had only his military plans in mind, and in that sense, time for him was of the essence.

However, the happiest event we have witnessed this year has been the scheduling of the plebiscite for the Germans in the Saar—I say the happiest because it marked the end of a situation under which not 800, 000, but 67 million Germans suffered. For not only you, my Volksgenossen in the Saar, have suffered and are still suffering from this separation from the Vaterland; no, Germany too has suffered equally from it. Germany sees you as an indivisible component of its own self. We have followed your fight in Germany, in the Reich, with burning interest. He who attacked you has attacked us; he who abused you has abused us; he who violated you has violated us.

Nothing has been inflicted upon you which has not been inflicted upon Germany as a whole.

After these chauvinistic remarks, Hitler calmed down and stated in closing:

I hope that one day reason will triumph after all and that, on January 13, an understanding will be reached on the Saar which can and will be effected on this higher level.

Thus you have a particularly great and peaceful mission to fulfill on January 13. We will rejoice that, when the bells sound throughout Germany on January 14, they will ring in not only the return of our lost territory, of our lost Germans, but the coming of peace.

Therefore I ask you to take courage and be strong yet again! Go into this last segment of your fight as upstanding and genuine Germans! Live your lives in the conviction that the will of the entire nation is standing behind you! Forget

everything for this struggle which might divide you. Consecrate yourselves to this struggle exclusively as Germans. And then this day will become a great victory, a victory leading you back to the nation and to the German Reich, and then—I hope—we will hold our next and even more tremendous rally here with you.

The Reich Party Congress of 1934 commenced on September 4. The year before,²³² Hitler had announced that the Congress was to take place every two years; apparently he had already changed his mind. Such meetings were more important to him than to any of the other participants, for the pompous demonstrations in Nuremberg afforded him the opportunity to intoxicate himself on these gigantic manifestations of his power.

The Reich Party Congress of 1934 was not given any special theme or title as was the case in respect to the others held subsequent to the NSDAP takeover.

Apparently the events of the preceding months had made Hitler somewhat cautious for the time being. In comparison to 1933, the calendar of events was considerably fuller due to the inclusion of rallies on the part of the NS Frauenschaft and the veterans of war, and above all the Wehrmacht and the Labor Service, which were making their first appearance at a Party Congress. The rest of the program conformed to the itinerary laid down in 1933. As noted above, Hitler's speeches in Nuremberg are quoted here only to the extent that they contain new aspects.

The Congress opened with a reception in the Nuremberg City Hall on September 4, at which Hitler said a few words of thanks.²³³

On September 5, Gauleiter Adolf Wagner read Hitler's proclamation in the Luitpold Hall.²³⁴ In addition to the standard retrospective on the past and prophecy for the future, it contained several remarks on the character of the National Socialist Revolution which are noteworthy for their phrasing:

We wish to establish two realizations as historic facts:

1. The year from September 1933 to September 1934 brought with it the final consolidation of National Socialist power in Germany. The Congress of Victory marked the beginning of a battle of pursuit in the course of which we broke up and captured our enemies' positions one after another.

2. For the National Socialist leadership of state, this period at the same time constituted a year of tremendous constructive and productive work.

This inevitably leads to the unquestionable conclusion: the National Socialist Revolution has now come to an end as a revolutionary and power-related process!

As a revolution, it has completely fulfilled what could be expected of it. The world does not live on wars, and similarly the Volk does not live on revolutions. Both cases can, at most, provide the basis for a new life. But no good will come of it if the act of destruction is not accomplished for the sake of a better and thus higher idea, but is exclusively subject to the nihilistic drives of destruction and will thus result not in the formation of something better but in unending hatred. A revolution which perceives its sole purpose as the defeat of a political opponent, the destruction of earlier accomplishments, or in the elimination of existing circumstances will lead to nothing better than a world war which will reach its appalling culmination—or rather its logical progression—in a mad Diktat.

Genuine revolutions are only conceivable as the consummation of a new calling to which the will of the Volk assigns its historic task in this way. And today this leadership of the Volk has the power to do anything in Germany! Who can deny that the National Socialist Movement has become the omnipotent master over the German Reich? The crowning glory of this political development is expressed symbolically in the fact that the Wehrmacht has adopted the sovereign symbol of the Movement; in the fact that the leader of the Party has been elected to head of state of the German nation, and the Wehrmacht and administration of the Reich subsequently pledged an oath of allegiance to him. Thus we shall crush any and all attempts to instigate acts of violence against the leadership of the National Socialist Movement and of the Reich and nip them in the bud, regardless of whom they originate from.

We all know to whom the nation has given its mandate! Woe betide anyone who does not know this or forgets it! Revolutions have always been rare in the German Volk. The nervous age of the nineteenth century has finally come to an end with us.

There will not be another revolution in Germany for the next thousand years!

Speaking on National Socialist economic policy, Hitler disclosed a number of future projects including roadbuilding, new national railway station²³⁵ and a restructuring of the major cities:

Tremendous was, above all, the work which had to be done in the areas of decay which manifested itself most evidently at the time.

He who finds fault with the economic policy of these past twelve months can only be malicious or have taken leave of his senses.

When we took power, Germany's economy was in what seemed to be an unstoppable process of shrinking. Fear and distrust, despondency and despair comprised the breeding ground for a development whose collapse could be clearly foreseen. These successes are the convincing proof of the effectiveness of our economic policy and the German Volk's confidence in it:

1. The executive destruction of German peasantry was not only stopped, but fully eliminated.

2. The measures taken to create work have, on a large scale, been attended by tremendous success.

3. The number of unemployed has decreased by an estimated four and a half million.

4. The German mark has remained stable, and that in spite of the many export problems.

5. Savings deposits have grown tremendously.

6. The volume of traffic has undergone enormous increases on the railroads, in terms of motorized traffic, and in the air.

7. The receipts from contributions and taxes have far surpassed estimates in respect to all voluntary, nonstate and state organizations as well as to all public funds.

When, two years ago, we predicted that this development would take place if we took power, this was not only challenged and denied, but claimed to be impossible and even dismissed with scorn. And today these same people who did nothing but ruin Germany by their own labors now dare to claim that our achievements are trivial and insignificant. But where would Germany be had these destructive elements governed for even one year longer?

This year which lies behind us has accomplished the tremendous preliminary work for projects which will only become visibly evident to the nation in the course of the next few years. The gigantic roadbuilding plans could not be pulled out of a hat from one day to the next, but required a certain amount of time alone for their conception and design. But the German Volk will see what preliminary work has been accomplished during these twelve months in what will be carried out in the years to come. In addition to the national network of roads, tremendous new national railway stations have been completed in the conceptual and design stages. Revolutionary construction programs are being drawn up for a whole series of major German cities, the magnitude of which will only be able to be fully and finally appreciated after decades have passed.

Some industries have been broken up, new industries have been founded; the settlement policy was consolidated in order to be more effective in broad points of view.

In order to combat the world boycott, the substitution of raw materials was begun and the initial preparations undertaken to make Germany independent of this need. Constantly guided by a single belief: no matter what happens, National Socialism will never capitulate!

The proclamation closed with the following words:

Posterity shall one day say of us: never was the German nation stronger and never its future more secure than at the time when the ancient Germanic peoples' old mystical symbol of salvation (*Heilszeichen*) was rejuvenated in Germany to become the symbol of the Third Reich.

Long live our German Volk, long live the National Socialist Party and our Reich!

On the afternoon of September 5, Hitler delivered his customary speech at the Culture Convention in the Apollo Theater, this time commenting above all on artistic genius.²³⁶

September 6, 1934

On September 6, he addressed 52,000 workers on the Zeppelin field, creating the impression that he had but one goal in life: to introduce compulsory labor service in Germany:²³⁷

It is a great undertaking to educate an entire Volk in this new concept of work and this new opinion of work. We have taken up the challenge, and we will succeed, and you will be the first to bear witness to the fact that this work cannot fail!

The entire nation will learn the lessons of your lives! A time will come when not a single German can grow into the community of this Volk who has not first made his way through your community.

And we know that then, for millions of our Volksgenossen, work will no longer be a burning issue but a concept uniting all, and that above all there will no longer be anyone living in Germany who insists upon seeing in manual labor something less than in any other type of work. We do not want to be socialists in theory only; we want to seize hold of this genuine problem, too, as genuine National Socialists, and find a genuine solution. And this great task will be accomplished because behind it stands not only the Weltanschauung of a Movement controlling Germany; behind it stands our will! Today, for the first time, you will march in ranks of tens of thousands into the city of the German Reich Party Congresses, and you will be conscious that in this moment not only the eyes of hundreds of thousands in Nuremberg will see you, but in this moment Germany will see you for the first time. And I know that, just as you are serving this Germany in proud devotion, Germany will proudly and happily see in you today its sons marching past. *Heil!*

On September 7, Hitler spoke before 200,000 political leaders who had assembled on the Zeppelin field;²³⁸ on the same day, he made a brief speech before the blinded veterans at a "Victims of War" conference.²³⁹

On the morning of September 8, Hitler addressed the Hitler Youth in the Nuremberg Stadium²⁴⁰ and, at noon, spoke at a convention of the NS Frauenschaft, where he stated:²⁴¹

For the first time in years, I am once again taking part in a convention of National Socialist women and thus of National Socialist women's work. I know that the prerequisites for this have been established by the work of innumerable individual women and, in particular, by the work of their female leaders. The National Socialist Movement has not only seen but also found in woman its most loyal assistant from the time of its conception onwards.

I remember the difficult years of the Movement's fight and especially those times in which good fortune seemed to have turned away from us; those times when many of us were in prisons, others had once more become fugitives, still others were in foreign parts; many of us were lying wounded in sick bays or had been killed. I remember the time when there were those among us who turned back, believing that we would never make it in the end; a time in which the spirit pervading Germany arrogantly believed that it could approach the problems only from the angle of reason, and when many lost faith in us as a result. I know

that back then there were innumerable women who remained unshakably loyal to the Movement and to me.

At that time, the power of emotion truly proved itself to be stronger and better. We have seen that the clever mind can be misled only all too easily, that ostensibly intellectual arguments can cause men of weak intellect to falter, and that it is particularly in these times that the most profound inner instinct of preservation of the self and of the Volk awakens in a woman. Woman has proven to us that she knows what is right! In those times when the great Movement seemed, to many, to falter and all were united against us, the stability and sureness of emotion prevailed as stable factors when confronted with brooding intellect and supposed knowledge. For only very few are endowed with the talent of penetrating superficial knowledge to the most profound inner meaning. But this most profound insight is ultimately the root of the world of emotion. That which perhaps only few philosophically gifted intellects are capable of analyzing scientifically can be sensed by the nature of an unspoiled human being with instinctive certainty. The feeling and, above all, the nature of woman has always acted throughout the ages as a supplement to the intellect of man.

And if at times in the course of human life the working spheres of men and women have shifted to become unnaturally aligned, this happened not because woman aspired to rule over man; rather, the reason lies in the fact that man was no longer capable of completely fulfilling his task. That, of course, is the miraculous thing about Nature and Providence: no conflict is possible in the relations between the two sexes as long as each fulfills the task assigned to it by Nature.

The catchword "Women's Liberation" is merely a phrase invented by the Jewish intellect, and its contents are marked by the same spirit. The German woman will never need to emancipate herself in an age supportive of German life. She possessed what Nature gave her automatically as an asset to maintain and preserve; just as the man, in such an age, never had to fear that he would be ousted from his position in respect to woman.

Woman has been the last to contest man's right to his position. Only when he was no longer sure of himself in recognizing his duty did the immortal instinct of survival and preservation begin to revolt in woman. After this revolt, a shift took place which was not in accordance with Nature's design, and it prevailed until both sexes returned to what an eternally wise Providence assigned to them.

If it is said that a man's world is the State, that the man's world is his struggle, his willingness to devote himself to the community, one might perhaps say that a woman's world is a smaller one. For her world is her husband, her family, her children, and her home. But where would the larger world be if no one wanted to care for the small world? How could the larger world survive if there was no one who would make the cares of the smaller world the content of his life? No, the large world is built upon this small world! This greater world cannot survive if the small world is not firm. Providence assigned to woman the care of this, her very own world, and it is only on this foundation that the man's world can be formed and can grow.

However, these two worlds are never opposed to one another. They mutually complement each other, they belong together, just as man and wife belong together.

We do not feel that it is right when a woman forces her way into a man's world, in territory belonging to him; instead, we feel it is natural when both of these worlds remain divorced from one another. One of the worlds is home to the power of feelings, the power of the soul! The other is home to the power of recognition, the power of toughness, of resolution, and of fighting morale! In one case, this power requires the full willingness of the woman to devote her life to maintaining and multiplying this important cell, and in the other case it requires the willingness of the man to safeguard life.

What a man sacrifices in struggling for his Volk, a woman sacrifices in struggling to preserve this Volk in individual cases. What a man gives in heroic courage on the battlefield, woman gives in eternally patient devotion, in eternally patient suffering and endurance. Every child to which she gives birth is a battle which she wages in her Volk's fateful question of to be or not to be. And hence both must mutually value and respect each other by recognizing that each part is accomplishing the task assigned to it by Nature and Providence. The performance of these two tasks will necessarily result in mutual respect.

What the Jewish intellect maintains is not true—that respect is determined by the overlapping of the spheres of activity of the two sexes—but rather this respect requires that neither of the sexes endeavors to do what belongs to the other. This respect ultimately lies in the knowledge of each half that the other is doing everything necessary to maintain the whole!

Therefore, woman throughout the ages has always been the helpmate of man and thus his most loyal friend, and man, too, has been the protector of his wife throughout the ages and thus her best friend. And both perceived in this manner of living the common foundation for the existence of what they loved, and of its continued subsistence in the future. Woman is an egoist in maintaining her small world, putting man in a position to preserve the greater world, and man is an egoist in maintaining this greater world, for the one is indissolubly bound up with the other. We will stand up against an intellectualism of the most depraved sort which would tear asunder what God hath joined.

Because woman originates in the most basic root of all, she is also the most stable element in the preservation of a people.

Ultimately, she has the most infallible sense for whatever is necessary to prevent a race from ceasing to be, for her children would bear the major brunt of all the suffering.

Man is often far too mentally instable to find the right path by means of these basic insights. However, given favorable times and a good education, man will know just as well what his task is. We National Socialists have therefore protested for many years against deploying woman in political life, for in our view this would be unworthy. A woman once said to me: you must see to it that women join parliament, for woman alone is capable of ennobling it. I do not believe, I replied to her, that human beings were meant to enoble what is bad by its very nature, and a woman who became caught in the gears of this parliamentary system would not enoble parliament; rather, this system would dishonor such

a woman. I do not want to leave something to women which I intend to take away from men. Our opponents claimed that we would then never gain women for the Movement. But we have gained more than all of the other parties put together, and I know that we would have won over every last German woman had she been given but one opportunity to study parliament and the degrading role women play there.

For this reason we have integrated woman in the fight of the *völkisch* community in accordance with the decrees of Nature and Providence. To us, our women's movement is thus not something which inscribes on its banner the fight against man as its program, but rather something which takes up in its program the mutual fight together with man. It is thus that we have strengthened the new National Socialist Volksgemeinschaft, thus that we have gained, in millions of women, the most loyal and zealous fellow fighters. Female fighters for a life together in the service of together preserving our life. Fighters who fix their gaze not upon the rights which a Jewish intellectualism pretends to offer them, but upon the obligations which Nature has burdened upon us all.

Whereas in the past, the liberal and intellectualistic women's movements included many, many items in their programs which originated in a so-called intellect, the program of our National Socialist Women's Movement actually contains only a single item, and this item is: the child, this tiny creature who must come into being and flourish, who constitutes the sole purpose of the entire struggle for existence. For what would be the purpose of our fighting and struggling if there were not something to come after us which can make use of and pass on what we attain today for its own benefit and avail?

What else could be the purpose of humanity's entire struggle? Why else the worry and the suffering? For the mere sake of an idea? Only for an idea? Only for a theory? No, that would not be worth traversing this earthly vale of tears. The only thing which allows us to overcome all of that is shifting, our gaze from the present to the future, away from ourselves to that which is growing up to follow us.

A few moments ago, I spoke before the youth rally. It is a glorious thing to look out over this golden youth in the knowledge that it will one day be Germany when we no longer exist! It will preserve the sum of what we are creating and building up. It is for this youth that we are working. That is the real purpose of the entire struggle! And in recognizing this, the most elementary and lapidary goal of Nature, the labors of the two sexes will logically and rightfully fall into place for us, no longer in conflict, but in a common fight for the real life.

You, my female party comrades, are waging this battle as leaders, organizers and helpers. You have joined in taking on a glorious task. That which we wish to shape within our Volk on a large scale is that for which you must internally form a firm support and a solid foundation. You must impart spiritual and emotional reinforcement and stability from within! In this battle which we are waging today for the freedom, equality of rights, honor, and peace of our Volk, you must be a complement to man, so that we can prevail as real fighters before our Volk and for our Volk with our sights set on the future.

Then strife and discontent will never be able to flare up between the two sexes, but they will instead traverse this life fighting together, hand in hand,

fulfilling the wishes of a Providence which created both of them for this purpose. And then the blessings of these mutual endeavors will not be withheld. Then no mad fight over theories will flare up, then man and woman will not turn against one another because of false notions, for then the blessing of the Almighty will rest upon their joint struggle for life!

On September 9, Hitler appeared before the SA for the first time since June 30 to take a mass roll call in the Luitpold arena. He was accompanied not only—as in the year before—by the Chief of Staff, but also by the Reichsführer SS, who was making his first appearance as a new Reichsleiter subordinate only to the Führer.

Addressing 100,000 SA and SS members, Hitler stated:²⁴²

Men of the SA and SS!

For the fourth time in the history of the Party, the SA and the SS have assembled here. Twelve months ago as a sign of having gained power in the State! Today, to testify that this process was carried on and completed!

Today, the power of the German Reich lies in our hands. The National Socialist Movement is today the master of Germany. In the twelve months lying behind us, we took possession over one position after another. No one who is willing to open his eyes can believe that this regime can be eliminated or that it would even consider stepping down of its own accord.

But these twelve months also comprised a period of hard work within the National Socialist Movement itself. When I decided to convene another Party Congress after such a short time in order to summon you, my comrades in the SA and SS, to this place, I did it for a particular reason. A few months ago, a dark shadow was cast over the Movement. Many of our opponents believed that they could see the day approaching on which the power of the National Socialist Party would perhaps come to an end. I have summoned you to this place, my comrades, in order to document three things:

1. the SA had as little to do with this shadow as any other institution in the Party;

2. in order to demonstrate to everyone that my relationship to you, my comrades, is the same as it has been for fourteen years; and

3. in order to show our enemies that the Party stands firm and that its SA and its SS stand firm as guarantors of the National Socialist Revolution.

They are all mistaken, those who believe that even a single crack has appeared in the structure of our Movement. It is standing as solidly as this block here!

And it will be broken by nothing in Germany. If someone sins against the spirit and purpose of our Movement, if he sins against the spirit of my SA, this shall not affect the SA, but those very persons who dared to sin against it.

We have lined up for this roll call not only to demonstrate how indestructibly solid the structure of the Movement and its organization is, but also to demonstrate how it continues to be filled by the spirit of loyalty, of discipline and of obedience, and in order to assign 126 standards to the SA and 57 standards to the SS.

September 9, 1934

These new ensigns of the Movement will now join forces with the great columns of our old standards. You will put them at your fore and follow them loyally as you have the old.

These ensigns will serve to remind you of what made you great. You will remember the long years of difficult battles, of sacrifices, when it seemed almost impossible that we would be able to conquer the State. And you will recall the great persistence during the time of struggle which was required to wage this battle for Germany. You will learn from this the lesson that we must not allow what once enabled us to be victorious to desert us after the victory, but must hold fast today even more than in the past to the virtues of old.

SA members and SA leaders have no choice but to be loyal, obedient, disciplined, modest, and willing to sacrifice—for otherwise they are not men of the SA.

Holding fast to these virtues of old will not only make our power indestructible; it will also mean that the resurrection of the German Volk will continue to have an effect far into the future. For we are not simply a manifestation of months or years; what has come about in these fifteen years shall live on for centuries.

Only a lunatic or a deliberate liar can claim that I or anyone else ever entertained the thought of dissolving what we ourselves have built up in long years. My comrades, we now stand firmly united for our Germany, and we must stand united for this Germany. We want to continue to strengthen the Movement in the years ahead of us by more strongly than before consolidating the individual organizations and fusing them together to form a single whole. Our flag shall truly fly over a single and unified Movement. That is our goal. And if we work toward this goal, no one will dare to put up resistance or oppose this organization, the most tremendous of its kind in German history.

Thus I assign to you the new ensigns in the conviction that I am placing them in the most loyal hands in all of Germany.

In times past, you have proven your loyalty to me a thousand times over. In times to come, this cannot and will not change.

Hence let me now welcome you as my old and loyal men of the SA and SS:
Sieg Heil!

At the Nuremberg Market Place, Hitler presided over the customary parade of the party formations which lasted several hours. On this September 9, he also welcomed foreign diplomats at Nuremberg Central Station where they had arrived on board a special train.²⁴³

Von Papen had arrived in Nuremberg from Austria two days earlier, not wanting to miss this “patriotic Party Congress demonstration.” September 10 marked the first “Wehrmacht Day,” accompanied by sample maneuvers on the Zeppelin field performed by Reichswehr troops.²⁴⁴ In 1934, Hitler had not yet begun to capitalize on this additional chance to address the soldiers and accept a marching salute from the highest-ranking Reichswehr generals.

On the afternoon of September 10, the Party Congress came to an end with Hitler's closing address.²⁴⁵

On September 12, Hitler received accredited diplomats in the presidential palace in Berlin who had come to pay their respects to the new head of state. The papal nuncio, Monsignor Cesare Orsenigo, delivered the following address in his role as doyen of the Diplomatic Corps:²⁴⁶

Herr Deutscher Reichskanzler!

The Diplomatic Corps is pleased to appear before you to proffer its sincere congratulations and best wishes to the immediate successor of the highly esteemed Reich President, Field Marshal von Hindenburg, whose memory is indelibly imprinted upon our hearts.

By appearing before you today, we wish to express to Your Excellency that each of us is today renewing the same attestation of deference and the same assurance of mutual cooperation to the new head of the German Reich which we expressed earlier upon handing over our credentials.

It is our conviction that Your Excellency will support all of our efforts to fulfill the noble mission which our heads of state have entrusted to us and will, by doing so, maintain and consolidate the good relations between Germany and our countries and thus contribute to preserving peace in the world.

We are well aware that only by strengthening the spirit of truth, of justice and of brotherly love can a pacification of the peoples in the world be achieved. And we are happy that Your Excellency has repeatedly declared that Germany, lying in the heart of Europe, is firmly resolved to play an effective role in peace. We can already observe the devoted care with which Your Excellency is endeavoring in your new office to assist your Vaterland in overcoming the painful consequences of unemployment and to bring about the prosperity of the German Volk.

Thus we may express our wish that, under the highest governmental power now united in your hands, your Vaterland will be allowed to attain a prosperity which can guarantee internal peace in your country. We also wish that Germany may continue to secure possession of all goods of a higher order which constitute the true treasure of each and every nation.

May Divine Providence mercifully allow these wishes and hopes to become reality for the glory of your precious Vaterland, which has just assigned to you the highest office of the German Reich.

Hitler, attired in a tailcoat, expressed his gratitude in the following words:

Your Excellency!

May I express my warmest thanks to Your Excellency for the congratulations which you have relayed to me on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps on the occasion of my assuming the former office of Reich President. I am filled with particular gratitude that you were thereby mindful of the late Reich President, Field Marshal von Hindenburg. His memory shall live on indelibly in the hearts of all Germans.

Your Excellency, you have expressed the conviction that I will support you in your task of maintaining and reinforcing the good relations between your countries and Germany.

It is my will to preserve close and sincere connections between Germany and the foreign powers and thus to promote a reciprocal understanding and acquaintedness which is often still lacking at this time and which is the basis for mutual respect and appreciation. The great tasks which have been assigned to us—as you yourself, Your Excellency, have said—and which we have successfully begun can only then be completed if peace stays with us and with the rest of the world. And I may once more declare today and before you, gentlemen, as representatives of the foreign states, that it is the unshakable goal of my politics to make of Germany a firm stronghold of peace. The relations among people shall not be characterized by power and violence, but by the spirit of equal rights and respect for work and the accomplishments of each of the other people. Under the shelter of this peace, I myself and, with me, the Reich Government will dedicate the sum of our endeavors to the spiritual resurrection of our Volk—a Volk which was driven to the brink of collapse by the hardships of the War and the postwar period—to the new inner order of our Reich, and to overcoming its economic and social crisis. If we are capable of accomplishing this task—and we will accomplish it—Germany will be doing a service not only to itself, but to the whole world, and doing its share to contribute to the welfare and the progress of mankind. And we are confident in our hope that the blessing of Divine Providence, to which you, Your Excellency, have appealed so warmly on our behalf, may not be withheld for this work.

I ask you, gentlemen, at the same time to accept my most sincere wishes for a happy future of all of our people, for your own heads of state, your governments, and your countries.

On September 30, the *Erntedankfest* was celebrated at the Bückeberg near Hamelin. This enormous rally of German peasantry was preceded by a reception of peasant delegations in Goslar at which Hitler had commented briefly on the significance of the peasant class.²⁴⁷

The lengthy speech delivered before 700,000 peasants gathered at the Bückeberg contained Hitler's standard views on the "peasantry as the antithesis of intellectual urbanization." Vainly conscious of holding the supreme military command, he could not resist warning his adversaries at home and abroad that he would not shy away from the "worst," by which he was apparently referring to war. Hitler stated:

They [the adversaries] will never defeat us; at worst, they will make us even more independent. National Socialist Germany stands more firmly today than ever before, and August 19 was the best and most unequivocal confirmation of this fact.

