



Volume 7. Nazi Germany, 1933-1945

Excerpts from Hitler's Speech before the first "Greater German Reichstag" (January 30, 1939)

With the dawning of the year 1939, Germany's war preparations in the areas of armaments, economics, and diplomacy entered into their critical end phase. These preparations were also accompanied by intensified propaganda efforts. In this famous Reichstag speech, delivered on the 6th anniversary of his takeover of power, Hitler emphasizes his own wish for peace – one that apparently existed despite the Jews' alleged international conspiracy against the German people. In advance, he presents the outbreak of war – which he himself would actually prompt a few months later – as Germany's way of defending itself against Jewish aggression, and he promises retribution. It is unlikely that the Nazi regime had any concrete plans for the actual "annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe" at this time. But it must have been clear that war and the conquest of territory that it would entail in Eastern Europe, home to millions of Jews, would require the Nazis to formulate new policies toward the Jews.

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On January 30, 1933, I moved into Wilhelmstraße, filled with the deepest concern for the future of my *Volk* [people]. Today – six years later – I am able to speak to the first Reichstag of Greater Germany! We, perhaps more than any other generation, can truly appreciate the full meaning of the pious expression: 'What a change brought about by the grace of God!'

Six years were enough to achieve the dreams of centuries. One year to bring our people the enjoyment of that unity that so many generations strove for in vain. Today, as I see you assembled around me as representatives of our German *Volk* from all *Gaue* [regions] of the Reich, and know that among you are the newly elected men of the *Ostmark* [Austria] and the Sudetenland, I am once more overwhelmed by the powerful impressions of the events of a year in which the work of centuries was realized.

How much blood has been shed in vain for this goal! Over the course of more than a thousand years, how many millions of German men have consciously or unconsciously traveled down the bitter road toward a quick or painful death in the service of this goal! How many others were condemned to end their lives behind the walls of fortresses and prisons – lives they would have gladly given to Greater Germany!

How many hundreds of thousands have poured forth into the whole wide world, an endless stream of German emigrants driven by need and worry! For decades they still thought of their

unhappy Fatherland, but after generations they forgot it. And within a single year, this dream has been successfully realized.

Not without a fight, as some thoughtless bourgeois may perhaps like to think. This year of German unity was preceded by nearly two decades of fanatical struggle on behalf of a political idea. Hundreds of thousands, millions devoted their entire selves to this, their physical and economic existence; they accepted mockery and derision as readily as they did years of disgraceful abuse, vile defamation, and nearly unbearable terror. Countless blood-soaked dead and wounded in all the German *Gaue* were witnesses to this battle. Moreover: this success was hard-won through an immense exertion of will and through the power of brave decisions fanatically adhered to.

I am saying this because there is a danger that those very people who contributed the least to the practical success of German unity are now – as the loudest of declaimers – only too quick to claim the creation of the Reich as their own doing, or to depict the events of 1938 as a matter of course, a development that was long overdue and, unfortunately, only belatedly finally achieved by National Socialism.

As far as these elements are concerned, I would like to say that persevering through this year required uncommonly strong nerves – something of which these midgets have nary a trace! They are the incorrigible old pessimists, skeptics, and indifferentists that we know so well, those who made no positive contribution during our twenty-year struggle, but who now, after the victory, feel compelled to make their critical comments as the appointed experts on the nation's rebirth.

In a few sentences I will now provide a factual account of the historical events of the memorable year of 1938.

[. . .]

On Friday evening [March 11, 1938], I was asked to order German troops to march into that country [Austria], in order to prevent unpredictable turmoil there. By around 10 o'clock at night, troops had already crossed the border in many places. The general invasion began at 6 in the morning [on March 12, 1938] and met with immense enthusiasm from a population that was now finally liberated.

[. . .]

The man responsible for the development that gradually turned Czechoslovakia into the exponent of all hostile foreign intentions toward the Reich was Dr. Beneš, who was President at the time. In May of last year, at the instigation of and with the cooperation of certain foreign circles, he carried out the Czech mobilization that was intended, first, to provoke the German Reich, and, second, to damage the reputation of the German Reich abroad.

Despite the fact that, on my orders, a declaration to the effect that Germany had not mobilized a single soldier was conveyed twice to president Beneš, and despite the fact that the same assurances were given to the representatives of foreign powers, the fiction was maintained and disseminated that Czechoslovakia had been forced to mobilize by a German mobilization, and that Germany therefore had to rescind its own mobilization and renounce its intentions.

Dr. Beneš disseminated the story that the German Reich had been put into its proper place by his own decisive actions.

Now, since Germany had neither mobilized nor had any intention of attacking Czechoslovakia, the situation inevitably had to lead to a heavy loss of prestige for the Reich. Because of this intolerable provocation, which was exacerbated by the truly infamous persecution and terrorization of Germans living there, I decided to resolve the Sudeten German question once and for all – and radically at that. On May 28, I:

1. gave the orders to prepare military intervention against this state on October 2;
2. ordered the massive and accelerated expansion of our defensive front in the west.

To prepare for the conflict with Mr. Beneš and to protect the Reich against other attempts at the exertion of influence, or even threats, the plan initially called for the immediate mobilization of 96 divisions, which could be followed in short order by a larger number of additional units.

