

The following are excerpts taken from the chapter in *Mein Kampf* entitled, *Weltanschauung* [worldview] and Organization.

I have underlined what I consider the most important concepts in Hitler's worldview. These points are not always easy to understand, since Hitler's bombastic language and convoluted style are confusing. Pick at least five of the points which I have underlined and express in your own words why you think they are important in understanding Hitler and National Socialism.

The parties which exist at present and which draw their profits from the State as it now is cannot be expected to bring about a radical change in the regime or to change their attitude on their own initiative. This is rendered all the more impossible because the forces which now have the direction of affairs in their hands are Jews here and Jews there and Jews everywhere. The trend of development which we are now experiencing would, if allowed to go on unhampered, lead to the realization of the Pan-Jewish prophecy that the Jews will one day devour the other nations and become lords of the earth.

In contrast to the millions of 'bourgeois' and 'proletarian' Germans, who are stumbling to their ruin, mostly through timidity, indolence and stupidity, the Jew pursues his way persistently and keeps his eye always fixed on his future goal. Any party that is led by him can fight for no other interests than his, and his interests certainly have nothing in common with those of the Aryan nations...

If we would transform our ideal picture of the People's State into a reality we shall have to keep independent of the forces that now control public life and seek for new forces that will be ready and capable of taking up the fight for such an ideal. For a fight it will have to be, since the first objective will not be to build up the idea of the People's State but rather to wipe out the Jewish State which is now in existence. As so often happens in the course of history, the main difficulty is not to establish a new order of things but to clear the ground for its establishment... That is why the protagonist of the new idea is unfortunately, in spite of his desire for constructive work, compelled to wage a destructive battle first, in order to abolish the existing state of affairs.

.... For a *Weltanschauung* is intolerant and cannot permit another to exist side by side with it. It imperiously demands its own recognition as unique and exclusive and a complete transformation in accordance with its views throughout all the branches of public life. It can never allow the previous state of affairs to continue in existence by its side.

And the same holds true of religions.

Christianity was not content with erecting an altar of its own. It had first to destroy the pagan altars. It was only in virtue of this passionate intolerance that an apodictic faith could grow up. And intolerance is an indispensable condition for the growth of such a faith.

It may be objected here that in these phenomena which we find throughout the history of the world we have to recognize mostly a specifically Jewish mode of thought and that such fanaticism and intolerance are typical symptoms of Jewish mentality. That may be a thousand fold true; and it is a fact deeply to be regretted. The appearance of intolerance and fanaticism in the history of mankind may be deeply regrettable, and it may be looked upon as foreign to human nature, but the fact does not change conditions as they exist today. The men who wish to liberate our German nation from the conditions in which it now exists cannot cudgel their brains with thinking how excellent it would be if this or that had never arisen. They must strive to find ways and means of abolishing what actually exists. A philosophy of life which is inspired by an infernal spirit of intolerance can only be set aside by a doctrine that is advanced in an equally ardent spirit and fought for with as determined a will and which is itself a new idea, pure and absolutely true.

Each one of us to-day may regret the fact that the advent of Christianity was the first occasion on which spiritual terror was introduced into the much freer ancient world, but the fact cannot be denied that ever since then the world is pervaded and dominated by this kind of coercion and that violence is broken only by violence and terror by terror. Only then can a new regime be created by means of constructive work. Political parties are prone to enter compromises; but a *Weltanschauung* never does this. A political party is inclined to adjust its teachings with a view to meeting those of its opponents, but a *Weltanschauung* proclaims its own infallibility.

...But a general *Weltanschauung* will never share its place with something else. Therefore it can never agree to collaborate in any order of things that it condemns. On the contrary it feels obliged to employ every means in fighting against the old order and the whole world of ideas belonging to that order and prepare the way for its destruction.

... Any new philosophy of life will bring its ideas to victory only if the most courageous and active elements of its epoch and its people are enrolled under its standards and grouped firmly together in a powerful fighting organization. To achieve this purpose it is absolutely necessary to select from the general system of doctrine a certain number of ideas which will appeal to such individuals and which, once they are expressed in a precise and clear-cut form, will serve as articles of faith for a new association of men. While the programme of the ordinary political party is nothing but the recipe for cooking up favourable results out of the next general elections, the programme of a *Weltanschauung* represents a declaration of war against an existing order of things, against present conditions, in short, against the established *Weltanschauung*.

