

The Collapse Of Nazi Germany

Index of Speeches:

Last Broadcast to the German People	page 03
On the Crimean Conference	page 08
American Troops cross the Rhine	page 10
Announcement of President Roosevelt's Death	page 11
Liberation of Buchenwald Concentration Camp	page 12
First Speech as President of the United States	page 16
Last Address to the People of Berlin	page 20
American and Soviet Armies Meet	page 23
Announcement of Hitler's Death	page 24
Announcement of Hitler's Death	page 25
Announcement of the Fall of Berlin	page 26
Announcement of German Surrender in Holland	page 27
Announcement of German Unconditional Surrender	page 28
Announcement of German Unconditional Surrender	page 29
Official announcement of German Unconditional Surrender	page 30

Radio Address on Victory in Europe	page 32
Speech on Victory in Europe	page 34
Last Wehrmacht Report	page 37

Last Broadcast to the German People

Adolf Hitler

January 30, 1945

Deutsche Volksgenossen und Volksgenossinnen! Nationalsozialisten!

Als mich als Führer der stärksten Partei vor 12 Jahren der verewigte Reichspräsident von Hindenburg mit der Kanzlerschaft betraute, stand Deutschland im Inneren vor der gleichen Situation wie heute in weltpolitischer Hinsicht nach außen. Der durch den Versailler Vertrag planmäßig eingeleitete und fortgeführte Prozess der wirtschaftlichen Zerstörung und Vernichtung der demokratischen Republik führte zur allmählich dauerhaft gewordenen Erscheinung von fast 7 Millionen Erwerbslosen, 7 Millionen Kurzarbeitern, einem zerstörten Bauernstand, einem vernichteten Gewerbe und einer dementsprechend auch zum Erliegen gekommenen Handelswirtschaft. Die deutschen Häfen waren nur noch Schiffsfriedhöfe. Die finanzielle Lage des Reiches drohte in jedem Augenblick zum Zusammenbruch nicht nur des Staates, sondern auch der Länder und der Gemeinden zu führen. Das Entscheidende aber war folgendes: Hinter dieser wirtschaftlichen methodischen Zerstörung Deutschlands stand das Gespenst des asiatischen Bolschewismus damals genauso wie heute. Und so wie jetzt im Großen war in den Jahren vor der Machtübernahme im kleinen Inneren die bürgerliche Welt völlig unfähig, dieser Entwicklung einen wirksamen Widerstand entgegenzusetzen. Man hatte auch nach dem Zusammenbruch des Jahres 1918 immer noch nicht erkannt, dass eine alte Welt im Vergehen und eine neue im Werden ist, dass es sich nicht darum handeln kann, das, was sich als morsch und faul erwiesen hatte, mit allen Mitteln zu stützen und damit künstlich zu erhalten, sondern dass es notwendig ist, das ersichtlich Gesunde an dessen Stelle zu setzen. Eine überlebte Gesellschaftsordnung war zerbrochen, und jeder Versuch, sie aufrechtzuhalten, musste vergeblich sein. Es war also nicht anders wie heute im Großen, da ebenfalls die bürgerlichen Staaten der Vernichtung geweiht sind und nur klar ausgerichtete, weltanschaulich gefestigte Volksgemeinschaften die seit vielen Jahrhunderten schwerste Krise Europas zu überdauern vermögen. Nur sechs Jahre des Friedens sind uns seit dem 30. Januar 1933 vergönnt gewesen. In diesen sechs Jahren ist Ungeheures geleistet und noch Größeres geplant worden; so vieles und so Gewaltiges, dass es aber erst recht den Neid unserer demokratischen, nichts könnenden Umwelt erweckte.

Das Entscheidende aber war, dass es in diesen sechs Jahren gelang, mit übermenschlichen Anstrengungen den deutschen Volkskörper wehrmäßig zu sanieren, das heißt, ihn nicht in erster Linie mit einer materiellen Kriegsmacht auszustatten, sondern mit dem geistigen Widerstandswillen der Selbstbehauptung zu erfüllen.

Das grauenhafte Schicksal, das sich heute im Osten abspielt und das in Dorf und Markt, auf dem Lande und in den Städten die Menschen zu Zehn- und Hunderttausenden ausrottet, wird mit äußersten Anstrengungen von uns am Ende trotz aller Rückschläge und harten Prüfungen abgewehrt und gemeistert werden. Wenn das aber überhaupt möglich ist, dann nur, weil sich seit dem Jahre 1933 eine innere Wende im deutschen Volk vollzogen hat. Heute noch ein Deutschland des Versailler Vertrages – und Europa wäre schon längst von der innerasiatischen Sturmflut weggefegt worden. Mit jenen nie aussterbenden Strohköpfen braucht man sich dabei kaum auseinanderzusetzen, die der Meinung sind, ein wehrloses Deutschland wäre infolge seiner Ohnmacht sicher nicht zum Opfer dieser jüdisch-internationalen Weltverschwörung geworden.

Das heißt nichts anderes, als alle Naturgesetze auf den Kopf stellen. Wann wird die wehrlose Gans vom Fuchs deswegen nicht gefressen, weil sie infolge ihrer Konstitution aggressive Absichten nicht haben kann? Und wann wird der Wolf endlich Pazifist, weil die Schafe keinerlei Rüstung besitzen? Dass es, wie gesagt, so bürgerliche Schafe gibt, die das in allem Ernst glauben beweist nur, wie notwendig es war ein Zeitalter zu beseitigen, das in seiner Erziehung solche Erscheinungen zu züchten und zu halten vermochte. Ja, ihnen sogar politischen Einfluss einräumte. Längst, ehe der Nationalsozialismus zur Macht gekommen war, tobte bereits der unerbittliche Kampf gegen diesen jüdisch-asiatischen Bolschewismus. Wenn er nicht schon im Jahr 1919/20 Europa überrannte, dann nur deshalb, weil er damals selbst noch zu schwach und zu wenig gerüstet war. Sein Versuch, Polen zu beseitigen, wurde nicht aufgegeben aus Mitleid mit dem damaligen Polen, sondern nur infolge der verlorenen Schlacht vor Warschau. Seine Absicht, Ungarn zu vernichten, ist nicht unterblieben, weil man sich eines anderen besann, sondern weil die bolschewistische Gewalt militärisch nicht aufrechterhalten werden konnte. Der Versuch, Deutschland zu zertrümmern, wurde ebenfalls nicht aufgegeben, weil man etwa den Erfolg nicht mehr wünschte, sondern weil es nicht gelang, den Rest der natürlichen Widerstandskraft unseres Volkes zu beseitigen. Sofort begann das Judentum aber nunmehr mit der planmäßigen inneren Zersetzung unseres Volkes. Und es hatte dabei die besten Bundesgenossen in jenen verbohrten Bürgern, die nicht erkennen wollten, dass das Zeitalter einer bürgerlichen Welt eben beendet ist und niemals wiederkehren wird. Dass sich die Epoche des zügellosen wirtschaftlichen Liberalismus überlebt hat und nur zum eigenen Zusammenbruch führen kann. Dass man aber vor allem die großen Aufgaben der Zeit nur zu meistern vermag unter einer autoritär zusammengefassten Kraft der Nation. Ausgehend von dem Gesetz der gleichen Rechte aller und der daraus folgend, auch der gleichen Pflichten. Genauso wie umgekehrt, die Erfüllung dieser gleichen Pflichten auch zwangsläufig zu gleichen Rechten führen muss. So hat der Nationalsozialismus inmitten einer gigantischen wirtschaftlichen, sozialen, kulturellen Bautätigkeit vor allem auch Erziehungsmäßig dem deutschen Volk jene Rüstung gegeben, die überhaupt erst in militärische Werte umgesetzt werden konnte. Die Widerstandskraft unserer Nation ist seit dem 30. Januar 1933 so ungeheuer gewachsen, dass sie nicht mehr vergleichbar ist mit der früheren Zeit.