On October 8, Hitler traveled to Landsberg to visit former fellow inmates and prison personnel from the period of his own detention there in 1924.²⁴⁸

October 9, 1934

The following day, upon learning of the assassination of the Yugoslavian King Alexander and the French Foreign Minister Barthou, Hitler sent the following telegram to the Queen Dowager:²⁴⁹

Deeply shaken by the news of the execrable assassination of which His Majesty the King has become a victim, may I ask Her Majesty to accept my most sincere condolences and to be assured of the sympathy of the German Volk.

Adolf Hitler, German Reich Chancellor

Hitler sent a similar telegram to the President of France, Albert Lebrun. These messages inaugurated a long series of telegraphic statements nearly as numerous as his speeches. Hitler upheld this practice all the way up to April 1945, when Germany had become so isolated that the only remaining recipients were the Slovaks and Croats.

At the opening of the second *Winterhilfswerk*²⁵⁰ in Berlin on October 9, Hitler claimed that the relief program constituted a means of insuring the German Volk against lack of political common sense:

Thus prosperity means not only an increase in the possibilities of enjoyment, but above all an increase in obligations. The view that the spending of a fortune of any size is the private affair of the individual requires revision in the National Socialist State all the more because no single individual could enjoy such a privilege without the collaboration of the whole.

If I turn particularly to these circles who enjoy average to above-average standing, I am doing so because I am sufficiently acquainted with the willingness to sacrifice exhibited by the broad masses of our Volk in the cities and out in the country and know that the latter, who have so often suffered firsthand from the curse of unemployment and economic misery, have the most sympathy with their Volksgenossen who are still unfortunate today.

However, I believe that it is necessary to point out one thing in particular here:

The insurance business in Germany today has been built up to cover a large network. Today, people insure themselves against fire and water damage, against theft, against burglary, against hailstorms and drought, against sickness and death—and spend billions doing so. But woe betide a people which forgets that the most precious possession it should insure is its political common sense. That same political common sense which is soundly embodied in the Volksgemeinschaft.

The German Volk can pride itself today that it has found its way back to this common sense. But let everyone be conscious of how tremendous is the benefit for all which generates from this sound political development.

You might care, my Volksgenossen, to shift your gaze from Germany for just a moment to take a critical look at the conditions in other countries. Riots, civil war, social strife, and economic crises follow each other in uninterrupted sequence. The torches of revolt are being carried far and wide. Strikes and

lockouts are eating up millions of the people's assets, but the misery remains great nearly everywhere. In Germany, we have overcome all of that.

Yet not because a few economists put their factories back in operation, but because the Volksgemeinschaft created by National Socialism abolished this political and economic madness, thus securing orders for the factories and an income for workers and entrepreneurs.

Hitler's appeal to political common sense was indicative of the way he so frequently twisted the truth in his verbal acrobatics. In reality, for years he had done everything he could to bar reason and—at least in terms of foreign politics—to rob the German people of their last drop of political common sense. His rhetoric powers were instead devoted to elevating the ideas he had developed in 1919, which had scarcely anything to do with reality, to a universal dogma.

On October 29, Hitler congratulated the Turkish President Atatürk (Mustafa Kemal Pasa) on the occasion of the Turkish National Holiday, sending him the following telegram:²⁵¹

On the occasion of the Turkish National Holiday, may I extend to Your Excellency my warmest congratulations which I may combine with my best wishes for Your Excellency's personal well-being and the continuing prosperity of the Turkish nation.

Adolf Hitler, German Reich Chancellor

On October 30, Hitler received the Land Bishops Marahrens, Meiser and Wurm who were opposed to Reich Bishop Müller—in the Reich Chancellory for an exchange of views on questions of church politics.²⁵²

On October 31, the Reichsstatthalter swore their allegiance to the new head of state, and Hitler spoke to them on political and economic questions of the day.²⁵³

Later the same day, Hitler toured the Olympic Stadium under construction in Berlin²⁵⁴ and also delivered a speech before SA Gruppenführers.²⁵⁵

On November 8 and 9, the festivities in memory of the failed putsch attempt in 1923 took place in Munich. The mood bore no comparison with the enthusiastic frenzy of the year before, for the incidents of June 30 were still too fresh and cast a shadow over the meetings of the *Alte Kämpfer*. Aware of this, Hitler dispensed with the commemorative march to the Feldherrnhalle.

At the Bürgerbräukeller, where he spoke on November 8,²⁵⁶ he attempted to boost his own courage by claiming that it was possible to transform any catastrophe into a triumph if one only had the will to do so.

The significance of November 8 and 9, 1923 lies for us in the fact that this Movement proved its inner toughness and resilience back then. If Fate were ever to impose a similar burden upon us, we can recall the day when we believed to have already grasped hold of power only to find ourselves in prison a few hours later; the day when we were confident of having demonstrated our quick-wittedness only to wake up the next morning empty-handed. How did it happen that we were nevertheless able to overcome this catastrophe?

Back then, the Movement carried out its historic order, and there is only one thing left to say to today's know-it-alls: either none of you has ever read Clausewitz, or if you have, you have not understood how to apply him to the present.

Clausewitz writes that reconstruction is possible even after a heroic collapse. Only cowards abandon their own cause, and that continues to take effect and spread like an insidious drop of poison. And then the realization dawns that it is still better, if necessary, to accept a horrible but sudden end than to bear horrors without end.

As he had the preceding year, Hitler made an effort to portray the fiasco of 1923 retrospectively as the right decision. The main thing, he insisted, was that it had been documented that the men had had the courage to take action; moreover, separatism would have wracked the German nation had they not intervened.

And then the time came when talk was not enough. For once, action had to be taken. For ultimately, only action can force men under its spell.

We had to act in the year 1923, because we were confronted at the time with the final attempt of the separatists in Germany. Want was appalling; inflation had robbed the people of all their worldly goods; hunger was rampant. The people could not count on a single tomorrow. Anyone who hoisted a flag was sure of a following. There were many people who simply said: it makes no difference who takes action. The main thing is that someone has the courage to do something. If another had had the courage to take action, the Volk would have followed him. It would have said: it's a good thing that someone is taking the risk.

Had the men we were faced with taken action, utmost danger would have been imminent. Others would have taken action on November 12, 1923 along the lines of the maxim we heard preached so often back then, namely: Northern Germany will become Bolshevik in any case, so we need to secede! We must have the North gutted! Only when that has been done can we later unite with it once again! Of course they knew how to divide. But how one would ever be able to reunite—that was the least of these gentlemen's worries.

And for that reason we were resolved back then to act first. We did not intend to stage a coup. But I had made one decision: if the opposition goes so far that I know that they will strike, I will strike four days earlier. And if people say to me, "Yes, but think of the consequences!" my reply is, "The consequences could never have been worse than if no action had been taken."

The truth would out: the “opposition” had planned to strike in 1923, and Hitler had beat it to the game by four days! This was the same tactic the dictator later used to justify his attacks on Poland, Denmark and Norway, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, Yugoslavia, and Russia—but here his alleged margin had narrowed to a mere 24 hours.

In closing, he alluded not only to the victims of November 9, 1923, but also to those of June 30, 1934. Those he had slain were thus indirectly accorded the status of having been “martyrs” for the Movement, for they had also died for Hitler, i.e. for Germany’s glory.²⁵⁷ The blood which had been shed had “become the baptismal water of the Third Reich.”

We have but a single pain, that not all of those can be here who marched with us back then, that—tragically—a number of our very best, most loyal and most zealous fighters have not lived to see the goal for which they fought. However, they too are present in spirit in our ranks, and in eternity they will know that their fight was not in vain.

The blood which they shed has become the baptismal water of the Third Reich.

And thus let us look back in this new Reich upon that which lies behind us and do so in the most distant future, too, and let us bear in mind one article of faith:

We shall be resolved at all times to take action! Willing at all times, if necessary, to die! Never willing to capitulate!

In this context, it is also worthy of note that Hitler decreed the institution of an “Endowment for the Martyrs of the Movement” on November 9.²⁵⁸

In place of the commemorative march to the Feldherrnhalle, the youngest members of the Party who had now left the ranks of the Hitler Youth were sworn in on November 9. Hitler delivered the following speech:²⁵⁹

National Socialists!

Deeply stirred, we stand again here today on this square. It is a reminder of our Movement’s first dead, and it is a symbolic act that the swearing-in of the Party’s recruits takes place on this square.

This square of death thus becomes a place for swearing oaths in life. And we could conduct no fairer commemoration celebration at this site at which our comrades once gave their lives than the swearing-in of those who once again dedicate themselves to their work as the youth of Germany.

You shall, I know, be just as loyal, just as brave as our old comrades! And you will have to be fighters! For there are still many, many opponents of our Movement in Germany. They do not want Germany to be strong. They do not want our Volk to be united. They do not want our Volk to defend its honor. They do not want our Volk to be free.

November 9, 1934

They might not want it, but we want it, and our will will defeat them! And your will shall be with us, and you shall contribute to preserving and immortalizing the will of that earlier time. We shall make even these last few bend under this will.

We shall ensure that the times which once required these sacrifices will never again, within human power, return in Germany!

Today the Party is by no means at the end of its mission, but at the very beginning! It is now in its youth. And thus you, my German youth, are not entering something foreign; rather, youth is joining the Movement of youth, and this movement of youth thus welcomes you as one of its own. You have the task of doing your share to fulfill what your elders once hoped for.

I am confident in you, confident that you who have already grown up and come into being in the spirit of the new Germany will fulfill this task, and that you will bear in mind our old principle: that it is not important that a single one of us lives, but vital that Germany lives!

Hitler's strange observation that there were "many, many opponents" stemmed perhaps from the pessimistic mood he was in throughout the months of November and December. His apparent depression might also have been a cause for the rumors of an assassination plot circulating at the time, as described below.

On November 13, Hitler dispatched the following telegram to the Chairman of the Olympic Organization Committee, former State Secretary Dr. Lewald:²⁶⁰

Your Excellency!

On behalf of the Organization Committee for the Eleventh Olympic Games in Berlin 1936, you have addressed to me the request that, due to the vacancy left by the death of the Reich President, Field Marshal von Hindenburg, I become the patron for the Eleventh Olympic Games. I would be glad to comply with this request. I wish you and your Organization Committee continuing success in your work.

With the German salute *Mit deutschem Gruß*:²⁶¹

Adolf Hitler

In the meantime, Germany and Poland had promoted their respective legations to the status of embassies. To celebrate the occasion, Hitler received the new Polish Ambassador, Josef Lipski, in the Reich Chancellery on November 14. After Lipski had delivered his new credentials and stressed the favorable course German-Polish relations had taken, Hitler responded with the following address:²⁶²

Mr. Ambassador!

I have the honor to receive from your hands the letter with which the President of the Republic of Poland has certified that you are now the extraordinary, authorized Ambassador here.

I, too, perceive in the elevation of the two representations of Germany and Poland to embassies a gratifying sign of the positive direction which the relations between our countries have taken. A restructuring of these relations, which are based upon the consensus reached between the German Government and the Polish Government, deserves particular significance in view of the manifold difficulties in the present political constellation in Europe. It is suited not only to serve the promotion of the interests of both countries, but also to comprise an important factor in safeguarding peace in general. The results achieved to date can but reinforce our will to continue on the course we have set, to intensify even more the cooperation in the various sectors of our relations, in order to thus establish a firm and lasting friendly and neighborly relationship between Germany and Poland in mutual respect and mutual understanding. In the economic sector as well, Germany would gladly be willing to do its part toward overcoming the difficulties caused by the present crisis and to promote a reciprocal exchange of goods as far as possible.

I welcome the fact that you, Mr. Ambassador, who have contributed so successfully in the past to the development of German-Polish relations, have been chosen by your government to dedicate yourself to this task in your new function as well. You may rest assured that, in your work, you will always meet with my support and the support of my government as well.

In November, Hitler also conferred with Jean Goy, the French war veterans' leader, and explicitly relinquished any claim to Alsace-Lorraine. Since the German dictator had not approved of the wording of the interview published in France, an official German version was issued on November 24, quoting Hitler as having said the following:²⁶³

"The former German and French front-line fighters became acquainted with one another during the War and have gleaned from one another the right concept of their value and the value of each nation. They are more capable than others of respecting this value in peacetime. There may be no misunderstandings between our two peoples. The present difficulties generate from the problem of the Saar. The French press seeks to allow the assumption to arise that we Germans are preparing for a putsch. It is pure foolishness to believe that Germany wishes to attempt to disrupt the coming plebiscite by the use of force. I formally declare that we will submit to the results of the plebiscite, no matter what its outcome. Incidentally, I proposed to the French Foreign Minister several months ago that a protocol be drawn up to settle any problems which might arise. But I received no reply."

When the talk then turned to the treaties, the Führer spoke emphatically of the honorable demands of the German Volk, adding:

"There can be no question of shifting any boundary posts. You know my view in respect to Alsace-Lorraine. I have declared once and for all that it would not solve anything to wage war every twenty or thirty years in order to take back provinces which have always caused difficulties for France when they were French and for Germany when they were German. Present-day Germany feels differently on this than the Germany of the past. We do not think in terms of

square kilometers of territory to be conquered. We have the safeguarding of the life of our Volk in mind. What is called for now is work to establish a new social order. People will insinuate that I am seeking only to gain time in order to complete my preparations.

“My answer to them is that my plan is such that the man who is able to attain the goal which I have set for myself will earn a much greater monument in the gratitude of his people than that which a glorious leader could earn after innumerable victories.

“If France and Germany come to an understanding, a great number of neighboring peoples will let out a sigh of relief, and a nightmare would disappear. There would be an immediate reduction of tension, an improvement in the economic relations in all of the countries in Europe. It is up to our two countries to make this dream come true. I am of the opinion that the men who went through the War and who, for the most part, are still at an age when they can be mobilized once more, have a clearer understanding of the dangers which a lack of agreement between the two peoples would cause. The men who went through the War are more open, their attitude is more brutal. And for this reason they dare to look the difficulties in the eye, and that is the only way to solve them more easily. Without regard to diplomatic custom, they must confide their natural fears to one another and disclose these in time to banish the dangers of conflict.”

On November 19, Hitler spent some time in Berlin in the circles of the “fighters of Brzeziny.”²⁶⁴

From November 23 to December 18, he withdrew almost completely from the public eye. A speech scheduled at the anniversary of the organization *Kraft durch Freude* on November 27 in Berlin was cancelled because “Hitler was detained due to political work.”²⁶⁵ Rudolf Hess spoke instead, relaying the Führer’s regards. Due to Hitler’s absence from the political stage, there were persistent rumors that an assassination attempt had been made.

According to the rumor, a relative (a niece or nephew) of General Schleicher had been the perpetrator and had been killed in making the attempt. Hitler’s left arm had been injured. One of his chauffeurs—not, however, Schreck²⁶⁶—had also allegedly been killed.

These rumors were in evidence above all in party circles and had arisen as early as the commemorative festivities on November 9 in Munich. Had the story really been true, it would have been the one and only time an assassin had dared to look Hitler in the eye. All endeavors to shed light on this mysterious affair were in vain.²⁶⁷ After World War II, no one who had been close to Hitler made any official statement on such an attempt, and thus it is assumed that the story was mere myth. The fact remains, however, that Hitler was markedly retired in November and December of 1934, and that various security measures were taken,

such as reinforcing the guards on the Obersalzberg. In all probability, this was due to the Führer's unexpected difficulties brought on by renewed tensions between the Reichswehr and the SS. The Reichswehr insisted upon its Hitler-given right to be "the nation's sole bearer of arms," while the SS leaders, likewise with Hitler's backing, naturally held a different view. As a rule, the longstanding party members perceived the Reichswehr as a stronghold of the *Reaktion* and feared, not without some justification, that the Generals planned to gradually transform the Third Reich into a military dictatorship.

The new crisis which arose in the leadership of state was manifested in obvious signs. One did not even need to turn to the foreign press, for even the German party-line newspapers contained ambiguous denials of differences between the Party and the Reichswehr.²⁶⁸

Reports on the dictator himself were few and far between in the month of December, his volubility almost completely stilled.

On December 4, a decree issued by Hitler was announced in which the Silesian Gauleiter Helmuth Brückner²⁶⁹ was dismissed from office "for behavior detrimental to the Party." His successor was the Gauleiter for Southern Westphalia, Josef Wagner.

On December 5, the State Secretary of the Reich Ministry of Economics, Hitler's old wartime comrade Gottfried Feder, who also held the post of Reich Commissar for Settlement Policy, was dismissed. No reasons were disclosed.²⁷⁰

The following day, Hitler paid a visit to Field Marshal von Mackensen in Frankenwalde near Stettin to congratulate him on his 85th birthday,²⁷¹ accompanied by General von Blomberg, Reich Minister of Defense; General von Fritsch, the Chief of Army Command; and von Neurath, Reich Foreign Minister. Hitler declined making a speech. In the evening, he visited the Geyer film-processing works in Berlin-Neukölln.

On December 10, a picture was published with the following caption: "Adolf Hitler places a one thousand mark bill in Maria Paudler's collecting tin—his donation to the *Winterhilfswerk*."²⁷²

On December 12, Hitler attended the Weimar burial of Dr. Zunkel, who had been an SA Gruppenführer and councillor of state.²⁷³

On December 14, the reclusive dictator made a surprising appearance at the launching of the East Asia steamer *Scharnhorst* in Bremen. He was accompanied by Blomberg, Raeder, von Eltz-Rübenach (Reich Minister of Transportation), and Schacht.²⁷⁴ He then proceeded to Bremerhaven to tour the Lloyd express liner *Europa* and the armored ship *Admiral Scheer*. Here again Hitler made no speeches.

Around 5:00 p.m. on the way back from Bremen to Berlin, Hitler's special train collided near Verden an der Aller with a bus transporting a theater company from Stade which had broken through the crossing gates in the fog. Fourteen persons were killed in the accident. At the burial in Stade on December 17, Hitler had his aide Brückner lay down a wreath and hand over donations to the bereaved.²⁷⁵

On December 18, a "Day of the German Police" was observed throughout Germany. It marked the introduction of the so-called "Deutscher Gruß" (a salute of "Heil Hitler!" with the right arm extended at eye-level)²⁷⁶ in all uniformed police organizations. Hitler delivered a brief address to the Land Police troop which performed a concert in the chancellory courtyard and made WHW donations to the officers' wives.²⁷⁷ In the evening, he watched a television broadcast shown by the State Secretary in the Reich Post Office Department, Dr. Wilhelm Ohnesorge.²⁷⁸

On December 19, Hitler named Dr. Hans Frank, former Reich Commissar of Justice, as a Reich Minister without portfolio, sending him the following handwritten letter:²⁷⁹

Dear Mr. Minister,

Now that the Ministry of Justice of the Reich has been united with that of Prussia and the Reich has assumed the direct supervision of the administration of justice by virtue of the law of December 5, 1934, the task of coordinating the judiciary in the Länder has now been accomplished.

In the Academy for German Law, you have created an exemplary and lasting institution for the work of revising the legal system which has enabled you to aid in enforcing the National Socialist Weltanschauung in every sector of the revision of the law without limitation to the judiciary in a narrower sense. May I extend to you my warmest thanks and my special appreciation for your untiring and successful efforts as Reich Commissar for the Coordination of the Judiciary in the Länder and for the revision of the legal system and, at the same time, hereby declare that the task which was assigned to you by the immortal Reich President von Hindenburg on April 22, 1933 is now completed. At this time I also appoint you to the position of Reich Minister without portfolio in the Reich Government.

Mit deutschem Gruß,

Adolf Hitler

On December 20, Hitler once again received French front-line soldiers of the *Union Federale*, President Pichot, and Secretary-General Randoux.²⁸⁰

On December 22, Hitler arrived in Cuxhaven at 7:40 a.m. aboard a special train in order to congratulate the crew of the Hapag steamer *New York* which had rescued sixteen sailors from the sunken Norwegian ship

Sisto. Hitler thanked Commodore Kruse and delivered the following address on the ship's promenade deck:²⁸¹

My dear Commodore!

I have come to express to you on behalf of the entire German nation its thanks for your outstanding deed. The entire German Volk is proud of you! And you have also done a great service to German navigation! You have borne witness to the world that German ships' crews are brave, fearless and valiant. But you have also shown the world that the German Volk is always ready to provide peaceful assistance.

My congratulations to you, my dear Commodore, on such a crew, and my compliments to the German Volk on such brave men!

One hour after its arrival, Hitler's train left Cuxhaven again for Berlin. On December 24, Hitler spent the noon meal with old party comrades who had congregated in the Wagner Hotel in Munich. Making a brief speech, he stressed that an unshakable will, a consciousness of power, and an unflinching onward march would make Germany great, as it had the Movement.²⁸²

At the close of 1934, Hitler issued the following order to the Wehrmacht:²⁸³

To the Wehrmacht!

May I extend my best wishes for the new year to all members of the Wehrmacht. They are coupled with my gratitude and my appreciation for the work they have accomplished in the past year in loyal and exemplary fulfillment of their duties.

In the future, our service shall have but one goal: Germany's resurrection in a peace characterized by equal rights, honor and secure freedom.

Berlin, December 31, 1934

Der Führer und Reichskanzler:
Adolf Hitler

One might have expected a lengthier text from the new Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces on the occasion, but Hitler's withdrawn attitude had not changed. Thus the year 1934—a year which had seen the National Socialists achieve their domestic goal—closed not in triumph, but in a mood of crisis.

Crises at home and abroad were indeed characteristic of the Third Reich in the years 1934 to 1939, when they followed in nearly uninterrupted sequence. For the most part, Hitler deliberately provoked them, while others were caused by his typical impatience. He could not tolerate waiting for a matter to ripen gradually on its own, but was driven onward by his inner demon. Although initially he had seemed to race breathlessly from one triumph to the next, his behavior increasingly

December 31, 1934

came to resemble a precarious balancing act. Indeed, he himself had once spoken of the “instinctive sureness of a sleepwalker” with which he trod the “path assigned to him by Providence.”²⁸⁴

This sureness abandoned him abruptly in September 1939: colliding with reality, he lost his balance and fell.

Introduction

Notes

1. Cf. Heinrich Conrad, *Napoleons Leben. Von ihm selbst* (Stuttgart, 1913); Paul and Gertrude Aretz, *Napoleon I. Mein Leben und Werk* (Basel, 1936).
2. Johannes Penzler, *Die Reden Kaiser Wilhelms II* (3 vols., Leipzig). Vol. I (1890–1895) was published by Reclam ca. 1900, n.d., Vol. II (1896–1900) in 1904; and Vol. III (1901–1905) ca. 1907, n.d. Further speeches, edited by B. Krieger, were also published by Reclam.
3. The expression “Third Reich” was originally a mythological term signifying an ideal *Reich* (empire) of the future, in evidence as early as the Middle Ages. Cf. Julius Petersen, *Die Sehnsucht nach dem Dritten Reich in deutscher Sage und Dichtung* (Stuttgart, 1934). It enjoyed particular popularity in Germany after World War I by virtue of Arthur Moeller van den Bruck’s work *Das Dritte Reich* (Berlin, 1922). Adopted by Hitler’s followers as the aim of their political struggle (one rally song claimed, “Many fell in Munich” and climaxed with the refrain: “There are still thousands fighting for the Third, the Greater German Reich.”). The term was first understood as a sequel to the two previous German empires (the Holy Roman Empire from 962 to 1806, and the Hohenzollern Empire from 1871 to 1918). Throughout Hitler’s rule and thereafter, the “Third Reich” was regarded as identical with the period of National Socialist dictatorship from 1933 to 1945. Hitler himself only occasionally used the expression “Third Reich.” After the *Anschluss* of the Sudetenland territories, he proclaimed, “The birth certificate of the Second Reich was signed by the German Princes. The birth certificate of the Third Reich will be issued and verified by the German Volk.” See below, speech of December 2, 1938. (Footnote references to further remarks made by Hitler which are included in this work are cited by the respective date heading each page in chronological sequence.)
4. Cf. Hermann Rauschning, *Gespräche mit Hitler* (2nd unabr. ed., Vienna, 1973); Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941–42* (Bonn, 1951); *Hitler’s Table Talk, 1941–44* (London, 1953); *Hitler’s Secret Conversations* (New York, 1953).
5. Early sources for Hitler’s speeches in English translation mainly for the years up to 1939: Norman H. Baynes, *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, 1922–1939* (2 vols., Oxford, 1942); Gordon W. Prange, *Hitler’s Words* (Washington, 1943); Count Raoul de Roussy de Sales, *My New Order* (New York, 1941).
6. In his book *Mein Kampf* (Vol. I was published in 1925, Vol. II in 1927), Hitler noted on page 225, “Yet I resolved to become a politician.” This and all subsequent quotations are taken from the 78th to 84th edition (Munich, 1933).—For Hitler’s Munich years after World War I and the beginnings of the National Socialist Movement cf. *ibid.*, pp. 226 ff.; see further Alan Bullock, *Hitler. A Study in Tyranny* (Rev. ed., London,

- 1962), pp. 57 ff.; Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur* (Köln, 1969), pp. 60 ff.; William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London, 1960), pp. 62 ff., 117 ff.; Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler. Eine Biographie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), pp. 155 ff.
7. The term “National Socialist” was originally used by the German Workers’ Party founded in Austria in 1904 (its official title as of May 11, 1918 was the “German National Socialist Workers’ Party of Austria”). Using this party as a model, a lathe operator named Anton Drexler and Karl Harrer, an author and journalist, founded the “German Workers’ Party” in Munich on January 5, 1919 (known from 1920 as the “National Socialist German Workers’ Party”), which Hitler—member number 7—joined in September 1919. Hitler was extremely fond of the expression *national-sozialistisch* and normally declined using the abbreviation “NS.” Ostensibly he was impressed by the mere sound of the word which also had the advantage of denoting the synthesis of nationalist and socialist currents in Germany to which Hitler aspired.
 8. Statement of the former Reich Youth Leader and Gauleiter Baldur von Schirach before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg on May 24, 1946: “My guilt lies in having organized the youth of our Volk for a man who, in the course of long years as Führer and Head of State, had to me always seemed unimpeachable. Yet this man was guilty of murder on millions of counts” (IMT, Blue Series, Vol. XIV, p. 477).
 9. *Mein Kampf*, p. 3: “I had become a little ringleader.”
 10. Cf. August Kubicek, *Adolf Hitler, Mein Jugendfreund* (Graz, 1953), pp. 121 ff.; see also William A. Jenks, *Vienna and the Young Hitler* (New York, 1960).
 11. Cf. Konrad Heiden, *Adolf Hitler* (2 vols., Zurich, 1936–1937), Vol. I, pp. 52 ff.
 12. The *Alldeutscher Verband* was a non-partisan, nationalist Pan-German association founded in 1891 (Chairman in 1908: Heinrich Class, attorney and publisher). Dissolved during the Third Reich.
 13. See also below, pp. 37 ff.
 14. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler writes of the unworldliness of the “völkisch St. Johns of the twentieth century” (p. 398).
 15. Cf. Joseph Greiner, *Das Ende des Hitler-Mythos* (Vienna, 1947).
 16. Although he was an Austrian citizen, Hitler volunteered for the Royal Bavarian Army on August 3, 1914 and, with the permission of the King, joined the First Company of the 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment (also called the “List Regiment” after its Commander) in August 1914. He was awarded the Iron Cross, Second Class, in December 1914 and the Iron Cross, First Class, in August 1918. Cf. Hans Mend, *Adolf Hitler im Felde* (Munich, 1931); Fridolin Solleder, *Vier Jahre Westfront. Geschichte des Regiments List R.I.R.* 16 (Munich, 1932).
 17. Cf. Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hitler wie ich ihn sah. Aufzeichnungen seines Leibfotografen* (München, 1974), pp. 81 ff.; Rauschning, pp. 230 ff., 260 f.; Rudolf Olden, *Hitler* (Amsterdam, 1935), pp. 62, 66; several quotations in *Mein Kampf* and in his speeches.

