

From the Führer's Speech

On July 19, the Führer and Chancellor Adolf Hitler addressed the German Reichstag with a speech in which he gave the German nation an account of the military operations carried out up to the present. The Führer described the German Army's wonderful achievements in Norway and on the Western Front, which in every case led to the complete rout of the enemy within a few weeks. He then dealt generally with Germany's position after ten months of the war, and stated that it was singularly favourable in view of the coming final battle with England. The German people, he said, were united as never before in their history, and would follow their leaders to the end. As far as food supplies were concerned, the war could last for any length of time. Since wide areas in Europe had by now been occupied, Germany would be able to draw on inexhaustible resources of raw materials. From now on, time would work for Germany. Germany commanded the strongest forces the world had ever seen, and was firmly resolved, side by side with allied Italy, to throw them into an attack against Britain, if this should prove necessary. In spite of Germany's overwhelming superiority and her unique strategic advantages - as opposed to the utter isolation of Britain -, the Führer once more upheld the policy of an understanding with Britain, which he has followed all these years, and again appealed to reason and common sense before starting out on a battle which, in its consequences for England, is beyond imagination.

The Fuhrer said:

“Ever since the commencement of the National Socialist régime, two points were prominent in the programme of its foreign policy:

- 1. The achievement of a real understanding and friendship with Italy,**
- and**
- 2. the achievement of the same relationship with England.**

You are aware, Gentlemen, that these ideals inspired me twenty years ago to the same extent as they did later. I have expressed and defended these ideas in print and in speeches on innumerable occasions, as long as I was only a member of the Opposition in the democratic Republic. As soon as the German nation entrusted me with its leadership, I immediately attempted to realize in practical form this, the oldest of the ideals of National Socialist foreign policy.

Even today I still regret that, in spite of all my efforts, I have not succeeded in achieving that friendship with England which, as I believe, would have been a blessing for both peoples. I was not successful in spite of determined and honest efforts.”

Later in his speech, the Führer said:

“In my speech on October 6, I prophesied correctly the further development of this war.

I assured you, Gentlemen, that never for one moment did I doubt in our victory.

As long as one does not insist on regarding defeat

as the visible sign and guarantee of ultimate victory, I would appear to have been justified by the course which events have taken so far.

Although I was convinced of the course they would take, I nevertheless at the time held out my hand in an endeavour to reach an understanding with France and Britain.

You will remember the answer which I received. All my argument as to the folly of continuing the struggle, and pointing to the certainty that at best there was nothing to gain, but all to lose, were either received with derision, or completely ignored. I told you at the time that on account of my peace proposals I expected even to be branded as a coward who did not want to fight on, because he could not. That is exactly what did happen.

I believe, however, that the French — of course not so much the guilty statesmen as the people — are beginning to think very differently about that 6th of October. Indescribable misery has overtaken that great country and people since that day.

I have no desire to dwell on the sufferings brought on the soldiers in this war.

Even greater is the misery caused by the unscrupulousness of those who drove millions from their homes without reason, merely in the hope of obstructing German military operations — an assumption which it is truly difficult to understand. As it turned out, the evacuation proved disastrous for Allied operations, though far more terrible for the unfortunate evacuees.

Neither in this world nor in the next can Messrs. Churchill and Reynaud answer for the suffering they have caused by their counsels and decrees to millions of people.

All this, as I said once before, need never have happened, for even in October I asked nothing, from either France or Britain, but peace.

But the men behind the armaments industries wanted to go on with the war at all costs, and now they have got it.

I am too much of a soldier myself, not to understand the misery caused by such a development.

From Britain I now hear only a single cry — the cry not of the people but of the politicians — that the war must go on.

I do not know whether these politicians already have a correct idea of what the continuation of this struggle will be like.

They do, it is true, declare that they will carry on with the war and that, even if Great Britain should perish, they would carry on from Canada.

I can hardly believe that they mean by this that the people of Britain are to go to Canada; presumably only those gentlemen interested in the continuation of their war will go there. The people, I am afraid, will have to remain in Britain.

And the people in London will certainly regard the war with other eyes than their so-called leaders in Canada.

Believe me, Gentlemen, I feel a deep disgust for this type of unscrupulous politician who wrecks whole nations and states. It almost causes me pain to think that I should have been selected by Fate to deal the final blow to the structure which these men have already set tottering.

It has never been my intention to wage wars, but rather to build up a state with a new social order and the finest possible standard of culture. Every year that this war drags on is keeping me away from this work.

And the causes of this are nothing but ridiculous nonentities, as it were, Nature's political misfits, unless their corruptibility labels them as something worse.

Only a few days ago, Mr. Churchill reiterated his declaration that he wants war. Some six weeks ago he began to wage war in a field where he apparently considers himself particularly strong, namely, air-raids on the civil population, although under pretence that the raids are directed against so-called military objectives. Since the bombardment of Freiburg, these objectives are open towns, market places and villages, dwelling-houses, hospitals,

schools, kindergartens and whatever else may come along.

Until now I have ordered hardly any reprisals, but that does not mean that this is, or will be, my only reply.

I know full well that our answer, which will come one day, will bring upon the people unending suffering and misery.

Of course not upon Mr. Churchill, for he, no doubt, will already be in Canada, where the money and the children of those principally interested in the war have already been sent. For millions of other people, however, great suffering will begin.

Mr. Churchill ought perhaps for once to believe me, when I prophesy that a great empire will be destroyed — an empire which it was never my intention to destroy or even to harm.

I do, however, realise that this struggle, if it continues, can end only with the complete annihilation of one or the other of the two adversaries. Mr. Churchill may believe that this will be Germany. I know that it will be Britain.

In this hour I feel it to be my duty before my own conscience to appeal once more to reason and common sense, in Great Britain as much as elsewhere. I consider myself in a position to make this appeal since I am not the vanquished begging favours, but the victor speaking in the name of reason.

I can see no reason why this war must go on.

I am grieved to think of the sacrifices which it will claim. I should like to avert them, also from my own people.

I know that millions of German men, young and old alike, are burning with the desire at last to settle accounts with the enemy, who for the second time has declared war upon us for no reason whatever. But I also know that at home there are many women and mothers, who, ready as they are to sacrifice all they have in life, are yet bound to it by their very heart strings.

Possibly Mr. Churchill will again brush aside this statement of mine by saying that it is merely born of fear and of doubt in our final victory. In that case I shall have relieved my conscience in regard to the things to come."