Die Aufrechterhaltung dieser inneren Widerstandskraft aber ist zugleich der sicherste Garant für den endgültigen Sieg! Wenn Europa heute von einer schweren Krankheit ergriffen ist, dann werden die davon betroffenen Staaten sie entweder unter Aufbietung ihrer ganzen und äußersten Widerstandskraft überwinden oder an ihr zugrunde gehen. Allein auch der Genesende und damit Überlebende überwindet den Höhepunkt einer solchen Krankheit nur in einer Krise, die ihn selbst auch auf das Äußerste schwächt. Es ist aber deshalb erst recht unser unabänderlicher Wille, in diesem Kampf der Errettung unseres Volkes vor dem grauenhaftesten Schicksal aller Zeiten vor nichts zurückzuschrecken und unwandelbar und treu dem Gebot der Erhaltung unserer Nation zu gehorchen. Der Allmächtige hat unser Volk geschaffen. Indem wir seine Existenz verteidigen, verteidigen wir sein Werk. Dass diese Verteidigung mit namenlosem Unglück, Leid und Schmerzen sondergleichen verbunden ist, lässt uns nur noch mehr an diesem Volk hängen. Es lässt uns aber auch jene Härte gewinnen, die notwendig ist, um auch in schlimmsten Krisenpunkten unsere Pflicht zu erfüllen; das heißt nicht nur die Pflicht dem anständigen ewigen Deutschland gegenüber, sondern auch die Pflicht gegenüber jenen wenigen Ehrlosen, die sich von ihrem Volkstum trennen. Es gibt deshalb in diesem Schicksalskampf für uns nur ein Gebot: Wer ehrenhaft kämpft, kann damit das Leben für sich und seine Lieben retten. Wer der Nation aber feige oder charakterlos in den Rücken fällt, wird unter allen Umständen eines schimpflichen Todes sterben.

Dass der Nationalsozialismus diesen Geist in unserem deutschen Volke erwecken und erhärten konnte, ist seine größte Tat. Wenn einmal nach dem Abklingen dieses gewaltigsten Weltdramas die Friedensglocken läuten werden, wird man erst erkennen, was das deutsche Volk dieser seelischen Wiedergeburt verdankt: Es ist nicht weniger als sein Dasein auf dieser Welt.

Vor wenigen Monaten und Wochen noch haben die alliierten Staatsmänner ganz offen das deutsche Schicksal gekennzeichnet. Sie wurden daraufhin von einigen Zeitungen ermahnt, klüger zu sein und lieber etwas zu versprechen, auch wenn man nicht die Absicht habe, das Versprochene später einzuhalten. Ich möchte in dieser Stunde als unerbittlicher Nationalsozialist und Kämpfer meines Volkes diesen anderen Staatsmännern einmal für immer die Versicherung abgeben, dass jeder Versuch der Einwirkung auf das nationalsozialistische Deutschland durch Phrasen Wilsonscher Prägung eine Naivität voraussetzt, die das heutige Deutschland nicht kennt.

Aber es ist überhaupt nicht entscheidend, dass in den Demokratien die politische Tätigkeit und die Lüge als unlösliche Bundesgenossen in Erscheinung treten, sondern entscheidend ist, dass jedes Versprechen, das diese Staatsmänner einem Volk abgeben, heute überhaupt völlig belanglos ist, weil sie selbst nicht mehr in der Lage sind, jemals irgendeine solche Versicherung einlösen zu können. Es ist nicht anders, als wenn ein Schaf einem anderen die Versicherung abgeben wollte, es vor einem Tiger zu beschützen. Ich wiederhole demgegenüber meine Prophezeiung: England wird nicht nur nicht in der Lage sein, den Bolschewismus zu bezähmen,

sondern seine eigene Entwicklung wird zwangsläufig mehr und mehr im Sinne dieser auflösenden Krankheit verlaufen. Die Geister, die die Demokratien aus den Steppen Asiens gerufen haben, werden sie selbst nicht mehr los. All die kleinen europäischen Nationen, die im Vertrauen auf alliierte Zusicherungen kapitulierten, gehen ihrer völligen Ausrottung entgegen. Ob sie dieses Schicksal etwas früher oder später trifft, ist - gemessen an seiner Unabwendbarkeit - völlig belanglos. Es sind ausschließlich taktische Erwägungen, die die Kremljuden bewegen, in einem Mal sofort brutal und im anderen Fall zunächst etwas zurückhaltender vorzugehen. Das Ende wird immer das gleiche sein.

Dieses Schicksal aber wird Deutschland niemals erleiden! Der Garant dafür ist der vor zwölf Jahren erfochtene Sieg im Inneren unseres Landes. Was immer auch unsere Gegner ersinnen mögen, was immer sie unseren Landschaften aber vor allem unseren Menschen an Leid zufügen, es verblasst gegenüber dem unkorrigierbaren Jammer und Unglück, das uns treffen müsste, wenn jemals die plutokratisch-bolschewistische Verschwörung Sieger bliebe. Es ist daher am 12. Jahrestag der Machtübernahme erst recht notwendig, das Herz stärker zu machen als jemals zuvor und in sich den heiligen Entschluss zu erhärten, die Waffen zu führen, ganz gleich wo und ganz gleich unter welchen Umständen - so lange, bis am Ende der Sieg unsere Anstrengungen krönt.

Ich möchte an diesem Tag aber auch über etwas anderes keinen Zweifel lassen: einer ganzen feindlichen Umwelt zum Trotz habe ich einst im Innern meinen Weg gewählt und bin ihn als Unbekannter, Namenloser gewandert bis zum endgültigen Erfolg. Oftmals totgesagt und jederzeit totgewünscht, abschließend doch als Sieger! Mein heutiges Leben wird aber ebenso ausschließlich bestimmt durch die mir obliegenden Pflichten.

