

Election Promises Should Be Kept
We Lack Leadership That Places America First
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Under the Auspices of the America First Committee
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We are assembled here tonight because we believe in an independent destiny for America. Such a destiny does not mean that we will build a wall around our country and isolate ourselves from contact with the rest of the world. But it does mean that the future of America will not be tied to these eternal wars in Europe. It means that American boys will not be sent across the ocean to die so that England or Germany or France or Spain may dominate the other nations.

An independent American destiny means, on the one hand, that our soldiers will not have to fight everybody in the world who prefers some other system of life to ours. On the other hand, it means that we will fight anybody and everybody who attempts to interfere with our hemisphere, and that we will do so with all the resources of our nation. It means that we rely on our own strength, our own ability and our own courage to preserve this nation and to defeat any one who is rash enough to attack us. It means that we have faith that these United States of ours can compete in commerce or in war with any combination of foreign powers, and that we are no more afraid of the Europe of Germany than our forefathers were afraid of the Europe of France or England or Spain.

No Reason for Fear

We in America should have no reason to fear. With adequate leadership we can be the strongest and most influential nation in the world. No other country has as great resources. None is as easily defended. We lack only a leadership that places America first - a leadership that tells what it means and what it says. Give us that and we will be the most powerful country in the world. Give us that and we will be so united that no one will dare to attack us.

Our country is not divided today because we fear war, or sacrifice, or because we fear anything at all. We are divided because we are asked to fight over issues that are

Europe's and not ours - issues that Europe created by her own shortsightedness. We are divided because many of us do not wish to fight again for England's balance of power, or for her domination of India, Mesopotamia, or Egypt, or for the Polish Corridor, or for another treaty like Versailles. We are divided because we do not want to cross an ocean to fight on foreign continents, for foreign causes, against an entire world combined against us. Many of us do not think we can impose our way of life, at the point of a machine gun, on the peoples of Germany, Russia, Italy, France and Japan. Many of us do not believe democracy can be spread in such a manner. We believe that we are more likely to lose it at home than to spread it abroad by prolonging this war and sending millions of our soldiers to death in Europe and Asia.

Democracy is not a quality that can be imposed by war. The attempt to do so has always met with failure. Democracy can spring only from within a nation itself, only from the hearts and minds of the people. It can be spread abroad by example, but never by force. The strength of a democracy lies in the satisfaction of its own people. Its influence lies in making others wish to copy it. If we cannot make other nations wish to copy our American system of government, we cannot force them to copy it by going to war.

Intolerance Seen Rising Here

On the contrary, if we go to war to preserve democracy abroad, we are likely to end by losing it at home. There are already signs of danger around us. We have been shouting against intolerance in Europe, but it has been rising in America. We deplore the fact that the German people cannot vote on the policies of their government - that Hitler led his nation into war without asking their consent. But, have we been given the opportunity to vote on the policy our government has followed? No, we have been led toward war against the opposition of four-fifths of our people. We had no more chance to vote on the issue of peace and war last November than if we had been in a totalitarian state ourselves. We in America were given just about as much chance to express our beliefs at the election last Fall, as the Germans would have been given if Hitler had run against Goering.

This state of affairs should make every American - even the

interventionists - stop and think before we plunge blindly into a second world war. There are many interventionists who actually believe that by going to war we can strengthen democracy throughout the world, and with it all the civilized virtues which we in this country support. Those people overlook our failure in the last war "to make the world safe for democracy." They overlook the persecution and the intolerance which followed that war in Europe. They do not seem to realize that the elements they dislike in Germany lie beneath the surface of every nation; that they are here in America just as they are in Europe, and that nothing is as likely to bring them out as war - especially a prolonged war.

I opposed this war before it was declared because I felt it would be disastrous for Europe. I knew that England and France were not in a position to win, and I did not want them to lose. I now oppose our entry into the war because I do not believe that our system of government in America can survive our participation or our way of life can survive our participation.

