



A historically significant step has been taken!

On July 12 and 13 of this year, a conference was held in Moscow of German officers and soldiers in prisoner-of-war camps, together with men of German public life, labor union leaders, and members of the Reichstag.

The representatives of all classes of our German nation resolved to found the National Committee "Free Germany" and to address the German Wehrmacht and the German nation with the following manifesto.

Manifesto of the National Committee "Free Germany" to the Wehrmacht and to the German nation

The events demand that we Germans make an immediate decision.

In this hour of greatest danger for Germany's existence and future, the National Committee "Free Germany" has been founded.

The National Committee consists of: workers and writers, soldiers and officers, labor unionists and politicians, people of all political and ideological tendencies who only a year ago would not have thought such a union possible.

The National Committee expresses the thoughts and will of millions of Germans on the frontlines and in the home country, for whom the fate of their fatherland weighs upon their hearts.

The National Committee regards itself as justified and obliged, at this fateful hour, to speak clearly and bluntly in the name of the German people, as the situation demands it.

Hitler is leading Germany to its demise.

On the fronts:

The defeats of the past seven months are without precedent in German history: Stalingrad, Don, Caucasus, Libya, Tunis. Hitler alone bears responsibility for these defeats. He still heads the Wehrmacht and the Reich. Scattered across thousands of kilometers of frontlines, the German armies are far away from their homeland, reliant on allies whose battle skills and reliability were questionable to begin with, exposed to the powerful blows of a coalition that grows stronger from week to week. The armies of England and America are at the gates of Europe. Germany will soon have to fight on all sides at the same time. The weakened German Wehrmacht, surrounded ever more closely by overpowering opponents, will not and cannot hold out in the long term. The day of collapse is approaching!

In the homeland:

Germany itself has now become a theater of war. Cities, industrial centers, and shipyards are being destroyed at a growing rate. Our mothers, wives, and children are losing their homes and possessions. The free farmers have been robbed of their rights. The total mobilization is ruining the tradesmen and traders and stealing the working people's last healthy forces.

For years, Hitler prepared this war of conquest without asking what the people wanted. Hitler has isolated Germany politically. He unscrupulously challenged the three greatest powers in the world and united them in an unrelenting battle against Hitler's rule. He made all of Europe the enemy of the German nation and sullied its honor. He is thus responsible for the hate that envelops Germany today.

No external enemy has ever plunged Germany so deeply into misery as Hitler has done.

The facts prove: the war is lost. Germany can extend it only at the cost of immeasurable sacrifices and deprivations. The continuation of the hopeless war would mean the end of the nation.

But Germany must not die! It is now a question of the existence or non-existence of our fatherland.

If the German nation continues to allow itself to be led submissively and unresistingly to its demise, then every day of the war will make it not only weaker, more powerless, but also more guilty. Then Hitler will be brought down only by the coalition's arms. That would mean the end of our national freedom and our state; that would mean the fragmenting of our fatherland. And then we could raise a charge against no one but ourselves.

If the German nation plucks up courage in time, however, and proves through its deeds that it wishes to be a free nation and is determined to liberate Germany from Hitler, it will win the right to determine its future fate for itself and to be heard in the world. This is the only way to rescue the existence, the freedom, and the honor of the German nation.

The German people need and want peace without delay.

Yet no one will make peace with Hitler. No one will even negotiate with him. Thus, the formation of a truly German government is the most urgent task for our people. Only such a government will enjoy the trust of the people and its former opponents. Only it can bring peace.

Such a government must be strong and possess the necessary means of power to render harmless the nation's enemies, Hitler and his patrons and protégés, to do away ruthlessly with terror and corruption, to create a stable order, and to represent Germany worthily to the rest of the world. It can emerge only from the struggle for freedom of all classes of the people, underpinned by combat groups that come together to topple Hitler. The forces in the army that are loyal to the people and the fatherland must play a decisive role in this process.

Such a government must break off the war immediately, withdraw the German troops to the Reich borders, and initiate peace negotiations, forfeiting all conquered territories. In this way, it will achieve peace and lead Germany back into the community of equal nations. Only this government can give the German nation a chance to announce its national will freely in peace and to create its state structure autonomously.

The objective is: Free Germany.

This means:

A strong democratic state power, which has nothing in common with the powerlessness of the Weimar regime, a democracy that ruthlessly stifles every attempt at reviving conspiracies against the people's rights to freedom or against peace in Europe.

Complete abolition of all laws based on national or racist hate, of all institutions of the Hitler regime that dishonor our nation, abolition of all coercive laws of the Hitler era aimed against freedom and human dignity.

Reinstallation and expansion of the political rights and social achievements of the working population, freedom of speech, the press, of organization, conscience, and religion.

Freedom of the economy, trade, and industry. Securing of the right to work and to legally obtained property, return of the possessions stolen by the National Socialist authorities to their owners, confiscation of the assets of those guilty of causing and profiting from the war, exchange of goods with other countries as a healthy basis for secure national prosperity.