Sie ergeben zusammengefasst nur eine einzige, nämlich: für mein Volk zu arbeiten und dafür zu kämpfen. Von dieser Pflicht kann mich nur der entbinden, der mich dazu berufen hat. Es lag in der Hand der Vorsehung, am 20. Juli durch die Bombe, die 1½ Meter neben mir kreperte, mich auszulöschen und damit mein Lebenswerk zu beenden. Dass mich der Allmächtige an diesem Tag beschützte, sehe ich als eine Bekräftigung des mir erteilten Auftrages an. Ich werde daher auch in den kommenden Jahren diesen Weg kompromissloser Vertretung der Interessen meines Volkes weiterwandeln, unbeirrt um jede Not und jede Gefahr und durchdrungen von der heiligen Überzeugung, dass am Ende der Allmächtige den nicht verlassen wird, der in seinem ganzen Leben nichts anderes wollte, als sein Volk vor einem Schicksal zu retten, das es weder seiner Zahl noch gar seiner Bedeutung nach jemals verdient hat.

Ich appelliere in dieser Stunde deshalb an das ganze deutsche Volk, an der Spitze aber an meine alten Mitkämpfer und an alle Soldaten, sich mit einem noch größeren härteren Geist des Widerstandes zu wappnen, bis wir - wieder wie schon einmal -

den Toten dieses gewaltigen Ringens den Kranz mit der Schleife auf das Grab legen dürfen: "Und ihr habt doch gesiegt!"

Ich erwarte von jedem Deutschen, dass er deshalb seine Pflicht bis zum Äußersten erfüllt, dass er jedes Opfer, das von ihm gefordert wird und werden muss, auf sich nimmt, ich erwarte von jedem Gesunden, dass er sich mit Leib und Leben einsetzt im Kampf, ich erwarte von jedem Kranken und Gebrechlichen oder sonst Unentbehrlichen, dass er bis zum Aufgebot seiner letzten Kraft arbeitet; ich erwarte von den Bewohnern der Städte, dass sie die Waffen schmieden für diesen Kampf, und ich erwarte vom Bauern, dass er unter höchstmöglicher eigener Einschränkung das Brot gibt für die Soldaten und Arbeiter dieses Kampfes. Ich erwarte von allen Frauen und Mädchen, dass sie diesen Kampf – so wie bisher – mit äußerstem Fanatismus unterstützen. Ich wende mich mit besonderem Vertrauen dabei an die deutsche Jugend.

Indem wir eine so verschworene Gemeinschaft bilden, können wir mit Recht vor den Allmächtigen treten und ihn um seine Gnade und seinen Segen bitten. Denn mehr kann ein Volk nicht tun, als dass jeder, der kämpfen kann, kämpft, und jeder, der arbeiten kann, arbeitet, und alle gemeinsam opfern, nur von dem einen Gedanken erfüllt, die Freiheit, die nationale Ehre und damit die Zukunft des Lebens sicherzustellen.

Wie schwer auch die Krise im Augenblick sein mag, sie wird durch unseren unabänderlichen Willen, durch unsere Opferbereitschaft und durch unsere Fähigkeiten am Ende trotz alle dem gemeistert werden. Wir werden auch diese Not überstehen. Es wird auch in diesem Kampf nicht Innerasien siegen, sondern Europa – und an der Spitze jene Nation, die seit eineinhalbtausend Jahren Europa als Vormacht gegen den Osten vertreten hat und in alle Zukunft vertreten wird: Unser Großdeutsches Reich, die deutsche Nation!

On the Crimean Conference

February 12, 1945

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

I come from the Crimean Conference with a firm belief that we have made a good start on the road to a world of peace.

There were two main purposes in this Crimean Conference. The first was to bring defeat to Germany with the greatest possible speed and with the smallest possible loss of Allied men. That purpose is now being carried out in great force. The German army, and the German people, are feeling the ever increasing might of our fighting men and of the Allied armies and every hour gives us added pride in the heroic advance of our troops in Germany, on German soil, toward a meeting with the gallant Red Army.

The second purpose was to continue to build the foundation for an international accord which would bring order and security after the chaos of the war and would give some assurance of lasting peace among the nations of the world. In that goal, toward that goal, a tremendous stride was made.

After Teheran, a little over a year ago, there were long-range military plans laid by the chiefs of staff of the three most powerful nations. Among the civilian leaders at Teheran, however, at that time, there were only exchanges of views and expressions of opinion. No political arrangements were made and none was attempted.

At the Crimean Conference, however, the time had come for getting down to specific cases in the political field. There was on all sides at this conference an enthusiastic effort to reach an agreement. Since the time of Teheran, a year ago, there had developed among all of us a — what shall I call it — a greater facility in negotiating with each other, which augurs well for the peace of the world. We know each other better.

I have never for an instant — wavered in my belief that an agreement to insure world peace and security can be reached. There are a number of things that we did at the conference that was definite. For instance, the lapse of time between Teheran and Yalta without conferences of civilian representatives of the three major powers have proved to be too long — fourteen months. During this long period local

problems were permitted to become acute in places like Poland and Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia.

Therefore we decided at Yalta that, even if circumstances made it impossible for the heads of the three Governments to do it, to meet more often in the future, and to make that sure by arranging that there would be frequent personal contacts between the Secretaries of State of these three powers.

American Troops Cross the Rhine

Ian Wilson on BBC

March 08, 1945

Hello BBC, this is Ian Wilson speaking from Supreme Headquarters. The Americans are over the Rhine. Supreme Headquarters announced a few minutes ago that General Hodgin's 1st United States Army has crossed the Rhine. Elements reached the Rhine and crossed to establish a bridgehead on the East bank somewhere south of Cologne.

Announcement of President Roosevelt Death

Fulton Noyce on MBS

April 12, 1945

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. This is Fulton Noyce Junior speaking from the Mutual Studios in New York City.

This nation has suffered this day a staggering loss. At this moment in Warm Springs, Georgia, President Franklin D. Roosevelt lies with the problems of the nation finally lifted from his shoulders, stricken late this afternoon with cerebral hemorrhage. He passed away before his physicians could be of any assistance – if assistance in such a case is possible at all.

Vice president Harry Truman, who from hereon will be president Truman, went immediately to the White House. A special Cabinet meeting was called and we should know more about what is going to happen in Washington as the evening goes on.

But Franklin D. Roosevelt, the first president to be elected for four terms in the White House, has passed away. And that is the overshadowing of all news events that have happened or can happen for quite a while.