18. As did, for instance, Prof. Dr. Oswald Bumke (born 1877 in Stolp, died 1950 in Munich). Records of the author.—See also Oswald Bumke, *Erinnerungen und Betrachtungen* (Munich, 1952), pp. 174 ff. For the manic-depressive diagnosis pronounced by Hitler's personal physician, Dr. Theo Morell, see Leonard L. Heston and Renate Heston, *The Medical Casebook of Adolf Hitler. His Illnesses, Doctors and Drugs* (London, 1979), p. 115.
19. Cf. Birger Dahlerus, *The Last Attempt* (London, 1948; *Der letzte Versuch*, München, 1948), cc. 6 and 9; Erich von Manstein, *Verlorene Siege* (Bonn, 1955), p. 572; Heinz Guderian, *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten* (Heidelberg, 1951), p. 376; Rauschnig, pp. 272 f.; Paul Schmidt, *Statist auf diplomatischer Bühne, 1923–45* (Bonn, 1949), p. 297; William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (New York, 1941) pp. 118 f.
20. Cf. Franz Haider, *Hitler als Feldherr* (Munich, 1949), p. 52.
21. Cf. Ernst von Weizsäcker, *Erinnerungen* (Munich, 1950), p. 203.
22. As, for instance, in the speech of September 7, 1937: "The genius consistently stands out from the masses in that he unconsciously anticipates truths of which the population as a whole only later becomes conscious." See below, September 7, 1937.
23. Arthur Weigall, *Alexander the Great* (London, 1933), pp. 16 f.
24. Cf. Guderian, pp. 262, 310 and 402; Heinz Linge, "Kronzeuge Linge," in *Revue*, 51 (1955); Albert Zoller, ed., *Hitler privat. Erlebnisbericht einer Geheimesekretärin* (Düsseldorf, 1949), p. 64; see also Jochen von Lang, ed., *Adolf Hitler. Gesichter eines Diktators* (Hamburg, 1968), a selection of photographs compiled by the Zeitgeschichtliches Bildarchiv Heinrich Hoffmann.
25. Although Hitler regarded the ninth of November as a fateful day evoking memories of the Revolution of 1918, he attempted a putsch on November 8/9, 1923. In the first few days of November 1937, he launched a new foreign policy based on military force; this also foundered. On June 22, 1941, he initiated his Russian campaign on the same date Napoleon had chosen for his catastrophic Russian offensive in 1812.—The train accident described by Hoffmann, pp. 86 ff., did not occur in 1936, but on December 14, 1934. See below, *ibid.*
26. See below, July 3, 1934.
27. Ministers Hugenberg and von Eltz-Rübenach were not prosecuted for resigning in 1933 and 1937 respectively, although their actions were a serious affront to Hitler.
28. On March 13, 1943, Major General Henning von Tresckow planted a time bomb in Hitler's plane on its return flight from Smolensk to East Prussia. However, the detonator malfunctioned. Tresckow committed suicide at the front near Bialystok on July 21, 1944; cf. Fabian von Schlabrendorff, *Offiziere gegen Hitler* (Frankfurt, 1960), pp. 88 ff.
29. See below, November 6, 1933.
30. G. Ward Price, *I Know These Dictators* (London, 1938), pp. 96 f. Ward Price died in England in 1961.
31. Hans Baur, *Ich flog Mächtige der Erde* (Kempten, 1956), pp. 108 ff.

32. See below, November 8, 1939.
33. In a speech in Berlin, Hitler stated: “We had provided for every eventuality from the start.” (See below, January 30, 1941).
34. Henderson’s report to Halifax, cited in *British Blue Book* (London, 1939), No. 69.
35. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 7 and 17 f.;
36. Cf. also Kubicek, pp. 97 ff. and 132 f.
37. *Mein Kampf*, p. 35.
38. See below, April 29, 1945.
39. Ward Price, p. 20.
40. Hitler’s observations on Richard Wagner before the People’s Court of Justice at Munich in 1924; see below, September 7, 1932.
41. Cf. Zoller, p. 58.
42. See below, April 20 to May 1, 1935.
43. Cf. Zoller, pp. 49 f.
44. *Mein Kampf*, p. 21.
45. In 1928, Hitler dictated his *Zweites Buch* (a treatise on questions of foreign policy which had largely been discussed previously in *Mein Kampf*) to Reichsleiter Max Amann, but did not publish it. After World War II, the manuscript was found in the United States and published by the Institut für Zeitgeschichte (*Hitlers Zweites Buch*, Stuttgart, 1961) and simultaneously in English as *Hitler’s Secret Book* (New York, 1961).
46. See below, May 30, 1938.
47. For further references to Hitler’s remarks in this context, see below, Volume IV, Index under “Intellectuals.”
48. See below, speech in Hamburg on August 17, 1934.
49. See below, speech in Nuremberg on September 6, 1938.
50. See below, speech in Munich on November 10, 1938.
51. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 71–73.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 21; repeated on p. 137.
53. See below, speech in Nuremberg on September 14, 1936.
54. See below, March 21, 1933.
55. See below, October 29, 1937. Externally, Hitler had never been a disciple of Germanic cult ideas and rejected Rosenberg’s and Himmler’s “cult” aspirations. Rosenberg’s book *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* was a particular object of his ridicule (see below, September 6, 1938). For Hitler’s religious ideas, see Friedrich Heer, *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler. Anatomie einer politischen Religiosität* (Munich, 1968); see also Picker, c. VII, and Rauschnig, c. IV.
56. “God be with us” was imprinted on the belt buckles of the Imperial Army, the Reichswehr and the National Socialist Wehrmacht.
57. Text of the *Rachelied der Deutschen* (“Germans’ Song of Revenge”) by Ernst Moritz Arndt (1813).
58. Ward Price, p. 17.
59. See below, speech of November 8, 1943.
60. Emanuel *Geibel in Siegeslieder* (1870/71). The German original is, “Und es soll am deutschen Wesen einmal noch die Welt genesen.”

61. Cf. especially Rauschning and Picker.
62. *Mein Kampf*, Epilogue.
63. See below, speech in Vienna on April 9, 1938.
64. See below, speech in Munich on March 14, 1936.
65. See below, speech in Würzburg on June 27, 1937.
66. See below, speech in Hamburg on March 20, 1936.
67. See below, speech in Breslau on July 31, 1937.
68. See below, speech in Regensburg on June 6, 1937.
69. See below, speech in Königsberg on March 25, 1938.
70. See below, speech in Berlin on October 6, 1936.
71. See below, speech in Hamburg on March 20, 1936.
72. See below, speech in Königsberg on March 25, 1938.
73. Eva Braun, born 1912 in Munich, was the daughter of a vocational school teacher. She first met Hitler during her employment with Hitler's photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann (born 1885 in Fürth; died 1957 in Munich) in the early 1930's. In 1932 she attempted suicide in order to tie Hitler more closely. She became his mistress and, on April 29, 1945, his wife. Together with Hitler she committed suicide in the bomb shelter of the Chancellory on April 30, 1945; while she took poison, Hitler chose to shoot himself.
74. Cf. Otto Dietrich, *Zwölf Jahre mit Hitler* (Munich, 1955), pp. 218 ff; Heinz Linge, *Bis zum Untergang. Als Chef despersönlichen Dienstes bei Hitler* (München-Berlin, 1980), pp. 57 ff.
75. An active ingredient in one of these miracle drugs called *Vitamultin Gold*, a preparation manufactured by Morell's pharmaceutical firm, was *Pervitin*, one of the strongest amphetamines available at the time. It was also taken by German pilots in combat during World War II. See also Heston, pp. 82 ff.
76. Matthew 18, 18.
77. *Mein Kampf*, p. 70.
78. Quoted by Rauschning, p. 212.
79. *Mein Kampf* p. 223.
80. The *Dolchstoßlegende* is based upon the inaccurate but widely held view in Germany to the effect that the military defeat in 1918 was due not to the superiority of the enemy forces but a result of events and forces inside the country (e.g. munition workers' strike): the "stab in the back" of the allegedly victorious army. The groundlessness of this claim is best illustrated by the fact that the responsible military leaders, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, had already requested an armistice within 24 hours in September 1918 due to the desperate military situation.
81. Hitler's statement as witness before the Reichsgericht in Leipzig on September 25, 1930; cf. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 26, 1930.
82. See below, speech in Berlin on January 25, 1936.
83. See below, speech in Munich on November 8, 1941.
84. See below, speech in Munich on November 8, 1938.
85. See below, speech of October 20, 1932: "For this Volk I would let myself be beaten to pieces if necessary."

86. See below, speech of September 1, 1939.
87. See below, speech of February 10, 1933.
88. See below, speech of February 24, 1933.
89. See below, speech of October 24, 1933.
90. See below, speech of August 17, 1934.
91. See below, speech of January 30, 1942.
92. See below, speech of March 4, 1933.
93. See below, speech of May 1, 1935.
94. See below, January 27, 1932 to February 10, 1932.
95. See below, October 16, 1933.
96. See below, speech of March 12, 1936.
97. Louis de Jong, *Die deutsche fünfte Kolonne im 2. Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 1952).
98. The swastika was widely distributed as a religious and spiritual symbol throughout the ancient Mesopotamian, Christian and Byzantine world, occurring as well among the Mayas and in Asia, especially in India and Tibet. In Hinduism, the right-hand swastika stands for light and fortune, the left-hand swastika—as used during the Nazi regime—is considered a symbol of the Goddess Kali, of darkness and destruction.
99. Cf. Wilfried Daim, *Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab* (Munich, 1958); Heer, pp. 709–718. The *Ostara* pamphlets represented a primitive mixture of anti-Semitism, mysticism, occultism, the Germanic cult, and pornography.
100. Cf. Rauschnig, pp. 202 ff. and 230 ff.
101. The Thule Order and the Thule Society were established in 1917/18 by the mysterious Baron Rudolf von Sebottendorf (1875–1945). Their leading members included the Munich professor for geopolitics, Karl Haushofer, and his assistant, Rudolf Hess, who later became Hitler's deputy. Cf. Rudolf von Sebottendorf, *Bevor Hitler kam* (Munich, 1934); Dietrich Bronder, *Bevor Hitler kam* (Hanover, 1964), pp. 190 f. and 219 ff.; cf. also Reginald H. Phelps, "Before Hitler Came. The Thule Society and Germanen Orden," in *Journal of Modern History*, XXXV (1963).—Karl Haushofer, born 1869 in Munich, died 1946 in Pähl (Upper Bavaria); Major General in World War I and professor at the University of Munich from 1921 to 1939, was the founder of geopolitics in Germany, with its theory of *Lebensraum* (living space). On his various trips to Asia, he had also come into contact with the esoteric doctrines of Tibet.
102. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 54 f.
103. Hitler's belief in the alleged existence of a clandestine Jewish world government was based upon the so-called "Protocols of the Elders of Zion."
Opinion had it that these were allegedly the records of secret sessions of the Zionist Congresses held at Basel in 1897 with the aim of conspiring, on an international basis, to rule the world. Although revealed as forgeries, the "protocols" circulated throughout the world at the beginning of the 20th century, serving to reinforce anti-Semitic currents. Cf. Gottfried zur Beek, *Die Geheimnisse der Weisen von Zion* (Munich, Eher

- Verlag, 1932); see also Theodor Fritsch, *Die zionistischen Protokolle. Das Programm der internationalen Geheimregierung* (Leipzig, 1924).
104. *Mein Kampf*, p. 70.
 105. Set off in original.
 106. After the takeover, Hermann Rauschnig asked Hitler whether “the Jew” was to be annihilated. Hitler replied: “No. Then we would have to invent him. An enemy who is invisible is not enough; one needs a visible enemy.” Rauschnig, p. 223.
 107. See below, April 1, 1933 and November 9 and 10, 1938.
 108. See below, speech before the Reich Cabinet on March 29, 1933.
 109. See below, speech in Berlin on January 30, 1941.
 110. This remark, to which Hitler refers repeatedly, was made not in his speech of September 1, 1939, but on January 30, 1939; see below, speech of January 30, 1939.
 111. See below, speech of January 30, 1942.
 112. See below, speech in Pocking on October 12, 1932.
 113. For the complete wording of these 25 points, see Walter Hofer, *Der Nationalsozialismus. Dokumente 1933 bis 1945* (Frankfurt, 1957), pp. 28 ff.; see also Gottfried Feder, *Das Programm der NSDAP* (Munich, 1932).
 114. Cf. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 513 f.: “The National Socialist German Workers’ Party received with its program of 25 theses a basis which must remain unshakable. For the majority of followers, the spirit of our Movement lies not so much in a literal interpretation of our basic principles but in the meaning which we are able to vest in them.”
 115. Recorded speech of July 1932; see below, July 15, 1932.
 116. See below, speech of June 6, 1937.
 117. See below, speech of January 30, 1937.
 118. See below, speech of March 21, 1934.
 119. See below, speech of September 2, 1933.
 120. See below, speech of September 20, 1933.
 121. See below, speech of September 14, 1936.
 122. See below, January 27, 1932, Note 28.
 123. Dr. (Horace Greely) Hjalmar Schacht, born 1877 in Tingleff, died 1970 in Munich; Reichsbank President from 1923 to 1930 and 1933 to 1939; a patron of Hitler’s in 1932/33; Reich Minister of Economics from 1935 to 1937; acquitted in Nuremberg in 1946. In order to disguise the inflationary measures required to finance Germany’s arms production, Schacht had proposed that bills be issued by the Reich Ministry of Finance which were accepted by the Metallurgisches Forschungsinstitut (Mefo) and discounted by the Reichsbank. When, in 1939, Schacht refused to further increase the creation of money, Hitler promptly dismissed him.
 124. Franz Pfeffer von Salomon, retired Captain, born 1888 in Düsseldorf; Supreme Commander of the SA from 1926 to 1930.
 125. Ernst Röhm, born 1887 in Munich, retired Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel in Bolivia; Chief of Staff in the SA from 1930; Reich Minister in 1933; murdered in Munich-Stadelheim on July 1, 1934.

126. Gregor Strasser, born 1892 in Geisenfeld, apothecary; murdered on June 30, 1934.
127. Kurt von Schleicher, born 1882 in Brandenburg; General in the Reichswehr; Reich Minister of Defense in 1932; Reich Chancellor from December 12, 1932 to January 28, 1933; murdered on June 30, 1934 in Berlin.
128. Rudolf Hess, born 1894 in Alexandria; Deputy of the Führer (in party matters) in 1933; Reich Minister in 1933; fled to Britain on May 10, 1941; sentenced to life imprisonment by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg in 1946; incarcerated in Berlin-Spandau; died on August 17, 1987.
129. Martin Bormann, born 1900 in Halberstadt, farmer, Head of the Party Office in 1941; allegedly killed when attempting to escape in Berlin on May 2, 1945.
130. From 1919 to 1935, the armed forces of the German Reich were officially called the *Reichswehr*. In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, the Reichswehr was composed of voluntary professional soldiers serving 12-year terms. The *Reichsheer* (Army) was confined to 100,000 men, while the *Reichsmarine* (Navy) was permitted a force of 15,000. A *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) was not permitted, nor were military aircraft, tanks, heavy artillery, or U-boats.
On May 21, 1935, Hitler reinstated general conscription. From this date, the armed forces were officially called the *Wehrmacht*; this name had, however, been in use unofficially since 1933. The Wehrmacht was composed of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and was under the supreme command of Adolf Hitler himself, whose official title was *Oberster Befehlshaber der Wehrmacht*. At the same time, the *Reichswehrministerium* (Reich Ministry of Defense) was aptly renamed *Reichskriegsministerium* (Reich Ministry of War).
131. Werner von Blomberg, born 1878 in Stargard; Reich Minister of Defense from 1933 to 1935; Reich Minister of War from 1935 to 1938; died 1946 in Nuremberg.
132. Werner Freiherr von Fritsch, born 1880 in Benrath; Chief of Army Command and Commander in Chief of the Army from 1934 to 1938; killed in action in 1939 outside Warsaw.
133. Walter von Brauchitsch, born 1881 in Berlin; Commander in Chief of the Army from 1938 to 1941; Field Marshal in 1940; died 1948 in Hamburg.
134. See also below, Appendix to Volume II.
135. Colonel General Friedrich Fromm, dismissed from his post as Commander of the Replacement Army on July 20, 1944; later arrested and shot on March 19, 1945 in the Brandenburg Penitentiary.
136. Heinrich Himmler, born 1900 in Munich, degree in agriculture, Reichsführer SS; Chief of the German Police in 1936; Reich Minister of the Interior in 1943; Commander of the Replacement Army in 1944; committed suicide in 1945 near Lüneburg.
137. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 736–742.
138. *Ibid*, p. 705.
139. See below, speech of October 6, 1939.

140. See below, proclamation to the German Volk of September 3, 1939.
141. See below, speech of October 3, 1941.
142. *Mein Kampf*, p. 154.—For Hitler’s policy of expansion cf. Norman Rich, *Hitler’s War Aims* (2 vols., London 1973–74).
143. Interview with Bertrand de Jouvenel; see below, February 21, 1936.
144. See below, speech of November 21, 1937.
145. See below, speech of November 8, 1940.
146. Cf. Rauschnig, pp. 255 f.—Reference to Alfred Hugenberg, the leader of the DNVP.
147. See below, speech of August 22, 1939.
148. See below, speech of January 30, 1942.
149. Cf. Andre François-Poncet, *The Fateful Years* (London, 1949), p. 193.
150. Dahlerus, c. 6; see also below, August 27, 1939.—Birger Dahlerus was a confidant of Göring’s with influential connections to British government circles; during August 25 and September 4, 1939 Dahlerus flew to Berlin and London for attempts to mediation.
151. See IMT, Blue Series, Vol. X, p. 226; cf. also Schmidt, p. 464 and below, September 3, 1939.—Dr. Paul Otto Schmidt, born 1899 in Berlin, died 1970 in Munich; interpreter and chief interpreter in the German Foreign Office from 1924 to 1945, with the rank of an envoy from 1938.
152. *Mein Kampf*, p. 745.
153. Japan and Bulgaria, for instance, remained neutral in regard to Russia; Finland kept its neutrality in regard to the U.S.A.
154. Winston Churchill, *The Collected Works, Vol. XXI (The War Speeches, Vol. III; London, 1975)*, p. 115.
155. See below, speech of February 20, 1937.
156. See below, speech of October 19, 1932.
157. Fritz Thyssen, born 1873 in Styrum (near Mülheim an der Ruhr), died 1951 in Buenos Aires, a German industrial magnate and the eldest son of August Thyssen, lent strong support to Hitler prior to his accession to power, paving his way to meeting the captains of industry at the Industry Club in Düsseldorf in January 1932 and backing his bid for the office of Chancellor. Thyssen fled to Switzerland on September 2, 1939 and then to France, where he fell into the hands of the Gestapo in 1940. Thyssen was confined to the psychiatric ward of the Babelsberg Sanatorium for several years and subsequently transferred to Oranienburg, Buchenwald and Dachau. He was liberated by the American Army in 1945. (Information courtesy of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich.)
158. Quoted by Olden, p. 37.
159. This was the first film adaptation of the utopian novel, *Der Tunnel*, first published in 1913 in Berlin (quotation taken from the 259th to 283th edition, Berlin, 1931). Bernhard Kellermann (born 1879 in Fürth, died 1951 in Neu-Glienicke near Potsdam) narrates the turbulent events surrounding the construction of a subterranean tunnel under the Atlantic Ocean connecting America and Europe.
160. See below, Volume IV, Index under “Time.”—Kellermann writes in his novel of the “most extraordinary concert of all time” (p. 9); the “boldest

land speculation of all time” (p.112); the “most brazen slavery of all time” (p. 253); the “greatest gangster of all time” (p. 337), etc. Hitler surpassed even Kellermann’s marked use of this superlative. The expression, “the greatest commander of all time” (*der größte Feldherr aller Zeiten*), which became *Gröfaz* in the vernacular, was one superlative Hitler himself did not use.

161. *Mein Kampf* p. 116.
162. Ibid, p. 533. Bethmann-Hollweg was German Reich Chancellor from July 14, 1909 to July 13, 1917.
163. Ibid, p. 534.
164. Ibid, p. 533. David Lloyd George was British Prime Minister from December 10, 1916 to October 19, 1922.
165. Ibid, p. 315. Thomas Woodrow Wilson was President of the United States from March 4, 1913 to March 3, 1921. On January 8, 1918, he issued fourteen guidelines for world peace, the “Fourteen Points.” Hitler frequently made Wilson the butt of his ridicule: in his speech on September 26, 1938, for instance (see below), he called him a “wandering scholar” and on November 8, 1940 (see below) an “American sorcerer-priest.”
166. Ibid, pp. 390 f.
167. Hitler’s own life, particularly in the years from 1939 to 1945, was striking proof of the falsity of this tenet.
168. Wolfgang Kapp, born 1858 in New York, died 1922 in Leipzig, Director-General of the East Prussian agricultural credit banks, launched a nationalist putsch in Berlin on March 13, 1920, which collapsed within few days. The generals of the Reichswehr had sided with the Social Democratic government in power at the time.
169. See below, June 18, 1935.
170. Such as, for instance, the declination of predicate adjectives at the end of a sentence, as in “*Mein Entschluß ist ein unabänderlicher*” (“My decision is an inalterable one”). In radio broadcasts in America during the Second World War, Thomas Mann criticized this and other aspects of Hitler’s Austrian diction.
171. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 530 ff.
172. Ibid.
173. Expression coined by the author.
174. See Linge, in *Revue*, part 15 of a serial, p. 30; see also “Heinrich Hoffmanns Erzählungen,” in *Münchener Illustrierte* (1954/1955) and the series “Das war Hitler,” in *Revue* (Munich, 1952/1953).
175. Information provided by Gau Propagandaleiter Waldemar Vogt (killed in action 1945 in Berlin) to the author on January 3, 1939.—Dr. Joseph Goebbels, born 1897 in Rheydt, Gauleiter of Berlin in 1926; Reich Propagandaleiter of the NSDAP in 1928; Reich Minister of Propaganda in 1933; committed suicide with his wife and children on May 1, 1945 in the Reich Chancellory bunker—Goebbels made this statement in an attempt to impress upon Hitler how intent he was to comply with Hitler’s every wish. In a speech to Kreisleiters in Vogelsang on April 29, 1937,

- Hitler had demanded: “For us, the soul of the Volk must be an instrument upon which we can play” (Bundesarchiv, Koblenz).
176. Cf. Ward Price, pp. 56 f.
 177. See below, speech of August 17, 1934.
 178. Cf. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 600 f.
 179. See below, second speech delivered on March 23, 1933.
 180. Bundesarchiv, Koblenz. Files of the Reich Chancellory, fascicle materials for speeches of the Reich Chancellor (R. 43 II 994).
 181. Hjalmar Schacht, *Abrechnung mit Hitler* (Hamburg, 1948), p. 32.
 182. The *Völkischer Beobachter* was the official party organ of the NSDAP. Originally founded in Munich in 1887 as a weekly with a nationalist slant, it was first called the *Münchner Beobachter*. In December of 1920, the NSDAP bought the paper and began publishing it first biweekly and then daily from 1923. In August of 1923, the oversized format common in the United States was adopted in accordance with Hitler’s wishes. From 1925 to 1933, Hitler himself was listed as editor; subsequently, this role was assumed by Alfred Rosenberg, who had been editor in chief since 1922, and former Captain Wilhelm Weiss took over Rosenberg’s function. As of January 1, 1933, a local edition was published in Berlin (with a respective section on Northern Gaus), while the Munich edition was also issued as a Southern German edition (usually containing a page of news from the Southern Gaus). A Vienna edition went into publication in March of 1938. The three central offices of the *Völkischer Beobachter* in Munich, Berlin and Vienna maintained their own independent editorial staffs and printing presses. Thus the texts—and the publication dates—were not always identical. All quotations in this work have been taken, unless otherwise cited, from the Munich (or, respectively, Southern German) edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter* (abbreviated VB). The last issue was published in Munich on April 30, 1945 (the date of Hitler’s death) but not delivered due to the advance of the American Army (photocopy filed with the Stadtarchiv, Munich).
 183. See below, October 2, 1941.
 184. See below, November 8, 1942.
 185. See below, radio speech of July 20, 1944.
 186. Ward Price, p. 9.
 187. Cf. Zoller, pp. 29 f.
 188. Information reported by Hanna Reitsch before an American Investigation Committee in Oberursel on October 8, 1945. IMT 3734 – PS.
 189. Raeder stated on May 16, 1946 in Nuremberg, “Hitler spoke a great deal, he went quite far afield; above all, he pursued a specific aim in every speech depending on his audience. He was a master at dialectic just as he was a master at bluffing. He used strong language, again depending upon the aim he was pursuing; he allowed his fantasy to roam completely at will, and he often contradicted himself in consecutive speeches. One never knew which were his latest aims and plans. This was extremely difficult to determine after a speech of that sort. His oratory generally made more of an impression on people who seldom heard him

than on those who were already thoroughly acquainted with his manner of speaking." IMT, Blue Series, Vol. XIV, p. 44.—Dr. h.c. Erich Raeder, born 1876 in Wandsbek, was Chief of Navy Command from 1928 to 1943 and Commander in Chief of the Navy from 1935. In 1939 he became Grand Admiral and in 1943 was awarded the honorary title of Generalinspekteur of the Navy; in 1946 he was sentenced to life imprisonment in Nuremberg, incarcerated in Spandau Military Prison and released in 1955 for health reasons. He died 1960 in Kiel.

