

# 1936 Nuremberg Party Rally - The Oath Under the Dome of Light

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**Background:** This is the account of the Political Leaders Meeting at the 1936 Nuremberg Rally. It was held at night, with searchlights surrounding the field. The effect was most impressive according to contemporary accounts.

**The source:** “Der Schwur unter dem Lichtdom,” *Der Parteitag der Ehre vom 8. bis 14. September 1936. Offizieller Bericht über den Verlauf des Reichsparteitages mit sämtlichen Kongreßreden* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1936, pp. 170-177.

The Oath Under the Dome of Light

The Nuremberg Party Rally continued Friday evening with the powerful roll call of political leaders. As the setting sun cast its red glow over the towers of Nuremberg, 90,000 of Adolf Hitler’s political followers and 25,000 flags marched in wide columns to the Duzendteich. All Nuremberg was on its feet to see the impressive spectacle.



Just before 7:30 when it was nearly dark, a floodlight shot heavenward. The small spotlight's beam reveals more than 200 enormous swastika flags that fly from 12 meter flagpoles in the evening breeze. Suddenly one realizes the enormous size of the field and drinks in the unforgettable picture. More lights illuminate the flawless white marble platform, an unforgettably beautiful sight. All who see the splendid sight stand still and breathe quietly. The first of the Führer's large buildings on the Nuremberg Reich Party Rally grounds is seen in all its beauty.

More lights shoot across the field, revealing the endless brown columns, showing their movements, until suddenly, at a command, the 90,000 are in place.



A festive mood fills all, as if they knew what an experience awaits them. But what actually happens surpasses all their expectations.

Orders blare from the loudspeakers, hurried automobiles dash here and there. Shortly before 8, the spotlights at the south fade. It is the direction from which the Führer will come. The 500 pupils of the party school Ordensburg Vogelsang have entered just before, displaying perfect order, and taken their position before the main platform.

The voice of Dr. Ley comes over the loudspeaker: "Attention! The Führer is here!" The shouts that always accompany the Führer resound from the Dutzendteich train station. The colonnade slowly circles the field, then suddenly — as the shouts of those on the other side of the platform announce the Führer's arrival — 180,000 people look to the heavens. 150 blue spotlights surge upward hundreds of meters, forming overhead the most powerful cathedral that mortals have ever seen.

There, at the entrance, we see the Führer. He, too, stands for several moments looking upward, then turns and walks, followed by his aides, past the long, long columns, 20 deep, of the fighters for his idea. An ocean of Heil-shouts and jubilation surrounds him.

Several stars shine through the deep blue curtain of the cathedral of light, and the flags of the German nation flutter in the soft wind.

The Führer has reached his place. The loudspeaker thunders: "Flags. Forward, March!" We know that 25,000 flags are to enter. We look out and see thousands of golden points coming from the direction of the tribune on the far side. They move forward, the red of the flags appears, the black swastikas on the white background glow against the brown uniforms.



Now the flags cascade in, through eight side entrances, with another flood coming in at the wide middle entrance. Spotlights illuminate the flags at the head, casting a silver glow that intensifies as it nears us.

Finally, finally, as the masses gaze as if transfixed, the flood of flags comes to a rest. Fanfares sound into the night, and 500 pupils from the school at Burg Vogelsang take the oath for us all, for all Germans:

**We have come**

**For the good**

**And to renew the sacred oath.**

**Blazing flames hold us together**

**Into eternity.**

**May the times**

**Bring what they will,**

**We are a young people ever ready.**

**No one shall take this faith**

**From those who are dedicated to Germany.**

**When we pass on,**

**Something new will come**

**Today and forever more.**

Today and forever more — each repeats it to himself, and holds firmly to it.

“We remember the dead of our movement and the Great War.” —  
The flags sink as the song of good comrades plays softly.

Would that you could be with us, you who gave your lives on Europe's battlefields, who gave your blood on the streets in the struggle for Germany. If only you could see what — in only four years — has become of your Germany. The heart grows heavy, old wounds reappear — then a voice orders “Raise the flags! Heads high! Sadness may not overwhelm us! Germany must live!”



Turning toward the Führer, **Reich Organization Leader Dr. Ley** speaks the words of the oath to the gathered formation:

My Führer! The political leaders of the party stand before you. Millions more of them throughout the country join us in this festive hour and listen with us. They are men of every class and occupation: workers, craftsmen, farmers, professionals, They and their flags have come from everywhere. My Führer! These men want to tell you how much the people love and honor you. They want to see you and hear you. That gives each of them strength for the coming year.

These men thank you, My Führer, as do we all, because you, My Führer, believed in us at a time when all were in despair. No one besides you, My Führer, can take the credit for having saved Germany. You alone saved Germany. (Jubilant agreement.)

When these people collapsed because its leaders failed and as fate asked each of us “Do you believe in Germany,” the best of us despaired and the others chased after the false gods of the economy and money. No one was able to answer without hesitation: “Yes, fate, I believe!” Only you, My Führer, said then: “Yes, fate, I believe in Germany and in the German worker!” (Renewed agreement from the masses.) These men thank you for that. The whole nation thanks

you, because at that time you did not doubt the German people, but believed in them.”

I wish to express our thanks and everything that we carry in our hearts in the following confession of faith:

In this sacred hour, as the endless dome towers over us and into eternity, this we pledge: We believe in the Providence that created us, who leads and protects us, and who has sent you, My Führer, to free Germany. That we believe, My Führer. (Thunderous applause demonstrates the agreement of the masses.)



