

Monarchist support for Hitler

The following letter from the prominent racial theorist and Wagnerian publicist, Houston Stewart Chamberlain (see Docs.1.4 and 1.5), to the aspiring *völkisch* politician Adolf Hitler was sent only a month before Hitler launched his "Beer Hall Putsch" on 9 November 1923. Hitler had paid his respects to the ailing Chamberlain in Bayreuth on 6 October 1923. Chamberlain personified the transition that so many conservatives made from monarchism to fascism after the First World War. His letter gives some indication of the profound effect that Hitler was capable of exercising on like-minded people. It also attests to Hitler's success in appearing to stand above politics as the unifier of his people. Encouragement of the kind he received from Chamberlain and other monarchists may well have helped to persuade Hitler that his putsch attempt would succeed.

2.12 Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Letter to Hitler, 7 October 1923

Most respected and dear Herr Hitler,

You have every right not to expect this surprise attack, since you have seen with your own eyes how difficult it is for me to speak. But I cannot resist the urge to say a few words to you. I regard this as an entirely unilateral act, however – i.e. I do not expect an answer from you.

I have been thinking why it should have been you of all people – you who are so successful at awakening people from their sleep and lethargy – who recently gave me a longer and more refreshing sleep than I have had since that fateful day in August 1914 when I was smitten with this treacherous illness. Now I believe I understand that precisely this is the essence of your being: the true awakener is simultaneously the bestower of peace.

You are not at all, as you were described to me, a fanatic. I would rather describe you as the direct opposite of a fanatic. The fanatic makes people into hotheads, you warm people's hearts. The fanatic wants to talk people into something, you want to convince them, only to convince them – and that is why you succeed. In fact, I would also describe you as the opposite of a politician – in the ordinary sense of the word – for the root of all politics is membership in a party, whereas in your case all parties disappear, devoured by the heat of your love for the fatherland. It was, in my opinion, the misfortune of our great Bismarck, that he ... became a little too involved in politics. May you be spared this lot! ...

I constantly ask myself whether the lack of political instinct of which the German is so widely accused may not be a symptom of a much deeper talent for state-building. At any rate the German's organizational talent is unsurpassed (see Kiaochow!)¹⁰ and his scientific ability is second to none: it is on this that I have based my hopes in my essay *Political Ideals*. It should be the ideal of politics to have none. But this non-politics would have to be frankly admitted and forced upon the world through the exercise of power. Nothing will be achieved so long as the parliamentary system obtains; for this the Germans have, God knows, not a spark of talent! I regard its continued existence as the greatest misfortune; it can lead only again and again into the mire and ruin all plans for restoring the health and the prestige of the fatherland.

However, this is a digression, for I only wanted to speak of you. That you gave me peace is connected very much with your eyes and the motions of your hands. Your eyes seize people

¹⁰ The reference is to the German naval colony of Kiaochow in China, which Germany was forced to surrender after the First World War.

and hold them fast, as if with hands, and you have the singular habit of addressing yourself to one particular member of your audience at any one moment – I noticed this to be completely characteristic. As for your hands, they are so expressive in their movements that they are like eyes in this respect. It is hardly surprising that a man like that can give peace to a poor suffering spirit!

Especially when he is dedicated to the service of the fatherland.

My faith in Germanism has not wavered for a moment, though my hopes were – I confess – at a low ebb. With one stroke you have transformed the state of my soul. That Germany, in the hour of her greatest need, brings forth a Hitler – that is proof of her vitality ... that the magnificent Ludendorff openly supports you and your movement: What wonderful confirmation!

I could go untroubled to sleep, and there was no need for me to have woken up. May God protect you!

Source: Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Briefe, 1882–1924, und Briefwechsel mit Kaiser Wilhelm II*, Vol. I (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1928), pp. 124–6.
[Röhl, *From Bismarck to Hitler*, pp. 52–3]

The Beer Hall Putsch, 1923

The purpose of Hitler's failed "Beer Hall Putsch" in Munich on 8 and 9 November 1923 was to overthrow the Weimar Constitution and replace it with an authoritarian regime. Modelling his coup attempt on Mussolini's "March on Rome" of the year before, a successful bluff, Hitler thought he could count on the support of German conservatives, especially the dictatorial ruler of the state of Bavaria, Gustav von Kahr (1862–1934). Against the wishes of the national government in Berlin, Kahr had not only permitted but encouraged the activities of the radical right in Bavaria. Such prominent conservatives as General Erich Ludendorff (1865–1937), the chief of staff of the German Army in the First World War, were to have leading roles in the government Hitler hoped to establish. Kahr thought better of his alliance with Hitler, however, and ordered the Munich police to suppress the putsch attempt. In the ensuing shoot-out sixteen Nazis and three policemen were killed. Although Kahr had no sympathy for the Weimar system, he was reluctant to support an obviously illegal venture that did not command full army support. Hitler had not yet gained the millions of followers that would make him so indispensable to conservatives ten years hence. Kahr became a victim of Hitler's revenge in the "blood purge" of 30 June 1934 (see Doc. 3.21).

The following selection is an extract from Hitler's testimony at his trial. Posing as an unselfish patriot, he insisted that an attempt to overthrow a government that had signed the armistice in November 1918 and the Versailles Treaty in 1919 could never be considered treason. He pointed out that the highest Bavarian officials had originally been part of the conspiracy. He justified his putsch attempt by the danger of the spread of Marxism. Hitler understood that his appeal to conservatives lay in his willingness to use ruthless measures against the left. He knew that he could count on the sympathy of the court, which gave him the minimum penalty allowed by law. Sentenced to five years, he was released after serving only eight months. In prison he wrote his book, *Mein Kampf*. After his release he resolved to seek power legally and constitutionally in order to avoid a similar debacle in the future.

2.13 Hitler's speech in his own defense, 1924

Hitler: May it please the Court!

... Replacing the person by the cipher, energy by mass, the Marxist movement is destroying the foundation of all human cultural life. Wherever this movement breaks through, it must destroy human culture. The future of Germany means: destruction of Marxism. Either Marxism poisons the people, their Germany is ruined, or the poison is going to be eliminated – then Germany can recover again, not before that. For us, Germany will be saved on the day on which the last Marxist has either been converted or broken ...

We will fight spiritually for one who is willing to fight with the weapons of the spirit; we have the fist for the one who is willing to fight with the fist.

When we recognized that the territory of the Ruhr would be lost, our movement arrived at a big point of discord with the bourgeois world. The National Socialist movement recognized clearly that the territory of the Ruhr would be lost if the people would not wake up from its lethargy. World politics are not made with the olive branch, but with the sword. But the Reich too must be governed by National Socialists ...

But our movement has not been founded to gain seats in parliament and daily attendance fees; our movement was founded to turn Germany's fate in her twelfth hour ...

As we had declared at numerous public meetings that our leaders would not, like those of the Communists did, stand in the rear in the critical hours, our leaders marched in front. On [General Erich] Ludendorff's right side Dr. [Friedrich] Weber marched, on his left, I and [Max von] Scheubner-Richter and the other gentlemen. We were permitted to pass by the cordon of troops blocking the Ludwig Bridge. They were deeply moved; among them were men who wept bitter tears. People who had attached themselves to the columns yelled from the rear that the men should be knocked down. We yelled that there was no reason to harm these people. We marched on to the Marienplatz. The rifles were not loaded. The enthusiasm was indescribable. I had to tell myself: The people are behind us, they no longer can be consoled by ridiculous resolutions. The Volk want a reckoning with the November criminals, as far as it still has a sense of honor and human dignity and not for slavery. In front of the Royal Residence a weak police cordon let us pass through. Then there was a short hesitation in front, and a shot was fired. I had the impression that it was no pistol shot but a rifle or carbine bullet. Shortly afterwards a volley was fired. I had the feeling that a bullet struck in my left side. Scheubner-Richter fell, I with him. At this occasion my arm was dislocated and I suffered another injury while falling.

I only was down for a few seconds and tried at once to get up. Another shot was fired, out of the little street to the rear of the Preysing Palace. Around me there were bodies. In front of us were State Police, rifles cocked. Farther in the rear there were armored cars. My men were 70 to 80 meters in back of me. A big gentleman in a black overcoat was lying flat covered on the ground, soiled with blood. I was convinced that he was Ludendorff. There were a few more shots fired from inside the Royal Residence and from the little street near the Preysing Palace and maybe also a few wild shots fired by our men. From the circle near the Rentenamt, I drove out of town. I intended to be driven back the same night ...

A few days later, at Uffing, we found out that I had suffered a fracture of the joint and a fracture of the collarbone. During those days I was all broken down by pains of body and soul, if only because I believed that Ludendorff was dead. I obtained the first newspapers at Landsberg. There I read the statement about a breach of my pledged word, that I had pledged

my word to Herr von Kahr never to undertake anything without informing him, that I had given this pledge on the evening of November 6th. There I stood as a perfect scoundrel without honor. That is the lowest thing to do; that man, who worked together with us the whole time, stepped up with such lies against us now, when we could not defend ourselves and, to an extent, were broken down in spirit. I never gave such a pledge to Mr. von Kahr. I said, I am standing behind you loyally, I will do nothing against you. Finally I said: "If you are not going to make up your mind, then I will not consider myself obligated as far as my decisions are concerned." When this campaign of slander continued in the course of the next few days and one after the other was brought in to Landsberg [prison], whose only guilt was to have adhered to our movement, then I resolved to defend myself and to resist until the last breath. I did not enter this court to deny anything or to reject my responsibility. I protest against the attempt that Herr von Kriebel tries to assume the responsibility, be it only for the military preparations. I bear the responsibility all alone, but I declare one thing: I am no criminal because of that and I do not feel as if I were a criminal.

I cannot plead guilty, but I do confess the act. There is no such thing as high treason against the traitors of 1918. It is impossible that I should have committed high treason, for this cannot be implicit in the action of November 8th and 9th, but only in the intentions and the actions during all the previous months. But if I really should have committed high treason, then I am surprised not to see those gentlemen here at my side, against whom the prosecutor would be obliged to file indictments;¹¹ those who willed together with us the same action, discussed and prepared things down to the smallest detail, things which may be described in particular at a closed session later. I do not consider myself as a man who committed high treason, but as a German, who wanted the best for his people ...

Source: Office of the US Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality,
Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. V
(Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 73–4

Struggle for an expanded National Socialist program

This draft of a more detailed program than the Nazi Party's official "Twenty-five Point Program" (Doc. 2.6) was prepared under the leadership of Gregor Strasser (1892–1934) in 1925. Although Hitler countermanded its adoption to avoid any commitments to specific social and economic reforms and to keep full personal control of party policy, the draft is of interest as an indication of the kind of social and economic reforms that many idealistic Nazis favored, at least in the early years. This draft provides the most detailed record of what some party members understood under the term "German socialism." Striking are the many archaic features, such as the restoration of guilds, the special protections for small proprietors, especially farmers, and the establishment of vocational chambers, representatives of which would serve in a national parliament (the Reich Chamber of Corporations). The corporate state (*Ständestaat*), a

¹¹ Hitler is here referring in particular to Kahr, General Otto von Lossow (commander of the Bavarian Reichswehr), and Colonel Hans Ritter von Seisser (chief of the Bavarian state police), all of whom had helped plan the putsch attempt with Hitler.

