

Papers of Hugh Dalton:
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DIARY6.4.38.

Returned yesterday and saw Nield at the House to-night. I rowed him for habitual indiscretions and hoped that he took it in. He told me of the progress of the sub-committee of Three on the Research Department and seemed very satisfied with progress so far. The sub-committee's report will not be finished till Laski returns from the U.S. He has seen a lot of Laski and found him receptive and constructive. Nield had also seen H.M. who was still suffering from a persecution mania traceable to his failure to get the leadership in 1935. He had, however, incited H.M., at my suggestion, to operate on George Ridley who, we thought, was being drawn too much into A.G.'s orbit, probably by flattery and special attention. N. told me that Grant McKenzie had put in a most bitter and highly documented memorandum which, by its excessive bitterness, had damaged the author but had also convinced the sub-committee that something drastic must be done. Many efforts had been made to prevent N. from speaking freely before the sub. He had been spoken to by Smyth, by Willie Hall, and by two M.P.s, friends of A.G., whose names he did not know. Also by A.G. himself, who said that, of course, G.M. had always been a viper in his bosom but that he hoped that Nield, as a decent and promising young man, would not be led away and get into bad company. N. also showed me a document of some interest. It was a summons to a special meeting of the New Welcome Lodge, dated four days before the meeting of the Parliamentary Party at which Attlee was re-elected Leader after the last election. This Lodge is masonic and appears to cater especially, though not quite exclusively, for Labour M.P.s. The secretary summoning the meeting was Scott Lindsay. (He canvassed me for A.G. at the time and, in reply to my obvious point of doubt, told me that A.G. had promised that, if elected Leader, he would never be out of control on important occasions. A full list of members of the Lodge was on the back of the summons. The list included Sir Robert Young, Joe Compton, A. Short, Major Milner, J.W. Bowen, Rev. H. Dunnico, Colonel L'Estrange Malone, Colonel H.W. Burton (a Tory M.P. and the only one in this galere), Jack Hayes, F.J. Bellenger, Willie Henderson, F.O. Roberts, A.G. himself (these two appear to have joined about the same time), W. Dobbie, Ben Tillett, George Hicks, Lord Kinnoull (now dead).

This is a surprisingly large number, and some of the names are very surprising. I recall that I unwisely invited Bellenger to the "private meeting" in my flat designed to win support for H.M. And then we wondered who leaked to the Press, and suspected poor little Ellen Wilkinson, probably quite innocent. Nield told me that he had shown this document to H.M. who said "I have got a copy locked up in my drawer. Someone sent it to me a few days after the election."

DIARY7.4.38.

J.H. Retinger came to see me at the House with most optimistic stories of the growing power of the Peasants' Party in Poland. Vitos was organising all this from Prague. The Ukrainian peasants were in it too, Ukrainian nationalism being largely a product of the towns. Retinger thought that either in May or in September there would be a wholesale peasants' strike and political demonstration to bring pressure on the Polish Government to restore a real Parliament with free elections. They would be supported in this by the Socialists, who, however, were not very effective at present, so many of their leaders being old men without initiative. Nędzalkowski was still very good but found it difficult to energise the others.

Smigly-Rydz had been a complete failure in politics, though he was still effective as head of the Army. But he could not wear the mantle of Pilsudski. His attempt to form a Party of his own had been a complete failure. Beck had shown great moderation in handling the Lithuanian affair. I said that he had created the affair. R. said yes, but he had resisted the demands of the Right in Poland to annex Lithuania. R. had asked Addison, as a Lord and an agricultural specialist, for this purpose a strong combination, to go out to Poland and travel through the countryside and make contact with the leaders of the Peasants' Party. He hoped that he had made it clear that expenses would be covered if this invitation was accepted. He asked me to use influence with A. to persuade him to accept. It would have great moral effect in Poland he thought.

I do not know how much there may be in this story. I do not regard R. as a very good witness. But it might alter the shape of things in Eastern Europe considerably if Poland were to return to Parliamentarism and have a democratic Left Government. Therefore it was at least worth while to listen.

DIARY

7.4.38

Ronald

Cartland spoke to me at some length in the library, continuing till midnight after the House had risen. He said that they had now a Fuhrer in the Conservative Party. The P.M. was getting more and more dictatorial. It was astonishing how the bulk of the Party followed him blindly, though there had been great perturbations both at the time of Eden's resignation and when Hitler took Vienna. The inner ring in the Cabinet consisted of the P.M., Simon, Hoare, Swinton and Kingsley Wood. He supposed that Halifax, now that he was Foreign Secretary, was in the ring part of the time. Eden had been got rid of as the result of activities persuaded over many months. Swinton, possibly under the influence of drink, at a male dinner party soon after Whitsuntide, had declared that our foreign policy must be entirely remodelled, that Vansittart must go and that a group of four, namely the P.M., Simon, Hoare and himself, were going to run foreign policy for the future. Someone had asked "What about Eden?" Swinton had replied, after some abuse of his colleague, "He will either have to do what we tell him or go." A member of the party had made a note of all this and taken it round to Van, who had taken it to Eden, who had taken it to the P.M. and demanded explanations. Van, to some extent, and Eden still more so, were greatly upset. The P.M. had merely replied "How foolish of Philip to think that he would be put on any committee dealing with foreign policy."

There had been several occasions on which Eden might have resigned, e.g., on the Chamberlain-Mussolini correspondence, or on the Halifax visit to Berlin. But in each case it would have seemed a question of personal pique. I said that the right time for him to have resigned was on Abyssinia. Cartland agreed but said that it was always very difficult to judge the right time for resignation. When Eden did resign, the old gentlemen in the Government and the sly people in the Conservative Whips' Office put round the story that (1) it was personal pique, and (2) that poor Anthony was completely exhausted by strain in the F.O. and had lost his grip and judgment. The second explanation, in particular, had infuriated Eden. Now they were trying to treat him like the Duke of Windsor and persuade the world, and particularly the Conservative Party, to forget all about ~~it~~. But this would not be possible, because he had just come back from a holiday in France, by all accounts very full of fight.

I asked who really influenced Chamberlain. C. said not much any of his colleagues in the Cabinet. But there was a queer figure, Sir Joseph Ball, now in the Conservative Head Office, who had been in M.I.5 during the War, in whom the P.M. had great confidence.

Ribbentrop had been lunching with the P.M. and Halifax

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the day before Hitler took Vienna. He had told them nothing about it. It was not clear whether he knew what was coming. In any case the P.M. had taken grave offence, regarding it as a slight upon his dignity that Ribbentrop had told his nothing.

The Conservative Party had had some very excited meetings in Committee Rooms upstairs during my absence. H. Nicolson had been forced to resign the vice-chairmanship of their Foreign Affairs Committee because he had taken a strong and persistent line against the P.M.'s policy. (From an other quarter I heard that during one of these discussions Lady Astor had said to some colleague, "You must be a bloody Jew to say a thing like that", to which Winston had replied "I have never before heard such an insult to a Member of Parliament as the words just used by that bitch.") Cartland thought that some 40 Conservative M.P.s had been so deeply stirred by the Austrian affair that they would be prepared to vote against the Government in favour of some alternative combination. Now, however, he thought that 40 had shrunk to about 20, of whom he was one. He thought that after Easter some of them would have to speak very clearly, after having given every opportunity to the P.M. to make a success of his policy. He said that it was quite astonishing how many of his colleagues were still terrified of the Communist bogey. He agreed with me that the Anti-Comintern Pact was simply an anti-British and anti-League pact with a title that would be dust in the eyes of the simple.

On the other hand, he said, it was astonishing how few Tory M.P.s realised the imminent danger to this country from the continual strengthening and diplomatic successes of Germany. He supposed that some never would realise this until German aeroplanes were over London!

He was greatly concerned at the failure of the Air Ministry and of Inksip to speed up the production of military aeroplanes. The shadow factory business was, up to date, a flop. Austin's works in his own constituency had so far only turned out three aeroplanes, and these not by mass production at all. We were steadily falling behind the Germans in air strength. Swinton, as Air Minister, was deeply responsible for this state of things. He did not know why he kept in favour with Chamberlain, as previously with Baldwin.

Cartland said "I am sure that we have now lost all the floating vote, though I don't think you have got much of it yet. Most of it abstains."

*A very brave young man, & a social reformer.
I liked to meet him when he was, if bullied by his MP or
after Munich. He didn't believe in Munich, & being taken prisoner
in Spain. Therefore he refused to surrender, & was killed, being his own
in the end.*

DIARY8.4.38.

Lunched with Kingsley Martin at the Savile Club, of which he is now a member. I told him that I intended for some time to listen rather than to speak, in view of all that had happened during my absence. He said that Chamberlain had at last got a coherent foreign policy, whether right or wrong. He took the view that this country was so weak in arms, and London so indefensible, and France so weak, that we could not afford to antagonise in any degree a German-Italian combination. (This explained why "The Times" and "Telegraph" had both refused, in consequence of official guidance, to print any accounts of atrocities in Austria since they did not wish to offend Hitler.) Chamberlain, therefore, was striving to detach Mussolini from Hitler, believing that M. was really, though he did not admit it, very vexed at having Hitler on the Brenner. Chamberlain's policy included letting Spain go and recognising Italy in Abyssinia, although there was much very good evidence, some published in the "New Statesman" this week, that the Italian hold on Abyssinia was badly shaken.

One of the great difficulties was to get to know the technical facts. It was being said that Chamberlain had told the General Council of the T.U.C. that Germany was now stronger in the air than ourselves and the French combined. K.M. was convinced that there was shocking inefficiency at our Air Ministry and that our production programme was very far from being fulfilled. On the other hand, rumours were going round that we had made new discoveries which would make London much more defensible.

K.M. spoke at some length of the state of mind of politicians and public after Hitler's march on Vienna. The idea of a new Coalition Government was very much in the air. Churchill was to be Prime Minister and Eden Foreign Secretary. The Labour Party and Liberal Party would both be strongly represented in the Cabinet. It was said that Bevin would be willing, if offered the Ministry of Labour. It was calculated that there would be so large a break away from Chamberlain in the Tory Party that this break away plus Labour plus Liberal would command a majority in this House of Commons. It was said that five Cabinet Ministers - Hore-Belisha, W.S. Morrison, Oliver Stanley, Ormsby Gore and Elliott - were prepared to resign from the present Government and join such a new one. K.M. had been very active in running about as go-between at this time. He had seen Attlee, who, at the beginning, had been not unfavourable to the idea. Later, he had changed his mind. Greenwood had been much interested; Herbert Morrison even more so. Such a Government would have sought allies everywhere and made a definite commitment to Czechoslovakia. It would have actively explored the possibility of bringing the Russians right into a scheme of mutual guarantees. But the idea died away within a few

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days. By the following Monday there was nothing left of it.

As for the public, the events in Austria has produced, he thought, a mass panic. People were terrified by the exhibition of ~~the~~ combined brutality and efficiency by the German authorities. He gave me many examples of this efficiency, evidently based on carefully prepared plans and an infinity of effective spy work. In the pub next door to his country cottage everyone was sitting silent in the bar. This was most unusual. Also they talked politics with him, again most unusual. "I don't suppose they would come over a little village like this", said one old man. And this was typical.

K.M. said that he himself felt that things had now gone so far that to plan armed resistance to the dictators was now useless. If there was a war we should lose it. We should therefore seek for the most peaceful means of letting them gradually get what they wanted.

But he feared that this would not be the view taken either by the British imperialists when roused, or by the Left Book Club and similar groups which were bent on war against Fascism.

Russia, he said, was still the great enigma. I agreed. This was the most difficult gap in all one's knowledge to get filled in. What could they do, and what would they do? No one in this country seemed to know

^{report}
I regard this talk, in which I let K.M. make nearly all the running, with no more comment of mine except that he is a most emotional, unstable person with little judgment. None the less, he disquited me a good deal.

DIARY

~~11.4.38~~
 11.4.38

Lunched with Citrine at Thames House. He says that since his visit to A. and N.Z. he has kept industrial leaders informed of our activities here. He formed the view that the Arbitration Acts in New Zealand tied the Trade Unions more tightly to the political Labour Party than in this country, and that they bred a special class of Arbitration Court lawyers who substituted legal pleading on every industrial detail for our own method of negotiation by non-legal Trade Union officers.

He gave me some account of events since last December. He thought that there was still great confusion of mind both on the G.C. and on the political side regarding the international situation. Our own people were passionately concerned about Spain, but the great mass of the public were not. This might be deplorable but it was true. He had had some rows with Attlee, who had sworn at him in front of several others - "Does he often swear?" he asked; "Not very efficiently", I replied - because Citrine had pressed for information on Attlee's conversations with Chamberlain and Halifax. Citrine took the view that the Government had a pretty good answer to our questions and criticisms. Chamberlain had spoken very frankly to the deputation from the N.C.L. As to Japan, he had said that we had made strong representations to Washington for a joint naval demonstration, with lots of capital ships, in the Far East, but that the U.S. would not move. Without them, having regard to the dangers in Europe, we could do nothing to influence Japan. Chamberlain had also admitted that British aircraft construction was most unsatisfactory. We were far behind the Germans, both in present strength and rate of output. It was noticeable that Chamberlain had ceased to speak of parity with the strongest air power as the objective of our policy. Chamberlain had been very gloomy regarding the French Air Force. The present rate of output was very low. The existing Force was poor both in men, quality of machines, and material. The French Ministers, Chautemps and Delbos, had been spoken to plainly about this by British Ministers in London. On their return ~~to~~ to France they had found that things were even worse than they had been told. On the other hand, the French Army was still, according to Chamberlain, the best in the world.

The G.C. had taken the view that any question of speeding up armaments, e.g., by demarcation changes - he thought that it was these rather than dilution that the Government wanted - was purely an industrial matter in which politicians should not interfere. The A.E.U. were always a difficult crowd, squabbling openly among

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themselves as well as squabbling with the other Unions concerned. Personally, he did not see how you could draw a logical distinction between producing armaments at present and agreeing to a speed up of arms production. He said that immediately after Hitler took Austria there had been wild rumours. The House of Commons, he said, was always full of rumours. It was the most unreliable source of information in the country. He knew nothing of approaches, except by quite irresponsible people in our own Party, to Trade Union leaders with a view to the formation of any Coalition Government. In particular, he did not believe the story, which I quoted to him, of Bevin having been willing to become Minister of Labour in such a Government. He said that Bevin's health was bad. He was retiring from various committees and should really take a good rest. He was more difficult than ever to do business with, being very cheerful one day and unaccountably morose and suspicious the next.

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The same evening I talked to Attlee, who had had very bad accounts of aircraft production. He heard that aeroplanes had been exported to Finland complete with all the latest gadgets which we could not get ourselves. Cripps had arrived with a story that workmen at Bristol were being told to paint swastikas on newly completed fighting aeroplanes for export to Germany. I said that this seemed almost unbelievable. It should be carefully checked or we should make public fools of ourselves. On the other hand, if it was true, we should raise public hell about it.

I impressed on Attlee, and later in the same evening on Alexander, both of whom were quite receptive, that this failure of the Air Ministry and of private enterprise to give us aircraft was the biggest single issue at the present moment, and that we should concentrate our minds on this to the exclusion of less important matters.