Now **the Führer** speaks to his political leaders.

My party comrades! People of the National Socialist movement!

We meet here for the fourth time. How this field has changed! So has our Reich! And so, we can say with even greater pride, has our people!

We have experienced in these four years the miracle of a resurrection of a defeated and demoralized and suppressed people. Today these people stand before us once more, restored in outlook

and heart.

Each time we come to this city, we can look back on a year of work, but also on a year of accomplishments. Three years ago as we met the world was in motion. There may have been some who thought the wheel of history could be rolled back. A year later, two years ago, we had just taken steps necessary to preserve the strength of the movement. A year ago the threading clouds of enemy opposition hung over Germany, foreign rejection and threatening misunderstandings. Now we are here once more and all of us, you and I and the nation, know that the time of inner turmoil is as much behind us as is the time of external threats. (Stormy applause from hundreds of thousands.)

As we have come together here, so today the German people have also come together. As you have marched here in columns beneath your flags, my flag bearers, the German people are behind you! I have reminded the German people in my proclamation of the wonders of the past four years. We are reminded at this festival what has become of the German people.

What a spirit seized our people! How proud and manly it has once more become. It has overcome all the powers of destruction, collapse and dishonor, and has found once again the path to honor! Today we can again be proud of our people! This miracle that has renewed our people, my fighting comrades, is not a gift from heaven given to those unworthy of it.

Never has there been a movement that struggled with more fanatic, devoted, sacrificial commitment to national resurrection than we have shown in the past eighteen years! (Stormy applause.)

We have fought for our people for the souls of millions, of our workers, our farmers, our citizens! We have fought as one fights only for the most priceless gift that this world has to offer. What have we given over these years in work, in sacrifice, in devotion, in fanaticism, in contempt of death! We were successful not only because I was your leader, but rather far more because you were my followers. (Enthusiastic jubilation.)

We feel once more in this moment the miracle that brought us



together! You heard once the voice of a man that moved your hearts, that awakened you, and you followed this voice. You followed for years without even seeing the bearer of the voice himself. You heard only the voice and you followed.

The miracle of our coming together moves us all. Not all of you can see me, and I cannot see all of you. But I feel you, and you feel me! The belief in the greatness of our people has made us small people large, it has made us poor people rich, it has made wavering, cowardly, anxious men brave and courageous, the blind to see. It has brought us together!

You have come to this city from your small village, from your market towns, from your cities, from mines and factories, from behind the plow. You have come from your daily routine and from your labors for Germany to share this feeling: We are together, we are it and it is us, and we are now Germany! (A wave of enthusiasm flows across the field.) It is splendid to know that we are gathered here as representatives of the German nation. Everyone knows: These 140,000 have but one thought and their heart, one longing, they all think the same. That is the source of our movement's strength that has brought us through all that fate had to offer toward the goal for which we strive, and which is now in reach.

It is wonderful for me to be your Führer.

Who can be prouder of his followers than he who knows that they are moved by nothing but the purest idealism!

Who forced you to follow me? What could I offer you, what could I give you? We together agreed on one thing: on the struggle for a great shared idea! We grew in size and strength until we were the victors.

For years I could greet you only as my fighting comrades. Today I greet you as victors. You have built a new home for our people, and have given those who dwell in that house a new spirit and new meaning. All those who may think that they can shake this state, or even bring it to collapse, should take note. They should not deceive themselves! If our old enemies and opponents should seek to attack us once more, our battle flags will fly high and they will learn

respect for us! (Renewed thundering shouts of Heil across the wide plain.)

They will have to learn that Germany is no place for them.

We had no prayer but this during our long years of struggle: Providence, give our people peace at home and abroad! Our generation has experienced so much that it is understandable why we long for peace. We want to work, to build our Reich, to build it according to our ideas and not those of the bolshevist jews. (Roaring applause.)

We want to work for the future of the children of our people, for a future that will not only be safe for them, but easier as well. We have so much behind us that we have only one request for a gracious and good Providence: "Spare our children that which we have gone through!"

We desire nothing but peace and quiet in which to do our work. May others have the same wish, for we have not hesitated to give up our rest when it was necessary to deal with internal troublemakers. We have not aged during our struggle. We are as young as ever. What the years added our idealism subtracted.

With and behind our flags march our new youth.

We are happy and proud to see them. A new generation of leaders is maturing. What fate's hard process of selection graciously granted us, that we want to guarantee for the future through our own tough selection.

To be a National Socialist is to be a man, it is to be a fighter, it is to be brave and courageous and sacrificial. We will be that for all eternity!



In this fourth Reich Party Rally since the seizure of power we can look calmly to the future. We are not careless and foolish. History has given us hard lessons. But we are calm and self confident. I am so when I see you. I know that there is a unique movement behind me, a wonderful organization of men and women. I see before me endless columns of the flags of our new Reich. I make this prophecy to you:

This Reich has the first days of its youth behind it. It will grow in

the coming centuries, becoming strong and powerful! These flags will be borne by ever new generations of our people. Germany is healthy once more! Our people are reborn!

I greet you, my old fighting comrades, my flag bearers, my standard bearers of a new history, and I greet you and thank you for all the loyalty and faith that you have given me over the long years.

I greet you as the hope of the present and the guarantee of our future.

And I especially greet the youth who are present. Become men like those you see before you!

Fight as they have fought! Be upright and determined, fear no one and do your duty!

If you do so, Providence will never leave our people.

Heil Germany!

An enormous wave of jubilation fills the dark field as the Führer ends his speech with these words.