Adolf Hitler – speech in the Sportpalast

Berlin, January 30, 1940

German Volksgenossen!

Seven years are a short time indeed. They are only a fraction of a normal human life-only a second in the life of a people. And yet the seven years lying behind us today seem longer than many decades of the past. Within them we feel the concentrated force of historic evolution: the resurrection of a great nation in danger of extinction. This was an eventful, tumultuous period indeed. We were fortunate not only to witness it, but to fashion it in part. At times we nearly lost sight of it.

Today there is much talk about democratic ideals in the outside world. But not in Germany! For here in Germany we had more than enough time—fifteen years—to acquaint ourselves with these democratic ideals. And we ourselves had to pick up the legacy left behind by this democracy.

Now we are being credited with many a truly astounding war aim, especially by the English. After all, England is quite experienced in issuing proclamations of objectives in warfare as it has waged the greatest number of wars the world over.

Truly astounding are the war aims announced to us today. A new Europe will arise. This Europe will be characterized by justice. This justice will render armament obsolete. This will lead to disarmament at last. This disarmament in turn will bring about an economic blossoming. Change and trade will spring up—much trade—free trade. And with the sponsorship of this trade, culture shall once more blossom, and not only culture will benefit, but religion will also prosper.

In other words: we are heading towards a golden age!. Well, we have heard of this golden age before. Many times precisely the same people attempted to illustrate its virtues to us who are now flooding us with descriptions of its benefits. The records are old ones, played once too often. We can only pity these gentlemen who cannot even come up with a new idea to trap a great people. For all this they had already promised us in 1918.

Then, too, England’s objectives in the war were the creation of this “new Europe,” the establishment of a “new justice,” of which the “right to selfdetermination of the peoples” was to form an integral part. Back then already they promised us justice to render obsolete—for all time—the bearing of any sort of weaponry.
Back then already they submitted to us a program for disarmament—one for global disarmament. To make this disarmament more evident, it was to be crowned by the establishment of an association of nations bearing no arms.

These were to settle their differences in the future—for even back then there was no doubt that differences would still arise—by talking them to death in discussion and debate, just as is the custom in democratic states. There would be no more shooting under any circumstances! In 1918, they declared a blessed and pious age to come! What came to pass in its stead we all lived to see: the old states were destroyed without even as much as asking their citizenry. Historic, ancient structures were severed, not only state bodies but grown economic structures as well, without anything better to take their place. In total disregard of the principle of the right to self-determination of the peoples, the European peoples were hacked to pieces, torn apart. Great states were dissolved.

Nations were robbed of their rights, first rendered utterly defenseless and then subjected to a division which left only victors and vanquished in this world.

And then there was no more talk of disarmament. To the contrary, armament went on. Nor did any efforts materialize to settle conflicts peacefully. The armed states waged wars just as before. Yet those who had been disarmed were no longer in a position to ward off the aggressions of those well armed.

Naturally, this did not herald economic prosperity but, to the contrary, produced a network of lunatic reparations payments which led to increasing destitution for not only the vanquished, but also the so-called victors themselves. The consequences of this economic destitution were felt most acutely by the German Volk.

And culture meanwhile received no support. Instead, it was abandoned to the arbitrary reign of crazed ideas and distortions. Religion, too, had to take a back seat. In these fifteen years, not one Englishman recalled the Christian ideals of charity or of love for one’s fellow man. The gentlemen went for walks not with the bible under their arms, but with the Treaty of Versailles in hand as their bible. It contained those 440 articles, all of which represented a burden, an obligation, an indictment, and an extortion of Germany. The League of Nations guaranteed this Versailles. It was not an association of free and equal nations. It was not even a League of Nations; its founding father refused it recognition from the start. It was a so-called League of Nations with the sole intent of guaranteeing this most vile of all Diktats. Its mission was to force us to fulfill this Diktat.

This was the age of democratic Germany! Now that foreign statesmen repeatedly act as though they could not possibly trust present-day Germany, one should remark that this cannot possibly be applied to the Germany back then. This former Germany was their own creation, their own work. They should have been
able to place trust in it. Yet, instead, just how badly did they treat it! Let us recall the true story of those years: the despondency of the collapse of 1918; the tragedy of the year 1919; all those years of economic decline domestically; the continuation of the enslavement; the misery of our Volk; and, above all, the utter hopelessness of those years! Even today the memory of these years profoundly shakes us. Those were the days when a great nation slowly lost not only its belief in itself, but all hope for justice in this world. During this entire period, democratic Germany hoped in vain, pleaded in vain, and protested in vain.