DIARY12.4.38

Lunched at House of Commons with Attlee, Greenwood, Alexander, Benn and Phil to meet Julius Deutsch, fresh from Spain, and Gessner, acting as interpreter. A gloomy, desperate business. D. said he had been sent over to find out whether

- (1) more arms could be got for the Spanish Government, and
- (2) whether anything could be done to raise the morale of the Government forces.

As to arms, he said that there was a preponderance of planes on the Rebel side of 12 to 1 and of artillery of 6 to 1. A number of Russian planes had recently arrived via Bordeaux, but the Rebel spy service was so good that, whenever more arms came for the Government an even greater addition was seen made on the Rebel side. The morale of the Government troops had become very bad immediately after the second battle of Teruel. Two Catalan Divisions had broken up and run away. There were now a number of Castillian troops on the Catalan front and these were better soldiers. None the less, there had been great discouragement, although he alleged that the morale of the civilian population was still high. He suggested that morale might be maintained if further "pronouncements" were made, or resolutions passed, by the I.F.T.U. and L.S.I.! (What pathetic drivel and self delusion this is. It nearly makes me sick.) He also thought that we might have an important debate on Spain in the House of Commons. I said that I understood there had been thirteen such debates in the past nine weeks. If all they wanted were friendly quotations from Labour leaders' speeches they had more than enough material already. Moreover, there had been an enormous Hyde Park Demonstration last Sunday, at which a long resolution (he said they liked Resolutions!) had been carried.

Passing now quite clearly beyond his official mission, D. said that he did not see how, unless very large supplies of arms were sent to the Government, they could continue to hold out for more than a few weeks in Catalonia, or for more than a month or two in the rest of Spain. The question, therefore, arose whether we should not make the French admit that they could not send great supplies of arms, and that we could not either, and that, this being so, it would be better for the Spanish Government to seek mediation to negotiate terms of peace. I was shocked at the reluctance of several of those present to pursue this line. Phil has transferred all his eager enthusiasm and credulous optimism from Geneva to the Spanish front. "Barcelona may turn out to be a second Madrid"; "It will be very difficult for Franco to keep up the pressure for very long"; "The Government have now to defend a shorter line so they need less arms"; "What terms could they hope to get if they did negotiate now?"

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Atlee made typical motions of going into his shell and said that "We could not think of anything of this kind unless it was authorised by the Spanish Government". Alexander and I, on the other hand, thought the possibility should be pursued (in any case it will be, because D. saw Citrine this morning and told him what he now tells us, and Citrine is going to Paris on Thursday for a joint meeting of L.S.I. and I.F.T.U.).

D. said that Negrin believed that if the Spanish Government resisted a bit longer there would be a general war in Europe which would "relieve the pressure by Hitler and Mussolini on Spain"!!!

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I left this party before it broke up, to see Vansittart. He is still in the same room at the F.O. but no longer has a male secretary. He was very doubtful whether to accept his present position, which is largely humbug. Clearly he has no great influence on policy now and often only hears of decisions already made. Sometimes, he said, he was able to intervene before decisions were taken. Obviously a most unsatisfactory status, both for himself and for Cadogan.

He was quite catty about Eden, who, he said, had been trying to edge him out for a long time. Eden had pressed him very strongly to take the Paris Embassy but he had firmly refused. Eden had been jealous of him, thinking that he had too much of the lime light. I said "Surely you had very little compared with Eden himself". Eden had brought back Cadogan from China with the object of making him Under Secretary. He wanted a tame and colourless civil servant with less character, less knowledge, and less persistence in arguing with politicians when he thought they were wrong. At the end, Eden had resigned on what he thought a most inadequate pretext, and had never discussed it with him or given him any warning of his intention. One night when Van was down at Denham, Eden had rung him up on the telephone and said "I've finished". Van said that he thought of Eden as a man with whom he had often had to go out tiger shooting and who, at the end, had shot him in the back. The French had never had much confidence in Eden. They thought him young, inexperienced and ambitious. They had never thought that their case was properly presented by him. Van had been reluctant to go altogether, because it would have been regarded as a triumph by the Germans and a set back by all our friends in Europe and by his personal friends in particular, such as

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Prince Paul of Yugoslavia. The Cliveden set had, of course, worked very hard to get him out. They had influenced Chamberlain early and in the end even old S.B. had thought Van ought to go because he was "inclined to be too pessimistic". Van observed that Cadogan went to Cliveden and that even Eden had once been there for a weekend.

Van disagreed with Eden on the merits of the Anglo-Italian negotiations. He had long thought, and his view was strengthened by events in Austria, that it was possible to detach Mussolini from Hitler. In Austria M. had certainly been duped, and though he did not say so in public, was very angry. In Spain it was likely that he would be duped again. It was Germany and not Italy who would secure lasting and material advantages from intervention on behalf of Franco. The Spaniards despised the Italians but respected the Germans. I said that, even though Mussolini might be vexed with Hitler, I thought that he would calculate that he would gain more by hanging on to Hitler than by leaving him. Van admitted that this might be so, if M. thought that Germany was the predominant power in Europe and the only one who was ready to fight.

I said that I was deeply disturbed by the failure of the British air rearmament programme. He did not deny that it was most unsatisfactory. "After all", he said, "we are not a nation of organisers. It always takes us a long time to get things in order." I also questioned him on the French Air Force and asked him whether he was sure that the adverse reports which he got were objective and not from tainted reactionary sources. He said that he was quite satisfied ~~with~~ that things were very bad, but he hoped they might soon improve. The French army remained the best army in the world, but with the passage of time it could not maintain this superiority over the Germans. Moreover, if the Germans penetrated further and further east and acquired wheat, oil, etc., the value of our navy as a blockading force would disappear.

I questioned him closely about Russia. It is clear, I think, that they really do not know much. He had little to add to what I had heard from him before. But he was very anxious that we should not cold-shoulder the Russians, nor drive them into isolation. He was sure that it was knowledge of Russian weakness and disorganisation that had loosed the present war in the Far East. If Russia had been stronger, Japan would not have dared.

He quoted an American journalist who said, after the capture of Austria, "Next time I hear anybody say 'It is the method

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I object to', I shall scream". Also Corbin, who had said "What I find requires most self-control is to hear people, a week or two after some German coup, saying encouragingly, 'I think the international situation is a bit easier now, don't you?'. The Germans went on and on and would be content with nothing less than the domination, first of Europe, and then of the world; The reduction of all the rest of Europe to vassal states, and the destruction of all liberty and democracy as we know it. It was no satisfaction to Van to be able so often to point out that the correctness of his view was being justified time after time. The Germans would not discuss anything with you on terms of equality if they thought that soon they would be stronger than you. I said that I recalled many instances when, the British Government attempting to speak with them, they simply walked away.

DIARY28th May, 1938.

Arrive in the evening in Brussels with Dallas and Walker for L.S.I. Executive. Gillies awaited us at Hotel Albert ler, having attended meeting of Bureau to-day. He said that Adler had told Bureau that no-one from Czechoslovakia, either Czech or German, would be able to attend the Executive. It had been suggested at the last moment that the Executive should go to Prague, but this was impossible. It was therefore proposed that there should be a discussion on Central Europe, without the Czechs, to be opened by Bauer. Gillies and others had emphatically protested against such an absurdity. Adler had then again telephoned to Prague, and Jaksch would now take an aeroplane early on Sunday morning and arrive in time for our discussion. Styven, Editor of Pravo Lidu, would also try to come. Failing him, Winter would be there and would speak.

29th May, 1938.

Executive meets. Fairly good attendance, though Blum, contrary to our hopes, not present. Longuet, Zyromski and Eyraud for France; Scandinavians well represented, including Norway for the first time. Jaksch has arrived and speaks after de Brouckere's opening. He does not tell us much which is new, but hopes that German Socialists will "hold their own" in to-day's second batch of elections. There is a tremendous terror in Sudeten Deutsch areas. People say "Wait till Hitler comes in". Groups of Henleinians call on leading Socialists, including candidates, and warn them not to go on. In some cases, wives of candidates are called on. Doubt is thrown on the effective secrecy of the ballot. But they have been tremendously encouraged by the attitude of France and Britain last weekend. (As he is speaking, Gillies whispers to me, "He is the happiest man in the room. He feels that he has the whole strength of the British Empire behind him.")

Next morning it becomes clear that the anti-Henlein groups have not even "held their own". Henleinians have polled between 80 and 90% of the votes in the German areas. Some fool says "They have had a set back. They have failed to poll 90% which they were expecting." We of the British delegation say to each other that if we polled 80% of the votes in an English election we should regard it as a most satisfying victory.

Sunday morning's debate on Central Europe is continued by Bauer, who wants us to declare (1) that there must be no concessions by Czechoslovakia to Nazi Germany, and (2) that in the

event of war all states must give a right of passage to troops passing through their territory to defend democracy against Fascism!

Niedzalkowski then speaks. He says that of the three alternatives, (a) Poland fighting on the German side, (b) Poland neutral, and (c) Poland fighting against Germany, he thinks that neither (a) nor (b) is really to be contemplated if a war should come. Whatever Beck may wish, Poland would, he thinks, be forced to (c), but danger of war is increased if this is not declared beforehand. Therefore, the whole effort of himself and his Party will be directed towards obtaining from the Polish Government a clear declaration, as soon as possible, that in the event of war arising from a German attack on C.S., and in the event of France and Britain coming to the assistance of C.S., Poland will do the same. He adds that it would be easier to get this declaration and to mobilise Polish opinion behind it if, in the meantime, C.S. were to make substantial concessions to minorities which would be applied to the Polish minority round Teschen. The question of the right of passage is delicate and it must not be assumed that Poland would be willing to permit the passage of the Red army into C.S. Indeed, at this moment Polish opinion would be overwhelmingly against this.

It is agreed that after lunch France and Britain should speak, and then the smaller states. This has the advantage of discouraging emigré orations, the bane of the L.S.I.

Longuet makes an obvious speech, in the course of which he quotes me, with approval, as having told him that the tales put about by the Right in France that the British Government would abandon France to her fate if she did not slavishly follow the British Foreign Office, are rubbish. England could not afford in any circumstances to allow France to be defeated and overrun.

I dwell on the close friendship, strengthened by many personal visits, between the British Labour Movement and C.S. Our Party has always stood for Collective Security and we have demanded "an emphatic superiority of armed force through the League" against potential aggressors. Last weekend it seems that the British Government at last gave a warning to Germany. This, for the moment, stopped her, but British public opinion is divided, confused and uncertain. There are many who would be prepared to let C.S. drown. Ribbentrop was not talking complete nonsense when he said to Henlein, on the latter's return from a discouraging weekend in London, "I know England better than you". There is an important England - Cliveden, part of the City, the "Times", etc., - which Ribbentrop knows very well.

I reject very definitely on behalf of our delegation Bauer's suggestion that we should declare for "no concessions by C.S. to Nazi Germany". This would be a most stupid public declaration. If British opinion is to be held, C.S. must at any rate appear conciliatory. Nor is "no concessions" a sensible private formula, for I recall that Jaksch has expressed the view that some reasonable concessions would detach some of the Henleiners, and Niedzalkowski has told us that concessions to the Polish minorities might go far to remove Polish-Czech tension. In Central Europe nothing would be more important than effective co-operation between these two Slav states. Winter had complained that Newton at Prague had gone beyond Chamberlain's public declaration in pressing excessive concessions upon the C.S. Government. I could not say whether this were true or not. My colleagues who were going to Prague would see Newton and would question him. But in any case Newton could not override Chamberlain's public declaration.

Poland was a key state and if Niedzalkowski could get the public statement of the Polish Government's intentions which he desired it might of itself prevent war.

I vigorously combatted Bauer's other proposal that we should make some pontifical pronouncement on the "right of passage". This would undoubtedly embarrass not only Poland and Roumania, but Belgium, Holland and perhaps Denmark. It would not help us either with general public opinion in these countries or with the Socialist Movements there. I hoped, however, that in a crisis the Poles would not look too carefully into the sky. The Red Air Force, I had heard, was in better shape than the Red Army, the efficiency of which had been seriously diminished by perpetual purges of officers. If, however, it were a question of passage for ground troops, I suspected that Poland might advise Roumania to arrange for this, perhaps along some narrow corridor on or near the Polish-Roumanian frontier.

I thought it only right to warn states which, though members of the League, contemplated neutrality, that not only was this contrary to international law as defined by the Covenant, but that in practice it would probably subject them to blockade by the British Navy. In view of our experiences in the last war I did not think that we could tolerate even the possibility of small neutral states passing on overseas supplies to Germany.

Last week's experience showed that Collective Security was still a practical possibility if only enough states would face up to it. The pendant to Collective Security was collective discussion, of all international grievances and difficulties, provided that the Fascist States would join in such discussion in a reasonable and civilised manner. This might seem a remote prospect at the moment, but we must not cease to propose it. This was the policy of the British Labour Party.

Vogt of Sweden was obviously embarrassed in his speech. Privately he agrees with us, but Sandler has been making very absolute statements recently about neutrality. This is most intelligible from the Swedish point of view.

After our seance ended, I had a private talk with Niedzalkowski. He said that Beck was pro-Hitler, but the Polish General Staff has other views. Beck had returned from Berlin with Hitler's approval for Polish invasion of C.S. and capture of Teschen. But this would permit, Hitler had suggested, the retrocession by Poland to Germany of Upper Silesia. Beck was disposed to think this a good bargain. Not so the General Staff who were furious, particularly since such a change of frontier would mean the abandonment of elaborate defensive works near Kattowice. Polish Soviet relations had been relatively calm lately.

I don't know whether N. is too optimistic. Liebermann, Cielens, the Latvian, and Ehrlich of the Polish Bund, all said so.

Dalton I 19 (17) /

DIARY

June 5th, 1938.

Douglas and Peggy Jay at W.L., she very radiant at being a London County Councillor, he rather dissatisfied over recent D.H. experiences. He says that Southwood has been sent for several times by Halifax and flattering appeals made to him as a great Press magnate. There has been some reflection of this in pressure to prevent too critical a line on foreign policy.

"No gloom" has become an Odhams slogan. Therefore you may not talk of a slump or emphasise statistics indicating that it has already begun. One weekend when Douglas was away "they" tried to get his Sub Editor to put in a quantity of statistics of recent high profits which were supposed to show continued prosperity. His Sub stood firm.

"Budget surplus". D. had great difficulty in preventing this from being boosted. He had to say that he knew the Party in the House would, quite rightly, maintain that the Budget was in fact badly unbalanced and showed a large deficit.

Dead millionaires fortunes. He put in, a few weeks ago, a note on some recent instances, regretting that the State had not taken more. This called forth a protest from Mr Cook, the business manager of Odhams, who wrote a minute to Lord Southwood saying that this para was bad for advertising, and was also unfair, since if men could not leave money to their families they would not make it. This minute reached D.J. via F.W. He wrote "Surely Mr Cook does not suggest that my statement is contrary to Labour Party policy."