Should the Jew, with the help of his Marxist creed, conquer the nations of this world, his crown will become the funeral wreath of mankind, and once again this planet, empty of mankind, will follow its orbit through the ether as it did millions of years ago . . .

What Hitler meant by the 'elimination' of the Jewish danger remained undefined, but to a German National Socialist from Bohemia who visited him in prison and asked if he had changed his position about the Jews, he replied:

Yes, yes, it is quite right that I have changed my opinion about the methods to fight Jewry. I have realised that up to now I have been much too soft. While working out my book I have come to the realisation that in the future the most severe methods of fighting will have to be used to let us come through successfully. I am convinced that this is a vital question not just for our people, but for all peoples. For Judaism is the plague of the world.

The twin tenets of Hitler's worldview, his determination to 'root out' the Jews (whatever he meant to suggest by that) and to conquer *Lebensraum* in Eastern Europe, not only remained unchanged but were repeatedly stated, years before he came to power, in *Mein Kampf* and in many speeches and interviews.

As he claimed in *Mein Kampf*: 'In this period there took shape within me a world picture and a philosophy which became the granite foundation of all my acts. In addition to what I then created, I have had to learn little since, and have had to alter nothing.' Hitler wrongly dates this to his years in Vienna before 1914; it was a process which began then but was not complete until he committed it to paper in the mid 1920s. After that, however, he was quite right in saying that his *Weltanschauung* provided a granite foundation to which he added nothing. His was a closed mind impervious to argument or doubt. It was thanks to this, the assurance that he possessed the key to history, and with it could unlock the future as well, that he felt able to exploit tactical opportunities, without any risk of losing sight of his objectives, awaiting his time, believing that it would arrive and that he would then be able to commit the German people to a programme which remained as primitive and brutal as when he spelled it out in *Mein Kampf*. The advantage this gave was already evident in the years up to 1930, when circumstances did not favour him and few outside the party took him seriously, but he nonetheless prepared for a change in his favour which he could not foresee but was confident would come.

Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann

Hitler's Racism

It is not certain which racialist works Hitler actually read. There is no 'man who gave Hitler his ideas' in a simplistic teleological sense. However, it is certain that Hitler knew the most important racial-anthropological, racial-hygienic, and racial anti-Semitic theories, and in *Mein Kampf* turned them into a comprehensive, self-contained, if totally insane, racial-political programme. His racial discourse began with the following 'truths':

Even the most superficial observation shows that Nature's restricted form of propagation and increase is an almost rigid basic law of all the innumerable forms of expression of her vital urge. Every animal mates only with a member of the same species. The titmouse seeks the titmouse, the finch the finch, the stork the stork, the field mouse the field mouse, the dormouse the dormouse, the wolf the she-wolf, etc.

On a first reading, these observations seem involuntarily comic. In reality, both this passage and the paragraphs which follow contain three axioms fundamental to racist thought. The first is the claim that only those living things which produce healthy offspring with one another constitute a race — a definition of race which can already be found in the works of Kant. Secondly, Hitler presupposed the existence of 'higher' and 'lesser' races, a notion common to virtually every racial ideologist since the late eighteenth century. Following Gobineau and others, Hitler claimed that the 'Aryans' alone were the 'culture-creating race'. The Chinese and Japanese were merely 'culture-bearing'; the other races, i.e. Blacks and Slavs, of 'lesser value', while the 'Jewish race' was the embodiment of evil. The third axiom was that among humans as well as animals there was, and should be, an 'urge towards racial purity'. Interbreeding between the races would result in 'bastardisation' and a deterioration of racial 'value'. This idea can also be found in the work of reactionary aestheticians from Gobineau onwards, and it is expressed in a 'scientific' guise in the research of men

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like Eugen Fischer. In 1913 Fischer published a study of the Rehoboter Bastards, or the children of Boers and Hottentots in South-West Africa. Without the slightest evidence, Fischer claimed that the children of so-called mixed marriages were of 'lesser racial quality'. Their intellectual achievements increased or decreased according to the proportion of European blood. However, they would never create their own culture, for they required constant European leadership.

In the course of a chapter devoted to 'Nation and Race', Hitler dwelt upon the need to prevent 'miscegenation' while promoting racial selective breeding. Since there were still 'considerable remnants of unmixed Nordic-Germanic people' in the 'body of the German people', one should 'not only gather together and maintain the most valuable remnants of primeval racial elements, but slowly and surely lead them to a commanding position'. Although Hitler mentioned no names, it is clear that here he was indebted to the ideas of racial-hygienicists. It is not particularly important whether he had actually read the work of scientists such as Haeckel, Schallmayer, and Ploetz, or whether, more probably, he derived his ideas from the sub-scientific undergrowth of tracts produced by Hentschel, Lanz, and Dinter. In a subsequent chapter, entitled 'World View and Party', Hitler summed up his racial-ideological presuppositions. The 'völkisch world view . . . by no means believes in an equality of the races, but along with their difference it recognises their higher or lesser value and feels itself obligated, through this knowledge, to promote the victory of the better and the stronger, and demand the subordination of the inferior and weaker in accordance with the eternal will that dominates this universe'.

How was this 'victory of the better and stronger' to be achieved? In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler outlined a catalogue of measures which can be found in racial-hygienic and eugenicist literature from Galton, Haeckel, and Schallmayer onwards. However, the terminology employed was rather different. Hitler eschewed technical scientific terms like Weissmann's 'germ plasm' or Mendelian 'hereditary properties' in favour of calls for the 'maintenance of the purity of the blood'. Firstly, care should be taken 'to ensure that only those who are healthy produce children'. The 'obstruction of the reproductive capacities of those with syphilis, tuberculosis, the hereditarily burdened, cripples and cretins' was unavoidable. He repeated this last point, which again can be found in the work of Haeckel, Ploetz, and Schallmayer, in countless speeches and writings before 1933. The corollary of these 'negative eugenic' measures involved 'positive' attempts to increase the birthrate. Again,

in both *Mein Kampf* and subsequent speeches and writings, Hitler recommended a number of measures, which some historians have mistakenly regarded as 'modern', or even 'socially revolutionary'. These measures included the introduction of child allowances, public housing projects, the promotion of equal education opportunities for working-class children, and so forth. In reality, all of these projected measures were motivated by racial considerations, firstly, because both 'alien races' and the 'less valuable elements' of the German population were excluded from the benefits of Nazi 'social policy', and secondly, because all of these social 'improvements' were designed to encourage the reproduction of certain types of people.

Again, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler made no secret of this objective. He advocated the acquisition of 'outlying colonies', which were to be settled by 'bearers of the highest racial purity'. The latter were to be selected by especially constituted 'commissions of racial experts'. Only those applicants deemed to be 'racially valuable' were to receive an 'attestation (of the right) to settle'. Again, Hitler refrained from acknowledging his intellectual debt to those eugenicists and racial-hygienicists who had argued along precisely these lines for several decades. In contrast to racial-hygienicists, Hitler expected no immediate results from these measures. The initial object was 'at least to eliminate the germ of our present physical and intellectual decline'. Only after the 'six-hundred-year obstruction of the reproductive capacities and possibilities to reproduce of the physically degenerate and the mentally ill', and through 'the consciously planned promotion of the fertility of the healthiest bearers of the nation', could a level of recovery be achieved 'which is hardly imaginable today'.

However, 'recovery' would only be possible if victory were achieved in the 'struggle' against the Jews. This struggle was both absolutely necessary and indeed willed by God. As Hitler wrote, 'I believe today that I am acting in the sense of the Almighty Creator: by warding off the Jews, I am fighting for the Lord's work.' The alternative outcome was distinctly bleak. For should 'the Jew, with the help of his Marxian creed . . . conquer the nations of this world, his crown will become the funeral wreath of humanity, and once again this planet, empty of mankind, will move through the ether as it did thousands of years ago'. This plangent, pseudo-eschatological vision reflects the second and most important element in Hitler's racism, namely racial anti-Semitism. Virtually everything Hitler thought about the Jews was contained in this passage. Unlike other anti-Semites, Hitler made no

distinctions between German and foreign, rich and poor, liberal, conservative, socialist, or Zionist, religious or nonreligious, baptised or unbaptised Jews. In his eyes, there was only 'the Jew'. 'The Jew' was striving for mastery of the peoples of the world. His most pernicious weapon was 'Marxism', whereby Hitler made no distinction between its Communist and socialist variants. If 'the Jew' should manage to win this ongoing 'struggle', then the result would be the downfall not only of the Germans, but of all peoples, and indeed of the world as a whole. 'The Jew' represented evil incarnate, performing for Hitler much the same function as the Devil does for many Christians. It was not fortuitous that in this connection Hitler used religious terms like 'creed', or that he employed apocalyptic language to describe the threat represented by 'the Jew'. The latter was the embodiment of absolute evil: the 'struggle' against 'him' was both righteous and good.

According to Hitler, the Jews in Germany and elsewhere were the champions of 'Marxism', the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', 'democracy' and the 'majority principle'. Jews were responsible for the outbreak of the First World War, and for the war's catastrophic outcome, namely Germany's collapse in 1918. They were the 'wire-pullers' behind the German Revolution, and the 'fathers' of the Weimar Constitution. Following the Revolution, they exercised their baleful influence in every political party — excepting the NSDAP — within the bureaucracy, the economy, cultural life, and the mass media. Other countries were either ruled by 'the Jew', like 'Jewish-Bolshevik Russia', or controlled by Jews, through their alleged dominance of 'world finance'. Both of these apparently polar opposites — namely Communism and 'finance' capitalism — were merely instruments designed to further plans for Jewish 'world domination', as essayed in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Even the propagation of the 'Jewish universal language' of Esperanto was a device designed to achieve this same end.

There was little in this Jewish conspiracy theory that was new, or which could not be found in the ravings of anti-Semites in other countries. Again, there was little originality in Hitler's coupling of the Jews with the question of prostitution, although in this case one would have to go back to the semi-pornographic tracts of Lanz and Dinter to find the same degree of obsessional and prurient concern with this issue. Hitler devoted twenty pages to this problem in *Mein Kampf*. He regarded prostitution as the 'pace-setter' of syphilis. Indeed, for him, in 1925–6 (!), 'the struggle against syphilis . . . was the task facing the na-

tion', and indeed, humanity as a whole. This 'struggle' was one of the 'touchstones of the racial value' of a nation. The race which failed this 'test' would 'die out, or forfeit its position to healthier or hardier races capable of greater resistance'. In order to prevent this unhappy outcome, Hitler proposed a series of measures, ranging from 'the pitiless isolation' and 'sterilisation of the incurably ill', through the 'iron hardening' of youth in order to eradicate their sexual desires, to the facilitation of 'early marriage', and philogenerative welfare measures. However, these measures would be otiose unless the struggle against 'the Jew' was radicalised. 'The Jew' was responsible for prostitution, the spread of syphilis, and the 'spiritual prostitution' of the German people. Directly and indirectly 'he' sought to achieve the 'racial decomposition', 'bastardisation', and 'poisoning of the blood' of the 'body of the German nation', either through surrogates, notably French colonial troops 'planted' upon the Rhineland, or directly through 'his' own marital or extra-marital relations with 'Aryan' women. Assuming the sexual passivity of the latter, Hitler emulated Dinter's quasi-pornographic and prurient interest in this subject: 'With satanic joy in his face, the black-haired Jewish youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing her from her people. With every means he tries to destroy the racial foundations of the people he has set out to subjugate.' In this oft-cited but sometimes underrated passage, Hitler both fused and developed the ideologies of anti-Semitism and racism. The Jews were accused not only of trying to 'subjugate' the German nation politically, but now of systematically undermining its 'racial foundations'. Racial-hygienic measures would therefore only be meaningful once the 'Jewish Question' had been 'solved'. What was the point of improving the racial health of the German population, if it was continually liable to subversion by the racial arch-enemy? In other words, Hitler had succeeded in combining and radicalising all previous strains of religious, social, and racial anti-Semitism: 'the Jew' was evil personified, therefore all means were appropriate and necessary in the fight against 'him'. The language used to describe 'the Jew' suggests one of the means he had in mind. They were 'spongers', 'parasites', 'poisonous mushrooms', 'rats', 'leeches', 'bacilli', 'tuberculosis bacilli' and so forth. Although some historians like to imagine that these metaphors were merely used for rhetorical effect, unaccountably ignoring the palpable inner violence of the man using them, the terms employed suggested one possible fate for the Jews, namely extermination.

decadence. Peoples who rise or rearise are imperialistic; renunciation is characteristic of dying peoples. The Fascist doctrine is that best suited to the tendencies and feelings of a people which, like the Italian, after lying fallow during centuries of foreign servitude, is now reasserting itself in the world.