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If certain newspapers and politicians in the rest of the world now allege that Germany thus threatened other nations with military blackmail, this can only be based on a crude distortion of the facts. In a region where neither the British nor any other western nation has any business, Germany restored the right of self-determination to ten million German compatriots. It threatened no one in doing so; it merely fought back against attempted meddling by third parties.

And I don't need to assure you, my delegates, men of the German Reichstag, that we will not tolerate it in the future, either, if western states try to meddle in affairs that concern only us in order to hinder natural and reasonable solutions with their interference!

We were therefore all pleased that it was possible, thanks to the initiative of our friend Benito Mussolini, and thanks to the likewise much-appreciated willingness of Chamberlain and Daladier, to find the elements of an agreement that not only allowed for a peaceful solution to a matter that admitted no further delay, but also served as an example of the possibility of a reasonable handling and resolution of certain vital problems.

But without the determination to resolve this problem one way or another, such an agreement among the great European powers would have never come about.

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The politically and socially disorganized German *Volk* of previous decades squandered the better part of its inherent powers in a domestic war that was as fruitless as it was irrational.

The so-called democratic freedom to give expression to opinions and urges did not lead to the development, or even to the release, of special values or powers, but only to a senseless wasting of them, and finally to the paralysis of any truly creative person who still remained.

By putting an end to this fruitless battle, National Socialism liberated the powers previously tied up internally and set them free to represent the vital interests of the nation, both in the sense of tackling great communal tasks within the Reich and in the service of securing the common necessities of life in the world around us.

It is nonsense to believe that obedience and discipline are necessary only for soldiers and have little significance for others in the life of nations. On the contrary: a *Volk*-community that is disciplined and raised in obedience is in a position to mobilize powers that facilitate the assertion of the existence of peoples and thereby successfully represent the interests of all.

This kind of community, however, cannot be created primarily through coercion, but only through the compelling force of an idea and thus by the exertions of ongoing education.

[. . .]

There are people who, even when faced with the greatest and most unsettling events, are completely incapable of any kind of inner reflection, let alone action. These people are also personally dead on the inside and thus useless to a community. They make no history themselves, and no history can be made with them. In their narrow-mindedness or blasé decadence they are the useless waste product of nature [*Ausschußware der Natur*].

They find their own inner consolation or satisfaction in the thought that their supposed cleverness or wisdom allows them to stand above the events of the day – or, to say it better, makes them ignorant. Now, one can well imagine that a *Volk* could possess not a single such ignoramus and still be capable of the greatest acts and deeds.

It is impossible, however, to imagine – let alone lead – a nation consisting mostly of such ignoramuses instead of pure-blooded masses of idealistic, believing, affirming people. The latter are the only valuable elements of a *Volk* community. A thousand weaknesses will be forgiven them as long as they have this one strength, that of being able to give – if necessary – their all for an ideal or an idea!

[. . .]

My dear deputies, we still stand before enormous, tremendous tasks! A new leadership class of our *Volk* must be built up. Its composition is dependent upon race. But it is equally necessary to demand and ensure, through the educational system and our educational methods, that courage and an eagerness to accept responsibility are the self-evident preconditions for the assumption of any public office.

When it comes to the filling of leading posts in the state and party, character should be valued more highly than so-called academic or supposed intellectual qualifications. For wherever leadership is called for, the crucial factor should not be abstract knowledge, but an inborn capacity to lead and with it, a high measure of eagerness to assume responsibility, with all the accompanying determination, courage, and persistence.

In principle, we must realize that a supposedly first-rate academic education, confirmed by report cards, can never make up for a lack of eagerness to assume responsibility. Knowledge and leadership ability, which also means vigor, are not mutually exclusive. But when doubts arise, knowledge can under no circumstance be considered a replacement for integrity, bravery, courage, and initiative. When it comes to leading a *Volk* community in the party and the state, these qualities are the more important ones.

If I state this in front of you, my deputies, I am doing it because this one year of German history has taught me, more clearly than all of my previous years, how important and irreplaceable these very virtues are, and how, in critical hours, a single, resolute man always matters more than 1,000 sophisticated weaklings!

As a social manifestation, however, this new selection of leadership must also be liberated from numerous prejudices that I really cannot describe as anything other than a phony and fundamentally nonsensical code of social morality.

There is no attitude that cannot find its final justification in the benefit it brings to the totality. Anything that is clearly unimportant or even harmful to the existence of the totality cannot, in service to a social order, be judged as morality.

And above all: a *Volk* community is only conceivable with the recognition of laws that are binding for all; that is to say, it makes no sense to expect or demand that one person should adhere to principles that seem nonsensical, harmful, or merely unimportant in the eyes of others.

I have no appreciation for the attempts of dying social groups to cut themselves off from real life by hiding behind a hedge of withered and outdated class laws, in order to maintain themselves artificially in that way. As long as this is done merely to secure a quiet cemetery for one's own

demise, there can be no objection. But if one intends to place a barrier in the way of advancing life, then the storm of a forward-surgng youth will simply clear away this old brush.

The German national state [*Volksstaat*] of today knows no social prejudices. For that reason, it also has no special social morality. It knows only the life laws and necessities that humans have arrived at through reason and understanding. [. . .]