A note on working class savings also caused trouble. D.J. gave some figures and argued that, though large in the total, such savings were small per head, and were much less than was often alleged, since, e.g., the rich held shares in Building Societies, etc. This produced another memo from the egregious Mr Cook. "Very bad for advertising". Here, he said, had we been telling readers ~~they~~ had plenty of money to spend, and this note suggests that they have not. "Nothing should be printed in a paper unless it either helps advertising or interests the readers. This does neither."

advertisers
in not ok

Row with Lord Wardington (Beaumont Pease). D.J. had commented on his Chairman's speech in which he said that municipal expenditure should be restricted. D.J. had said that such expenditure was chiefly for slum clearance and housing, and had noted

that the recent L.C.C. loan was not taken up, perhaps through political prejudice. He added that Lord W. had not criticised gambling in gold shares which had been taking place on a large scale just before Lord W. had addressed his shareholders. Lord W. had then asked to see D.J., who suggested that if His Lordship would send the D.H. something in writing it should be published in the City column. Lord W. refused and pressed for an interview. This was acid and disagreeable. Lord W. complained of unfair comment. He had not made any political statement. He was not against housing and slum clearance. He had always believed in good relations with the press. That was why his Bank advertised in the press, not because it paid them. The interview, after some further argument, ended badly.

Then Lord W. got on to Southwood. It was indicated that Odhams bank with him. Then memos. began to circulate. It was emphasised that Lord W. advertised a good deal in the People and John Bull, though not much in the D.H. This row was still running. D.J. was not disposed to make any recantation.

He was afraid that one day a resolution might be passed by the Directors saying that there must be "No more politics in the City column." F.W. has a very heavy time, fighting many battles. D.J. doubts whether any of them are really secure. I told him not to do anything drastic or melodramatic without consulting me again. He has never met Citrine. To approach him direct might seem to be going behind the back of F.W. I say that if things become much more difficult I will arrange for him to meet Citrine none the less.

on his
staff

DIARY15th June, 1938.

Nield has just finished a very good piece of work on air "defences". Attlee, Greenwood and I only have copies. N. I hope talks less about leading people to others than he does to me. Me he tells that he has been pressing H.M. to concentrate much more on the House and to earn the right to the Leadership. He thinks that pressure by him and others is having effect. (I agree. H.M. has been much more regular at Parliamentary Executive lately. I was also much interested a few days ago when, at Parliamentary Executive, the question of votes on the defence services was raised, and H.M., Shinwell and Johnston, all in the beaten minority last year, said that they thought that we could not chop and change from year to year and, having decided not to vote against last year, could not vote against next month. If we have broken the back of this folly I am well pleased. It will save me much time not to have to canvas and mobilise my troops and make a strong speech in the Party meeting, antagonising some poor softies.)

N. also told me that little Laski had been suggesting to H.M. that Attlee's leadership was intolerable, equally Greenwood's Deputy Leadership. His suggestion was that H.M. should be Leader and Cripps Deputy. Cripps apparently was present when this suggestion was made.

I said that it was very difficult for anybody outside the cage of the Parliamentary Labour Party to measure up the inclinations of the inmates. But I was sure that for this particular ticket the votes were not there. Nor would they be, I thought, after the next election.

DIARY7th July 1938

Noel Buxton came to see me at the House this afternoon. He thought the Labour Party had given too much encouragement to the Czechs to resist the reasonable claims of the S.Ds, as a result of the events of May 20th and 21st the Czech Government and Benes in particular felt that they had France, Russia and England behind them and had therefore stiffened their attitude. He thought that some of our own "Foreign Office pundits" held the view that if the German claims were resisted German national feeling would after a while die down. This he felt was quite a mistaken view. (I thought here I heard the echo of N.Henderson.)

Buxton wanted the Labour Party to issue a declaration urging the Czech Government to make large and speedy concessions and to hint that, if they delayed much longer or offered too little, they would lose the support of British public opinion. He wished this particularly in order to bring pressure on Benes. Hodza he thought was much more reasonable but not allowed a free hand by "Czech Chauvinist".

I said that we had already issued a declaration with a somewhat different emphasis and that I could hold out no hope that the Party would act as he wished. I myself took the view that the Czech Government was probably being pressed very hard already by our own Government. We had heard recently at Brussels very bad accounts of the terrorism against the German Socialist Minority in the S.D. areas. I asked Buxton whether he was advocating frontier revision as he had previously sent me a memorandum which argued for this policy. He said no, he only desired that the S.Ds should have full legal autonomy. I said that I knew Benes fairly well having played tennis with him before breakfast at Geneva in 1929/30 and that I might perhaps write him a private letter developing my views on the situation. But I could give no assurance that this letter would carry the emphasis desired by Buxton, though I agreed with him that it was desirable that an early public statement be made of the Czechs Government proposals under the Minorities Statute.

On parting Buxton said "I hope you do not regard me as utterly pro-German or being a Nazi agent" I said "I know you have always been more pro-German than most of the Party and I think that you are less shocked than most of us are by the internal regime in Germany". He replied "I am very shocked by much that is going on and I am doing my best to help the refugees".

I heard later that he had been to see Attlee who had snubbed him rather vigorously.

DIARY13th July 1938

Van rang me up and suggested that I should see ^{Foerstle} the ~~first~~ Gauleiter of Danzig who is in London for a few days. I said that I was afraid that Danzig was a goner and that we could not put that humpty-dumpty back on the wall again. He agreed but suggested that I should tell F. that British opinion was glad to know that hitherto the ante-aryan law had not been applied so strictly in Danzig as in the Reich and that I should then go on to speak bluntly on the subject of Anglo-German relations. I agreed.

In the afternoon F, rather a good-looking tough, speaking no English accompanied by Professor Noe (?) who interpreted, Holden the go-between who after my talk with Van had fixed the appointment by telephone, and Spencer, apparently a north of England businessman. They had just come from an interview with Sinclair. Noe said that the purpose of F's visit was to understand what was now preventing complete Anglo-German friendship. I did most of the talking. I opened on the lines agreed about Danzig, adding that we noted with satisfaction that there had not been the same suppression of minority and non-Nazi elements as in the Reich. I then said that we were all desirous of close friendship between this country and Germany. We were both great nations with a great history and that it would be a shocking tragedy if we once more made war upon each other. There were many things in Germany that most English people did not like; no doubt there were things here too which Germans did not like. I was not going to speak this afternoon about the internal regimes of either country but much harm was done here by the press campaigns of Dr. Goebbels. German were also somewhat wounded by what they read in some British papers but the difference was that in Germany all the press was controlled by one man whereas here in England there was what they no doubt regarded as an anarchy, each paper taking its own line according to the views of its proprietors. Germany, I said, had been tragically misled in July 1914 by inaccurate reports from her representatives here regarding British opinion and probable action in the event of war. They had been led to believe that if war broke out in Europe, we should remain neutral. I was afraid that there was a danger of Germany again being misled at the present time. They would, however, I hope quite appreciate after the events of May 20th and 21st, that if Germany attacked Czecho-Slovakia she would be resisted not only by other powers but also by this country. I desire to impress upon him and hope that he would convey this information to those in Germany that if war had broken out during that weekend the British Government would have had overwhelming popular support behind it in going to the assistance of Czecho-Slovakia and of France.

It was a widely held opinion in this country that, although there was no danger at the present time of any of her neighbours attacking Germany there was considerable danger of Germany attacking one or other of her neighbours. We believe that there were certain powerful forces of men, I did not propose to mention any names, in Germany which were continually planning for and playing with the idea of war as an instrument of German policy. It was this widely held belief more than anything else which prevented the growth of real friendly relations between the two countries.

So far I had spoken of British opinion generally now I will give him the views of the British Labour Party. (He asked how many members we had in Parliament. I said 165. He seemed surprised that the number was so large.) In our view a necessary condition for better relations was a check to the arms race and to an agreement on arms limitations among, at any rate, the Great Powers. We attached very great importance to this both for psychological and economical reasons. We desire to see the standard of living of our people and of the German people greatly raised and it would remain impossible for the present while the great expenditure on arms continued. The late Arthur Henderson had done his best to secure success at the Disarmament Conference. I would not now discuss the responsibility for the failure of this Conference but the Labour Party would continue to work for the ideals of its late leader.

None the less if Germany continued to increase her arms so should we. It might interest him to know that I myself on behalf of the Party had made on May 25th last a speech strongly criticising the Government for not expanding our Air Force fast enough.

Provided that an arms agreement could be reached we believe that a general settlement would become possible, given goodwill and a reasonable spirit on both sides. The Labour Party would be prepared to consider sympathetically German claims in the field both of commerce and colonies. (He pricked up his ears at the word colonies "Then you think that Germany's colonial claims are reasonable".) I repeated that given an arms agreement we would be in favour of a friendly discussion on the colonial issue though we did not commit ourselves to acceptance of any particular claim which Germany might make but in general we also thought if arms were limited and some form of international society, of which Germany should be a member, was reconstituted Germany should have her fair share in the opportunities for development and exploitation of the colonial territories of the world. I added that the Labour Party had always given strong support to the League of Nations and greatly regretted its weakness at the present time. We desire to see it strengthened and would prefer that a new colonial settlement should be reached along the lines of an expansion of the mandatory principle. In the past each great power had in effect monopolised certain colonial territories. We desire to see a system in which colonial territories would be developed according to a co-operative scheme in the benefits of which all nations should equally share. Such a scheme would mean much working out but we believe that given goodwill

it would be practicable to reasonable German claims.

Being devoted to the principles of the League of Nations we, of the British Labour Party, still believe that a proper system of collective security should be established particularly in Europe. (Here he asked me what I thought about Russia). I said that I did not have a moments believe that under Stalin's leadership the S.U. had any designs of aggression against her neighbours, she was too full of her own problems. He asked were we not afraid in this country of communist propoganda, I said no certainly not, because we were conscious of the great superiority of our political system over that of any dictatorship. He then asked what did I think about the internal economical condition of Russia. I said that there had been a great improvement compared with the time of the Tsar but that the Russians starting from very primitive conditions had still a long way to go before their material conditions of life were equal to those of Western Europe. I added that a very stupid mistake was made by Dr.Goebbels in some of his press campaigns in attempting to confound British democracy with "Marxism". It might interest him to know that in fact Marx was surprisngly little read in England, even by British Socialists, I doubted whether any of my Parliamentary colleagues had read even more than half-a-dozen pages of "Das Capital". He seemed to think this was a great joke and took a note of it. I was in doubt several times during our interview whether he was very stupid or very sly.

I said that many of us would like to see a system of mutual guarantee against aggression in Europe so that if Russia attacked Germany we, together with other powers, would go to Germany's assistance. He took a note of this also and seemed very pleased. I then added that the system would involve also our going to the assistance of Russia if she was attacked by Germany.

I ended by emphasising once more British distrust of German intentions towards some of her neighbours and that he must not count upon British neutrality in the event of war breaking out.

I hope that this and other talks this man will have will do some good. I am convinced that this is the only line to take with these people at the present time.

DIARY5.9.38

Lunched with Van alone. He was more disturbed than I had often seen him. He said that "perhaps because of advancing years" he had been sleeping badly lately, last night only four hours. He did not want to become dependent on drugs for his sleep.

He thinks that the big pronouncement at Nuremberg will not come before next Monday, September 12th, when Hitler makes his final oration. Benes is much to blame for not having produced already for publication a clear statement of what he is prepared to do for the minorities. If he did this and it was as reasonable a plan as has been suggested, then we could all say "Now C.S. has made a very fair proposal and anyone who refuses to discuss things on this basis is in the wrong." Benes, however, has frequently gone back in one interview on what he offered in the last and has refused to make things clear. Van has been pressing Jan Masaryk constantly in the sense suggested.

There is certainly a strong war party in Berlin. They ~~they~~ simply do not believe that, if they attacked the Czechs, we or the French or the Russians would do anything effective. They are playing with the idea of a sudden and overwhelming attack upon C.S. and then the offer from conquered Prague of a wonderful Peace Plan, including, perhaps, air pact and limitation, the abolition of the bombing of civilians (look at Spain!) and the voluntary evacuation of Prague and other non-German conquered areas. They count on a delay due to France having to obtain from the League of Nations an assurance that she would not be an aggressor in going to the help of the Czechs, also on our doing nothing until France did something. These are the calculations of the war party, of which, in fact, Hitler is the head. There is also a more moderate party, but weak. If the above plan succeeded, the moderate party, already discredited by past events, would simply disappear. So would all remnants of resistance to Germany in Middle and South East Europe. A great number of Germans are thoroughly disconcerted and frightened at the idea of war, but if the Blitzkrieg comes off, they will say "Hitler was right again".

The Siegfried Line is now very strong. It is doubtful whether the French, even though their Army is still the best in Europe, could force it without enormous losses. If, on the other hand, they fly over, the German Air Force is much more powerful than theirs and would retaliate. The Russians have purged their military forces so thoroughly that they are undoubtedly much weakened at the moment. They have also lent a good deal of material to Spain and China. Some think that they might send 100 aeroplanes to C.S., but

this would be a very small factor. It is possible that the Rumanians would raise no objection to Russian aircraft and, more doubtfully, Russian ground troops, crossing through their country. The present rulers of Rumania, including the King, now realise the danger which they would be in if C.S. fell. The Yugo-Slavs are much less satisfactory. Stoyadinovitch would gladly wash his hands of the Czechs. Until recently the Polish attitude was most unsatisfactory. It seemed that they were merely anxious to share the spoils of C.S. with Germany. Lately there has been a slight improvement here. Goering, as Minister in charge of the Four-Year Plan, realises better than most the damage which a British blockade would do to Germany. But he is not for this reason to be counted in the peace party. All really depends on Hitler, whom it is very difficult to reach. In so far as he is reached by Ribbentrop he is misled, for Ribbentrop saw too much of Londonderry and Mayfair and too little of England.

N. Henderson is not the man to put over on the Germans an effective threat that we should come in early and heavily. He has too long talked to them in tones of sympathy with their projects. His inclination is to be defeatist and pro-Nazi. It was a disastrous innovation that he should have been present at the Cabinet the other day. Any request, e.g., from the T.U.C., to the Government for a statement of their policy would probably draw only very cautious formulas, adding nothing to what has been published.

The U.S.A. is much more full than in 1914 of anti-German feeling. Dictatorships are amazingly unpopular in the U.S. at present.

Italy is completely unpredictable. The French are inclined to think that Mussolini would join the Germans if war came in Central Europe, but the Germans are very far from sure of this and are probably making their plans on the assumption that he will remain neutral.

Cadogan has been away on leave during the past month. Among those much to blame is Tyrrell who, in spite of his great knowledge, long experience and known views, has said nothing publicly either in the House of Lords debates or, e.g., in a letter to "The Times", to stem the flood of blind pro-Nazi sympathies.

DIARY14. 9. 38

Liddell Hart comes to my flat to talk to Attlee, Greenwood, Morrison, Alexander, Dallas and myself on our defence weaknesses, especially anti-aircraft, and on the strategical position in Europe. The general feeling is that war is very near and that a strong policy here would line up Rumania, Poland, and possibly others, on our side, and perhaps intimidate Italy into neutrality. While we are talking, I hear by telephone that Chamberlain is flying to Berchtesgaden to-morrow. Sensation!

