



Volume 7. Nazi Germany, 1933-1945

Protocol of Hitler's Speech to *Gauleiters* on the Role of the NSDAP (February 2, 1934)

In early 1934, it was evident that some party groups shared the SA's view that a second National Socialist revolution was necessary. But before "Operation Hummingbird" succeeded in obliterating all such hopes, Hitler tried to defuse the situation temporarily by demanding absolute obedience from the party and its full subordination to the state. For example, in this speech to *Gauleiters* [supreme regional party leaders] from February 2, 1934, he instructed them to view the mobilization of the population behind the National Socialist cause as the main task of the NSDAP, since support for this action equaled support for the orderly functions of the state and government.

Meeting of *Gauleiters* on February 2, 1934, in Berlin

The Führer stressed:

The most essential tasks of the Party were:

1. to make the people receptive for the measures intended by the Government;
2. to help to carry out the measures which have been ordered by the Government in the nation at large;
3. to support the Government in every way.

Furthermore, the Führer stressed that those people who maintained that the revolution was not finished were fools; they did this only with the intention of getting particular jobs for themselves. The Führer described what difficulty he had had in filling all the posts with the right people and went on to say that we had people in the movement whose conception of revolution was nothing but a permanent state of chaos. But we needed an administrative apparatus in every sphere which would enable us to realize National Socialist ideas at once. And to achieve this, the principle must remain valid that more orders must not be given, and more plans must not be discussed, than the apparatus could digest; there must be no orders and plans beyond what could be put across to the people and actually carried into effect. The question of the amalgamation of Party and State was of fundamental importance; upon it Germany's future essentially depended.

The Führer described our main immediate task as the selection of people who were on the one hand able, and on the other hand willing, to carry out the Government's measures with blind obedience. The Party must bring about the stability on which Germany's whole future depended. It must secure this stability; this could not be done by some monarchy or other. The first Führer has been chosen by fate; the second must have right from the start a faithful, sworn community behind him. Nobody with his own power base must be chosen! What is vital is that he should have everyone completely behind him from the outset. This fact must be well known, and it will then be clear that there is no point in trying to assassinate him.

Apart from this: Only one person at a time can be Führer; who it is, is not so important; the important thing is that everybody should back up the second and all subsequent leaders. An organization with such inner solidity and strength will last for ever; nothing can overthrow it. The sense of community within the movement must be inconceivably intense. We must have no fighting among ourselves; no differences must be visible to outsiders! The people cannot trust us blindly if we ourselves destroy this trust. If we destroy other people's trust in us, we destroy our own trust in ourselves.

Even the consequences of wrong decisions must be mitigated by absolute unity. One authority must never be played off against another. There must be only *one* view, that of the movement.

To work against someone in an official position, who embodies part of this authority, is to destroy all authority and trust completely.

There must therefore be no superfluous discussions! Problems not yet decided by individual officials must under no circumstances be discussed in public. Otherwise, this will mean passing the decision on to the mass of the people. That was the crazy idea behind democracy. By doing that, the value of any leadership is squandered. The man who has to make the decisions must make them himself and everyone else must back him up. The authority of even the most junior leader is the sum of the authority of all leaders and vice versa.

Apart from this we must carry on only one fight at a time. The saying, 'Many enemies, much honor' should really run: 'Many enemies, much stupidity'. In any case, the whole nation cannot engage in twelve campaigns at the same time and understand what is involved. For this reason, we must always instill the whole nation with only one idea, concentrate its attention on *one* idea.

In questions of foreign policy it is particularly necessary to have the whole nation behind one as if hypnotized. The whole nation must be involved in the struggle as if they were passionate participants in a sports contest. This is necessary because, if the whole nation takes part in the struggle, they also will be losers. If they are not involved, only the leadership loses. In the one case the wrath of the nation will rise against the opponent, in the other against their leaders.

Source of English translation: Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Nazism, 1919-1945, Vol. 2: State, Economy and Society 1933-1939*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000, pp. 40-42.

Source of original German text: Gauleiter-Tagung am 2.2.1934 in Berlin, in Hans-Adolf Jacobsen and Werner Jochmann, eds., *Ausgewählte Dokumente zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus, 1933-1945*. Vol. 2, Bielefeld, 1961, no page (Dokument 2. II. 1934).