International finance remained brutal and squeezed our Volk ruthlessly.

The statesmen of the allied nations closed their hearts to it. In cold blood, they declared that we were twenty million Germans too many. In those days when all hope was for naught, all pleas were in vain, and all protests bore no fruits, in those days the National Socialist Movement came forth from the realization that, in this world, one must never stoop to hoping, pleading, or protesting. Instead, in this world, it is imperative first and foremost to help oneself.

Belief in our German Volk and the mobilization of its values took the place of hope. We had few real means at our disposal back then. What we regarded as building blocks for our new Reich, besides our willpower, was first our Volk’s ability to work, second its intelligence, and third what our soil, our Lebensraum, afforded us.

And thus we began our work and began Germany’s inner uplifting. It did not threaten the world. It was a work of purely inner, domestic reform. And nevertheless, it immediately elicited the hatred of others. These got wind of the renewed rise of the German Volk. And it was because we knew of this that we undertook to mobilize Germany’s strength.

You know it well: in the year 1933, the year we assumed power, I was forced to declare our withdrawal from the League of Nations and from the Disarmament Conference. This forum was incapable of according us justice.

In 1934, Germany’s rearmament began on a large scale. In 1935, I introduced general conscription. In 1936, I had the Rhineland occupied militarily. In 1937, the Four-Year Plan was launched. In 1938, the Ostmark and the Sudetenland were integrated into the Reich. In 1939, we began to establish protection for the Reich against those enemies who had meanwhile cast aside their masks.

The steps taken in 1939 served the defense of the Reich. Everything could have developed quite differently had the outside world had as much as an ounce of understanding for the vital concerns of Germany. Often it is said we should have waited for a negotiated settlement. Remember, my Volksgenossen: did I not repeatedly place the colonial question, for instance, before the world to obtain a negotiated settlement?! Did we ever receive a response? None other than brusque
replies and ever new hateful reactions.

The moment the Reich began to re-emerge, the leading classes of England and France determined to take up the battle once again. They wanted it thus.

For over 300 years, England has sought to prevent a real consolidation of Europe, just as France sought to prevent a consolidation of Germany for many a century. Today Mr. Chamberlain stands up to preach his pious war aims to the outside world. To this, all I can say is: English history has already betrayed your intent, Mr. Chamberlain! For 300 years, your statesmen have spoken just as you do today, Mr.

Chamberlain, at the onset of war. They always fought for “the Lord and religion.” They never had “a material goal.” And just because they never fought for such “a material goal,” the Lord so richly rewarded them in material terms! That England always declared itself “a fighter for truth and justice” and “a protagonist of all virtues,” this Dear Lord has not forgotten. Generously He has bestowed His blessings on the English. In those nearly 300 years, they have subjugated forty million square kilometers of soil on this earth. Naturally, they did this not from egotistical motives or because they lusted for mastery, riches, or enjoyment. To the contrary, they were merely fulfilling a mission in the name of the Lord and religion.

Of course, England did not wish to be the sole crusader for the Lord’s cause, and thus invited others to partake in this noble exploit. It did not even seek to claim the battle’s greatest burdens for itself. For ventures so pleasing to the Lord one can always find others. And England still does this today. And all this is richly rewarding for England: Forty million square kilometers obtained through conquest: a succession of rape, extortion, tyrannical abuse, oppression, pillaging. Events mark English history inconceivable for any other state or for any other people. The English waged war for any old reason. They waged war to expand trade; they waged war to force others to smoke opium; they waged war for gold mines and for mastery over diamond mines. Their goals were always material in nature, though hidden beneath a cloak of noble ideals.

And this last war was led in the service of noble purposes, too. To have pocketed German colonies in the process was the Lord’s will; to have taken our fleet from us; to have pocketed German accounts abroad. All these exploits were mere side effects of the “noble struggle for a holy religion.”

When I see Mr. Chamberlain go about, bible in hand, preaching his noble war aims, I cannot help having the impression of watching the devil, bible clasped under his arm, creeping up to a poor soul.