Liberation of Buchenwald Concentration Camp

Edward Murrow

April 16, 1945

Permit me to tell you what you would have seen, and heard, had you been with me on Thursday. It will not be pleasant listening. If you are at lunch, or if you have no appetite to hear what Germans have done, now it is time to switch off the radio for I propose to tell you of Buchenwald. It is on a small hill about four miles outside Weimar, and it was one of the largest concentration camps in Germany, and it was built to last. As we approached it we saw about a hundred men in civilian clothes with rifles, but dancing in open order across the fields. There were a few shots. We stopped to enquire. We were told that some of the prisoners had a couple of SS men cornered in there. We drove on, reached the main gate. The prisoners crowded up behind the wire. We entered. And now let me tell this in the first person for I was the least important person there as you shall hear. There surged around me an evil smelling of horrors. Men and boys reached out to touch me. They were in rags and the remnants of uniforms. Death had already marked many of them, but they were smiling with their eyes. I looked out over that mass of men to the green fields beyond where well-fed Germans were plowing. A German, Fritz Gersheimer, came up and said: "May I show you around the camp? I've been here ten years". An Englishman stood to attention saying: "May I introduce myself? Delighted to see you. And can you tell me when some of our blokes will be along?". I told him: "Soon", and asked to see one of the barracks. It happened to be occupied by Czechoslovakians. When I entered men crowded around, tried to lift me to their shoulders. They were too weak. Many of them could not get out of bed. I was told that this building had once stabled eighty horses. There were twelve hundred men in it, five to a bunk. The stink was beyond all description. When I reached the center of the barracks a man came up and said: "You remember me. I'm Pieter Zinko, onetime mayor of Prague". I remembered him, but did not recognize him. He asked about Benish and Jan Mastericht. I asked how many men had died in that building during the last month. They called the doctor. We inspected his records. There were only names in a little black book, nothing more. Nothing about where, what they had done or hoped. Behind the names of those who had died there was a cross. I counted them. They totaled two hundred and forty-two. Two hundred and forty-two out of twelve hundred in one month. As I walked down to the end of the barracks there was applause from the men too weak to get out of bed. It sounded like the hand-clapping of babies - they were so weak. The doctor's name was Paul Heller. He had been there since '38. As we walked out into the courtyard a man fell

dead. Two others - they must have been over sixty - were crawling towards the latrine. I saw it, but will not describe it. In another part of the camp they showed me the children, hundreds of them. Some were only six. One rolled up his sleeve, showed me his number. It was tattooed on his arm - B6030 it was. The others showed me their numbers. They will carry them till they die. An elderly man standing beside me said: "The children - enemies of the state". I could see their ribs through their thin shirts. The old man said: "I am Professor Charles Richa of the Sorbonne". The children clung to my hands and stared. We crossed to the courtyard. Men kept coming up to speak to me and to touch me. Professors from Poland, doctors from Vienna, men from all Europe. Men from the countries that made America. We went to the hospital - it was full. The doctor told me that two hundred had died the day before. I asked the cause of death. He shrugged and said: "Tuberculosis, starvation, fatigue, and there are many who have no desire to live. It is very difficult". Dr. Heller pulled back the blankets from a man's feet to show me how swollen they were. The man was dead. Most of the patients could not move. As we left the hospital I drew out a leather billfold hoping that I had some money which would help those who lived to get home. Professor Richa from the Sorbonne said: "I should be careful of my wallet if I were you. You know, there are criminals in this camp, too". A small man tottered up saying: "May I feel the leather please? You see, I used to make good things of leather in Vienna". Another man said: "My name is Walter Reuder. For many years I lived in Joliette. Came back to Germany for a visit and Hitler grabbed me". I asked to see the kitchen. It was clean. The German in charge had been a Communist, had been at Buchenwald for nine years. Had a picture of his daughter in Hamburg, hadn't seen her for almost twelve years, and if I got to Hamburg would I look her up. He showed me the daily ration: one piece of brown bread about as thick as your thumb. On top of it a piece of margarine as big as three sticks of chewing gum. That, and a little stew was what they received every twenty-four hours. He had a chart on the wall, very complicated it was. There were little red tabs scattered through it. He said that was to indicate each ten men who died. He had to account for the rations and he added: "We're very efficient here". We went again into the courtyard and as we walked, we talked. The two doctors, the Frenchman and the Czech, agreed that about six thousand had died during March. Kirshenheimer, the German, added that back in the winter of '39 when the Poles began to arrive without winter clothing, they died at the rate of approximately nine hundred a day. Five different men asserted that Buchenwald was the best concentration camp in Germany. They had had some experience of the others. Dr. Heller, the Czech, asked if I would care to see the crematorium. He said it wouldn't be very interesting because the Germans had run out of coal some days ago and had taken to dumping the bodies into a great hole nearby. Professor Richa

said perhaps I would care to see the small courtyard. I said yes. He turned and told the children to stay behind. As we walked across the square I noticed that the professor had a hole in his left shoe and a toe sticking out of the right one. He followed my eyes and said: "I regret that I am so little presentable, but what can one do?" At that point another Frenchman came up to announce that three of his fellow countrymen outside had killed three SS men and taken one prisoner. We proceeded to the small courtyard. The wall was about eight feet high. It adjoined what had been a stable or garage. We entered. It was floored with concrete. There were two rows of bodies stacked up like cordwood. They were thin and very white. Some of the bodies were terribly bruised though there seemed to be little flesh to bruise. Some had been shot through the head, but they bled but little. All except two were naked. I tried to count them as best I could and arrived at the conclusion that all that was mortal of more than five hundred men and boys lay there in two neat piles. There was a German trailer, which must have contained another fifty, but it wasn't possible to count them. The clothing was piled in a heap against the wall. It appeared that most of the men and boys had died of starvation. They had not been executed, but the manner of death seemed unimportant. Murder had been done at Buchenwald. God alone knows how many men and boys have died there during the last twelve years. Thursday I was told that there were more than twenty thousand in the camp. There had been as many as sixty thousand. Where are they now? As I left that camp, a Frenchman who used to work for Havas in Paris came up to me and said: "You will write something about this perhaps?" And he added: "To write about this you must have been here at least two years and after that you don't want to write anymore". I pray you to believe what I have said about Buchenwald. I have reported what I saw and heard, but only part of it. For most of it I have no words. Dead men are plentiful in war, but the living dead, more than twenty thousand of them in one camp, and the country round about was pleasing to the eye. And the Germans were well fed and well dressed. American trucks were rolling towards the rear filled with prisoners. Soon they would be eating American rations, as much for a meal as the men at Buchenwald received in four days. If I have offended you by this rather mild account of Buchenwald I am not in the least sorry. I was there on Thursday and many men in many tongues blessed the name of Roosevelt. For long years his name had meant the full measure of their hope. These men who had kept close company with death for many years did not know that Mr. Roosevelt would within hours join their comrades who had laid their lives on the scales of freedom. Back in '41 Mr. Churchill said to me, with tears in his eyes: "One day the world and history will recognize and acknowledge what it owes to your president". I saw and heard the first installment of that at Buchenwald on Thursday. It came from men from all over Europe. Their faces, with more flesh on them, might have been found

anywhere at home. To them the name Roosevelt was a symbol, the code word for a lot of guys named Joe who were somewhere out in the blue with the armor heading east. At Buchenwald they spoke of the president just before he died. If there be a better epitaph, history does not record it.

First Speech as President of the United States

Harry Truman

April 16, 1945

Mr. President, Members of the Congress,

It is with a heavy heart that I stand before you, my friends and colleagues, in the Congress of the United States.

Only yesterday, we laid to rest the mortal remains of our beloved President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. At a time like this, words are inadequate. The most eloquent tribute would be a reverent silence.

Yet, in this decisive hour, when world events are moving so rapidly, our silence might be misunderstood and might give comfort to our enemies.

