

creative culmination of work already begun. The statesman is there to create standards; the state and the people are his only concerns. The state is the sole power and the last guarantor of something to which every citizen can lay claim: iron-clad justice. Therefore the state also cannot endure any dualism in the long term, and the success of the German Revolution and the future of our nation depend on whether a satisfactory solution can be found to the dualism between party and state.

The Government is well informed on all the self-interest, lack of character, want of truth, unchivalrous conduct, and arrogance trying to rear its head under cover of the German Revolution. It is also not deceived about the fact that the rich store of confidence bestowed upon it by the German people is threatened. If one wishes a close proximity to and a close connection with the people, one must not underestimate the good sense of the people; one must return their confidence and not constantly want to tell them what to do. The German people know that their situation is serious; they feel the economic distress; they are perfectly aware of the defects of many laws conditioned by the emergency; they have a discerning feeling for violence and injustice; they smile at clumsy attempts to deceive them with false optimism. No organization and no propaganda, no matter how good, will in the long run be able to retain trust. I have therefore viewed the wave of propaganda against the so-called petty critics differently from many others. Confidence and readiness to cooperate cannot be won by incitement, especially of youth, nor by threats against helpless segments of the people, but only by discussion with the people with trust on both sides. The people know that great sacrifices are expected from them. They will bear them and follow the Führer with unwavering loyalty, if they are allowed to have their part in the planning and in the work, if every word of criticism is not taken for ill will, and if despairing patriots are not branded as enemies of the state. ...

Source: *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, Vol. XV (International Military Tribunal, 1949), pp. 544-557*

Retroactive legalization of the Roehm Purge

In the night of 30 June 1934 Hitler authorized the SS (aided in some areas by regular army units) to liquidate the SA leadership. He was encouraged to do so by Himmler, Goering, and Goebbels, as well as the Reichswehr leadership, all of whom viewed Roehm as a dangerous rival. The Nazi leaders took the opportunity to liquidate others who had opposed or criticized Hitler in the past, including Gregor Strasser, General Kurt von Schleicher, Gustav von Kahr, and the Catholic publicist Erich Klausener. Papen escaped with his life, but the author of his Marburg speech, Edgar Jung, was shot (see Doc. 3.20). The exact number of victims has never been determined; they may have numbered in the hundreds. Hitler justified the purge as a necessary defense against a planned SA putsch, despite the fact that virtually the entire SA leadership was on furlough at the time. Nonetheless, wide sectors of the public approved of Hitler's actions, and President Hindenburg sent him a congratulatory telegram. The Ministry of Justice retroactively legalized the summary executions in the following decree.

3.21 Law Relating to National Emergency Defense Measures, 3 July 1934

The Reich Government has enacted the following law, which is hereby promulgated:

The measures taken on 30 June and 1 and 2 July 1934 to suppress attempts at treason and high treason are legal emergency measures in defense of the state.
Berlin, 3 July 1934

The Reich Chancellor: Adolf Hitler
The Reich Minister of the Interior: Frick
The Reich Minister of Justice: Dr. Gürtner

Source: *Reichsgesetzblatt, 1934, I, p. 529*

Loyalty oath of the armed forces to Hitler

This loyalty oath was initiated by leaders of the Reichswehr after Hitler combined the offices of President and Chancellor in his person following Hindenburg's death on 2 August 1934. In a reversion to a practice typical of absolutist monarchies of the past, officers and soldiers pledged loyalty to the Führer personally, not to the offices of president or chancellor as prescribed in the constitution. By introducing this oath army leaders expressed their appreciation to Hitler for his suppression of the SA as a potential rival to the military. The loyalty oath also reflected the common interest of the Reichswehr and the Nazi Party in the speedy introduction of universal military training and accelerated rearmament. Reichswehr leaders were well aware that they depended on the Nazi government and on Hitler's leadership and diplomacy to achieve these goals.

3.22 Oath of officials and soldiers of the Wehrmacht, 20 August 1934

The Reich Government has enacted the following law, which is hereby proclaimed:

ARTICLE 1

Civilian officials and soldiers of the Armed Forces must take an oath of service on entering the service.

ARTICLE 2

1 The oath of service of civilian officials will be:

I swear: I shall be loyal and obedient to Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the German Reich and people; respect the laws; and fulfill my official duties conscientiously, so help me God.

2 The oath of service of the soldiers of the Armed Forces will be:

I swear by God this sacred oath, that I will render unconditional obedience to Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the German Reich and people, supreme commander of the Armed Forces, and will be ready as a brave soldier to risk my life at any time for this oath. ...