Immediate liberation and compensation of all victims of the Hitler regime.

Just, unsparing judgment of the war criminals, the leaders, their backers and helpers, who plunged Germany into decline, into guilt and shame, though with an amnesty for all of Hitler's supporters who have renounced Hitler in time through their deeds and who join the movement for a free Germany.

Onwards, Germans, into battle for a free Germany!

We know sacrifices are unavoidable. But they will be all the less, the more determinedly the battle against Hitler is waged. The sacrifices in the struggle for Germany's liberation will be a thousand times less than the pointless sacrifices demanded by continuing the war.

German soldiers and officers on all fronts!

You have the weapons! Stay with the weapons! Break your way courageously through to the homeland, to peace, under responsible leaders who are at one with you in the fight against Hitler.

Working men and women in the homeland!

You are the majority! Make that majority into a powerful force by means of organization! Form combat groups in the workplace, in the village, in the labor camp, at the universities, everywhere where you come together! Do not pay allegiance to Hitler any longer! Do not let yourselves be abused to help prolong the war. Fight with all means, each in his own way, in his place in the social life of the state and the economy!

We have a great role model in our history. A hundred and thirty years ago, when German troops were still on Russian ground as enemies, the best Germans, vom Stein, Arndt, Clausewitz, Yorck, and others, sent an address from Russia to the conscience of the German people, above the heads of the treacherous authorities, and called upon the nation to fight for freedom. Like them, we will stake all of our strength and our lives to undertake everything that benefits our nation's struggle for freedom and that accelerates Hitler's fall.

The struggle for a free Germany calls for courage, vigor, and determination. Above all, courage. Time is short. Quick action is essential. Those who continue to stand by Hitler, out of fear, faint-heartedness, or blind obedience, act in a cowardly manner and help to drive Germany into national disaster. Those, however, who value the imperative of the nation more highly than the command of the "Führer" and who risk their life and honor for their people, act courageously and help to rescue the fatherland from its deepest disgrace.

For the people and the fatherland!
Against Hitler and his war!

For immediate peace!
For the rescue of the German people!
For a free, independent Germany!

National Committee "Free Germany"

[List of 33 signatures]

Karl Hetz, Major, Staff 371st I. D., engineer, Königsberg
Heinrich Homann, Major, 100th Jäg. Div., professional soldier, Hamburg
Herbert Stößlein, Major, 44th I. D., engineer, Enns/Obd.
Carl Fleischer, Captain, 100th Jäg. Div., economist, Straubing
Dr. Ernst Hadermann, Captain, A. R. 152, secondary school teacher, Kassel
Eberhard Charisius, First Lieutenant, II/K. G. 55, professional soldier, Düsseldorf
Friedrich Reyher, First Lieutenant, 1st Pi. 88, professional soldier, Dresden
Fritz Rücker, First Lieutenant, 1st/Sich. Batl. 343, senior secondary school teacher, Berlin

Heinrich Graf von Einsiedel, Second Lieutenant, III Jagdgeschwader "Udet" No. 3, professional soldier, Berlin

Ernst Kehler, Second Lieutenant, 4th/K. N. A. 428, postal inspector, Pillau

Bernt v. Kugelgen, Second Lieutenant, I. R. 418, 123rd I. D., publisher, Berlin

Max Emendörfer, Private, I. R. 2, 11th I. D., shoe worker, Frankfurt am Main

Jakob Eschborn, Private, 4th/I. R. 212, student of theology, Heidesheim a/Rh.

Reinhold Fleschhut, Private, I. R. 276, 94th I. D., managing director of textiles factories, Plauen

Heinz Keßler, Private, 134th I. D., machine fitter, Chemnitz

Matthäus Klein, Non-Commissioned Officer, 8th/I. R. 485, Protestant pastor, Bettingen i. Baden

Erich Kühn, Private, 5th K., I. R. 368, 281st I. D., worker, Berlin

Fritz Luddeneit, Private First Class, 6th/A. R. 293, forest worker, East Prussia

Otto Sinz, Private First Class, 7th/I. R. 698, construction worker, Lörrach

Hans Zippel, Private, Staff III/I. R. 178, clerk, Berlin

Leonhard Helmschrott, Private, 5th/I. R. 487, 267th I. D., farmer, Unterkührheim

Anton Ackermann, labor union leader, Chemnitz

Martha Arendsee, member of the Reichstag, Berlin

Johannes R. Becher, writer, Munich

Willi Bredel, writer, Hamburg

Wilhelm Florin, member of the Reichstag, Ruhrgebiet

Edwin Hoernle, member of the Reichstag, Stuttgart

Hans Mahle, youth leader, Hamburg

Wilhelm Pieck, member of the Reichstag, Berlin

Gustav Sobottka, mining workers leader and member of the Landtag, Ruhrgebiet

Walter Ulbricht, member of the Reichstag, Berlin

Erich Weinert, writer, Berlin

Friedrich Wolf, doctor and writer, Stuttgart