The cohesiveness of the German national body [*Volkskörper*], whose guarantor you, my delegates, are and will be first and foremost, makes me certain that, whatever tasks our *Volk* will have to face, the National Socialist state will solve them sooner or later! That whatever difficulties may still await us, the vigor and courage of leadership will overcome them.

[. . .]

1. We are truly fighting an immense battle, applying all the unified power and energy of our *Volk*, and
2. We will win this fight completely; in fact, we have already won it!

Wherein lies the root cause of all our economic difficulties? In the overpopulation of our living space [*Lebensraum*]! And here I can present the gentlemen critics in the western and non-European democracies with one fact and one question. The fact: the German *Volk* lives with a ration of 135 people per square kilometer, without any outside help and without any of the reserves it once had. Plundered by the rest of the world for a decade and a half, burdened with immense debts, without colonies, it has nevertheless fed and clothed its people and, moreover, has no unemployment. And the question: which of our so-called great democracies would be able to accomplish as much? –

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Of course, the person for whom bananas simply grow on trees has an easier struggle for existence than the German farmer, who must exert himself all year long to work his field. Here, we would only ask that this carefree international banana-picker not criticize the activities of the German farmer.

[. . .]

The condition that would then occur can only be overcome in two ways:

1. Through the importation of additional foodstuffs, which would mean an increase in the export of German products, whereby one would have to consider that some of the raw materials necessary for the manufacture of these very products would have to be imported from abroad,

so that only a fraction of the remaining profits would be available for the purchase of foodstuffs, or

2. The expansion of the living space of our *Volk*, in order to resolve the problem of feeding Germany within our domestic economy.

Since the second solution is not yet feasible on account of the persistent blindness of the one-time victorious powers [!], we are forced to deal with the first one, that is, we must export in order to be able to buy food; and second, since some of this export would require raw materials that we ourselves do not possess, we must export even more to secure these raw materials for our economy.

This necessity is certainly not a capitalistic one, as may be the case in other countries, but rather results from the direst need that can afflict a people, namely, concern for their daily bread.

And when foreign statesmen now threaten us with economic counter-measures of some kind or another, I can only assure them that this would initiate a desperate economic struggle in which we could easily hold our own. We could do so more easily than the satiated other nations, for the motive for our economic struggle would be a very simple one, namely: German people either live – that means, export – or die.

And I can assure all international skeptics, the German *Volk* will not die, most certainly not because of this, but it will live! If necessary, it will place all of the productive capacity of the new National Socialist community at the disposal of its leadership in order to enter into such a struggle and fight to the end. As far as the leadership is concerned, I can only assure you that it is determined to do whatever is necessary.

However, a final solution to this problem, and a reasonable one at that, will only occur when common human reason triumphs over the greed of individual nations; that is, when people have learned that insisting upon an injustice is not only politically but also economically useless, indeed, insane.

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Under the present circumstances, however, we are left with no other option but to continue our economic policy, which must try to wrest the most from the living space at our disposal. This requires an ever greater increase in our efforts and an increase in production. This forces us to implement our Four Year Plan more vigorously.

But it also leads to the mobilization of ever increasing manpower. And here we are now approaching a new phase in German economic policy.

During the first six years after our assumption of power, the goal of our economic leadership was to channel all idle manpower into some kind of useful employment. The task in the coming years, however, is to carefully review our workforce, the deployment of which must be regulated according to plan in order to achieve higher productivity through the application of the same amount of effort by means of rationalization and, in particular, through better technical organization of working conditions, and in that way, also free up workers for new additional production.

That in turn forces us to make the capital market freer so that our enterprises may expand, and to thereby relieve it of demands placed on it by the state. All of this, however, necessitates a close unification of the economy and the monetary system.

I am determined to complete the path – already embarked upon on January 30, 1937 – that is leading to the reorganization of the German Reichsbank from a banking institution under international influence into the bank of issue of the German Reich. If the rest of the world complains about this in part by saying that yet another German enterprise would thus lose its international character, let me just say to the world that it is our inexorable determination to impart to all of the institutions of our life a primarily German, that is to say, National Socialist, character.

And let the rest of the world recognize from this how absurd it is to accuse us of wishing to force German ideas upon the rest of the world, and how much more justified it would be if National Socialist Germany complained that the rest of the world is still trying to force its views on us all of the time.

My dear deputies of the Reichstag, I now see it as the duty of every German man and every German woman to understand the leadership of the Reich when it comes to its economic policy and to support it through all possible means. In city and countryside, to consider above all that German economic policy is in no way based on any kind of financial theories, but on a very primitive understanding of production, that is, on the understanding that the only decisive factor is the quantity of goods produced.

The fact that we are confronted with additional tasks in the process, that is, that we must employ a high percentage of our national labor force for the arming of our *Volk*, which is not productive in and of itself, remains regrettable, but cannot be changed.

In the final analysis, the economy of today's Reich rises and falls with its external security. It is better to recognize this in a timely manner rather than too late.

I therefore see it as the highest task of the National Socialist leadership of the state to do everything humanly possible to strengthen our defensive capability. In this I am counting on the understanding of the German *Volk* and especially on its ability to remember.

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We have no reason to assume that Germany's fate would be any different if it were ever to succumb to a second bout of weakness in the future. On the contrary: some of the same men who once threw the world into the firestorm of war are still trying today, as the driving forces or paid henchmen of those who promote hatred among the nations, to heighten animosities in order to prepare the ground for a new conflict.

