Houston Stewart Chamberlain Letter to Hitler October 7, 1923

This is truly one of the most amazing letters in German history. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, one the leading nationalist philosophers in Germany and a key part of Richard Wagner's circle, hails Hitler as the new leader of Germany in 1923. It shows the depth of Hitler's support in German nationalist circles even in 1923.

The exact text follows in English and original German.

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Most respected and dear Herr Hitler:

You have every right to be surprised at this intrusion having seen with your own eyes how difficult it is for me to speak. But I cannot resist the urge to address a few words to you. I view this, however, as an entirely one-sided act, i.e. I do not expect an answer from you.

I have been wondering why it was you of all people, you who are so extraordinary in awakening people from sleep and humdrum routines, who recently gave me a longer and more refreshing sleep than I have experienced since that fateful day in August 1914 when I was first struck down by this insidious sickness. Now I believe I understand that it is precisely this that characterizes and defines your being: the true awakener is at the same time the bestower of peace.

You are not at all, as you have been described to me, a fanatic. In fact, I would call you the complete opposite of a fanatic. The fanatic inflames the mind, you warm the heart. The fanatic wants to overwhelm people with words, you wish to convince, only to convince them-and that is why you are successful. Indeed, I would also describe you as the opposite of a politician, in the commonly accepted sense of the word, for the essence of all politics is membership of a party, whereas with you all parties disappear, consumed by the heat of your love for the fatherland. It was, I think, the misfortune of our great Bismarck that he became, as fate would have it (by no means through innate predisposition), a little too involved in politics. May you be spared this fate.

You have immense achievements ahead of you, but for all your strength of will I do not regard you as a violent man. You know Goethe's distinction between force and force. There is the force that stems from and in turn leads to chaos, and there is the force which shapes the universe.... It is this creative sense that I mean when I number you among the constructive men rather than those who are violent.

I constantly ask myself whether the poverty of political instinct for which Germans are so often blamed may not be symptomatic of a much deeper talent for state-building. In any case the German's organizational skills are unsurpassed and his scientific capacity is unequalled. In the essay Politische Ideale I pinned my hopes on this. The ideal kind of politics is to have none. But this non-politics must be frankly acknowledged and forced upon the world through the exercise of power. Nothing will be achieved so long as the parliamentary system dominates; for this the Germans have, God knows, not a spark of talent! I consider its prevalence to be the greatest misfortune; it can only drag us continually into the mire and ruin every plan for a healthy and revitalized father­land.

But I am digressing, for I wanted only to speak of you. That you brought me peace is related very much to your eyes and hand gestures. Your eye works almost as a hand: it grips and holds a person; and you have the singular quality of being able to focus your words on one particular listener at any given moment. As for your hands, they are so expressive in their movement that they rival your eyes. Such a man brings rest to a poor suffering spirit! Especially when he is dedicated to the service of the father­land.

My faith in Germandom has never wavered for a moment, though my hopes had, I confess, reached a low ebb. At one blow you have transformed the state of my soul. That Germany in its hour of greatest need has given birth to a Hitler is proof of vitality; your actions offer further evidence, for a man's per­sonality and actions belong together. That the magnificent Ludendorff openly supports you and embraces your movement: what a wonderful combination!

I was able to sleep without a care. Nothing caused me to awaken again. May God protect you!