All this is no longer original. It is all in exceedingly bad taste. Nobody believes him anymore. Sometimes I fear he is coming to doubt himself.
Besides, every Volk burns its fingers only once. Only once were the children of Hamelin herded off by the Pied Piper; only once was the German Volk herded off by that apostle of the international brotherhood of man. In this context, I must praise Mr. Churchill. He frankly states what old Mr. Chamberlain only thinks quietly to himself and hopes for secretly. He says, our goal is the dissolution, the destruction of Germany. Our goal is the extermination, if possible, of the German Volk. Believe me, I welcome this openness.

And the French generals also freely discuss what is actually at stake. I believe we can understand each other more easily in this manner. Why always fight with lies and empty phrases? Why not be open about things? We should greatly prefer this. We know the objective they are pursuing whether or not Mr. Chamberlain walks about with the bible in hand or not; whether he is acting piously or not; whether he speaks the truth or not. We know their goal: it is the Germany of 1648 which they envision, a Germany disintegrated and torn to pieces. They know only too well that over eighty million Germans sit in this Central Europe. These human beings have a right to live—they have a right to a piece of the pie—and for three hundred years they were cheated out of it.

They could only be cheated since their disintegration led to the weight of their numbers being proportionally undervalued. And thus today we have 140 men living on one square kilometer. And when such numbers unite, they have power. When they are divided, they are defenseless and impotent. There is a moral imperative lying within their unity also. What does it matter when thirty, fifty or 200 small states rise to protest or to claim their vital rights? Who takes note? When eighty million men rise up—that is a completely different story! Hence the disinclination against the state-forming activities in Italy, the unity of Germany. They would much prefer to see these states dissolve into their former elements once more.

A few days ago, an Englishman wrote: “So it is, indeed. The hasty foundation of the German Empire—that was not right.” Indeed, it was not right. It was not right that eighty million men came together to jointly realize their vital rights. Instead, they would much prefer to see us under 200 or 400 different little flags or, if possible, in some 200 or 300 dynasties. Every dynasty would rule some 100,000 odd men and these would be silenced, never to be heard of by the rest of the world. Then we as a Volk could try to survive as a people of poets and philosophers. Besides this, poets and philosophers also need less food than hard laborers do.

This is the problem up for discussion today. Here are great nations which in the course of the centuries were cheated out of their right to life in this world due to their divisions. These nations have now overcome their inner divisions.

Today they have entered, as young peoples, the circle of all others and are staking their claim. They are opposed by the so-called owners. These latter peoples who today possess and block large sections of the world without sense or purpose; these who pillaged Germany only a few years ago; these now place themselves in the
same position as the so-called possessing classes within a society do.

On the world stage, the same thing is repeated which we have already witnessed inside the life of a people. Here, too, there were economic analysis and political opinion to the effect that he who has something, has something; he who has nothing, has nothing. It was to please the Lord that the one should possess while the other should not. And it was to remain so for eternity. New forces have come to oppose this. The one simply cries out: “We want only to destroy! What we cannot possess we will destroy!” This nihilistic force has raged in Germany for a decade and a half. Constructive National Socialism has overcome this force. It has refused to acknowledge the existing state of affairs and undertaken its modification. It changed the method of eradicating the state of affairs by saying: “We want to change this state of affairs by gradually permitting the non-possessing classes to partake in the national wealth and by educating them to partake in it.” Under no circumstances can the man who possesses everything presume himself to possess all-encompassing rights while the other man has no rights. It is no different in the world either. It is not acceptable for forty-six million Englishmen to simply block forty million square kilometers on this earth and to declare: “The Good Lord gave us this. Twenty years ago we got a little more yet from you. Now this is in our possession, and we shall not give back any of it.” And France? With its truly none-too-fertile people, numbering hardly eighty men per square kilometer, it has set out to conquer over nine million square kilometers of soil. Germany with its eighty million men possesses barely 600,000 square kilometers. This is the problem which must be solved, and it will be solved just as other social questions will be solved.