190. The Italian Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, noted in his diary in respect to Hitler's meeting with Mussolini on April 29 and 30, 1942 in Salzburg, "Hitler talks, talks, talks, talks. Mussolini suffers—he, who is in the habit of talking himself, and who, instead, practically has to keep quiet. On the second day, after lunch, when everything had been said, Hitler talked uninterruptedly for an hour and forty minutes. He omitted absolutely no argument: war and peace, religion and philosophy, art and history. Mussolini automatically looked at his wrist watch, I had my mind on my own business, and only Cavallero, who is a phenomenon of servility, pretended he was listening in ecstasy, continually nodding his head in approval. Those, however, who dreaded the ordeal less than we did were the Germans. Poor people. They have to take it every day, and I am certain there isn't a gesture, a word, or a pause which they don't know by heart. General Jodl, after an epic struggle, finally went to sleep on the divan. Keitel was reeling, but he succeeded in keeping his head up." *The Ciano Diaries, 1939–1943* (New York, 1946), pp. 478 f. Hitler's interpreter, Dr. Paul Schmidt, confirmed Ciano's impression in full; cf. Schmidt, p. 563.

Galeazzo Ciano, conte di Cortellazzo, born in 1903, was Mussolini's son-in-law and became Foreign Minister in 1936. He was executed by Mussolini at Hitler's instigation in 1944.

Colonel General Alfred Jodl, born 1890 in Würzburg; Chief of Operations Staff of the OKW (the High Command of the Armed Forces) during World War II; sentenced to death and hanged in Nuremberg in 1946.

Wilhelm Keitel, born 1882 in Helmscherrode near Gandersheim, Field Marshal, Chief of Staff of the Reich Defense Council (State Secretary) in 1935; Chief of Staff of the OKW from 1938 to 1945; sentenced to death and hanged in Nuremberg in 1946.

191. Cf. for instance, Dahlerus, cc. 6 and 9.
192. Meeting between Hitler and Molotov on November 12/13, 1940; see below, November 12, 1940.
193. Meeting between Hitler and Franco on October 23, 1940; see below, October 23, 1940.
194. World Broadcast on November 12, 1939. Churchill, *Works*, Vol. XIX (*War Speeches*, Vol. I), p. 120.

The Year 1932

Notes

1. In September 1932, SA and SS formations in Mecklenburg conducted joint maneuvers with the National Socialist police force there. Cf. illustrated reports in VB, No. 264, September 20, 1932. See also below, September 15, 1932, note 240.
2. Hitler frequently called himself the drummer of the national movement, as for instance in his closing statement before the Munich People's Court on March 27, 1924: "it was not modesty which moved me to be a 'drummer' then; that is the highest calling; the rest is nothing." Quotation in Dr. Ernst Boepple, *Adolf Hitlers Reden* (Munich, 1933), p. 118. Hitler also cited his mission as "drummer" in his speech to the Industry Club in Düsseldorf on January 27, 1932; see below, January 27, 1932.
3. See below, February 16, 1932.
4. Called *Standarten*.
5. See below, interview of August 16, 1932.
6. Cf. Joseph Goebbels, *Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei* (Berlin, 1934), p. 220.
7. See below, November 8, 1940.
8. The New Year's proclamations of the following years are excerpted to the extent that they contain anything new.
9. Published in VB, No. 1/2, January 1/2, 1932.
10. Ibid.
11. Published in VB, No. 9, January 9, 1932. Dr. h.c. Wilhelm Groener, born 1867 in Ludwigsburg, died 1939 in Berlin; last General Quartermaster in 1918; Reich Minister of Transportation in 1920; Reichswehr Minister in 1928; Reich Minister of the Interior in 1931 (appointed). Dr. Heinrich Brüning, born 1885 in Munster i.W., died 1970 in Norwich, Vt., U.S.A.: Reich Chancellor from 1930 to 1932.
12. In this press release, Hitler withheld the fact that he had also met in Berlin with General Kurt von Schleicher (born 1882 in Brandenburg a. d. H., murdered June 30, 1934 in Berlin). Schleicher had been chief of the ministerial office of the Reich Ministry of Defense since March 1, 1929. Hitler had become acquainted with this influential general through former Captain Ernst Röhm (born 1887 in Munich, murdered July 1, 1934 in Munich). Röhm used these same connections to gain Hitler's access to Reich President von Hindenburg for initial—as it turned out, unproductive—talks on October 10, 1931. During the negotiations in 1932, Hitler relied heavily upon Röhm. Röhm and former Captain Hermann Göring (born 1893 in Rosenheim, committed suicide in Nuremberg in 1946; fighter pilot in World War I and decorated with the pour-le-merité medal) comprised the two assets which he used alternately at the negotiations in Berlin. Schleicher was pursuing his own political goals by cooperating with the NSDAP and believed he could use Hitler and his party for his own designs. He paid for this error with his life.

13. WTB report, January 8, 1932.
14. Report in VB, No. 10/11, January 10/11, 1932.
15. Dr. Alfred Hugenberg, born 1865 in Hanover; Privy Finance Councillor; owner of nationally-oriented newspaper and film companies (UFA); Chairman of the German National People's Party; Reich Minister of Economy, Food and Agriculture in 1933 (resigned June 27, 1933); died 1951 in Kükenbruch near Rinteln.
16. The "national opposition" (National Socialists, German Nationalists, Stahlhelm and Reichslandbund) had consolidated for joint action in Bad Harzburg and formed an action committee, the Harzburg Front, on October 11, 1931.
17. Cf. the account in VB, Nos. 12–14, January 12–14, 1932 and Otto Meissner, *Staatssekretär unter Ebert-Hindenburg-Hitler* (Hamburg, 1950), p. 216; see also Heinrich Brüning, "Ein Brief," in *Deutsche Rundschau*, 70 (1947), No. 7, pp. 2 ff.; Theodor Eschenburg, "Die Rolle der Persönlichkeit in der Krise der Weimarer Republik. Hindenburg, Brüning, Groener, Schleicher," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 9 (1961), pp. 1 ff.; Erich Matthias, "Hindenburg zwischen den Fronten," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 8 (1960), pp. 75 ff.; Thilo Vogelsang, "Neue Dokumente zur Geschichte der Reichswehr 1930–1933," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 2 (1954), pp. 420 ff.; and Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart-Düsseldorf, 1955).
18. Published in VB, No. 14, January 14, 1932.
19. Published verbatim in VB, No. 19, January 19, 1932; see also *Hitlers Auseinandersetzung mit Brüning* (Eher pamphlet, 1932).
20. Published in VB, No. 29, January 29, 1932.
21. Published verbatim in VB, No. 16, January 16, 1932.
22. Excerpt in VB, No. 19, January 19, 1932.
23. Excerpt in VB, No. 20, January 20, 1932.
24. Excerpt in VB, No. 26, January 26, 1932.
25. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 42 (journal entry of February 8, 1932).
26. Excerpt in VB, No. 110, April 19, 1932. The full wording was published by the Eher Verlag in a pamphlet entitled *Vortrag Adolf Hitlers vor westdeutschen Wirtschaftlern im Industrie-Klub zu Düsseldorf* (Adolf Hitler's presentation before German businessmen in the Industry Club, Düsseldorf) (Munich, April 1932). The text published above was taken completely from the Eher pamphlet, including the applause cited.
27. Refers to the world economic crisis of 1931/32.
28. The percentage of Communist voters in Germany, even in the—in this sense, remarkable—Reichstag election of November 6, 1932, never exceeded the figure of 17.06 percent.
29. Hitler's interest in Christianity confined itself to religion's function in supporting the State.
30. The leadership of the Social Democratic Party was no less enthusiastic about war in 1914 than its adherents. However, Hitler chose to ignore this fact.

31. Referring to the Reich Government, i.e. the Reich Parties, at that time called the “system.”
32. Hitler staunchly refused, as did the right-wing parties as a whole, to recognize the military reasons behind the defeat.
33. One of Hitler’s favorite slogans, taken from Theodor Mommsen.
34. The old Holy Roman Empire collapsed in 1806. Between 1806 and 1871, sixty-five years elapsed, not one hundred and fifty.
35. In Hitler’s opinion, the inofficial government at that time was none other than himself and the NSDAP.
36. The announcement of what was called the “Hindenburg Committee” (formed by the First Mayor of Berlin, Heinrich Sahn) was made on February 1, 1932.
37. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 36.
38. VB, No. 31, January 31, 1932.
39. Published verbatim in VB, No. 43, February 12, 1932.
40. Report, *ibid*.
41. For discussions of Hitler’s Austrian citizenship and, respectively, attempts to expel him in 1924/1925, see Franz Jetzinger, *Hitlers Jugend. Phantasie, Lügen und die Wahrheit* (Vienna, 1957) and D.C. Watt, “Die bayerischen Bemühungen um Ausweisung Hitlers 1924,” in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 6 (1958), pp. 270–280.
42. Dr. Wilhelm Frick (born 1877 in Alsenz in der Rheinpfalz, hanged 1946 in Nuremberg) participated in the preparations for Hitler’s putsch on November 8, 1923 although he was a civil servant at the Munich Police Headquarters at the time. From January 23, 1930 to April 1, 1931, he was Minister of the Interior and Popular Culture in Thuringia. The cabinet there collapsed in 1931 due to disputes between the NSDAP and the Christian National Peasant and Rural Peoples’s Party (Christlich-Nationale Bauern und Landvolkpartei).
43. The minutes of the meeting are filed at the Geheimes Staatsarchiv in Munich (Ministerial File 1943, A.V. No. 427) and quoted by Rudolf Morsey, “Hitler als braunschweigischer Regierungsrat,” in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 8 (1960), p. 421. This article also contains documentation on the attempt to gain citizenship in Thuringia in 1930 and on the related incidents in Brunswick and Berlin in 1932. See also Hitler’s testimony before the parliamentary investigating committee of the Thuringian Landtag (VB, No. 77, March 17, 1932).
44. Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitgesetz (Law Concerning Citizenship in the Reich and State) of July 22, 1913, § 14. RGBl. 1913, I, p. 586.
45. Since the Brunswick Landtag elections of September 14, 1930, a right-wing government had been in office there with the National Socialist Dietrich Klagges as Minister of the Interior and Popular Culture and the German Nationalist Dr. Werner Küchenthal as Chairman of the Ministry of State.—In the course of 1932, the governments of the following Länder also became National Socialist when Landtag elections took place: Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Anhalt, Oldenburg, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and—for the second time—Thuringia.

46. VB, No. 43, February 12, 1932.
47. Ibid.
48. VB, No. 45/46, February 14/15, 1932.
49. Excerpt in VB, No. 48, February 17, 1932.
50. Names of SPD Reichstag deputies at the time.
51. Published in VB, No. 48, February 17, 1932.
52. A plan designed by the American economist Owen D. Young in 1928 to control German reparation obligations, which was rejected by the German nationalist parties. The Young Plan was signed on June 7, 1929 in Paris.
53. Published in VB, No. 49, February 18, 1932. This issue also contains an account of the speech in Düsseldorf.
54. Cf. VB, No. 55, February 24, 1932.
55. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 50.
56. WTB, February 26, 1932. Hitler was sworn in as a member of the Brunswick legation in Berlin on February 26, 1932 by the Brunswick envoy, Privy Councillor Friedrich Boden.
57. Published verbatim in VB, Special Issue No. 22, February 1932.
58. Published verbatim in VB, No. 61, March 1, 1932.
59. Report in VB, No. 63, March 3, 1932.
60. Report in VB, No. 64, March 4, 1932.
61. Report in VB, No. 65, March 5, 1932.
62. Report in VB, No. 69, March 9, 1932.
63. Ibid.
64. Report in VB, No. 68, March 8, 1932.
65. Ibid.
66. Report in VB, No. 69, March 9, 1932.
67. Report in VB, No. 70, March 10, 1932.
68. Report in VB, No. 71, March 11, 1932.
69. Report in VB, No. 72, March 12, 1932.
70. Report in VB, No. 73/74, March 13/14, 1932.
71. Published in VB, *ibid.*
72. *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, March 13, 1932.
73. Published in VB, No. 73/74, March 13/14, 1932.
74. According to a report in the Berlin periodical *Der Angriff*.
75. The right-wing parties scored only one victory—Mecklenburg-Strelitz—in the Landtag elections which took place at the same time. There they had achieved a majority, eleven German Nationalists and nine National Socialists, and were able to form a right-wing government.
76. Published in VB, No. 75, March 15, 1932.
77. A number of pistol shots were fired at the moving train. See Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 64, and VB, No. 77, March 17, 1932.
78. Report in VB, No. 77, March 17, 1932.
79. Published in VB, *ibid.*
80. See below, October 3, 1941 and April 26, 1942.
81. Association of German Commercial Employees (Deutscher Handlungsgewerkschaften-Verband), a right-wing professional organization.

82. Published in VB, No. 79/80/81, March 19/20/21, 1932.
83. Report in VB, No. 82, March 22, 1932.
84. Published in VB, No. 87/88/89, March 27/28/29, 1932.
85. Published in VB, No. 90, March 30, 1932.
86. Junkers D 1720 piloted by Hans Baur.
87. Landtag elections were scheduled for this day, cf. VB, No. 96, April 5, 1932.
88. "Manifesto" and report on the election speeches delivered on April 3, *ibid.*
89. Reports in VB, *ibid.*
90. Reports in VB, No. 98, April 7, 1932.
91. When Hitler turned against Röhm in 1934, he was just as unscrupulous in citing Röhm's homosexual leanings to justify his actions. See below, July 13, 1934.—Heinrich Hoffmann has quoted Hitler as saying of Röhm: "In a man like Röhm, who lived in the tropics for years, homosexuality must be seen in a different light than with others. Röhm is a valuable factor in the party because of his connections to the Reichswehr. His private life is no concern of mine as long as the necessary discretion is maintained. In any case, I will never reproach him or take any steps on this count." See "Heinrich Hoffmanns Erzählungen," in *Münchener-Illustrierte*, 50 (1954), p. 33.
92. Published in VB, No. 99, April 8, 1932.
93. Röhm had left the Reichswehr as a Captain, but in the course of his work as an instructor in Bolivia (1930), he achieved the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel in the Bolivian Army.
94. Reports in VB, No. 99, April 8, 1932.
95. Published in VB, No. 100, April 9, 1932.
96. *Ibid.* This statement led to controversy with the authorities in Brunswick, who were not willing to accept the salary assignment; Morsey, pp. 444 ff.
97. Published in VB, No. 100, April 9, 1932.
98. Report in VB, *ibid.*
99. Reports on the election speeches on April 8 in VB, No. 101/102, April 10/11, 1932.
100. WTB report, April 4, 1932.
101. Strangely enough, Adolf Gustav Winter, plant lawyer in Grossjena near Naumburg, had run on the first ballot as representative of a splinter group which demanded that the old thousandmark bills be appreciated to their prewar value. He had received 111,000 votes on March 13, 1932.
102. Published in VB, No. 103, April 12, 1932.
103. RGB1. 1933, I, No. 22, p. 175.
104. For details of Schleicher's role before and after the SA ban, see Kurt Caro and Walter Oehme, *Schleichers Aufstieg* (Berlin, 1932/1933), pp. 222 ff.; see also Hans Otto Meissner and Harry Wilde, *Die Machtergreifung* (Stuttgart, 1958), pp. 85 ff.
105. Published in VB, No. 106, April 15, 1932.
106. In reality, this phrase is from Karl Bröger, *Kamerad als wir marschieret. Kriegsgedichte* (1918) p. 3: "Herrlich zeigt es aber define grösste Gefahr,

- dass dein ärmster Sohn auch dein getreuester war. Denk es, o Deutschland." [But it is magnificent proof of your greatest threat: that your poorest son was the most loyal one. Oh Germany, do not forget!]
107. The original contains a blank at this spot. Apparently Hitler had a word removed during the printing which he had found too offensive.
 108. Quoted verbatim by Caro-Oehme, p. 230.
 109. Excerpt in VB, No. 107, April 16, 1932.
 110. Reports in VB, No. 110, April 19, 1932.
 111. VB, No. 110, April 19, 1932 and Morsey, p. 444.
 112. Reports in VB, No. 111, April 20, 1932.
 113. Reports in VB, No. 112, April 21, 1932.
 114. This Landtag election took place on May 29, 1932. However, at this time Hitler had more pressing things to do than keeping his promise to visit Masovia.
 115. Reports in VB, No. 113, April 22, 1932.
 116. Reports on the speeches of April 21 in VB, No. 114, April 23, 1932.
 117. Report in VB, No. 115/116, April 24/25, 1932.
 118. Report *ibid*.
 119. Report *ibid*.
 120. These were the Landtag elections in Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg, and Anhalt, and the elections to the City Parliament of Hamburg.
 121. A coalition government was formed in Anhalt by the National Socialists and German Nationalists under the National Socialist Minister-President Freyberg.
 122. The percentage of National Socialist voters was considerably higher in Northern Germany than in the South and particularly in Bavaria.
 123. Published in VB, No. 117, April 26, 1932.
 124. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 89.
 125. Published in VB, No. 122/123, May 1/2, 1932.
 126. Report in VB, *ibid* ("Adolf Hitler and the Reich leadership have instructed Attorney Dr. Hans Frank II, Munich, . . ." etc.). The suit was rejected.—Dr. Hans Frank, born 1900 in Karlsruhe, was Reich Minister from 1934 to 1945 and Governor-General of Poland from 1939 to 1945; he was hanged in Nuremberg in 1946.
 127. Hitler purchased "Haus Wachenfeld," which had been built on the Obersalzberg in 1916/17 by the Councillor of Commerce Winter, with the aid of Dietrich Eckart, a National Socialist writer and staunch anti-Semite. Initially, the house was held in the name of Angela Raubal, Hitler's half-sister, who also ran the household until 1935. The building was remodeled several times, most extensively upon the addition of the large "Berghof" annex in 1935. This was done not so much for purposes of prestige but rather in order to create inconspicuous private quarters for Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun on the second floor. The ground floor contained large reception and conference rooms; a huge picture window took up nearly the entire front of the building. This room was the site of numerous political meetings, among them the conferences which were held in 1938 with the English Prime Minister, Chamberlain,

- the Austrian Chancellor, Schuschnigg, and others.—In the near proximity of the Berghof, there arose a multitude of administrative buildings, SS quarters, buildings for party leaders, etc. On April 25, 1945, an Allied bomb raid destroyed the Berghof and most of the surrounding structures. The ruins were dynamited in 1952. Only the terrace and its supports are still recognizable today. Cf. Josef Geiss, *Obersalzberg. Die Geschichte eines Berges von Judith Platter bis heute* (Berchtesgaden, 1960); see also Maria Rhomberg-Schuster, *The Obersalzberg. Historical Snapshots* (Salzburg, 1957).
128. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 93.
 129. Report in VB, No. 142, May 21, 1932.
 130. Reports in VB, No. 143/144, May 22/23, 1932.
 131. Report in VB, No. 145, May 24, 1932.
 132. Note in VB, No. 149, May 28, 1932.
 133. Report in VB, No. 147/148, May 26/27, 1932.
 134. Report in VB, No. 149, May 28, 1932.
 135. Hitler's remarks in the guest book of the cruiser *Köln*, see below, August 11, 1935.
 136. Reports in VB, No. 150/151, May 29/30, 1932.
 137. Report in VB, No. 152, May 31, 1932.
 138. Franz von Papen, born 1879 in Werl, died in 1969 in Obersasbach. From 1921 he was a deputy of the Center Party in the Prussian Landtag. The Herrenklub was a posh influential organization in Berlin.
 139. Konstantin Freiherr von Neurath, born 1873 in Klein-Glattbach (Württemberg), was Reich Foreign Minister from 1932 to 1938; Reich Minister from 1938 to 1945; Reich Protector of Bohemia-Moravia from 1939 to 1943; in 1946 he was sentenced in Nuremberg to fifteen years imprisonment and subsequently transferred to Spandau Military Prison. He was released in 1954 and died 1956 in Enzweihingen.
Johann Ludwig Graf Schwerin von Krosigk, born 1887 in Rathmannsdorf, died 1977 in Essen, was Reich Minister of Finance from 1932 to 1945. He was sentenced to ten years imprisonment in the "Wilhelmstrasse Proceedings" in 1949 and released in 1951.
Paul Freiherr Eltz von Rübenach, born 1875 in Wahn near Cologne, died 1943 in Linz am Rhein, was Reich Minister of Postal Services and Transportation from 1932 to 1937.
Dr. Franz Gürtner, born 1881 in Regensburg, died 1941 in Berlin, was Reich Minister of Justice from 1932 to 1941.
 140. VB, No. 155, June 3, 1932.
 141. Report in VB, No. 154, June 2, 1932.
 142. Report in VB, No. 156, June 4, 1932.
 143. Report in VB, No. 161, June 9, 1932.
 144. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 106.
 145. RGBl. 1932, 1, No. 33, p. 255.
 146. RGBl. 1932, 1, No. 34, p. 257.
 147. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 109 and VB, No. 162, June 10, 1932.
 148. Report in VB, No. 162, June 10, 1932.