DIARY17. 9. 38

Van came to see me at my flat at 9.30. I told him we were going to see the P.M. He said he did not know how much the P.M. would tell us, but he hoped he would speak frankly. Van said that the French were weak, especially Bonnet, but this must on no account be mentioned to the P.M. as it would suggest that we had knowledge of what was in F.O. telegrams, and this might rebound against him. It was clear to me that he is having a terrible tussle with Ministers and getting very little of his own way. His fixed view is, as it has been for years, that this move against C.S. is only the beginning of a process. Hitler is determined to destroy C.S. as a stepping stone to further conquests. In itself, the Sudeten German question has only a demagogic value. The first diplomatic trench, said Van, which we should still hold if possible, is along the present frontiers of C.S. Within these frontiers a negotiated settlement on the lines of the Fourth Plan might still be possible if a sufficiently strong front were presented to Hitler. But it looks as though this line is already lost, and he is now trying to think out a second trench line. This might include cession, as preferable to a plebiscite, of some Sudeten areas and then a direct guarantee of the new Czech frontiers in which this country would join with France and Russia. Van attached enormous importance to Russia being kept in, but it was clear that he feared our Government would take a different line. "After all", he said, "Russia is at least half a European power with enormous reserves of force, and it is madness to try to push her out of Europe in order to please Germany. From the most material point of view, if war should come who but a lunatic could wish the whole power of the German Air Force to strike westwards instead of being divided between East and West." I infer that this is a point on which he is making a stiff but unhopeful fight. I said that it was amazing how some people, otherwise intelligent, had a mad fixation about Russia and seemed almost to prefer that this country should be defeated in war without Russian aid rather than win with it. He did not disagree, and added that no sane person could suppose that Russia was any threat to this country. The Anti-Comintern stuff of Hitler and Co. had, however, had surprising success in Mayfiar, though he now heard that Mount Temple, for example, was becoming frightened and changing his line.

I said I hoped the Government was doing all it could to get the U.S.A. to interest itself publicly in the C.S. question, e.g., to suggest a conference at which there might be a U.S. observer. Van said that he had strongly urged, some time ago, representations by us to Washington in this sense, but I gathered that nothing effective had been done. I said that I hoped there was no danger of

a Four Power Conference - Germans, Italians, French and ourselves - leaving out Russians and Poles. It has been freely rumoured that a Four Power Pact is one of Chamberlain's objectives. Van shrugged his shoulders, was unable to say much, but evidently shared my apprehensions. He added that one danger of any big power conference was that economic concessions might be made to Germany which would strengthen her without changing her intentions. As to Italy, he pointed out that there might be certain advantages to Germany in Italian benevolent neutrality during the first stages of war, as distinct from direct intervention. Such neutrality would tend to nullify a British blockade and we should have the same sort of difficulty with Italy as we had with the U.S.A. in 1914/16. But Mussolini was now "very axis". He must earn his keep as Hitler's hired servant. Even on the most hopeful assumptions the Poles might remain neutral for months before coming in our side. I asked him about the Soviet attitude. He said that all he could say was that their declarations were clear, repeated and recent, but general. They were not bound to move unless France moved; they said that if France moved they would move; but it might be that their movement would be limited to air assistance and that not on a very great scale.

DIARY*Citrine & Morris*17th September, 1938.

Waiting all day, in touch with C. and M. by telephone, for time to be fixed for interview with P.M. Long Cabinet meetings. I urge C. to use emphatic, though not necessarily discourteous, language to Horace Wilson demanding that our interview shall be to-day, no matter how late, and before anyone else other than the P.M.'s Cabinet colleagues.

At 6 message that our interview is fixed for 6.30. By taxi to Transport House and a quarter of an hour's ~~conversation~~ conference with C., M., Dallas and Middleton. Drive in Citrine's car - a better looking vehicle than Herbert's and hence more dignified - to No.10. Moderate crowd at bottom of Downing Street. Swarm of press men and photographers in Downing Street itself. Inside, wait five minutes, then spend an hour and a half in Cabinet room, we three sitting facing P.M. across the table, he having Halifax on his right and Horace Wilson on his left. Only we six. Halifax says practically nothing, leaving it all to the P.M. Wilson makes one or two minor interventions.

P.M. asks how freely he can speak. We say speak on assumption that nothing goes outside this room. Then, at the end, we will discuss with you how much we can tell to a small circle of colleagues. He then gives what purports to be a full account of his visit to and talk with Hitler. Whether or not he holds much back, it is a vivid tale. Before he starts, C., by prior arrangement between us three, opens with a statement that our Blackpool declaration represented the unanimous view of our three Executive bodies, that we still stand by it, and that the N.C.L., at its meeting yesterday, was only doubtful whether this unanimous view was best expressed by a public reaffirmation or by no fresh statement. They had decided the latter. There had also been grave doubt in the minds of many members of the Council as to whether British prestige had not been gravely lowered by the P.M. going to see Hitler.

The P.M. says that he thinks it is just as well we did not publicly reaffirm the Blackpool declaration for reasons which will appear in his narrative. He was quite confident that British prestige had not been lowered but rather raised by his visit to Hitler and establishment of personal contact. In fact, when he first made the proposal to make direct contact, Hitler had replied suggesting that he should come to London. For obvious reasons the British Government had had to dissuade him from this idea. The P.M. believed, "while not wishing to appear egotistical", that he had

made a great impression on H. He thought that H. appreciated not only the fact of his personal visit, but that he was a plain, practical man, not of the diplomatic type, with whom it was possible to have a straight talk with no frills. He thought that H. appreciated the directness with which he had spoken during their conversation and the quickness with which he had got down to essentials.

The P.M. and H. were alone with an interpreter during their conversation. Many others were in a room downstairs. H. seldom looked him full in the face but nearly always kept his eyes fixed on the interpreter. "He is a most extraordinary creature", but the P.M. does not think that he is either a lunatic as some say, or 100% gangster. There is the gangster element very strongly, but there is also "a something else" with which, said the P.M., he had tried to get in touch and believed that he had not wholly failed.

"It is impossible in this quiet room to realise the state of tension and excitement at Berchtesgaden". Stories were coming in all the time of new Czech outrages and the murder of Sudeten Germans. While he was with H. a story was brought in that 300 Sudetens had been killed the day before. This story, which afterwards turned out to be completely false, greatly excited H. The P.M. had thought that his visit would last two or three days and that they could begin with generalities on the first day, postponing the details of C.S. till the morrow. He soon found this was impossible. H. declared that the question could not brook delay. Frequently he became very excited and began to shout and pour forth a flood of language. "Several times I had to stop him, saying that I could not understand a word of what he was saying and that I wanted it translated." This had the effect momentarily of calming him down.

It soon became clear that the situation was "desperately critical". "I gathered that certain dates were fixed within which, if no settlement was first reached, the German Army and Air Force would move against C.S. These dates were the 20th to the 28th September.

H., early in the conversation, launched forth on a long disquisition on his relations with his neighbours. For ten years non-aggression pact with Poland; the assurance to France that he no longer claimed Alsace Lorraine; his acceptance of the result of the Plebiscite in the Saar (though he added that if the plebiscite had gone otherwise he would have been compelled to raise the question afresh); the Anglo-German Naval Treaty, which, he said, he had entered into because he had regarded war between England and Germany as unthinkable. But, he added, if the present talk in England of war against Germany continues, he would have to reconsider this

Treaty. H. then "talked a lot of racial stuff" and said that till recently there were more than ten million Germans outside the Reich in Central Europe. Seven million of these from Austria had now "come home". There remained three million or more in C.S. and he could no longer tolerate their oppression by the Czechs.

The P.M. then asked whether, if the Sudeten German question were now satisfactorily settled, H. would make any further claims, and warned him that some people in England thought that there was never any limit to his demands. H. replied No. He recognized the distinction between what was possible and what was impossible. He realised that great numbers of Germans lived dispersed and not in territories adjacent to the Reich and that these could not be brought within the Reich. He only wanted Germans in the Reich, not other alien elements. After the Sudeten Germans there would only remain Memel and, so long as the Lithuanian Government continued to respect the Statute, H. had told them that he did not propose to raise this question. There were, of course, other matters for discussion with other Governments in the future, for example, the matter of colonies. But this, he said, would not be "a war question".

Then, said the P.M., he again worked himself up into a state of great excitement and began once more to declaim against Czech tyranny and oppression. At this stage the P.M. warned him that if he attacked C.S. and the French came to her help, he must not count on British neutrality. An attack on C.S. said the P.M., might therefore precipitate a world war.

e/ H. said "I am ready to chance a world war, even on those conditions. If a world war must come I would rather it came soon. I am 49 now and I want still to be young enough to lead my people to victory". The P.M. then told us "At this point I raised my voice deliberately and shouted too, so that those in the room below could hear. I said 'If you are determined on force, I am wasting my time here. I may as well go back home at once. It is no use going on unless you have something else to suggest than force.'" Then H. quieted down again "and for the first time since our interview began, looked me straight in the face. It is not a nice face." Then H. said "Everything depends on the British Government. Will you admit the principle of self-determination?" The P.M. said he could not answer a general question of this kind without consultation with his colleagues. But he was prepared to go back and consult them and return again to continue the talk after a few days. (My impression is that at this point the P.M.'s narrative to us deliberately left gaps. I think that at this stage Hitler or he made to each other more specific proposals which were not revealed to us.) H. said "Yes, that is a possible procedure." The P.M. then proposed that he and H. should issue a joint appeal

to both sides in C.S. to keep calm and avoid all incidents. H. said he could not join in making any such appeal while his people were being tortured and oppressed.

The P.M. then asked for an assurance that during the next few days there would be no attack on C.S. H. replied "The German military machine is a mighty instrument. Once put in motion it cannot be stopped. But provided there is no further grave provocation by the Czechs, I will not set it in motion until our talks are resumed." H. then said "Next time you come I will meet you half way. I don't like a man so much older than myself to have the fatigue of such a long journey." On this the P.M. naively observed, "I think that remark shows that there is another side to Hitler beside the gangster which it is worth while trying to cultivate." The P.M. also remarked that H. "gave me the impression of a man who would be rather better than his word."

The P.M. then returned to London. He gave us to understand, though I doubt if quite truthfully, that he had brought back no specific proposals.

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We then discussed the present situation generally. At quite an early stage the P.M. said "The real difficulty is the weakness of France." "Within the last few days French resolution has crumbled." The state of the French Air Force was appalling. Guy Le Chambre, the present Air Minister, had told a group of French Parliamentarians - the P.M. could not remember whether Senators or Deputies - a few days ago that France had only 21 first class machines equal to the best in the German Air Force, and only 500 machines which were serviceable at all. This statement had created consternation in France. Bonnet in particular had been appaled and was now very weak. Daladier (in reply to a question put by me) was a little stronger than Bonnet but likewise irresolute now. The geographical difficulties of France or anybody else assisting C.S. if attacked, were obvious. He said "Nothing any of us can do can protect C.S. from aggression." All we could do was, "after she had been attacked and destroyed, to start a war against Germany". But he was very doubtful how far public opinion here would really be in favour of such a policy, and in any case "C.S. will have been destroyed and you won't be able to put Humpty-Dumpty back on the wall again. All you could do, even if you won, would be to create some new State to replace the present C.S."

We raised the question of the attitude of the S.U. The P.M. then reported an alleged interview between Litvinov and Bonnet at Geneva. Bonnet had asked "What will you do if Germany attacks C.S.?" Litvinov had said "What will you do? It will depend on

that." (Of course, this is what the Treaties say. The S.U. is only bound to act if France acts.) Bonnet had then said, "If C.S. is attacked we shall go to her assistance. What will you do then?" "Then we should raise the whole question of German aggression at Geneva." The P.M. said that Bonnet, in consequence of this conversation, entertained grave doubts as to whether the S.U. really meant to do anything. At this point I said "I must tell you, Mr Prime Minister, that I do not believe that story. It is quite contrary to what I have heard from more than one good source on which I place reliance." (I had in mind both Van and Coates.) This conversation, moreover, is quite inconsistent with the clear, repeated and recent statements by the Soviet that if France moved she would move at once. (Note, moreover, that, on the assumption that the S.U. has a sinister design to push Europe into a general war, and herself snatch a communist profit at the close - and this is the yarn circulating in many high diplomatic and other circles - Litvinov would not have spoken, as alleged to Bonnet but would rather have egged him on. For if Litvinov spoke as alleged the effect would clearly be to slow down the French and to promote, not a general war, but the heroic and unaided death of C.S.)

Still on Russia, the P.M. said that the geographical difficulties were obvious in any case and our General Staff did not think that the Red Army could do much. In the air, of course, the Russians could do a good deal, but what would they do?

The French, the P.M. said, were now pretty sure that Italy would join Germany against them. This was one cause of their weakness

"The Czechs", said the P.M., the only time during our long interview when he directly referred to them as distinct from plans relating to them, "have been much too slow in making all these offers." He referred to them with an impatient snarl. Runciman, he said, had come to the conclusion and had told the Cabinet that it was now impossible for Czechs and Sudeten Germans to lie down side by side in the same State. If this view was accepted, some change of frontiers must follow.

H.M. asked at this point whether the Government had considered an exchange of discontented populations across the present frontiers, Sudeten Germans being free to go into the Reich and oppressed inhabitants of the Reich free to escape into C.S. from Hitler's rule. The P.M. said that he was afraid this would not be a practical basis of discussion.

The question being raised by us of a direct guarantee to the Czechs as distinct from an indirect guarantee via France, the P.M. said that if we made a direct pledge to the Czechs we might be the first to be attacked. It also appeared that the P.M. had gathered, whether from his conversation with Hitler or from some other source I am not sure, that the Germans intended, if they attacked C.S., to stand purely on the defensive against any French attacks, whether on land or by air. I suspect that one of the causes of French weakness is that it has been hinted to them that in such circumstances we should, at any rate, not come in at once.

The P.M. feared that French weakness was only too well known to the Germans. Little Wilson added - when I told this afterwards to Van, he smiled at these confessions of a very amateur diplomat - "The Germans told me at Berchtesgaden the exact position in France, both military and political."

Towards the end of the talk I addressed the Prime Minister somewhat as follows -

"It has been stated in the press that some of us take the view that now or never is the time to make a stand against Hitler. Even if that phrase simplifies our position a little too much, I feel that you have been confronted with this choice and have chosen Never. I hope you have chosen it fully realising all its implications. I don't believe that this will be the last of Hitler's demands. I believe that he intends to go on and on until he dominates first all Central and South Eastern Europe, then all Europe, then the world. And at every stage this situation may be repeated. When the next crisis comes, you or your successor will once again fly over to see him. You will return and say that the situation is 'desperately critical' - and it will be true. You will say that the German military machine is very formidable - and that will be still more true than now. You will say that there is no time to lose, that the French, or whoever it may be, are weak and irresolute and that therefore we must give in. For some time you may give in at the expense of other people, but sooner or later you will have to give in at the expense of British interests, and the end of the whole process may well be the liquidation of the British Empire. And at each stage you will have fewer friends and weaker allies to join you in any stand you may, in some late stage, decide to make. And I know that these opinions are not held only in the Labour Party. They are shared by a large number of your supporters in Parliament."

He listened to this, shuffling a little on his backside, and then leaning back in his chair and looking not at me or any of

us, but at the far corner of the room, he said "I freely admit that we are often haunted by fears like this, but we do not believe that such a course of things is inevitable. If we can avert war now we are not satisfied that it will come later." One of my colleagues, following up my line, asked what he would do if Hitler demanded the retrocession of African colonies. The P.M. said, drawing himself up as though about to score a point, "Ah, that is quite different from the case of Czechoslovakia. The Germans could only get there by sea, and we have the British navy." Whereat I said, rather abruptly, "The case is not different at all. What would happen would be that he would threaten to bomb London unless you agreed to hand over German East." "Then", said the P.M., "in such a case as that, I should appeal to the British people to resist and should be absolutely confident of their reply". I said "I am not sure that I should, and by that time you might be left without a friend or ally in the world." He shrugged his shoulders, and we passed to questions of national defence.

