

PARLIAMENT AND THE WAR

British Reply to German Proposals

House of Commons, 12th October

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR CHAMBERLAIN) : Last week, in speaking of the announcement about the Russo-German pact, I observed that it contained a suggestion that some peace proposals were likely to be put forward, and I said that, if such proved to be the case, we should examine them in consultation with the Governments of the Dominions and of the French Republic in the light of certain relevant considerations. Since then, the German Chancellor has made his speech and the consultations I referred to have taken place.

We must take it that the proposals which the German Chancellor puts forward for the establishment of what he calls "the certainty of European security" are to be based on recognition of his conquests and of his right to do what he pleases with the conquered.

It would be impossible for Great Britain to accept any such basis without forfeiting her honour and abandoning her claim that international disputes should be settled by discussion and not by force.

It is no part of our policy to exclude from her rightful place in Europe a Germany which will live in amity and confidence with other nations. On the contrary, we believe that no effective remedy can be found for the world's ills that does not take account of the just claims and needs of all countries, and whenever the time may come to draw the lines of a new peace settlement, His Majesty's Government would feel that the future would hold little hope unless such a settlement could be reached through the method of negotiation and agreement.

It was not, therefore, with any vindictive purpose that we embarked on war but simply in defence of freedom. It is not alone the freedom of the small nations that is at stake: there is also in jeopardy the peaceful existence of Great Britain, the Dominions, India, the rest of the British Empire, France, and, indeed, of all freedom-loving nations. Whatever may be the issue of the present struggle, and in whatever way it may be brought to a conclusion, the world will not be the same world that we have known before. Looking to the future we can see that deep changes will inevitably leave their mark on every field of men's thought and action, and if humanity is to guide aright the new forces that will be in operation, all nations will have their part to play.

His Majesty's Government know all too well that in modern war between two great Powers victor and vanquished must alike suffer cruel loss. But surrender to wrongdoing would spell the extinction of all hope, and the annihilation of all those values of life which have through centuries been at once the mark and the inspiration of human progress.

We seek no material advantage for ourselves; we desire nothing from the German people which should offend their self-respect. We are not aiming only at victory, but rather looking beyond it to the laying of a foundation of a better international system which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of each succeeding generation.

I am certain that all the peoples of Europe, including the people of Germany, long for peace, a peace which will enable them to live their lives without fear, and to devote their energies and their gifts to the development of their culture, the pursuit of their ideals and the improvement of their material prosperity. The peace which we are determined to secure, however, must be a real and settled peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and repeated threats. What stands in the way of such a peace? It is the German Government, and the German Government alone, for it is they who by repeated acts of aggression have robbed all Europe of tranquillity and implanted in the hearts of all their neighbours an ever-present sense of insecurity and fear.

I would sum up the attitude of His Majesty's Government as follows:

Herr Hitler rejected all suggestions for peace until he had overwhelmed Poland, as he had previously overthrown Czecho-Slovakia. Peace conditions cannot be acceptable which begin by condoning aggression.

The proposals in the German Chancellor's speech are vague and uncertain and contain no suggestion for righting the wrongs done to Czecho-Slovakia and to Poland.

Even if Herr Hitler's proposals were more closely defined and contained suggestions to right those wrongs, it would still be necessary to ask by what practical means the German Government intend to convince the world that aggression will cease and that pledges will be kept. Past experience has shown that no reliance can be placed upon the promises of the present German Government. Accordingly, acts—not words alone—must be forthcoming before we, the British peoples, and France, our gallant and trusted Ally, would be justified in ceasing to wage war to the utmost of our strength. Only when world confidence is restored will it be possible to find—as we would wish to do with the aid of all who show good will—solutions of those questions, which disturb the world, which

stand in the way of disarmament, retard the restoration of trade and prevent the improvement of the well-being of the peoples.

There is thus a primary condition to be satisfied. Only the German Government can fulfil it. If they will not, there can as yet be no new or better world order of the kind for which all nations yearn.