Pleas to Interventionists

And here I address a plea to any interventionists who may be listening to me tonight. I ask them to consider what a prolonged war will bring. I ask them to consider what the last war brought to Europe - to Russia, to Italy, to Germany and now to France and England and even the smaller countries. I ask them to remember that we in America returned from that war with the loss of relatively few soldiers, but that now we face a war in which our losses are likely to run into the millions and in which victory itself is doubtful. I ask them to consider whether democracy, tolerance and our American way of life are likely to survive in such a struggle. Or may we not find conditions as bad or worse in America. After a war than they are in the dictatorships of Europe today? It is all very well to shout for war, to say that aggression must be stopped, that our ideals of democracy must be preserved all over the world. But when the shouting is over, then we will be faced with the reality of war. Someone must lay plans for invading Germany, for invading Japan, for invading possibly Russia, France, Italy and Spain as well. Someone must do the fighting; someone the dying. When we turn from sentiment and emotion to reality and action, the task we face is staggering. We find ourselves unprepared for war,

about to enter an action that will require us to cross two oceans and to invade nations with a far greater population than ours, nations with armies that have been trained for years, armies that have been hardened by generations of warfare, armies that are larger now than ours can ever be. We find ourselves in a position where we would have to force landings on hostile coasts against the prepared positions of the strongest military powers in the world. Democracy is not likely to survive a conflict such as this will bring. Does any one think that freedom can exist even in America if we are forced into such a war? The United States is a nation of mixed races, religions and beliefs. We came from every part of Europe and from every portion of the earth. Here, in this country, we have learned to live peacefully together. Here we have developed a racial tolerance such as the world has never known before. Here we have developed a civilization in many ways never previously approached. Why must all this be jeopardized by injecting the wars and the hatreds of Europe into our midst? Why, in this second century of our national existence, must we be confronted with the quarrels of the old world that our forefathers left behind when they settled in this country? It is to answer these questions, it is to oppose intervention in this war, it is to preserve our American way of life, that you and I have assembled here tonight. We have assembled to show that in times of crisis there still are men and women in this country ready to give up their normal interests and their normal occupations so that our way of life and our right to determine it may survive.

Sacrifices Are Cited

Every one of us has made some sacrifice to attend this rally. You have given up an evening at home or with your friends. Senator Wheeler has come from Washington to talk to us. He represents the type of leadership that places America first. Mr. Thomas has added this engagement to an already crowded schedule. If all of our leaders had the courage, integrity and vision that these men have shown, this country would not be on the verge of war today. Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Marguand, Mr. Flynn, all of us on the America First Committee are contributing everything we can to prevent this war and to maintain the way of life we believe in for America. I am glad to be able to tell you that our strength is increasing. This meeting is one of many. I have just come from the West, and I can tell you that in every State, in every city, on street corners and on farms, men

and women are meeting, as we have met tonight. From every section of our country a cry is rising against this war. But it is a cry that reaches beyond the question of war alone. It is more penetrating than that. It echoes from the very foundations on which our system of government is built. It asks how this situation came about. It demands an explanation of what happened at the elections last November. It demands an accounting from a government that has led us to war while it promised us peace. To both Democratic and Republican leaders, this cry should be a warning of an awakened spirit in our nation - a spirit that has carried us through times of crisis before, and that will carry us through times of crisis again. We in America can make our nation an example for the rest of the world. We can spread our ideals in other countries. We can defend this hemisphere from invasion. And all of this can be accomplished without entering the war. With your assistance, we still create the leadership necessary to do it. The America First Committee asks your help in carrying out this program. We ask you to join with us in demanding that election promises be kept. We ask you to organize your community, to write to your Representatives in Washington, to attend meetings of this kind whenever they are held. Our American ideals, our independence, our freedom, our right to vote on important issues, all depend on the sacrifice we are willing to make, and the action we take at this time.