But imperialism implies discipline, the coordination of efforts, a deep sense of duty and a spirit of self-sacrifice. This explains many aspects of the practical activity of the régime, and the direction taken by many of the forces of the State, as also the severity which has to be exercised towards those who would oppose this

spontaneous and inevitable movement of twentieth century Italy by agitating outgrown ideologies of the nineteenth century, ideologies rejected wherever great experiments in political and social transformations are being dared.

Never before have the peoples thirsted for authority, direction, order, as they do now. If each age has its doctrine, then innumerable symptoms indicate that the doctrine of our age is the Fascist. . . .

Fascism has now acquired throughout the world that universality which belongs to all doctrines which by achieving self-expression represent a moment in the history of human thought.

QUESTIONS

1. What is liberty in the Fascist state? Why does the state have total power?
2. Mussolini would have argued that the Fascist state was democratic. Why?
3. What is the Fascist view of war?
4. Why do Fascists reject socialism and liberal democracy?
5. Mussolini claimed that fascism enhanced the life of the individual. How so?

135.



ADOLF HITLER

MEIN KAMPF

(1923)

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) was the leader of one of the most powerful and brutal dictatorships in Western history. His father was a minor customs official in Austria, so Adolf grew up in a provincial town on the German border. His early years were spent pursuing an unsuccessful career as an artist against his father's wishes. In 1913 he left Austria in order to avoid military conscription and settled in Munich where, paradoxically, he became so caught up in war fever that he joined the German army. Hitler served in

France, where he was wounded several times and eventually decorated for bravery. The war was the happiest period of his life; when he was demobilized after the German defeat, he joined and eventually led the right-wing National Socialist German Workers Party. His politics were a mixture of nationalism and racism that appealed especially to former soldiers who shared Hitler's view that Germany had not lost the First World War, but had been betrayed by its leaders. By 1932 the Nazi party was the largest in Germany; Hitler was named chancellor in 1933. Once in power, he began an economic and military recovery that restored Germany to its former position as one of the leading states in Europe. His territorial ambitions, however, led directly to the Second World War, and his racial attitudes led directly to the Holocaust. When Germany's military situation became hopeless, Hitler committed suicide in Berlin in 1945.

Mein Kampf was written while Hitler was in jail after an attempt to overthrow the German government. The title means "My Struggle"; this very long and turgid work is a combination of a memoir and a statement of political philosophy. It includes some of Hitler's characteristic racist and anti-Semitic ideas.

It is a futile enterprise to argue which race or races were the original bearers of human culture and, with it, the actual founders of what we sum up with the word "mankind." It is simpler to put this question to oneself with regard to the present, and here the answer follows easily and distinctly. What we see before us of human culture today, the results of art, science, and techniques, is almost exclusively the creative product of the Aryan. But just this fact admits of the not unfounded conclusion that he alone was the founder of higher humanity as a whole, thus the prototype of what we understand by the word "man." He is the Prometheus of mankind, out of whose bright forehead springs the divine spark of genius at all times, forever rekindling that fire which in the form of knowledge lightened up the night of silent secrets and thus made man climb the path towards the position of master of the other beings on this earth. Exclude him—and deep darkness will again fall upon the earth, perhaps even, after a few thousand years, human culture would perish and the world would turn into a desert.

If one were to divide mankind into three groups: culture-founders, culture-bearers, and culture-destroyers, then, as representative of the first kind, only the Aryan would come in question. It is from him that the foundation and the walls of all human creations originate, and only the external form and color depend on the characteristics of the various peoples involved. He furnishes the gigantic building-stones and also the plans for all human progress, and only the execution corresponds to the character of the people and races in the various instances. In a few decades, for instance, the entire east of Asia will call a culture its own, the ultimate bases of which will be Hellenic spirit and Germanic technique, just as is the case with us. Only the external form will (at least partly) bear the features of Asiatic character. It is not the case, as some people claim, that Japan adds European techniques to her culture, but European science and techniques are trimmed with Japanese characteristics. But the basis of actual life is no longer the special Japanese culture, although it determines the color of life (because outwardly,

in consequence of its inner difference, it is more visible to European eyes), but it is the enormous scientific and technical work of Europe and America, that is, of Aryan peoples. Based on these achievements alone the East is also able to follow general human progress. This creates the basis for the fight for daily bread, it furnishes weapons and tools for it, and only the external makeup is gradually adapted to Japanese life.

But if, starting today, all further Aryan influence upon Japan should stop, and supposing that Europe and America were to perish, then a further development of Japan's present rise in science and technology could take place for a little while longer; but in the time of a few years the source would dry out, Japanese life would gain, but its culture would stiffen and fall back into the sleep out of which it was startled seven decades ago by the Aryan wave of culture. Therefore, exactly as the present Japanese development owes its life to Aryan origin, thus also in the dim past foreign influence and foreign spirit were the awakener of the Japanese culture. The best proof of this is the fact that the latter stiffened and became completely paralyzed later on. This can only happen to a people when the originally creative race nucleus was lost, or when the external influence, which gave the impetus and the material for the first development in the cultural field, was lacking later on. But if it is ascertained that a people receives, takes in, and works over the essential basic elements of its culture from other races, and if then, when a further external influence is lacking, it stiffens again and again, then one can perhaps call such a race a "culture-bearing" one but never a "culture-creating" one.

We see this most clearly in that race that cannot help having been, and being, the supporter of the development of human culture—the Aryans. As soon as Fate leads them towards special conditions, their latent abilities begin to develop in a more and more rapid course and to mold themselves into tangible forms. The cultures

which they found in such cases are nearly always decisively determined by the available soil, the climate, and—by the subjected people. The latter, however, is the most decisive of all factors. The more primitive the technical presumptions for a cultural activity are, the more necessary is the presence of human auxiliary forces which then, collected and applied with the object of organization, have to replace the force of the machine. Without this possibility of utilizing inferior men, the Aryan would never have been able to take the first steps towards his later culture; exactly as, without the help of various suitable animals which he knew how to tame, he would never have arrived at a technology which now allows him to do without these very animals. The words "*Der Mohr hat seine Schuldigkeit getan, er kann gehen*" [The Moor has done his duty, he may go] has unfortunately too deep a meaning. For thousands of years the horse had to serve man and to help in laying the foundations of a development which now, through the motor-car, makes the horse itself superfluous. In a few years it will have ceased its activity, but without its former cooperation man would hardly have arrived at where he stands today.

Therefore, for the formation of higher cultures, the existence of inferior men was one of the most essential presumptions, because they alone were able to replace the lack of technical means without which a higher development is unthinkable. The first culture of mankind certainly depended less on the tamed animal, but rather on the use of inferior people.

Only after the enslavement of subjected races, the same fate began to meet the animals, and not *vice versa*, as many would like to believe. For first the conquered walked behind the plow—and after him, the horse. Only pacifist fools can again look upon this as a sign of human baseness, without making clear to themselves that this development had to take place in order to arrive finally at that place from where today these apostles are able to sputter forth their drivels into the world.

The progress of mankind resembles the ascent on an endless ladder; one cannot arrive at the top without first having taken the lower steps. Thus the Aryan had to go the way which reality showed him and not that of which the imagination of a modern pacifist dreams. The way of reality, however, is hard and difficult, but it finally ends where the other wishes to bring mankind by dreaming, but unfortunately removes it from, rather than brings it nearer to, it.

Therefore, it is no accident that the first cultures originated in those places where the Aryan, by meeting lower peoples, subdued them and made them subject to his will. They, then, were the first technical instrument in the service of a growing culture.

With this the way that the Aryan had to go was clearly lined out. As a conqueror he subjected the lower peoples and then he regulated their practical ability according to his command and his will and for his aims. But while he thus led them towards a useful, though hard activity, he not only spared the lives of the subjected, but perhaps he even gave them a fate which was better than that of their former so-called "freedom." As long as he kept up ruthlessly the master's standpoint, he not only really remained "master" but also the preserver and propagator of the culture. For the latter was based exclusively on his abilities, and, with it, on his preservation in purity. But as soon as the subjected peoples themselves began to rise (probably) and approached the conqueror linguistically, the sharp separating wall between master and slave fell. The Aryan gave up the purity of his blood and therefore he also lost his place in the Paradise which he had created for himself. He became submerged in the race-mixture, he gradually lost his cultural ability more and more, till at last not only mentally but also physically he began to resemble more the subjected and aborigines than his ancestors. For some time he may still live on the existing cultural goods, but then petrification sets in, and finally oblivion.

In this way cultures and realms collapse in order to make room for new formations.

The blood-mixing, however, with the lowering of the racial level caused by it, is the sole cause of the dying-off of old cultures; for the people do not perish by lost wars, but by the loss of that force of resistance which is contained only in the pure blood.

All that is not race in this world is trash.

All world historical events, however, are only the expression of the races' instinct of self-preservation in its good or in its evil meaning.

The Jew forms the strongest contrast to the Aryan. Hardly in any people of the world is the instinct of self-preservation more strongly developed than in the so-called "chosen people." The fact of the existence of this race alone may be looked upon as the best proof of this. Where is the people that in the past two thousand years has been exposed to so small changes of the inner disposition, of character, etc., as the Jewish people? Which people finally has experienced greater changes than this one—and yet has always come forth the same from the most colossal catastrophes of mankind? What an infinitely persistent will for life, for preserving the race do these facts disclose!

Also the intellectual abilities were schooled in the course of centuries. Today the Jew is looked upon as "clever," and in a certain sense he has been so at all times. But his reason is not the result of his own development, but that of object lessons from without.

Never did the reverse process take place.

For, even if the Jewish people's instinct of self-preservation is not smaller, but rather greater, than that of other nations, and even if his spiritual abilities very easily create the impression as though they were equal to the intellectual disposition of the other races, yet the most essential presumption for a cultured people is completely lacking, the idealistic disposition.