MR C. R. ATTLEE (Leader of the Opposition) : We of the Labour party have taken up a definite stand against wanton aggression and for the rule of law. We are convinced that there is no prospect of enduring peace until we get rid of violence. We are resolved to carry on this struggle until we have secured the necessary conditions for a peaceful world. It is impossible for anyone at the present time to discuss usefully the detailed terms of a European settlement, but we can and should affirm principles, and the first principle is that we cannot any longer endure a world that is subject at all times to violence, a world in which there is no rule of law. I was glad to hear the Prime Minister say, in his speech, that in arriving at any peace, we should do it in consultation with the German people—we should be considering the future of the German people. We are not standing for a Carthaginian peace, but we are standing for a Europe in which, while the German people will have their rights, all other nations will have their rights as well. We are standing against domination, we are standing against Imperialism, and we must also stand for the only conditions under which it is possible that those smaller nations could exist, and that is a system of collective security in which they do not have to rely only on their own strength. If we want to build up a new Europe, it must be a more closely co-ordinated Europe. We stand for disarmament, but you must have disarmament of the mind first of all, and you must have security if you are going to get disarmament. We do not believe in the carving-up of Colonies or in the exploitation of Colonies by any Power. We believe in Colonies being for the people who live there, and in the use of all the resources of the world in the interests of all the peoples of the world. No patched-up peace which is only going to lead to another war, no patched-up peace which will leave only an uneasy world staggering under a huge burden of armaments, will content us. We are in this struggle. We must see that we come out of this struggle with nothing less than a new world.

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR (Leader of the Liberal Party) : We cannot now go back to Europe as it was. A new dispensation is inevitable. It may be based on force and tyranny, and let us face the fact that all the indications in Europe at the present time are that it will be based on force and tyranny, but it will not be so based unless the democracies allow their will to be paralysed by fear and irresolution. If we stand firm, we can now win the opportunity, of which we must steel ourselves by prayer and thought to be worthy, of laying the foundations of Europe on a basis of freedom and consent. If the Germans want Hitlerism, have we the right or the power to demand its destruction? Surely the answer is this, that we recognize the right of a nation to govern itself in its own way, even to choose a dictatorship if it wants it. We may be horrified by the results. We may see the loathsome spectres of racial and religious persecution rearing their ugly heads. We may witness the horrors of secret police oppression and of concentration camps. We have the right and the duty to condemn these manifestations of barbarism, but it is not for us to chastise another people for its own misgovernment or to go to war on behalf of Pastor Niemuller or the German Jews. The German people must find means of setting their own house in order and we must recognize their rights of self-government in their own country. But when they seek to impose their tyranny on their neighbours, the peace and freedom of every other nation, including our own, are threatened. To shrink from any sacrifice to stop the spread of Nazi tyranny would be to betray not only our country, but our democratic ideals and our hopes of establishing peace in the world. I would urge the Government to proclaim by every means in their power to the German people and to the world at large, that if this war goes on it is not because we have any territorial claims upon them—we have none, nor because we wish them ill—we wish them freedom and prosperity; nor because we want to dictate peace to them, because, as the Prime Minister has said, we want them to join with us in rebuilding Europe on a foundation of justice and good faith.

MR GEORGE LANSBURY (Labour) : I wish, first of all, to say that, like everyone in this House, I and the friends with whom I am usually associated view with as much horror as does everybody else the aggression, the persecution and the slaughter which have taken place in Poland; but while we may express our sympathy with the Polish people there are those of us who cannot accept the doctrine that by more slaughter the wrong which has been done will be rectified. I do not understand how men who are infinitely better educated than I am can dare to stand up at this period in the history of the world and say that out of this universal slaughter, out of the hatred that will be engendered, out of all the horrors

