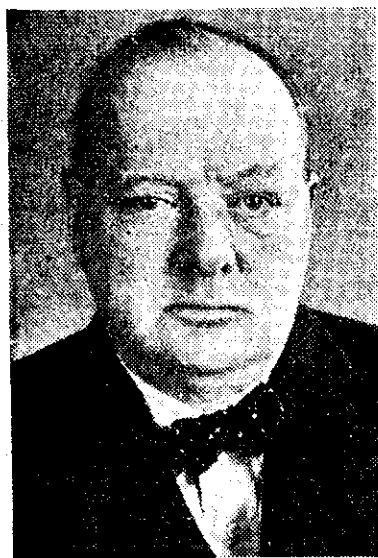


CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE

An Australian Writes a Letter From England



CHURCHILL

"... So much an aristocrat he is also a democrat."

I SHALL write a little about my own thoughts and feelings; they may be wide of the mark, but I dare say you will like to get anything first hand from England just now (wrote Professor Hancock). Roughly, I am pessimistic about the immediate situation and confident about the final upshot.

I have been pessimistic for many years, and every time my fears have been realised; so, though I hope this time that they are exaggerated, I do not rule them out.

But one fear is forever exorcised. This country has recovered its will.

You just cannot imagine what a difference this makes.

To know that we can trust our leaders, to know that they will call on everything which we can give and to know that we will give even more than that—it changes everything.

From the military point of view, I believe it makes Hitler's defeat certain.

In his Satanic virg, Hitler is a very great man; terrific *virtu*; no wonder he rushed the French; for years he has gathered every ounce of the terrific striking force of Germany for this blow, while we and the French remained mentally, spiritually and physically lazy.

But the impact cannot carry its full force across the Channel.

In the next few months we shall get horribly strafed; but now we have the nerve to stand up to that.

We shall make ourselves a fortress that cannot be broken, and in time we shall become the spear-head of the oceanic and New World forces which will break him.

This will happen, even if the very worst things which I have talked about happen in the next few months.

Guarantees of Success

A Government containing Churchill, Morrison, Bevin, and Sinclair, and a nation which insisted that it must have

this Government—these are the guarantees that we will succeed.

There are other good people in the Government, and there are some indifferent people in it too. No matter, it fuses our will to survive, and if Kingsley Wood or anyone else conceives the job too pettily or easily, he will go.

It has to happen.

I'm very well up in the faults of the British Empire, as you know. I won't say too much about its virtues, though they exist.

I have just come back from Africa, and I am as certain as I am of my own existence that if the Nazis were to break through us hell would be let loose in Africa.

The Africans also know it.

We certainly have not made heaven in Africa, but we have started something which has some ordinary decency and hope in it.

Often in Nigeria I found myself being surprised to find it so good.

Then I went on being surprised that we should have left it half-way, and even run the risk of losing much of the good because we had not put in the extra ounces of thought and resolution that would have kept it moving and thereby made it secure.

End of an Age

Well, I think we are going to put every extra ounce into this war; and I believe that we are going to put the same extra ounce into setting our own society in order when we have won the war.

Chamberlain's resignation is symbolic, and is a more important landmark than the Reform Act of 1832.

It marks the passing of an age—the age of the Business Man, 1932-1940.

Anybody who imagines that Chamberlain was a bad man is making a silly mistake.

In some ways he is a very good man.

Some years ago American "leftists" were writing plays which featured Chamberlain, Hitler and Mussolini as partners in Fascist plotting against "the masses." Nothing could be more absurd.

Chamberlain and Hitler were and are fundamentally opposed; and if the choice were (as it seemed recently to be) between Chamberlain and Hitler, I should choose Chamberlain.

I should do so, however, under a feeling of doom.

Hitler is a man who belongs to the present and the future; he accepts them and forges them for evil.

Chamberlain rejected the evil, but rejected the present and the future with it.

It was not morality or courage that he lacked; it was his limitations that were disastrous.

He simply could not escape from the Joe Chamberlain-Birmingham age, which was the last phase of the Business Man's Century.

That meant he was unable, despite good intentions, to wage modern war or organise modern peace.

His successors will do both, and Chamberlain's acceptance of them (he did that with real nobility) is a pledge that the old order will pass resignedly into the new, as it did in 1832.

A Classless Man

Churchill is so much an aristocrat that he is also a democrat; a classless man.

Morrison and Bevin can work with him, now and after.

My own feeling is that if this struggle lasts too long for Churchill, Morrison will take on the leadership; he has the power in him.

As for the job—it is to make society organic without destroying freedom. In peace time we have to get a new standard of social duty.

The acid test of our success will be the abolition forever of the disease and disgrace of unemployment.

Germany did this by (1) the release of racial hatred; (2) the abolition of personal freedom; (3) the perpetuation of war.

We take up the job during war, a war which we have to win, and a war which we cannot win without committee-of-public-safety methods.

It may seem an unhappy start.

But it is not the way the Nazis started, and its end is not their end.

They started by burning down the Reichstag and destroying the workers' organisations and forcibly subduing their own people.

The People Started It

But it was the people who started the thing here; it was they who subdued the Government. It could not have been done without the trade unions, it could not have been done without Parliament,



MORRISON

"... If this struggle lasts too long for Churchill, Morrison will take on the leadership."

and the work will be carried through by them.

For the duration of the war we are "totalitarian," and we shall in many things remain "totalitarian" after the war. So I hope.

But we shall graft all that on to the stock of our ancient freedom.

We take the thing and use it as an instrument (one could see this coming before the war, e.g., in New Zealand), and thereby prevent Hitlers and Mosleys and such *canaille* from forcing it on us to make us its slaves and the instruments of their personal lunacies.

This perhaps is meant to be persuasive? I don't know. I don't know what you think nowadays. I don't particularly want to persuade anyone.

I suppose this is a statement of what I personally am fighting for.

Medicine to Drink

Our backs are to the wall just now, and personal reactions have to be strong. Either one will accept a Hitler world or no.

I say "No!" and that means a programme both for war and peace.

In war, we have to surrender some of our normal liberties; there's medicine we have to drink. I do that cheerfully. It doesn't hurt me when we lock up Oswald Mosley and Co.

We shall lock up some decent people by mistake. I'm sorry for that, but I wish the Norwegians and the Dutch had made the mistake on the side of severity instead of easy-going optimism.

We're doing what the Roman Republic used to do. And wouldn't it be just too bad if only the thugs knew how to use a gun?

All the same, this is only one side of it.

We have to defend ourselves against those who in bad faith use the phrases of freedom in order to destroy freedom, but we have to keep freedom itself alive, even in war.

It was only a free Parliament which gave us a Government strong enough to save us.