But how far the Jew takes over foreign culture, only imitating, or rather destroying, it, may be seen from the fact that he is found most

frequently in that art which also appears directed least of all towards invention of its own, the art of acting. But here, too, he is really only the "juggler," or rather the ape; for here, too, he lacks the ultimate touch of real greatness; here, too, he is not the ingenious creator, but the outward imitator, whereby all the turns and tricks he applies cannot deceive us concerning the inner lack of lowers man, and never again can its consequences be removed from body and mind.

Only upon examining and comparing, in the face of this sole question, all the other problems of life, one will be able to judge how ridiculously small the latter are as compared with the former. How all of them are only temporal, while the question of the preservation of the blood is one of human eternity.

All really important symptoms of decay of the pre-War time ultimately go back to racial causes.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of the Aryan race in human history, according to Hitler?
2. Why are the Japanese, in Hitler's theories, a "culture-bearing" rather than a "culture-creating" people?
3. Hitler believed that cultural progress was necessarily aggressive. Why? How might these views have applied to his own policies in later years?
4. How are Jews said to destroy cultures?
5. Did Hitler view the defeat in World War I as inevitable? Was the Allied victory a good or a bad thing, in Hitler's view?

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MEMORIES OF THE HOLOCAUST

(1938-1945)

The following selections are the recollections of three survivors of the Holocaust. Sam Bankhalter was born to a Jewish family in Lodz, Poland; Fred Baron to an Austrian Jewish family; and Reidar Dittmann was a Protestant Norwegian. Although from very different backgrounds and countries, they all had one thing in common: they were deemed enemies of the Nazi state. Bankhalter and Baron were Jews, and Dittmann was a political dissident. All three were very lucky in that unlike most of the others who fell into the hands of the S.S., they survived.

Baron and Bankhalter were deported to the infamous death camp at Auschwitz in occupied Poland, and Dittmann was held in the German camp at Buchenwald. They were rescued at the end of the war by Allied forces.

[Sam Bankhalter's father was a manufacturer of pre-fabricated wooden houses, a Hebrew scholar, and an ardent Zionist who helped young Poles who wanted to go to Palestine. Sam was running an errand for his father when the Nazis caught him and sent him to Auschwitz].

There was always anti-Semitism in Poland. The slogan even before Hitler was "Jew, get out of here and go to Palestine." As Hitler came to power, there was not a day at school I was not spit on or beaten up.

I was at camp when the Germans invaded Poland. The camp directors told us to find our own way home. We walked many miles with airplanes over our heads, dead people on the streets. At home there were blackouts. I was just a kid, tickled to death when I was issued a flashlight and gas mask. The Polish army was equipped with buggies and horses, the Germans were all on trucks and tanks. The war was over in ten days.

THE GHETTO The German occupation was humiliation from day one. If Jewish people were wearing the beard and sidecurls, the Germans were cutting the beard, cutting the sidecurls, laughing at you, beating you up a little bit. Then the Germans took part of Lodz and put on barbed wire, and all the Jews had to assemble in this ghetto area. You had to leave in five or ten minutes or half an hour, so you couldn't take much stuff with you.

The Jewish community chose my father to run the cemetery, to organize burials and clean up the streets, because dead people started smelling on the streets. They brought in frozen Jewish soldiers, hundreds and hundreds. I helped bury them.

AUSCHWITZ We were the first ones in Auschwitz. We built it. What you got for clothing was striped pants and the striped jacket, no underwear, no socks. In wintertime you put paper in your shoes, and we used to take empty cement sacks and put a string in the top, put two together, one in back and one in front, to keep warm.

If they told you to do something, you went to do it. There was no yes or no, no choices. I worked in the crematorium for about eleven months. I saw Dr. Mengele's experiments on children, I knew the kids that became vegetables. Later in Buchenwald I saw Ilse Koch with a hose and regulator, trying to get pressure to make a hole in a woman's stomach. I saw them cutting Greek people in pieces. I was in Flossenburg for two weeks, and they shot 25,000 Russian soldiers, and we put them down on wooden logs and burned them. Every day the killing, the hanging, the shooting, the crematorium smel, the ovens, and the smoke going out.

I knew everybody, knew every trick to survive. I was one of the youngest in Auschwitz, and I was like "adopted" by a lot of the older people, especially the fathers. Whole families came into Auschwitz together, and you got to Dr. Mengele, who was saying "right, left, left, right," and you knew, right there, who is going to the gas chamber and who is not. Most of the men broke down when they knew their wives and their kids—three-, five-, nine-year-olds—went into the gas chambers. In fact, one of my brothers committed suicide in Auschwitz because he couldn't live with knowing his wife and children are dead.

I was able to see my family when they came into Auschwitz in 1944. I had a sister, she had a little boy a year old. Everybody that carried a

National Socialism



THERE is no logical necessity to connect socialism and internationalism. The traditional connection between the two reflects a feeling that the oppressed of this world have more in common with one another than with their masters, that common economic interests are more real than spurious bonds of nationality. This seemed reasonable enough in the relatively free late nineteenth-century world, where people, money, and goods passed with little hindrance from one country to another—at any rate, west of the unenlightened territories of the sultan and the tsar. But with the beginning of the twentieth century, one country after another began to use tariffs and regulations to control imports and immigration. National interests would henceforth be furthered by deliberate economic policies, and this economic nationalism seemed to league employers and workers of a given country together, profits for the former meaning benefits for the latter, even if those benefits came at the expense of fellow workers across the border.

Internationalist arguments grew less convincing in a world cut up by a multitude of economic and political barriers. The First World War exacerbated nationalistic and chauvinistic feelings, and its aftermath persuaded many who until then had hesitated that they must look after number one and the devil take the hindmost. This could well be done by reconciling the two most popular creeds of the time, nationalism and socialism; the idea was hardly new, and in the twenties much of Mussolini's appeal was based on it. But its fullest and most effective expression was to appear in the party of Hitler—the National Socialist movement—that conquered Germany in the thirties.

The Program of the National Socialists

German Workers' Party: The Twenty-Five Points

The National Socialist German Workers' Party at a great mass meeting on February 25th, 1920, in the Hofbrauhaus-Festsaal in Munich announced their Programme to the world.

In section 2 of the Constitution of Our Party this Programme is declared to be inalterable.

The Programme of the German Workers' Party is limited as to period. The leaders have no intention, once the aims announced in it have been achieved, of setting up fresh ones, merely in order to increase the discontent of the masses artificially, and so ensure the continued existence of the party.

1. We demand the union of Germans to form a Great Germany on the basis of the right of the self-determination enjoyed by nations.
2. We demand equality of rights for the German People in its dealings with other nations, and abolition of the Peace Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain.
3. We demand land and territory (colonies) for the nourishment of our people and for settling our superfluous population.
4. None but members of the nation may be citizens of the State. None but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. No Jew, therefore, may be a member of the nation.
5. Anyone who is not a citizen of the State may live in Germany only as a guest and must be regarded as being subject to foreign laws.
6. The right of voting on the State's government and legislation is to be enjoyed by the citizen of the State alone. We demand therefore that all official appointments, of whatever kind, whether in the Reich, in the country, or in the smaller localities, shall be granted to citizens of the State alone.
We oppose the corrupting custom of Parliament of filling posts merely with a view to party considerations, and without reference to character or capability.
7. We demand that the State shall make it its first duty to promote the industry and livelihood of citizens of the State. If it is not possible to nourish the entire population of the State, foreign nationals (non-citizens of the State) must be excluded from the Reich.
8. All non-German immigration must be prevented. We demand that all non-Germans, who entered Germany subsequent to August 2nd, 1914, shall be required forthwith to depart from the Reich.
9. All citizens of the State shall be equal as regards rights and duties.
10. It must be the first duty of each citizen of the State to work with his mind or with his body. The activities of the individual may not clash with the interests of the whole, but must proceed within the frame of the community and be for the general good.
We demand therefore:
11. Abolition of incomes unearned by work.
12. In view of the enormous sacrifice of life and property demanded of a nation by every war, personal enrichment due to a war must be regarded as a crime against the nation. We demand therefore ruthless confiscation of all war gains.
13. We demand nationalisation of all businesses which have been up to the present formed into companies (Trusts).
14. We demand that the profits from wholesale trade shall be shared out.
15. We demand extensive development of provision for old age.

16. We demand creation and maintenance of a healthy middle class, immediate communalisation of wholesale business premises, and their lease at a cheap rate to small traders, and that extreme consideration shall be shown to all small purveyors to the State, district authorities and smaller localities.
17. We demand land-reform suitable to our national requirements, passing of a law for confiscation without compensation of land for communal purposes; abolition of interest on land loans, and prevention of all speculation in land.
18. We demand ruthless prosecution of those whose activities are injurious to the common interest. Sordid criminals against the nation, usurers, profiteers, etc. must be punished with death, whatever their creed or race.
19. We demand that the Roman Law, which serves the materialistic world order, shall be replaced by a legal system for all Germany.
20. With the aim of opening to every capable and industrious German the possibility of higher education and of thus obtaining advancement, the State must consider a thorough re-construction of our national system of education. The curriculum of all educational establishments must be brought into line with the requirements of practical life. Comprehension of the State idea (State sociology) must be the school objective, beginning with the first dawn of intelligence in the pupil. We demand development of the gifted children of poor parents, whatever their class or occupation, at the expense of the State.
21. The State must see to raising the standard of health in the nation by protecting mothers and infants, prohibiting child labour, increasing bodily efficiency by obligatory gymnastics and sports laid down by law, and by extensive support of clubs engaged in the bodily development of the young.
22. We demand abolition of a paid army and formation of a national army.
23. We demand legal warfare against conscious political lying and its dissemination in the Press. In order to facilitate creation of a German national Press we demand:
 - (a) that all editors of newspapers and their assistants, employing the German language, must be members of the nation;
 - (b) that special permission from the State shall be necessary before non-German newspapers may appear. These are not necessarily printed in the German language;
 - (c) that non-Germans shall be prohibited by law from participating financially in or influencing German newspapers, and that the penalty for contravention of the law shall be suppression of any such newspaper, and immediate deportation of the non-German concerned in it.

It must be forbidden to publish papers which do not conduce to the national welfare. We demand legal prosecution of all tendencies in art and literature of a kind likely to disintegrate our life as a nation, and the suppression of institutions which militate against the requirements above-mentioned.

24. We demand liberty for all religious denominations in the State, so far as they are not a danger to it and do not militate against the moral feelings of the German race.
The Party, as such, stands for positive Christianity, but does not bind itself in the matter of creed to any particular confession. It combats the Jewish-materialist spirit within us and without us, and is convinced that our nation can only achieve permanent health from within on the principle: THE COMMON INTEREST BEFORE SELF.
25. That all the foregoing may be realized we demand the creation of a strong central power of the State. Unquestioned authority of the politically centralised Parliament over the entire Reich and its organisations; and formation of Chambers for classes and occupations for the purpose of carrying out the general laws promulgated by the Reich in the various States of the confederation.

The leaders of the party swear to go straight forward—if necessary to sacrifice their lives—in securing fulfilment of the foregoing Points.

Munich, February 24th, 1920.

