

PEACE

Midnight crowds in the West End had waited hours expecting  
surrender news, and now that it had come they let themselves  
go just as they did <sup>in May</sup> ~~three months ago~~ at the end of the  
~~celebration. But there was one big difference. In May~~  
~~there was still the shadow of war in the Far East. Now~~  
~~there was no shadow of war in the Far East. Now~~  
with an easy conscience

German war. It was an occasion that excused a little mild  
flag-wagging, even if in the process the flag tied you up  
in knots.... There was one big difference between this  
night and the original Victory Day; when the German war  
ended we still had the shadow of the Far East hanging  
over us, and for all anybody knew ~~then~~ the war there  
might have gone on for a long time. ~~Then~~ Now it was  
real peace.

After nearly six years of strain and effort that dwarfs  
anything else in history <sup>the occasion</sup> ~~we had that~~ called for celebrating  
in the big way. All the more so as the rumours of the  
past few days had made everybody tense and expectant. First  
Japan had surrendered and then she hadn't. Now we knew it  
was true. Beyond all doubt the war was over at last.

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Recalling famous occasions before the War floodlit St. Paul's was a magnificent spectacle. Thousands of people gathered on the steps. It was symbolic of ~~the capital~~ Britain itself that London's Cathedral survived the War almost undamaged, an invulnerable island in the midst of devastation and ruin.

Dense thousands packed Trafalgar Square.

Down Lambeth Way, as was to be expected, they celebrated with music.

All over the country there were enormous bonfires., proclaiming far and wide that the grim years of War and blackout were put behind us.



It was the happiest possible coincidence that the first VJ-Day saw the Royal Opening of Parliament. London was taking a holiday and there were probably 100,000 people outside Buckingham Palace when their Majesties began the drive to Westminster. Everything was in keeping with this Royal occasion except the weather, but to the general gratification, the King and Queen kept to their intention of driving in an open landau.

There was another great crowd outside the Houses of Parliament. Lord Halifax was an early arrival. Then came the former Lord Chancellor, Lord Simon. The American Ambassador, Mr. Winant, was followed by distinguished officials of the House of Lords.

The Minister of Saudi Arabia gave a further touch of colour to the dull morning. He was followed by that ~~man~~<sup>doyen</sup> of *diplomats* ~~the Belgian Ambassador.~~ the Belgian Ambassador.

Soon after Admiral Stark had arrived distant cheering announced the approach of the Royal carriage. His Majesty, ~~in the happiest possible circumstances,~~ was opening the first Parliament of a new era.

Meanwhile the crowd at the Palace had been swollen by several thousands and their Majesties had another great reception as they returned.

(TV) Now that the Royal procession had entered the Palace gates the great throng outside saw no further need of restraint and surged to the railings.

In the Palace grounds His Majesty posed with the leading *members* of his new Cabinet, the men whose programme of reform <sup>Monarch</sup> the KING had outlined in the morning, at the House of Lords, in the King's Speech.

While ~~the~~ King George and his new Prime Minister were together the great crowd provided ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> own amusement.

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There was one big difference between this rejoicing and that of the last occasion when their Majesties appeared on the balcony. On that memorable day Germany was vanquished but the shadow of the Far Eastern War hung over us and the Victory was not complete. Now at last we reap the full harvest of the toil and fighting of six long, glorious years. At last it is real Peace.

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