149. Report in VB, No. 166, June 14, 1932.
150. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 110 and Meissner-Wilde, *Machtergreifung*, p. 88. Werner von Alvensleben, a brother of the Herrenklub chairman, was a political gambler. On January 29, 1933 he spread the rumor that the Reichswehr was on the verge of a putsch (which resulted in Schleicher's alerting the Potsdam garrison to prevent Hitler from forming a cabinet). He also drew attention to himself in connection with an assassination attempt on the Austrian politician Dr. Steidle. Hitler had him arrested on June 30, 1934 in connection with the Röhm Purge, but he was not shot. See below, July 13, 1934.
151. Report in VB, No. 167, June 15, 1932.
152. Report in VB, No. 168, June 16, 1932.
153. Report in VB, No. 169, June 17, 1932.
154. Report in VB, No. 170, June 18, 1932.
155. Ibid.
156. Decree to Prevent Political Riots of June 14, 1932. RGB1.1932, I, pp. 297ff.
157. Published in VB, *ibid.*
158. Excerpt from the account cited in VB, No. 177, June 25, 1932.
159. Published in VB, No. 175, June 23, 1932.
160. Before the Prussian Landtag election on April 24, 1932, the SPD and the Center had amended the standing orders to provide that an absolute majority was required to elect the Minister-President. Prior thereto, a Minister-President could also be elected by a simple majority: a provision which would have benefited the National Socialists.
161. Report in VB, No. 178/179, June 26/27, 1932.
162. Report in VB, No. 182, June 30, 1932.
163. Report in VB, No. 187, July 5, 1932.
164. Report in VB, No. 190, July 8, 1932.
165. Report in VB, No. 191, July 9, 1932.
166. Report in VB, No. 192/193, July 10/11, 1932.
167. Report in VB, No. 194, July 12, 1932.
168. At that time, Hitler wore a simple brownshirt bearing no insignia but with brown leather shoulder straps. Wearing shoulder straps was a privilege reserved for the National Socialist fighting formations, i.e. the SA, the SS, the HJ, etc. as opposed to the purely political party leaders. Even the police in most of the German Länder wore shoulder straps at that time, while soldiers did not. Hitler's two decorations, the Iron Cross First Class and the bronze or black badge awarded to wounded soldiers, were fastened onto the brownshirt, which was worn with a swastika armband. Hitler wore brown uniform trousers tucked inside black knee boots with soft legs. As a general rule, he wore no head covering at that time other than an occasional leather driving or flying cap when he was traveling in bad weather. He then also donned the light-colored trenchcoat with a belt of the same material. Only in 1933 did he begin wearing a tunic and beret.
169. This was the first election giving German party leaders the chance to speak on the radio. In place of the scheduled speech of Adolf Hitler, the

- radio message on July 29, 1932 was delivered by Gregor Strasser (born 1892 in Geiselfeld, Upper Bavaria, murdered on June 30, 1934 in Berlin). Strasser, an apothecary by profession, was then Reichsorganisationsleiter (Head of Political Organization). His brother Otto (born 1897 in Windsheim, died 1974 in Munich) had separated from Hitler in 1930.—Goebbels had delivered a short radio speech on July 18, 1932.
170. The phonograph record was distributed by the Musikverlag Franz Eher Nachf. in Munich from July 20, 1932. This “brown record” cost 5.00 RM and had a playing time of 8 1/2 minutes.
 171. Reports in VB, No. 199/200, July 17/18, 1932.
 172. Reports in VB, No. 201, July 19, 1932.
 173. Report in VB, *ibid.*
 174. Report in VB, No. 203, July 21, 1932.
 175. *Ibid.*
 176. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 131.
 177. Report in VB, No. 203, July 21, 1932.
 178. The flying boat was piloted by the later NSFK Corps Leader Christiansen.
 179. Reports in VB, No. 204, July 22, 1932.
 180. Robert Hugh Benson, *The Lord of the World* (London, 1907).
 181. On July 17 a great many had died or been wounded, particularly in Altona (“Altonaer Blutsonntag”).
 182. RGBl. 1932, I, No. 48, pp. 377/378.
 183. Gerd von Rundstedt, born 1875 in Aschersleben, died 1953 in Hanover; Field Marshal from 1940; Commander in Chief in the West from July 1942 to July 1944 and from September 1944 to March 1945.
 184. Reports in VB, No. 205, July 23, 1932.
 185. Reports in VB, No. 206/207, July 24/25, 1932.
 186. Reports in VB, No. 208, July 26, 1932.
 187. *Ibid.*
 188. Reports in VB, No. 210, July 28, 1932.
 189. Reports in VB, No. 211, July 29, 1932.
 190. Reports in VB, No. 212, July 30, 1932.
 191. Reports in VB, No. 213, July 31, 1932.
 192. Reports in VB, No. 214/215, August 1/2, 1932.—It was alleged that assassination attempts had been made on Hitler in Gera and Fürth. Cf. VB, *ibid.*, and Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 135.
 193. Published in VB, *ibid.*
 194. Prior to World War I, von Papen had belonged to the Fifth Uhlán Regiment. In 1913 he was made Captain (G.S.) and by the end of the War in 1918 had achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and Chief of Staff of the Fourth Turkish Army. See *Kürschners Handbuch Deutscher Reichstag* (1933).
 195. Cf. Meissner-Wilde, *Machtergreifung*, p. 95 and Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, pp. 138/139.
 196. The American journalist H.R. Knickerbocker, who talked with Hitler in the course of summer 1932, described him as a potential chancellor. Cf. H.R. Knickerbocker, *Kommt Europa wiederhoch?* (Berlin, 1932), p. 204.

197. Published in VB, No. 225, August 12, 1932.
198. Cf. VB, No. 218, August 5, 1932.
199. Cf. Meissner-Wilde, *Machtergreifung*, p. 96.
200. *Kölnische Zeitung*, August 13, 1932, evening edition.
201. According to the Constitution, the Reich Government did not have the right to make an appointment to the office of Prussian Minister-President.
202. Apparently, von Papen and Schleicher had Strasser in mind.
203. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*; p. 144.
204. Hitler could hardly have demanded “complete power.” In the Weimar Republic, this was distributed among various bodies: the Reichstag, the Reich President (who was simultaneously Commander in Chief of the Reichswehr), and the Reich Chancellor. On August 13, Hitler had demanded the chancellorship for himself and the Ministry of the interior for his party—a demand which he raised repeatedly and which was then fulfilled on January 30, 1933. Von Papen and Schleicher had apparently informed the Reich President on August 13 that Hitler wanted to fill the entire cabinet with his party friends. This is the only conceivable explanation for Hindenburg’s—incorrectly applied—phrase, “complete power.”
205. This opportunity did arise: Schleicher was murdered on June 30, 1934; see below, June 30 and July 1, 1934.
206. The texts of the official communiqué and the statement of the NSDAP were published in WTB, August 14, 1932.
207. Had one actually intended to grant the NSDAP “influence proportionate to its size,” the National Socialists, comprising the strongest party, should have been awarded the leadership of the government, for this had at least been the established custom.
208. Rbhm’s proclamation to the men of the SA and SS of August 13, 1932. Published in VB, No. 230, August 17, 1932.
209. Palace revolution of the radical Berlin SA Führer, former Colonel Stennes, in protest against Hitler’s legal route.
210. This right-wing industrialist newspaper was published in Essen and supported Hitler during von Papen’s chancellorship. It maintained close ties to the Reich Press Chief of the NSDAP, Dr. Otto Dietrich (born 1897 in Essen, died 1952 in Düsseldorf) for family reasons: Dietrich was the son-in-law of the publisher, Dr. ReismannGrone, and there is little reason to doubt that Dietrich himself was the unnamed “representative” of the *Rheinisch Westfälische Zeitung* to which Hitler granted this so-called interview, the text of which was also published in VB, No. 230, August 17, 1932.
211. According to the NSDAP’s own figures, at this time (August 15, 1932) National Socialist “dead and martyred” (*Gefallene und Blutzengen*) totalled 192, if one generously extended the list to include remote pioneers of the movement such as Albert Leo Schlageter and Dietrich Eckart. See the “Roll of Honor of Those Murdered for the Movement” (*Ehrenliste der Ermordeten der Bewegung*) in VB, No. 312, November 8, 1937.

212. The interview was published in the *Berliner Nachtausgabe* on August 19, 1932 and in VB, No. 234/235, August 21/22, 1932.
213. NSK report of August 20, 1932.
214. RGBl. 1932, I, No. 54, p. 403. This emergency decree served to pave the way for Hitler's bloody special courts instituted to try political opponents.
215. Term coined by the Germans for the Polish who fought in the Upper Silesian border conflicts of 1920/1921.
216. Report issued by the Press Office of the NSDAP on August 23, 1932.
217. Published in VB, No. 327, August 24, 1932.
218. "If you won't be a comrade, you know what I'll do? I'll come and smash your skull in two."
219. SA Obergruppenführer Edmund Heines, born 1897 in Munich, murdered on June 30, 1934.
220. The Prussian State Ministry (von Papen-Bracht) commuted the sentences by an act of clemency on September 2, 1932. After Hitler's accession to power, the convicted men were released but no longer played any part in politics. The author spoke with two of these men in April 1935.
221. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 152.
222. The speech was published in VB (No. 244, August 31, 1932) only in excerpts and, in part, in indirect speech. Other National Socialist newspapers, as for instance the Berlin publication *Der Angriff* and *Der SA-Mann*, printed longer segments.
223. Prior to this session, Hitler had sent a telegram to Stöhr, the National Socialist Vice President of the Reichstag at the time, who normally would have been considered for the presidency, in which he extended his gratitude and best wishes for Stöhr's recovery from an fictitious illness (printed in VB, No. 245, September 1, 1932). In reality, Hitler preferred to appoint a more presentable and skillful figure—i.e. Göring—to this key office.
224. Following the elections of July 31, 1932, the government had ordered a four-week truce during which public rallies were prohibited.
225. Printed in VB, No. 247, September 3, 1932.
226. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 155.
227. Excerpt in VB, No. 250, September 6, 1932.
228. Report in VB, No. 251, September 7, 1932.
229. Excerpt from the (incomplete) wording published in VB, No. 253, September 9, 1932. The portion left out in the VB is quoted from the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* below; see September 7, 1932.
230. Allusion to the expulsion of German optants from the Polish Corridor and Upper Silesia after World War I. The number is greatly exaggerated.
231. Following Richard Wagner's tombstone. Hitler had declared before the Munich People's Court of justice on March 27, 1924: "The first time I stood at Wagner's grave, my heart overflowed with pride that here lay a man who had refused to have written on his tombstone: Here lies Privy Councillor Music Director His Excellency Baron von Wagner. I was

- proud that this man and so many men in German history have been satisfied to hand down only their names to posterity.” (Cf. Boepple, p. 118).
232. Hitler instantly realized that he had gone too far with this affront to Hindenburg: the entire passage was omitted when the speech was published in VB (No. 253, September 9, 1932). However, it was printed in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (No. 244, September 8, 1932) and other Munich papers (*Bayerische Staatszeitung*, *Bayerischer Kutier*, *Neue Bayerische Volkszeitung*).
233. The interview was published in the *Mfinchener Post*, No. 252, September 11, 1932.
234. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof* p. 160.
235. Ernst Torgler, floor leader of the KPD, was indicted for allegedly taking part in the burning of the Reichstag but acquitted by the Supreme Court.
236. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 162.
237. Report in VB, No. 259, September 15, 1932.
238. Report in VB, No. 261, September 17, 1932.
239. WTB, September 27, 1932.
240. VB, No. 264, September 20, 1932. The Gauleiter of Mecklenburg, Hildebrandt, commented on the military action taken in his Gau during the critical fall months of 1932 in a speech in Schwerin on June 1, 1935. Records of the author.
241. RGl. 1932, I, No. 66, p. 485.
242. Report in VB, No. 278, October 4, 1932.
243. Report in VB, No. 279, October 5, 1932.
244. Excerpt in VB, No. 282, October 8, 1932.
245. Published in VB, No. 287, October 13, 1932. According to the VB report, 20,000 people were present at this speech. The *Münchener Post* (No. 240, October 15/16) stated that there were 5,000 attending at most.
246. Allusion to von Papen.
247. Report in VB, No. 287, October 13, 1932.
248. WTB, October 11, 1932 (a number of slight changes in wording have been made on the basis of the author’s notes).
249. Reports in VB, No. 289, October 15, 1932.
250. Reports in VB, No. 290/291, October 16/17, 1932.
251. Report in VB, No. 292, October 18, 1932. At a “German Day” celebration in Coburg in 1922, National Socialists beat up their opponents.
252. VB, No. 295, October 21, 1932. Allegedly 10 million copies were printed.
253. Reports in VB, No. 292, October 18, 1932.
254. Quoted in the *Münchener Post*, No. 273, November 24, 1932.
255. Reports in VB, No. 293, October 19, 1932.
256. Report in VB, No. 294, October 20, 1932.
257. Reports in VB, No. 295, October 21, 1932.
258. Report in VB, No. 296, October 22, 1932.
259. Reports in VB, No. 299, October 25, 1932.
260. Ibid.
261. Reports in VB, No. 300, October 26, 1932.

262. Published in VB, No. 301, October 27, 1932.
263. Reports in VB, *ibid.*
264. Dr. Erwin Bumke, born 1874 in Stolp, committed suicide 1945 in Leipzig. Brother of the psychiatrist Prof. Dr. Oswald Bumke (1877–1950).
265. Reports in VB, No. 302, October 28, 1932.
266. Reports in VB, No. 304/305, October 30/31, 1932.
267. The son of Kaiser William II, SA Obergruppenführer, born 1887 in Potsdam, died 1949 in Stuttgart.
268. WTB, October 29, 1932.
269. Reports in VB, No. 306/307, November 1/2, 1932.
270. *Ibid.*
271. *Ibid.*
272. Reports in VB, No. 308, November 3, 1932.
273. Report in VB, No. 309, November 4, 1932.
274. Reports in VB, No. 310, November 5, 1932.
275. Excerpt in VB, No. 311/312, November 6/7, 1932.
276. Reports in VB. Telegram edition, November 7, 1932.
277. Quoted in Baur, p. 93.
278. Published in the *Nassauer Volksblatt*, November 8, 1932. The *Völkischer Beobachter* was banned from November 8–14, 1932 due to an article against von Papen.
279. The entire correspondence between Hitler, von Papen, Hindenburg and State Secretary Meissner in November 1932 and the official communiqués were published in VB, No. 331, November 26, 1932 and in all major German daily papers at the same time. Also cited in Fritz Poetzsch-Heffter, *Vom Staatsleben unter der Weimarer Verfassung*, Jahrbuch des öffentlichen Rechts, Vol. 21 (1933/1934), pp. 163 ff.
280. The hypothesis of Meissner-Wilde (*Machtergreifung*, p. 108) that Goebbels was the real author of this letter is unfounded. Hitler required neither prompters for his speeches nor ghostwriters for his letters, and Goebbels did not have the stature required to draft this type of correspondence. In fundamental matters, Hitler accepted no proposals from third parties, particularly not from Goebbels, for whom he harbored a deep mistrust. Goebbels' attitude toward Hitler was that of a servant to a dearly beloved master. He might have allowed himself a remark upon occasion, but he immediately withdrew to his place if he had failed to strike the right note. On December 13, 1932, Goebbels stated in the Berlin periodical, *Der Angriff* "I may stress, as so often before, that I do not represent any particular direction in the Party. We have only one single direction, and that is the one the Führer determines." He remained true to this principle, following Hitler to the end: he was the only Unterführer who literally breathed the same dying breath as his leader.
281. Cf. Meissner-Wilde, *Machtergreifung*, p. 111 ff.
282. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 114.
283. Hjalmar Schacht, at that time former President of the Reichsbank, gave this interview to the editor-in-chief of the *Nordwestdeutsche Zeitung* in Bremerhaven, Wilhelm Georg, on November 22, 1932.

284. This refers to the decision of the Constitutional Court of October 25, 1932 regarding the powers of the Reich Commissar in Prussia; see above, October 25, 1932.
285. At that time, an NSDAP/Center coalition would have been possible without the German Nationalists.
286. This refers to the dissolution of the Reichstag and the calling of a new election.
287. Meissner-Wilde, *Machtergreifung*, p. 129.
288. Goebbels announced on November 25, 1932 at a rally in Berlin that it would be quite in order were von Papen to return. At least one had grown used to him. "Gott erhalte Franz den Papen" ("Papen" bearing a resemblance to the word "Papst" which means "Pope" in German), he declared, parodying the former Austrian national anthem, "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser."
289. Cf. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 210.
290. Published in VB, No. 331, November 26, 1932.
291. Cf. Goebbels, *ibid.*
292. Report in VB, No. 334, November 29, 1932.
293. WTB, November 29, 1932.
294. The version circulating in the press at the time, i.e. that Göring had hauled Hitler off the train at Jena on November 30 to prevent him from going to Berlin to see Schleicher, is not credible. Göring did not travel to Weimar until a few hours later.
295. Eugen Ott, born in 1889 in Rottenburg, was Department Head in the Reich Ministry of Defense in 1931; military attaché in Tokyo in 1934, Major General in 1937; and Ambassador to Japan from 1938 to 1943.
296. Cf. Meissner-Wilde, *Machtergreifung*, pp. 123–124; see also Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 214.
297. Reports in VB, No. 338, December 3, 1932.
298. Reports in VB, No. 339/340, December 4/5, 1932.
299. Reports in VB, No. 341, December 6, 1932.
300. Walter von Reichenau, born 1884 in Karlsruhe, died 1942 while in a transport returning from Russia. Chief of the Ministerial Office (State Secretary) in the Reich Ministry of Defense in 1933; Commander in Wehrkreis VII (Munich) in 1936; Field Marshal in 1940. Hitler's letter is quoted verbatim in Thilo Vogelsang, "Hitlers Brief an Reichenau vom 4.12.1932," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 8 (1939), pp. 433 ff.
301. The Reichswehr maintained close connections to the Red Army prior to 1933; cf. Edward Hallett Carr, *German-Soviet Relations between the Two World Wars 1919–1939* (Baltimore, 1951).
302. Report in VB, No. 342, December 7, 1932.
303. See below, November 8, 1941.
304. Karl von Litzmann was born 1850 in Neu Globson and died there in 1936. General of the Infantry, secured the breakthrough at Brzeziny on the Eastern Front in 1914 with the Third Guards Division.
305. For Litzmann's role in the action of June 30, 1934, see below, June 30 and July 1, 1934.

306. At that time, this was Dr. Bumke, who had already won Hitler's favor on October 25, 1932 for his Constitutional Court judgment against von Papen.
307. Cf. H.R. Knickerbocker, p. 204 ff. (interview with Gregor Strasser).
308. Strasser was murdered on June 30, 1934; see below, June 30 to July 13, 1934.
309. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 220.
310. VB, No. 345, December 10, 1932.
311. Gottfried Feder, born 1883 in Würzburg, author of the pamphlet, *Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft*, State Secretary in the Reich Ministry of Economics from 1933 to 1934, died 1941 in Munich.
312. VB, No. 346/347, December 11/12, 1932.
313. See below; speech of January 3, 1935 to the "Deutsche Führerschaft."
314. Indignation within the SA against Hitler's legal course. Hitler's dismissal of the Supreme Commander of the SA, former Captain Pfeffer von Salomon.
315. Published in VB, No. 346/347, December 11/12, 1932.—Dr. Robert Ley, born 1890 in Niederbreitenbach, chemist; Leader of Staff of the Political Organizations of the NSDAP in 1932; Leader of the DAF from 1933 to 1945. Committed suicide in Nuremberg in 1945.
316. Published in VB, No. 348, December 13, 1932.
317. Ibid.
318. Report in VB, No. 353/354, December 18/19, 1932.
319. Reports in VB, No. 355, December 20, 1932.
320. Published in VB, No. 356, December 21, 1932.
321. "I once had a comrade," the first line of a melancholy German soldier's song.
322. See below, speech of April 9, 1938.
323. See below, November 8, 1940.

The Year 1933

Notes

1. See below, January 30, 1933.
2. See above, October 16, 1932.
3. See below, speech of July 12, 1933.
4. See above, speech of September 7, 1932.
5. RGBI. 1933, I, p. 43.
6. RGBI. 1933, I, p. 43.
7. RGBI. 1933, I, p. 103.
8. RGBI. 1933, I, p. 141.
9. See below, March 23, 1933.
10. RGBI. 1933, I, p. 153.
11. RGBI. 1933, I, p. 173.
12. RGBI. 1933, I, p. 479.
13. See below, March 23 to 28, 1933.
14. See below, July 6 and 8, 1933.
15. See below, May 17, 1933.
16. See below, October 14, 1933.
17. Mussolini became Prime Minister on October 28, 1922 and dictator in 1925. In 1929 he was able to conclude the Lateran Treaty with the Vatican.
18. Printed verbatim in VB, No. 1, January 1, 1933.
19. Excerpted in VB, No. 4, January 4, 1933.
20. Kurt Freiherr von Schröder, born 1889; died 1965 in Hamburg.
21. Wilhelm Keppler, born 1882 in Heidelberg, died 1960; State Secretary in 1938.
22. The memorandum was signed by Kurt von Schröder, Hjalmar Schacht, Fritz Thyssen, and a considerable number of well-known industrialists and economists. It is printed verbatim in Meissner-Wilde, p. 153; commentary pp. 288–289. For the names of those who signed and of other supporters, see Eberhard Czichon, *Wer verhalf Hitler zur Macht? Zum Anteil der deutschen Industrie an der Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik* (Köln, 1967), documents no. 8–10.
23. Published verbatim in VB, No. 7/8, January 7/8, 1933.
24. Excerpted in VB, *ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. Report in VB, No. 9, January 9, 1933.
27. Report in VB, No. 10, January 10, 1933.
28. Published verbatim in VB, *ibid.*
29. Report in VB, No. 11, January 11, 1933.
30. Published verbatim in VB, No. 13, January 13, 1933.
31. Excerpted in VB, *ibid.*
32. Reports in VB, *ibid.*
33. Published verbatim in VB, *ibid.* On January 20, 1933, Stegmann was expelled from the Party in a telegram from Hitler which was published

- by the NSDAP Press Office on January 22, 1933. After the seizure of power, Stegmann was arrested and sent to a concentration camp.
34. Verbatim in VB, No. 14, January 14, 1933. The statement is aimed foremost at the *Tägliche Rundschau* in Berlin, Schleicher's newspaper.
 35. Notes in VB, No. 13, January 13, 1933.
 36. Reports in VB, No. 16 and No. 17 of January 16 and 17, 1933 respectively.
 37. Published in VB, No. 23, January 23, 1933.
 38. Oskar von Hindenburg had been military adjutant to the Reich President since 1925. In 1934 he achieved the rank of Major General and later became Lieutenant General. For his relations with Hitler, cf. the testimony of Oskar von Hindenburg before the Denazification Court at Uelzen in March 1949, and comments in the magazine *Weltbild*, No. 26, 1957.
 39. Published in VB, No. 23, January 23, 1933.
 40. Parody on the portal inscription in Dante's *Divine Comedy* (Hell III, 9): "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."
 41. Misappropriation of public funds for redevelopment of landed properties in East Prussia. Hindenburg's estate Neudeck was also involved in the scandal. Schleicher's cabinet had just recommenced investigations of the matter.
 42. Bullock, p. 247.
 43. Joachim von Ribbentrop, born 1893 in Wesel; son-in-law of the champagne producer Henkell in Wiesbaden-Biebrich; German Ambassador in London from 1936 to 1938; Reich Foreign Minister from February 4, 1938 to April 30, 1945; hanged 1946 in Nuremberg.
 44. Meissner-Wilde, pp. 162–163.
 45. Report in VB, No. 24, January 24, 1933.
 46. Published, *ibid*.
 47. There is no documentary evidence to support Schleicher's alleged coup attempt on January 29 or 30, 1933. It may be that Schleicher had discussed such a possibility, but it is highly improbable that he intended to or actually did put such a plan into action. The experience of history has taught us that, as a rule, active German generals did not make it a practice of overthrowing the legal authority of the State. Even in Schleicher's case, there is no evidence to the contrary. For further comments on this alleged putsch attempt see Bullock, p. 248; Meissner-Wilde, pp. 182 ff.; Theodor Duesterberg's testimony before the Denazification Court at Nuremberg on January 29, 1947 and his book *Der Stahlhelm und Hitler* (Wolfenbüttel, 1949). In an interview with the Berlin newspaper *BZ am Mittag* published on February 2, 1933, Schleicher personally denied that he had intended to stage a coup.
 48. Meissner-Wilde, p. 186.
 49. Cf. the testimony of Theodor Duesterberg before the Denazification Court at Nuremberg on January 29, 1947; Meissner-Wilde, pp. 184 ff.
 50. Meissner-Wilde, p. 191. Franz von Papen's memoirs, *Der Wahrheit eine Gasse* (Munich, 1952), exhibit sleights of memory in terms of substance, chronology, and personae and are thus of limited use in evaluating the events of 1932/33.