In His infinite wisdom, Almighty God has seen fit to take from us a great man who loved, and was beloved by, all humanity. No man could possibly fill the tremendous void left by the passing of that noble soul. No words can ease the aching hearts of untold millions of every race, creed and color. The world knows it has lost a heroic champion of justice and freedom.

Tragic fate has thrust upon us grave responsibilities. We must carry on. Our departed leader never looked backward. He looked forward and moved forward. That is what he would want us to do. That is what America will do.

So much blood has already been shed for the ideals which we cherish, and for which Franklin Delano Roosevelt lived and died, that we dare not permit even a momentary pause in the hard fight for victory.

Today, the entire world is looking to America for enlightened leadership to peace and progress. Such a leadership requires vision, courage and tolerance. It can be provided only by a united nation deeply devoted to the highest ideals.

With great humility I call upon all Americans to help me keep our nation united in defense of those ideals which have been so eloquently proclaimed by Franklin Roosevelt.

I want in turn to assure my fellow Americans and all of those who love peace and liberty throughout the world that I will support and defend those ideals with all my strength and all my heart. That is my duty and I shall not shirk it.

So that there can be no possible misunderstanding, both Germany and Japan can be certain, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that America will continue the fight for freedom until no vestige of resistance remains!

We are deeply conscious of the fact that much hard fighting is still ahead of us.

Having to pay such a heavy price to make complete victory certain, America will never become a party to any plan for partial victory!

To settle for merely another temporary respite would surely jeopardize the future security of all the world.

Our demand has been, and it remains – unconditional surrender!

We will not traffic with the breakers of the peace on the terms of the peace.

The responsibility for making of the peace – and it is a very grave responsibility – must rest with the defenders of the peace. We are not unconscious of the dictates of humanity. We do not wish to see unnecessary or unjustified suffering. But the laws of God and of man have been violated and the guilty must not go unpunished. Nothing shall shake our determination to punish the war criminals even though we must pursue them to the ends of the earth.

Lasting peace can never be secured if we permit our dangerous opponents to plot future wars with impunity at any mountain retreat – however distant.

In this shrinking world, it is futile to seek safety behind geographical barriers. Real security will be found only in law and in justice.

Here in America, we have labored long and hard to achieve a social order worthy of our great heritage. In our time, tremendous progress has been made toward a really democratic way of life. Let me assure the forward-looking people of America that there will be no relaxation in our efforts to improve the lot of the common people.

In the difficult days ahead, unquestionably we shall face problems of staggering proportions. However, with the faith of our fathers in our hearts, we do not fear the future.

On the battlefields, we have frequently faced overwhelming odds – and won! At home, Americans will not be less resolute!

We shall never cease our struggle to preserve and maintain our American way of life.

At this moment, America, along with her brave Allies, is paying again a heavy price for the defense of our freedom. With characteristic energy, we are assisting in the liberation of entire nations. Gradually, the shackles of slavery are being broken by the forces of freedom.

All of us are praying for a speedy victory. Every day peace is delayed costs a terrible toll.

The armies of liberation today are bringing to an end Hitler's ghastly threat to dominate the world. Tokyo rocks under the weight of our bombs.

The grand strategy of the United Nations' war has been determined—due in no small measure to the vision of our departed Commander in Chief. We are now carrying out our part of that strategy under the able direction of Admiral Leahy, General Marshall, Admiral King, General Arnold, General Eisenhower, Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur.

I want the entire world to know that this direction must and will remain – unchanged and unhampered!

Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices. Because of these sacrifices, the dawn of justice and freedom throughout the world slowly casts its gleam across the horizon.

Our forefathers came to our rugged shores in search of religious tolerance, political freedom and economic opportunity. For those fundamental rights, they risked their lives. We well know today that such rights can be preserved only by constant vigilance, the eternal price of liberty!

Within an hour after I took the oath of office, I announced that the San Francisco Conference would proceed. We will face the problems of peace with the same courage that we have faced and mastered the problems of war.

In the memory of those who have made the supreme sacrifice – in the memory of our fallen President – we shall not fail!

It is not enough to yearn for peace. We must work, and if necessary, fight for it. The task of creating a sound international organization is complicated and difficult. Yet, without such organization, the rights of man on earth cannot be protected. Machinery for the just settlement of international differences must be found. Without such machinery, the entire world will have to remain an armed camp. The world will be doomed to deadly conflict, devoid of hope for real peace.

Fortunately, people have retained hope for a durable peace. Thoughtful people have always had faith that ultimately justice must triumph. Past experience surely indicates that, without justice, an enduring peace becomes impossible.

In bitter despair, some people have come to believe that wars are inevitable. With tragic fatalism, they insist that wars have always been, of necessity, and of necessity wars always will be. To such defeatism, men and women of good will must not and cannot yield. The outlook for humanity is not so hopeless.

During the dark hours of this horrible war, entire nations were kept going by something intangible – hope! When warned that abject submission offered the only salvation against overwhelming power, hope showed the way to victory.

Hope has become the secret weapon of the forces of liberation!

Aggressors could not dominate the human mind. As long as hope remains, the spirit of man will never be crushed.

But hope alone was not and is not sufficient to avert war. We must not only have hope but we must have faith enough to work with other peace-loving nations to maintain the peace. Hope was not enough to beat back the aggressors as long as the peace-loving nations were unwilling to come to each other's defense. The aggressors were beaten back only when the peace-loving nations united to defend themselves.

If wars in the future are to be prevented the nations must be united in their determination to keep the peace under law.

Nothing is more essential to the future peace of the world than continued cooperation of the nations which had to muster the force necessary to defeat the conspiracy of the Axis powers to dominate the world.

While these great states have a special responsibility to enforce the peace, their responsibility is based upon the obligations resting upon all states, large and small, not to use force in international relations except in the defense of law. The responsibility of the great states is to serve and not to dominate the world.

To build a foundation of enduring peace we must not only work in harmony with our friends abroad, but we must have the united support of our own people.

Even the most experienced pilot cannot bring a ship safely into harbor, unless he has the full cooperation of the crew. For the benefit of all, every individual must do his duty.

I appeal to every American, regardless of party, race, creed, or color, to support our efforts to build a strong and lasting United Nations Organization.

You, the Members of the Congress, surely know how I feel. Only with your help can I hope to complete one of the greatest tasks ever assigned to a public servant. With Divine guidance, and your help, we will find the new passage to a far better world, a kindly and friendly world, with just and lasting peace.

With confidence, I am depending upon all of you.

To destroy greedy tyrants with dreams of world domination, we cannot continue in successive generations to sacrifice our finest youth.

In the name of human decency and civilization, a more rational method of deciding national differences must and will be found!

America must assist suffering humanity back along the path of peaceful progress. This will require time and tolerance. We shall need also an abiding faith in the people, the kind of faith and courage which Franklin Delano Roosevelt always had!

Today, America has become one of the most powerful forces for good on earth. We must keep it so. We have achieved a world leadership which does not depend solely upon our military and naval might.

We have learned to fight with other nations in common defense of our freedom. We must now learn to live with other nations for our mutual good. We must learn to trade more with other nations so that there may be for our mutual advantage – increased production, increased employment and better standards of living throughout the world.

