

Comrades!

In this quiet Sunday hour let us stand faithfully together and again remember those who were once amongst us and who marched out in 1914 to defend the borders of the Reich. They gave their life for the Fatherland and now rest in the cool earth, be it in the homeland or far away in enemy territory. It has not been granted to us to stand at their gravesides and recall with gratitude all that they sacrificed. So we feel all the more deeply the need to honour again those who, from the ranks of their comrades, died a hero's death for the Fatherland and to remember their names now and forever more.

The duty of gratitude is a sacred duty! Cool pastures cover the silent sleepers. The days fly by, weeks and months pass, the seasons change, one year after another draws to a close. The gaps rent open by death have closed. A new generation is growing up and beginning to take the reins out of the hands of those who suffered, body and soul, during the hard years of the war.

Life was easier in the German Fatherland before the War! We were a united and prosperous people. A brave army protected the borders. Our flag flew on the seas. Commerce and progress flourished. The old enjoyed their final years in peace. A man knew what it was he was working for. Our youth grew up more carefree and children were looked after and protected.

Everything has changed! It was not the victorious sword of the enemy that defeated our courageous army. A pack of envious nations harried us to death. It was no honourable battle of man against man. They starved us and wore us out and the blood of our finest that flowed in torrents flowed in vain. What is one against many? What was the handful of our bold lads against the global power of our enemies?²

War is destiny. It has been written by the iron pen of history throughout the centuries. As long as humanity exists some will rise and some will fall. We struggled desperately, year after year, but it was not given to us to emblazon victory on our banner. They took everything from us. They took the tranquil,

¹ The transcriber of the speech is likely to have been Marianne's mother, Clara Angermann, since the handwriting bears striking similarities to that used for the first part of Journal 1.

² Konrad Angermann implies here that Germany's defeat came about through an international alliance of nations who were only able to emerge victorious by dishonourable – because non-martial – means. The German fighting man, he claims, remained unbowed. The idea that Germany had been brought low by traitors in the rear and the enemy's preponderance of matériel was widespread in right-wing circles in Germany after World War One but has been emphatically rejected by modern historical scholarship. (See, for example: Wilhelm Deist, 'The Military Collapse of the German Empire: The Reality Behind the Stab-in-the-Back Myth' (trans. by E.J. Feuchtwanger), *War in History* 3/2 (April 1996), 186–207.) Such myths could easily accommodate the message of anti-Semitism and a hint of how this might come about can be seen in Konrad's speech. The "global power" of the enemy mentioned here would later come to be located by parties of the far-right (such as the National Socialists and the DNVP) in the financial system which they claimed was run by an international Jewish conspiracy.

peaceful years from the old, they make men fight and struggle and deny him the fruits of his labours, they have made a merciless, joyless life for our youth and deprived our children of the best – a beautiful, united Fatherland!

But we are German and we will remain German!

For us, being German means our Fatherland, our Homeland, our houses and farms, our women and children. Through tough and tireless work we will rebuild everything they have smashed, everything they have taken from us. Let us cultivate and sow the desolate fields, let our children tend and nourish their fruits and let our children's children bring the final harvest in. It is hard, difficult work but it has to be done, not least as a sacred duty of thanks to those who went to their deaths for a greater, more secure Fatherland.

The darkest night is followed by a day of sunshine! Those whose names we have recorded on this roll of honour – they fought and struggled for that day of sunshine. Let us keep working in their memory, let us be united, brothers together. Let no danger or distress come between us for as surely as we are Germans, just as surely our comrades died for the cause of Germany and just as surely the bright day of German freedom will dawn again.

And so I place this roll of honour under the town's protection with thanks to those who donated it to remember those who ought never, ever to be forgotten.

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