Mein Kampf

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), the son of an Austrian customs official, was influenced by two currents in his youth: the pan-Germanism rife in his hometown and the antisemitism of Vienna. He served through the war in the German army and after 1918 continued to serve the army by spying on minor political groups. In this capacity he got in touch with the German Workers' Party and quickly made himself its leader. In November 1923, after the failure of a putsch, or uprising, that he and General Ludendorff had attempted in Munich, Hitler was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. During this time he wrote the first volume of Mein Kampf "My Struggle," which was completed by a second volume in 1927. After his accession to power in 1933, Mein Kampf served as the Nazi movement's bible. It was widely distributed, a copy being presented to every German bride. If the book ever did come to the attention of Western leaders, their policies unfortunately showed little sign of it.

Adolf Hitler: from Mein Kampf

RULES OF ACTION

I wish, moreover, to state the following general premises:

If by foreign policy we understand the regulation of the relations of a people to the rest of the world, then the nature of this regulation will be determined by very definite facts. As National Socialists, we can further set forth the following principle with regard to the nature of the foreign policy of a folk-state:

3.3 Hitler's speech to leading industrialists, 20 February 1933

With the year 1918 a whole system collapsed. That it had to come about was often predicted, as much by economic leaders as especially by *Geheimrat* Kirdorf.³ The revolution which the year 1918 brought us was only conditional. In any case it did not bring about a revolution such as in Russia, but only a new school of thought, which slowly initiated the dissolution of the existing order. Bismarck's statement: "Liberalism is the pacemaker of Social Democracy" is now scientifically established and proven for us. A given school of thought – thought direction – can unsuspectedly lead towards the dissolution of the foundation of the state. In our country also, a new direction of thought had gained ground which slowly led to internal disruption and became the pacemaker of Bolshevism.

Private enterprise cannot be maintained in the age of democracy; it is conceivable only if the people have a sound idea of authority and personality. Everything positive, good, and valuable that has been achieved in the world in the field of economics and culture is solely attributable to the importance of personality. When, however, the defense of the existing order, its political administration, is left to a majority, it will go irretrievably under. All the worldly goods that we possess we owe to the struggle of the select few. If we had the present conditions in the Middle Ages, the foundations of our German Reich would never have been laid. The same mentality that was the basis for obtaining these values must be used to preserve these values. All values that made up the height of our culture originated from an entirely different mentality than that which seized its administration since 1918.

... Our people has not yet sufficiently recognized that there are two souls struggling for it. Our entire life is based upon common agreements. The smallest example of this is the family, and it leads on up to the state. It is an impossibility that part of the people recognizes private ownership while another part denies it. Such a struggle splits people. The struggle lasts until one side emerges victorious. When a man deserts his unit he can be punished. When, however, 15 percent to 20 percent disregard their oath of allegiance, the unit must fail as a military instrument. The same applies to a state; if 15 percent of the people deny the state as a permanent recognized social order, no sound system can be set up for the general public. Therefore, it is impossible to maintain culture, art, religion, and science, if a large percentage of the nation refuses to abide by the thoughts which created such a culture ...

No two ideologies can continuously live alongside one another. In such struggles the strength of a people eats itself completely up internally and therefore cannot act externally. It does not rest. This condition of attrition lasts until one party emerges victorious or the state itself dissolves, whereby a people loses its place in history. We live in such times now, when the die must be cast, and when we must decide whether we want to adopt a form of life that supports the state or to have communism. The latter is also thinkable. It is often being said that communism is the last step of humanity. I believe the very opposite; it is the origin of human development. It represents the most primitive form of human life. The deeper one delves into nature the more alike becomes its achievements, they become as in communism more and more homogeneous. The communist principle does not hold water. It is not by chance that one person accomplishes more than the other. The principle of private ownership ... is rooted in this fact.

3 Coal and steel magnate Emil Kirdorf (1847–1938), a long-time member of the Pan-German movement, was one of the first industrialists to join the Nazi Party in the 1920s.

The course that we have to take is clearly indicated. It is, however, not enough to say: We do not want communism in our economy. If we continue on our old political course, then we shall perish. We have fully experienced in the past years that economics and politics cannot be separated. The political conduct of the struggle is the primary decisive factor. Therefore, politically clear conditions must be reached ...

As I lay in the hospital in 1918 I experienced the revolution in Bavaria. From the very beginning I saw it as a crisis in the development of the German people, as a period of transition. Life always tears up humanity. It is therefore the noblest task of a leader to find ideals that are stronger than the factors that pull the people apart. I recognized even while in the hospital that one had to search for new ideas conducive to reconstruction. I found them in nationalism, in the value of personality, in the denial of reconciliation between nations, in the strength and power of individual personality. On this basis I tried to reach an understanding between two souls struggling with one another within the German people. The struggle that I undertook was so much harder because it was conducted during a time when the law for the protection of the weak and decadent held true, a law under which every nation is doomed to perish ...

For 40 years we have experienced a continuous growth of Social Democracy. Bismarck said shortly before he retired: "If this keeps up, Marx must remain victorious."

The creative and decomposing forces in a people always fight against one another. In this struggle one side always gains ever greater heights than the other, and therefore I have been following the development of Social Democracy with steadily growing concern and said to myself, we must come to a decision. I have repeatedly taken the occasion to point out to responsible people what dangers were threatening the German people. Time and again it was argued, amongst others by von Seeckt, that at the present time this would mean civil war.⁴ And when a few years ago the number of socialist seats went back a little, I was told triumphantly: "Look here, the danger is already over." They always comforted themselves with the hope that the socialist movement would slow down by itself. The danger, however, cannot be overcome by such means. Human beings are nothing so little as equal, and if human beings are not led, they drop back into the most primitive ancient state. It was this perception that moved me to found a new nationalist movement, which after 14 years of struggle has become a leading force in the German Reich. We must not forget that all the benefits of culture must be introduced more or less with an iron fist, just as once upon a time the farmers were forced to plant potatoes. For all this, however, courage and iron will and perseverance are essential.

... Two fronts have thus shaped themselves that put us to the choice: Either Marxism in its purest form or the other side. One cannot assume the point of view and say: The other side will gradually break through again. When I wanted to act, I was advised to wait a while. But I did not agree to such tolerance. With the very same courage with which we have gone to work to make up for what has been sinned during the last 14 years, we have withstood all attempts to move us off the right course. We have turned down the offer of the Catholic Center Party to tolerate us.⁵ Hugenberg has too small a movement.⁶ He has only considerably

4 General Hans von Seeckt (1866–1936), Commander in Chief of the Reichswehr from 1920–26, withheld military support from the Hitler Putsch in 1923.

5 The Center Party's toleration of a Hitler regime in the Reichstag would have enabled Hitler to form a parliamentary government (a government with a parliamentary majority), but Hitler rejected such a coalition because he wanted to rule with full dictatorial powers.

slowed down our development.⁷ We must first gain complete power if we want to crush the other side completely. While still gaining power one should not start the struggle against the opponent. Only when one knows that one has reached the pinnacle of power, that there is no further possible upward development, should one strike. In Prussia we must gain another 10 seats and in the Reich proper another 33. That is not impossible if we throw in all our strength. Then only begins the second action against Communism.

Now we stand before the last election. Regardless of the outcome there will be no retreat, even if the coming election does not bring about a decision. One way or another, if the election does not decide, the decision must be brought about even by other means. I have intervened in order to give the people once more the chance to decide their fate by themselves. ... The question of restoration of the Wehrmacht will not be decided at Geneva, but in Germany, when we have gained internal strength through internal peace.⁸ There will, however, be no internal peace until Marxism is eliminated. Here lies the decision that we must meet, hard as the struggle might be. I put my life into this struggle day after day as do all those who joined me in this struggle. There are only two possibilities, either to crowd back the opponent on constitutional grounds, and for this purpose once more we have this election, or a struggle will be conducted with other weapons, which may demand greater sacrifices. I would like to see them avoided. I hope the German people thus recognize the greatness of the hour. It shall decide over the next 10 or probably even 100 years. It will become a turning point in German history, to which I pledge myself with glowing energy.

Source: Office of the US Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality,
Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. VI
(Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 1080-84 [Doc. D-203]

Nazi persecution of political opponents, 1933

Although the Nazis had gained power legally, their takeover was accompanied by a wave of terror against the left, particularly Communist and Social Democratic activists. Rudolf Diels (1900-57) was a career official in the Prussian police who was retained by Goering (as Prussian Interior Minister) to head the Prussian Gestapo (Secret State Police) when it was founded on 26 April 1933. Diels describes the extra-legal violence of the SA, which began as soon as Hitler took power. Violence was escalated after the Reichstag Fire Decree (Doc. 3.5) suspended legal protections for people charged with political crimes. Goering had SA members deputized as auxiliary members of the Prussian police to give their violence legal cover. A favorite device for the arrest of political opponents who had committed no crime was "protective custody." Diels estimated the number of political opponents murdered from March to October 1933 at between 500 and 700.

Diels was eventually relieved of his post (he was named to the highest governing office in the city of Cologne) when Heinrich Himmler assumed control of the Prussian

⁶ Alfred Hugenberg's Nationalist Party had less than 10 percent of the vote in the 1932 elections, not enough to form a parliamentary majority with the Nazis.

⁷ By siphoning off votes that would otherwise have gone to the Nazis.

⁸ The reference is to the Geneva Disarmament Conference, from which the Germans withdrew in October 1933.

police in 1934 and incorporated the Gestapo into the SS. The Gestapo continued to employ professional policemen who were willing to cooperate with the Nazis in achieving their political aims. Diels, who became a witness for the prosecution at the Nuremberg trials after the war, claimed that he was dismissed for failing to arrest and eliminate Gregor Strasser and General Kurt von Schleicher, both of whom were murdered in the "Blood Purge" of 30 June 1934 (Doc. 3.21). This selection is taken from the record of the US prosecutors.

3.4 Affidavit of Rudolf Diels

I, Rudolf Diels, being duly sworn, declare:

When Hitler came into power on 30 January 1933 I was chief of the political police in Berlin. On 26 April 1933 Goering founded the secret state police, and I was nominated as deputy leader of the Gestapo. Most of my orders were given to me personally by Goering. Goering told me my main task was to eliminate political opponents of National Socialism and Hitler. The most important task was the fight against communism.

Because of the interference of the SA and because of the whole revolutionary development during the course of 1933, all police forces, including the Gestapo, had to work mostly as a normalizing and legalizing agent, and had to fight more strongly against SA excesses than against the communists themselves. This condition changed completely at the beginning of 1934. The extra-legal arrests by the SA were annulled again toward the end of 1933, and the Gestapo started to investigate the cases of people still in prison under protective custody to see if they could be accused of high treason. These intentions were interrupted when [Heinrich] Himmler was made the chief of the entire Prussian police and [Reinhard] Heydrich Chief of the Gestapo. Himmler immediately started the reorganization of the police as he had already done in the other states. In the field of the political police he introduced the SD in Prussia, a purely SS organization which Goering had not permitted so far.⁹ The Gestapo was now extended over all of Germany, and Heydrich discharged radically the old officials and replaced them with reliable Nazis and SS officers. He started immediately to make up for what in his opinion had been neglected; he again filled up the jails and concentration camps and organized the purge of 30 June 1934. From now on the Gestapo was responsible for all deprivations of freedom and breaches of law and killings in the political field which took place without court verdict. Of primary importance among these was the shooting of numerous persons who had been committed to jails by the courts and then shot supposedly because of resistance. Many such cases were at that time published in the papers. For people guilty of immorality such illegal shootings became the rule. As for deprivation of freedom, there was no legal reason any more for protective custody orders after 1934, which had still been the case before that date, since from 1934 on the power of the totalitarian state was so stabilized that the arrest of a person for his own protection was only an excuse for arbitrary arrest - without court verdict and without legal measures for him. The terroristic measures, which led to the development of the pure force system and punished to an increasing degree each

⁹ SD was the acronym for *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service, the SS agency for the collection of internal intelligence headed by Reinhard Heydrich (1904-42). The SD later took over the functions of foreign intelligence as well.