And above all else, there is one thing that you especially, my dear delegates, men of the Reichstag, must not forget:

In certain democracies it is apparently one of the special prerogatives of political-democratic life to nurse an artificial hatred against so-called totalitarian states. Through a flood of reports – partly distortions, partly utter fabrications – public opinion is turned against nations who have not done anything to other nations and have no intention of doing them any harm, who, at most, were themselves oppressed by severe injustice for decades.

And when we now defend ourselves against such apostles of war like Mr. Duff Cooper, Mr. Eden, Churchill, or Mr. Ickes, and so on, this is presented as an encroachment upon the sacred rights of democracies. As these gentlemen see it, they certainly have the right to attack other nations and their leadership, but no one has the right to defend himself.

I do not need to reassure you that as long as the German Reich is a sovereign state, the state leadership will not let an English or an American politician keep it from responding to such attacks. That we remain a sovereign state will be ensured in the future by the weapons we are forging and by the choice of our friends.

One could simply dismiss the claim that Germany intends to attack America with laughter. And it might be best to pass over in silence the continuing campaign of incitement by certain British war apostles, except that we must not ignore the following:

1. These democracies are states whose political construction makes the following possible: that only a few months down the road, these most horrible of war mongers could hold the leadership of the government in their own hands.

2. We therefore owe it to the security of the Reich to tell the German *Volk* the truth about these men in a timely fashion. The German *Volk* feels no hatred toward England, America, or France; it just wants peace and quiet. Those nations, however, are being continuously stirred up against Germany and the German *Volk* by their Jewish or non-Jewish agitators. Thus, should the intentions of these warmongers succeed, our own *Volk* would wind up in a situation for which they would be psychologically unprepared and which they would be unable to comprehend.

I therefore consider it necessary that, from now on, our propaganda and our press should always answer these attacks and that, above all, they should be brought to the attention of the German *Volk*.

It needs to know who the men are who want to start a war at all costs. I am convinced that the calculations of these elements are faulty, for once the National Socialist propaganda begins to answer back, we will be just as successful as we were within Germany when we brought the Jewish world-enemy to its knees through the compelling force of our propaganda.

The nations will soon realize that National Socialist Germany seeks no enmity with other nations, that all claims that our *Volk* intends to attack other nations are the product of a pathological hysteria or are lies spawned by the personal desire of certain politicians to survive, that in certain states these lies are intended to help unconscionable profiteers protect their financial interest, that international Jewry most of all hopes to satisfy its thirst for revenge and its lust for profit by means of these lies, and that they represent the most outrageous slander that one can inflict on a great and peace-loving nation.

After all, German soldiers have never fought on American soil, for example, except in service to American independence and its struggle for liberty, but American soldiers were certainly brought to Europe to help strangle a great nation fighting for its freedom.

It is not Germany that has attacked America, but America that has attacked Germany, and as the investigative committee in the American House of Representatives determined, it did so without any compelling cause, merely for capitalistic motives.

But everyone should be clear about one thing: these attempts will have no influence whatsoever on Germany, especially on the way it is resolving its Jewish question.

Let me say the following about the Jewish question: It is a shameful spectacle to see today how the entire world of democracy is oozing with compassion toward the poor, tormented Jewish people, while remaining hard-heartedly stubborn in the face of what is an obvious duty to help them. The arguments that are used to excuse this failure actually speak only *for us* Germans and Italians.

For it is said:

1. 'We' – that is, the democracies – 'are not in a situation to take in the Jews!' And yet in these world empires there are not even 10 people per square kilometer, while Germany has to feed 135 per square kilometer, and is still supposed to be able to accommodate them.
2. We are told: 'We cannot take them unless they are given, by Germany, for example, a certain amount of capital for immigration.'

For centuries, however, it was perfectly all right for Germany to receive these elements, though they possessed nothing except infectious political and sanitary diseases. What that people possesses today, it has acquired by way of the vilest manipulations at the expense of the not-very-astute German *Volk*.

Today we are merely undoing the harm for which these people are themselves to blame. Back when the German *Volk* lost its entire savings from decades of honest work to the inflation instigated and promoted by the Jews, when the rest of the world took away the German *Volk*'s foreign assets, when we were dispossessed of all our colonial possessions, such philanthropic considerations do not seem to have had any meaningful influence on these democratic statesmen.

Today, I can only assure these gentlemen that we, thanks to the brutal education that the democracies have inflicted upon us for fifteen years, are completely hardened against any sentimental stirrings.

We witnessed how, after more than 800,000 of our children had already died of hunger and undernourishment at the end of the war, nearly a million dairy cows were driven away in accordance with the cruel provisions of a dictate that the democratic, humane apostles of the world forced upon us as a peace treaty.

We witnessed how more than a million German prisoners of war were kept in confinement for no reason at all for a whole year after the war ended. We had to endure that well over a million Germans in our border regions were torn from their property and possessions and driven out with almost nothing but the clothes on their backs.

We had to bear millions of our *Volk* comrades being torn away from us, with no one according them a hearing or leaving them even the smallest possibility of sustaining their lives. I could supplement these examples with dozens that are more horrendous still.