May we Americans all live up to our glorious heritage.

In that way, America may well lead the world to peace and prosperity.

At this moment, I have in my heart a prayer. As I have assumed my heavy duties, I humbly pray Almighty God, in the words of King Solomon: "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

I ask only to be a good and faithful servant of my Lord and my people.

Last address to the people of Berlin

Joseph Goebbels

April 21, 1945

Meine Berliner Volksgenossen und Volksgenossinnen!

Am vergangenen Sonntag begannen die Bolschewisten ihre Großoffensive an der Oderfront. Berlin ist ihr Ziel. Die Eroberung der Reichshauptstadt soll Stalin eine wichtige Trumpfkarte im politischen Spiel der Alliierten in die Hand geben. Damit ist der Kampf um die Reichshauptstadt ein Kampf um Deutschland und um Europa geworden. In heldenhafter Abwehr haben unsere tapferen Divisionen und Volkssturmmänner in den vergangenen Tagen den Sowjets schwerste Verluste zugefügt. Ihr aufopferungsvoller Einsatz hat jedoch nicht verhindern können, dass die Bolschewisten an die äußeren Verteidigungslinien der Reichshauptstadt herangekommen sind. Damit ist Berlin zur Frontstadt geworden.

Verteidiger Berlins! Auf Euch sind die Blicke Eurer Frauen, Eurer Mütter und Eurer Kinder gerichtet. Sie haben Euch ihr Leben, ihr Glück, ihre Gesundheit und ihre Zukunft anvertraut. Ihr kennt jetzt Eure Aufgabe, und ich weiß, Ihr werdet sie vorbildlich erfüllen. Die Stunde Eurer Bewährung ist da. Mit der militärischen Verteidigung der Reichshauptstadt wurde Generalleutnant Reymann beauftragt. Er ist Träger des Eichenlaubs zum Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes. Seiner in diesem Kriege oft bewährten Führung können sich alle Soldaten und Volkssturmmänner bedingungslos anvertrauen. Ich bleibe mit meinen Mitarbeitern selbstverständlich in Berlin. Auch meine Frau und meine Kinder sind hier und bleiben hier. Mit allen Mitteln werde ich die Verteidigung der Reichshauptstadt aktivieren. Mein Denken und Handeln gilt Eurem Wohl und der Abwehr unseres gemeinsamen Feindes. An den Mauern unserer Stadt wird und muss der Mongolensturm gebrochen werden.

Unser Kampf wird das Fanal sein für den entschlossensten Kampf der ganzen Nation. Von dem fanatischen Willen erfüllt, die Hauptstadt des Reiches nicht in die Hände der Bolschewisten fallen zu lassen, sind wir solidarisch zu Kampf und Arbeit angetreten. Unser Ziel ist die Freiheit unseres Volkes und ein Reich der sozialen Gerechtigkeit in einer kommenden glücklichen Zukunft.

American and Soviet Armies Meet

Frank Gillard on BBC

April 25, 1945

East and West have met. At twenty minutes to five on Wednesday afternoon, April 25, 1945, American troops made contact with Soviet elements of Marshal Konyev's First Ukrainian army group near the German town of Torgau on the Elbe. This is the news for which the whole Allied World has been waiting: Nazi Germany, tottering to her final collapse, has been split clean in half. The forces of liberation have joined hands.

Announcement of Hitler's Death

Karl Dönitz

May 01, 1945

Aus dem Führerhauptquartier wird gemeldet, dass unser Führer Adolf Hitler heute Nachmittag in seinem Befehlsstand in der Reichskanzlei bis zum letzten Atemzuge gegen den Bolschewismus kämpfend für Deutschland gefallen ist. Der Großadmiral und Nachfolger des Führers spricht zum deutschen Volk.

...

Deutsche Männer und Frauen, Soldaten der deutschen Wehrmacht!

Unser Führer, Adolf Hitler, ist gefallen. In tiefster Trauer und Ehrfurcht verneigt sich das deutsche Volk. Frühzeitig hatte er die furchtbare Gefahr des Bolschewismus erkannt und diesem Ringen sein Dasein geweiht. Am Ende dieses seines Kampfes und seines unbeirrbaren, geraden Lebensweges steht sein Heldentod in der Hauptstadt des Deutschen Reiches. Sein Leben war ein einziger Dienst für Deutschland. Sein Einsatz im Kampf gegen die bolschewistische Sturmflut galt darüber hinaus Europa und der gesamten Kulturwelt. Der Führer hat mich zu seinem Nachfolger bestimmt. Im Bewusstsein der Verantwortung übernehme ich die Führung des deutschen Volkes in dieser schicksalsschweren Stunde. Meine erste Aufgabe ist es, deutsche Menschen vor der Vernichtung durch den vordrängenden bolschewistischen Feind zu retten. Nur für dieses Ziel geht der militärische Kampf weiter. Soweit und solange die Erreichung dieses Zieles durch die Briten und Amerikaner gehindert wird, werden wir uns auch gegen sie weiter verteidigen und weiterkämpfen müssen. Die Anglo-Amerikaner setzen dann den Krieg nicht mehr für ihre eigenen Völker, sondern allein für die Ausbreitung des Bolschewismus in Europa fort. Was das deutsche Volk in dem Ringen dieses Krieges kämpfend vollbracht und in der Heimat ertragen hat, ist geschichtlich einmalig.

In der kommenden Notzeit unseres Volkes werde ich bestrebt sein, unseren tapferen Frauen, Männern und Kindern, soweit dies in meiner Macht steht, erträgliche Lebensbedingungen zu schaffen. Zu all dem brauche ich Eure Hilfe. Schenkt mir Euer Vertrauen, denn Eurer Weg ist auch mein Weg!. Haltet Ordnung und Disziplin in Stadt und Land aufrecht! Tue jeder an seiner Stelle seine Pflicht. Nur so werden wir die Leiden, die die kommende Zeit jedem einzelnen von uns bringen wird mildern und den Zusammenbruch verhindern können. Wenn wir tun, was in unseren Kräften steht, wird auch der Herrgott nach so viel Leid und Opfer, uns nicht verlassen.

Announcement of Hitler's Death

Stuart Hibberd on BBC

May 01, 1945

This is London calling. Here is a news flash. The German radio has just announced that Hitler is dead. I repeat that, the German radio has just announced that Hitler is dead.

Announcement of the Fall of Berlin

Stuart Hibberd on BBC

May 2, 1945

Now a breaking into our programs for the second time tonight, this time with some splendid news from Moscow.

Berlin has fallen.

Marshal Stalin has just announced the complete capture of the capital of Germany, the center of German imperialism and the cradle of German aggression.

The Berlin garrison laid down their arms this afternoon. More than seventy thousand prisoners have been rounded up so far today.

Announcement of German Surrender in Holland

Bernard Montgomery

May 4, 1945

The German Command agrees to the surrender of all German armed forces in Holland, in northwest Germany – including the Frisian Islands and Helgoland and all other islands – in Schleswig-Holstein, and in Denmark, to the Commander in Chief 21 Army Group. This to include all naval ships in these areas. These forces to lay down their arms and to surrender unconditionally.

