

# MR. ATTLEE REPLIES TO MR. CHURCHILL

## MAIN CLASH OF PARTIES ON DOMESTIC POLICY

Mr. Attlee, leader of the Socialists, replied to Mr. Churchill in a broadcast last night after the nine o'clock news. He said:

"When I listened to the Prime Minister's speech last night, in which he gave such a travesty of the policy of the Labour party, I realised at once what was his object.

"He wanted the electors to understand how great was the difference between Winston Churchill, the great leader in war of a united nation, and Mr. Churchill, the party leader of the Conservatives. He feared lest those who had accepted his leadership in war might be tempted out of gratitude to follow him further.

"I thank him for having disillusioned them so thoroughly. The voice we heard last night was that of Mr. Churchill, but the mind was that of Lord Beaverbrook."

Paying a tribute to his colleagues in the Coalition Government and to "a great leader in war, the Prime Minister," he said:

"No political differences will efface the memory of our comradeship in this tremendous adventure, of the anxieties shared, of the tasks undertaken together and of the spirit of friendly co-operation in a great cause which prevailed.

"The fact that men of diverse political views, backed by the continuous support of Parliament and the country, were able to work together for five years is a great testimony to British democracy and to the political maturity of this country.

"To plan for the immediate post-war period was more difficult, but here, again, on such matters as social insurance, we were able to submit to the country proposals supported by us all.

"It was, however, inevitable that when an approach was made to long-term policy in relation to the economic organisation of the country there would be a divergence of view on the principles to be applied which necessitated an appeal to the country."

### NEED FOR ELECTION

#### Premier Quoted

Speaking of the reason for the election, he said, "There is some misunderstanding and some deliberate misrepresentation." It would be contrary to the spirit of the Constitution for Parliament to extend its life unless there was some compelling reason.

"The point was very well put by the Prime Minister," he went on, "in introducing the Prolongation of Parliament Bill in 1944.

"He said: 'I could not blame anyone who claimed that there should be an appeal to the people once the German peril is removed. I have myself a clear view that it would be wrong (note that word "wrong") to continue this Parliament beyond the period of the German war.'"

Mr. Attlee said he could not adopt the proposal that the Government should go on until the war with Japan was ended because he agreed with the Prime Minister that it would be wrong to continue.

A referendum would have been quite contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, a 10-year-old Parliament could not introduce such an exotic novelty to prolong its life.

"I am sorry that the Prime Minister, who after all owed his position as Prime Minister to the Labour party, should have accused us of putting party before country. His proposal to carry on for another year would have meant a Conservative majority in the House during the crucial period of reconstruction

### Resolved to Beat Japan

"The calling of a General Election involved the break-up of the Government, but has not in any way altered the firm resolve of the Labour party to do its utmost to win the war against Japan.

"Equally we are resolved to maintain as long as it is necessary the Forces required elsewhere to deal with the aftermath of war."

Mr. Attlee said that the development of modern long-range weapons had made still more cogent the reasons for creating a world organisation charged with the maintenance of peace.

"We must all recognise that if we wish for peace we must take our share in providing the armed forces necessary to give power to the new organisation.

"I hold that it should be a principal object of the United Nations to wage war on hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance and to promote the greatest measure of economic co-operation between all nations to raise the standards of life of the masses."

### Premier's "Lurid Picture"

It was on domestic policy that they had the main clash between parties. The Prime Minister had painted a lurid picture of what would happen under a Labour Government.

"He has forgotten that Australia, New Zealand, whose peoples have played so great a part in the war, and the Scandinavian countries have had Socialist Governments for years, to the great benefit of their peoples, with none of these dreadful consequences.

"When he talks of the danger of a secret police and all the rest of it he forgets that these things were actually experienced in this country only under the Tory Government of Lord Liverpool in the years of repression when the British people, who had saved Europe from Napoleon, were suffering deep distress.

"He has forgotten many things, including, when he talks of the danger of Labour mismanaging finance, his own disastrous record at the Exchequer over the Gold Standard.

