



Fate—I Believe!

Robert Ley



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Head of the German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront) from 1933-1945



We have accomplished enormous things in the over three years that we have been in power. I do not believe this evening would be long enough to list all the great successes that we have had. Two facts stand out: The German today has become an entirely different person! Whether worker, craftsman, farmer or member of the middle class, we are all entirely new people! There are a few holdovers from past times, there always have to be museum pieces, after all. They will gradually die out. The broad, large and great mass of our people has changed thoroughly. They have been transformed.

Look at the workers! Look with me into Germany's factories. I might remind some in this room what they thought three years ago, not only about their party or the government, but of their whole view of life, their views of labor, the fatherland, their people, their community, or about socialism — all these things that have always concerned humanity. They will have to agree that they are of entirely different opinions today.

Germany has been born anew. The Führer said at the last party rally, as he always says, that for him the greatest miracle of the age is how people have changed. Once there was hopelessness, today there is joy and affirmation, once there was general desperation, today there is resurrection and reawakening. Once each was the enemy of his neighbor. Envy, mistrust, and hatred were everywhere; today, everyone tries to do something good for the next person, even if sometimes with too much energy and enthusiasm. Each wants to be a good comrade, loyal, friendly.

I have said this in other speeches, too: It is not that we have no more worries, that everyone is happy, and that people have no more troubles or problems. No, we still face enormous problems, and will continue to face them. The sacrifices demanded of some may be even greater than before. The work required of some is certainly greater than it was before.

We are not living in a paradise where no one has any problems or anything to do any longer, where there are no hurdles, weariness or burdens. The opposite is true. Those things are even greater than before, yet people once again take pleasure in life, in their community, and in what a people can accomplish.

Germans today sacrifice gladly, and rejoice in it. We have only now understood the meaning of struggle, and therefore of life. This people has become a different people. That fills us with joy. It gives us an attitude toward life, and a joy in life.

My fellow Germans! The second miracle: This people have received leadership! You may not understand me, you may ask: Did not the people always have leadership? Certainly there have always been states and forms of government, and types of societies and types of economies. However, a true people's leadership is wholly new. Our people lacked it in the past two thousand years. Our people did establish governments, and had Kaisers, kings, counts, republics, and other forms of government. Our people had every sort of economic system. Occupations, classes and such came and went. But a popular leadership, the feeling of the individual that someone cares for me, is personally concerned about me, that is unique. The feeling of the individual, whether high or low, that other people are responsible for them, that their problems are the problems of the leadership, this is unique.

That is why we love Adolf Hitler so much. The German worker has the feeling that this man, our Führer, works on his problems day and night! This type of popular leadership is unique. We demand such leadership. We will not surrender it, we will not share it with anyone.

The German nation and its soul belong to Adolf Hitler and his party.

When one makes a total claim on the soul of a nation, it is not enough to preach. One must also understand organization. It is important to build an organization that includes everyone. A sure instinct on the part of the leadership is necessary. That is why these millions of men, the block leaders and block wardens, the cell leaders and cell wardens, the local group leaders and all the others in the local groups, come from the broadest range of the population. Instinct is most important. The men must be able to sense what the people want, what moves their souls. They must feel the resonance, they must find the right words to reach the soul of the nation. The relationship is reciprocal, and it is not to be found through reason, only through instinct. Earlier leaders did not understand this at all. Once people laughed at us and said: "What do these Nazis want? They speak of instinct, of racial instinct. These are outdated ideas. The understanding is the important thing. Knowledge is all, one must study at the universities." No, my friend, one can't study it! It is a question of race, of blood, of inheritance. Either you feel your people, or you do not. Either fate was kind enough to give you this instinct, or not. All the learning in the world cannot replace instinct. If you do not have it, you are lost to our people. The most important thing for the leadership is not to lose that instinct. Earlier leaderships believed they could replace instinct with brainwashing! No, my friend, if one wants to lead a people and has the honor to do so, one must always be careful to follow one's instincts. It is necessary to constantly return to the people. There is only one place to sharpen instinct: the people. A leader who loses his connection to his people soon loses the ability to lead them.