which will take place, some good, new edifice of peace and security can be erected. I am glad to hear from the right hon Gentleman that he does not claim that France and Britain alone must settle what the terms of peace are to be, whether they carry this thing to an end or it is ended before. The smaller countries of the world, especially in Europe, have as big an interest in this business as have any of the larger countries. You cannot overlook the fact that Lord Halifax, in another place and the Prime Minister to-day at that Box spoke of the new world into which we shall emerge. I have said in this House, and I repeat this afternoon, that we are living in a new world now. For years this world of men and women has been advancing, and there has been progress in regard to economic conditions and in the power that man possesses over Nature. There has been this terrible dilemma, that we can produce abundantly everything we need, without being able to distribute it. I believe we and the world will be making a tremendous mistake unless some effort is made to break down the idea that our country at this juncture, for some reason which they do not understand, should carry on this war. I feel more strongly than I can say that any and every opportunity should be taken to end the war. I know now the tremendous effort that our country has made. I wonder whether the day will ever come when a similar effort will be made to sweep away the bad economic conditions and the poverty and destitution in our own country, and whether there will ever be a day when Ministers will stand at that Box and say: "Now we are building a new England, a new Britain and a new world." If I could be convinced that out of war and slaughter, and out of all this bestial business, a true peace would come, I would go out and cheer them and beg them to go and join; and if I had the strength, I would go and join with them. But I know from the bottom of my soul, because I am convinced by experience, by what I have read and by experience in my own lifetime, that you cannot overcome evil by evil and you cannot cast out force by force. You may tell me a thousand times that Hitler is this, that on the other, and you may tell me that no one's words are to be trusted; but when you speak of democracy, just remember India. I am sorry that the First Lord of the Admiralty is not here. When we fought for the miserable Measure that is at present operating in India, he led 70 or 80 Members against that tiny bit of democracy for India. To-day, if we want to show the world that we really believe in democracy, it is our business to apply our principles where we are capable of doing so.

MR H. V. A. M. RAIKES (Conservative): Peace must succeed victory, but if one thing is almost certain it is that, until either the German Army has been beaten in the field or the German home front has been broken behind the German Army, it is profitless to talk of a real peace, and a peace that will endure. Can you expect that Hitler fresh from his victories in Poland, freshly inspired by a few people, who do not represent general feeling, in this country and elsewhere, talking about negotiations, will offer us terms which we can accept?

MR A. EDWARDS (Labour): Does the hon Member say that it is part of the Government's policy to destroy Hitler?

MR RAIKES: I understood that at the very start of this war the Government laid it down that Nazism must be defeated. It seems to me that it would be an abuse of terms to suggest that Nazism must be defeated and that Hitler might remain. Peace talks will be considered at any time, but it is not likely that there will be peace before victory, and we have to face the pretty hard and difficult task before us. By taking on this show over Poland—perhaps not an issue which some of us would have chosen—we have not taken it on from selfish motives. We have taken it on because we believe the time has come when aggression has to be checked, and when paganism and evil, and all that spirit which has dominated Germany, and not only Germany alone, have to be removed. I hope and believe that we shall go forward this winter, next year, and, if necessary, the year after, in the determination that we shall never be defeated in our purpose until aggression has ceased and liberty has been restored.

SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS (Labour): We on this side of the House have certainly been consistently opposed to the regime of Hitler in Germany. It would, indeed, have been to the great benefit of our country and of the world as a whole if that antagonism had been shared by the Government during the last five years. I am as unwilling as any hon Member in this House to place any reliance upon the promises of Hitler, or of any similar government anywhere in the world. But that unwillingness cannot discharge us from the duty to make clear to the world, and to our own people, what exactly it is for which we are asking them to suffer if we are determined to carry on the war. The offer that has been made by the German rulers is, obviously, one that we could not for a moment accept, and yet it would, in my view, be the height of unjustifiable folly merely to turn it down without putting forward in clear and precise terms our own objective. By our statement now of that purpose we shall largely decide the course of the war, if it continues, and we shall disclose to the rest of the world the reality or the unreality of our professions in the cause of democracy and freedom. But it is not only the rest of the world that matters in