H.M. spoke strongly of the lethargy at the Home Office, both of Ministers and officials, regarding A.R.P. He had been trying to hustle them along so far as London was concerned. He asked the P.M. to check up on what was being done. I then raised the question of anti-aircraft guns, and cited several facts, without indicating their source, regarding the small number of guns, particularly of 3.7 ins., and the fact that many were still in store, so that, in the opinion of good judges, it would take at least twenty four, and perhaps 48, hours efficiently to man the A.A. defences. Wilson here intervened to say not only were guns still in store, but they had no mountings. I said that either he was deceived on this point or else the situation was even worse than I had suggested, because I had understood that some guns, ready for action, were still in store. I then raised the question of defence against low flying air attack, and asked where were the modern guns for this purpose as distinct from a few old vamped up Lewis guns, practically useless. They remained silent, and I then said, not unemphatically and slightly raising my voice, "I suggest to you that they are no where at all and that not one has yet been delivered." Then, turning to Wilson, whose presence and aspect I by now found somewhat irritating, I asked "Can you deny that there are now in London no modern guns at all for attack on low flying aircraft?" Wilson replied, "No I cannot deny it".

The P.M. then said, with a faint attempt at greater cheerfulness, "We are doing our best and there have been great improvements lately, and I don't think there is any danger of a sudden and unexpected attack on this country within the next week whatever happens".

Wilson had a little earlier passed an envelope across, saying "The American Ambassador has now been waiting half an hour." We then raised with the P.M. how much of what he had said could be passed on to colleagues. He said we were quite at liberty to tell them everything regarding France and Russia, but that we should exercise great discretion regarding what he had told us of his talk with Hitler. It would be disastrous if particular phrases, many of which he had quoted, got into the press. We then left.

el The best that can be said of the P.M. is that, within the limits of his ignorance he is rational, but I am appalled how narrow these limits are, and it is clear that Hitler produced an enormous impression upon him, partly by hustling intimidation and partly by a few compliments and words of courtesy. If Hitler had been a British nobleman and Chamberlain a British working man with an inferiority complex, the thing could not have been done better.

DIARY18. 9. 38

At Attlee's request, I made a pilgrimage to his little Victorian villa at Stanmore, which I have never been inside before, to meet Necas, Czech Socialist Minister of Social Welfare who is paying a flying visit to London, though he is seeing no Ministers, and Kosina who came to interpret. I had met N. in Prague some years ago. He is a tall man, finely built, and full of courage, very Slav looking, with a small beard. Alexander joined us for part of the talk before lunch, but did not stay long. N. began by laying out the familiar Czech case with aid of maps and statistics. We know all this by heart, but it would have been unkind to cut it short. He said "We would sooner die and be drowned in our own blood than become Hitler's slaves. Every man in our country knows what is coming, every woman, even every child. We shall all be massacred, but we shall fight to the last, rather than give in. K. said "People in this country don't understand. Hitler is like a shark. When he tastes blood he wants more. The more he eats the greater his appetite becomes." The circle of mountains round Bohemia has stood as the frontier for nearly 1,000 years. Once that frontier is given up, all the defensive strength of C.S. disappears and the economic losses would also be fatal to the future life of the State.

amx I explained our attitude, what we had done, and the significance of our Blackpool resolution. N. was very appreciative of our action. I explained that we called on our Government to join with the French and Soviet Governments in warning Hitler, and if he attacked, in resisting him. This was important because our action must depend on that of France. If France did nothing, we could not move. Therefore, I asked N., who had just come from Paris, his views on the situation there. He said that early last week (I think on Tuesday, 13th) the issue was to mobilise at once or not. Daladier wanted to mobilise, Bonnet not. Seven Ministers sided with Bonnet. Also, outside the Cabinet, Flandin, Caillet and high finance were active against a strong line. Bonnet threatened to resign if mobilisation was decided on. He wants to oust Daladier and form a new Government further to the Right. D. and B. were sent for at this crisis by Lebrun and urged that they must stand together and that there must be no resignations. In the result, it was decided not to mobilise. N. believed that the story put about by Bonnet of his conversation with Litvinov at Geneva was a lie. He had not heard any such report in Paris and it conflicted with everything else that was known in Prague of Soviet intentions. In the French Cabinet Reynaud and Mandel were the strongest. Daladier would be strong if others were not so weak. Blum and the Socialists had been for a strong line. (In view of other information, I doubt whether this is quite true.)

After we had gone over all this ground in a resumed conversation after lunch, N. produced a great sheaf of typescript describing in English the social legislation of C.S., in much of which he had had a hand. He was very proud of it and said that their standard of life might not be as high as ours, but that the basis of their social legislation was, he thought, as good as any country in the world. He was beginning to develop this in detail. Attlee and I felt that there was really nothing more to be got from this conversation and were anxious to talk things over together. On the other hand, we were very loath to stop him, for, as K. interpreted, "He says that he is going back to his country to-day and he may never see you again, and so he wants to tell you something of what he has been trying to do for the workers, including the Sudeten Germans, since he became Minister". N. and K. left in a Czech Legation car to go to Trafalgar Square to see something of the Demonstration organised by the I.P.C. on behalf of C.S. When they left, N. nearly broke down and K. said "I may or may not see you again. If it is war, I am an officer and I shall go back."

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Through all these days, the steadfast courage, self-restraint, moderation of speech and civilised outlook of the Czechs, from Benes and Hodza down to the simple soldiers on the frontier, has been perfectly amazing. The contrast with the howling devils on the other side of the mountains is too great for words to express.

Dalton J 19 (89) /

DIARY

19. 9. 38

N.C.L. meeting all day. In the morning reports by us three of our talk with P.M., by Attlee and I of our talk with Necas, and by Lathan and Snell of their talks in Paris when they were over for Longuet's funeral.

L. and S. report that the Quai d'Orsay were left without information regarding Chamberlain's talk with Hitler, and the French Government were awaiting a British lead. They said they felt that "the lead is in British hands". On Saturday morning they still had no news from London. Chamberlain had got back from Berchtesgaden on Friday night. The French were furious and Daladier thought of refusing an invitation to come to London.

There was serious division in all sections of public opinion in France on the issue of war, and even on the question of a plebiscite, except the Communists who were all for war. Bonnet had threatened to resign but had been persuaded by Daladier to remain. On the Socialist executive there were serious divisions, but Blum had got them together. It was doubtful whether Blum was 100% for standing up and fighting for Czechoslovakia. They had seen Blum along with Adler, de Brouckere, another Belgian, and Schiff. Blum was very voluble. He complained that the French Ambassador in London had not even been able to get in touch with Halifax and had only seen Cadogan, who had nothing to say. Blum said that French opinion had hardened in the early part of the week (12th and 13th) in favour of S.S., but later had weakened. He had tried to put all the blame on the British, but to this L. had demurred. There were elements in the French Government only too willing to support British proposals for the partition of C.S. If war came, the Czechs having refused, Blum said that neither a majority of the French Parliament, nor of the French people, would support French entry into war. L. said "Are you not bound by Treaty to the Czechs?" Blum replied "Yes, but" with a shrug. L. had said that we stood root and branch by the Blackpool resolution and he hoped that the French Movement was doing as much as we were to try and stiffen their Government. Blum said that this was their desire and intention. Also that they valued contact with us and hoped that it might be made more continuous.

The French had said that the S.U. would stand by her obligations. But it was wise not to obtrude the S.U. publicly so as not to give Hitler an excuse for an anti-Bolshevik campaign against C.S.

Two British journalists had told them that the French General Staff were quietly confident of their ability to face all

Dalton I 19 (40)

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consequences of war; that the air defects were not so bad as had been alleged, and that Guy Le Chambre was regarded as "unsatisfactory" and seeking, along with Bonnet, to find excuses for inaction.

Snell added that the French felt themselves very badly used by Downing Street. The French Communists were passionately anti-British. Everything was our fault. Blum was losing hold because the Communists always seemed to be taking the lead. If in the end there is a retreat, Blum and the others will say that the British would not play up.

DIARY19. 9. 38

9.45. Twenty minutes with Van at his house. He had been up till the small hours of the morning in connection with the Anglo-French Plan. He said "Since we last met I have been upbraided for holding views which are not those of the Government." He said that his position had become very difficult and that he could not go on indefinitely. But he thought it was his duty to hold on for a time. If he resigned now it might seem that he was moved by personal resentment or ambition, which was not the case; his elimination from the scene would also give great delight to the Germans and "Neville Henderson would go through the roof with joy." But there was need for even greater care in the arrangement of meetings between him and me. (For some time past we had agreed that we could not meet at the F.O.) He did not think that he was suspected by Ministers of contact with the Labour Party, but they knew that he and Winston were old friends and that he sometimes saw some of the more active critics in the Conservative Party. I asked him to have a word with me before finally deciding to clear out. I said that I thought I might have some useful things to say on some aspects of such a decision. I asked whether he thought that the time had come for us privately to urge the Czechs to give way rather than make a hopeless and heroic fight against overwhelming odds if they were to be deserted by all the great Powers. He said this would be going too fast as there were important factors in the case which he could not tell me now without grave breach of secrecy, but which perhaps a little later he could explain. For the moment, he counselled great reserve both in public utterances and in anything said privately by us to the Czechs. Reverting to French weakness, he said that a French Minister sitting next to him at luncheon said "It is only the clemency and humanity of the democracies which makes them shrink from the idea of war."

I told him how frankly the P.M. had spoken to us, and he was pleased at this. I amused him by quoting little Horace Wilson's saying of what the Germans had told him at Berchtesgaden about France, and still more by quoting the P.M. - "I don't know whether any of you play poker", then, looking at me direct, "perhaps Dalton does. Well what Henderson said to us was 'If Hitler is bluffing, at any rate he has got a full house in his hand'". Van, who plays poker himself, was very delighted with this remark, illustrative of the P.M.'s innocence. Van said that the French air situation was incredibly bad but it was important that we should not publicly abuse the French, for this would delight Berlin. The plain truth, which Ministers could not see, was that Hitler had one simple aim - to dominate first Europe and then the world.

DIARY19. 9. 38

I am pretty constantly in touch in these days with Alexander who, in spite of some defects, is a stout fellow and has a number of contacts. Tonight he tells me that Oliver Stanley who, a few days ago, had admitted to him that he hated the idea of bringing pressure on the Czechs, and regarded the proposal for a plebiscite as a cruel farce, tonight said, after to-day's Cabinet, "I will put to you a straight question. If you had been in our place, would you have been prepared to go to war alone to help the Czechs"? This reflects the view that the Cabinet is persuaded that neither France nor Russia would move.

A. has it on good authority that Kennedy, the American Ambassador, is profoundly shocked at the failure of our Government to consult the Czechs before producing a plan to dismember their country. He felt so strongly on this point that he went down to Downing Street and protested against this procedure.

20. 9. 38

Our N.C.L. declaration reads well in the press this morning. It is not too long, the epithets are right, and it avoids more than one tempting pitfall. Attlee tells me that Winston rang him up this morning and said "Your declaration does honour to the British nation." Attlee apparently merely replied "I am glad you think so." I hear later, via Balogh and Nield, that Winston intended this to be an overture for some form of concerted action and that he was huffed that Attlee did not make a warmer response. My view is that openly concerted action between our Party and other critics of the Government is less useful at this stage than outwardly separate action. We have been visibly and constantly active for days. Others have done practically nothing, so far at least as outward signs go. It would not strengthen any appeal of ours if it were associated with Winston or Eden or the Liberals, even if they would join, and I doubt whether it would strengthen any appeal of theirs for us to be associated with it. But it is possible to be too cautious, as well as too rash, towards any suggestion for conversations. Alexander, more than any of us, has been itching for more contacts with other critics of the Government, but, when he put his point of view to me, I warned him of some of the difficulties, particularly of the possibilities that we might upset a large number of our own Party and destroy our credit in our own home market. I heard last night that Winston had said privately, "The Government had to choose between war and shame. They have chosen shame and they will get war." I hear to-day that he is flying to Paris to try and stiffen the French Government. This is an attempt which he can make but we can't.

Dalton I 19 (43) ✓

DIARY

20. 9. 38

Meeting of N.C.L. at which are present Vincent Auriol, Bothereau (C.G.T.), Schevenels, de Brouckere and Adler. We had summoned them urgently yesterday to attend for consultation.

Auriol made a long and, as we all thought, very honest speech. He said that there had been two periods. In the first period, before Hitler's Nuremberg speech (12th), the French Government had been strong and energetic, especially Daladier who had put much pressure on Chamberlain to support C.S. Chamberlain's declarations, however, had been unsatisfactory. Blum had joined in putting pressure on Phipps to try to stiffen Chamberlain, but Phipps had made a disappointing reply.

In the second period, after the Nuremberg speech and the incidents which followed, the French Government had weakened and this weakness had spread from members of the Government to senators and deputies and to public opinion generally. They had been influenced by Hitler's promise to respect French security and by Henlein's ultimatum. Daladier had had a long conversation on the telephone with Chamberlain, proposing more vigorous action. The result had been Chamberlain's flight to Berchtesgaden. On the evening of Monday (12th) Bonnet had told Phipps that he did not know what France would do, and Flandin had written a public letter to Daladier saying (1) that France was under no obligation to assist C.S., and (2) that the French Parliament should be summoned and should vote before France was committed to war. At the Cabinet Council which followed, Daladier at last submitted to pressure by Bonnet, Caillet, Beranger and many others. Flandin spoke on the wireless against French entry into war. The British Government up to this time had not said anything really definite on their attitude if war came. Probably Chamberlain went to Berchtesgaden meaning to be firm, but found himself confronted with the dilemma of large concessions or immediate war. But, though he returned on Friday, up to Saturday night the French Government knew nothing either of Hitler's attitude or of Chamberlain's reaction to it. French public opinion is now deeply divided and many have a sense of humiliation and shame. The Socialist Party and all its organs are divided, the Executive and the Parliamentary Group. Some say "At all costs we must not break with the British and therefore we must accept the Plan." Others take the same attitude as the British Labour Party at Blackpool. The London Plan has increased divisions, not diminished them. Ever since Laval there has been a deep division in France on foreign policy. Any decision of the French Socialist Party to put pressure on the Government to be stronger might have immediate consequences. If the Government failed, Flandin

fall,

Flandin would seek a new majority in the Chambre and this new Government would be much worse than the present one. In view of all this, Blum was no longer putting any pressure either on the French Government or on Phipps. Blum had seen Necas in Paris who had told him that the Czechs would fight, even if alone. Blum had telephoned to Benes at midnight last night (19th) suggesting that he should demand that the Czech point of view should be heard in London. Benes was inclined to agree. Blum said that even if a new and better Government could be formed in Paris it could not go back on Bonnet's attitude in London, unless the British Government also changed its attitude. Chautemps and Bonnet had both been saying that if C.S. rejects the Plan and fights, France won't move. No movement of public opinion can be decisive at this stage unless the Governments change their attitude.

We put to Auriol the alleged statement of Guy Le Chambre, including the figures 21 and 500. He said that he was not a member of the Defence Council but that in his view the figures quoted were certainly too low. On the other hand, the French Air Force was much inferior to the Germans, both in numbers and quality. This was not due, as their enemies alleged, to the forty-hour week, but to the shortage of skilled workers and modern machines. He said that the Executive Committee ~~would~~ of the French Socialist Party had had "discussions, but no decisions". Nor had they made, as yet, any official approach to the Government. The Parliamentary Group was meeting to-morrow.