Do not speak to us, then, of humanity. The German *Volk* does not wish for its affairs to be determined and governed by a foreign nation. France to the French, England to the English, America to the Americans, and Germany to the Germans!

We are determined to stop a foreign people from nesting here, a people that has known how to seize all leadership positions, and to deport it; for we are willing to educate our own people for these leadership positions.

We have hundreds of thousands of intelligent children of farmers and workers. We will have them educated, and we are already educating them, and we want them – not the members of a people that is alien to us – to one day occupy the leading positions in the state alongside our educated classes.

Most of all, however, German culture is, as the very name suggests, a German and not a Jewish one, and its administration and care will therefore be placed in the hands of our *Volk*.

If, however, the rest of the world cries out with a hypocritical mien about the barbaric expulsion from Germany of such an irreplaceable, culturally valuable element, we can only be astonished by the conclusions that can be drawn from this. How grateful they should be to us for setting free these wonderful bearers of culture and making them available to the rest of the world.

In accordance with their own statements, the rest of the world cannot find a single reason to excuse themselves for refusing to admit these highly worthy people into their own countries.

It is, after all, impossible to understand why the members of this race are inflicted on the German *Volk*, while the states that are so enthusiastic about these 'splendid people' suddenly refuse to admit them with all kinds of excuses.

I believe that the sooner this problem is solved, the better. For Europe will not find peace until the Jewish question has been settled. It is perfectly possible that this problem will lead sooner or later to an agreement in Europe, even between nations that would otherwise not have reconciled so easily.

The world has enough settlement space, but one must, once and for all, break with the notion that the Jewish people have simply been chosen by the Lord God to be the beneficiaries of a certain percentage of the body and productive work of other peoples.

Jewry will have to adjust to the kind of respectable, constructive activity that other nations are already engaged in; otherwise, it will succumb sooner or later to a crisis of unimaginable scope.

And another thing I want to say on this day, which may be memorable for others as well as us Germans: I was often a prophet in my life and was usually ridiculed for it. At the time of my struggle for power, it was chiefly the Jewish people who laughed at my prophecies that I would one day assume in Germany the leadership of the state and thus the entire *Volk*, and would then, among other things, also bring the Jewish problem to a solution. I believe, however, that the Jews in Germany have already choked on the uproarious laughter of those days.

I wish to be a prophet again today: should international financial Jewry in and outside of Europe succeed in plunging the nations once again into a world war, the result will not be the Bolshevization of the world and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.

For the time of the propagandistic impotence of the non-Jewish peoples is over. National Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy possess the institutions that allow them, if necessary, to enlighten the world about the nature of a question of which many peoples are instinctively aware but have not thought clearly about.

At the moment, Jewry may, in certain states, pursue its smear campaign under the protection of press, film, radio propaganda, theater, literature, etc., which are in its hands. But should that people succeed once again in driving the nations' masses of millions into a struggle that is entirely senseless for them and serves only Jewish interests, we shall see the effectiveness of an education in Germany to which Jewry has completely succumbed within a few short years.

The nations no longer wish to die on the battlefield so that this rootless international race can profit from the business of war and satisfy its Old-Testament lust for vengeance. The Jewish slogan, 'Proletarians of all countries, unite,' will be defeated by a higher realization, namely: 'Working members of all nations, recognize your common enemy!'

Among the charges leveled against Germany in the so-called democracies is that National Socialist Germany is a state that is hostile to religion. Regarding this point, I would like to make the following, solemn declaration before the entire German *Volk*:

1. In Germany, nobody has hitherto been persecuted for his religious beliefs, and no one will be persecuted for them.
2. Since January 30, 1933, the National Socialist state has provided both churches the following sums from public tax revenues through its state organizations:

in fiscal year 1933:	130 Million Reichsmark
in fiscal year 1934:	170 Million Reichsmark
in fiscal year 1935:	250 Million Reichsmark
in fiscal year 1936:	320 Million Reichsmark
in fiscal year 1937:	400 Million Reichsmark
in fiscal year 1938:	500 Million Reichsmark

Added to this are another 85 million Reichsmark in subsidies from the states and about 7 million Reichsmark in subsidies from communities and communal organizations.

Apart from that, the churches are the largest landowners next to the state. The value of their agricultural and forestry property exceeds 10 billion Reichsmark. The income from this property should be estimated at more than 300 million a year.

To this are added the countless donations, testamentary bequests, and, above all, the yield of church collections. Moreover, the church in the National Socialist state enjoys tax benefits in various areas and is exempt from taxes on donations, bequests, etc. It is therefore – to put it mildly – an outrage when foreign politicians, in particular, have the nerve to speak of hostility to religion in the Third Reich.

But should the German churches in fact see this situation as intolerable for them, the National Socialist state is ready at any time to carry out a clear separation of church and state, which is the case in France, America, and other countries.

I will permit myself to ask this question, then: what sums did the governments of France, England, or the USA, during the same period, hand over to their churches from public funds?

3. The National Socialist state has not closed a church, nor prevented a religious service, nor ever influenced the form of a service. It has exerted no influence on either the teachings or the creed of any confession. In the National Socialist state, everyone can find salvation in his own way.

However: the National Socialist state will harshly remind those priests who, instead of being servants of God, wish to see their mission in insulting our Reich today, its institutions or its leading figures, that nobody will tolerate the destruction of this state, and that priests, as soon as they put themselves outside of the law, will be held accountable to the law just like any other German citizen.