this relation. The spirit of our own people is of the most vital importance, if this war is to be prosecuted. To-day, there are in this country a large and growing number of people who are feeling that, whatever comes out of this war, it is absolutely impossible that we should go back again to the conditions that existed before the war. As the Prime Minister has already stated in his speech to-day, there is a realization that some new order must come out of the war, and those people are determined, so far as they can achieve their purpose, that that newer and better type of national and international organization shall emerge for the benefit of the common people of the world. That is their only real interest and desire, and unless they can clearly see some hope of accomplishing such a purpose, they will have no enthusiasm for prosecuting a war which they will regard as a hopeless and senseless struggle. Any definitive world settlement must envisage democracy and freedom, if that is our true aim, not only in territories that have been conquered by the Germans, but throughout the world. Our care for India must be as great as it is for Poland. Our readiness to re-establish the map of Europe must be equalled by our readiness to reconsider the whole question of the Imperial conquests of the past. We cannot, without laying ourselves open to the charge of cynicism, select the territories of others for the benefits of democracy and freedom while withholding those benefits from territories from which we derive economic advantage. To go forward with a war upon such a basis would, in my view, be to invite disaster.

MR L. C. M. S. AMERY (Conservative): We are not going to get a Europe in which these things can even be discussed—and certainly, not settled—until this system, this tradition, this incarnate gangsterdom which is the German Government to-day, is broken and has lost the faith of the German people.

MR C. T. CULVERWELL (Conservative): Does the right hon Gentleman really think that after a long and bloody war we should be calm and better able to discuss these thorny problems?

MR AMERY: I do not think these problems can best be discussed at a moment when the German people are intoxicated with an easy victory. There is the Germany that is ascendant at this moment; and there is another Germany, suppressed, speechless, whether at home or in the concentration camp—the Germany whose traditions go back to the more generous, more cultured, wiser Germany of the dreams of German unity of '48, and other dreams since. But there is a third Germany, larger than either of those two—the vast mass of Germans who support Nazi-ism and believe in it so long as it is successful; and that Germany has to be taught by defeat that aggression does not pay. Only when it has learned that lesson, then it can also learn from us, so far as we are concerned, that there is also room, within a new and settled Europe, for the German nation to have economic freedom and development and to live its own life, without being any more afraid of oppression by its neighbours than its neighbours are afraid of oppression by Germany. That position has not come yet, and surely, as practical men, we are concerned not with ideal positions, but with the world as it is to-day. In that situation, what is the good of talking of detailed issues as the hon and learned Member did, and still more of suggesting that they can bring peace to-day? At this moment, at any rate, let us accept the statement, to my mind clear and generous as well as unequivocal, which the Prime Minister has made, and let us get on with the terrific problem facing us in the war.

MR CAMPBELL STEPHEN (Independent Labour): Give the people in each country something worth fighting for. The trouble in every country in the world to-day is the poverty of the people. Hitler gets the people of Germany behind him because he promises to solve the problem of their poverty. He tells them about their misery and how he and his colleagues will lead them out of it, and he leads them into Poland. The British Government should put forward terms of peace which go to the root of the problem which creates war in the world, the problem of poverty. The Government would be fulfilling their responsibility to the people of this and other countries if, instead of talking about the need for acts and the need for security, the Prime Minister and his colleagues tried to clear their minds. What do they want? What would be sufficient? Let them make up their minds what is behind the phrases that they are using. Let them clear their minds and, having done so, let them put the result before the nations of the world and, in a conference, seek to bring them to the acceptance of what they have worked out as being a sound basis for world peace.

MR K. W. M. PICKTHORN (Conservative): We have no business to distinguish between the German Government and the German people in so far as we are talking about what our Government is to do in conducting war, and the business of our Government in this connection has nothing to do with old age pensions or the government of Jamaica or any of those things. The business of our Government in this connection is to go on fighting until the German Government is willing to do those things without which, in our judgment, there will be no peace in Europe, whatever it may be called. I hope that, if there is to be an elaboration of war aims, that elaboration will be slow, it will never be too voluminous,

and that it will be extremely careful to keep, as far as it can, its feet on the ground.

