



Appeal to the German Nation [First version]

Germans!

Horrific things have played out before our eyes over the past years. Hitler has unconscionably sacrificed entire armies, against the advice of experts, to his thirst for glory, his conceit of power, his blasphemous and delusional idea of being an appointed and blessed tool of "providence"!

Not appointed by the German nation but come to the head of government through intrigues of the worst kind, he has sowed confusion through demonic arts and lies, through monstrous waste that appeared to bring advantages for all but in truth plunged

the German nation into huge debt. In order to stay in power, he has combined this tactic with an unbridled reign of terror, destroyed justice, declared decency outlawed, mocked the divine commandments of pure humanity, and wiped out the good fortune of millions of people.

It was a deadly certainty that his delusional contempt for all people would plunge our nation into calamity, his arrogated command-ership would lead our brave sons, fathers, husbands, and brothers to their doom, his brutal terror against the defenseless would bring shame to the German name. He has enthroned lawlessness, violation of the conscience, crimes, and corruption in our fatherland, which had always been proud of its lawfulness and integrity. Truth and truthfulness, which even the smallest nation

considers its greatest task to instill in its children, are punished and persecuted. Thus, the public realm and individual life are under threat of a deadly dose of poison.

Yet it must not go on this way! The lives and the aspirations of our men, women, and children may not be abused for this purpose any longer. We would not be worthy of our fathers, we ought to be despised by our children, if we did not have the courage to do everything, everything possible, to avert this awful threat and to regain our self-respect.

To this end, we, having examined our consciences before God, have taken over control of the state. Our brave Wehrmacht is the guarantor of safety and order. The police will fulfill their duty.

Every civil servant shall obey only the law and his conscience and exercise his office in accordance with his expertise. Every individual shall help through discipline and trust. Perform your daily work with new hope. Help one another! Your tortured souls shall be calmed and confident again.

We shall strive toward inner reconciliation far from any hate, and with dignity toward outer reconciliation. Our first task will be to cleanse the war of its degeneracies and to end the devastating destruction of human lives and cultural and economic assets behind the fronts. We all know that we are not the lords over war and peace. In firm trust in our incomparable Wehrmacht and in confident faith in the tasks entrusted by God to humankind, we intend to sacrifice everything for the defense of the fatherland and the restoration of a just and solemn order, to live once again in respect of the divine commandments, in cleanliness and truth, for honor and freedom!

[Second version]

Germans!

Hitler's reign of violence has been broken.

Horrific things have played out before our eyes over the past years. Not appointed by the German nation but come to the head of government through intrigues of the worst kind, Hitler has confused minds and souls in our nation through demonic arts and lies, through monstrous waste that appeared to bring advantages for all but in truth plunged us into debt and shortages, and created fateful deceptions even outside Germany. In order to stay in power, he has erected a reign of terror. Our nation could once be proud of its integrity and lawfulness. Yet Hitler has mocked the divine commandments, destroyed justice, outlawed decency, devastated the good fortune of millions. He has deemed honor and dignity, freedom and the life of others

worthless. Countless Germans, but also members of other nations, have been languishing for years in concentration camps, exposed to the greatest agonies and often subjected to terrible torture. Many of them have perished. Our good name has been besmirched by brutal mass murders. With bloodstained hands, Hitler wandered astray, leaving behind him tears, suffering, and misery.

With deadly certainty, his delusional contempt for all human emotions has plunged our nation into calamity, his arrogated commander's genius has led our brave soldiers to their doom.

Intoxication with power, hubris, and mania for conquest have found their ultimate expression in this war. Our soldiers' bravery and dedication have been shamefully abused, incredible sacrifices by the entire nation pointlessly wasted. Against the advice of experts, Hitler has sacrificed entire armies to his thirst for glory, his conceit of power, his blasphemous and delusional idea of being an appointed and blessed tool of providence.

We will present the evidence of the terrible betrayal of the German nation and its soul, of the total bending of the law, of the mockery of the noble position that the public interest shall take precedence over self-interest, of shameless corruption. Anyone who might still doubt these awful truths, considering it impossible as a decent human being that grandiloquent words could conceal such heinousness, will be taught by the facts.

It could not go on this way!

We would not be worthy of our fathers, we ought to be despised by our children, if we did not have the courage to do everything, everything possible, to avert this awful threat and to regain our self-respect.

Hitler has broken the oath he made ten years ago to the nation, by violating divine and human laws countless times. Thus, no soldier, no civil servant, no citizen at all is now obliged to him by his own oath.

In greatest need, I have acted together with men from all classes of the nation, from all parts of the fatherland. I have assumed provisional command of the German Reich and ordered the formation of a government under the leadership of the Reich Chancellor [name omitted; Carl Friedrich Goerdeler is meant]. It has commenced its work. Supreme command of the Wehrmacht is held by [name omitted; Erwin von Witzleben is meant], to whom the commanders in chief on all fronts have accepted subordination. These men have come together with me to avert collapse.

In this dire hour, we come before you. We are duty-bound to our responsibility before God, before our nation and its history, to the precious blood sacrifices of two world wars, to the constantly growing poverty in the homeland, the misery of the other nations too, to concern about the future of the youth.

The government's principles and goals will be announced. They are obligatory until there is a possibility to allow the German nation to decide on them. Our goal is the true community of the nation, founded on respect, willingness to help, and social justice. We wish to put the fear of God in place of self-deification, justice and freedom in place of violence and terror, truth and cleanliness in place of lies and self-interest. We wish to restore our honor and thereby our esteem within the community of nations. We wish to devote our best energies to healing the wounds that this war has inflicted upon all nations, and to reviving the trust between them anew.

The guilty parties who have defiled our nation's good reputation and brought so much calamity over us and other nations shall be punished.

We wish to put an end to the hopelessness that this war will go on forever. We strive for a just peace, which will replace the self-mutilation and destruction of the nations with peaceful cooperation. Such a peace can only be founded on respect for freedom and the equal rights of all nations.

I call upon all decent Germans, men and women of all tribes and classes; I call upon the German youth. I am counting on the joyful cooperation of the Christian churches.

Have courage and trust! The task is incredibly difficult. I cannot and will not make any empty promises. We will have to wrestle through hard work to make slow progress forward and upward once again. Yet we will walk this path in decency as free people and find the peace of a clear conscience again.

Let every one of you fulfill his duty! Let every one of you help to save the fatherland!