Bothereau said that the C.G.T. likewise was divided. There was a majority for resistance to Hitler, but a minority for yielding. (The majority, of course, is Communist.) Eight days ago the C.G.T. had made a declaration "en principe" in favour of preserving peace!! They had not met since but were meeting to-day. Jouhaux was in the United States and would not be back till the 29th.

Auriol had told us that the French Parliamentary Group and also the French Executive were meeting to-morrow. The idea was thrown out that we might send one or two people to confer with them, but this was not an official invitation and the N.C.L. afterwards decided that we would indicate, through Schevenels in Paris, that if either the industrial or political section invited us to send representatives, we would do so. But it was understood that this would be for the exchange of information and not with the idea of our attempting to put pressure on them to change whatever attitude their majorities favoured. Any such attempt would be resented and would defeat itself.

Schevenels told me that Paul Faure and Severak were among those who were for capitulation at any price, and that Blum, as usual, was balancing.

De Brouckere made, as always, a short, lucid and emotionally moving speech. He deplored the French weakness and said that the British only, of all sections of the International, had stood absolutely firm and united in their declarations. This to him, as President of the International, was almost his only consolation in this hour. He was of opinion that a further visit by some of us to Paris should be undertaken, even though it might seem unlikely to achieve any result.

DIARY21. 9. 38

Rang up Soviet Embassy and arranged to see Kagan at 12.15, Maiski being still at Geneva. I put some questions from which it appears that there has been no contact between F.O. and Soviet Embassy since September 9th, when Maiski left for Geneva. Kagan neither invited by F.O. nor instructed by Moscow to make contact of any kind. (I said that though some of us would blame F.O. for this, others would say that he might have been more energetic himself.) He said Maiski saw Halifax on 7th or 8th, they spoke of many things, including C.S. M. told H. of conversation in Moscow between Litvinov and French Charge d'Affaires a few days before, in which L. had stated clearly that S.U. would fulfill her obligations, and suggested immediate Staff consultations between C.S., France and S.U. H. had taken note of this, but when M. had asked what would this country do, he had been "very vague".

I raised Bonnet's story of what L. had said to him at Geneva. Kagan said this was a complete lie and that at this very moment (12.30 p.m.) Litvinov at Geneva was making a speech in which he was making completely clear the Soviet attitude, which had, indeed, been perfectly clear throughout. Kagan gave me a copy. This evidence strengthens my view that either Bonnet lied to Chamberlain as well, no doubt, as to his own colleagues, or that Chamberlain lied to us when reporting Bonnet. I incline to the former belief.

K. also gave me a copy of Litvinov's proposal, made immediately after the rape of Austria, that all peaceful Governments should get together and concert plans to prevent a repetition of such outrages. I recalled that the British Government had refused this suggestion on the ground that it "might seem like organising Europe into two ideological blocks."

As I left the Soviet Embassy soon after one o'clock, K. told me that just before my arrival he had had a telephone conversation with Masaryk. To the Franco-British pressure to accept the "Plan", the Czechs had replied, proposing arbitration between Germany and themselves on the basis of the Arbitration Treaty of 1926, concerning the continued validity of which Goering and Von Neurath had given full assurances immediately after the rape of Austria last March. The British and French Ministers had returned at 2 a.m. and told Benes that there was no time to be lost, that perhaps in a matter of hours the German forces would move, and that if this happened neither France nor Britain could lift a finger to help C.S. Faced with this, the Czech Government had decided to accept the Plan. Masaryk had said "Britain and France put a knife to our throat. What more could we do?"

Dalton I 19 (47)

DIARY

21. 9. 38

Full meeting of three Executives at 2.30. Reports, including a report of my visit to Soviet Embassy this morning. Attlee and Greenwood to see P.M. at 5.30. Decided, though not wishing to embarrass Attlee, that a strong deputation should be sent later in the evening to the P.M. on behalf of the Three Bodies. Citrine, Morrison and I with Elvin, Dallas and Alexander. We six have tea together and concert plans. Some in joint meeting were afraid that difficult questions might be put to us. I scout this, saying "There should and can only be time for us to put questions to them and to express our views as hitherto declared." Resuming full meeting, A. and G. returned. They had only half an hour with P.M. because he had to see the King. It does not seem to have occurred to them to say that they would be glad to wait for him till his return from B.P. and continue the conversation then. Attlee makes a report in outline and tells us that it was a disagreeable interview, that the P.M. becomes steelier and steelier, smiling less and snarling more. He says they cross-questioned the P.M. on details of the Plan and its execution, but it seems that no details are arranged. Minorities? Nothing worked out and therefore no pledges for anything at all. If Czechs accept, are there any guarantees for them? Apparently not. Why then did Czechs accept? Because, if not, they would have been marched over. What provision has been made that they shall not be marched over now? No details have been arranged. Poland and Hungary? We are only dealing at present with the Sudeten question. You are destroying the Czechoslovakian State. What then? Anyhow, they will have the guarantee. A guarantee of what frontiers and by whom? Nothing has yet been worked out. A. then says he told the P.M. "You have abandoned these people completely. You have made a complete and abject surrender. All Eastern Europe will now fall under Hitler's sway. We are all full of the most profound disgust, and this is one of the biggest disasters in British history." This story sounded pretty well, but I am not sure that it sounded as impressive to the P.M. as it does when read in my report.

Message comes that P.M. finds it physically impossible to receive deputation but that Halifax will see us on his behalf at 7.20 at F.O. We arrive, and are brought from waiting room into the Presence by Master Caccia, a nice young man, now one of the Private Secretaries, who began at the Office in 1930. I introduce him to my colleagues and then we go in. Halifax alone with very junior official sitting in the rear taking a note. Halifax says he has an appointment with the P.M. in half an hour and hopes we may be able to give him our views within that time. I say at once "That will be very difficult." Citrine then, as pre-arranged, makes opening statement. He says he has been required - not requested, but

required - by all present at the joint meeting to express our sense of shame, humiliation and disgust at what is taking place and the British Government's part in it. We then all put questions to Halifax, who replies to them together at the end.

Moralities and expediencies. Morality knows no geography. No more moral case to go to war with Germany for C.S. than with Japan for China. French had direct obligation, we never.

Cannot say whether, as I said I believed, "Bonnet lied". Admits non-contact with S.U. during this period. Maiski had said to him at last interview, "We shall do our bit". This vague. British Ambassador in Moscow said Red Army was weak through purges and could do practically nothing. Air Force could do something but not much. I asked "Did Ambassador approach Soviet Government?" Halifax not sure. I asked "Did you not think it worth while to give him instructions?" Halifax said no. I said, before he answered on non-contact, "If facts as alleged, we shall draw our own conclusions as to competence with which British diplomacy has been conducted during these grave days."

Suggestion of pressure on French. I asked "Is difference between last May and now that then we told French we would stand by her, and now we have been putting pressure on them to run away?" H. denied pressure. He had been with French Ministers all Sunday and he had never heard a word spoken during that conversation suggesting that if France stood by her Treaty obligations we should not give her support.

Runciman said if Benes had not delayed and prevaricated we could have settled this weeks ago without cession. Guarantee international like Locarno; details not settled. Against unprovoked aggression, we retaining right to say what is unprovoked.

At one stage, Dallas, half rising from his chair, said "Lord Halifax, we are ashamed to be Britishers."

Leaving, I said to the press, "Nothing was wanting in emphasis in statements made by the delegation to Halifax."

(w)

Looking for

DIARY22. 9. 38

Fly to Paris with Citrine, Lathan, Elvin and Gillies, leaving Heston half an hour after P.M. had left for the Rhine. Pretty good weather and only bump when nearing Paris. Stayed at Lutetia Hotel, where I am slightly irritated by prolonged haggle by Citrine over the price of his room.

At 3 p.m. L., G. and I meet Blum, Auriol, Dormoy, Paul Faure, Grumbach, Zyromski and Evrard. Also present de Brouckere, Adler and Winter.

First I and then Lathan make a statement to them of our Party's recent activities - three declarations, two formal demands for summons of Parliament, two deputations from the N.C.L., a number of visits by Attlee and Greenwood to Ministers, and our decision to hold a large number of demonstrations and meetings in the next few days. I emphasise that all our declarations have been unanimously adopted and that, up to date, we have no dissentient minority either in N.C.L. or in any of the three Executives. I ask, in effect, what the French have done, are doing, or intend to do, and whether they ~~xxx~~ are still seriously divided?

Blum says that the recall of Parliament has been raised here, but the Communists have taken the initiative in a way that has embarrassed him. He has had two talks with Duclos and explained this danger. Parliamentary debates might weaken, rather than strengthen, the will of the Government. Flandin, Caillaud, etc. might thus gain influence. But last night, in view of disclosures of division in the Cabinet, the Socialist Parliamentary Group decided to ask for the meeting of Parliament, but Daladier, met by a delegation from the three Parties of the Left, declined. A Cabinet crisis now might be most serious.

Both in the Parliamentary Group and in the C.A.P., there is now almost unanimity in support of the Resolution of the Group. (This really contains nothing but a demand for the recall of Parliament)

Blum thinks that for months past the direction of Czechoslovak policy has passed from Paris to London. We must now stop these dreadful attempts of the two Governments to shift responsibility from one to the other, this "équivoque atroce". On Thursday, 15th, Blum talked to Daladier, who was then firm. (Then followed a tedious repetition of the grievance of the French Government because they had been kept waiting so long without information of what had happened at Berchtesgaden. When Daladier and Bonnet were telephoned to come to London on the Saturday afternoon

they knew nothing of what had happened at Berchtesgaden, and Corbin, on Saturday morning, could get no information. The British Cabinet, Blum thinks, confronted them with a decision already taken.)

The French had long wanted a more clear declaration of British intentions in the event of war. Churchill, when in Paris yesterday, had said to Blum "The British Government's declaration only means that we shall intervene when the war is already lost." Blum said that the British Government had asked France not to mobilise without previous agreement with them. (I told Blum only, whispering to him in the corner, that Chamberlain had told us on Saturday last that French weakness had developed "some days ago", and that he had quoted Bonnet's story about what Litvinov had said at Geneva and also Guy Le Chambre's statement on French military aviation. Blum said "Bonnet had completely lost his head", and that Daladier first said that he would go to London but that he would take someone else with him and not Bonnet.)

Questioned by us on the truth regarding the French Air Force, Blum said he had had the most contradictory statements. Daladier had told him fifteen days ago that the British and French Air Forces combined were equal to the German. Boussoutrot, himself a famous airman and Chairman of the Air Committee of the Chambre, a Left-wing Radical, said yesterday that weighing up all factors of military value, the British, French and Czech Forces combined were equivalent to 75% of the German. This left out of account on the one hand the Russians and on the other the Italians. The latter, in Boussoutrot's view, were not very efficient. Guy Le Chambre says that the Germans may have many more planes than we think, and views vary from the most pessimistic, in which German superiority over France is 10 to 1, to the more optimistic, in which it is only 5 or 6 to 1. The French are now in a bad situation between the taking of a decision for a certain programme of construction and the carrying out of this decision. When Chautemps and Delbos were in London last November, Chamberlain and Inskip gave them certain figures for the British rate of production which, after having been challenged and checked, were admitted by British Ministers next day to have been too high. This illustrates, says Blum, how difficult it is to know the truth about aircraft production. I then put the other side of the same story, namely, that Chamberlain had told Citrine and others that when Chautemps and Delbos were over he gave them some very gloomy figures regarding current French production, that the French Ministers expressed astonishment, but having returned to France, informed him that the figures which he had given were, unhappily, too high!

Blum reports at 5.30 that Daladier has now sent to Chamberlain a message that France will consider the entry of German

troops into Czechoslovakia, now that Czechoslovakia has accepted the "Plan", as a casus belli.

Grumbach said that we should doubt all figures about military strength because if the truth were told, many high officers of the General Staff should be immediately court-martialled and shot.

At 6 p.m. Blum says "I must go to my paper", i.e., to write to-morrow's leader in the Populaire. As he goes, I whisper into his ear "Courage" and he kisses me upon the cheek.

Auriol then takes the Chair. Not much more. Someone says that the Quai d'Orsay confirms the most pessimistic estimates of the Air Force, Guy Le Chambre having given his figures to officials who were not in agreement with their Minister, Bonnet.

I have the impression that there has been a certain stiffening and movement towards unity in the French Socialist Party in the last few days. I think that Auriol's visit to London has contributed to this.

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Citrine and Lathan later report that they have had a satisfactory meeting with some eight members of the Executive of the C.G.T. They, too, are now much more united.

DIARY23. 9. 38

Called on Phipps. More of a bedside manner than ever, but I remain of the opinion that he is one of our ablest diplomats. I invite his views, and quite soon I hear again of the weakness of the French in the air. If the French Air Force is knocked out early, not only will there be no aircraft defence for Paris and other large towns, but a French army attacking the Siegfried Line will lose its eyes, whereas the Germans will still have theirs. The view of the French General Staff is that they could make some progress on the Siegfried Line, but, given all the present conditions, only with very heavy losses. Phipps refers to "Lindberg's report" which states that only the Germans are really first-class in the air, and that we, the French and the Russians are all much inferior to them. In Russia, the purge must have weakened the army very much. Herriot, "kind old gentleman who would never want to kill a fly", sitting here the other day, was most indignant when Phipps asked whether the purge had not weakened the Red Army. He could only reply, "In the days of the French Revolution we shot a lot of generals and the result was good. I think the French armies would have done better then if even more generals had been shot".

Phipps says it is a most difficult choice which now confronts us. The early stages of a war under present conditions must go in favour of Germany, and this will probably bring Italy in on her side. In the long run, no doubt, things would be reversed, but the early stages would be pretty bad. "We have missed one preventive train after another, and I am afraid now that no train will reach a preventive terminus." It would have been easy, when Hitler first came in, for us to have said "Who is this man? We do not recognise him. We have only done business with democratic Germany." But the French and British democracies were not prepared to say this. The last real preventive train left during the Rhine-land reoccupation. "You will remember", he said, "how people in England said that after all it was only German territory, and who could object to the Germans occupying it?" I said I remembered only too well deplorable discussions along this line in meetings of the Labour Party Executive. I asked, "Do you think there is any sticking point now?" He replied, "I don't believe the French will march unless they are actually attacked. Of course, if the Germans go into Czechoslovakia and brutalise the Czechs beyond a certain point, o..pinion here might find this intolerable."

"Dear Blum", he said, "whom I love and have known for twenty years, just after he had become President of the Council, when I asked him what was the position regarding the French Air Force, said 'I have heard several rumours in the last two or three days about the weakness of our Air Force. I must look into the question.'"

As I left, I said, "I will tell you a malicious story. Your counterpart in Berlin, who came to see me at his own request soon after he had been appointed, said 'When I got to Berlin, I found that there was no British Embassy. There was only an annexe to the Quai d'Orsay. I had to change all that.'" Phipps replied "That was what Ribbentrop used to say in London - 'In Berlin there is no British Embassy; there are only two French Embassies'. He learned that from Ribbentrop." I said "He is very quick to learn Nazi tunes." Phipps, shrugging his shoulders and raising his hands, "What a man!"

