

Background: Goebbels gave a speech every year on the eve of Hitler's birthday. His 50th birthday in 1939 was celebrated in grand style. Good treatments of the development of the Hitler myth are provided by [Bramsted and Kershaw](#).

The source: *Die Zeit Ohne Beispiel* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1941).

Our Hitler

Goebbels' 1939 Speech on Hitler's 50th Birthday

In an unsettled and confused world, Germany tomorrow celebrates a national holiday in the truest sense of the word. It is a holiday for the entire nation. The German people celebrate the day entirely as a matter of the heart, not of the understanding.

Tomorrow the Führer finishes his fiftieth year. The entire German nation takes pride in this day, a pride in which those peoples who are friendly with us also take deep and hearty part. Even those who are neutral or oppose us cannot ignore the strong impact of the events. Adolf Hitler's name is a political program for the entire world. He is almost a legend. His name is a dividing line. No one on earth can remain indifferent to his name. For some, he represents hope, faith, and the future, for others he is an exemplar of confused hatred, base lies, and cowardly slander.

The highest that a person can achieve is to give his name to an historical era, to stamp his personality indelibly on his age. Certainly the Führer has done that. One cannot imagine today's world without him.

Treitschke once said that men make history. If this is true, when more so than in our era? He has shown his simplicity and depth in the most wonderful way. Adolf Hitler has influenced not only the historical development of his country, but one can say without fear of exaggeration that he has given all of European history a new direction, that he is the towering guarantee of a new order for Europe.

Our part of the world looks vastly different today that it would without him, not to mention his impact on our own people and nation. He has given the German nation an entirely new face through revolutionary internal transformations.

Someone who saw Germany for the last time in 1918 would scarcely recognize it today. The people and nation are entirely different. What seemed like a miracle only a short while ago is self-evident today.

About a year ago, the Führer solved the problem of joining Austria to the Reich. The whole people celebrated his 49th birthday then. 7 1/2 million Germans had returned to the Reich. A Central European problem one almost believed to be unsolvable was miraculously solved.

On the eve of his 50th birthday, we can happily see that once again the map of Europe has changed in the Reich's favor, and — unique in world history — this change has occurred without bloodshed. It came as the result of a clear desire to establish peace in an area of Europe in which the contradictions were so severe that there was danger that they sooner or later would cause a general European conflagration.

This new peace in the threatened areas is not a peace of tired, moralistic theories that are endangered as often as the false bourgeois democrats praise them. It is much more a peace that is built on practical

realities

Such a peace could be built only on the foundations of a higher, instinctive understanding growing from the knowledge that only strength gives a people the opportunity to finally resolve problems.

Successful policies require both imagination and reality. Imagination as such is constructive. It alone provides the strength for powerful, flexible historical conceptions. Realism on the other hands brings the ideas of political fantasy in agreement with hard reality.

The Führer possesses both characteristics in a unique harmony seldom seen in history. Imagination and reality join in him to determine the goals and methods of political policy. His contemporaries are constantly astonished and amazed by seeing how he brilliantly brings goals and methods together to influence history. He has no stubborn ideas, no tired tactical doctrines, to dim his vision and reduce his political imagination. His inflexible principles are joined with changing and flexible political methods that have lead to the greatest and most unexpected successes for Germany.

That is nothing new for us old National Socialists. We learned to admire the Führer's political abilities in the earliest phases of our party's hard struggle for power in the Reich. They were demonstrated in many small and apparently unimportant ways at the time, though they were then for us and the movement as important as the goals and problems of today.

Then too there were doubters who failed to see the greatness and brilliance of the Führer's decisions during the struggle for power. They favored the false wisdom that Clausewitz discussed: they wanted nothing but to escape danger. We are therefore not surprised or anxious to see the same or similar happenings in internal German politics that we earlier saw in the National Socialist movement.

The only thing that has changed over the years is the scale of the Führer's actions; his methods and goals have remained the same. Back then we saw in him the political instincts of a truly historic genius, able to understand problems and find the simplest and clearest solution to them from his own greatness and certainty. That is why we were then his most loyal and obedient servants of this man and his work, entirely aside from the human element.