And what we witness today is a larger replay of the same drama we already observed on a smaller stage in the interior when National Socialism launched its struggle for a truly tolerable order and a true community of man for the benefit of the broad masses of the Volk. At the time, liberal and democratic circles—i.e., the possessing classes, and their parties—attempted to destroy National Socialism. “Dissolve the Party! The Party must be outlawed!” This was their eternal battle cry. They saw the Movement’s dissolution or prohibition as the only means of destroying this force which they feared might well prove capable of bringing about a change in the existing state of affairs.

National Socialism dealt squarely with these other forces; it survived; it inaugurated a new order in Germany and has persisted in so doing. And today the possessing part of the world is crying: “We must dissolve Germany! We must atomize these eighty million. They should not be allowed to remain within a contiguous state structure. Thereby we can rob them of the force to see their demands through!” And these are the objectives England and France are pursuing in this war! Our answer to them nevertheless remains the very same one with which we replied to our adversaries internally. My Old Party Comrades! You know well that the victory of the year 1933 was not a gift. It was the outcome of an unparalleled struggle which we had to lead for nearly fifteen years; of a nearly hopeless struggle.
You will recall that Providence did not all of a sudden bestow a great movement upon us. A handful of people founded it. They had to laboriously fight to attain their position back then and subsequently to expand upon it. This handful of people then became hundreds; then thousands; then tens and hundreds of thousands; and finally the first million. Then they grew into a second million, later into a third and fourth million. And it was thus, in the course of a long struggle against thousand fold resistance and assaults, pillage and violation of our rights, that we grew. And we became strong through this struggle: strong internally. And it was thus we struggled for power in these fifteen years. We received it not as a gift from the Lord, but as recompense for an unequaled, tough struggle; for courageous persistence in the struggle for power.

As I took hold of this power in the year 1933 and took over responsibility, along with the National Socialist Movement, for the future of Germany, I realized that the liberty of our Volk must no longer be restricted. I further realized that our struggle had by no means come to an end, but had only begun to be led on a far larger scale. For before us we had not only the victory of the National Socialist Movement, but the delivery of our German Volk! This was our objective! What I have labored for since is but a means to an end: Party; Labor Front; SA and SS; all other organizations like the Wehrmacht, the Army, the Luftwaffe, and the Navy; all these were not ends in themselves, but means to an end...The imperative of securing the liberty of our Volk reigns above all of these.

Naturally, at home as well as abroad, I have tried to see through the most urgent, inalienable demands by means of negotiations and appeals to reason. I have succeeded in doing so only in a number of cases and instances. In 1938, the realization forced itself upon us that the old war agitators of the World War were beginning once more to get the upper hand in the hostile states. It was then already that I began to issue warnings. For what should we think of these states when they first sit down at Munich to conclude an agreement, only then to depart for London to resume agitation, to denounce this agreement as a disgrace—even to insist such a thing would not be repeated a second time—in other words, to declare a voluntary understanding precluded and inconceivable for all times.

It was then that the outsiders appeared on the stage in the so-called democracies. I immediately warned of them. For it was perfectly clear: the German Volk harbored hatred neither against the English nor the French people. The German Volk desired only to live in peace and friendship with them. The demands we make do not do injury to these peoples, they rob them of nothing.

Hence the German Volk has never been educated to harbor hatred for them. Yet at this point, in England, certain circles launched an impertinent, intolerable campaign. To me, this indicated the moment had come to say: we cannot stand by silently any longer. For one day these agitators in London might well find themselves in government and realize their plans. And then the German Volk will not know what precisely hit it. And thus I gave orders to enlighten the German Volk regarding this
campaign. And from this moment on, I also stood determined to secure the Reich’s defenses in one way or another.

In 1939, the Western Powers finally dropped their masks. Despite all our attempts and our advances, they sent us their declaration of war. And today they freely admit: “Indeed, Poland may well have given way, but we did not want it to.” Today they admit it would have been possible to arrive at an understanding. But they wanted war.

This was precisely what my domestic opponents used to tell me. I held my hand out in friendship to them. But they also refused it. And they also cried: “No reconciliation. No understanding. Only war!” Well, they got their war! And I can only say to France and England: you, too, shall have your war! The first phase in this war consisted of political action. It freed our rear first of all. For years Germany collaborated with Italy in policy formation. This policy has not changed to this day. The two states are close friends. There is a common denominator to their interests.