51. WTB report of January 30, 1933. Franz Seldte, born 1882 in Magdeburg, died 1947 in Fürth. Günter Gereke, born 1893 in Gruhna, had already been a Reich Commissar in Schleicher's cabinet; retired from office on March 30, 1933 (arrested on March 27, 1933 on charges of embezzlement).
52. Walther Funk, born 1890 in Trakehnen (East Prussia); Press Chief of the Reich Government in 1933; State Secretary in the Reich Ministry of Propaganda from 1933 to 1937; Reich Minister of Economics from 1938 to 1945; President of the Reichsbank from 1939; sentenced to life imprisonment in 1946 in Nuremberg, subsequently incarcerated in the Spandau Military Prison; released on health grounds in 1957; died 1960 in Düsseldorf. See also IMT, Blue Series, Vol. XIII, pp. 105 ff.
53. Appeal of the Reich Government of February 1, 1933; cf. *ibid.*
54. Even Bullock, p. 255, errs in stating that Hitler "was not even a presidential chancellor."
55. Cf. correspondence between Hitler, Hindenburg, and Meissner, cited above, November 16 to 25, 1932, particularly November 21 and 23.
56. RGL. 1933, I, p. 147.
57. The Second Coordination Law of Länder and Reich promulgated on April 7, 1933 appointed Hitler Reichsstatthalter in Prussia and granted him the power to appoint the Prussian Minister-President. Without perceptible hesitation, he appointed Göring and not Papen to this post. However, the newly elected Prussian Landtag which was dominated by a right-wing majority of National Socialists and German Nationalists would have made the same decision.
58. Published in VB, No. 32, February 1, 1933.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Advance notice in VB, No. 7/8, January 7/8, 1933.
61. RGL. 1933, I, p. 43. Kaas rejected this allegation in a letter to Hitler dated February 1, 1933 (cited in Walther Hofer, *Der Nationalsozialismus. Dokumente 1933 bis 1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 1957), pp. 50 ff.
62. As Bavarian Minister of Justice, Dr. Franz Gürtner had secured lenient conditions for Hitler after his sentencing by the Munich People's Court of Justice in 1924. Although D.C. Watt attempts to depict Gürtner in another light in his article, "Die bayerischen Bemühungen um Ausweisung Hitlers 1924" (*op. cit.*), he is able to cite only a single source in the documentation which possibly allows for a respective interpretation. While it is true that Hitler did not "reward" Gürtner with the Reich Ministry of Justice in 1933 (he had already held this post under Papen and Schleicher), his positive attitude toward Hitler had long been a known fact, and he remained true to the Führer until his death in 1941. Particularly indicative of Gürtner's attitude was his behavior during the RöhM Purge; see below, July 3, 1934.
63. WTB text, February 4, 1933. For Kaas' reply see Hofer, *Nationalsozialismus*, pp. 5051.
64. See above, January 25, 1932.
65. For the official text see the pamphlet *Die Reden Hitlers als Kanzler*

- (Munich, 1934; already distributed in fall of 1933). The text quoted in VB, No. 35/36 of February 4/5, 1933 contains a number of errors due to faulty transcription. The proclamation was also pasted on advertising pillars in poster form.
66. As Meissner-Wilde has claimed, p. 198.
 67. Minister of Defense, Werner von Blomberg, declared at a conference of army commanders on February 3, 1933 in Berlin that the government proclamation had been Hitler's work from A to Z. Cf. Thilo Vogelsang, "Neue Dokumente zur Geschichte der Reichswehr 1930-1933", in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 2 (Munich, 1954), p. 452.
 68. Published in VB, No. 35/36, February 4/5, 1932.
 69. Published in VB, No. 34, February 3, 1933.
 70. Report on this address in VB, No. 34, February 3, 1933.
 71. Published in VB, No. 34, February 3, 1933.
 72. See above, January 27 to February 16, 1932.
 73. Ibid.
 74. RGBl. 1933, I, p. 43.
 75. Published in VB, No. 37, February 6, 1933. The report was supplemented as follows: "These close ties were also reflected in remarks from the Wehrmacht's own ranks. The newly appointed head of the Ministerial Office of the Reichswehr Ministry, the former Chief of Staff of the First Division of Military District I in Königsberg, Colonel von Reichenau, who together with the former Commander of Military District I, the new Reich Minister of Defense General von Blomberg, has earned much recognition for the consolidation of East Prussia's defensive positions, stated that he was assuming his new post with the same enthusiasm with which the proclamation of the new Reich Government had been addressed to the German Volk. In connection with the general guidelines which are to govern the actions of the new Wehrmacht leadership, Colonel von Reichenau declared: "Never was the Wehrmacht more at one with the duties of the State than today."
 76. A handwritten record of Hitler's speech on February 3, 1933 drawn up by Lieutenant General Liebmann of Munich is located in the archives of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, No. 167/51, folio 39. See also Thilo Vogelsang, "Neue Dokumente zur Geschichte der Reichswehr 1930-1933", in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 2 (1954), pp. 434 ff.
 77. WTB, February 4, 1933.
 78. Published in VB, No. 37, February 6, 1933.
 79. WTB report of February 5, 1933.
 80. Hitler's private apartment on the third floor of 16 Prinzregentenplatz was located in an apartment house designed for well-to-do middle class families in the German style constructed before the First World War. The building, a dark, gloomy structure, was erected at approximately the same time as the neighboring Prinzregenten Theater (1901). In September 1929, Adolf Hitler, occupation "artist and writer," whose residence from May 1, 1920 had been in the second floor of 41 Thierschstrasse, rented the Prinzregentenplatz apartment from the Councillor of Com-

merce Hugo Schühle (who died in 1954). The third-floor apartment consisted of nine living rooms, two kitchens, two walk-in closets, two bathrooms, and furnishings (lease dated September 10, 1929, Stadtarchiv, Munich, Room 117). Hitler's patron, Hugo Bruckmann, had procured the apartment for him. The annual rent was 4,176 marks. The term of the lease contract was first to run until April 1, 1934, with a six-month term of notice. Hitler moved into the apartment on October 1, 1929. Initially, a subtenant remained in the apartment. Then Hitler engaged the packer Georg Winter and his wife as janitor/housekeeper (later they moved into the 5th floor). On November 17/December 27, 1938, "Hitler, Adolf, Führer and Kanzler des deutschen Volkes in Berlin," purchased the entire building from Schühle and his wife Natalie after the satisfaction of mortgages totalling 175,000 RM had been entered (Real Estate Registry of Munich, Real Estate Register 124, Haidhausen, p. 86, Folio 3235).

Geli Raubal, Hitler's beloved niece, committed suicide in the third-floor apartment on September 18, 1931 by shooting herself (cf. reports in the Munich newspapers of September 21, 1931). Her room, which was located at one end of the apartment, remained unaltered on Hitler's instructions.

After Hitler had become Reich Chancellor, he received numerous public figures in his private quarters. Particularly publicized visits were those of Mussolini (see below, September 25, 1937) and Chamberlain (see below, September 30, 1938). Ward Price, pp. 37 f., has described this apartment, although his memories contain a few flaws (e.g. flooring, bay windows, location of the apartment, etc.). 16 Prinzregentenplatz was not destroyed in World War II. After the American Army had entered Munich, it became the headquarters of an American Section. The furnishings and paintings etc. were removed. Thereafter the Munich Financing Office of the Land of Bavaria took up its quarters in the building.

81. See above, speech of October 17, 1932.

82. Published in VB, No. 45, February 14, 1933. In the first few days following Hitler's accession to power, it had already become evident that the English were not willing to be impressed by Hitler's eloquence.

In the published interview, Colonel Etherton not only reported what Hitler had said, but also what Hitler had borne in mind when saying what he did. WTB printed the following on February 14, 1933:

"The Polish Corridor is to be returned to Germany, both in the opinion of the population involved as well as for other reasons.

"Communism was to be completely eradicated, thus allowing for Germany's peaceful development and progress.

"A restoration of the Hohenzollern Monarchy was out of the question. A battle, i.e. the Republic versus the Monarchy, would split the parties and stir up an infinite amount of difficulties at a time when Germany most needs to be a uniform whole.

"The colonial problem was to be solved in a just manner. Germany required colonies as much as other nations.

“In closing, Hitler stated that he wished with all his heart to cooperate with England toward promoting world peace and to avoid, if possible, causing offense to anyone.

“He admired statesmen of Cromwell’s stature; Germany now required a Cromwell to lead it out of its present crises and difficulties and on to prosperity and peace.”

Hitler’s clumsy attempts to curry favor with the great Anglo-Saxon world power (parallels to Cromwell, etc.) met with ironic reactions in England from the very start. The English had no desire to act the part of the German Nationalists in Hitler’s foreign policy and to aid him on his way to world domination.

83. Report in VB, No. 40, February 9, 1933.
84. RGBl. 1933, I, p. 35.
85. Statement before the Reichsgericht in Leipzig on September 25, 1930.
86. Published in VB, No. 42/43, February 11/12, 1933.
87. Allusion to Kaas’ questions on January 31, 1933.
88. See below, Volume IV, index (“decisions”).
89. See above, speech of October 19, 1932.
90. See above, speech of October 17, 1932.
91. See above, speech of October 16, 1932.
92. The Protestant version of the Lord’s Prayer according to Matthew makes use of the additional doxology: “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.” (The German “Reich” also means kingdom.)
93. Published in VB, No. 44, February 13, 1933.
94. Report in VB, *ibid.*
95. Report in VB, No. 46, February 15, 1933. The *Völkischer Beobachter* published Hitler’s remarks in indirect speech, i.e. in a paraphrased version, as cited above.
96. Report in VB, No. 47, February 16, 1933.
97. *Ibid.*
98. Published in VB, No. 48, February 17, 1933. The speech was broadcast on radio.
99. Taken from the author’s notes.
100. Report in VB, No. 49/50, February 18/19, 1933.
101. Report in VB, No. 51, February 20, 1933.
102. IMT. EC-439; Bullock, p. 259.
103. WTB report, February 23, 1933.
104. Published in VB No. 56/57, February 25/26, 1933; WTB, February 24, 1933.
105. Issued by the Reich Press Office of the NSDAP on February 23, 1933.
106. Reports in VB, No. 56/57, February 25/26, 1933.
107. Fritz Schäffer (born 1888 in Munich, died 1967 in Berchtesgaden) was Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 1961. He repeated the remark cited above in Würzburg on February 23, 1933. Cf. *Fränkisches Volksblatt*, February 24, 1933.
108. North Bavarian border at the Main River.

109. Graf von Herding (Reich Chancellor from 1917 to 1918) was born in Darmstadt. Prior to his appointment he had been Minister-President of Bavaria, just as had Fürst von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst (Reich Chancellor from 1894 to 1900). Fürst Hohenlohe was born in Rotenburg near Fulda. Thus Hitler was not mistaken; at least his own birthplace was on the border to Bavaria.
110. Report in VB, No. 58, February 27, 1933.
111. See above, February 2, 1933.
112. For further information on the events surrounding the Reichstag fire, cf. press reports on the Reichstag Fire Trial before the Reichsgericht in Leipzig from September 21, 1933 to December 23, 1933; see also *Weissbuch über die Erschiessungen des 30. Juni 1934* (Paris, 1934); "Stehen Sie auf, van der Lubbe!—Der Reichstagsbrand 1933, Geschichte einer Legende" (based upon a manuscript by Fritz Tobias), in *Der Spiegel*, 43 (1959) through 1 (1960); Martin Broszat, "Zum Streit um den Reichstagsbrand", in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 8 (1960), p. 275; *Der Reichstagsbrand. Eine wissenschaftliche Dokumentation* (2 vols., Berlin, 1972 and Munich, 1978).
113. RGBL. 1933, I, p. 83.
114. Articles 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124, and 153. They contained provisions governing freedom of speech; freedom of the press; the rights of assembly and association; the privacy of postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications; restrictions on property; warrants for house searches; orders for confiscation of property, etc.
115. Published in VB, No. 60, March 1, 1933.
116. Report in *Schulthess Europäischer Geschichtskalender* (1933), pp. 51 ff.
117. Report in VB, No. 61, March 2, 1933.
118. Report in VB, No. 62, March 3, 1933.
119. Report in VB, No. 63/64, March 4/5, 1933.
120. Report in VB, No. 67, March 8, 1933.
121. Reich Minister of the Interior Frick declared on March 11, 1933 in Frankfurt a.M.: "When the new Reichstag convenes, the Communists will be unable to attend the session due to other matters which are more pressing and productive. These gentlemen must become reaccustomed to doing productive work. We will give them the opportunity to do this in concentration camps" (WTB, March 11, 1933).
122. *Der 9. März 1933. Erinnerungen und Erkenntnisse. Reden des bayerischen Ministerpräsidenten Dr. H. Ehard und des stellvertretenden Ministerpräsidenten Dr. W. Hoegner*, edited by the Volksbund für Frieden und Freiheit e.V. (Munich, 1953).
123. Published in VB, No. 70/71, March 11/12, 1933.
124. Spartacus was the leader of rebellious Roman slaves in the Gladiatorial War and was killed in 71 B.C. The Spartacus League (*Sparktakusbund*) was the name for extreme leftist followers of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in 1918. Liebknecht had begun publishing what were known as the "Spartacus Letters" as early as 1916. Hitler despised the use of the rucksack as military equipment (as opposed to the military

- knapsack) and had already made use of the pejorative term “Rucksack-Spartakisten” he had coined in *Mein Kampf* (p. 610). However, when the German Air Force adopted the rucksack after 1935, Hitler made no protest.
125. Report in VB, No. 72, March 13, 1933.
 126. Article 3 of the Reich Constitution provided that the Reich colors were black-red-gold.
 127. The *Volkstrauertag*, which annually commemorated the dead of World War I, was on the second Sunday of Lent. In 1934, Hitler changed the name to *Heldengedenktag* (Heroes’ Memorial Day).
 128. Published in VB, No. 70/71, March 11/12, 1933.
 129. Published in VB, No. 72, March 13, 1933. By order of the Reich President of March 14, 1933 (RBGl. 1933, I, p. 133), the Reichswehr were given black-white-red cockades on their caps and black-white-red plaques on their helmets in place of the former insignia (colors of the respective garrison country).
 130. Published in VB, No. 72, March 13, 1933.
 131. The Prussian Land Police were integrated into the Army after the introduction of general conscription in 1935.
 132. Sepp Dietrich, born 1892 in Hawangen, died 1952 in Düsseldorf, began his career as a regular NCO, progressed to SS Obergrouppenführer and, in the Second World War, to the rank of General of the Waffen SS.
 133. Alfred Rosenberg, born 1893 in Reval; Reich Minister for the Occupied (Eastern) Territories in 1941; hanged 1946 in Nuremberg.
 134. Only a small fraction of the German people—less than 3%—officially left the Church during the Third Reich.
 135. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, pp. 139 ff. Prior to 1933, there had been no Ministry of Culture in the Reich.
 136. The appointment was made on May 1, 1934. Bernhard Rust, born 1883 in Hanover, became Reich Minister of Science, Education and Popular Culture in 1934. He committed suicide in 1945 near Berend (Schleswig).
 137. Dr. Hans Luther, born 1879 in Berlin, died 1962 in Düsseldorf; Reich Chancellor from 1925 to 1926.
 138. Published in VB, No. 80, March 11, 1933. On March 20, Hitler had taken an early special flight from Munich, where he had participated in conferences on internal Bavarian matters the day before. In the same issue of VB, Himmler published a statement on the alleged attempt on Hitler’s life at the Richard Wagner Memorial in Munich.
 139. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 284.
 140. March 21, 1871. Opened by Bismarck.
 141. WTB, March 21, 1933. In response to this official statement, the *Bayerischer Kurier* published a report on March 23, 1933 originating from “competent Church sources,” which read as follows: “The claim to the effect that NSDAP adherents are regarded as deserters of the faith who are not allowed to receive the sacraments, is incorrect in this general form. In numerous cases, NSDAP members have been allowed to receive the Holy Sacraments like all other Catholics. Whether or not they

- are allowed to receive the sacraments is a question which, as is the case with all Catholics, is not decided on the basis of political considerations but rather on the merits of the individual. Thus the term ‘deserters of the Church’ is not applicable.”
142. Official text published by the Eher Verlag; also in VB, No. 81, March 22, 1933.
 143. RGBL. 1933, 1, p. 141.
 144. See above, November 23, 1932. Goebbels mentioned Hitler’s intention to present an Enabling Act to the Reichstag as early as August 6, 1932; Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 139.
 145. Printed in VB, No. 83, March 24, 1933; official text also published by the Eher Verlag. Several insignificant transcription errors contained therein were corrected on the basis of the author’s notes.
 146. See below, May 17, 1933.
 147. The text is taken from the copy at the Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, supplemented by the author’s notes.
 148. “*Wir Sind wehrlos, wehrlos ist aber nicht ehrlos.*”
 149. The following sentence was inserted by the author.
 150. “Ye have come too late—but you are come!” Schiller, *Wallenstein. The Piccolomini* (I, 1). Quotation taken from the London 1846 edition.
 151. The word “either” is absent from the notes. It is a known fact that Hitler could not tolerate interruptions; he would not accept them in this case, either.
 152. Reference to a speech held in Leipzig by the Social Democratic Chief of Police in Berlin, Grzesinski, in February 1932; see above, February 10, 1932.
 153. Official notice of the Reich Government, March 25, 1933; Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, Kabinettsprotokolle R 43 I; see also Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 287.
 154. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 139.
 155. See below, October 14 and November 12, 1933.
 156. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 288.
 157. Published in VB, No. 88, March 29, 1933.
 158. Julius Streicher, born 1885 in Fleinhausen; hanged 1946 in Nuremberg.
 159. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 289.
 160. Published in VB, No. 89, March 30, 1933.
 161. Ibid.
 162. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 293.
 163. RGBL. 1933, I, pp. 153 ff.
 164. RGBL. 1933, 1, p. 173.
 165. Upper House of the Prussian Landtag until 1918. The building itself was later still known “Herrenhaus.”
 166. Excerpt from the official wording published by the Eher Verlag; also printed in VB, No. 96, April 6, 1933.
 167. Richard Walter Darré, born 1895 in Delgrano (Argentina); died 1953 in Munich.
 168. Published in VB, No. 97, April 7, 1933. The speech was held in the Reich

- Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda at the Wilhelmsplatz. Among those attending was the papal nuncio Orsenigo.
169. Excerpt from the account in WTB, April 9, 1933 and VB, No. 100, April 10, 1933.
 170. “Deutschland, erwache!” (“Germany, awaken!”) had been one of the National Socialists’ fighting slogans prior to 1933 and was often sung in chorus (one cry of “Deutschland!”, answered by a chorus of the masses with “Erwache!”, similar to the antiphonies customary in church liturgies).
 171. Hitler’s letter to Hindenburg, Papen’s letter to Hitler, and Hitler’s telegram to Göring were published in VB, No. 102, April 12, 1933.
 172. Richard Wagner’s daughter, who had married the writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1925) in 1908.
 173. Report in VB, No. 111, April 21, 1933.
 174. Ibid. and WTB, April 21, 1933.
 175. Excerpts of the speech were published in VB, No. 114, April 24, 1933.
 176. Report in VB, No. 118, April 28, 1933.
 177. Report of the Reich Press Office of the NSDAP, April 28, 1933.
 178. Published in VB, No. 118, April 28, 1933.
 179. Hitler regarded Hess as an insignificant but nonetheless loyal and devoted man. In spite of this, he was irritated that he had given Hess the title of “Stellvertreter des Führers” (Deputy of the Führer). He once commented to his photographer: “There can be no deputy for a man like myself.” See “Heinrich Hoffmanns Erzählungen”, in *Münchener Illustrierte*, 51 (1959). On December 1, 1933, Hess and Röhm were made Reich Ministers. In a speech on September 1, 1939 (see below, *ibid.*), Hitler described Hess as his second candidate for succession after Göring. Ultimately, however, Hess knew Hitler too well and decided not to remain a passenger on Hitler’s journey to destruction. He fled to England on May 10, 1941.
 180. WTB, April 27, 1933.
 181. WTB, May 1, 1933. The report in VB (May 2, 1933) makes no mention of this feat.
 182. Karl Bröger, working-class writer; born 1886; died 1944 in Nuremberg.
 183. RGBl. 1933, I, p. 191.
 184. Report in VB, No. 122, May 2, 1933 and WTB, May 1, 1933.
 185. Report in VB, *ibid.*
 186. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 306; Eher pamphlets.
 187. Official text published by the Eher Verlag. Also printed in VB, No. 122, May 2, 1933. Hugenberg had given Hitler a draft for this speech drawn up by experts in his Ministry which is still on file at the Bundesarchiv, Koblenz (Akten der Reichskanzlei). Naturally Hitler preferred his own words.
 188. “May has arrived.”
 189. This compulsory labor service (*Arbeitsdienstpflicht*) was instituted neither in 1933 nor in 1934, for it was nothing but a propaganda slogan. Hitler’s real interest lay in general conscription which he introduced on

March 16, 1935. As a supplement, he initiated a six-month term of compulsory labor on June 26, 1935. This relatively short period of labor service reflected his own priorities: the term for military service was two years (it had only been reduced to one year in 1935 for propaganda purposes and was reestablished at two years in 1936 prior to the dismissal of the first annual contingent).

190. 1 Genesis 32, 26.
191. Published in VB, No. 124, May 4, 1933.
192. Cited by Norman H. Baynes, pp. 1039–1041.
193. Published by WTB, May 6, 1933.
194. See above, September 7, 1932, for example.
195. Published in VB, No. 125, May 5, 1933.
196. Ibid.
197. In reference to an accident at the “Matthias Stinnes” mine in Essen. The honorary committee which Hitler cites in closing was comprised of the industrialist Fritz Thyssen, the head of the NSBO, Walther Schuhmann, and the German Nationalist Emil Georg R. von Stauss (1877–1942).
198. Report in VB, No. 128, May 8, 1933.
199. The Gospel according to Saint John, Chapter 14, Verse 20.
200. Published in VB, No. 131, May 11, 1933.
201. Official text published by the Eher Verlag. Also printed in VB, *ibid.*
202. Speech before the Reichgericht in Leipzig on September 25, 1930.
203. Here Hitler was alluding to a remark made by Bismarck in the Reichstag in 1878 regarding Germany’s role at the Congress of Berlin (held to settle disputes between Russia and Turkey).
204. Paraphrase of 1 Cor. 1, 19 and Isaiah 29, 14.
205. See above, April 5, 1933.
206. Report in VB, No. 136, May 16, 1933.
207. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 603 ff.
208. Cf. Raymond Recouly, *Memorial de Foch* (Paris, 1929).
209. Observation of the author. The four invasions cited took place in wartime in 1814, 1815, 1870, and 1914, whereby in 1814 and 1815 the French borders were crossed not only by German troops, but by international forces interceding against Napoleon.
210. Official text published by the Eher Verlag, which coincides with the wording published in VB, No. 138, May 18, 1933. A few insignificant errors due to faulty transcription have been corrected on the basis of the author’s notes.
211. As usual, Hitler’s figures are exaggerated. According to information supplied by the Statistisches Reichsamt, Berlin, the number of suicides in Germany from 1919 to 1932 was less than 200,000. Hitler took the highest annual average of 16,000 (1926 to 1928), multiplied it by 14, and thus arrived at the figure of 224,000. However, there was no connection between the suicide rate and the Treaty of Versailles or the economic need in Germany. The official statistics show that the suicide rate in 1913, for instance, was significantly higher: 23.2 per 100,000 inhabitants; during the economically depressed years from 1919 to 1923, it ranged

- from 18.4 to 21.7 *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*, 44th Year (Berlin, 1925).
212. Report in VB, No. 143, May 23, 1933. The battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* touched off World War II on September 1, 1939 by opening fire on the Westerplatte outside Danzig.
213. See below, September 26, 1938.
214. Published in VB, No. 149, May 29, 1933.
215. A bourgeois government had been in power in Danzig since January 9, 1931, under the leadership of Dr. Ziehm, the German National President of the Senate. At the end of 1932, the National Socialists withdrew their toleration of the cabinet. Negotiations failed, and new elections were held on May 28, 1933. The German Nationalists were angered and refused to take part in government, whereupon the National Socialists entered into a coalition with the Center, although they could have governed alone. The two senators representing the Center retired from office in November 1933.
216. Dr. Hermann Rauschnig, born 1887 in Thorn, West Prussia, died 1982 in Portland, Oregon; in 1932 he was able to gain Hitler's confidence, who variously disclosed his thoughts and views to Rauschnig; following disputes with the Party leadership in Danzig, Rauschnig resigned on November 23, 1934 and emigrated, conducting anti-Hitler agitation from abroad, mainly with his book *Gespräche mit Hitler*.
217. In the Saar, the DNVP, the Center, and the German State Party announced their dissolution in September and October of 1933 respectively. Under the leadership of the NSDAP, they joined to form what was known as the "German Front."
218. Published in VB, No. 153, June 2, 1933.
219. WTB, June 6, 1933. Red Cross Day (*Rotkreuztag*) was June 11, 1933.
220. Report in VB, No. 160, June 9, 1933.
221. Report in VB, No. 167, June 16, 1933.
222. Reports of both speeches in VB, No. 168, June 17, 1933.
223. Report in VB, No. 170, June 19, 1933.
224. Ibid.
225. Reference to the Erfurt Program of the SPD in 1891.
226. Notice in VB, *ibid.*—Baldur von Schirach, born 1907 in Berlin, received a twenty-year prison sentence in Nuremberg in 1946. He was incarcerated in the military prison of Spandau and died 1974 in Kröv an der Mosel.
227. The Jungstahlhelm was comprised of the members of the Stahlhelm formations who had not been soldiers at the front.
228. Published in VB, No. 179, June 28, 1933.
229. Emperor's speech at the opening of the extraordinary session of the Reichstag in the Berlin Castle on August 4, 1914.
230. By virtue of the law of July 14, 1933 (RGBl. 1933, I, p. 479), the NSDAP was declared Germany's only political party and the penalty for forming or reconstituting another party set at penal servitude of up to three years.
231. Hugenberg and Neurath were members of the German delegation attending the World Economic Conference in London in June 1933.

232. Hugenberg's own protocol of his discussion with Hitler on June 27, 1933 and his letters to Hindenburg of June 26 and 27, 1933 have been published by Anton Ritthaler, "Eine Etappe auf Hiders Weg zur ungeteilten Macht. Hugenbergs Rücktritt als Reichsminister," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 8 (1960), pp. 193 ff.
233. See below, June 18, 1935.
234. Cf. Meissner-Wilde, p. 165.
235. Published in VB, No. 181, June 30, 1933.—Dr. Kurt Schmitt was born 1886 in Heidelberg and died there in 1950.
236. Report in VB, No. 180, June 29, 1933.
237. Published in VB, No. 181, June 30, 1933.
238. Report in VB, No. 184, July 3, 1933.
239. Published in VB, No. 185, July 4, 1933.
240. See above, speech of April 22, 1933.
241. Abridged wording in the Eher pamphlet. Also published in VB, No. 189, July 8, 1933. In economic matters, Hitler was far more reasonable than in political or military questions.
242. Published in VB, No. 191, July 10, 1933.
243. Ibid.
244. Report in VB, No. 192, July 11, 1933.
245. Published in VB, No. 194, July 13, 1933.
246. Ibid.
247. Report in VB, No. 195, July 14, 1933.
248. Cf. Baynes, pp. 1081–1082.
249. Published in VB, No. 198, July 17, 1933.
250. Report in VB, Ibid.
251. Ibid.
252. Mentioned by Baynes, p. 374.
253. Report in VB, No. 202, July 21, 1933.
254. Published in VB, Berlin Edition, July 23/24, 1933.
255. Reports in VB, No. 208, July 27, 1933.
256. Published in VB, No. 212, July 31, 1933.
257. Published in VB, Berlin Edition, August 1, 1933.
258. Notice of the Reich Press Office of the NSDAP in indirect speech, published in VB, No. 219, August 7, 1933.
259. Hitler was so pleased with the Reich Party Congress of 1933 that he had a similar event take place each year until the spectacles were put to an end when war broke out in 1939.
260. This senate never came to be. Hitler feared that, were such a body established, it might detract from his absolute power. In his speech at the outbreak of World War II (see below, September 1, 1939), he announced that a senate would be appointed by law which was to elect his successor from its midst (following Göring and Hess). The plan never progressed beyond this announcement.
261. Report in VB, No. 226/227, August 14/15, 1933.
262. WTB reports, August 16 and 19, 1933.
263. Report in VB, No. 231, August 19, 1933.