All hostilities on land, on sea, or in the air by German forces in the above areas to cease at 0800 hours British Double Summer Time on Saturday May 05, 1945.

Announcement of German Unconditional Surrender

Unknown Speaker on NBC

May 07, 1945

The National Broadcasting Company delays the start of all its programs to bring you a special bulletin:

“It was announced in San Francisco half an hour ago by a high American official not identified that Germany has surrendered unconditionally to the Allies, no strings attached, and that the announcement is to be made formally by general Eisenhower.”

I repeat that the formal announcement has not yet been made, but the official says that Germany has surrendered unconditionally to America, Britain and Russia.

Announcement of German Unconditional Surrender

John Snagge on BBC

May 07, 1945

This is the BBC home service. We're interrupting programs to make the following announcement:

"It is understood that in accordance with arrangements between the three Great Powers an official announcement will be broadcast by the Prime Minister at 15.00 o'clock tomorrow, Tuesday afternoon May 8. In view of this fact tomorrow, Tuesday, will be treated as Victory in Europe Day, and will be regarded as a holiday. The day following, Wednesday May 9, will also be a holiday. His Majesty the King will broadcast to the peoples of the British Empire and Commonwealth tomorrow Tuesday at 21.00, British Double Summer Time."

Official Announcement of German Unconditional Surrender

Winston Churchill

May 08, 1945

Yesterday morning at 2:41 a.m. at General Eisenhower Headquarters, General Jodl, the representative of the German High Command, and Grand Admiral Doenitz, the designated head of the German State, signed the act of unconditional surrender of all German Land, sea, and air forces in Europe to the Allied Expeditionary Force, and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command.

General Bedell Smith, Chief of Staff of the Allied Expeditionary Force, and General Francois Sevez signed the document on behalf of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, and General Susloparov signed on behalf of the Russian High Command.

Today this agreement will be ratified and confirmed at Berlin, where Air Chief Marshal Tedder, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, and General de Lattre de Tassigny will sign on behalf of General Eisenhower. Marshal Zhukov will sign on behalf of the Soviet High Command. The German representatives will be Field-Marshal Keitel, Chief of the High Command, and the Commanders-in-Chief of the German Army, Navy, and Air Forces.

Hostilities will end officially at one minute after midnight to-night (Tuesday, May 8), but in the interests of saving lives the "cease fire" began yesterday to be sounded all along the front, and our dear Channel Islands are also to be freed today.

The Germans are still in places resisting the Russian troops, but should they continue to do so after midnight they will, of course, deprive themselves of the protection of the laws of war, and will be attacked from all quarters by the Allied troops. It is not surprising that on such long fronts and in the existing disorder of the enemy the orders of the German High Command should not in every case be obeyed immediately. This does not, in our opinion, with the best military advice at our disposal, constitute any reason for withholding from the nation the facts communicated to us by General Eisenhower of the unconditional surrender already signed at Rheims, nor should it prevent us from celebrating today and tomorrow (Wednesday) as Victory in Europe days.

Today, perhaps, we shall think mostly of ourselves. Tomorrow we shall pay a particular tribute to our Russian comrades, whose prowess in the field has been one of the grand contributions to the general victory.

The German war is therefore at an end. After years of intense preparation, Germany hurled herself on Poland at the beginning of September, 1939; and, in pursuance of our guarantee to Poland and in agreement with the French Republic, Great Britain, the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations, declared war upon this foul aggression. After gallant France had been struck down we, from this Island and from our united Empire, maintained the struggle single-handed for a whole year until we were joined by the military might of Soviet Russia, and later by the overwhelming power and resources of the United States of America.

Finally almost the whole world was combined against the evil-doers, who are now prostrate before us. Our gratitude to our splendid Allies goes forth from all our hearts in this Island and throughout the British Empire.

We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing; but let us not forget for a moment the toil and efforts that lie ahead. Japan, with all her treachery and greed, remains unsubdued. The injury she has inflicted on Great Britain, the United States, and other countries, and her detestable cruelties, call for justice and retribution. We must now devote all our strength and resources to the completion of our task, both at home and abroad. Advance, Britannia! Long live the cause of freedom! God save the King!

Radio Address on Victory in Europe

Harry Truman

May 8, 1945

This is a solemn but a glorious hour. I only wish that Franklin D. Roosevelt had lived to witness this day. General Eisenhower informs me that the forces of Germany have surrendered to the United Nations. The flags of freedom fly over all Europe.

For this victory we join in offering our thanks to the Providence which has guided and sustained us through the dark days of adversity.

Our rejoicing is sobered and subdued by a supreme consciousness of the terrible price we have paid to rid the world of Hitler and his evil band. Let us not forget, my fellow Americans, the sorrow and the heartbreak which today abide in the homes of so many of our neighbors – neighbors whose most priceless possession has been rendered as a sacrifice to redeem our liberty.

We can repay the debt which we owe to our God, to our dead, and to our children only by work – by ceaseless devotion to the responsibilities which lie ahead of us. If I could give you a single watchword for the coming months, that word is – work, work and more work. We must work to finish the war. Our victory is but half won. The West is free, but the East is still in bondage to the treacherous tyranny of the Japanese. When the last Japanese division has surrendered unconditionally, then only will our fighting job be done.

We must work to bind up the wounds of a suffering world – to build an abiding peace, a peace rooted in justice and in law. We can build such a peace only by hard, toilsome, painstaking work – by understanding and working with our allies in peace as we have in war.

The job ahead is no less important, no less urgent, no less difficult than the task which now happily is done.

I call upon every American to stick to his post until the last battle is won. Until that day let no man abandon his post or slacken his efforts.

And now I want to read to you my formal proclamation of this occasion:

“The Allied armies, through sacrifice and devotion and with God’s help, have wrung from Germany a final and unconditional surrender. The western world has been freed of the evil forces which for 5 years and longer have imprisoned the bodies and

broken the lives of millions upon millions of free-born men. They have violated their churches, destroyed their homes, corrupted their children, and murdered their loved ones. Our armies of liberation have restored freedom to these suffering peoples, whose spirit and will the oppressors could never enslave.

Much remains to be done. The victory won in the West must now be won in the East. The whole world must be cleansed of the evil from which half the world has been freed. United, the peace-loving nations have demonstrated in the West that their arms are stronger by far than the might of the dictators or the tyranny of military cliques that once called us soft and weak. The power of our peoples to defend themselves against all enemies will be proved in the Pacific war as it has been proved in Europe.

For the triumph of spirit and of arms which we have won, and for its promise to the peoples everywhere who join us in the love of freedom, it is fitting that we, as a Nation, give thanks to Almighty God, who has strengthened us and given us the victory. Now, therefore, I, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States of America, do hereby appoint Sunday, May 13, 1945, to be a day of prayer.

I call upon the people of the United States, whatever their faith, to unite in offering joyful thanks to God for the victory we have won and to pray that He will support us to the end of our present struggle and guide us into the way of peace.

