

Background: This is a mass pamphlet issued by the Nazis early after the release of one of a series of emergency decrees authorized by Reich President Hindenburg on 1 December 1931. At the time, Chancellor Brüning was governing without a parliamentary majority, instead being dependent on the support of Hindenburg who as Reich President had constitutional authority to permit Brüning to function without the normally required majority. Among other things, the emergency decree banned political meetings, uniforms, and insignia in the hope of reducing public political tension and conflict. To make sense of it, you may need to read up on the context.

Hitler released this "open letter" twelve days after the decree was issued. It is a good example of his rhetorical style.

The source: *Hitler an Brüning* (Munich: Franz Eher, 1932).

Hitler to Brüning

Broschürenreihe der Reichspropaganda-Leitung der NSDAP, Heft 5

Open Letter from Adolf Hitler to the Reich Chancellor

The Politics of Illusion from Matthias Erzberger to Heinrich Brüning

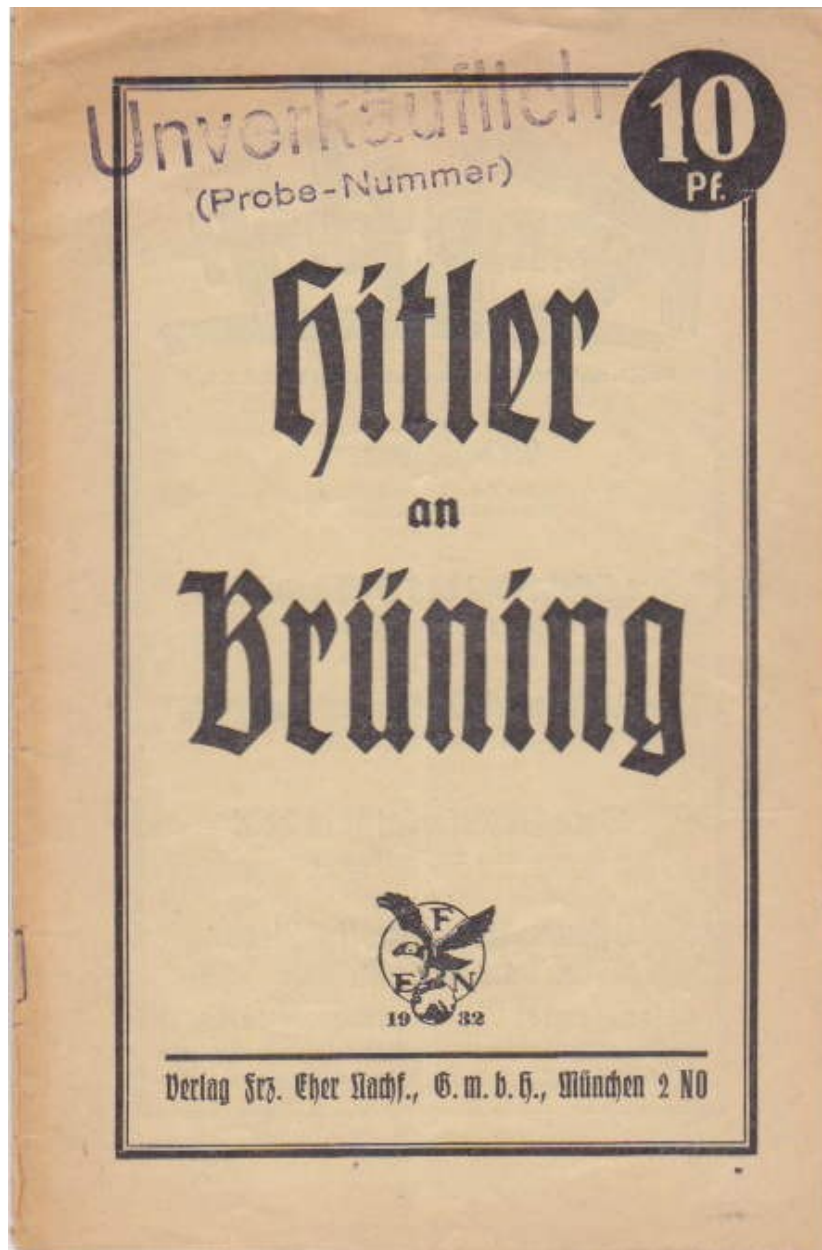
The Great Illusion of the Last Emergency Decree

Why does Brüning attack the NSDAP, but not Communism?

Mr. Reich Chancellor!

I read the following sentences in your commentary on the Fourth Emergency Decree issued by the Reich President:

I will continue to resist all efforts by parties to tear apart the German people into two enemy camps in the midst of our spiritual tension and material need. An ancient instinct admonishes all peoples to set aside internal controversies when the fatherland stands at the decisive hour for political action.



Although each of the emergency decrees issued by your government claimed to be at a “decisive moment” of political action, I take it from the extensive introductory speech that this most recent emergency decree is supposed to have even greater significance, since the hour is seen as particularly serious. **However, Mr. Reich Chancellor, I do not see the so-called “ancient instincts” in your introduction,** which to my mind are to be expected not only from parties, but also from statesmen.