It must be noted here, however, that there are tens of thousands of priests of all Christian confessions who fulfill their ecclesiastical duties just as well as – and probably better than – the political agitators, without ever running afoul of the laws of the state. Protecting them is something the state sees as its task. Destroying the enemies of the state is its duty.

4. The National Socialist State is neither prudish nor hypocritical. But there are certain moral principles whose preservation is in the interest of the biological health of our people and which, therefore, are beyond challenge. Pederasty or child abuse will be punished by the law in this state, no matter who commits these crimes.

When leading figures of the National Socialist party were guilty of these crimes five years ago, they were shot. If other persons of public or private life or priests commit the same crimes, they will be punished by jail or prison in accordance with the law.

Transgressions by priests against their other vows of celibacy and so on do not interest us at all. Nor has any word about this ever appeared in our press.

Incidentally, this state has intervened only once in the internal organization of the churches, namely when I myself tried in 1933 to combine the impotent, fractured Protestant state churches in Germany into one large and powerful Protestant Reich Church.

This was thwarted by the opposition of various state bishops. After that, this attempt was given up; after all, in the end, it is not our task to defend the Protestant Church by force against its own officials, let alone strengthen it!

When foreign countries, and especially certain democratic statesmen, now advance the cause of individual German priests so vigorously, it can only be for a political reason. For the same statesmen were silent when hundreds of thousands of priests were mowed down or burned in

Russia; they were silent when tens of thousands of priests and nuns were barbarically slaughtered or burned alive in Spain.

They could not deny these facts, but they were and are silent, whereas – and I must say this to the democratic statesmen – in response to these slaughters many National Socialist and Fascist volunteers made themselves available to General Franco to help prevent this Bolshevist bloodlust [*Blutrausch*] from spreading further across Europe and thus across the better part of civilized humanity.

For it was concern for European culture and true civilization that drove Germany to take sides in this battle of nationalist Spain against its Bolshevist destroyers.

It does not say much for the mentality of various countries when people cannot even imagine that someone would act out of unselfish motives. But National Socialist Germany took part in the elevation of General Franco merely out of an ardent desire that he might succeed in saving his country from a danger to which Germany itself very nearly succumbed at one time.

Thus it cannot be sympathy or pity for persecuted servants of God that is mobilizing the interest democratic citizens are taking in individual priests who have run afoul of the law; rather, it is an interest in the enemy of the German state.

But one thing should be known in this regard: We will protect the German priest who is the servant of God; we will destroy the priest who is the political enemy of the German Reich.

We believe that this will most likely prevent a development which – as the example of Spain has shown us – would otherwise lead all too easily to a conflict of unforeseeable magnitude one day.

I would like to add this fundamental explanation: In certain circles abroad, there seems to be the opinion that an especially loud proclamation of sympathy for elements that have run afoul of the law in Germany might lead to an amelioration of their situation. Perhaps there is the hope that certain publicity methods can be used to terrorize the leadership of the German state.

That belief is based on a fatal error. When foreign countries support certain activities directed against the state, we see the final proof of their treasonous character!

After all, simple opposition to a regime never elicited sympathy from these democratic foreign countries. Neither did the persecution or punishment of one such political criminal. For when was there a stronger opposition in Germany than the National Socialist one?

Never was an opposition more oppressed by viler means, more persecuted and defamed than the National Socialist party. But to our credit, we can say that we never enjoyed the pity, let alone the support, of these foreign powers on account of this.

This support therefore seems destined only for those who intend to destroy the German Reich. For that reason we shall see in every individual case merely the compelling reason to tighten our measures.

Given the dangers threatening us, I therefore see it as a great good fortune to have found states in and outside of Europe which, much like the German *Volk*, must engage in the most arduous struggles to defend their existence: Italy and Japan.

In the western world today, the Italians, as the descendants of ancient Rome, and we Germans, as the descendants of the Germanic peoples of that time, are the oldest peoples, and therefore the peoples who have been in contact the longest.

In my speech at the Palazzo Venezia in Rome on the occasion of my visit to Italy, I explained that it was indeed a misfortune that the mightiest civilized people of the ancient world and the young people of an emerging new world, owing to the absence of a natural separation [between them], and on account of many other circumstances, became involved in centuries of fruitless conflicts.

And yet, out of this thousand-year contact there arose a community that is not only connected by blood through countless bonds, but also, and above all, held incalculable significance historically and culturally.

What the Germanic people owe to antiquity as regards the organization of their state and thus the development of their *Volk*, as well as their general culture, is immeasurable in detail, immense in the aggregate. Since then nearly two thousand years have passed.

By now, however, we have made our contribution to culture to an abundant degree. But we always remained in close spiritual connection with the Italian *Volk*, its cultural and historical past. The nineteenth century brought a remarkably similar process of national unification. The German tribes united themselves into the German Reich, the Italian states into the Kingdom of Italy.

In fact, as fate would have it, in one year, 1866, the two peoples took to battle together for the creation of their new states.

Today we are experiencing this same development for the second time. A man of historic proportions was the first to successfully challenge a democratic spirit that had grown barren in his *Volk* with a new idea and then led it to victory within a few years. It is difficult to estimate what Fascism means for Italy. What it has achieved for the preservation of human culture is astronomical.