I also call upon my countrymen to dedicate this day of prayer to the memory of those who have given their lives to make possible our victory.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed”.

Speech on Victory in Europe

George VI

May 08, 1945

Ladies and gentlemen, the man who stands as the symbol of the British Empire will speak to his people and to the world. As he spoke with simple sincerity when Britain went to war almost six years ago, as he spoke with raising hope on June 06, 1944 – so today His Majesty George VI king of England, Scotland and Wales, defender of Faith and Emperor of India, speaks in this hour of Victory in Europe for the British Empire and the United Nations. We take you now to London, where Big Ben is sounding in the tower of the House of Parliament.

...

This is London. His Majesty King George VI.

...

Today we give thanks to Almighty God for a great deliverance.

Speaking from our Empire's oldest capital city, war-battered but never for one moment daunted or dismayed, speaking from London, I ask you to join with me in that act of thanksgiving.

Germany, the enemy who drove all Europe into war, has been finally overcome. In the Far East we have yet to deal with the Japanese, a determined and cruel foe. To this we shall turn with the utmost resolve and with all our resources. But at this hour when the dreadful shadow of war has passed far from our hearths and homes in these islands, we may at last make one pause for thanksgiving and then turn our thoughts to the task all over the world which peace in Europe brings with it.

Let us remember those who will not come back: their constancy and courage in battle, their sacrifice and endurance in the face of a merciless enemy; let us remember the men in all the services, the women in all the services, who have laid down their lives.

We have come to the end of our tribulation and they are not with us at the moment of our rejoicing.

And then let us salute in proud gratitude the great host of the living who have brought us to victory. I cannot praise them to the measure of each one's service, for in a total war the efforts of all rise to the same noble height and are devoted to

the common purpose. Armed or unarmed, men and women, you have fought, striven and endured to your utmost. No one knows that better than I do, and as your King I thank with a full heart those who bore arms so valiantly on land and sea or in the air; and all civilians who, shouldering their many burdens, have carried them unflinchingly and without complaint.

With those memories in our minds, let us think what it was that has upheld us through nearly six years of suffering and peril. With the knowledge that everything was at stake, our freedom, our independence, our very existence as a people, with the knowledge also that in defending ourselves we were defending the liberties of the whole world, that our cause was the cause not of this nation only, not of this Empire and Commonwealth only, but of every land where freedom is cherished and law and liberty go hand in hand.

In the darkest hours we knew that the enslaved and isolated peoples of Europe looked to us. Their hopes were our hopes; their confidence confirmed our faith. We knew that if we failed the last remaining barrier against a world-wide tyranny would have fallen in ruins. But we did not fail. We kept faith with ourselves and with one another. We kept faith and unity with our great Allies. That faith, that unity have carried us to victory through dangers which at times seemed overwhelming.

So let us resolve to bring to the tasks which lie ahead the same high confidence in our mission. Much hard work awaits us, both in the restoration of our own country after the ravages of war and in helping us to restore peace and sanity to a shattered world.

This comes upon us at a time when we have all given of our best. For five long years and more, heart and brain, nerve and muscle have been directed upon the overthrow of Nazi tyranny. And now we turn, fortified by success, to deal with our last remaining foe. The Queen and I know the ordeals which you have endured throughout the Commonwealth and Empire. We are proud to have shared some of these ordeals with you and we know also that together we shall all face the future with strong resolve and prove that our reserves of will power and vitality are inexhaustible.

There is great comfort in the thought that the years together, that the years of darkness and danger in which the children of our country have grown up are over, and please God, forever. We shall have failed, and the blood of our dearest will have flowed in vain, if the victory which they died to win does not lead to a lasting peace, founded on justice and good-will.

To that, then, let us turn our thoughts on this day of just triumph and proud sorrow, and then take up our work again, resolved as a people to do nothing unworthy of those who died for us and to make the world such a world as they would have desired, for their children and for ours.

This is the task to which now honor binds us. In the hour of danger we humbly committed our cause into the hand of God and He has been our strength and shield. Let us thank Him for His mercies and in this hour of victory commit ourselves and our new task to the guidance of that same strong hand.

Last Wehrmacht Report

Unknown Speaker on RRG

May 09, 1945

20 Uhr und 3 Minuten. Reichssender Flensburg und die angeschlossenen Sender. Wir bringen heute den letzten Wehrmachtsbericht dieses Krieges.

Aus dem Hauptquartier des Großadmirals, den 9. Mai 1945.

Das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht gibt bekannt:

In Ostpreußen haben Deutsche Divisionen noch gestern die Weichselmündung und den Westteil der Frischen Nehrung bis zuletzt tapfer verteidigt, wobei sich die siebente Infanteriedivision besonders auszeichnete.

Dem Oberbefehlshaber, General der Panzertruppe von Saucken, wurden als Anerkennung für die vorbildliche Haltung seiner Soldaten die Brillanten zum Eichenlaub mit Schwertern zum Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen.

Als vorgeschobenes Bollwerk kesselten unsere Armeen um Kurland unter dem bewährten Oberbefehl des Generaloberst Humpert monatelang überlegene sowjetische Schützen- und Panzerverbände und erwarben sich in sechs großen Schlachten unvergänglichen Ruhm. Sie haben jede vorzeitige Übergabe abgelehnt. Fern der Heimat haben die Verteidiger der Atlantikbezirke, unsere Truppen in Norwegen und die Besatzungen der Ägäischen Inseln in Gehorsam und Disziplin die Waffenehre des Deutschen Soldaten gewahrt.

Seit Mitternacht schweigen nun an allen Fronten die Waffen.

Auf Befehl des Großadmirals hat die Wehrmacht den aussichtslos gewordenen Kampf eingestellt.

Damit ist das fast sechsjährige heldenhafte Ringen zu Ende. Es hat uns große Siege aber auch schwere Niederlagen gebracht. Die Deutsche Wehrmacht ist am Ende einer gewaltigen Übermacht ehrenvoll unterlegen.

Der Deutsche Soldat hat getreu seinem Eid im höchsten Einsatz für sein Volk für immer Unvergessliches geleistet. Die Heimat hat ihn bis zuletzt mit allen Kräften unter schwersten Opfern unterstützt. Die einmalige Leistung von Front und

Heimat wird in einem späteren gerechten Urteil der Geschichte ihre endgültige Würdigung finden.

Den Leistungen der Deutschen Soldaten zu Lande, zu Wasser und in der Luft wird auch der Gegner die Achtung nicht versagen. Jeder Soldat kann deshalb aufrecht und stolz seine Waffe aus der Hand legen und in den schwersten Stunden unserer Geschichte tapfer und zuversichtlich an die Arbeit gehen für das ewige Leben unseres Volkes.

Die Wehrmacht gedenkt in dieser schweren Stunde ihrer vor dem Feind gebliebenen Kameraden.

Die Toten verpflichten zu bedingungsloser Treue, zu Gehorsam und Disziplin gegenüber dem aus zahllosen Wunden blutenden Vaterland.