It is not necessary, however, that every individual fighter for such a new doctrine need have a full grasp of the ultimate ideas and plans of those who are the leaders of the movement. It is only necessary that each should have a clear notion of the fundamental ideas and that he should thoroughly assimilate a few of the most fundamental principles, so that he will be convinced of the necessity of carrying the movement and its doctrines to success. The individual soldier is not initiated in the knowledge of high strategical plans. But he is trained to submit to a rigid discipline, to be passionately convinced of the justice and inner worth of his cause and that he must devote himself to it without reserve. So, too, the individual follower of a movement must be made acquainted with its far-reaching purpose, how it is inspired by a powerful will and has a great future before it.

Supposing that each soldier in an army were a general, and had the training and capacity for generalship, that army would not be an efficient fighting instrument. Similarly a political movement would not be very efficient in fighting for a *Weltanschauung* if it were made up exclusively of intellectuals. No, we need the simple soldier also. Without him no discipline can be established.

By its very nature, an organization can exist only if leaders of high intellectual ability are served by a large mass of men who are emotionally devoted to the cause. To maintain discipline in a company of two hundred men who are equally intelligent and capable would turn out more difficult in the long run than in a company of one hundred and ninety less gifted men and ten who have had a higher education.

.... They {other political parties} completely failed to realize the fact that the strength of a political party never consists in the intelligence and independent spirit of the rank-and-file of its members but rather in the spirit of willing obedience with which they follow their intellectual leaders. What is of decisive importance is the leadership itself. When two bodies of troops are arrayed in mutual combat victory will not fall to that side in which every soldier has an expert knowledge of the rules of strategy, but rather to that side which has the best leaders and at the same time the best disciplined, most blindly obedient and best-drilled troops.

That is a fundamental piece of knowledge which we must always bear in mind when we examine the possibility of transforming a *Weltanschauung* into a practical reality.

... the programme of the new movement was condensed into a few fundamental postulates, twenty-five in all. (NOTE: this is a reference to the Nazi Party

Platform of 1920) They are meant first of all to give the ordinary man a rough sketch of what the movement is aiming at. They are, so to say, a profession of faith which on the one hand is meant to win adherents to the movement and, on the other, they are meant to unite such adherents together in a covenant to which all have subscribed.

In these matters we must never lose sight of the following: What we call the programme of the movement is absolutely right as far as its ultimate aims are concerned, but as regards the manner in which that programme is formulated certain psychological considerations had to be taken into account. Hence, in the course of time, the opinion may well arise that certain principles should be expressed differently and might be better formulated. But any attempt at a different formulation has a fatal effect in most cases. For something that ought to be fixed and unshakable thereby becomes the subject of discussion. As soon as one point alone is removed from the sphere of dogmatic certainty, the discussion will not simply result in a new and better formulation which will have greater consistency but may easily lead to endless debates and general confusion...

... For would it be possible to inspire people with blind faith in the truth of a doctrine if doubt and uncertainty are encouraged by continual alterations in its external formulation?

The essentials of a teaching must never be looked for in its external formulas, but always in its inner meaning. And this meaning is unchangeable. And in its interest one can only wish that a movement should exclude everything that tends towards disintegration and uncertainty in order to preserve the unified force that is necessary for its triumph.

... Therefore whoever really and seriously desires that the idea of the People's State should triumph must realize that this triumph can be assured only through a militant movement and that this movement must ground its strength only on the granite firmness of an impregnable and firmly coherent programme...

This important principle had to be acknowledged in practice by the members of the National Socialist Movement at its very beginning. In its programme of twenty-five points the National Socialist German Labour Party has been furnished with a basis that must remain unshakable. The members of the movement, both present and future, must never feel themselves called upon to undertake a critical revision of these leading postulates, but rather feel themselves obliged to put them into practice as they stand. Otherwise the next generation would, in its turn and with equal right, expend its energy in such purely formal work within the party, instead of winning new adherents to the movement and thus adding to its power. For the majority of our followers the

essence of the movement will consist not so much in the letter of our theses but in the meaning that we attribute to them.

The new movement owes its name to these considerations, and later on its programme was drawn up in conformity with them. They are the basis of our propaganda. In order to carry the idea of the People's State to victory, a popular party had to be founded, a party that did not consist of intellectual leaders only but also of manual labourers. Any attempt to carry these theories into effect without the aid of a militant organization would be doomed to failure to-day, as it has failed in the past and must fail in the future. ...