264. Report in VB, No. 233, August 21, 1933, in indirect speech.
265. The cockade was added only after the Anschluss of Austria in March of 1938. It was to symbolize that his Reich had now been complemented by what had previously been lacking. The golden oak-leaf cluster around the cockade which he wore from this day onwards personified his position as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces; it was otherwise worn only by the Reichswehr and, subsequently, the new Wehrmacht.
266. Published in VB, No. 240, August 28, 1933.
267. Published in VB, No. 241, August 29, 1933.
268. See below, September 12, 1938.
269. Adolf Wagner's intonation was similar to Hitler's, and he also had the same accent. Hitler was always personally present in the Congress Hall at each reading.
270. Report in VB, No. 243, August 31, 1933. The first Party Congresses of the NSDAP (General Membership Meetings) took place in 1920, 1921, and 1922 in Munich. The first "Reich Party Congress" was held in Munich on January 27/28, 1923. The second "Reich Party Congress" took place on July 4, 1926 in Weimar; the third and fourth in Nuremberg from August 19 to 21, 1927, and August 2 to 4, 1929, respectively. The Reich Party Congress of 1933 (the "Congress of Victory") was referred to as the fifth congress and took place from August 30 to September 3, 1933. The sixth "Reich Party Congress" was held from September 4 to 10, 1934. It was given no special name, apparently because of the Rdhm affair and the failed coup in Austria which preceded it. The seventh Reich Party Congress (the "Congress of Freedom") was held from September 10 to 16, 1935, the eighth (the "Congress of Honor") from September 8 to 14, 1936, the ninth (the "Congress of Labor") from September 6 to 13, 1937, and the tenth ("Großdeutschland") from September 5 to 12, 1938. The eleventh Reich Party Congress (the "Congress of Peace"), which had been scheduled to begin on September 1, 1939, of all dates, was cancelled on August 27, 1939 and postponed. It never took place.
271. The proclamation and the other Party Congress speeches held in 1933 are cited in the Eher pamphlet, *Die Reden Hitlers am Reichsparteitag 1933* (Munich, 1934); also in VB, Nos. 245 to 247, September 2 to 4, 1933.
272. From 1923 to March 1933, the flag had been stored at Police Headquarters in Munich.
273. Report in VB, No. 249/250, September 6/7, 1933.
274. Published in VB, No. 257, September 14, 1933.
275. Published in VB, No. 265, September 22, 1933.
276. Published in VB, No. 268, September 25, 1933.
277. Goethe, *Faust*, Part II, V.
278. Report in VB, No. 268, September 25, 1933.
279. Report in VB, No. 272, September 29, 1933.
280. Report in VB, No. 276, October 3, 1933.
281. The harvest festival, which drew hundreds of thousands of peasants to the large Bückeberg field near Hamelin (not to be confused with the Bückeberg near Schaumburg-Lippe) each year, took place only five

- times: on October 1, 1933, on September 30, 1934, on October 6, 1935, on October 4, 1936, and on October 3, 1937. In 1938, it was cancelled due to the occupation of the Sudeten German territories.
282. Report in VB, No. 275, October 2, 1933.
283. Published in VB, *ibid.*
284. Report in VB, No. 278, October 5, 1933.
285. Further incidents which Hitler staged on Saturdays included the reinstatement of general conscription (March 16, 1935), the occupation of the Rhineland (March 7, 1936), and the invasion of Austria (March 12, 1938).
286. Published in VB, Special Edition, October 15, 1933.
287. *Ibid.*
288. *Ibid.*
289. *Ibid.*
290. Here Hitler is alluding to the (private) commission meeting in London at the time to investigate the Reichstag fire and the circumstances surrounding it.
291. The building in the Prinzregentenstrasse—which is now called the ‘Haus der Kunst’—survived World War II almost completely intact. The old museum in the Botanical Garden, which had been known as the ‘Glass Palace,’ had been destroyed by fire on June 6, 1931.
292. Published in VB, No. 288, October 15, 1933.
293. Published in VB, No. 289, October 16, 1933. On the basis of the Bavarian Concordat, a papal nuncio held office in Munich at the time. His residence lay within close proximity to the ‘Braunes Haus.’
294. Published in VB, *ibid.*
295. The success of the French resistance in World War I was facilitated, on the one hand, by the support of the Anglo-Saxon powers and, on the other, by the strain of fighting on several fronts which weakened Germany. These factors did not play a role in 1870/71 or in 1940.
296. The extent to which Hitler feared military invention is evidenced in Blomberg’s Weisung für die Wehrmacht im Falle von Sanktionen (Orders to the Armed Forces in the event of sanctions) of October 25, 1933 (cited in Hofer, p. 183).
297. Report in VB, No. 292, October 19, 1933.
298. From the author’s notes.
299. The entire territory of the left bank of the Rhine and a strip of land fifty kilometers wide running parallel to the right bank.
300. Published in VB, No. 293, October 20, 1933.
301. Ultimately, such tolls were never charged.
302. See above, May 17, 1933, note 211. The figure of 20,000 is a gross exaggeration.
303. Reports in VB, No. 296, October 23, 1933. In 1849, King Ludwig I had commissioned Klenze (1784–1864) to build the Befreiungshalle in memory of the Napoleonic War from 1813 to 1815.
304. Report in VB, No. 296, October 23, 1933.
305. WTB, October 25, 1933. The wording cited in VB (No. 299, October 26, 1933) is incomplete.

306. Report in VB, No. 299, October 26, 1933.
307. Report in VB, No. 300, October 27, 1933.
308. Report in VB, No. 303, October 30, 1933.
309. Ibid.
310. Published in VB, *ibid.*
311. Cited in Baynes, p. 1143. Reference hereto is also made in VB, Berlin Edition, November 1, 1935.
312. Report in VB, No. 307, November 3, 1933.
313. Ibid.
314. Report in VB, No. 310, November 6, 1933.
315. Ibid.
316. Cf. Baur, p. 106.
317. Ward Price (pp. 96 f.) paints a dramatic picture of this flight based upon various accounts. See above, p. 21 f.
318. Report in VB, No. 312, November 8, 1933.
319. Ibid.
320. Published in VB, No. 313, November 9, 1933.
321. In Hitler's opinion, the Kapp Putsch in 1920 had been the first attempted coup of its kind.
322. A small beer pub in downtown Munich which was closed and remodeled after the Second World War.
323. Published in VB, No. 314, November 10, 1933 and in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, No. 307, November 10, 1933.
324. The presence of the military staff guards of Göring and Röhm is particularly noteworthy. The existence of Röhm's staff guard was interpreted as proof of Röhm's alleged revolutionary intent in justifying the slayings of June 30, 1934.
325. Taken from the author's notes. The speech itself was not published in the press.
326. It was a known fact that Hitler despised the *Wehrverbände* (militias) and rejected any organizations with a military character; see *Mein Kampf*, pp. 605 ff. Furthermore, a substantial number of the SA leaders Hitler had executed on June 30, 1934 were former leaders of the Freikorps.
327. Published in VB, No. 315, November 11, 1933.
328. This semi-uniform dress was worn by the National Socialists during periods when uniforms and the SA were banned, particularly in 1931 and 1932, and was humorously referred to as *Räuberzivil* (casual outfit).
329. The Berlin *Lokal Anzeiger* reported on October 28, 1933 that Hugenberg was willing to run for office for patriotic reasons in order to project a united front in regard to foreign policy.
330. Published in VB, No. 317, November 13, 1933.
331. WTB, November 15, 1933.
332. WTB, November 16, 1933.
333. Hitler had written in *Mein Kampf* (p. 143): "Therefore Italy had only two alternatives in its relations with Austria: either alliance or war. By choosing the former, one had time to prepare for the second."
334. Published in VB, No. 327, November 23, 1933.

335. DNB report, November 25, 1937.
336. Published in VB, No. 332, November 28, 1933.
337. RGL. 1933, I, p. 1016.
338. Report in VB, No. 346, December 12, 1933.
339. The German Landtage were dissolved pursuant to the Law of January 30, 1934.
340. Report in VB, No. 347, December 13, 1933.
341. Published in VB, No. 349, December 15, 1933.
342. DNB report, December 24, 1933. In his speech on March 23, 1933, Hitler had declared that he planned to “publicly” execute the arsonist and his accomplices; see above, March 23, 1933. The judgment passed down by the Reichsgericht put an end to these plans.
343. Report in VB, No. 361, December 27, 1933
344. Published in VB, No. 1/2, January 1/2, 1934 and No. 3, January 3, 1934.
345. Hitler made use of the familiar form of address to Röhm only.
346. In reference to the crisis of fall, 1930; see above, December 9, 1933.
347. Franz Xaver Schwarz, born 1875 in Günzburg, died 1947 in an internment camp near Regensburg; Reich Treasurer of the NSDAP from 1925 to 1945.
348. Max Amann, born 1891 in Munich, died 1957 in Munich; sergeant in Hitler’s regiment; director of the Eher Verlag from 1922 to 1945; Reich Leader for the Press.
349. Walter Buch, born 1883 in Bruchsal, suicide in 1949 in Ammersee; former major and Supreme Judge of the NSDAP.
350. “I will lead you still to magnificent days!” (Speech at a banquet of the Landtag for the Province of Brandenburg on February 24, 1892; see Penzler, Vol. I, p. 209).

The Year 1934

Notes

1. The “Law for Removing the Distress of Volk and Reich” was passed by the Reichstag on March 23, 1933 and went into effect on March 24, 1933; see above, March 23, 1933.
2. Friedrich Ebert, First Reich President (1919 to 1925).
3. At von Hindenburg’s funeral on August 5, 1934, Hitler called out: “Dead Commander, enter into Valhalla now!” See below, August 7, 1934.— Fabian von Schlabrendorff, *Offiziere gegen Hitler* (Berlin, 1960), p. 6, quotes Hitler as having said: “When I was not yet Reich Chancellor, I believed the General Staff was like a brute of a dog who needs to be kept firmly on the leash because otherwise he might attack every person in sight.”
4. Hitler believed the military defeats of the Second World War were due not to the impossible tasks assigned to the Generals, but to their personal cowardice and incompetence. To his pilot, Baur, Hitler declared in April 1945: “It should be written on my gravestone, ‘He was the victim of his generals.’” Cf. Baur, p. 257.
5. In World War II, Hitler was nonetheless forced to deploy soldiers who had received only very little training. This did not result in any noticeable difference in the outcome.
6. See above, letter of December 31, 1933.
7. Cf. Rauschnig, p. 162.
8. See below, proclamation of August 20, 1934.
9. Published in VB, No. 1/2, January 1/2, 1934.
10. Ibid.
11. Report in VB, No. 15, January 15, 1934.
12. Troost had built the “Haus der Kunst” in Munich and drafted the plans for the so-called “Führerbauten” on the Königsplatz.
13. Report in VB, No. 23, January 23, 1934.
14. Report in VB, No. 25, January 25, 1934.
15. DNB report, February 1, 1934.
16. Report in VB, No. 26, January 26, 1934.
17. Ibid.
18. Report in VB, No. 27, January 27, 1934.
19. Cf. *Frankfurter Volksblatt*, No. 26, January 27, 1934. The talk is also published in Hanns Johst, *Standpunkt und Fortschritt* (Oldenburg, 1934).
20. DNB report, January 29, 1934.
21. DNB report, January 30, 1934.
22. Ibid.
23. Cited here in the wording of the Reclam edition, *Die Rede des Führers Adolf Hitler am 30. Januar 1934 im Deutschen Reichstag* (Leipzig, 1934). Also published in VB, No. 31, January 31, 1934.
24. It is incomprehensible how Hindenburg’s State Secretary, Meissner, was

able to conclude from the discussion with Göring on January 28, 1933 (cf. Meissner-Wilde, p. 170) that the National Socialists upheld a positive attitude toward the reinstatement of the monarchy. Göring had declared that it was possible only if two thirds of the German population were to deem it their will in a free election, a remark which appears to indicate the opposite. Who was to constitute the two-thirds majority if the National Socialists, the Social Democrats and the Communists comprised three quarters of the German voting public?

25. See Hitler's respective comment to Rauschning, p. 162.
26. Here Hitler was referring to the "Law to Prevent Hereditarily Ill Offspring" (*Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses*) of December 5, 1933 (RGBl. 1933, I, p. 1021). Further developments showed that he was primarily interested not in preventing offspring, but in killing the incurably ill (euthanasia) and, in fact, all those he found to be unworthy of life from his vantage point as a superhuman being; as such, he knew no limits whatsoever.
27. This reference is to Hugenberg. However, he had excused himself from this session.
28. Hitler is referring to the "Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich" (*Gesetz über den Neuaufbau des Reiches*), see below, January 30, 1934. It is interesting to note that Hitler talks of "continuing the National Socialist Revolution" after he had declared on numerous occasions that the Revolution had been completed. "The Revolution is not a permanent state of affairs," he had declared on July 6, 1933 in an address to the Reichsstatthalters. Later, on July 13, 1934, he attempted to excuse the murder of Röhm and other SA leaders by stating that they had evidently "embraced the Revolution as revolution and perceived in it a permanent condition," for the only one allowed to stage a revolution in Germany was Hitler.
29. Hitler had introduced a fee of RM 1,000 for private visits to Austria by means of legislation on May 29, 1933 (RGBl. 1933, I, p. 311) in order to paralyze the Austrian tourist industry and thus exert pressure on the Dollfuss regime.
30. Fulvio Suvich was State Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Italy from 1932 to 1936.
31. RGBl. 1934, I, p. 75.
32. DNB report, February 4, 1934; VB, No. 35, February 4, 1934.
33. DNB report, February 3, 1934.
34. Report in VB, Berlin Edition, February 8, 1934.
35. Report in VB, No. 47, February 16, 1934.
36. VB, No. 50, February 19, 1934.
37. The Dollfuss Government in Austria had also instituted concentration camps (called "Anhaltelager") for National Socialists and Social Democrats who had been arrested. The most notorious was Wöllersdorf.
38. The three Bulgarians were deported within the month of February and arrived in Moscow on February 27, 1934. After Bulgaria had refused them admission, the Soviet Union granted the men Russian citizenship.

39. DNB report, February 20, 1934.
40. The sovereign symbol of the NSDAP, an eagle with swastika, only became the national emblem of the Reich and the State by a decree of November 5, 1935 (RGBl. 1935, I, p. 1287) after the passage of the Nuremberg Laws.
41. Cf. Bullock, pp. 288 f. See also general DNB report, February 21, 1934.
42. The uniform ban Hitler had imposed on the SA in the Rhineland after October 14, 1933 (see above, October 16, 1933) was already an indication of his real attitude.
43. Report in VB, No. 57, February 26, 1934.
44. See above, speech of October 16, 1932.
45. Report in VB, No. 57, February 26, 1934.
46. Ibid.
47. "Law Governing National Holidays" (*Gesetz über die Feiertage*, RGBl. 1934, I, p. 129) of February 27, 1934. Other holidays included May 1 (the National Holiday of the German Volk) and the first Sunday after Michaelmas (*Erntedankfest*).
48. DNB Report, February 25, 1934.
49. The subject matter of the speech cited above is taken from the report in the *Münchner Merkur*, May 9, 1957.
50. Note in VB, No. 61, March 2, 1934.
51. Hitler had Goerdeler hanged in connection with the incidents of July 20, 1944 (see below, *ibid.*). He had hoped to become Reich Chancellor after Hitler's assassination.
52. Published in VB, No. 66, March 7, 1934.
53. Published in VB, No. 68, March 9, 1934.
54. Report in VB, No. 71, March 12, 1934.
55. Report in VB, No. 79, March 20, 1934.
56. Report in VB, No. 81, March 22, 1934.
57. Report in VB, No. 82, March 23, 1934.
58. Published in VB, No. 94, April 4, 1934.
59. DNB report, March 26, 1934.
60. Information in VB, No. 106, April 16, 1934 and No. 109, April 19, 1934.
61. Cf. Bullock, p. 290.
62. DNB wording, August 6, 1934.
63. Report in VB, No. 109, April 19, 1934.
64. Report in VB, Berlin Edition, April 17, 1934 and VB, No. 108, April 18, 1934.
65. Cited in VB, No. 110, April 20, 1934.
66. Report in VB, No. 111, April 21, 1934.
67. DNB report, April 20, 1934.
68. Report in VB, No. 112, April 22, 1934.
69. Published in VB, No. 115, April 25, 1934.
70. Published in VB, No. 121, May 1, 1934.
71. Published in VB, No. 122, May 2, 1934.
72. Reports in VB, *ibid.*
73. Published in VB, *ibid.*

74. Round badges depicting the sovereign symbol of the NSDAP, with a hammer on the left and a sickle on the right. Design: Professor Klein, Munich.
75. Published in VB, No. 121, May 1, 1934.
76. The formations of the Prussian Land Police were integrated into the Army when national conscription was instituted in 1935.
77. DNB report, May 2, 1934.
78. NSK report, May 3, 1934.
79. Published in VB, No. 128, May 8, 1934.
80. Report in VB, *ibid.*
81. Report in VB, No. 129/130, May 9/10, 1934.
82. Published in VB, *ibid.* Eighty-six miners met with their death.
83. Report in VB, No. 137, May 17, 1934.
84. Report in VB, No. 140/141, May 20/21, 1934.
85. Reports on Hitler's visit to Dresden in VB, Nos. 148–151, May 28 to June 1, 1934.
86. On July 1, 1934, Göring assigned the task of "reorganizing" these SA groups to SS Gruppenführer and General of the Land Police, Kurt Daluege.
87. Report in VB, No. 156, June 6, 1934.
88. According to Bullock (p. 293), it was June 4.
89. See below, July 13, 1934.
90. See above, February 21, 1934.
91. After the Röhm Purge, the SA's main activities consisted of military sports. It was to provide sports training for young men prior to their military service and motivate them to achieve the "SA Sports or Military Badge."
92. Other actions which Hitler scheduled for Saturday or Sunday included: October 14, 1933 (withdrawal from the League of Nations); March 16, 1935 (introduction of general conscription); March 7, 1936 (occupation of the Rhineland); March 12, 1938 (occupation of Austria); October 1, 1938 (scheduled date for the invasion of Czechoslovakia; transformed as a result of the Munich Convention to the occupation of the Sudeten German territories), August 26, 1939 (scheduled date for the invasion of Poland; postponed on August 25, 1939 and actually carried out on September 1, 1939); and June 22, 1941 (invasion of the Soviet Union).
93. DNB report, June 7, 1934.
94. DNB report, August 8, 1934.
95. Today Hotel Lederer.
96. According to Article 49 of the Treaty of Versailles, the population of the Saar was to be called upon to exercise its right of self-determination in a plebiscite fifteen years after the Treaty went into effect (January 10, 1920).
97. Published in VB, No. 159, June 8, 1934.
98. Report in VB, No. 162, June 11, 1934.
99. Cf. Ward Price, p. 23.
100. Published in VB, No. 167, June 16, 1934.

101. Reports on Hitler's visit to Venice in VB, No. 167, June 16, 1934.
102. Cf. Baur, p. 100. Baur mistakenly cites the meeting as having taken place in 1933.
103. Published in VB, No. 168, June 17, 1934. 104. Ibid.
105. Published in VB, No. 170, June 19, 1934.
106. Like von Papen, Jung was also a member of the Herrenklub. He is the author of two books, *Herrschaft der Minderwertigen* (1931) and *Sinndeutung der deutschen Revolution* (1934), both of which bear a German-Nationalist, reactionary stamp. As early as June 30, 1934, the *Basler Nachrichten* carried reports of Jung's arrest in connection with von Papen's speech in Marburg. On July 5, *Der Angriff* published in-depth coverage of the Jung case, stating: "The litterateurs should beware of meddling in the affairs of the Führer, who is our sole standard, by foolish and scheming drivel. The task which Adolf Hitler has taken upon himself is so tremendous that even the slightest attempt to pick holes in and carp about the methods with which it is accomplished is wicked."
107. A number of pamphlets did, however, survive.
108. Von Papen's associates Dr. Edgar Jung and Herbert van Bose were shot on June 30, while his secretary, Günther von Tschirschky, was initially arrested but released on July 3. Von Papen himself was placed under house arrest. Hitler had dispatched Dr. Walther Funk, State Secretary at the time and later Reich Minister of Economics, to Neudeck to lodge a protest against von Papen's Marburg speech with the Reich President. Hindenburg replied with the comment, "If he [von Papen] cannot maintain discipline, then he will simply have to draw the consequences" (as quoted by Funk in his testimony before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg on May 6, 1946, see IMT, Blue Series, Vol. XIII, pp. 154 f.).
109. Report in VB, No. 172, June 21, 1934. The name "Scharfheide" was later changed to "Carinhall." Göring's wife Carin, née van Fock, had formerly been married to the Swedish officer Nils van Kantzow. Five years Göring's senior, she died in Stockholm on October 17, 1931 (information supplied by the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich).
110. Report in VB, No. 173, June 22, 1934.
111. Report in VB, No. 176, June 25, 1934.
112. Reports in VB, *ibid.*
113. DNB report, June 25, 1934.
114. DNB report, June 26, 1934.
115. VB, No. 180, June 29, 1934.
116. See Bullock, p. 301. Röhm's expulsion had been initiated by Major General van Reichenau, Chief of the Ministerial Office of the Ministry of Defense.
117. DNB wording, June 26, 1934.
118. Reports of Hitler's visit to Essen in VB, Nos. 180 and 181, June 29 and 30, 1934, and in the *Westdeutscher Beobachter* and the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, both of June 29, 1934.

119. Hoffmann apparently refused to believe the stories of Röhm's revolt and plainly disassociated himself from Hitler's massacre in his "Erzählungen" published in 1954 and 1955; see *Münchener Illustrierte*, No. 50, December 11, 1954, and No. 51, December 18, 1954.
120. Bergmann's testimony in what was known as the "Röhm Trial" before the Jury Court at the Landgericht Munich I on May 8, 1957.
121. Reports in the *Westdeutscher Beobachter* and the *Wiesbadener Tagblatt*, both of June 30, 1934.
122. Ibid. Ostensibly, Hitler had scheduled this full itinerary for the entire day (June 29) in order to avoid any contact with the SA.
123. The fact that Hitler took Goebbels with him when arresting Röhm was not an indication of the trust he placed in his Minister, but the opposite: Hitler was plagued by constant doubts as to Goebbels' loyalty and wanted him in his sight during any potentially dangerous incidents.
124. See Goebbels' comments in his radio speech of July 1, 1934 (DNB wording, July 1, 1934).
125. This account of what transpired in Munich and Bad Wiessee is based mainly upon the testimony of witnesses at the "Röhm Trial" against Sepp Dietrich and Michael Lippert before the Jury Court at the Landgericht Munich I from May 6 to 14, 1957; further on the author's interviews with eyewitnesses.
126. From that time, Hitler surrounded himself with his SS bodyguards and plainclothes police detectives. Even at the Berghof (Obersalzberg), they were constantly within calling distance. When Rudolf Hess' aide delivered Hess' farewell letter on May 11, 1941, Hitler had him arrested on the spot by one of the detectives standing by (see below, May 10, 1941).
127. The claim was made in the "Röhm Trial" that Röhm had stayed in room 31, the corner room facing the lake. The present owner, Lederer, informed the author that Röhm had, however, inhabited room 21 facing the courtyard.
128. Dietrich's testimony before the Jury Court in Munich on May 6, 1957.
129. Viktor Lutze, head of the SA Gruppe Nord (Hanover) and Oberpräsident of the Province of Hanover, was regarded as innocuous by the Reichswehr officers and in particular by Major General von Reichenau. Lutze had the reputation of being a man with absolutely no military ambitions.
130. Speech before East Prussian party comrades at the Gau Party Congress, broadcast on all German radio stations. Quoted from the DNB wording.
131. Using a breathless present tense, Hess reported on July 8 as follows: "He [Hitler] is working continuously. He dictates the dismissal order of the Chief of Staff and the appointment of Obergruppenführer Lutze. He dictates a letter to the new Chief and Staff and then, without pausing, dictates the statement of the National Socialist German Workers' Party on the incidents and his own actions [!]. Meanwhile, he issues other orders for individual steps to be taken in Munich and in the Reich. Then, without lifting his pen from the paper, he formulates the famous twelve points governing the actions of the new SA Chief of Staff. "Not even the slightest necessity of the moment escapes the Führer. He

even issues directions for the publications in the press and on the radio! And at the very moment the last order is given, the respective operation starts immediately.

“It was, in fact, just as a Berlin newspaper described it: ‘At two o’clock in the morning an airplane left the Hangelar airfield near Bonn—at ten o’clock in the evening the same plane landed in Berlin. In between lies a chapter in world history.’”

