

MEMORIES

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‘Never have we fought for a cause so just’



Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain greeted by Adolf Hitler at the beginning of the Bad Godesberg meeting in 1938

Since our last issue there has been a rapid sequence of dramatic events in the international arena. Herr Hitler, without troubling to issue a declaration, is now waging furious war against Poland; and on Sunday England and France, in fulfilment of their pledges to Poland, commenced operations against Germany on the Western Front.

The German Chancellor has let it be known that while he is waging war against Poland, he is doing no more than merely resisting an “act of aggression” by France and Great Britain on the Western Front. Such a characteristic piece of cunning, designed to make it appear that Germany is the innocent victim of unprovoked attack by the two democracies, will deceive no one. All the world has been well aware for several months now that if the Nazi junta broke its treaty obligations to its Eastern neighbour, then automatically it would be declaring war on France and Britain, who had firmly pledged themselves to go to Poland’s assistance in such an event.

There is, of course, much more on the part of German leaders to this simulation of being the

“aggrieved party” than an attempt to secure the moral sympathy of the nations who at the moment are not involved in the struggle. The real object was, first to postpone hostilities as long as possible, and then to limit the extent of them, so that the German legions might be left free to wreak their vengeance on hapless Poland, isolated as it is from the direct help of its Western Allies. How characteristic it is of the whole attitude of the German bully – to seek to avoid an issue with an opponent of its own size and while he tries to get a little fellow into a corner and batter him into submission. And, if allowed to achieve his aims, the bully would, no doubt, claim all the little fellow’s possessions, and proceed to call an international conference to stave off war until he could grab another slice of territory by a similar piece of intrigue.



Chamberlain with the Munich Agreement

Never has this country been called upon to engage in a cause so just, or in vindication of a more noble ideal. Unless the glaring evils which dominate the Totalitarian system are exorcised, Europe will have nothing to look forward to but a frequent recurrence of crisis and carnage. It is a matter for devout thankfulness that the vital importance of the issue is so keenly appreciated by all our people, as is evidenced by the complete unity which exists, and by the resolute way in which the whole of the nation’s

resources are being organised and thrown into the struggle. The orderliness, efficiency and humane consideration with which the gigantic scheme of evacuation was carried out have filled us all with pride. It was, indeed, a magnificent achievement. Then, too, we have been thrilled and inspired by the spectacle of young men flocking to join the combatant forces; by the activities of those who are undertaking service in the A.R.P. and in other branches of home defence; and by the spirit in which the whole population of these islands is adapting itself to the revolutionary changes which the war emergency has necessitated.

These are all very heartening portents of Britain’s stern resolve to spare no effort to ensure victory in the great cause to which, with France, we have so solemnly dedicated ourselves.

■ The editorial in the eight-page broadsheet Gazette of September 9, 1939, was unearthed by Richard West, of the Chaucer Education Project.

Wielun town centre in Poland was laid in ruins by the Luftwaffe early on September 1, 1939



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