An Unnecessary Attack

In your speech, Mr. Reich Chancellor, you intentionally attack the National Socialist movement, indirectly comparing it to the unity of the rest of the population. Since this attack against a part of the German people includes a reference to me as its leader, I see myself obligated to defend this part of the mass of the people that I lead. **I greatly regret this, since I am unable to see how an attack against so large a part of the German people is related to the new emergency decree.** There was no political nor material

cause for this attack. It is of a purely partisan nature.

The emergency decree hardly supports an attack against the National Socialist movement

since as you yourself grant in your speech, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that the economic crisis is at least in part the result of the mistakes of previous governments.

We National Socialists had nothing to do with these governments; in fact we always rejected and fought their mistakes that have finally been recognized.

Political grounds also provide no reason for this attack against the National Socialist movement or me personally. Even if an objective analysis of my opposition had found no justification for our actions, at the very least a sense of political justice “which a statesman cannot lack” would have to conclude that there were other movements and parties within Germany besides the National Socialist Party that

at least in part attack the present system and your government very sharply. Although it has a different worldview, the Communist Party, for example, attacks not only the current system, but even the state, indeed the whole order, **and with consciously chosen illegal methods.**

Under the current crisis of the German people burdened by a new emergency decree, fighting against parties could be justified only, Mr. Reich Chancellor, if you had taken a position against all of those forces that oppose you and your government.

But that would mean millions, the overwhelming majority of our people.

Since that did not happen, there can only be **partisan** reasons for attacking only the National Socialist movement with accusations that are both unjustified and easy to refute. That forces me to say the following:

On the Value of Silence, Speech, and Action

I find the following sentences in the printed version of your speech:

“I have been accused of remaining silent for too long. Careful work seems to me more important than speaking, and I have confidence that the German people prefer that which is factual, serious.”

Mr. Reich Chancellor! This opinion seems to me to rest on several not insignificant errors. It is certainly true that not every speech that is given in the world is a “factual matter” that one must approach seriously. **Since German radio has regularly put itself at the service of governmental propaganda, I, too, can no longer close my eyes to the all too perishable nature of rhetoric.** It would, however, be wrong to form a general opinion of the deficiencies of the intellectual content of all speeches in contrast to written elaborations based on examples from the present, even when those printed words have the good fortune or misfortune to pass through the machinery of lawmaking. The sum total of all laws ranging from those applying to the village school to those at the highest level demonstrate little evidence that they deserve to be seen as having greater importance than many speeches have, considering the conscientious and diligent work behind them. **I will not deny that many laws are the result of hard mental effort, great determination, and admirable endurance. However, their final result and value is often less than the piece of paper that has the misfortune to have printed on it this blessing for mankind.**

The value of a law is neither in the time it took to develop, nor in its outward length, but rather exclusively in its ultimate intellectual content. The lightning of a genius has always illuminated the world more brightly than a thousand smoking torches of regulations and laws.

I know that before the revolutions of 1848 governments thought that they had the right to act and their peoples had the duty to remain silent. But even in the Germany of that era there was strong agreement that alongside of the right of the government to act was the of the governed to have an opinion.

Alongside the duty of the governed to obey a government, there is a duty on the part of government to respond graciously to objections from the governed.

Particularly since the Revolution of 1918, the German people believes that it has the right to criticize, and to criticize openly, since it was maintained that the lack of free speech was one reason for the downfall of the old system.

The constitution of the new Reich, therefore, does not say: All power comes from the **government**, but rather that all power comes from the **people**.

But you, Mr. Reich Chancellor, now jealously assert that no one in Germany has the right to act except the government. **That necessarily means restrictions on the ability of the opposition to criticize and speak freely.**

If todayâ€™s Germany had an Oliver Cromwell, a George Washington, or an Otto von Bismarck, at the moment all three would have to be satisfied by informing the nation of their opposition to the current government only through speaking or writing. And even if these three could only speak today, Mr. Reich Chancellor, one surely could not say that the content of their speeches would be worth less than the content of government decrees!

Such an underestimation of the speech does help me to understand the modest intellectual force of recent German rhetoric from official sources, while the frequency of such rhetorical efforts earns my grudging admiration.

Why do government offices keep using an instrument that they seem to think of so little value, or even hold in contempt? That may, however, explain why they do it so poorly.

Success is the only Measure

The government. Mr. Reich Chancellor, can act. It can realize thoughts and ideas through laws. It can prove the correctness of its ideas through deeds. It watches jealously to ensure that no one else asserts this ability. **What do we have left to us, Mr. Reich Chancellor, aside from speech if we want to express to the people our opinions about the destructiveness of your plans, about the mistakes at their core, and about the disasters that will result?**

One can, of course, use naked police force to deny the opposition the ability to speak and write. **That can only be justified, however, if success against the speaker and in favor of the holder of power results not only in successfully banning a meeting or newspaper, but rather in successfully leading a nation.**

The correctness or incorrectness of an intellectual message, whether written or spoken, is in the end determined only by the results. Reich Chancellor Bismarck condemned his critics to respectful silence by the proclamation of a New German Reich that earned international respect and had growing domestic prosperity.

Currently, however, the critical speakers, not the governments of the System, have been proven right.

If those in high office see our speaking as disobedient, then save us the talk and give us power!

Mr. Reich Chancellor, we are ready to act at any time.

Have we ever been unwilling to accept responsibility?

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It is well known, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that you reject the possibility of the National Socialist movement and the national opposition taking over the government. This is not easy to justify.

