

The beginning and end of World War II

Germany, 1945

Lesson
90 minutes

Additional
material

Original
Sources

On 29 April 1945, Adolf Hitler wrote his political testament, in which he spoke about his thoughts and intentions of the last few years. A little later Hitler committed suicide. This signified the effective end of the Second World War in Europe and the capitulation of the “Third Reich”.

Political Testament of Hitler, 1945

[...] It is untrue that I or anyone else in Germany wanted the war in 1939. The war was sought and instigated exclusively by those international statesmen who were either of Jewish origin or who worked for Jewish interests. I have made too many offers of arms limitation and arms control, which no one will ever be able to deny, for the responsibility for the outbreak of this war to rest upon me. I have never wanted a second war against England, or even against America, after the first unfortunate world war. Centuries will pass, but from the ruins of our cities and monuments, hatred against those ultimately responsible for it all – international Jewry and its helpers – will continue to renew itself. Just three days before the outbreak of the German-Polish war, I proposed a solution to the German-Polish problems to the British Ambassador in Berlin – similar to that implemented in the case of the Saar region, which was administered under an international mandate. That I made this offer cannot be denied either. It was only rejected because the leading circles in British politics wanted war, partly because of the commercial benefits they were hoping to secure, and partly because of propaganda organised by international Jewry. But I have also left no doubt that if the peoples of Europe are once again seen as the mere stock-in-trade of these international financial conspirators, then the people who are actually guilty of this murderous struggle will also be held accountable: The Jews! [...]

After six years of struggle, which will, despite all our setbacks, go down in history as the most glorious and brave manifestation of a people's will to live, I cannot bring myself to leave the city that is the capital of this empire. Since our forces are too small to withstand any longer the enemy onslaught now at our very doors, and since my own resistance is gradually being devalued by subjects who are as blinded as they are characterless, I would like my fate to be the same as that which millions of others have chosen by staying in this city. Moreover, I do not want to fall into the hands of enemies who need a new spectacle arranged by Jews to amuse their hated masses. I have therefore decided to stay in Berlin and to choose death here of my own free will at the moment at which I believe that I can no longer maintain my position as Führer and Chancellor. I die with a heart made joyful by the immeasurable achievements of our soldiers at the front, of our women at home, and of our farmers and workers, and by the commitment of our youth. All of this bears my name and is unique in history.

It goes without saying that I thank them all from the bottom of my heart, and I hope that they will not give up the fight under any circumstances, but will continue it against the enemies of the fatherland wherever they may be [...]

Before my death, I expel the former Reich Marshal Hermann Göring from the party and deprive him of all rights that might accrue to him from the decree of 29 June 1941 and from my declaration to the Reichstag of 1 September 1939. Instead, I appoint Grand Admiral Dönitz as Reich President and Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht. Before my death I expel the former Reichsführer-SS and Reich Minister of the Interior Heinrich Himmler from the party and from all state offices. [...] Göring and Himmler have caused unmeasurable damage to the country and the entire people, quite apart from their disloyalty to me, by secret negotiations with the enemy, which they conducted without my knowledge and against my will, and by their attempts to seize power in our state in contravention of the law. I demand of all Germans, all National Socialists, all men and women and all soldiers of the Wehrmacht



that they be loyal and obedient to the new government and its President until death. Above all, I commit the leadership of the nation and its followers to scrupulous observance of our racial laws, and to merciless resistance against the world poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry.

Given in Berlin, 29 April 1945, 4 o'clock; Adolf Hitler.

770 Words

Source: W. Lautemann, M. Schlenke (Hg.), Geschichte in Quellen, Weltkriege und Revolutionen 1914-1945, Band 5, München 1961, S. 545 ff., <https://www.geschichte-abitur.de/quellenmaterial/quellen-drittes-reich/politisches-testament-hitlers-1945>, last visited: 11/01/2021