When fate has given someone sound instincts, it usually gives the necessary understanding to combine in a way that leads to good sense. The combination of instinct and understanding is good sense. If I have good sense and act reasonably, the people will love me, it will look to you and me. If you add to that strength and manliness and assurance, then you are prepared for any crisis. Let us not deceive ourselves! Fate will not lead us

through a rose garden. There will be hard times. Our upward path is steep and hard. The past has made us hard. That is why the people love us.

The people understand our language. It may be new, but they understand it. It came from the heart, from the understanding. It was true. It was no lie, but the truth. It was the language the people themselves speak. Thus we can speak with powerful assurance that makes the people secure.

We are a young people. We have all the weaknesses of a child. A child wants a father to hold it. When there is thunder and lightning, the child is afraid and hurries to its father, for it wants to be safe. That is like the leadership of a people. You, block leaders, block wardens, cell leaders, cell wardens, must be that if there are storms again in Germany, you must be a refuge for the people, if sacrifices are again demanded. You must say: "Citizens, stay calm! The Führer is always right!" They may ask: "How do you know that?" You will answer: "I believe it." "And who tells you that?" "The Führer is always right. I sense it. I can prove it from the successes of the past, the things this man has done. He rose from a lowly worker and soldier to the Führer of Germany." If you persuade the people of this, that the Führer is always right, then our people's sacrifices will never be fatal, but will only make it harder, stronger and greater. If cowardice and unreasonableness have been defeated, if the people are confident, and if true popular leadership is present, the Führer will be able to do whatever he wants with the nation. He will be able to make important political decisions. The people will obey him blindly and follow him blindly. The Führer is always right. Every last citizen must say this.

The order of life will be the same. We have dissolved the unions and employers' associations. We have fought everything that divides the nation. Unfortunately, we have not been able to eliminate everything. Religious class hatred is still present. But I am convinced that this nation's desire for unity will succeed in ending this split in the nation as well, though it has existed for centuries. I am convinced of it.

A firm is a unit that we will not touch. This is holy to us. The firm must remain unified. Firm leaders and workers should organize things themselves as much as possible, They should work things out and be comrades together. We have given people's fate into their own hands. We have said: "We do not want to control your fate. No one can do that for you. We can only teach you how to master it. We can give you the weapons you need for your struggle. But no one else can wage your battle for you."

No one can stand aside from the struggle, pouting or playing the coward. Whether you are a worker or a manager, merchant or doorman or errand boy, whether you are young or old, man or woman, all who are members of a firm share a common fate. Your fate is dependent on the success of this firm.

When the firm operates well and earns money, everyone earns, and when the firm goes poorly, it does not go poorly for just one person, but for everyone. It is a living community of fate. It is so simple, so straightforward, so clear. But one has to preach the simple things over and over again. If someone tells me I say the same thing in every speech, I answer: "Yes, my friend, but the Church has preached the same thing for two thousand years. Why should not I do the same?"

People forget what is simple and reasonable and chase after phantoms. One has to tear these people away from confusion and lies, and preach to them the simple truths. If someone says to leave him in peace, I reply: "No, my friend, I will not leave you in peace. I won't even think about it. There is rot under such silence, and decay, and Marxism. As long as I have the honor to stand here and preach, I will not leave you in peace."

I always say that workers and managers belong together, and we will not leave you along whether you want us to or not, whether you like it or not. If the manager says: "It is ridiculous that I always have to participate in employee meetings, I won't do it," we reply "You must do it! Ten thousand workers are marching. The best German blood! It should be an honor for you to march at their head. If you do not want to do that, we will have to put you back in the ranks where the man behind you can tread on your heels until you do it properly. We will teach you, believe me. We will not give up." Some people say that is Marxism. My God, that has nothing to do with Marxism.

What I am preaching here is genuine German military virtue. If that is Marxism, then our army was Marxist for centuries. But it was not. No, it was the most German thing we had. I want firms to be like the army. A camaraderie forged together. That is life. It is no dead construction that is pleasant to look at, but that on closer examination is dead. No, one always takes pleasure in what is alive.

I was pleased to hear manager Bolhm speak of this joy, a joy he shares. I know that the larger part of our managers think the same way. It is a pleasure today to be a manager and to go through the factory. We are proud of it! We are proud of the German worker, but also proud of the German owner. We are proud of every German person who cheerfully joins our community.