The System,

the nature of which is incorporated in the present government, has been rejected by the overwhelming majority of the German nation. If one attempts despite that to justify from a democratic perspective the incomprehensible continuance of the present forces, one must naturally find

some sort of reason. I believe, therefore, that a sense of the necessity of a defense of the otherwise incomprehensible attitude of the current System, against the overwhelming majority of the people, is a reason for the speech you gave, Mr. Reich Chancellor, introducing the emergency decree.

The System is attempting to preserve itself by making baseless accusations against the NSDAP.

According to your speech, there are two reasons why the present governmental System is obligated not to give up power:

1. Since the National Socialist movement is the strongest element in the national opposition, it should no longer be a legal organization. That will remove the ability of those opposition voters and party masses to take over the government. The governing coalition of the Center Party and the Marxists will then be the only possible democratic solution.
2. The National Socialist movement, and in a broad sense the whole national opposition, are presumably pursuing a program of illusions and wishful thinking. The present government, however, and the whole ruling system, is supposedly working in a "serious" and "practical" way. It hopes to silence the voices of discontent by emotional appeals to "moral responsibility."

Both reasons are easily refuted.

1. In your speech, Mr. Reich Chancellor, you said the following:

"The National Socialist Party leaders claim their methods and goals are legal, but they stand in blatant contrast to strong statements by no less important leaders that call for senseless civil war and a stupid foreign policy. When one asserts that one wants to achieve power by legal means in order to eliminate those legal barriers, that is not legality. As a statesman, I oppose that in the strongest possible way."

First, it is untrue that I as leader of the National Socialist movement affirm that the party intends to follow legal methods while my subordinates are of a different opinion.

I along with all of my leaders and party members agree fully with this policy, with the exception of those

intentional provocateurs sent to infiltrate the party.

However, I am not responsible for them, but rather those high officials who sent them. It is certainly true, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that there have occasionally been individual leaders in my party whose views were not consistent with my viewpoint that we should follow a legal approach. **These leaders had closer relations to government offices than I, the official party leader.**

Mr. Reich Chancellor, if you think it important to deal with these peculiar matters publicly, I will be happy to provide the public with material that will help them understand how difficult it is to accept the leadership of a large party when individual members receive such seductive offers.

Mr. Reich Chancellor, I have always ruthlessly thrown such people out of the party "much to the regret of certain outside interests."

Defense " Not Civil War!

It is further untrue that my subordinates preach "senseless civil war." Instead, we deeply regret this battle. **However, it is also true that we are not willing stand defenseless and without protection while we are slaughtered by the murderous Red beast. It is furthermore true that we are not going to let Germany suffer Russia's fate.** It is true that we are not going to be kept from making political propaganda because of the terror of treacherous communist political murderers. **Finally, it is true that our purely defensive activities have cost us huge sacrifices of blood.**

It is true, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that for many months my unarmed and practically defenseless party comrades have been attacked by treacherous murderers, stabbed, injured, and killed. The government " your government, Mr. Reich Chancellor BrÄ¼ning " has done nothing to stop these outrages.

When treacherous communist murderers kill two police officers, their bloody deeds cannot easily be concealed from the public. But when these murderers kill more than

fifty National Socialists and injure four thousand more,

the world is silent. Certain newspapers have nothing to write about that, nor do the leaders of the governing parties have anything to say!

Consistent with my assurances of using legal methods, I have had to order my followers, with a heavy heart, to give up weapons absolutely. **However, Mr. Reich Chancellor, you cannot demand of me that I order them to let themselves be slaughtered without defending themselves, nor would I give that order.**

It would perhaps be better to make the world aware of those facts rather than raise doubts about the commitment to legality of a movement that has proven a thousand times its intention to obey the laws.

The Stupidity of the System's Foreign Policy

It is furthermore untrue, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that any of our responsible party leaders has called for "a stupid foreign policy" that is even one thousandth as bad as the stupid foreign policy of the last twelve years, which today is a historically demonstrable fact. **Signing the Young Plan alone, which allows France to set reparations payments at whatever level it wishes, was an act of political stupidity that cannot be outweighed by a thousand rhetorical gaffes, even if they actually were that. Thirteen years after the World War the German Reich is in a hopelessly desperate condition. Surely that is not because of the wisdom of our political leadership, but rather because all imaginable political stupidities were put into practice by our foreign policy leaders.**

Perhaps a kindly fate will some time in the future send the German people a statesman of real stature whose commission comes not from the *8-Uhr-Blatt* or the *Morgenpost*, but from history itself, a man who will have the time and energy to weigh the foreign policy achievements of 1918-1932 from the standpoint of posterity. I fear that he will have difficulty finding even the smallest scrap of "wisdom" from our time to place on the scale. It will be impossible for him, however, to find weights heavy enough to counterbalance the stupidities.

Let us consider current events:

Do you really believe, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that from the perspective of foreign policy it correct and intelligent to call a movement that from the national-political viewpoint is Germany's only active proponent of a truly nationalist foreign policy an "illegal" and

â€œdestructiveâ€ band of criminals? Even though doing so does not slow the victory of this movement in the slightest?