COLONEL JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD (Labour) : It is vitally important, before we have anything in the nature of a conference such as has been proposed by Herr Hitler, that we should have complete diplomatic contact with the people who are going to take part in it and who are not already on our side. It would be ridiculous not to have close contact with Russia, for instance, and to know Stalin's views on Czecho-Slovakia, before we went into conference in order to see how far their aims could be worked into the security which we desire. A premature conference which failed would be fatal. Most speakers to-day have touched upon a matter which has been at the back of all our minds during this war, and indeed before. It is, whether we can as a result of the war, build up a federation of the world sufficiently strong and all embracing to maintain peace. Federation must grow, and can only grow, voluntarily ; but if we start contemplating a federation of ourselves, France and the British Empire we have a nucleus ; and as soon as we are strong enough and as soon as we get the blessing of other great Powers, like Russia and America, we should be strong enough to attract the lesser nations. It would be an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, which would prove to the German people that we are not just out to smash Germany, but that we are out to smash that danger to democracy which we see ever around us. If you have any federal idea in your minds, you have to remember that free trade is an essential within the federation. I would welcome anything that would increase free trade between England and France and between England and the Empire and our Allies. I believe that free trade, free intercourse, is the best thing to produce a common spirit—destroying narrow nationalism and building up a union of the peoples, not merely a union of governments but a union of common sense and common humanity.

MR C. E. G. C. EMMOTT (Conservative) : If we make peace now upon the only suggestions, vague as they are, that have been made to us from Germany, we have failed in our purpose. It cannot be too clearly or precisely stated by any private Member in this Debate that nothing should deflect us from our purpose ; and that purpose is to win victory over the enemy, to defeat the enemy in the field. In any case, even if there were now to be a cessation of hostilities, there would be no peace. It would merely be an uneasy and suspicious pause in the hardly interrupted process of German aggrandisement. Conference will succeed where there is the will to agree : the will to agree upon conditions acceptable by all. Where is the evidence of the will of the German Government to-day to agree with us on terms that will be acceptable to both ? Where is the will in Germany to-day to agree with us ? Without this it is idle to talk of conference.

SIR R. ACLAND (Liberal) : The phrase in the speech of the Prime Minister that won the most resounding cheers from hon Members opposite was that in which he said that a certain line of conduct on our part would mean the recognition of the aggressor's conquest and of his right to do what he likes with the conquered. Unfortunately, not once or twice but over and over again we have done something to recognize conquest and the right of the conqueror to do what he likes with those he has conquered. Therefore, it is deeds and not words that are required from us. I ask hon Members opposite this question : At the end of the war is the British Colonial Empire to be owned by Great Britain in the way that it is owned now ?

SIR PATRICK HANNON (Conservative) : Please God, it will.

SIR R. ACLAND : So that is the answer. As long as that remains our attitude, it is no use pretending to neutral countries that we are fighting for some new world order. In considering how the practical problems in this war can be solved, we should consider transferring our Colonial Empire from our sole charge to a real international charge, which would give a guarantee of good faith and which would make the world realize that we are fighting for something wholly different from that for which the Nazis are fighting.

MR D. L. LIPSON (Independent National) : I do not think that the question of peace between Germany and ourselves necessarily depends upon whether Herr Hitler's word is to be taken or not. It will depend on the kind of peace that we make and the kind of guarantee upon which we insist. Everybody must be opposed to acts of aggression on principle, but we are dealing with a practical problem. That is realized by the British Government, because in spite of the act of aggression it is apparently prepared to maintain normal relations with Russia and even to conclude a treaty with her. What we have to ask ourselves is this : Are we more likely to get the new world which we have been promised as a result of a long and bitter war or are we more likely to build it up now before the war has aroused feelings of bitterness and hatred, and caused a great deal of destruction ? It is a duty we owe to our own people to state quite clearly on what terms we are prepared to talk, and if not why the war must continue. It is a duty we owe to the neutrals, because we have to realize from what has happened recently that if the war goes on most of the small nations

of the world will inevitably lose their independence and will be ruined economically. If we really want to make an appeal to the German people which is likely to be effective we shall do it best if we tell them quite clearly on what terms we are prepared to talk about peace.