So what we see today is nothing new for us old National Socialists. We therefore have no doubt of the outcome of Germany's current battle for its national existence. Our whole people has the same instinctive feelings, which are the cause of the blind and unshakable confidence it places in the Führer.

The man in the street is usually not in a position to understand the entire political situation. He lacks the practice, the experience and above all the background necessary to form a clear and certain judgment. It is therefore entirely understandable why he dislikes theories and programs, and prefers to place his firm and confident faith in a personality.

A nation inclines to doctrines only when it is poor in personalities. But when a man of historic greatness stands at its head, one who not only wants to lead but is able to do so, the people will follow him with its whole heart, giving him its willing and obedient allegiance. Even more, it will put all of its love and their blind confidence behind him and his work.

A nation is willing to sacrifice when it knows what it is sacrificing for and why it is necessary. That is true in Germany today. None of the numerous slogans that the broad masses of our people heard in the years after 1918 has had such powerful effect on the entire nation as the phrase "One People, one Reich, one Führer!"

The first two phrases were heard for the first time in 1937 at a singing festival in Breslau. The Führer stood high on the platform against the gathering darkness. Hundreds of thousands of people had gathered from every corner of the nation and from everywhere in Europe where Germans dwell to hear him speak. Suddenly, from the corner of this army of hundreds of thousands where the Austrians stood

came the call "One people, one Reich." It gripped and fascinated the whole crowd, and for the first time gave concise but clear expression to a program.

A year later we saw the Führer on a hot Sunday afternoon standing on the platform at the Schloßplatz in Breslau once again. German gymnasts performed before him. As the racial comrades from the Sudetenland passed before him, without command or order, they suddenly formed a wall before him. These people who had come from the Sudetenland to Breslau only to see his face, refused to move. Weeping women seized his hand. One could not understand what they were trying to say, since tears drowned their voices.

Once again, it was only a few months before the problem they had brought to the Führer was solved.

The Greater German Reich, in the truest sense of the word, has now become a reality. Even more, the Führer has given his peace to Central Europe. It is clear that this is not to the pleasure of those democratic envious of the National Socialist Reich. Through the Treaty of Versailles they had build a ring of trouble spots around Germany that they could use to keep the Reich in constant difficulties.

A man has come from the broad masses of the German people who removed these trouble spots with the firmest measures. Democracy sees its hopes vanishing. That explains their rage and moralistic disappointments. Their hypocritical prayers came too late. The enemies of the Reich are at the end of their rope. They look ridiculous, and cannot understand why.

We greet their hysterical cries with sovereign contempt, a sovereign contempt shared by the entire German people. The German people know that the Führer has restored it to its rightful position in the world. The Reich stands in the shadow of the German sword. Germany's economy, culture and popular life are blooming under a security guaranteed by the army. The nation, once sunk into impotence, has risen to new greatness.

We remember all of this as we begin to celebrate the 50th birthday of the man whom we thank for our nation's might and our people's greatness. No German at home or anywhere else in the world can fail to take the deepest and heartiest pleasure in participation. It is a holiday of the nation, and we want to celebrate it as such.

A people fighting for its fate must now and again stop in the midst of the tumult of events to remind itself of its situation, methods and goals. Today is such a time. The nation puts on its best clothing and stands before its Führer united in loyalty and brotherhood, to bring him their heartiest best wishes on his 50th birthday. These are the wishes of all Germans in the Reich, as well as those in every other nation and continent. Germans throughout the world join with us who have the good fortune to live in the Reich in these warm and thankful wishes. To this choir of a hundred million are joined the voices of all those peoples want true peace and order in Europe, who love its history and its culture.

As we begin to celebrate the Führer's 50th birthday in this festive hour as a great national community, we join in a fervent prayer to Almighty God that he graciously preserve in the future his life and work. May he grant the German people's deepest wish and keep the Führer in health and strength for many more years and decades. Then we will not need to fear for the future of the Reich. The fate of the German nation rests in a strong and sure hand.

We, the Führer's oldest followers and fellow fighters join together at this festive hour with the hearty wish that we have always had on the birthday of this man: May he remain for us what he is and always was:

Our Hitler!