In the past year, I have tried to rob England of the means to allow the conflict it envisioned to escalate into a general world war. The pious Mr. Chamberlain who studies, reads, and preaches the bible, labored for months to arrive at an understanding with the atheist Stalin. He attempted to conclude a pact with him. In this he failed at the time.

I understand that England is raging now that I have done what Mr. Chamberlain in vain sought to do. And I also comprehend that what was pleasing to the Lord in Mr. Chamberlain’s case should be far less pleasing to the Lord in my case. But, nevertheless, I do believe the Lord Almighty to be well pleased that a senseless war on so vast a terrain was prevented.

Throughout centuries Germany and Russia have lived next to each other in peace and friendship. Why should this not be possible in the future once again? I believe it to be possible since both peoples so desire! Any attempt on the part of the British and French plutocracies to raise renewed controversy between us will fail as we realize their true intentions.

And thus today Germany does not have to worry about its rear politically.

The second task of the year 1939 was to secure this rear militarily as well.

The strength of our Wehrmacht trampled to the ground the hope of the English military experts that under no circumstances could the war against Poland be decided in less than six months or a year. The state to which England had extended its guarantee was swept from the map within eighteen days. Hence the first phase of this war has come to an end, and the second one begins.

Mr. Churchill is already dying to start it. He cherishes the hope, as expressed
by intermediaries as well as by his own person, that bombardment should finally, and as soon as possible, feature in this war. And already they are crying that this war should not pay heed to women and children. For when has England ever paid heed to women and children?! After all, this entire blockade warfare is nothing other than a war against women and children, just as once was the case in the Boer War. It was then that concentration camps were invented. The English brain gave birth to this idea. We only read about it in the encyclopedias and later copied it—with one crucial difference: England locked up women and children in these camps. Over twenty thousand Boer women died wretchedly at the time. Why should England fight differently today? We have anticipated this and we have prepared ourselves.

May Mr. Churchill rest assured that we do know what has happened in England within these five months and in France, too. However, he apparently does not know what has happened in Germany within these five months! Evidently these gentlemen are of the conviction that we slept through these past five months. Since the day I stepped onto the political stage, I have never yet slept through a single day of importance, not to speak of five months.

I can assure the German Volk of one thing: in these five months, we have scored enormous achievements. What was built within Germany in the previous seven years pales in comparison to the attainments of these five months! Our armament program was launched according to plan. The plan proved its worth. Our foresight is just now beginning to bear fruits. These fruits are of so impressive a nature that our adversaries are beginning to imitate us. Alas—they are poor imitators. Naturally, the English broadcast services know better. According to them, the skies above England are so darkened by British squadrons flying overhead that the sun can no longer shine there today; the world is one immense arsenal, equipped by England, working for England, supplying the massive British armies; Germany is standing on the brink of a total breakdown.

I just heard today that we possess only three more U-boats. This is truly disastrous—not for us, however, but for English propaganda, since should these three items be destroyed—and this could be as early as today or tomorrow—what will be left to be destroyed? The English will then be forced to sink U-boats preemptively which we are to build only in the future. And then somehow they will have to come to terms with a method of resurrecting U-boats. Undoubtedly, English ships will continue to be sunk and, as we possess no more U-boats, the U-boats attacking them will have to be U-boats which the English have previously sunk.

Further I read that I have succumbed to deep despair and sadness as I had expected us to build two U-boats every day, while we were turning out only two every week. To this I can only say: it is not good to have one’s war reports and especially one’s radio broadcasts authored by members of a people which has not fought for several thousands of years. For after all, the last documented battle involving the Maccabees is slowly losing its instructive value for military history.
When I turn to look at this foreign propaganda, my belief in our victory grows to the immeasurable! For this propaganda I experienced once before. For nearly fifteen years, this propaganda was directed against us. My Old Party Comrades, you remember this propaganda! There are the same words, the same phrases—yes—when we look more closely we see the same heads speaking the same dialects.

I finished off these people as a lonely, unknown man who gathered but a handful of people about him. Throughout fifteen years I finished off these people. And today Germany is the greatest world power. It is not as though age as such results in wisdom. No more are the blind restored to sight by old age. Whoever was afflicted with blindness before remains so today. Whoever is afflicted with blindness will be cursed by the gods.

