

THE NEW WORLD

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meaning in the two thousand years of our civilised tradition: the stab in the back, the treacherous conspiracy, the organised and calculated lie, the reading of right and wrong by the test only of success. These are the procedures upon which they have relied.

No Choice But to Fight

Do you wonder that men to whom the very notion of war is abhorrent have felt that in this struggle they have no alternative but to fight? Can you be surprised if, almost in a day, the whole American people awakens to the understanding that no internal differences matter compared to the abyss which separates the things they value from the ends our enemies seek to establish?

Is it not obvious that all the free peoples, we in Britain, you in New Zealand, the Russians, the Chinese, are united in a common cause for the defence of which there can be no sacrifice too great? There is much in our British way of life that I seek to alter. There are things in our policy that I dislike. There are habits in this Government which seem to me to show lack of the audacity the hour requires, absence of the imaginative insight for which the problems call. Yet, when I put my criticisms against the paramount need, they seem to me to weigh nothing in the balance.

There is a special reason why I feel this. Some of you in New Zealand who hear this talk know that I am a socialist, deeply concerned to help to alter, if I can, the economic and social foundations of Britain. I note that in the war there is no hindrance to that effort. My right to criticise the Government is unimpeded, my power to associate with my colleagues of the Labour Party to press for this change and that is unaffected. No doubt, the war has greatly altered my own personal way of life. I can honestly say that the restrictions which it has compelled the Government to impose all seem to me, by and large, reasonable restrictions. If I had a complaint to make, it would be that there is still too much power to do as one likes, that the power to secure ease remains greater for many of us than it ought to be. There are realms of conduct in which I think the Government has been too tender to existing interests, too careful to let what was normal before the war remain normal after it. I am not always sure that it has grasped at all fully the central truth, that totalitarian war is revolutionary in its impact.

The Past is for Antiquarians

Believe me, the world we knew on September 3rd, 1939, belongs now to the lumber room of history. Antiquarians may investigate it, but statesmen cannot recall it into life. We are fighting the counter-revolution. We are seeking victory over men who want to take us back to an epoch when the very concepts of the rights of man were devoid of meaning. It is to establish those rights everywhere that we, and you, are fighting. Whether we know it or not, we are bringing a new society into being. The last war was a stage in its travail. So was the Russian Revolution of 1917. So will be the universal revolt of the subject peoples that will

begin the moment that we are in a position to strike a decisive blow at our enemies.

We Make the Future

Now, the establishment of rights means the recognition of duties. None of us can contract out of this war. We have all got to choose. We have even to understand that the refusal to choose is itself a choice. We cannot proceed at this time as though the future was no concern of ours. We make the future. Our Leaders—Mr. Churchill in Britain, Mr. Stalin in Russia, Mr. Roosevelt in the United States—draw their strength from our understanding of that future, our willingness to impose upon ourselves the discipline its evocation demands. What they require from us is what they give us—resolution, courage, imagination, audacity. These are the dynamics of freedom. But to exercise their authority they have to spring from within ourselves, to be part of the spontaneous contribution we make to the united effort.

It is the policy of giving to the common stock more than you knew you had it in you to give that is the source of democratic power. It is the quality Pericles spoke of in the Funeral Speech at Athens, the quality Lincoln used in that majestic utterance at Gettysburg. You get its inner essence if you read the citations for bravery, whether of fighting men or civilians, in the *London Gazette*. The record of achievement by mostly ordinary people called beyond and above their normal habits by the supreme occasion. My point is that for all of us, all over the world, every day now is a supreme occasion. Every one of us by working harder, and thinking harder, can give to the common stock more than he knows he had it in him to give, and what he gives to the common stock he gives to himself, because its weight and power are the measure of his freedom.

History Not a Straight Path

Some of you may say that you need more assurance than you have that the

announced purposes are the real purposes for which we fight this war. You see things that are wrong, you are aware of mistakes in policy, of defects in administration. I understand this outlook, but I remind you of two things it is vital to remember. History is not a straight path to an inevitable goal, and it is not in human kind either to avoid error or to attain perfection. We have to think of the price of defeat. It is only as we do all we personally can do to make that impossible that we can begin to think of the use of victory.

There were some in Britain who thought that victory did not matter until the Soviet Union was attacked. They think differently now. There were many in the United States who insisted that this war was not their concern. The attack on Pearl Harbour brought them a sudden and tragic awakening. This is, as no war has ever been, a people's war. Its purposes will be shaped, as its triumph will be assured, by the common man. His task is to prepare himself for the responsibilities it implies.

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