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Ran into Sir William Jowitt who has also seen Phipps and reports substantially the same story. Catch a plane at 5.30 from Le Bourget and get to Heston just after 7. A magnificent sunset away on the left as we cross the Channel. I say to Jowitt, "What a symbolic sunset. On what is the sun setting?"

Dalton I 19. (54)

DIARY

23. 9. 38.

At 9.30 p.m. Liddell Hart rings up about A.A.guns. The word "go" has not yet been given. It will take 48 hours to get everything ready. In Berlin already the guns are out and the crews manning them. **Visible on high buildings.** Pile is desperately anxious to get on. He is being stopped by an intermediate sandbag at the War Office. L.H. intends to work on Geoffrey Dawson to speak to Halifax to-night.

After some consultations, I decide that it is best for me to work on Morrison, and ring him up. He is apparently away in Cornwall! Meetings! I write a letter in case he is back late, emphasising that this "specially concerns your London" and that it is his job to hustle the W.O.

Bob reports on telephone that Halifax told Greenwood - though this is at third or fourth hand - that he thought the odds to-day were 51 to 49 against peace. De la Warr was told to confer with Litvinov at Geneva. (This is the first direct Anglo-Soviet diplomatic contact since September 7th!!) Press says that parts of conversation were confidential, but general impression favourable. Bob says they say that last night Hitler threw himself about like a lunatic, and, at 11.15 p.m., Prague official full Czech mobilisation.

DIARY24. 9. 38.

See Salmon, Gater's deputy, at County Hall and put L.H.'s point about A.A.guns. H.M. is in Cornwall but coming back, we hope, to-day. Both Gater and Attlee have so advised him by telephone. Salmon, very quick and efficient, says that Government Departments have been desperately slow all round. L.C.C. officials have gone to extreme limit of pressure upon them to quicken up. Gater, meeting R. and me on Westminster Bridge, says that at last we have an evacuation plan, at any rate for school children, which has been communicated today to every head teacher. Salmon says "A week ago we were all keyed up to face a war; then we felt the fear had gone; now we have to key ourselves up all over again. It is not easy, particularly for those who in the last war were in the front line trenches and who had been counting on a base job this time, and now we find that here in London we shall be in the front line". This man and Gater give one a sense of assurance and calm competence.

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Van to see me at flat at 12.30. Already he has been rung up by several M.P.s who are furious at Chamberlain's reported statement at Godesberg that "It is up to them now", i.e., to the Czechs. I say that R., much more intelligent than the average and much braver, said to me last night "Are we really to decide between peace and war on a mere question of procedure?" Van said that this morning several junior officials at the F.O. had put the same point to him. Perhaps Hitler is counting on this new proposal once more to weaken the will of France and England. Van has no confidence in the advisers of the P.M. on the Rhine. It is a disaster, he says, that Horace Wilson has "usurped my functions", and that with him is N.Henderson. Van fears, though we must await the Prime Minister's return before we know, that Hitler has played his cards well. "Unless you start from the assumption that you are dealing with a semi lunatic with a streak of low cunning, you get everything wrong." He has been putting this point of view for years, and is now rebuked by Ministers for being incurably anti-German. I tell him what P.M. told us, that Hitler said "All right, I am prepared to face it. If there must be a world war I would rather it came soon, for I am 49 now and I want to lead my people to victory." Van said that this had not been on any of the F.O. papers, but was most significant. He also shared my view that Chamberlain's idea that "there was another side" to Hitler, as illustrated by his remark that he would have liked to come to London rather than put an older man to so much inconvenience to come to Germany, was perilously gullible. This last proposal for a

"symbolic cession" nine miles deep all along the frontiers would, he hoped, be rejected by the Czechs, and he hoped that the British Government would not press it upon them. I said that as I read the map, the Germans had already a symbolic cession of the Eger-Asch triangle. Behind this and elsewhere along the mountain tops ran the first Czech defensive line; within a nine-mile belt the second and third lines were also found; therefore a nine-mile deep symbolic cession meant the abandonment both of strong defensive lines and, if enforced speedily, the surrender of large numbers of guns in fixed emplacements, etc. It was like pulling the shell from the crab's back. He said he thought that this was right. But Hitler, his cunning for the moment gaining an ascendancy over his lunacy and blood lust, might be calculating that by such a proposal he could weaken and disorganise British and French will to resist. I quoted my East Anglian batman in the war: "This'ere Kaiser, he's like a man who has gone up to the top of a hill and looks round the world and says 'This is all mine'". Van says, "Yes, like Greta Garbo who, offered £40,000 down and £40,000 on completion of a contract, said 'I want the bunch now'".

I said I had seen Phipps yesterday in Paris. I said his bedside manner was getting better and better. Van shrugged and said "He was a better man when he was in Berlin". I referred to the Lindberg report, and Van said "He has flown the Atlantic but what does he know about military air forces? He just had a scamper round, and he is in with the Astor group."

Left that Van should ring up here to-morrow morning.

Dalton I 19 (57)

DIARY

24. 9. 38.

7 p.m. To Masaryk by arrangement. Horrified to find not only Attlee and Greenwood, but Dallas and Middleton, already sitting there. I bring away, remaining after the others have gone, three documents: The Dawn Demarche of September 21st, the communication to Prague of the Anglo-French Plan, and a copy of the Hitler memorandum which Chamberlain undertook to transmit. The Dawn Demarche is petrifying. Benes had added to Masaryk "One of them put a pistol to my head and the other a knife to my throat. What could I do."

It is a bit of a joke that Jan Sirovy, called in Berlin "the Red General", got the Order of the Bath from the British for fighting against the Bolsheviks with the Czech legions at the end of the war.

Talking to diplomats in front of office boys is difficult. When Masaryk says to me, in front of the other four, "Would you like a copy of this?" (meaning the Hitler memorandum) I say "Thank you very much," and put the copy he offers me in my pocket. Whereat, Middleton, "Clem, you ought to have a copy"; then, being ignored, again, louder, "Clem, you ought to have a copy". Whereat, I say "Shut up, and don't keep on about matters we all understand." Then Dallas, seeking to save the situation, says to Masaryk, "You might send us a copy round to Transport House to put on our file"!!!

A. and G. to see the P.M. again to-night. M. says they cannot accept, but the P.M., before leaving the Rhine, said to the press, "It is up to the Czechs now", and he supposes that since they accepted the Anglo-French Plan under duress it can now be said that this is only a scheme for carrying it out; that the P.M. has saved them from invasion, and "are we to have a war over a mere question of procedure". Then he supposed that there will be more Anglo-French pressure, and the Czechs will either give way again or fight alone and be smashed. (I am conscious of the sense of immediate relief at the prospect of six days more of sure life. How weak we democrats are!) M. to me criticises Phipps, who had reported back all the scare stuff about the French Air Force and believed it. M. Says that Eden, when Foreign Secretary, ordered Horace Wilson out of his room because he tried to teach him how to conduct foreign policy. The only important thing, to be friends with Germany. Nothing else, he thought, mattered. It is most sinister to think of Chamberlain on the Rhine with Horace Wilson on one side and Neville Henderson on the other.

DIARY25. 9. 38

One's estimates of peace or war fluctuate wildly from day to day and hour to hour. This morning I feel that probably there will be peace through pressure on the Czechs, by us and the French, to accept the German terms. It will be said, "The principle is agreed. All that is left is detail. We cannot have a war on a mere question of procedure." As the day goes on, I change my view, particularly after hearing more in detail of the German terms, which are not intelligible without the map, as drawn by Hitler, which I have not seen. It seems towards evening that the Czechs cannot possibly accept, and that it would be impossible for us and the French to press them to do so as on September 21st. It seems, too, that public opinion is stiffening both in France and here. It is announced that Hitler will speak to-morrow, Monday, night. Masaryk, asked by me on the telephone whether he thinks the British and French Governments are getting a little more firm, replies "Firm! About as firm as" (Then follows a lively metaphor which I could not possibly dictate.)

his election of an old man of 70!

I ring up Attlee and ascertain that he will be coming in early to-morrow.

26. 9. 38.

At R.'s suggestion, ring up Attlee and propose that, as a last means of possible pressure, he should write a letter this morning to the P.M. to be delivered while British and French Ministers are in session. I suggest this to him on the telephone as he is leaving home, and he says he will think about it. I make a draft and take it to his room at the House of Commons. After slight hesitation and waiting to ask Greenwood, who also hesitates a little, he agrees to send it, adding only a few words to my draft. The letter is delivered by Dugdale at No.10 about 10.45. It will be in the press this afternoon.

2.30. National Council of Labour.

DIARY27. 9. 38

N.C.L. decides to send message to German people, using every means to get it through. Draft by H.M. improved by small committee, Citrine, Elvin, Lathan, with Gillies and Will Henderson.

Copy taken by me and Phil to French Embassy, where we arrange that it shall be put over in German from Radio Luxembourg, we hope to-night.

Parliamentary Executive, many much too talkative. Parliamentary Party meeting, full of questioners but finally, with only 3 or 4 against - Pacifists, Lansbury, Leech, McGhee, Cecil Wilson and ?others - passed a resolution approving everything done by Attlee and the rest of us during these weeks; also line to be taken to-morrow in the House. Agreed that I shall wind up to-morrow, Greenwood and Morrison speaking on second day if general debate continues.

At N.C.L. I make strong protest against Ewer once more side slipping pro-German in his statement on page 1 that "all territorial claims which Hitler makes he can have peacefully", also omitting other details of Hitler memorandum. I am supported by Citrine, who says that he has always felt that Ewer was "flippant and ill informed". F.W. makes defence that all are tired. We urge that to-morrow the "Herald" should carry, preferably from F.W. himself, a clear statement correcting the misleading given to-day to two million readers. (P.S. This is done, and done well.) I also warn F.W. not to send Ewer again to Masaryk after this! (Later, I learn that he has sent Moore instead.)

Lindbergh is putting out feelers to meet us, through Catchpole. I advise against so wasting our time and tell them the substance, in one sentence, of the so-called "Lindbergh Report", emphasising that he is no more an authority on air forces than Amy Johnson.

DIARY2.10.38

Masaryk says N.Henderson told Chamberlain that he had heard from Berlin that Benes and Masaryk were plotting with the Opposition in this country to turn out the Government. No doubt Chamberlain believed this. M. wrote to Halifax about something else, adding a postscript denying this rumour. Halifax did not reply. "You never get answers to your letters to Halifax". M. had, however, rung up Cadogan and protested at the rumours. C. had replied, "From one friend to another, be careful."

DIARY3. 10.38.

At the end of the first day's debate I am approached by Macmillan who says that Kingsley Wood is very eager for an immediate general election, thinking that Chamberlain, as Saviour of Peace, will sweep the country. It is being put about that the vote on the Government's confidence motion will be treated as a test of loyalty. Only those who vote for the Government will get the coupon at the next election. It will be like the Maurice Debate during the war. Those who abstain this week, much more any who vote against the Government, will be marked down for destruction and official Tory candidates run against them. I gather that the dissident Tories are very excited about all this. M. asks when we shall settle our amendment to the Government motion. I say that the Executive will decide at 11 to-morrow morning on a draft to be submitted at a Party meeting in the afternoon. He asks whether Attlee and I could see Winston and some of them to-morrow morning. I say there is hardly time, but I am willing to do business tonight.

Having corrected the reporters' version of my speech, which was well received except, most notably, on the Treasury Bench, I accompanied Macmillan in a taxi to No.8, North Street, the residence of Brendan Bracken. I find within, Winston, Eden, J.P.L. Thomas and Bracken. They are anxious to get the maximum abstention both on the Government's motion and on our amendment, and therefore ask us not to make the latter too patently a vote of censure. Various drafts are suggested, centering round Collective Security. One draft refers to "National unity and strength". I say to Winston "That is not our jargon". He says, "It is a jargon that we may all have to learn". I say that I think it will be possible to ~~avoid~~ an explicit vote of censure but that some of my friends are very anxious to be brave. Winston says "We must not only be brave, we must be victorious". (He is much more attractive than the Edens and other gentlemanly wishy-washies. He is a real tough and at the moment talking our language. Who, for instance, could improve on this as a terse summary of the Labour Party's many declarations: "I have always held the view that the maintenance of peace depends upon the accumulation of deterrents against the aggressor, coupled with a sincere effort to redress grievances". This from his speech on the Wednesday following, quite the best speech in this four days' debate.)

They spoke on the possibility of 20 or 30 of them being victimised and on the chance of some agreement with us for mutual support in the constituencies. I said that it was difficult to discuss anything of this kind at present and there were obvious snags, but if things went that way we might speak of it again later.

Dalton I 19(62)

DIARY

6. 10. 38

Cripps comes to me, very intense, and urges that we should make common cause with anti-Chamberlain Tories. He thinks we could agree on a programme for (1) the preservation of our democratic ~~rights~~ liberties, (2) reconstituting collective security, (3) national control of our economic life. He says he would put Socialism aside for the present. I say that National Control is Socialism for national defence reasons. I tell him of my talk on Monday night at Bracken's house. He thought that Attlee, Morrison and I - no more- should meet some three or four of them, including certainly Winston, probably Amery, and perhaps Eden, and it might be wise, he thought, to add Sinclair. Out of this there might emerge some new national appeal signed by a small group of leaders who were prepared to take their political lives in their hands. But he was sure that the response now would be tremendous. I asked whether he contemplated by-passing all our Executive bodies. He said no. We must try to persuade them. He thought we could. Only if we failed should we break out on our own. This was a new and desperate situation. The Labour Party alone could never win. He regarded the old Popular Front idea as dead, but this move had much bigger possibilities. He was most earnest that talks should begin this next weekend.

I said that I saw difficulties, and was not sure who would be willing to play with us, whatever our willingness to play with them might be. Also it would be impossible to go against the general opinion of Trade Union leaders. He said he thought most of them could be won round. I said that I felt, in this new situation, that everything should be looked at through fresh eyes, and I was prepared to see whether we could get some such talk with six or seven as he had suggested. How far we could get would be another matter, but I thought it was worth trying, without prejudice.

Cripps also said that he wished we could shunt Attlee from the leadership and replace him by Morrison. Attlee, even after making a good speech, sat down like a frightened rabbit. I said my preferences were pretty well known. I had done my best to get Morrison the leadership at the beginning of this Parliament. Cripps said "Well I voted for him". Could we not, he wondered, make a change next month. I said this was quite out of the question, and I had so spoken to Morrison some weeks ago. I should not be sure now of getting all the votes I got for him three years ago. Attlee, in most people's view, had done nothing wrong, though he inspired no enthusiasm.

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I then tackled first A. and then M. A., rather timidly but rather eagerly, said "Yes, I think it would be very useful". M. said "Yes, it might be quite interesting". He supposed, he added, that A. would have to be told. I said that I had already spoken to him, and he was willing. Later this evening, M. comes back to me and says "Don't hurry it". He sends me a message to the same effect next day through R.

I then saw Macmillan again and told him that A., M., and I would probably be willing to meet three or four of them. He was pleased at this, but said that there was some difficulty within their group at present, Eden and others being very moderate and talking about national unity with everybody, while Winston and Duff Cooper were out for Chamberlain's blood and inclined to join with anybody else to get it. He thought that they had better have some further conversations among themselves before we met them. I agreed, saying that I would much sooner be in a scrap with Winston than with the moderates, though I was not sure how far Winston and we could make a common programme. It was left that we should get in touch again next week.