Today the German Wehrmacht, the best of its kind, is fencing off these forces. Above all, the German Volk is fencing off these forces with its insight and its discipline. For seven years, National Socialist work has educated it in all areas. That this is not just a fantasy is something you can see today. This education has overcome differences of classes and ranks. It has eliminated parties, eradicated different Weltanschauungen, and has placed the community in its stead. Today the soul of this community is suffused with a singular, glowing trust and a fanatical will. This time this community will not make the mistake of 1918.

When today Monsieur Daladier expresses doubts regarding this community, or when he believes that parts of this community are lamenting their lot, or when he is quoting my own homeland—oh, Monsieur Daladier, you shall yet get to know my men of the Ostmark (Ostmarker)! They shall personally instruct you. You shall get to know their divisions and regiments just as well as the other German ones. Perhaps then you shall be cured of a peculiar form of insanity, namely, the insanity of believing you are faced by the German tribes of old.

Monsieur Daladier, you are faced by the entire German Volk today! And it is the National Socialist German Volk! This Volk for which National Socialism has so struggled and which through laborious works has received its present-day education, is immune to these international delusions. And this in fact represents a permanent cure. The National Socialist Party guarantees this.

And the hopes they entertain to drive a wedge between Volk and Party, or Party and State, or Party and Wehrmacht, or Party and me, are childishly naive.

Fifteen years ago my adversaries clung to exactly the same hopes.

As a National Socialist, I have known nothing other than work, struggle, worries, labors. I believe Providence has destined our generation for nothing else. Once, twenty-five years ago, the German Volk set out to fight a war forced upon it. The Volk was not well armed. France applied the power of its people in a fashion quite different from the Germany of the time. Russia was the mightiest adversary.
The whole world was successfully mobilized against this Germany. Thus the Volk set out to do battle and wrought many a wondrous heroic deed. And Providence was with our Volk.

The year 1914 delivered our homeland from the threat of foreign break-ins.

The year 1915 improved the situation of the Reich further still; 1916, 1917; year after year; battle after battle. At times, everything seemed on the verge of collapse when, as though by miracle, the Reich was rescued. Germany then afforded us with truly astounding proofs of its internal strength. Obviously, Providence had blessed it. Then the German Volk became ungrateful. Then it began to listen to the promises of others, instead of looking trustingly to its own strength and hence to its own future. And finally, in its ungratefulness, the German Volk turned against its own Reich, its own leadership. And it was then that Providence turned away from the German Volk.

Since then, I have come to regard this catastrophe as something not wholly undeserved. I have never complained that Providence had somehow wronged us.

On the contrary, I always supported this thesis: Providence only gave to us what we deserved in the end. The German nation was ungrateful. Therefore it was deprived of its recompense! This will not happen a second time in our history.

The National Socialist Movement has already passed through a trial period.

The fifteen years of struggle were not only days of glory, of marvelous victories.

They were a time of many a worry. At times, our enemies were already jubilantly hailing our destruction. Yet the Movement held its own with a heart filled with strength and joy. Time and time again, trusting in the necessity of our struggle, it leapt up once more to face the enemy and to carry the victory in the end.

This is the task of the German nation today. Eighty million men are stepping up to the line now. As many enemies are standing across from them.

These, our eighty million today, enjoy an excellent internal organization—the best possible in fact. They have a strong faith. Their leadership is not bad.

Rather, as I am convinced, it is the best.

Fuhrer and Volk today realize that no understanding is possible if we do not insist upon our rights. We do not wish the struggle for these rights to burst forth anew in two, perhaps three or five years. The rights of eighty million are up for discussion, not those of a party or a movement. For who am I? I am nothing other than your speaker, German Volk, the speaker for your rights! The Volk has vested its
trust in me! I will prove myself worthy of this trust.

I wish to draw attention not to my own person and my surroundings, but rather to the past and to the future. I wish to stand up in honor before the past and the future, and with me the German Volk shall honorably hold its own.

The generation of today—it is the bearer of Germany’s destiny; of Germany’s future or Germany’s fall. Our enemies, they already cry out today: Germany shall fall! Yet Germany can give but one answer: Germany will live, and hence Germany will win! At the beginning of the eighth year of the National Socialist revolution, our hearts turn to our German Volk and its future.

We want to serve this future. We want to fight for it and, if necessary, fall for it. We will never capitulate—for Germany must win and it will win.

Heil!