

**(2) REPLY FROM HERR HITLER TO MR. CHAMBERLAIN, DATED
23rd AUGUST, 1939.**

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

The British Ambassador has just handed to me a communication in which Your Excellency draws attention in the name of the British Government to a number of points which, in your estimation, are of the greatest importance. I may be permitted to answer your letter as follows:—

(1) Germany has never sought conflict with England and has never interfered in English interests. On the contrary she has for years endeavoured although, unfortunately, in vain to win England's friendship. On this account she voluntarily assumed in a wide area of Europe the limitations on her own interests which from a national political point of view it would have otherwise been very difficult to tolerate.

(2) The German Reich, however, like every other State possesses certain definite interests which it is impossible to renounce. These do not extend beyond the limits of the necessities laid down by former German history and deriving from vital economic prerequisites some of these questions held, and still hold a significance both of a national, political and psychological character which no German Government is able to ignore. To these questions belong the German city of Danzig, and the connected problem of the Corridor. Numerous statesmen, historians, and men of letters even in England have been conscious of this at any rate up to a few years ago. I would add that all these territories lying in the aforesaid German sphere of interest, and in particular those lands which returned to the Reich eighteen months ago, received their cultural development at the hands not of the English but exclusively of the Germans, and this moreover already from a time dating back over a thousand years.

(3) Germany was prepared to settle the questions of Danzig and of the Corridor by the method of negotiation on the basis of a proposal of truly unparalleled magnanimity. The allegations disseminated by England regarding a German mobilization against Poland, the assertion of aggressive designs towards Roumania, Hungary, &c., as well as the so-called guarantee declarations which were subsequently given, had, however, dispelled Polish inclination to negotiate on a basis of this kind which would have been tolerable for Germany also.

(4) The unconditional assurance given by England to Poland that she would render assistance to that country in all circumstances regardless of the causes from which a conflict might spring could only be interpreted in that country as an encouragement thenceforward to unloosen under cover of such a charter a wave of appalling terrorism against the one million and a half German inhabitants living in Poland. The atrocities which since then have been taking place in that country are terrible for the victims, but intolerable for a great Power such as the German Reich, which is expected to remain a passive onlooker during these happenings. Poland has been guilty of numerous breaches of her legal obligations towards the Free City of Danzig, has made demands in the character of ultimata, and has initiated a process of economic strangulation.

(5) The Government of the German Reich therefore recently caused the Polish Government to be informed that it was not prepared passively to accept this development of affairs, that it will not tolerate further addressing of notes in the character of ultimata to Danzig, that it will not tolerate a continuance of the persecutions of the German minority, that it will equally not tolerate the extermination of the Free City of Danzig by economic measures, in other words, the destruction of the vital bases of the population of Danzig by a kind of Customs blockade, and that it will not tolerate the occurrence of further acts of provocation directed against the Reich. Apart from this the questions of the Corridor and of Danzig must and shall be solved.

(6) Your Excellency informs me in the name of the British Government that you will be obliged to render assistance to Poland in any such case of intervention on the part of Germany. I take note of this statement of yours and assure you