"I shall not waste time on this theoretical stuff, which seems to me to be merely a secondhand version of the academic views of an Austrian, Prof. Friedrich August von Hayek, who is very popular just now.

Referring to controls, Mr. Attlee said that during the war the Government in the national interest imposed many restrictions on the right of the individual to do as he pleased

Some of these, though necessary, were very irksome.

"They should be removed as soon as the necessity for them has passed away," he went on, "but others are still vitally needed to protect the public from profiteers and monopolists. Yet strong elements in the Conservative party clamour, as their predecessors did successfully in 1918, for their abolition."

There was a world shortage of many kinds of food and goods. If controls were removed there would be a rush for those available.

Prices would soar. Profiteers would have a good time while the general public would lose, wage and salary earners, pensioners and investors in war savings would find that their money would purchase much less than expected.

The late Government wisely and firmly, by strict control, maintained prices fairly steady. The Labour party was determined not to countenance inflation.

For some time to come raw materials would be scarce. The savings of the nation must be directed into those channels where they would produce the things most needed, such as houses, schools and factories, not those that would give the most immediate profit.

"We need a prosperous agriculture. We need well-planned, well-built cities with parks and playing fields, homes and schools, factories and shops in their right relationship.

### FAIR PRICE FOR LAND

#### "Not Extravagant Ransom"

"Therefore we must control the use of the land and have power to acquire what the nation or the local council need, paying a fair price, but not an extravagant ransom extorted on account of the needs of the community."

It had only been through the power of the State given to it by Parliament that the general public has been protected against the greed of ruthless profit-makers and property owners.

"No one supposes that all the industries of this country can or should be socialised forthwith, but there are certain great basis industries which, from their nature, are ripe for conversion into public services.

"Inland transport is tending more and more towards monopoly, and it is unsafe to leave a monopoly in private hands.

"A Conservative Government has bought out the owners of coal but proposes to leave the getting and distributing of it in the hands of the same people whose inefficiency has been condemned by every impartial inquiry.

"Labour's policy is to transform the whole business of providing fuel, power and light into a public service. A similar policy would be pursued in relation to iron and steel.

"In every case there must be a suitable organisation which, while protecting the public interest, will give scope for business organisation and the application of scientific methods.

### Supervision Of Cartels

"Fair, but not excessive compensation will be paid. Wherever there is the danger of monopolies and cartels, there must be public supervision to prevent exploitation."

Saying that they could have the Britain they desired, Mr. Attlee added: "I speak on the eve of the anniversary of D-Day. The people who planned and carried through the Normandy landings will not be daunted by any difficulties."

He pointed out that over 120 Socialist candidates came from the fighting services, so that youth was well represented.

"The present Government is Conservative," Mr. Attlee said.

"I do not suppose that the Prime Minister expected anyone to take seriously his claim that the addition to the Conservative majority of a few Independents who are staying on as temporary caretakers and some tame Liberals who owe their seats to Tory votes and obey strictly the Tory Whip, really makes his Government National.

"It is Conservative. The Conservative party remains as always a class party. In 23 years in the House of Commons I cannot recall more than half a dozen from the ranks of the wage-earners. It represents to-day, as in the past, the forces of property and privilege.

"The Labour party is, in fact, the one party which most nearly reflects in its representation and composition all the main streams which flow into the great river of our national life.

"Our appeal to you, therefore, is not narrow or sectional. We are proud of the fact that our country in the hours of its greatest danger stood firm and united. We are proud of the self-sacrifice and devotion displayed by men and women in every walk of life in this great adventure.

"We call you to another great adventure which will demand the same high qualities as those shown in the war; the adventure of civilisation.

"We have to plan the broad lines of our national life so that all may have the duty and the opportunity of rendering service to the nation, everyone in his or her sphere and that all may help to create and share in an increasing material prosperity free from the fear of want.

"We have to preserve and enhance the beauty of our country to make it a place where men and women may live finely and happily, free to worship God in their own way, free to speak their minds, free citizens of a great country," he concluded.

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