Who can walk through Rome or Florence without being overcome by thoughts of the fate that would have befallen these unparalleled monuments to human art and culture had Mussolini and his Fascism not managed to save Italy from Bolshevism!

Germany faced the same danger. Here National Socialism achieved the miracle of salvation. In the imagination of countless people of all races, the belief in a new Renaissance in our time is linked to these two states. The solidarity of these two regimes is thus more than a matter of selfish utilitarianism.

In this solidarity lies Europe's salvation from the threat of Bolshevist destruction. When Italy was involved in its heroic fight for its right to live in Abyssinia, Germany stood by its side as a friend. And in 1938, Fascist Italy repaid us this friendship in rich measure.

Let no one in the world make any mistake about the decision that National Socialist Germany has made vis-à-vis this friend. It can only serve peace if there is no doubt that a war against Italy today, for whatever reason it is instigated, will call Germany to the side of this friend.

Most of all, let no one be counseled otherwise by those isolated bourgeois weaklings who vegetate in every country and cannot understand that within the life of a people, courage and honor can easily exist alongside cowardice as the imparters of wisdom.

As far as National Socialist Germany is concerned, it knows what fate would befall it if an international power ever succeeded in bringing Fascist Italy to its knees, under whatever pretense.

We understand the consequences and look at them unflinchingly. The fate of Prussia between 1805 and 1806 will not be repeated a second time in German history. The weaklings who advised the King of Prussia in 1805 are not dispensing counsel in Germany today. The National Socialist state recognizes the dangers and is determined to prepare to fight them.

I know that our own Wehrmacht is equal to the toughest military demands, and so is Italy's military power. For just as the German military of today cannot be judged by, for example, the standards of the old federal army [*Bundesarmee*] from circa 1848, modern Italy under Fascism cannot be judged by the standards of a time when Italy was fragmented as a state.

Only a hysterical press that is as obstinate as it is tactless, and very malicious, could have forgotten so quickly that only a few years ago it embarrassed itself thoroughly with its predictions about the outcome of the Italian campaign in Abyssinia, just as it is doing again now in its assessment of Franco's national forces in the Spanish campaign.

Men make history! But they also forge the instruments that are suitable for shaping history, and above all, they infuse them with their spirit. Great men, however, are themselves merely the strongest, most concentrated representation of a *Volk*.

National Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy are strong enough to secure the peace against anyone, or to put a determined and successful end to a conflict rashly instigated by irresponsible forces!

This does not mean that we Germans – as is written every day by an irresponsible press – wish for a war; instead, it merely means that we:

1. Understand that other peoples, too, want to secure their share of the goods of the world, to which they are entitled by virtue of their number, their courage, and their worth, and that
2. In recognition of these rights, we are determined to jointly stand up for shared interests.

Above all, however, it means that we will never, under any circumstances, yield to threats amounting to blackmail!

Thus, our relationship to Japan is also determined by the recognition and the decision with the utmost determination to put a stop to the threat of the Bolshevization of a world gone blind. The Anti-Comintern Pact may one day become the crystallization point for a group of powers whose highest goal is none other than to ward off the threat posed to the peace and culture of the world by a satanic apparition.

The Japanese *Volk*, which has given us so many examples of shining heroism during these past two years, is without a doubt a fighter in the service of human civilization on the other side of the world. Its collapse would not benefit European or other civilized nations, but merely lead to the certain Bolshevization of East Asia. Except for international Jewry, which has an interest in this, no *Volk* can wish for such a development.

Seeing as the enormous efforts made last year achieved their goal peacefully in the end, we, as I already assured you at the beginning, would like, without further ado, to thank Mussolini as well as the other two statesmen who, in those critical hours, judged peace to be more valuable than continuing an injustice.

Germany has no territorial demands against England and France, except for the return of our colonies. As much as the solution of this question would contribute to the calming of the world, these are certainly not problems which, by themselves, could lead to a military confrontation.

If there are any tensions in Europe today, then this is primarily attributable to the irresponsible activities of an unscrupulous press, which hardly lets a day go by without unsettling humanity with alarmist news articles that are as stupid as they are mendacious.

The kind of poisoning of the world's well that various organs have dared to engage in can only be judged a crime. Recently there have also been attempts to place radio in the service of this international smear campaign.

Let me utter a warning here: If the radio broadcasts sent from certain countries into Germany do not cease, we will answer them soon.

I hope that the statesmen of these countries will not then return in short order with the urgent request for the resumption of a normal state of affairs. For I continue to believe that our education will be more effective than the campaign of lies by these Jews who incite hatred between peoples.

And the announcement by American film companies that they will produce anti-Nazi – that is, anti-German – films can impel us, at most, to have anti-Semitic films made in our German studios. Here, too, one should harbor no illusions about the effect. There will be a great many states and peoples who will exhibit tremendous understanding for additional instruction on such an important topic!

I believe that if it were possible to put a stop to the Jewish international press and propaganda smear campaign, an understanding among peoples could be established very quickly.

It is only these elements that are constantly hoping for war. I, however, believe in a long peace!

After all, what conflicts of interest exist, for example, between England and Germany? I have explained more than often enough that there is no German, and especially no National Socialist, who has the intention, not even in his thoughts, of wanting to cause problems for the English world empire.