Berlin, 20 August 1934

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

Source: *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1934, I, p. 785

Paul von Hindenburg, Political Testament

President Hindenburg's testament was published in the official National Socialist newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, on 16 August 1934, two weeks after the popular war hero's death at the age of 86. His testament is noteworthy because it reflects the goodwill of the old elites toward the Third Reich and their approval of its accomplishments and what they took to be its direction and its aims. Although Hindenburg was a monarchist who hoped for the eventual restoration of the Hohenzollern dynasty, he, too, believed in Germany's "world mission," the necessity of rearmament, and the reversal of Germany's defeat in the First World War. Particularly interesting is his apology for the role that he played as the president of the Weimar Republic in upholding a form of government he abhorred. This strategy was necessary, he wrote, to preserve German independence while Germany was still too weak to resist the threat of foreign intervention. He viewed Hitler's accession to power as the event that had unified Germany and would enable the nation to finally throw off the fetters of foreign oppression and reclaim its rightful place in the world. He ends by exhorting his countrymen to continue to participate in the national reconstruction initiated by the Nazis.

3.23 Hindenburg's Political Testament, August 1934

To the German nation and its Chancellor, my testament.

In 1919 I wrote in my message to the German nation: "We were at the end! Just like Siegfried under the cunning spear of the furious Hagen, our exhausted front collapsed. In vain we tried to drink new life from the perennial spring of inborn strength. It was our task now to save the remaining strength of our army for the coming reconstruction of the Fatherland. The present was lost. There remained now only hope – for the future!"

"I understand the idea of escape from the world which obsessed many officers, in view of the collapse of all that was dear and true to them. The desire to know nothing more of a world where seething passions obscured the vital qualities of our nation, so that they could no longer be recognized, is humanly conceivable. And yet – but I must express it frankly, just as I think! Comrades of the once grand, proud German army! Can you speak of losing heart? Think of the men who more than a hundred years ago created for us a new Fatherland. Their

religion was their faith in themselves and in the sanctity of their cause. They created the new Fatherland, basing it not on freak doctrinaire theories foreign to our nature, but building it up on the foundations of the free development of the framework and the principles of our own common weal! When it is able, Germany will take this path again.

"I have the firm conviction that now, as in those times, the links with our great rich past will be preserved, and, where they have been broken, will be restored. The old German spirit will again assert itself triumphantly, though only after it has been purged in the flames of suffering and passion.

"Our enemies knew the strength of this spirit; they admired and hated it in times of peace; they were astonished at it and feared it on the battlefields of the Great War. They sought to explain our strength to their peoples by using the empty word 'organization.' They were silent about the spirit that lived and moved behind the veil of this word. But in and with this spirit we will again courageously reconstruct our nation.

"Germany, the focus-point of so many of the inexhaustible values of human civilization and culture, will not go under so long as it retains faith in its historical world mission. I am confident that the depth and strength of thought of the best in our fatherland will succeed in blending new ideas with the precious treasures of former times, and from them will together forge lasting values for the welfare of our fatherland.

"This is the unshakable conviction with which I leave the bloody battlefield of international warfare. I have seen the heroic agony of my fatherland and never, never will I believe that it was its death agony.

"For the present our entire former constitution lies buried under the flood-tide raised by the storm of wild political passions and resounding phrases which has apparently destroyed all sacred traditions. But this flood-tide will subside. Then, from the eternally agitated sea of human life, will again emerge that rock to which the hope of our fathers clung, that rock upon which, nearly half a century ago, the future of our fatherland was, by our strength, confidently founded – the German Empire! When the national idea, the national consciousness, has again been raised, then, out of the Great War – on which no nation can look back with such legitimate pride and with such clear conscience as we – as well as out of the bitter severity of the present days, precious moral fruits will ripen for us. The blood of all those who have fallen in the faith of the greatness of the fatherland will not then have flowed in vain. In this assurance I lay down my pen and rely firmly on you – the youth of Germany."

I wrote these words in the darkest hours and in the conviction that I was fast approaching the close of a life spent in the service of the fatherland. Fate disposed otherwise for me. In the spring of 1925 a new chapter of my life was opened. Again I was wanted to cooperate in the destiny of my nation. Only my firm confidence in Germany's inexhaustible resources gave me the courage to accept the office of *Reichspräsident*. This firm belief lent me also the moral strength to fulfill unswervingly the duties of that difficult position.

The last chapter of my life has been for me, at the same time, the most difficult. Many have not understood me in these troubled times and have not comprehended that my only anxiety was to lead the distracted and discouraged German nation back to self-conscious unity.

I began and conducted the duties of my office in the consciousness that a preparatory period of complete renunciation was necessary in domestic and international politics. From the Easter message of the year 1925 – in which I exhorted the nation to the fear of God, to social justice, to internal peace and political sanity – onwards, I have not become tired of cultivating the inward unity of our nation and the self-consciousness of its best qualities. Moreover, I was conscious that the political constitution and form of government which