MR R. W. SORENSEN (Labour) : When we speak of the neurotic brutality associated with the Nazi regime it is imperative, if we are to avoid shallow emotionalism, to ask ourselves how that neurotic brutality came into existence, and if we examine the situation honestly we shall be insincere if we merely say that Herr Hitler is the sole cause of the present situation. We know that the pathological condition which seems to be incarnate in Herr Hitler and his supporters grew out of circumstances, economical and psychological, for which we have, in a greater or less degree, a measure of responsibility. He would not have had the power he had, and still has, if we had more fully exercised our moral responsibility towards the German people during the 15 years following the war. We should not fool ourselves into imagining that merely by obtaining his removal we shall solve the problem of removing the causes which led to his rising to power. What really matters is that in the process of this punishment of Hitler we are going to subject to mutilation, torture and agony millions of innocent human beings in all countries. I earnestly plead that we should rid ourselves of this illusion by which so many people are misled into imagining that all we are concerned with is in teaching Hitler a lesson. Let us not bother so much about him, but rather think of the conditions which gave rise to him and of the victims not merely of Hitler, but also of the international rivalries, antagonisms and exploitation, in which we have played our part in some measure in the past. However terrible may be the consequences of war, I agree that we cannot make a peace merely through cowardice or spiritual indolence. It is no good going to the blackmailer and granting him concessions in the hope that he will no longer blackmail. We have to recognize there are times when evil seems to be incarnate in human nature, and that no matter how many concessions may be made, incarnate evil has imposed its will, time and again in history, on individuals and communities. Yet I suggest that there are more ways than one of resisting evil things. In the last resort, we do not rely upon arms to resist evil. Only a recognition of that can give the secret of human life, and I think that at long last it may be that human life will recognize that those deepest resources of human nature are the only weapons that can avail against all the armoury of hell. I would that some community should one day arise which will stake its whole existence on throwing away its arms and trusting to those spiritual resources to which I have referred. We should state distinctly the sort of world which we are trying to create and the sacrifices which we are prepared to make. Unless we are prepared to make deep sacrifices for this new world and to repudiate the processes by which men and nations have sought to exploit and dominate each other, then all our condemnation of the German people will be in vain. The people of this country and the workers in particular should make it their business to distinguish between the evil in Germany as it is, and the mass of the working men and women of that country. We should do our utmost to gain a response from the working-class people of Germany so that we may be able at last, even at some risk and with some sacrifice, to create those conditions in which Hitlerism and similar diseases will no longer be possible.

MISS E. RATHBONE (Independent) : What are the objections to setting out—not completely, because we cannot do that at the beginning of a war—the elemental conditions of the kind of peace which we should be willing to negotiate ? If those terms are contemptuously rejected by Herr Hitler, let us go on. If we could once get it into the hearts not only of our own people but of the people of Germany that we had offered those reasonable, honourable terms, terms which offered them not a destroyed Germany, but a better, happier, more prosperous Germany than they have now, a Germany in which they had no longer to choose between guns and butter, I believe that in any case, even if the terms were refused, to have had them put forward, to have made them known to the people of Germany would be in itself a step towards victory and it would have this advantage, that it would do away with the fear that haunts me that, as this war goes on our people, who have shown a splendid spirit, who are not panicky, who are not despairing as the hardships of the war weigh upon them, may become disgruntled and doubting and may ask themselves more and more every day the question which even now they are beginning to ask—Was this war really necessary ? Did our Government, which showed itself originally so completely indifferent to the fate of other nations and so unwilling to stand up against the aggressor, do everything possible to avoid this horrible necessity, when they really got us into a war, of fighting it to the bitter end ?

