

Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag, 1 September 1939

...If I call the Wehrmacht, if I now demand the German people to sacrifice, and if necessary, I demand to sacrifice everything, I have the right to do so. Because I am ready today, as I did in the past, to bring any personal sacrifice, I do not demand of any German man to do anything I was not prepared to do myself for four years. There should be no deprivation in Germany that I will not share. My entire life belongs from this moment on to my people. I want nothing else now than to be the first soldier of the German Reich.

I have now put on the same uniform that was once my dearest and holiest. I will only take it off after the victory, or else I will not live to see that end. Should something happen to me in this battle, my first successor will be party member Goering. Should something happen to party member Goering, the next in line will be party member Hess. You would then be bound by blind loyalty to them as Fuehrers, as you were to me. Should something happen to party member Hess, I will enact a law that the senate will then elect the worthiest, i.e. the bravest from their midst.

As National Socialist and as a German soldier I am going into this battle with a brave heart. My whole life was nothing but one continuous battle for my people, for its renewal, for Germany. This battle was always backed by the faith in this people. There is one word I have never known. It is surrender. If anybody thinks we may be heading towards difficult times, I want to ask him to remember that once a Prussian king with a minuscule state faced a big coalition and won after three battles, because he had a strong heart and faith. This is what we need today. And I want to tell the whole world: never again will there be a November 1918 in German history! Just as I am ready to sacrifice my life at any moment for my people and Germany, I demand the same from everyone. Anyone who believes he can evade this national command – whether directly or indirectly – will fall. Traitors can only expect death.

In this we all follow an old principle: It is of no consequence if we live, but it is essential that our nation will live, that Germany lives....

Source: *Into the Dark Night, Nazi Germany and the Jews 1933-1939*