3.25a Hitler's speech to the National Socialist Women's Organization, September 1934

The feelings and above all the psychology of woman have always had a complementary effect on the mind of man.

If the spheres of activity in daily life have sometimes shifted between man and woman in a way not in accordance with nature, it was not because woman as woman was striving for power over man; rather it was because man was no longer in a position to completely fulfill his responsibilities. That is the wonderful thing about nature and providence: no conflict between the two sexes is possible as long as each party fulfills the task assigned to them by nature.

The phrase "women's liberation" is a phrase invented only by Jewish intellectualism, and its content is shaped by the same spirit. The German woman never needed to be emancipated in the really good times of German life. She possessed exactly the gifts that nature had perforce given her to manage and preserve, exactly as man in his good times never needed to fear that he would be forced out of his role in relation to woman.

His place was least of all threatened by woman. It was only when he himself was not certain about what his responsibility was that woman's eternal instinct for self-preservation and preservation of the people began to rebel. A change of roles not in accord with nature began with this rebellion, and it lasted until both sexes returned once again to the roles that an eternally wise providence assigned to them.

If one says that man's world is the state, man's world is his struggle, his readiness to act on behalf of the community, then one could perhaps say that the world of woman 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 look after the smaller world? How could the larger world exist, if there were no one who would make the cares of the smaller world the content of their lives? No, the large world is founded on this small world! This large world cannot exist, if the small world is not stable. Providence assigned to woman the cares of a world that is particularly her own, and it is only on this that man's world can be shaped and constructed.

That is why these two worlds are never in conflict. They complement each other, they belong together, as man and woman belong together.

We feel it is not appropriate when woman forces her way into man's world, into his territory; instead we perceive it as natural when these two worlds remain separate. One world is characterized by strength of feeling, strength of the soul! The other world is characterized by strength of vision, toughness, determination, and willingness to act. In the former case this strength requires the willingness of woman to commit her life to preserve and increase the family unit; in the latter case this power requires from man the readiness to provide security.

Whatever sacrifices man makes in the struggles of his people, woman makes in the struggle for the preservation of her people in family units. What man offers in heroic courage on the battlefield, woman offers in ever-patient devotion, in ever-patient suffering and endurance. Each child that she brings into the world is a battle that she wages for the existence of her people. Both man and woman must therefore value and respect each other, when they see that each accomplishes the task that nature and providence have ordained. Out of this separation of functions there will necessarily come mutual respect.

It is not true, as Jewish intellectualism maintains, that respect depends on overlapping spheres of activity of the sexes; instead respect requires that neither sex try to do what

rightly is the task of the other. In the final analysis respect comes from each side knowing that the other is doing everything necessary to maintain the whole!

Thus woman was at all times the helper of man and because of this his most devoted friend, and man was at all times the guardian of his wife and therefore her best friend! And both saw in this way of life the common basis for the continued existence and preservation of all that they love. Woman is selfish in maintaining her small world so that man can take the role of protecting the larger world, and man is selfish in the maintenance of this larger world, for it is indivisibly connected with the other, smaller one. We will defend ourselves against an intellectualism of the most corrupt sort that would tear asunder what God has joined.

Woman, because she springs from the root of life, is also the most stable element in the preservation of a people.

In the last analysis she has the most infallible sense for what is necessary so that a race does not die out, because it is above all her children who will be the first to be affected by that misfortune.

Man is often psychologically too erratic to find his way immediately to these fundamental truths. Only in good time and with a good education will man come to know exactly what his responsibility is. For many years we National Socialists have therefore opposed bringing woman into political life, a life that in our eyes is unworthy of her. A woman once said to me: "You must see to it that women get into the parliament, because only they can ennoble it." "I do not believe," I replied, "that we should ennoble something inherently bad. And the woman who gets caught in this parliamentary machinery will not ennoble it; instead it will dishonor her. I do not want to leave something to woman that I intend to take away from men." My opponents believed that we would never win women for our movement. But we gained more women than all the other parties put together, and I know we would have won over the very last German woman if she had only had the opportunity to study the parliament and the degrading function of the women involved in it.

We have therefore included women in the struggle of the national community as nature and providence intended. Our women's movement is for us not a movement that inscribes on its banner a program of fighting against man, but instead it is a movement that embraces in its program the common struggle of woman together with man. For we have strengthened the new National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft* precisely because millions of women became the most loyal, fanatical comrades-in-arms; women fighting for life together in the service of the common preservation of life; women fighters who in this struggle do not set their gaze on rights with which a Jewish intellectualism bedazzles them, but on duties which nature imposes on all of us in common.

If earlier the liberal intellectual women's movements included in their programs many, many points that started with the so-called intellect, the program of our National Socialist women's movement has actually only one single point, and this point is: the child, this tiny being which must be born and must thrive, for the child alone gives the entire life's struggle its meaning. For what purpose would we fight and struggle, if something did not come after us that could use what we acquire to its advantage and benefit and could hand it down to its heirs? What other reason is there for the whole human struggle? Why the worry and the sorrow? Only for an idea? Only for a theory? No, it would certainly not be worth going through this earthly valley of tears for that. The only thing that enables us to overcome all that is the view from the present into the future, from ourselves to the generation coming after us.

I spoke just a few minutes ago at the youth rally. It is glorious to look at this golden youth, and to know: they will become Germany when we no longer exist! They will preserve everything we have created and built. We are working for them. That is indeed the meaning of the

whole struggle! And if we recognize this simplest and most succinct goal of nature, the work of both sexes will be settled of its own accord, logically and correctly, no longer in conflict, but in a common struggle for life as it really is.

You, my party comrades, stand here as leaders, organizers, and helpers in this struggle. You have accepted a magnificent responsibility. What we want to create in our nation as a whole is what you must establish and firmly support in the inner world. You must provide the inner psychological and emotional stability! You must complement man in this struggle that we are leading for our people's freedom, equality, honor, and peace, so that we can look to the future as fighters for our people!

Then strife and discord can never break out between the sexes; instead they will go through life hand in hand fighting together, just the way providence intended, and for the purpose that both sexes were created. Then the blessing of such work carried out together can not fail to appear. Then no insane struggle will flare up over theories, and man and woman will not quarrel because of false ideas; instead the blessing of the Almighty will accompany their joint fight for survival!

Source: *Der Kongress zu Nürnberg vom 5. bis 10. September 1934. Offizieller Bericht über den Verlauf des Reichsparteitages mit sämtlichen Reden* (Munich: F. Eher Verlag, 1935), pp. 169–172. Translated by Sally Winkle

3.25b Emilie Müller-Zadow, "Mothers who give us the future," 1936

There is a growing recognition that mothers carry the destiny of their people in their hands and that the success or ruin of the nation depends on their attitude toward the vocation of motherhood.

Nation and race are facts of creation, which we, too, are called upon to share in forming and preserving. Therefore a national leadership that respects and honors its mothers is on a sound and healthy path. ...

Of course a woman, simply because she is able to cook porridge, sew shirts, and grasp the basic rules of bringing up children, still in no way has the inner aptitude to be a mother, if she does not yet know how to fill her nursery with all the warmth, with the healthy, clean, strong, and cozy atmosphere necessary for growing children to become men and women capable "of ensuring the continued existence of their people." But we believe that in addition to succeeding externally, she cannot fail but succeed inwardly, either, if both of these conditions are fulfilled.

Motherhood training is not limited to any time period or age and is always a task for the long term; it is the seed of hope. It must be as close to nature, as full of life, and as many-sided as the young life that it serves. More than any other training, it has to be free of dogmas or of rigid formulas, forms, and methods. And yet it has to be "training", that is, it has to proceed consciously and be planned according to firm guidelines and clear principles.

For this reason it is only now, in the National Socialist state, that we can really speak of motherhood training. Much valuable education of mothers has already been done by different groups (mainly Christian) – a good deal of these experiences were incorporated into the present work. But if, despite all good intentions and the realization that time was pressing, this earlier educational work only remained fragmentary, that was because the conditions for large-scale, systematic, and standardized motherhood training were not yet established. These conditions were only created by the National Socialist world view and the unification of the people.

The place that Adolf Hitler assigns to woman in the Third Reich corresponds to her natural and divine destiny. Limits are being set for her, which earlier she had frequently violated in a barren desire to adopt masculine traits. The value and sanctity of goals now being set for her have been unrecognized and forgotten for a long time; and due respect is now being offered to her vocation as mother of the people, in which she can and should develop her rich emotions and spiritual strengths according to eternal laws. This wake-up call of National Socialism to women is one more indication that in Germany today it is not arbitrary laws that are being issued, but rather a nation is returning to essential, eternal rules of order.

It is therefore not at all surprising that the state and party claim the education of mothers as exclusively their task and insist that all training be carried out only by National Socialists and according to the principles of National Socialism. For the way a mother sees her child, how she cares for, teaches, and forms him, the principles that she instills in him, the attitude that she demands of him, all of this is crucial for the national health, for a German morality, and for the unified overall mind-set of the future nation.

Some think they can argue that the purely practical part of motherhood training – for example the care of newborns – is independent of politics and worldview and is not influenced by them. But this is only partially true. The following may serve as an example:

In the post-war period a real mania prevailed in clinics and institutions to keep premature babies or infants with the most serious hereditary diseases alive for a shorter or longer time in incubators and with the most sophisticated measures, even those babies whose chances for a full life every doctor judged as next to nothing. These experiments cost great amounts of the national wealth, while in the homes of the unemployed, normal children died from a lack of bare necessities. A complete change of opinion has occurred in this area, as now only the functional, realistic principles of the state are in force, a state that examines and treats the individual according to his value. So in the whole project of motherhood training there is scarcely a component whose basic orientation and objectives are not formed by National Socialism.

The training of German women for the calling of motherhood cannot be confined to the official courses which are offered for this purpose by the German Women's Organization,¹⁸ nor can it be limited to the education of the nation's youth provided by the League of German Girls.¹⁹ A complete educational development and permeation of the whole nation can only succeed if all responsible maternally-oriented women feel impelled to instruct and actively help their sisters. Indeed, this wholly personal, heartfelt concern for one another and communication from person to person cannot be matched in its effectiveness by any course-work. Experience does show, however, that the actions of the director of motherhood courses provide the stimulus for the emergence in the whole national community of this willingness to help and for its self-evident acceptance everywhere. A bond of trust connects the course participants very quickly, old barriers and prejudices fall away, and the gulf of class differences is bridged over. For in their concern for young life almost all mothers are alike. It is amazing to observe with what joy the course participants pass on their newly acquired knowledge and ability, especially in rural areas; or how they suddenly become fully aware of the obligation to let others as well

18 The German Women's Organization (*Deutsches Frauenwerk*) was formed by the Nazis in October 1933 for women who were not necessarily members of the Nazi Party or its women's affiliate, the *Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft*. However, the leadership and hierarchical structure of both groups were largely the same. In February 1934 Gertrud Scholtz-Klink became the leader (*Reichsführerin*) of both organizations.

