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Letter From Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson to Editor of the New York Times, October 14, 1941

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

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Tuesday, October 14, 1941.

To the Editor of the New York Times,
Times Square, New York City.

My dear Sir,

I enclose herewith a letter to the editor which I hope you may find worth using.

May I suggest that you might have an effective cartoon made with the heading "? Epitaph, 1942 ?" and a tombstone with something like "Here Lie Freedom and Civilization---Slain by those who let hatreds, politics, greed, folly or love of ease blind them to the interests of their country in its greatest crisis",--or something of that sort? *

Yours faithfully,

F. M. Huntington-Wilson.

** or just "Slain by American Isolationists"*

To the Editor of the New York Times:

The "Neutrality Law" and isolationism help Hitler and endanger America. The law should be repealed and the isolationists should support their Government in the face of danger. The so-called neutrality laws were begotten of ignorance and folly and fear and conceived in purblind isolationism. Those responsible for their enactment seem never to have understood the one and only reason why the United States entered World War No.1. Senator Knox, who wrote the final declaration of war in 1917, stated that reason in these words:- "America is in this war to defend its honor, its liberty and its life." Now we are virtually in World War No. 2, and for the same reason. If it had not been for our isolationists, who seem to think we can solve problems by ignoring them or running away from them, possibly the present war need not have occurred.

A mistake when enacted, the so-called neutrality laws (in everything affecting American ships) have now become a tragic folly. And they are a disgrace to a self-respecting nation engaged in saving itself and, incidentally, in helping to save civilization. The official and inevitable policy of the United States today is to defend America by defeating Germany, through cooperation with Britain and the rest of the English-speaking peoples; and also by helping all those who fight for freedom against Hitler and his allies.

This being the national policy, does it make sense for the United States to keep on the statute-book provisions of law that hamper the execution of that policy? And, on the same principle, is there justification, today, for isolationist activities and votes that help Hitler by fostering disunity and by hampering the carrying out of the policy of the United States? The task is hard enough without self-imposed handicaps.

Are
Do Senators Nye, Wheeler, Clark, Taft, Vandenburg, Danaher et al.,
and ^{are} the "America First Committee", more competent than the Secretary
of State to determine foreign policy; and more competent than the War
and Navy Departments to determine national defense policy? We take legal
questions to lawyers. We take questions of surgery or medicine to doctors
In questions of foreign policy or national defense it is imprudent to give
^{Too} much weight to the opinions of people who are without very special know-
ledge, experience, responsibility or information regarding those matters.
Moreover, the basic policy of the United States having been fixed by the
President and the Congress, to obstruct the means of carrying it out is
to sabotage the policy itself.

If America itself, and the world at large, come to be dominated by
the Nazi system of lying, deceit, ruthless cruelty and brute force,-in
short barbarism; if the forces of evil triumph over all decent ethics,
morals, and religion,-who will be responsible? If America should have
to choose between submission to a dominant Hitlerism and becoming, in
ghastly isolation, a regimented armed camp, facing a hostile world alone,-
who would bear the responsibility?

If civilization and freedom should perish from the earth, their epi-
taph might well read "Slain by those who let hatreds, politics, greed,
folly, or love of ease blind them to the interests of their country in
its greatest crisis."

Now is the time for America's supreme effort, by all-out produc-
tion, and by sea, in the air and, if need be, by land, no longer fettered
by foolish laws; no longer confused and divided by defeatist counsels.
Now is the time, while we have the British Empire as a powerful ally,
and while Hitler is weakened by his Russian campaign.

F. M. Huntington-Wilson
(formerly of the Diplomatic Service & Department of State)

Woodbury, Connecticut,

October 14, 1941.