It it really â€œstatesmanlike wisdomâ€ to attack a party whose victorious march has been unstoppable despite twelve years of oppression, telling the world through an evil-minded press that it is a danger for human society, for tranquility, peace, and order, thereby darkening the name of the inevitable New Germany in the eyes of the world?

There are more leaders and members of the National Socialist movement who fought in the great World War than in any other party. We came to know each other under terrible conditions. None of us wishes for a war. Nonetheless, we have remained men who think less of our lives than of freedom when that is necessary. If one screams that that is a â€œbloodthirsty spiritâ€ that should be exterminated, one signs a death warrant for our nation!

The Incompetence of Democracy

I must admit, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that I find the second part of your remarks completely incomprehensible. â€œAs a statesman,â€ you refuse to allow us to take power by legal means, since we would then violate legality? Mr. Reich Chancellor, the fundamental principle of democracy is that all power derives from the people. The constitution states how a viewpoint, an idea, and therefore an organization may secure legitimation from the people if it is to realize its intentions. **In the end, the people decides what its constitution will be.**

Mr. Reich Chancellor: If the German nation authorizes the National Socialist movement to introduce a constitution different than todayâ€™s, you can do nothing to stop it.

Statesmen are primarily responsible for what results from their ideas and deeds, not for what someone else later does. Looking into the future can influence oneâ€™s actions only if it serves that future.

The German nation does not exist for the sake of a constitution, but rather it requires a constitution that is appropriate for its existence, and when a constitution proves unsuitable, the nation does not die, but rather it changes the constitution!

The System in Conflict with its Own Constitution

I believe that we National Socialists have a better understanding of the spirit of the present constitution than the exponents of the present System. For a constitution is not merely letters on a page; there is also a constitution of the spirit. Do you believe, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that it corresponds to the principles of democracy and thereby the deepest meaning of the Weimar Constitution when a government remains a government although it knows that the source of its power, the people, has long since ceased to support it? Do you believe, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that the writers of the Weimar Constitution confused the democratic opinions and beliefs of the nation as the ultimate basis of authority with the fears of parliamentary parties who together form a cabinet?

Democracy is unsuitable for Germany because it denies its own essence. England provides us with an excellent example. When the former MacDonalld government concluded that there had been a major shift in the opinions of the British people, it dissolved parliament and appealed to the British people. That gave clear expression to the whole world of the drive for national preservation. That was not only fair, it was logical within the framework of democracy.

But what happened with us? For months, each new election has demonstrated the huge shift within our

people. A look at the growth of our party, Mr. Reich Chancellor, which is available to you at any time, proves this tendency. But what has happened with us? The pettiest war against the National Socialist movement began, hoping that through laws and chicaneries in the spirit of Metternich, half outrageous and half ludicrous, the System could be defended against democracy. Yes, **against** democracy and **against** the constitution, Mr. Reich Chancellor! How else, for example, could one understand a situation in which a state court rules the election law of a provincial parliament as unconstitutional, yet the provincial parliament itself does not dare to subject itself to the judgment of the people because of nervous parties intent on self preservation. Those parties include the Bavarian People's Party and the Social Democrats – both of which support you. You will not find a single expert in constitutional law with any real democratic convictions who will not find this action by the Bavarian Parliament to be unconstitutional. From my point of view, there is more than enough reason to be concerned in Germany today about unconstitutional acts. If you turn your valued attention to this closest danger rather than being diverted by **political astigmatism**, you should be worried about your illegal takeover of power, not by supposed illegal activities by my movement. Mr. Reich Chancellor! We National Socialists respect the constitution as we fight for political power, and hope **that it will be possible for us to give the German people a new and healthier constitution**. I promise you even now, however, that we will be more loyal to the present constitution than the current Weimar System is!

I cannot accept your doubts about the present and future legality of my party, Mr. Reich Chancellor, simply because you are a "statesman." Mr. Reich Chancellor, you today are a statesman because of your office, but certainly not because you have the majority required by your constitution. I am a man of the people, and will leave it to the future and to the German people as to whether they wish to give me the often misused title of statesman.

Mr. Reich Chancellor, your doubts about the legality of my party are no justification for the necessity of the current government, nor are your fears about the supposed unreality of our program reasonable.

You said in your speech:

"No one knows more than I the hard fate our people are suffering today. Broad circles of our people have sought refuge from the difficulties in wishful thinking.

Wishful thinking, however, is not a political program. Rescuing Germany will only be possible when the government's policies are not based on illusions, but rather when love of the people and fatherland is guided by the available means.

If the German people gives into the temptation of dealing with the troubles of the present by holding to unclear desires and by setting unreachable goals, Germany will collapse. Anyone who in desperation succumbs to such goals will have a terrible awakening. A government conscious of its responsibility for the people and fatherland may not give in to such currents. It may not and will not hold back from facing the threatening collapse of the people's strength with firm energy. It tolerates no other power than authorized by the constitution. The Reich President and the Reich government along control state power. They will use them with pitiless strength if necessary, including

the imposition of martial law

against all who attempt to resist constitutional authorities in the hour of the greatest test of nerves."

Mr. Reich Chancellor! The charge of illusions does not apply to the national opposition, least of all the

National Socialist party or me, but above all the present System.