MRS M. C. TATE (Conservative) : I am as desirous as anyone in the world that we should be able to avoid war, and I would make any sacrifice if this hideous war could end, but I am convinced that the one thing that would be absolutely fatal would be for us to make the approach and for us to go begging with terms at this moment. If Herr Hitler has the smallest wish for peace there could

be no greater opportunity than the speech made by the Prime Minister to-day. It left every door open, if Herr Hitler has any desire whatsoever to make peace. But if we were to go and say to the German people: "Do make peace; these are our terms," they would understand it in one way only. They would understand it as a defeatist attitude on our part. We shall be victorious far more certainly if we make no further efforts and if the Prime Minister's speech goes out and the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, as the unalterable opinion of this country. I believe that it represents the feelings and the really sincere wishes of the vast majority of the people of this country.

MR A. SLOAN (Labour): It is deplorable that the Prime Minister should state so emphatically that we will select the people with whom we shall discuss peace. We know that Hitler speaks as head of the German Government and is the leader of the German nation. We may not like it, I am sure that we do not like Hitler, but there are Members on this side of the House who do not like the Leader of the British nation. Hitler, after all, has made a sort of peace offer. No one in the House suggests that it is satisfactory, but surely it is a basis for discussion. We have to open the discussion some time. The Government and this House owe it to the nation that any opportunity of reaching peace should not be lost. We owe it to the millions of youths who are not yet in the danger zone. We deprecate in the strongest possible manner the idea that peace overtures are dangerous. That idea appears to have been running through all the speeches from the other side to-day, and we have been told that we should not discuss peace until the war has proceeded for a certain time. We should discuss peace before we have tested the machinery of war and before the enormous lists of casualties begin to come in. The people in the country are asking for peace, millions of them, and the Government are making a great mistake if they think they have the unanimous opinion of the people behind them. Hon Members know that they are getting letters by the hundreds, especially from the mothers of this country, asking that something should be done to stop things before the fearful carnage commences.

SIR FRANCIS FREMANTLE (Conservative): Herr Hitler has been worshipped, as we all know, raised to the position almost of a deity, anyhow a hero of the highest order, and the great mass of the German people appreciate him and will follow him wherever he leads, especially as he has always got his way without war. What is the position when a man like that becomes unbalanced? They cannot throw him over, they are bound to him, and yet they must be feeling all the time. "How can we get out of this mess he has got us into without throwing him over, seeing the position he holds among the German people?" The way to deal with a man of that mentality is to show strength and determination, to take a clear, sound, sensible line and to show that we are determined to carry through with it. The spirit of strength and determination will give him—or those around him—the opportunity of meeting our case and withdrawing from the impossible position taken up. By taking up a strong position, both as regards our forces and economic warfare, we are helping the change to take place in Germany.

MR EDMUND HARVEY (Independent): We ought not to try to attain the object that we have in view by methods which demand of the German people that they should depose their leader. I do not believe that that is the demand of the Prime Minister. As I look back upon that very remarkable speech which we heard this afternoon, phrased in such dignified and calm language, I feel that it is significant that, after six weeks of war, there was no word of hatred or of ill-will in it towards the German people. The right hon Gentleman made it clear that it is not part of the object of this country that there should be anything in the nature of a vindictive peace, and that he wanted to see living room for the German people, provided that that involved living room for other and smaller peoples too. It is a very great thing that that should be said at such a time and that the German people should know it. I hope that the Prime Minister will make it even more clear than he has done that, the right guarantees being given, we should welcome the opportunity of a conference that would provide not a truce, but a real settlement for Europe. It may be that one of these days in the immediate future we shall find ourselves at a turning point in human history. If we take the turn that leads to that three years' war it means, in all probability, the ruin of Western civilization. You will not get the new world that we want to see built on a foundation of hatred and ruin and bankruptcy. That is what would be left by this three years' war. We must do our utmost to get the way made clear for an honourable peace, not only for this country, but for all the countries of the world. As we go out to-night from the darkened corridors of this House into the greater darkness of the street without, we must all feel that the darkness that is about us is symbolic of the gloom and night that is falling upon our civilization if this war goes on and on. But the light is there behind curtain and shutter, it is there, being kept out from the streets that need it, and it is so in the lives of men. The light of wisdom and insight, of reason, of human fellowship is there in the hearts of men, and we have to turn it on to-day to get rid of this

darkness, which means death to our civilization; to bring us back to the way of peace.