10. 10. 38

I get a wire at Aldbourne from Cripps asking whether I have any further information and whether he can do anything.

11.10. 38

Back in London I tell Cripps on the telephone how far we have got. He is still very eager but sees that we cannot rush the Tories. I also add that one of our own team is very hesitant.

DIARY11. 10. 38

See Maiski at the Soviet Embassy. He gives me the following particulars, which fill out a little a familiar story.

On September 2nd, in consequence of pressure by Blum on Bonnet, the French Charge d'Affaires at Moscow saw Litvinov, who said "If you come in, we do". Asked precisely how and where, Litvinov said "I am not a military expert, but your question is very reasonable and I propose immediate staff talks between the Soviet, French and Czech experts. I propose further, and independently, that we should raise at Geneva, under Article 11, the German threat to Czechoslovakia. Even if there is only a majority decision of the Council, Britain, France and the Soviet Union voting in that majority, Rumania will be much strengthened and Poland also will be influenced. I further propose an immediate joint note by Britain, France and the Soviet Union at Berlin warning Hitler not to resort to force."

This conversation was at once reported by the French Charge d'Affaires to Bonnet, who, however, suppressed it. On the 4th September, Souritch, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris, saw Bonnet, at Litvinov's instructions, and reported the Moscow conversation of two days before. Bonnet suppressed this report also.

On September 7th, Maiski asked Corbin whether he had had a report of this conversation. Corbin said no, and Maiski thereupon repeated it. On September 8, Maiski saw Halifax and informed him also.

On September 11th Bonnet paid a flying visit to Geneva. It was a Sunday and there were no League meetings. He saw Litvinov, who again repeated the same proposals. Bonnet, however, deliberately misreported this conversation, as he had formerly suppressed all previous reports.

Maiski said that he did not think that the Soviet Government would for the present do anything dramatic. They would wait for a month or so and watch developments. The Franco-Soviet Pact was now not worth twopence, but it would probably be better not to denounce it since this would further encourage Hitler. The F.-S. Pact was an unwanted child in France. It had been negotiated by Laval and ratified by Flandin.

Hitler, Maiski thought, after he has consolidated his new gains is likely to turn west rather than east. He will play on the

Dalton 7 19 (65)

-2-

nerve of France and England. "He knows", said Maiski, "that we have stronger nerves than you or the French." Moreover, there is more to win by attack against the west. Even if the Soviet Union lost the Ukraine she would still be a great Power, and the western part of the Ukraine, being a grain-growing area, is less needed by Hitler if he has sucked Hungary and Rumania into his economic system. On the other hand, a hard blow at France or England might finish them for ever.

Maiski added that he had just been to the F.O. and left a strong protest against the speech of Winterton alleging that Russia, during the Crisis, had been vague, uncertain and unready.

12. 10. 38

Spend just over an hour with Macmillan in his flat at 90, Piccadilly. It does not seem that there has been any fresh and effective discussion on tactics among the Tory dissentients. M. is much disappointed with Eden and does not know what he is playing at. He would not be willing to serve again under Chamberlain, even if invited, but his speech in the House last week and his articles in the press, are vague and weak. Many of the Tory critics, however, are followers of Eden and will not move further or faster than he. Churchill, on the other hand, is in danger of relapsing in to a self-complacent Cassandra. He will say "Well, I have done my best. I have made all these speeches. Nobody has paid any attention. All my prophesies have turned out to be true. I have been publicly snubbed by the Government. What more can I do?" Duff Cooper, who is much more of a fighter than Eden, thinks of himself as the man who might build a bridge between the latter and Churchill, and so unite and energise the Tory rebels.

M. himself would like to see a "1931 in reverse", that is a break-away from the Conservative Party and a union of Labour, Liberal and Tory dissidents to form a new "national" government. Alternatively, one might repeat 1886 when an important bunch of Liberals left Gladstone over Home Rule and formed a separate Liberal-Unionist Party which first supported, and later merged with, the Conservatives.

All this, however, still seems rather remote, and I told M. that at some stage or other it would really be necessary for Conservatives to be prepared to vote against the Government and not merely to abstain. He agreed, and after some further talk it appeared that the most useful next step was to try to arrange a small private meeting, say of three on each side - probably Attlee, Morrison and I to meet Churchill, Duff Cooper and himself - the week before Parliament, to discuss how we could make our attacks and criticisms on the Government converge, both in the debate on the Address and on private members' motions, when voting against the Government was easier. He suggested four lines of attack; -

- (1) Munich in retrospect, showing that Hitler had got all he demanded at Godesberg and that all the talk of guarantees for the Czechs and orderly and reasonable procedures, were sheer humbug.
- (2) Foreign policy for the future.
- (3) Deficiencies in arms and A.R.P., with strong criticism of Minister's responsibility.
- (4) Loss of trade in East Europe and elsewhere; this would appeal

to many business people.

M. said that he regarded Chamberlain as quite impossible. He was completely stupid, completely sure that he was right, and completely misconceived Hitler and Mussolini and their intentions. I strengthen M.'s opinion by telling him some of the things Chamberlain had said to our deputation.

Dalton J 19 (68)

DIARY

18. 10. 38

Duncan Sandys came to see me at his own request. He raised various points in the course of an hour's conversation. He asked what action we were going to take about air defence. Were we going to demand the appointment of a special enquiry? He had had some recent evidence which showed that things were even worse than he had supposed. His figures did not ~~thally~~ tally with Liddel Hart's over the weekend. He was seeing the latter to check up. Did we intend, when the debate on the report of the Select Committee came on, to emphasise the air defence deficiencies as distinct from personal responsibilities dealt with in the report? He hoped we should. He drew my attention to the fact that in the last paragraphs the Select Committee had nailed responsibility for breach of privilege upon Belisha. I said that our minority had whitewashed him (Sandys) as assiduously as the majority had whitewashed the Attorney General.

He tackled me also on possibilities of co-operation between anti-Chamberlain Conservatives and our Party. Could propaganda based on a common platform be started? He left a rough note of the lines on which this might be done. Likewise on colonies. He was against any concession to Hitler and hoped that we should stand with dissident Conservatives on this. He expected that within a week or two this matter would become actual. Further, as regards his own constituency. Attempts were being made in this, as in all the others, to displace dissident Members. He had a meeting of his Executive to-morrow at which a pistol would be pointed at his head and he would be asked to promise to give whole-hearted support to the Government in future. He would consider the possibility of resigning and facing a by-election if he could be assured that there would be no Labour opposition. I said that he had better not contemplate this possibility.

Emphasised that I was not able to be very encouraging to particular projects for united action but encouraged him, if he felt inclined, to come and have another talk with me later on. We both agreed that it would be undesirable to let people know that we were meeting.

Dalton I 19. (69) X

30. 11. 38

Spent the evening with Kenneth Moore and R.H. Mayo.
Talk on commercial and military uses of Mayo's Composite
Aircraft. Note attached.

[Nothing attached]

DIARY8. 12. 38.

Lunched at house of General Spears to meet the King of Greece "incognito". Also present Amery, R. Hudson, Cranborne, Boothby and another Tory. The King is not very impressive but brighter than Royalty as revealed in certain letters which I have lately been re-reading. He is a small man with a round head, a small voice (some say he has cancer of the throat) and a lot of gold stoppings. His younger brother was picked by Venezelos as being the more intelligent, but unfortunately died of a monkey bite. This man is said to be now much under the influence of Metaxas. He said that his people were now very much more united, the worst of silly banality one expected. After lunch he told me that he did not like either the Italians or the Germans and did not want to do so much trade with them. He would much prefer to trade with this country, and, in particular, would like to sell us more tobacco; even we only took from Greece an additional amount equal to one percent of our total consumption, it would revolutionise their whole trade outlook. As to ~~expansions~~, the Greeks had now a satisfactory arrangement with the Australians about the British market. The King said that his Government had made a sincere offer to the British bondholders and had not promised them more than they could perform. He hoped that this offer would be accepted.

He told a sad story of the Italians pushing out the Greek farmers from the Dodecanese. They are compelled to leave their livestock and even their furniture behind, so that it shall be taken over by the Italians' peasants brought from Italy. When the Greeks ask "Where shall we go?" the Italian gendarmes point first to the mountains and then to the sea and say "Choose".

DIARY8. 12. 38.

Spears tells me that Chatfield, while First Sea Lord, dominated the C.I.D. His line was that we must cut our coat according to our cloth; that we cannot fight Germany, Italy and Japan at the same time; that, therefore, we must try and detach at least one member from this group; that probably Italy is the easiest to detach. Thus, it seems that this Admiral is responsible for Chamberlain's foreign policy.

Pertinax told Spears that Daladier was drunk at Munich during the more important parts of the discussion; that, as announced in the press, they all had a "light buffet lunch", but that the Germans deliberately plied Daladier with drink, with the result that he only focused when the final terms were being read out. He then rose and began a long, indignant speech, declaring that the terms were impossible, but then went out of action again. Spears also says that in the days preceding Munich, large numbers of Soviet aeroplanes flew over Rumanian territory and landed in Slovakia. The Rumanian Prefect of their northern Province telephoned day after day to Bucharest reporting that this was going on. Bucharest seemed uninterested. Finally, he went to Bucharest and said to the Minister of the Interior, "Whenever I look up into the sky I see Soviet aeroplanes flying over". The Minister replied, "Mr Prefect, why need you look up?"

It was clear, Spears thinks, both that the Russians would render large assistance by air, and that the Rumanian Government would make no difficulties.

Thirty German Divisions and 2,000 aeroplanes are now released for action in some other direction, and I take it for granted that Skodas are now working exclusively for Germany. Spears said he thought this must be so, but was trying to get definite information.

DIARY9. 12. 38.

Lunched with Lord Rea at his house, 6 Barton Street, Westminster. It is almost a year since he first tried to engage me in a conversation about allotting seats between the Labour and the Liberal Parties. This was on the boat between Bombay and Colombo. I recall that I found him rather tedious and changed the conversation to that of rival methods of disposing of the dead by Hindus, Parsees and Mahommedans. This seemed not an inappropriate theme to develop with an old Liberal politician now relegated to the House of Lords. He had approached me twice since then, but each time I had been unable to meet him.

To-day, he developed the suggestion that "here and there we should keep out of each other's way" at the next election. He said that he realised that nothing could be guaranteed or even formally arranged. Public talk of popular fronts and electoral pacts only did harm. He also recognised that there were many constituencies where it would be to our interest that a Liberal candidate should run, especially in the North of England. In many cases, the utmost that he would suggest would be that, even if a Labour candidate was in the field, and could not be withdrawn, we should not unduly encourage him, e.g., by sending down any of our leading speakers. He said that the Liberal Local Associations were very jealous of interference from the centre, but, although the Liberal central funds were now not large, they could still exercise some influence by either offering or refusing financial assistance in particular cases. I said that if he told me that they were going to run 200 Liberal candidates at the next election I should think that he was bluffing; I should guess that they would not run more than about 120. He replied that they would very much like to run as many as 200 but were doubtful if they could manage it. He, however, would be very disappointed if they did not run more than 120. I said that we already had, including sitting members, well over 500 in the field. There was, of course, a hard core of absurdity beginning with the City of London, which we should not attempt to touch. But it had been our practice in recent elections to fight the maximum number of constituencies where Local Parties were, or could be made, willing. There was, however, a possibility that, in order to make the best use of our financial resources, we should leave certain very difficult seats unfought next time.

We then talked, without commitment, about various areas and constituencies. I said that they should not run a Liberal candidate in Penrhyn and Falmouth, nor in Camborne. He was clearly eager that we should not do anything in St Ives or Bodmin. I said

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that Cornwall was a county which lent itself better than any other to the possibility of an arrangement, and that as one moved eastward from Cornwall the thing became more difficult. He showed interest in Darwen, where, it appears, his son is to be Liberal candidate. I said that we had made a habit of running in Darwen, even though we were regularly bottom of the poll and had not much strength. He said he did not ask us to withdraw, but only not to go out of our way to send leading speakers to Darwen.

He spoke bitterly, as all the old Asquith gang do, of Lloyd George and his Fund. He said that he thought that a good deal still remained, and much was being spent on the Council of Action which was really a Lloyd George pro-Labour organisation. He complained that the Council never helped a Liberal candidate at a by-election but, at the best, declared itself neutral if both Labour and Liberals were fighting the seat. He thought that some very lavish expenses had been charged against the Fund.

He said that the first Labour Government need never have fallen in 1924 if Ramsay MacDonald had not been so vain and the Chief Labour Whip so drunk. He alleged that frequently both Spoor and Frank Hall were too drunk to do their job properly in the House. (I think this is a peevish non-Conformist exaggeration.)

It ended with a suggestion that some time in the new year I should go to lunch with him again, when he would produce Harcourt Johnstone. He asked whether I would like to bring anyone else with me, but I said no. It was repeatedly said by both of us that we have no authority to commit or bind anyone; also that it would be disastrous if anything got into the press about talks, however informal. None the less, the idea was that next time we might talk more in detail about the possibilities in different areas and particular constituencies. I am doubtful whether much will come out of this, but if I can head off Liberal candidates in even half a dozen constituencies where a Labour win in a straight fight is likely, it would be worth while. These people must, however, be handled very gingerly. Rea is rather like a little sparrow. His butler stared at me rather hard when I gave him my name. I told Rea that I thought his butler might be a political spy. Most of our conversation was done alone upstairs after lunch.

DIARY

22. 12. 38.

Had a short talk with R.S.Hudson in the Lobby. He says he will not resign unless the P.M. asks him to. Belisha did nothing at W.O. all the summer, being so much absorbed and upset by Sandys' case. Strathcona spoke very straight to P.M. about this. (His Under-Secretary, who also still continues in office!)

Anderson on shelters. This is all very well, but what have Hoare and Lloyd been doing for more than a year past? Very gloomy on international outlook. February or March will be a very dangerous period. Hitler may threaten to attack us unless we promise not to intervene in Eastern Europe. The S.U. alone won't resist, being much weakened by the shooting of officers. This, at any rate, is our military information.

The French Air Force is still deplorable. More crashes than new machines! All flying officers would be killed in a fortnight of war. This is bad for moral.

So far, H.'s view is very black, but he adds that he is attempting to negotiate on economics with ~~Hitler~~ Germany, other States also being involved, hoping that an agreement for mutual advantage may strengthen the hands of the peace party in Berlin. This, perhaps, includes Goering who realises, as others do not, failure of Four-Year Plan. H. thinks that if he can bring off an agreement in February it may make all the difference.

This is one of the most vigorous and live members of the Government. He should certainly be in the Cabinet in preference to most of the duds there now. I hear from Gladwyn Jebb that he is one of the few ministers who can set civil servants funning about in pursuit of his hares.

G.J., who looks in on us at W.L. early in the new year, also says that February or March will be a very dangerous time. He thinks it possible that Mussolini will attack France. Also possible that the French may not wish us to intervene on their behalf, thinking that they can defeat Italy alone, and hoping to keep Germany out. M. has been cultivating his nuisance value so assiduously that he is now becoming quite indignant that nobody is offering to give him something. On the other hand, the Italian Air Force is suffering very severely in Spain and the economic position of Italy goes from bad to worse. In September, Mussolini never mobilised and only began to make violent speeches when he knew that war was off.