Illusions from Erzberger to Brüning

When the November Revolution of 1918 broke out, the flag of illusion was raised high, and has waved above all governmental actions, whether domestic or foreign, ever since. Your faction leader and party comrade Matthias Erzberger was one of Germany's armistice negotiators in the Forest of Compiègne. On 11 November 1918 he spoke the following memorable and statesmanlike words: "We must accept everything. We have to accept it all. That is the fastest way to get them to forgive us." That was an illusion. It was an illusion with dreadful and terrible consequences, just as terrible as the illusions of the naval units and battleship crews who thought that when they raised their treasonous red flags English ships would do the same.

All the programs of that time, all the promises whether from official government offices or party leaders were, to put it mildly, illusions. The promise of a coming life of "beauty, freedom, and dignity" was just as tragic an illusion as the promises of coming social happiness, social welfare, and upward mobility. They, too, were lies.

There was the illusion of promised reductions in prices, the illusion of "reducing bureaucracy" in government, the illusion of "abolishing secret diplomacy," the illusion of "true democratic equality!" Our whole people back then chased only after illusions, Mr. Reich Chancellor. I was one of the few who even in those years dared to attack these illusions openly in public meetings!

Fear of Its Record

The present System does not dare to release to the public its declarations and promises from its founding days, since they consist wholly of illusions. You are welcome, however, to publish my speeches from these years, and my later ones as well. They would provide support and justification for me today, just as they supported my attacks on your party and its Marxist allies back then.

It was an illusion to give up our naval fleet in the hopes it would be returned to us,
an illusion to give up our merchant fleet in the hopes of getting it back,
an illusion to disarm in the belief that France would do the same.

It was an illusion to expect help from the conscience of the world, from the League of Nations, or from some other conference.

It was an illusion to sign the Peace Treaty, thinking it was nothing but a formal document, not the intentional destruction of the German people and its economy by France "something already evident back then.

It was an illusion to believe that by signing the war guilt lie, one would be treated leniently, even be "forgiven," when in reality throughout world history every unprincipled act carries within it its own reward.

It was an illusion, Mr. Reich Chancellor, which your party comrade Matthias Erzberger proposed to the Allies a reparations payment of a hundred million gold marks, and the German government actually believed that it could fulfill that, then morally stoned anyone who called this nonsense nonsense.

It was further an illusion during the Ruhr battle to believe that one could intimidate an occupying army by a subsidized general strike, and an even greater illusion to think that one would be able to negotiate more effectively in the future without building an active front in the hinterland.

It was an illusion to sign the Dawes Pact, and to believe in the dream that this would somehow improve the German economy.

It was yet another illusion when one celebrated the *Fata Morgana* of a Dawes spring as the start of an economic rescue of the state.

The hope one put in the Locarno agreement was an illusion, just as the Young Plan was based on illusions.

Illusions from Dawes to Young

It was an illusion when one thought that one could salvage the finances of the Reich and the Provinces with the Young Plan, also an illusion that one thought that it could rescue the economy.

It was an illusion to believe that the Young Plan would eliminate **unemployment**, and another illusion that it could save agriculture from collapse. And above all these, there was the still greater illusion that stable and organized conditions had been achieved.

Yes, Herr Reich Chancellor, our reasonable and realistic government leadership fell victim to these illusions, and to countless others besides!

The emergency decrees from which you expected so much, Mr. Reich Chancellor, have also proven to be illusions.

Most fateful of all were the illusions that miserable and weak radio speeches could somehow make these decrees popular.

In my first open letter you to, Mr. Reich Chancellor, I pointed out the serious error in your opinion that Germany must first put its finances and economy in order if it were to have any hope of success in revising the Young Plan. I said then that such an improvement depended not only on revisions to the Young Plan, but also with regards to the Treaty of Versailles. And even were that to succeed, there would be no practical way to eliminate the burdens heaped upon us. How could we persuade the world of the impossibility of meeting these treaties if we proved them to in fact be possible by maintaining our financial and economic health? You, Mr. Reich Chancellor, attempted to present my opinion as mistaken in a speech to the Reichstag, saying that only by reaching into our last resources could we prove to the world the impossibility of fulfilling those treaty obligations.

New Desperate Attempts to Meet Treaty Obligations

First, Mr. Reich Chancellor BrÄ¼ning, that impossibility has already been proven to the world. Second, one could have proven that to the world at any time during the past six years if one had wanted to. Third, is it true that the present government, in contrast to former ones, attempted to prove the impossibility of meeting what was demanded of us by depending exclusively on our own German resources. No!

In fact, the present government looked for new loans all over the world. Had they been given, it would have been new $\hat{\epsilon}$ proof $\hat{\epsilon}$ ⁷ that the policy of meeting reparations demands was possible.

Each such tender blossom, no matter how unrealistic, has to strengthen the world's mistaken belief that the reparations nonsense may not be nonsense after all. That, too, is a policy of illusion, Mr. Reich Chancellor.

I also found the proposal of a **customs union** an incomprehensible $\hat{\epsilon}$ daydream. $\hat{\epsilon}$ ⁷ The whole thing

was a classic example of a "policy of illusion!" What an illusion it is to think that without a "rehabilitation" of the inner nature of our people, it is possible to effectively represent our national interests to the outside world.

The Great Illusion of the Emergency Decrees

It is yet another "illusion" to believe that one can "rehabilitate the nation," shaken by worldview conflicts as it is, through police measures authorized by laws.