I must also dispel the myth that it is unpleasant for a National Socialist to be an owner. People speak of materialism, of owners as materialists! Well, my friend, without material I can't live, and neither can you. We do not hold material things in contempt. There were once prophets who preached a separation between body, soul and spirit.

One cannot separate these three things. If you remove the body, nothing is left of the soul and spirit. If you remove the soul, you have a lifeless, cold being, and if you remove the spirit, you are left with a tragic idiot. These three things belong together. We do not despise materialism, but want to struggle each day with ourselves so that materialism does not

dominate us. God gave us understanding and creative souls to form and use material, to invent, to make new things and discover new things. That is wonderful. To realize these new things, however, we need material resources. To found a firm and create wealth is not contemptible. I must make that clear. What good would all our socialist desires do if there were not people to figure things out, to organize, to build a firm?

One sometimes finds those in business who tell us that business and idealism are in conflict. That is not right. The opposite. I say that a true idealist who does something truly good for humanity must have both feet on the ground, else he is a dreamer and a romantic. All his idealism has no meaning and no value. I do no one any good with it, it is false. I say that in the long run, a sound businessman can found a firm and lead it to success only when he is a true idealist. Everything else is illusion.

No, businessmen and idealists are not enemies, but in the end one and the same. No true idealist lacks good business sense, and no sound company can survive without idealism.

My friends, it is all a matter of education, of education toward community. Socialism is not given to us. Socialism is not a matter of dead points in a program, but rather socialism is justice. One may demand it because it is right, and it is right because it is good for the nation. That is right. What is good for Germany is right, and everything that harms Germany is wrong. In the last analysis socialism is not a consolation or refuge for the individual, but rather socialism asks this question: "What is good for Germany? What benefits this nation?"

As we began our fight with the Führer, we all shared one firm belief. A remarkable faith filled us all. Our hearers sensed it too. The people sensed it. We believed what we said. My German friends, the same must be true today.

Understanding sometimes is not enough to explain something. Only faith is sufficient. The Führer in Nuremberg said: "Woe to him who does not believe!" He who does not believe has no soul. He is empty. He has no ideals. He has nothing to live for. He has no sunshine, no light, no joy in life. He is a poor, poor man. What is wealth? What are possessions? What does it all mean? Problems come despite them, only faith is left. Woe to him who does not believe!

I urge you, my German people, to share this faith. The Führer has given us a new task for the next four years, a big task that will demand enormous sacrifices. We know that the Four Year Plan before us now will not be the last such plan. Things will not get easier, no, there will always be new tasks, new sacrifices to make. I believe that the size of these new sacrifices and new tasks will increase as the strength of the nation increases. We may not hope that the struggle will cease. It will continue. All the new factories will increase our strength. Each new construction project advances our nation's development. That is true socialism. Build new wealth to improve your life. That is German socialism, that is our struggle!

My friend, we walk hand and hand toward the future of our nation, toward eternity. We look back into the dim past. Generation has followed generation. We can look back on one thousand years, two, three, five, ten thousand years of our people's culture. We have Germanic structures that must be at least ten thousand years old. We suspect they might be twenty thousand years old! Generation after generation has come and gone, passing its inheritance to the next generation. The next generation in turn has fought and struggled to pass it on again. The chain of generations was nearly broken in our day. The people nearly perished. Catastrophe was only narrowly averted. It was all due to the faith of one man! Yes, you who called us godless, we found our faith in Adolf Hitler, and through him found God once again. That is the greatness of our day, that is our good fortune!

Now our people's chain of fate continues. We are becoming a link stronger than those before us. We are forging a link that includes many generations. We are laying a foundation that the next generation and the one after that will not be able to eliminate, even if they wanted to. So strong is that that we are building! Isn't that splendid? Isn't that wonderful? You, block leader and block warden, you cell leader and cell warden, you may say: "I, too, was there! I too helped." You, citizen from the firm, you can say: "I, too, lived during that time, I, too, believed in Adolf Hitler." And you, and you, and every one of you! Isn't that wonderful? That is the eternity of our nation, that is our faith, that is our socialism!

*Der Angriff* Robert Ley, "Schicksal — ich glaube!," *Wir alle helfen dem Führer* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1937), pp. 103-114