132. Hitler’s bulletins of June 30 and July 1, 2, and 3 have been cited here in the DNB wording.
133. See above, April 6, 1932 and December 31, 1933.
134. At that time rumors had been set in circulation by unknown parties claiming that this foreign power was France. The French Embassy denied this, and the Foreign Office itself was forced to confirm that any such suspicions were wholly without foundation; see Bullock, pp. 267 f. Hitler declared on July 13 that he would have men shot who spoke with foreign statesmen without his knowledge, even if they had only discussed the weather, old coins or similar topics. He was to be the judge of what was harmless and what was not.
135. This is apparently a reference to Werner von Alvensleben; see below, July 13, 1934.
136. Julius Streicher, well-known for his utter lack of moral scruples, ultimately had to be dismissed as Gauleiter for Franconia in 1940. However, Hitler continued to stand by him and refused to sign his order of expulsion from the Party.
137. At that time, §175 of the German Penal Code defined homosexuality generally as a criminal offense. After undergoing a series of substantial changes, this section was amended on November 23, 1973 in the course of the Fourth Penal Reform Law (1974), making homosexual acts punishable only in connection with persons under eighteen.
138. This statement was pure propaganda and referred to the members of the SA. Or had Röhm and the other slain SA leaders; all of whom had served Hitler since the very beginning, suddenly become “clever latecomers” (*gescheite Spätlinge*)?
139. Dietrich’s testimony before the jury Court in Munich on May 6, 1957.
140. This was the committal list for Stadelheim Prison in Munich which had been drawn upon the imprisonment of the SA leaders and sent to the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior. It is still in existence and bears a notation made by Wagner, Gauleiter and Bavarian Minister of the Interior, on June 30 that “at the Führer’s orders, those gentlemen are to be released into the custody of SS Gruppenführer Dietrich whom he shall specify” (court records of the jury Court at the Landgericht Munich I).
141. Napoleon enjoyed following up the speeches he made to his old campaigners with a round of marching practice. One day he was suddenly called away and forgot to give the command for the men to halt. The “Old Guard” kept right on marching in the given direction and continued for hours and even days, refusing to heed all attempts to make them stop. Numerous guardsmen fell down dead in their tracks before

Napoleon, shocked at the consequences of his forgetfulness, could dispatch a mounted messenger to deliver the command to halt.

142. Hitler made a mistake in this bulletin: at the time it was issued, only the six SA leaders whose names had been given to Dietrich had been shot. Gruppenführer Ernst was on a flight from Bremen to Berlin in handcuffs.
143. The head of the Ministerial Office, Major General von Reichenau, stated in an interview with Stanislas de La Rochefoucauld of the *Petit Journal* (published on August 6, 1934): “The death of Schleicher, our former chief, caused us pain, but we are of the opinion that he long ago ceased being a soldier.” Schleicher, according to von Reichenau, had been a born conspirator, and the fact that a former Minister of Defense could conceive of regaining power with the assistance of the SA escaped his comprehension. His connection to Röhm, he stated, had been a known fact, and it was equally certain that he had placed serious hopes in France, which was to aid him in accomplishing the tasks of government. “By no means am I making any accusations against your country [France]. I am merely saying that Schleicher was counting on France. It is a sad thought that officers can so easily lose the qualities of their profession in politics. That was the misfortune in Schleicher’s case. He forgot that obedience is the highest commandment in the military.” In this interview, Reichenau departed from the official version that Schleicher had been shot resisting arrest, admitting instead that the shooting had been planned. There also exists a statement by Schleicher’s domestic employee, Marie Güntel, on the slaying of Schleicher and his wife by two civilians (protocol of the Berlin police of June 31, 1934).
144. On October 14, 1933, Hitler had had an announcement made that high military honors such as, for instance, a guard of honor, were to be reserved exclusively for the Reich President and the upper echelons of the military and that he himself laid no claim to such honors; see above, October 14, 1933.
However, after the “test of courage” on June 30 had sufficed to impress the Reichswehr generals, Hitler was free to accept this “high honor,” having personally advanced to the upper echelons of the military.
145. See below, October 13, 1944.
146. Eicke was killed in the Second World War. Lippert and Sepp Dietrich were sentenced to one and a half years’ imprisonment on May 14, 1957 for acting as accessories to unlawful homicide (judgment in the Röhm Trial before the Jury Court at the Landgericht Munich I).
147. The fact that Schmitt had been taken ill was disclosed as early as June 28 and thus appears to have no connection with the events of the Röhm Purge, notwithstanding Schmitt’s statements to the contrary before the Military Tribunal in Nuremberg in 1946.
148. RGBl 1934, I, p. 529.
149. See above, July 1, 1934.
150. Cited in the *Dresdner Nachrichten*, August 4, 1934.
151. The *Landeszeitung* in Wiesbaden published the following notice on June 17: “Brüning in England. The London *Times* has reported that the

former German Reich Chancellor, Dr. Brüning, who had come to England due to a cardiac affliction, has been staying with his friend Anderson during his visit here. His state of health has improved substantially as a result of the rest, and he plans to return to Germany in two or three weeks. This report in the *Times* is apparently designed to disperse the false rumors in circulation regarding Brüning's visit to England. The *Evening Standard* published a statement on behalf of former Reich Chancellor Brüning in respect to reports in a number of morning papers to the effect that he had fled Germany under the cover of night. Brüning states that his visit to London is only temporary, that it is completely legal in nature and that he went there in answer to an invitation. Brüning stated further that his name is not on any blacklist, and that he has repeatedly spoken with Reich Chancellor Hitler and other National Socialist leaders."

The following press release was published on July 3: "Brüning in Lugano. London, July 3. In response to the statement issued by the Foreign Office to the effect that the English Government had no information as to whether former Reich Chancellor Brüning was still in England, the *Evening Standard* has reported that Brüning left for Lugano with several friends as early as last week. He planned to wind up his convalescent holiday there and then return to Germany. The newspaper believes it possible to safely assume that Brüning has not been involved in politics since having left office and thus has nothing to do with the most recent incidents in Germany."

152. Hitler cited the following persons: Chief of Staff Röhm; Obergruppenführers Schneidhuber and Heines; Gruppenführers Detten, Ernst, Schmidt, Hayn, and Heydebreck; Standartenführers Spreti, Uhl and Schmidt (the latter of whom was Obersturmbannführer); Gregor Strasser, General von Schleicher and his wife Elisabeth (née Hennings), and General von Bredow. On October 31, 1934, "Führerbefehl 26, Munich P. No. 24 400" was issued for the SA in which the following persons were cited—in addition to the above—as having been expelled from the SA on June 30 or in the period from July 1 to 7, 1934: Obergruppenführers Friedrich Ritter von Krausser and Werner von Fichte; Gruppenführers Karl Schreyer and Walter Luetgebrunn (the latter had been Hitler's attorney since 1923); Oberführer Hans Joachim von Falkenhausen, Standartenführer Hans Schweighart, Obersturmführer Max Vogel, Sturmführer Max Lösch, Obertruppführer Martin Schätzl, Obertruppführer Veit-Ulrich von Beulwitz, and Rottenführer Eduard Neumeier. Circumstances indicate that these eleven persons were liquidated, just as were Kahr, Klausner, Probst, Jung, and Bose. On August 5, 1934, the *Vogtländischer Anzeiger* published an obituary for Unterbannführer Karl Laemmermann with the text: "He died blameless and upright, gladly giving his life for the Vaterland and the Movement, loyal to his Führer unto death." Father Bernhard Stempfle, former member of the Hyronimite order and a staff member at the *Miesbacher Anzeiger* who had edited the first

edition of *Mein Kampf*, was also killed. According to Heinrich Hoffmann's report in his "Erzählungen" (*Münchener Illustrierte*, No. 50/1954), Hitler had remarked: "Those pigs killed my good Father Stempfle, too." If Stempfle was, in fact, killed without Hitler's knowledge, it is conceivable that his slayers were the three SS men whom Hitler ordered executed for "disgraceful abuse of prisoners in protective custody."

The Munich music critic Dr. Willi Schmidt was shot as a result of mistaken identity.

The victims also included Anton von Hohberg, an East Prussian SS Obersturmführer and tournament horseback rider (see reports of the trial against the one-time SS Oberguppenführer, von dem Bach-Zelewski, before the Jury Court in Nuremberg in January/February 1961).

It is difficult to identify even the 74 persons whom Hitler admitted were killed. The *Weissbuch über die Erschiessungen des 30. Juni 1934* (White Book on the Shootings of June 30, 1934) published in Paris in 1934 is not completely reliable. It is based, for the most part, on the *Deutsches Führerlexikon* for 1934/35 (Berlin) which was given the NSDAP seal of approval on June 15, 1934. Numerous "incriminated" parties had to be subsequently (after June 30, 1934) removed from this lexikon, of whom not all were shot; several even remained in office.

153. DNB report, July 18, 1934.
154. Camouflage organization for the Air Force, which was already being built up at the time contrary to the provisions laid down in the Treaty of Versailles.
155. At the "Revolution Roll Call" for the *Alte Kämpfer* on March 19, 1934, Hitler himself had stated that the revolution would continue for generations; see above, *ibid.*
156. Hitler's claim that SA members, who had joined the SA in 1933, had frequently been promoted to leadership positions is not true. This would apply more accurately to the political leadership, for many of the party members who joined in 1933 did, in fact, very quickly become functionaries.
157. Hitler is referring to Obersturmbannführer Hans Walter Schmidt, aide to Oberguppenführer Heines. On July 2, the *Breslauer Neueste Nachrichten* published a detailed wanted notice with the headline: "Obersturmbannführer Schmidt must be arrested!"
158. Heines, Hayn and Heydebreck belonged to the group of former Freikorps leaders who supported the militia and earned Hitler's disapproval by doing so.
159. Hitler's concept of "decency" was unconditional, blind obedience.
160. The words "whom you all know" are absent from the official text of the speech (source: the author's notes). The abbreviation "v.A." refers to Werner von Alvensleben, whose brother, SA Brigadeführer Bodo Graf von Alvensleben, chaired the Herrenklub. Alvensleben was arrested in connection with the Röhms Purge but was not executed.
161. Reference to General Ludendorff.
162. Admittedly, an oath which Hitler made to Hindenburg was worth no

- more than any of the other countless pledges he made during his rule and subsequently broke.
163. Hitler's claim that the Wehrmacht was to be the sole bearer of arms was a dubious affair from the very beginning. As early as March 17, 1933, the armed *SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* was created, forming the basis for the *Waffen SS*, from which in turn entire army corps evolved. In 1933, the armed staff guards of Göring and Röhm were installed. Göring then formed a private regiment within the Prussian Land Police called *General Göring*. Even the SA created a *Standarte* (guidon) with the name *Feldherrnhalle* in 1937, which took part in the occupation of the Sudetenland in 1938 wearing air force uniforms. Only marginal mention can be made here of the numerous armed and quartered police troops.
 164. This theatrical appeal to good faith (*Treu und Glauben*) ill became a man as unscrupulous as Hitler, whose promises and oaths were as worthless in terms of foreign policy as they were in respect to domestic affairs. An alliance, in his view, was to be upheld only as long as it served his purposes—a cynical approach he had already espoused in *Mein Kampf*.
 165. Here, the dictator portrays himself as an innocent and ignorant victim of circumstances—although he had personally sworn in Göring's and Röhm's staff guards in front of the *Feldherrnhalle* on the night of November 9, 1933; see above, November 9, 1933.
 166. With these references to the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day and the Sicilian Vespers, Hitler apparently wished to teach his audience the real meaning of fear and, in doing so, in fact aptly described his own actions.
 167. Reference to SA Gruppenführer Georg von Detten.
 168. Hitler is referring to the Standartenführer Julius Uhl. A rumor had been spread that Uhl planned to shoot Hitler on July 1 at a concert of the singer Heinrich Schlusnus in Braubach am Rhein. Uhl was in Bad Wiessee, however, where he was arrested on June 30 and taken to Stadelheim Prison. Apparently, Uhl was chosen to play the leading role in Hitler's concocted assassination plot due to his well-known prowess as a brilliant marksman.
 169. Hitler's claim that "inexplicable riots" had broken out in the ranks of the SA in August of 1932, i.e. in the wake of the failed negotiations on NSDAP participation in the government, is not true. While the members of the SA who had hoped for a takeover were naturally disappointed, they nonetheless followed Hitler's and Röhm's orders and returned home.
 170. Here, too, Hitler is clearly lying to his audience: he could neither name the alleged witnesses nor produce any written statements.
 171. There is no evidence of any sudden extension of service prior to the SA leave scheduled to commence on July 1 with the exception of the contrived alarm in Munich on the evening of June 29.
 172. A "mutiny" is only possible in military or paramilitary organizations and thus reprisals are limited to that respective scope. However, only shortly before, Hitler had denied the SA any military or paramilitary character.
 173. Here, according to Hitler, corruption suddenly became the reason for the

- executions. During the Third Reich, the death sentence was passed for various real and alleged crimes, but corruption was not among them.
174. Kutisker and Stavisky were large-scale defrauders whose dealings attracted international attention at the time. Members of the French Government officials were embroiled in the financial scandal surrounding Stavisky. The extremist right-wing *Action Française* attempted to turn the affair to its advantage and take power. During the riots, which reached a peak on February 6, 1934, fifteen persons were killed and Chautemps' government forced to step down. Within the month, a center government was formed which did not include the right-wing, anti-Republican camp.
 175. This is apparently a reference to the crises of 1930 and 1931 surrounding Pfeffer von Salomon and Stennes and, to a lesser extent, to the insignificant Stegmann crisis of January 1933. Former SA Gruppenführer in Franconia, Willi Stegmann, who had protested against Hitler's "legal route" shortly before the NSDAP took power, was put in a concentration camp in 1933. On February 14, 1936, he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment by a special court in Nuremberg for "maintaining a mutinous organization." A DNB report on February 17, 1936 stressed that the presiding judge had also taken "Stegmann's abhorrent mutiny during the period prior to the *Machtergreifung*" into consideration.
 176. Hitler assumed the "responsibility" neither for the Röhm Purge nor for any other of his atrocious deeds, electing instead to commit suicide in April 1945.
 177. Speech on April 29, 1937 before Kreisleiters in Vogelsang.
 178. Report in VB, No. 200, July 19, 1934.
 179. Report in VB, No. 202, July 21, 1934.
 180. Published in VB, No. 207, July 26, 1934.
 181. See above, June 11, 1934.
 182. From 1871 to 1945, the term "Reichsdeutsche" was applied to German citizens.
 183. Theo Habicht; commercial employee; NSDAP Kreisleiter in Wiesbaden from 1927 to 1932; Landesinspekteur in Austria from 1932 to 1934; Mayor of Wittenberg from 1937 to 1945.
 184. Report in VB, No. 204, July 23, 1934.
 185. Published in VB, No. 206, July 25, 1934.
 186. Emil Ritter von Fey, former major and leader of the *Heimwehr* (Home Defense Forces—uniformed paramilitary organizations formed in Austria after World War I), born 1886. Minister and State Secretary from 1932 to 1934 Von Fey played a dubious role in the attempted coup and committed suicide on March 16, 1938 after the Germans had occupied Vienna.
 187. Ward Price had been present at the execution and reported on it in detail. Cf. VB, No. 217, August 5, 1934.
 188. In 1938, Hitler stated in Klagenfurt (see below, speech of April 4, 1938): "You can take my word for it, I suffered with you back then. I could not help you, but I made an oath to myself then, and now I have kept it."

189. DNB wording of July 26, 1934.
190. This is a reference to reception and training camps for the Austrian National Socialists who had fled the country and were taken in by Bavaria until 1938. The inmates later wore olive-drab uniforms and were called the “Austrian Legion.” They did not, however, participate in the occupation of 1938 but were inconspicuously brought back into the country.
191. Published in VB, No. 209, July 28, 1934.
192. Cf. Tschirschky’s testimony before the Denazification Court at Nuremberg on February 19, 1947. Tschirschky emigrated to England in 1935. Another of von Papen’s secretaries, Wilhelm von Ketteler, was murdered by the Gestapo on March 13, 1938 following the German occupation of Austria.
193. Published in VB, No. 209, July 28, 1934.
194. Quoted from a facsimile of von Papen’s letter of appointment dated July 31, 1934 published in the *Frankfurter Volksblatt* on August 18, 1934.
195. Ferdinand Sauerbruch, *Das war mein Leben* (Bad Wörishofen, 1951), p. 520.
196. *Gesetz über das Staatsoberhaupt des deutschen Reichs*. RGBl. 1934, I, p. 747.
197. Article 51 of the Weimar Constitution originally provided that the Reich Chancellor was to represent the Reich President only in the interim prior to new elections. At the request of the National Socialists, the Reichstag resolved with a two-thirds majority in December 1932 (promulgated on December 17, 1932) that the President of the Reichsgericht [Dr. Bumke] was to represent the President for this term. At the time, Hitler wished to avoid, in the event of von Hindenburg’s sudden death, that Schleicher would be in a position to exercise the powers of both President and Chancellor.
Now that he had become Chancellor himself, Hitler would naturally no longer accept that the President of the Reichsgericht take office and hence passed the law of August 1, 1934, a step for which he had made provisions in the wording of the Enabling Act of March 23/24, 1933; see above, March 23, 1933.
198. Published in VB, No. 215, August 3, 1934.
199. Ibid. RGBl. 1934, I, p. 749.
200. An announcement made at a meeting of the heads of the Reich Ministry of Propaganda on the afternoon of August 2, 1934. DNB report, August 3, 1934.
201. Hitler’s speech at the Tannenberg Monument; see below, August 7, 1934.
202. DNB text, August 2, 1934, printed in RGBl. 1934, I, p. 796. RGBl. 1934, I, pp. 753–755, also contains an announcement of the Reich Government to the German Volk documenting Hindenburg’s biography with essentially the same contents as in Hitler’s two speeches on August 6 and 7, 1934.
203. Up until this point, the Reichswehr had not sworn allegiance to any particular person or to the Reich President. Even after the so-called

“national uprising,” the decree of December 2, 1933 (RGBl. 1933, I, p. 1017) had only provided that the German soldier was to “always serve Volk and Vaterland loyally and honestly” and that, as a brave and obedient soldier, he should be willing “to risk his life for this oath at all times.”

Not until August 20, 1934 was a law passed providing that civil servants and the soldiers of the Wehrmacht were to pledge the new oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler (RGBl. 1934, I, p. 785).

204. Published in VB, No. 215, August 3, 1934. Described and published as the “Decree of the Reich Chancellor for the Implementation of the Law on the Head of State” in RGBl. 1934, I, p. 751. In official intercourse within Germany, Hitler’s title from this point onwards was: “Der Führer and Reichskanzler.” Prior hereto, the official wording (in drafts of bills, etc.) had been merely “Der Reichskanzler.” In intercourse with foreign countries, Hitler used the title “Deutscher Reichskanzler” as head of state and was addressed at all official gatherings and receptions as “Herr Deutscher Reichskanzler.”

The plebiscite on the law of August 1, 1934 was scheduled for August 19, 1934 by a resolution passed by the Reich Government on August 2, 1934 (RGBl. 1934, I, p. 752).

205. Cf. Hitler’s comments on a prospective successor in Ward Price, p. 131, and in Heinz Linge, “Kronzeuge Linge,” in *Revue*, No. 5 (1956), pp. 34–35.
206. No plebiscites took place in 1935 and 1937.
207. Published in VB, No. 219, August 7, 1934.
208. Ibid.
209. See below, August 20, 1934.
210. Special formations composed of hand-picked National Socialists in gray-green uniforms with white collar patches which were later incorporated in the motorized gendarmerie.
211. Published in VB, No. 220, August 8, 1934.
212. RGBl. 1934, I, p. 769.
213. DNB report, August 18, 1934.
214. Report in VB, No. 222, August 10, 1934.
215. DNB report, August 10, 1934; VB, No. 223, August 11, 1934.
216. Wording of the will published in VB, No. 228, August 16, 1934.
217. Von Papen’s denazification trial in February 1947. According to the testimony of Oskar von Hindenburg at his own respective trial before the Denazification Court at Uelzen in March 1949, the Reich President had merely requested in a personal letter to Hitler that he consider reinstating the monarchy at a later date.
218. Ibid.
219. Reports in VB, No. 230, August 18, 1934.
220. Published in VB, *ibid.*
221. However, in his last will and testament, Hitler in fact appointed Grand Admiral Dönitz to the office of Reich President; see below, April 29, 1945.
222. In the official wording of the speech, the word “*ertrage*” (bear) has been

- replaced by the less caustic “*vertrage*” (tolerate), a subsequent change made by Hitler. The original term has been taken from the author’s notes.
223. Published in VB, No. 230, August 18, 1934.
224. Oskar von Hindenburg’s speech was published in all German newspapers on August 18, 1934 before it was broadcast. According to the Constitution, the Reich President did not have the right to choose a successor, and von Hindenburg did not do so in his testament. Hence his son was confined to stating his own personal opinion.
225. See photo XV.
226. Published in VB, No. 233, August 21, 1934.
227. Ibid.
228. Report in VB, *ibid.*
229. Report in VB, No. 235, August 23, 1934.
230. Published in VB No. 239 and No. 240, August 27 and 28, 1934 respectively. DNB wording, August 26, 1934.
231. The Saar plebiscite took place on January 13, 1935, and the Saar rejoined the German Reich on March 1 of the same year. Scarcely a week later, on March 9, Hitler announced the establishment of a new German air force and instituted general conscription on March 16.
232. See above, August 6, 1933.
233. Report in VB, No. 248, September 5, 1934.
234. Published in VB, No. 249, September 6, 1934.
235. This project was never realized.
236. Published in VB, No. 249, September 6, 1934.
237. Published in VB, No. 250, September 7, 1934.
238. Report in VB, No. 251, September 8, 1934.
239. Report in VB, No. 253, September 10, 1934.
240. Published in VB, *ibid.*
241. Ibid.
242. Ibid.
243. Report in VB, *ibid.*
244. Report in VB, No. 254, September 11, 1934.
245. Published in VB, *ibid.*
246. Published in VB, No. 256, September 13, 1934.
247. Report in VB, No. 274, October 1, 1934. This issue also contains the text of the Bückeberg speech.
248. Report in VB, No. 282, October 9, 1934.
249. Published in VB, No. 283, October 10, 1934.
250. Ibid.
251. Published in VB, No. 303, October 30, 1934. Hitler revered Atatürk as a “leader figure” and sent him congratulatory telegrams whenever the occasion presented itself, apparently unaware that Atatürk was anything but friendly toward Germany.
252. Report in VB, No. 304, October 31, 1934.
253. Report in VB, No. 305/306, November 1/2, 1934.
254. Ibid.

255. Mentioned in VB, Berlin Edition, December 1, 1934.
256. Published in VB, No. 314, November 10, 1934.
257. Hitler often maintained in party circles that the victims of June 30 had died “for the liberation of the Vaterland,” alluding to the inscription on the Munich monument for the Bavarian soldiers killed during the Napoleonic campaign in Russia (obelisk on the Karolinenplatz). He granted substantial pensions to the survivors of those slain on June 30, 1934.
258. Decree on the *Stiftung für die Blutzeugen der Bewegung*. Printed in VB, No. 313, November 9, 1934.
259. Published in VB, No. 314, November 10, 1934.
260. Published in VB, No. 337, December 3, 1934.
261. The “German salute” was the “Heil Hitler” greeting used as a closing in correspondence.
262. Published in VB, No. 319, November 15, 1934.
263. Published in VB, No. 330, November 26, 1934. DNB wording, November 24, 1934.
264. DNB report, November 19, 1934. This was an organization made up of soldiers from the World War. General von Litzmann, the “Lion of Brzeziny,” was its chairman.
265. DNB report, November 27, 1934. The morning of the same day, Hitler visited an exhibition of war paintings by Professor Ludwig Dettmann in the Berlin Zeughaus (VB, No. 332, November 28, 1934).
266. Julius Schreck, Hitler’s long-standing chauffeur, bore a marked resemblance to Hitler and was occasionally used as his double prior to the accession to power. Schreck stood in, for instance, on January 4, 1933 in order to keep the meeting between Hitler and Papen secret.
267. Neither the testimony before the IMT in Nuremberg nor the records of the interrogation of witnesses at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte contain evidence of an assassination attempt during this period. The author conducted numerous interviews with witnesses and was similarly unable to procure any evidence to support this theory.
268. On November 27, 1934, an official communiqué was published, for instance, which denied rumors about von Blomberg, General von Fritsch, and Major General von Reichenau, disclaiming that there had been any differences between the Army and Goebbels (DNB wording, November 27, 1934).—On December 2, 1934, Göring spoke in the Friedrich-Alfred-Hütte (steel works) in Rheinhausen and stated, as he had in respect to the Röhm Purge: “He who dares to interfere with the trust vested in the Führer, he who attempts to undermine that which is faithful in the Volk, is a traitor. He who agitates against the Führer is agitating against Germany” (DNB wording, December 3, 1934).—In early December, Major Foertsch, a department head in the Ministry of Defense, spoke before leaders of the SA, SS and HJ as well as representatives of the press on the relations between the Wehrmacht and National Socialism and stressed that the Führer had designated the Wehrmacht to be one of the pillars which, in addition to the Party, supported the State

- as the nation's sole bearer of arms (DNB wording, December 12, 1934).
269. DNB report, December 5, 1934.
270. DNB report, December 6, 1934.—Gottfried Feder, born 1883 in Würzburg, died 1941 in Murnau, was the author of the pamphlet, *Das Programm der NSDAP und seine weltanschaulichen Grundgedanken* (Munich, 1932) and an advocate of the thesis of breaking the shackles of interest.
271. DNB report, December 6, 1934. VB, No. 341, December 7, 1934.
272. DNB Photo Archives, December 10, 1934.
273. DNB report, December 13, 1934.
274. DNB reports, December 14, 1934.
275. DNB reports, December 14 and 17, 1934.—After this incident, Hitler's special train was allowed to travel only at a maximum speed of 60 kilometers per hour.
276. The latter was adopted from the Italian Fascists. For the introduction of the "German salute" in the Wehrmacht, see below, July 21, 1944.
277. DNB report, December 18, 1934.
278. Dr. h.c. Wilhelm Ohnesorge, born 1872 in Gräfenheinichen; Reich Minister of Postal Services 1937 to 1945.
279. DNB wording, December 19, 1934; VB, No. 354, December 20, 1934.
280. Report in VB, No. 355, December 21, 1934.
281. DNB special report, December 22, 1934; VB, No. 357, December 23, 1934.
282. DNB report, December 24, 1934; VB, No. 361, December 27, 1934.
283. DNB wording, December 31, 1934; VB, No. 365, December 31, 1934.
284. See below, speech of March 14, 1936.