It is an illusion to believe that we can pay two-and-half billion in tribute each year and two-and-a-half billion more in interest payments, just as is the idea that one can find domestic political support for such an impossibility for very long. No, Mr. Reich Chancellor! For thirteen years a ghostly Pegasus has flown through the blessed realm of limitless illusions: that animal is called German domestic and foreign policy!

Mr. Reich Chancellor, you asked that critical judgments on the new proposed laws be withheld until their effects are clear and demonstrable. I do not understand how a government unsure of itself could say this. A statesman convinced of the correctness of his actions and who expects success can only hope that his opponents will criticize them prematurely so that he can refute them once those actions are successful. **However, a government that has learned from past experience to be uncertain of its success will naturally prefer to ban any criticism.** It realizes in advance that the failure of its promises will later prove critics justified. It will, therefore, prefer to prohibit farsighted men from speaking and writing about developments in order to keep the opposition from later referring back to its prophecies and thereby earning the nation's respect.

Bringing Social Policy

From a political standpoint I completely understand your desire for a Christmas peace. However, Mr. Reich Chancellor, I would like to look back to your speech during the parliamentary debate defending the **first** emergency decree. The results are not open to doubt. **Back then you gave yourself over to illusions that are unforgivable for a statesman.**

At the Reichstag session of 16 October 1930, Mr. Reich Chancellor, you said:

"The Reich government has developed a major economic and financial plan to overcome the crisis."

Mr. Reich Chancellor, that major plan has proven to be an illusion, since the crisis was not overcome.

At the same session, you also said:

"With this emergency decree (of 26.7.30) the Reich President and the Reich government, based on Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, have taken the first steps to ameliorate the financial, economic, and social crisis."

Mr. Reich Chancellor, neither the financial, nor the economic, nor the social crisis has been ameliorated. Such a view rests on an illusion. You further said:

"Important parts of the welfare system have been revised to make it possible to rescue the welfare system."

Mr. Reich Chancellor, the welfare system seems to me to be less rescued than it was before. Instead, it is seriously threatened. I have the feeling here, too, that this statement will prove to be an illusion.

In that same speech, Mr. Reich Chancellor, you assured us that a basic principle of the reforms back then was the "simplification of the administrative system, in particular a taxation policy that does not unacceptably burden the productive process, but instead encourages savings by small savers, and finally sound financial accords between the Reich, the provinces, and the municipalities."

Since all of these hopes went unfulfilled, we can relegate to the area of illusions as well.

It also turned out to be an illusion that everything would be done as part of this economic plan to put as many people to work as possible.

Finally, you assured us:

"In view of the spiritual and economic crisis of our fatherland, the government considers it one of its most important tasks to do all it can to combat cultural decline as energetically as possible. The severe crisis that Germany must overcome (as already mentioned, that was said on 10.10.30) demands moral strength and courageous solidarity on the part of all who love the fatherland."

Mr. Reich Chancellor, was that an illusion, was it wishful thinking, or are the filthy films in Germany today, along with the Marxist-Jewish cultural subversion we see everywhere, among those efforts to combat cultural destruction?

It was an illusion, however, when you said back then that:

"Sacrifices must be demanded that will lead the way to freedom and recovery."

Economic sacrifices are only secondary to the freedom of peoples. It must primarily be achieved through political sacrifices and achievements. Any other viewpoint is an illusion.

Brüning Admits the System's Illusions

Mr. Reich Chancellor, the new emergency decree on which one places such hopes will also prove an illusion. Early in your speech you said the following:

"On the eve of the publication of a fateful emergency decree I consider it my duty to explain to the German people the goals and decisions of the Reich government. The new measures are the result of world economic conditions, of the burdens laid on the German people, and of **our own mistakes**. Every day there are new signs of world-wide economic collapse. The sinking of England's currency affects other currencies.

A wild economic war of enormous proportions has broken out.

The causes of the general crisis, and of Germany's particular role in it, are known. Nonetheless, there are serious worries as to whether the governments can draw the necessary conclusions from this knowledge quickly enough.

Holding to formal legal principles cannot solve the world's problems. Broad solutions free from the outdated thinking of the past must be found. Partial solutions for the world are insufficient."

As a National Socialist, Mr. Reich Chancellor, I owe you thanks for noting for the first time that the responsibility for the present catastrophe is the result of mistakes that our governments have made. And since you are further of the opinion that "holding to formal legalities" cannot solve the

world's problems, you are also admitting indirectly that your own government is apparently continuing these mistakes by relying on formal legal measures in the form of these emergency decrees. I assume that none of the former governments made these mistakes with bad intentions or ill will, instead presumably later recognizing as mistakes what they first thought to be correct and helpful; however, these governments erred in the most important and critical matters. They fell victim to wishful thinking and chased after illusions.

You minimize this reproach by adding world economic conditions as another reason. Here German governments have succumbed to the worst illusions. However, Mr. Reich Chancellor, you yourself were convinced that the Young Plan was practical, and would lead to improvements because of world conditions. What a terrible illusion! When you speak of the outdated thinking of the past and propose broad solutions that are free of such thinking, **I can probably say that this outdated thinking was yours, Mr. Reich Chancellor, and that we have proposed such broad solutions free from outdated thinking for years now.**

Your criticism of holding to formal legal principles stands in sharp contradiction to the fear evident in your thinking that the National Socialists might achieve power legally, but thereafter sin against the formal legal principles of the constitution. Why so so broad-minded on one case and so worried in the other?