MR HUBERT BEAUMONT (Labour): We are told, and quite rightly, that this war, if it goes on, will mean the torture and killing of hundreds of thousands, and it may be millions of people, but we are faced with this alternative, that if the war is stopped and aggression is not ended we shall still have the torture and killing of hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions of people. The torture and death of the body is great and terrible in itself, but what is perhaps more terrible and grim is the torture of the mind and the soul when in the concentration camp under the rule of terrorism and aggression. I am hoping that common sense and righteousness will prevail and that at the earliest opportunity some nation will step in and provide a basis upon which a conference may be held. While echoing and appreciating the statement made by the Prime Minister to-day, I would express the hope that the Government will be willing to agree to go into any conference that is convened by any of the neutral nations. That will show that we are willing to go into a conference, but at the same time we must be determined that we will not sacrifice our principles for the sake of securing a patched-up peace. One hon Member said that our objective was to win the war. Our objective is much more than that. It is to win the peace for the peoples of the world and to win an understanding between the peoples of the world, so that the terror of war shall never again blight the world. We have to see that this aggression stops, but we have to be ready at the earliest moment to accept whatever opportunity may be offered of preventing the further torture and killing of people. We are appreciative of the great work that the Secretary for the Dominions (Mr Eden) did for the League of Nations and of the stand that he made for its principles. I hope it will be possible for the right hon Gentleman to ask the powers that be if it is possible to convene a meeting of the Assembly of the League where it may then be possible to discuss the purposes of the war which is now being waged.

MR S. O. DAVIES (Labour): A more specific and detailed statement of our objectives should be made, and that now. This is absolutely necessary, not merely to satisfy neutral opinion or to satisfy German people, but to clarify the bewilderment and to allay, if it can be allayed, the growing suspicion in the minds of our own people as to the real and possibly as yet unstated war aims of this country and of France. We have told the world, and the Government benches have stated unceasingly, that we are fighting for democracy, self-determination, freedom of thought and of expression, and for the rights of nations to the forms of Governments that their people desire. That is, we are fighting for all those things that Fascism destroys. I shall continue to doubt the aims of the Government unless they are prepared to make a greater contribution towards that which is really vital in democracy and freedom in this country—that is to say, unless they make a contribution to those people who are prepared to support the aims of the Government by being far more generous towards masses of people in this country who, as a result of our being at war, are suffering a great deal more than they were suffering before, although their conditions were bad then. If the Government are wise, they will appreciate how absolutely important it is in war to sustain the highest morale on the home front. Without the maintenance of that morale on the home front, we shall run the grave risk of not succeeding in this war as most of the people in this country desire. I sincerely hope we shall not be compelled, during the horrible and difficult days which confront us, to urge and press the Government to show a little more humanity, particularly towards those sections of the population whose struggle to exist was a terrible one before the war began, but is intensified every day that the war continues. As long as those injustices continue, we shall unceasingly press the Government to make a gesture in harmony with the spirit which I would like to believe animated the words of the Prime Minister this afternoon. We look for justice first at home before being bidden to fight for it abroad.

THE THEORY OF THE LAND QUESTION

By Prof. George Raymond Geiger.

This work, which is one of the most important and valuable contributions to the literature on the land question, favourably reviewed in *Land & Liberty*, and from which extracts have been printed, was published by the Macmillan Co. for \$2. By arrangement with the publishers, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation has bought a supply on very special terms. We are happy to recommend the more readily this outstanding work, placing it in the hands of students at the privileged price of

Four Shillings Post Paid.

THE HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION
34 Knightrider Street, St. Paul's London, E.C.4