And we also hear from England the voices of people who are thinking reasonably and calmly, who are expressing the same attitude toward Germany. It would be a blessing for the whole world if these two peoples could find a way to work together in trust. The same applies to our relationship with France.

We have just marked the fifth anniversary of the conclusion of our non-aggression treaty with Poland. Among all true friends of peace, there is little disagreement today about the value of this agreement.

One need only ask oneself what might have happened to Europe if this genuinely liberating agreement had not been made five years ago.

The great Polish marshal and patriot [Józef Piłsudski] did just as great a service to his people as the National Socialist leadership did to the German *Volks*. Even during the unsettling months of the past year, the German-Polish friendship was one of the calming features of European political life.

Our relationship with Hungary is based on a long and proven friendship, on shared interests, and on the high esteem that we traditionally have for each other. Germany joyfully undertook, for its part, to participate in repairing the injustice that was once done to Hungary.

One state that has attracted growing attention from our *Volk* since the Great War is Yugoslavia. The great respect that the German soldiers once felt for this brave people has since deepened and developed into a genuine friendship.

Our economic relations with that country, just as with our friends Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania, and Turkey, have been steadily moving in an upward direction. The most important reason for this is the natural possibility for these countries and Germany to complement each other.

Germany is happy today to possess peaceful borders in the West, the South, and the North.

Our relationships with the states of the West and the North, that is, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic States, are pleasant, all the more so since there has been a growing tendency in these countries to turn away from certain articles in the Covenant of the League of Nations.

More so than anyone, Germany appreciates knowing that it has truly friendly, neutral states along the border of its Reich. Let us hope that Czechoslovakia, as well, will succeed in finding a way to domestic peace and order that rules out a return to the tendencies of the former president Dr. Beneš.

The addition of Hungary and Manchukuo to the Anti-Comintern Pact is a welcome symptom of the consolidation of world resistance against the Jewish-international-Bolshevist threat to the nations [of the world].

Relations between the German Reich and the states of South America are pleasant, and our economic cooperation is steadily growing more vigorous.

Our relationship with the United States is suffering from a slander campaign which, operating under the pretext that Germany poses a threat to American independence or liberty, is endeavoring to incite an entire continent against the popularly governed [*volksregiert*] states in Europe in the service of transparent political or financial interests.

None of us believe that these efforts reflect the will of millions of American citizens, who, despite a gigantic, Jewish-capitalist press, radio, and film propaganda [machine] that sends messages to the contrary, cannot fail to see that there is not a single word of truth in these assertions.

Germany wishes to have peace and friendship with America, as with all countries. It rejects any interference in American affairs, but it rejects just as emphatically any American interference in German affairs.

For example, whether Germany maintains economic relations and does business with South and Central American states concerns no one but these states and us. Germany, at any rate, is a great and sovereign Reich, and is not subject to the oversight of American politicians.

Moreover, I believe that all states have so many domestic problems to resolve today that it would be a blessing for the nations if the responsible statesmen would worry only about their own internal affairs.

As far as Germany is concerned, I know from personal experience that the tasks it faces are so enormous that they almost exceed the powers of wisdom and energy of a single man.

I can therefore only say for myself and for all those who work with me that we see our life's work as consisting solely in the care and preservation of our *Volk* and Reich, both of which can look back on a glorious, thousand-year-long history.

My delegates! Men of the first Reichstag of Greater Germany!

As I now conclude my remarks to you today, I look back once more on the years of struggle and fulfillment that lie behind us. For most of us they represent the meaning and content of our entire existence. We know that nothing greater can be granted to our *Volk* and thus to ourselves.

Without bloodshed, we have succeeded finally in erecting the great Reich of the German *Volk*. Still, we should not forget that this process, too, brought painful losses for some. Many cherished traditions, many dear memories and symbols had to be eliminated by us. States were wiped out, their flags taken down; their traditions have lost meaning. May all of us, however, find comfort in the realization that, in our history, no generation that worked on behalf of Germany was spared similarly painful experiences.

Ever since the first German dukes struggled to create higher entities out of savage tribes, their efforts had to tread upon cherished institutions, dear memories, manly obligations of loyalty and so forth.

This process lasted nearly 2,000 years, until scattered tribes became one *Volk*, countless lands and states one Reich. Now, the growth process of the German nation can be seen as having essentially come to an end. The Greater German Reich, however, encompasses the entire thousand-year life-struggle of our *Volk*.

Just as all streams of German blood flow into it, it unites in itself all past traditions, its symbols and banners and, above all, the great men of whom Germans of the past were once justly proud.

For no matter what camp they belonged to in their day, the bold dukes and great kings, the generals and mighty emperors, and around them the shining minds and heroes of the past, they were all merely instruments of providence in the process of creating a nation.

By embracing them with grateful reverence in this great Reich, the glorious richness of German history opens up to us. Let us thank Almighty God that he has blessed our generation and us to witness this time and this hour.

Source: *Rede des Führers und Reichskanzlers Adolf Hitler vor dem Reichstag am 30. Januar 1939* [Speech by the Führer and Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler before the Reichstag on January 30, 1939]. Berlin: M. Müller & Sohn 1939, pp. 5-63.

Translated by Thomas Dunlap