I have not addressed the particulars of the emergency decree. I only intend to establish for the future that its results, too, will be an illusion.

Laws and Implementation Decrees

If an emergency decree is to be unveiled to the world with such aplomb, it cannot be justified by references to this or that aspect of the general crisis, but rather it has to make a fundamental contribution to alleviating causes of the crisis. All great laws have the advantage of having some immediate effect. The lawgiver in such cases the task of finding the cause of the difficulties in the life of the community, and of changing things. There must, therefore, be a sharp distinction between the law and its methods of implementation. The law must not only meet its goal, but also the goal must be clear in every regard.

What is the goal of the new emergency decree?

If the general claim is to heal the damages of the present, that purpose should be clear in the individual details.

The present situation can be characterized by the following points:

1. **Our people's political crisis,**
2. **The production crisis,**
3. **The unemployment crisis,**
4. **The financial crisis in government,**
5. **The financial crisis in the private sphere.**

The people is interested only in the question of how well poorly one solves these major crises.

The people is concerned not with the extent of an emergency decree or the period to which it applies and rightly so. It is not interested in whether or not it took long hours of the day and into the night to develop, but rather it is interested only in the effect it has in dealing with the specified issues.

Through speeches and the press, one attempts to prove the necessity of the new ordinance as a way to alleviate these crises in our public life.

BrÃ¼ning's Failures

Mr. Reich Chancellor, I now wish to present my views to the German public, just as I did before the Young Plan was signed.

1. **The opinion that the fourth emergency degree will resolve our people's political crisis is an illusion.**
2. **The opinion that our domestic economic crisis and our ability to export German goods will be resolved by the emergency decree is an illusion.**
3. **The opinion and hope that it will alleviate unemployment is an illusion.**
4. **The thought that this emergency decree will resolve the crisis in public finance is an illusion.**
5. **Finally, the opinion that it will overcome the financial crises of individuals and the private sector is an illusion.**

Instead of the hoped for results, the opposite of each of these five points will occur. **The future will prove it.**

There is no reason, Mr. Reich Chancellor, for me to support my opinions any further to a System that is convinced that it is the model of reason, and that calls the opposition "dreamers and wishful thinkers." I have even less reason to provide a thorough analysis, **since I learned some months ago how willing the so-called "reasonable thinking" of the present government is from time to time to borrow from the opposition's "garden of daydreams and wishful thinking," presenting to an astonished public what it once said were poisoned fruits, but now are innocuous examples of the "new results of expert thinking."**

I will restrict myself, therefore, Mr. Reich Chancellor, to a thorough refutation of the last part of the emergency decree.

Even the organization shows here that the government is captive to an illusion, namely the crazy belief that the economy could be put back in order before political life. Such a view is emphasized by various statements of our government to foreign countries in which painful questions about the no longer deniable growth of the National Socialist movement are answered by references to the "world economic crisis." A little thought would lead the government to a different conclusion. If that opinion were really correct, the **Economic Party [BrÃ¼ning was a member of that party]** would really have to be in our place! The fact that the opposite is true proves only

that the people have long understood what the governing parties still do not understand. Without a national-political "recovery" within the German people, there will be no economic recovery.

Mr. Reich Chancellor, I assume that you seriously believe that the political appendix to the emergency decree is a suitable means for the "recovery" of the German people, and that one can best entrust such a "recovery" to the police.

I assume, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that you have that opinion, but I further assume that some of your colleagues involved in this major historic law have other possibilities in mind, for example to silence the National Socialist movement and in a larger sense the nationalist opposition, or perhaps even to destroy it. If one takes away a man's shirt, and his pants, and removes his membership badge, he has ceased to be a National Socialist! It was always remarkable how one-sidedly politically significant German politicians saw the world. That comes about because instead of dealing with the deeper nature of a movement, one pays heed only to the familiar reporters from the Mosse and Ulstein publishing houses, to the editorial staffs of *Germania* and *Vorwärts*, seeing them as the political experts who

know what the German people should do!

Bloody Terror and Brüning's Emergency Decree

Mr. Reich Chancellor, you think Germany's domestic peace is threatened. We National Socialists have said for many years that such peace must end if a party consciously preaches Marxist class struggle and incites the worst gutter scum to act as Cheka murderers against human society. **We have been unable for years to understand why Marxist newspapers carry almost open calls for the murder of others and hardly a state attorney dares to intervene only because their targets are called Fascists – or in other words, National Socialists.** Still, these murders and assaults were kept within relatively narrow boundaries. Mr. Reich Chancellor, it is only since you issued emergency decrees to "protect" domestic order from violence and terror did terror unfortunately reach unbearable levels. In practice, your all your emergency decrees have not withstood reality. The most miserable failure is in the "calming of public life." Instead of letting a movement from our people into the visible flow of politics, one kept it away from the spotlight and driven it into the darkness. That followed the brilliant method of the well-known philosopher Vogel, who assumed what what he did not see no longer existed.

The efforts to restrict or eliminate political movements made in recent years have led to enormous bitterness and an worsening of the situation.