19 The League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*), the Hitler Youth organization for girls.

participate in the richness of their lives as mothers, which becomes apparent to them for the first time in the course, in all its seriousness and fullness.

Source: Emilie Müller-Zadow: "Schulung und Selbsterziehung" (Training and Self-education), in *Mütter, die uns die Zukunft schenken* (Königsberg, 1936), pp. 7-11. Translated by Sally Winkle

The Nuremberg Laws

The Nazis had long promised to exclude Jews from German society. Economic boycott (see Doc. 3.9), exclusion of Jews from the Civil Service (Doc. 3.12), and *Gleichschaltung* of the professions and the arts (Docs. 3.16 and 3.17) were all directed toward this goal. The notorious "Aryan paragraph" of the Civil Service Law, the model for *Gleichschaltung*, had excluded "Non-Aryans," defined as anyone with one or more Jewish grandparents. The vagueness of the category of "Non-Aryans," which obviously included a great number of people who had no connection with the Jewish community, elicited increasing pressure from within the party to provide more specific and precise legislation on the role of Jews in Germany. The so-called Nuremberg Laws, passed by acclamation by the Reichstag convened for that purpose at the annual Nazi Party rally in 1935, constituted the official Nazi response. There were three separate laws: First, a law making the Nazi swastika the official national flag; second, a law defining German citizenship in a way that excluded Jews; and third, a law banning marriage and sexual intercourse between Germans and Jews. The Interior Ministry later issued amendments to the citizenship law defining who was a Jew (anyone descended from three or four grandparents) and creating separate categories for persons of mixed descent (so-called *Mischlinge*). The first of these amendments, issued in November 1935, is included here.

The Nuremberg Laws achieved what had been one of the main goals of the radical right in Germany for more than half a century: the reversal of Jewish emancipation (see Doc. 1.8). Jews in Germany once again became aliens in their own country. Nonetheless, because they gave legal status to Jews in Germany (as secondary citizens), the Nuremberg Laws had the paradoxical effect of giving Jews a certain sense of security. To mitigate the effect of the Nuremberg Laws on world opinion and to gain their acceptance by the German public, Nazi propaganda claimed, quite falsely, that the Nuremberg Laws marked the end of legal measures against Jews. The Reich Citizenship Law, in particular, provided the basis for later discriminatory legislation aimed at driving Jews out of Germany and isolating and segregating those who remained.

3.26a Reich Flag Law, 15 September 1935

The Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following law which is herewith promulgated:

ARTICLE 1

The colors of the Reich are black, white, and red.

ARTICLE 2

The Reich and national flag is the swastika flag. It is also the merchant flag.

ARTICLE 3

The Führer and Reich Chancellor will designate the design of the Reich War Flag and the Reich Service Flag.

ARTICLE 4

The Reich Minister of the Interior will issue the necessary legal and administrative regulations for the execution and extension of this law insofar as they are not within the jurisdiction of the Minister of War.

ARTICLE 5

The law takes effect on the day of its promulgation.
Nuremberg, 15 September 1935, at the Reich Party Rally of Freedom

The Führer and Reich Chancellor: Adolf Hitler
The Reich Minister of the Interior: Frick

The Reich Minister of War and Commander in Chief of the Wehrmacht: von Blomberg

3.26b Reich Citizenship Law, 15 September 1935

The Reichstag has adopted unanimously the following law, which is herewith promulgated.

ARTICLE 1

- 1 A subject of the State (*Staatsangehöriger*) is a person, who belongs to the protective union (*Schutzverband*) of the German Reich, and who therefore has particular obligations toward the Reich.
- 2 The status of the subject is acquired in accordance with the provisions of the Reich- and State Law of Citizenship.

ARTICLE 2

- 1 A citizen of the Reich (*Reichsbürger*) is only that subject, who is of German or kindred blood and who, through his conduct, shows that he is both willing and fit to serve faithfully the German people and Reich.
- 2 The right to citizenship is acquired by the granting of Reich citizenship papers.
- 3 Only the citizen of the Reich enjoys full political rights in accordance with the provision of the laws.

would be ready to promise France that, in case of German aggression, we would place all our forces at her disposal. Lansbury told me that he approved. But we must avoid sowing the seeds of war ourselves.

—The letter from General Smuts is read. He greatly fears the imposition on Germany of excessive terms and is alarmed about what is being said about Danzig and the left bank of the Rhine, as well as about the figures for indemnities, and maintains that it is in collaboration with Germany, and not against her, that it will be possible to keep new nations such as Poland and Bohemia alive. "Germany," writes General Smuts, "will remain, despite everything, a dominant element in continental Europe, and it would be folly to believe that we can reconstruct the world without her assistance."

M. Clemenceau. I am willing to believe that General Smuts, who has proved his loyalty to England, does not speak merely as a friend of Germany. But I want the French point of view also to be taken into account.

Adolf Hitler

The Versailles Territorial Settlement and Nazi Revisionism

Adolf Hitler, born and raised in Austria and a decorated veteran in the German army during the Great War, had developed by the mid-1920s an ambitious plan for German hegemony in Europe that he would energetically pursue after becoming chancellor in 1933. In issuing his territorial claims against neighboring states, Hitler usually concealed this grandiose scheme for the subjugation of Europe by focusing, as in the following excerpts from his speeches in the late 1930s, on the German grievances against the Versailles territorial settlement's violation of the principle of national self-determination.

From Adolf Hitler, *My New Order* (Raoul de Roussy de Sales, ed. New York: Octagon Books, 1973), pp. 505–507, 635–638, 693–695. Reprinted by permission of Octagon Books.

Speech of September 12, 1938

Nuremberg

Since the days when we took over the Government the united front around Germany is standing against us. Today we again see plotters, from democrats down to Bolsheviks, fighting against the Nazi State. While we were struggling for power, and particularly in the decisive final struggle, they formed a united bloc against us.

We are being insulted today, but we thank God that we are in a position to prevent any attempt at plundering Germany or doing her violence. The State that existed before us was plundered for fifteen years. But for this it was praised as being a brave and democratic State.

But it becomes unbearable for us at a moment when a great German people, apparently defenseless, is delivered to shameless ill-treatment and exposed to threats. I am speaking of Czechoslovakia. This is a democratic State. It was founded on democratic lines by forcing other nationalities, without asking them, into a structure manufactured at Versailles. As good democrats they began to oppress and mishandle the majority of the inhabitants. They tried gradually to enforce on the world their view that the Czech State had a special political and military mission to perform in the world. Former French Air Minister Cot has only recently explained this to us. According to his opinion, the task of Czechoslovakia is in case of war to bombard German towns and industrial works.

This mission, however, is in direct contrast to the vital interests, to the wishes, and to the conception of life of a majority of the inhabitants of this State. But the majority of the inhabitants had to be quiet, as any protest against their treatment was regarded as an attack on the aims of this State and therefore in conflict with the Constitution. This Constitution, as it was made by democrats, was not rooted in the people but served only the political aims of those who oppressed the majority of the inhabitants. In view of these political aims, it had been found necessary to construct this Constitution in a manner giving the Czechs a predominant position in the State.

He who opposes such encroachment is an enemy of the State and, according to democratic conceptions of the State, an outlaw. The so-called nation of the Czechs has thus been selected by Providence, which in this case made use of those who once designed Versailles, to see that no one rose against this purpose of the State. Should, however, some one belonging to the majority of the oppressed people of this nation protest against this, the nation may knock him down with force and kill him if

it is necessary or desired. If this were a matter foreign to us and one that did not concern us, we would regard this case, as so many others, merely as an interesting illustration of the democratic conception of people's rights and the right of self-determination and simply take note of it.

But it is something most natural that compels us Germans to take an interest in this problem. Among the majority of nationalities that are being suppressed in this State there are 3,500,000 Germans. That is about as many persons of our race as Denmark has inhabitants. These Germans, too, are creatures of God. The Almighty did not create them that they should be surrendered by a State construction made at Versailles to a foreign power that is hateful to them, and He has not created 7,000,000 Czechs in order that they should supervise 3,500,000 Germans or act as guardians for them and still less to do them violence and torture. The conditions in this nation are unbearable, as is generally known. Politically more than 3,500,000 people were robbed in the name of the right of self-determination of a certain Mr. Wilson of their self-determination and of their right to self-determination. Economically these people were deliberately ruined and afterward handed over to a slow process of extermination.

These truths cannot be abolished by phrases. They are testified to by deeds. The misery of the Sudeten Germans is without end. They want to annihilate them. They are being oppressed in an inhuman and intolerable manner and treated in an undignified way. When 3,500,000 who belong to a people of almost 80,000,000 are not allowed to sing any song that the Czechs do not like because it does not please the Czechs, or are brutally struck for wearing white stockings because the Czechs do not like it, and do not want to see them, and are terrorized or maltreated because they greet with a form of salutation that is not agreeable to them, although they are greeting not Czechs but one another, and when they are pursued like wild beasts for every expression of their national life, this may be a matter of indifference to several representatives of our democracies or they may possibly even be sympathetic because it concerns only 3,500,000 Germans. I can only say to representatives of the democracies that this is not a matter of indifference to us.

And I say that if these tortured creatures cannot obtain rights and assistance by themselves, they can obtain both from us. An end must be made of depriving these people of their rights. I have already said this quite clearly in my speech of February 22.

It was a short-sighted piece of work when the statesmen at Versailles brought the abnormal structure of Czechoslovakia into being. It was

possible to violate the demands of millions of another nationality only so long as the brother nation itself was suffering from the consequences of general maltreatment by the world.

To believe that such a regime could go on sinning without hindrance forever was possible only through a scarcely credible degree of blindness. I declared in my speech of February 22 before the Reichstag that the Reich would not tolerate any further continued oppression of 3,500,000 Germans, and I hope that the foreign statesmen will be convinced that these were no mere words. . . .

Speech of April 28, 1939 to the German Reichstag

Berlin

Members of the German Reichstag! The President of the United States of America has addressed a telegram to me with the curious contents of which you are already familiar. Before I, the addressee, actually received the document the rest of the world had already been informed of it by radio and newspaper reports; and numerous commentaries in organs of the democratic world press had already generously enlightened us as to the fact that this telegram was a very skillful, tactful document destined to impose upon the States in which people govern, the responsibility for warlike measures adopted by the plutocratic countries.

In view of these facts I decided to summon the German Reichstag so that you gentlemen might have the opportunity of hearing my answer first, and of either confirming that answer or rejecting it. In addition, I considered it desirable to keep to the method of procedure initiated by President Roosevelt and to inform the rest of the world on my part and by our means of my answer.

But I should like also to take this opportunity of giving expression to feelings with which the tremendous historical happiness of the month of March inspires me. I can give vent to my deepest feelings only in the form of humble thanks to Providence, who called upon me and vouchsafed to me, once an unknown soldier of the great war, to rise to be the leader of my so dearly loved people. . . .

