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Letter From Amos R. E. Pinchot to Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson, June 18, 1941

Amos R. E. Pinchot

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AMOS R. E. PINCHOT

COUNSELLOR AT LAW

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NEW YORK

TELEPHONE ASHLAND 4-5228

June 18, 1941.

Dear Hunt:

Your letter of June 16th is, alas, a rather typical example of the arguments being addressed against America First by members of the various war-seeking groups who are opposing our anti-war policy. Your letter is not an appeal to reason. It is an appeal to authority, with a lot of name-calling and silly charges thrown in - charges which, I believe, you would not make unless something had upset the quality and quantity of your thinking.

You have more "heavyweights" on your side than we have. That is a strange argument to come from a man who presumably knows history. To be an aviator or quartermaster, et cetera, "implies no necessary wisdom or knowledge in foreign policy." The period for discussion ended on March 11th, when the Lend-Lease Bill was passed - passed, however, with the clear understanding, imparted to Congress by Senator George and other administration leaders before the vote was taken, that aid to Britain under its terms would not involve any act of war. Perhaps you had forgotten that.

Again, the period for discussion ended when the President announced an emergency - a President who, in seeking re-election, often and solemnly promised that he would keep the country out of war. This despite the fact that, in July and August, both Stimson and Knox had stated that England might fall in from thirty to sixty days.

By what divine right do you assume Roosevelt can reverse a policy that he has himself promulgated, and that the majority of the people approved at the polls and still believe in, and, nevertheless, exempt his course from critical discussion? If this isn't Hitlerism, I'd like to know what is. Certainly the British people stand for no such doctrine, as you would know if you had followed the discussions of Parliament.

You say, since the emergency was declared, everyone should know what America's policy is. Certainly they should. But not even the British, who are far more on the inside of the administration than you and I, know that.

Hunt, how can you sit up on your farm and put yourself in a state of mind where you can accuse people like General Wood, Colonel Lindbergh, Janet Fairbank, Frank Lowden, Hanford MacNider, Kathleen Norris, Major Williams, George Peek, or even my humble self, men and women who have sacrificed more and worked harder for their country than you have worked, or ever thought of working, of being guilty of what is "virtually a shabby form of treason?" By saying things like that, you are simply saying that people who don't agree with you are necessarily wrong and something else! Don't be silly.

June 18, 1941.

If I believed that you had searched your mind and heart before writing that unworthy letter, I would feel that I had been mistaken about you right along. You chided me, before the war, for attacking the dictators; expressed your admiration for them, especially on account of their persecution of the Jews. I didn't think much about it at the time. I took it as just some jocose, after-dinner guff. But, if you really mean what you say now, you have waded pretty deep into totalitarian modes of thought.

Forgive me for being irritated and writing sharply. I'm working literally night and day to keep what I believe would be a great wrong from being done to our country.

Admittedly, I may be utterly wrong in my conclusions, - and so may you. ~~But~~, whether I am right or wrong, the sort of intolerance and arrogance of mind displayed in your letter are as unworthy of you as they are undesirable in a national crisis where good people differ on a great issue.

My best regards to Hope.

Sincerely,



AP:GH

Huntington Wilson, Esq.,
Hopelands,
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