Do you believe, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that by taking away from an adult man the symbols of his political viewpoint you also eliminate that viewpoint? You make him more fanatical, since he feels himself the victim of misused public force. Just as France was unable to hinder the growth of Germany's national strength, so little, Mr. Reich Chancellor, will you be able through analogous methods to stop the growth of this force within our own national body.

All the restrictions of the so-called uniform ban, the ban on membership badges, etc., only increase the anger against the present System, and from **all** sides. A quick look at history will persuade you, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that such suppressive measures have always had the opposite effect. And **you**, Mr. Reich Chancellor, will have a hard time refuting the lesson of history in this matter.

This decree will hardly eliminate the Communist Party from our people – the opposite, in fact. You promote it. And as for the National Socialist movement, I assure you, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that this movement will live and rule Germany long after this decree has been forgotten.

Brüning is a Bad Psychologist

I see how little the psychological effects of such measures are understood when I consider the time at which the new emergency decree was issued.

One chose the time **before** Christmas, since one could refer to the holy peace of Christmas and forbid opposition political activity for a long time. Today, naturally, when one bans all meetings, government parties are not affected. **No independent person in Germany will even think of defending this decree!** It would only be possible to speak against it. What a brilliant idea to use Christmas peace as an indirect shield for this infamous emergency decree! Despite it all, Mr. Reich Chancellor, you have given yourself over to yet another psychological illusion. If the constitutional guarantee of free assembly had been maintained, many a one would have been able to express his discontent. It displays dubious talents as a statesman to close off all means of releasing pressure so that the steam pressure builds up!

Just as it was psychologically wrong to announce the emergency decree at that time since it robbed millions of Germans of even the most modest Christmas joy, so, too, the psychological effects are unfortunate.

You are convinced, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that it will make a major contribution to calming people down if one, for example, bans ten thousand National Socialist Christmas parties, robbing hundreds of thousands of impoverished German children of their Christmas presents!

You are convinced, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that it will contribute to political peace and the calming down of public life if one carries this ban so far as, **for example, to ban a symphony concert by a prominent Bavarian orchestra only because it is sponsored by the National Socialist movement!** Or do symphonies by Brahms, Bruckner, and Mozart endanger the republic?

History will demonstrate whether the hopes of strangling a movement with such methods are realistic, or whether they belong in the kingdom of illusions.

Disarming Decent Citizens

Finally, Mr. Reich Chancellor, you hope to eliminate terror from public life by the new regulations on weapons.

Disarming decent people has never prevented attacks by less pleasant sorts, and they have never given up their weapons, but rather only decent citizens.

It is a fateful illusion, Mr. Reich Chancellor, to expect that this method will hinder violent acts by communist murderers. The opposite will occur. If you extend the ban on weapons to disarm German households, just as my S.A. is unarmed, Marxist terror will soon move from the streets into homes.

The bandit had never worried about regulations on disarmament. Mr. Reich Chancellor; if you tell him that decent people no longer have weapons at home, you give the bandit license to go into what should be each individual's castle.

I prophesy, Mr. Reich Chancellor, that this part of the emergency decree will lead to an enormous increase in terror and public insecurity!

Mr. Reich Chancellor, if one considers the last emergency decree, one cannot escape the depressing conviction that it will hold the German people captive to the illusions of the past thirteen years. Realizing that, one cannot escape the obligation to speak.

The National Socialist movement is convinced, more than any other movement, that that a people that wishes to escape its miserable situation can do so only if it is ready to make heavy sacrifices. It considers these sacrifices to be useful and justified only if they are combined with a new faith. The present government has done everything possible psychologically to make our crisis of confidence eternal. It entirely lacks the basic psychological understanding that a system may continue to exist under the constitution because of the fears of the guilty parties, but has long since lost the support of the people. One cannot govern for two years, piling one disappointment upon another, and appeal in the third year to the same faithful trust that one had at the beginning. The System press, of course, will greet each new emergency decree with loud approval, just as paid applauders in the theatre make the most noise for the most miserable performances. They just don't impress the audience. **The people wants no part of it any longer.** Yet there is no way out that is not based on the faithful trust of the masses. The splintering of our national body will not be alleviated by attempting to bring together conflicting worldviews by laws. The part of the German people that still believes in Marxism shrinks every day; the part that believes in us grows every day. No one believes in the center.

Faith in Germany!

Since all of today's government measures lack a deep connection to the spirit of a worldview, they also lack the psychological force and thereby the élan that is the fundamental requirement for laws to be effective. One cannot call on "civic discipline" forever, one cannot always seek refuge in legal paragraphs. No, one day the demands of the real lawgivers must become the demands of the nation.

The nation, however, will follow such a demand only if it is motivated by a clear and unified will. Doctrinaire calls and formal demands for calm, peace, and order will not over the long term replace a spirit of inner unity. The breakdown of such a spirit, however, can never be alleviated by an emergency decree, but rather only through final victory over the political-moral decay that today dominates Germany.

In your speech, Mr. Reich Chancellor, you attempted to attack the National Socialist movement, thereby hindering our victory. The practical results, together with your emergency decree to "alleviate" our crisis, will in the end only help to bring about the real salvation of the German nation.

Although that was not the intention, this emergency decree will help my party to victory, and therefore put an end to the illusions of the present System.

Berlin, 13 December 1931

Adolf Hitler