I have worked only to restore that which others once broke by force. I have desired only to make good that which satanic malice or human unreason destroyed or demolished. I have therefore taken no step which violated the rights of others, but have only restored that justice which was violated twenty years ago.

The present Greater German Reich contains no territory which was not from the earliest times part of this Reich, not bound up with or subject to its sovereignty. Long before an American continent had been discovered—to say nothing of settled—by white people, this Reich existed, not merely in its present extent but with the addition of many regions and provinces which have since been lost.

Twenty-one years ago, when the bloodshed of war came to an end, millions of minds were filled with the ardent hope that a peace of reason and justice would reward and bless the nations which had been visited by the fearful scourge of the Great War. I say “reward” for all these men and women, whatever the conclusions arrived at by historians, bore no responsibility for these fearful happenings.

And if in some countries there still were politicians who even at that time could be charged with responsibility for this, the most atrocious massacre of all time, yet vast numbers of combatant soldiers of every country and nation were at most deserving of pity but were by no means guilty.

I myself, as you know, had never played a part in politics before the war, and only, like millions of others, performed such duties as I was called upon to fulfill as a decent citizen and soldier. It was therefore with an absolutely clear conscience that I was able to take up the cause of freedom and the future of my people, both during and after the war.

And I can therefore speak in the name of millions and millions of others equally blameless when I declare that all those who had only fought for their nation in loyal fulfillment of their duty were entitled to a peace of reason and justice, so that mankind might at last set to work to make good by joint effort the losses which all had suffered.

But the millions were cheated of this peace; for not only did the German people or other people fighting on our side suffer through the peace treaties, but these treaties had an annihilating effect on the victor countries.

For the first time appeared the misfortune that politics should be controlled by men who had not fought in the war. The feeling of hatred was unknown to soldiers, but not to those elderly politicians who had carefully preserved their own precious lives from the horror of war and who now descended upon humanity in the guise of insane spirits of revenge.

Hatred, malice and unreason were the intellectual forebears of the Treaty of Versailles. Living space and States with history going back a thousand years were arbitrarily broken up and dissolved. Since time immemorial men who belong together have been torn asunder; the economic conditions of life have been ignored, while the peoples themselves

have been converted into victors and vanquished, into masters possessing all rights and slaves possessing none. . . .

However, when this new world order turned out to be a catastrophe, the democratic peace dictators of American and European origin were so cowardly that none of them ventured to take the responsibility for what occurred. Each put the blame on the others, thus endeavoring to save himself from the judgment of history.

However, the people who were maltreated by their hatred and unreason were, unfortunately, not in a position to share with those who had injured them in this escape. . . .

One of the most shameful acts of oppression ever committed is the dismemberment of the German nation and the political disintegration of her living space—which has, after all, been hers for thousands of years—was provided for in the dictate of Versailles.

I have never, gentlemen, left any doubt, that in point of fact it is scarcely possible anywhere in Europe to arrive at a harmony of State and national boundaries which will be satisfactory in every way.

On one hand, migration of peoples which gradually came to a standstill during the last few centuries and development of large communities, on the other, have brought about a situation which, whatever way they look at it, must necessarily be considered unsatisfactory by those concerned.

It was, however, the very way in which these national and political developments were gradually stabilized in the last century which led many to consider themselves justified in cherishing hope that in the end a compromise would be found between respect for the national life of various European peoples and recognition of established political structures—a compromise by which, without destroying political order in Europe and within the existing economic basis, nationalities could nevertheless be preserved.

This hope was abolished by the Great War. Peace—the dictate of Versailles—did justice neither to one principle nor to the other. Neither the right of self-determination nor yet political, let alone economic, necessities and conditions for European development, were respected.

Nevertheless, I never left any doubt that—as I have already emphasized—even revision of the Treaty of Versailles would also find its limit somewhere. And I have always said so with utmost frankness—not for any tactical reasons but from my innermost conviction.

As national leader of the German people, I have never left any doubt that whenever higher interests of the European comity were at

stake, national interests must, if necessary, be relegated to second place in certain cases.

And—as I have already emphasized—this is not for tactical reasons, for I have never left any doubt that I am absolutely earnest in this attitude of mine. For quite a number of territories which might possibly be disputed I have, therefore, come to final decisions which I have proclaimed not only to the outside world but also to my own people, and have seen to it that they should abide by them.

I have not, as France did in 1870–71, described the cession of Alsace-Lorraine as intolerable for the future, but I have here drawn a difference between the Saar Territory and these two former imperial provinces. And I have never changed my attitude, nor will I ever do so.

I have not allowed this attitude to be modified or jeopardized inside the country on any occasion, either in the press or in any other way. *Return of the Saar Territory has done away with all territorial problems in Europe between France and Germany. I have, however, always regarded it as regrettable that French statesmen should take this attitude for granted.*

This is, however, not the way to look at the matter. It was not for fear of France that I preached this attitude. As a former soldier I see no reason whatever for such fear. Moreover, as regards the Saar Territory, I made it quite clear we would not countenance any refusal to return it to Germany.

No, I have confirmed this attitude to France as an expression of appreciation of the necessity to attain peace in Europe, instead of sowing the seed of continual uncertainty and even tension by making unlimited demands and continually asking for revision. If this tension has nevertheless now risen, the responsibility does not lie with Germany but with those international elements which systematically produce such tension in order to serve their capitalist interests.

I have given binding declarations to a large number of States.

None of these States can complain that even a trace of a demand contrary thereto has been made to them by Germany. *None of the Scandinavian statesmen, for example, can contend that a request has even been put to them by the German Government or by German public opinion which was incompatible with the sovereignty and integrity of their State.*

I was pleased that a number of European States availed themselves of these declarations by the German Government to express and emphasize their desire for absolute neutrality. This applies to Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark.

I have already mentioned France. I need not mention Italy, with whom we are united in the deepest and closest friendship, or *Hungary and Yugoslavia*, with whom we, as neighbors, have the fortune to be on very friendly terms.

On the other hand, I have left no doubt from the first moment of my political activity that there existed other circumstances which represent such a mean and gross outrage of the right of self-determination of our people that we can never accept or endorse them.

I have never written a single line or made a single speech displaying a different attitude toward the above-mentioned States. On the other hand, with reference to other cases, I have never written a single line or made a single speech in which I have expressed any attitude contrary to my actions.

1. Austria! The oldest Eastern march of the German people, was once the buttress of the German nation on the southeast of the Reich.

The Germans of this country are descended from settlers from all the German tribes, even though the Bavarian tribe did contribute a major portion. Later this Ostmark became the crown lands and nucleus of the five-century-old German Empire, with Vienna as the capital of the German Reich of that period.

This German Reich was finally broken up in the course of a gradual dissolution by Napoleon the Corsican, but continued to exist as a German federation, and not so long ago fought and suffered in the greatest war of all time as an entity which was an expression of the national feelings of the people, even if it was no longer one united State. I myself am a child of this Ostmark.

Not only was the German Reich destroyed and Austria split up into its component parts by the criminals of Versailles, but Germans also were forbidden to acknowledge that community which they had confessed for more than a thousand years. I have always regarded elimination of this state of affairs as the highest and most holy task of my life. I have never failed to proclaim this determination. And I have always been resolved to realize these ideas which haunted me day and night.

I should have sinned against my call by Providence had I failed in my own endeavor to lead my native country and my German people of Ostmark back to the Reich and, thus, to the community of German people.

In doing so, moreover, I have wiped out the most disgraceful side of the Treaty of Versailles. I have once more established the right of self-determination and done away with democratic oppression of seven and a half million Germans.

I have removed the ban which prevented them from voting on their own fate, and carrying out this vote before the whole world. The result was not only what I expected but also precisely what had been anticipated by the Versailles democratic oppressors of the peoples. For why else did they stop a plebiscite on the question of Anschluss!

2. When in the course of the migrations of peoples, the Germanic tribes began, for reasons inexplicable to us, to migrate out of the territory which is today Bohemia and Moravia, a foreign Slav people made its way into this territory and made a place for itself between the remaining Germans. Since that time the living space of this Slav people has been inclosed in the form of a horseshoe by Germans.

From an economic point of view independent existence is, in the long run, impossible for these countries except on a basis of relationship with the German nation and German economy. But apart from this, nearly four million Germans lived in this territory of Bohemia and Moravia.

The policy of national annihilation which set in, particularly after the Treaty of Versailles under pressure of the Czech majority, combined, too, with economic conditions and a rising tide of distress, led to emigration of these German elements so that Germans left in the territory were reduced to approximately 3,700,000.

The population of the fringe of territory is uniformly German, but there are also large German linguistic enclaves in the interior. The Czech nation is, in its origins, foreign to us, but in the thousand years in which the two peoples have lived side by side a Czech culture has, in the main, been formed and molded by German influences.

Czech economy owes its existence to the fact of having been part of the great German economic system. The capital of this country was for a time a German imperial city, and it contains the oldest German university. Numerous cathedrals, town halls, and palaces of nobility and citizen class bear witness to the influence of German culture.

The Czech people itself has in the course of centuries alternated between close and more distant contacts with the German people. Every close contact resulted in a period in which both the German and the Czech nations flourished: every estrangement was calamitous in its consequences.

We are familiar with the merits and values of the German people, but the Czech nation, with the sum total of its skill and ability, its industry, its diligence, its love of its native soil and of its own national heritage, also deserves our respect.

There were, in actual fact, periods in which this mutual respect for the qualities of the other nation were a matter of course.

The democratic peacemakers of Versailles can take credit for having assigned to this Czech people the special rôle of a satellite State capable of being used against Germany. For this purpose they arbitrarily adjudicated foreign national property to the Czech State which was utterly incapable of survival on the strength of the Czech national unit alone; that is, they did violence to other nationalities in order to give a firm basis to a State which was to incorporate a latent threat to the German nation in Central Europe.

For this State, in which the so-called predominant national element was actually in the minority, could be maintained only by means of brutal assault on national units which formed a major part of the population.

This assault was possible only insofar as protection and assistance was granted by European democracies. This assistance could naturally be expected only on condition that this State was prepared loyally to take over and play the role which it had been assigned at birth, but the purpose of this role was none other than to prevent consolidation of Central Europe, to provide a bridge to Europe for bolshevik aggression, and, above all, to act as the mercenary of European democracies against Germany.

Everything else followed automatically. The more this State tried to fulfill the task it had been set, the greater was the resistance put up by national minorities. And the greater the resistance, the more it became necessary to resort to oppression.

This inevitable hardening of internal antitheses led, in its turn, to increased dependence on democratic European founders and benefactors of the State. For they alone were in position to maintain in the long run the economic existence of this unnatural and artificial creation.

Germany was primarily interested in one thing only and that was to liberate nearly four million Germans in this country from their unbearable situation and make it possible for them to return to their home country and to the thousand-year-old Reich.

It was only natural that this problem immediately brought up all other aspects of the nationalities problem. But it also was natural that removal of different national groups should deprive what was left of the State of all capacity to survive—a fact of which the founders of the State had been well aware when they planned it at Versailles, since it was for this very reason that they decided on assault on other minorities and had forced these against their will to become part of this amateurishly constructed State. . . .