

11-1-1941

(My dear Anna)

There may be Americans a bit doubtful about Lord Halifax's appointment, -Tory, appeasement, Chamberlainite and so on. I had known him so well for twenty-five years that I ought to be able to set your mind at rest. Right down to May of last year I wanted him for Prime Minister with Churchill leading in the Commons, only partly because I saw no other way of getting free from the old gang.

There is nothing of the old Tory politician in him, - or of any politician. He is just a Christian who has slipped into politics by the usual British accident. Therefore he had no ambitions and no selfishness. Therefore he made an excellent Viceroy to India where so many will think of their "career", and what will be said about them at home. His religious background enabled him to sympathise with Gandhi and the Hindus rather than with the more dominant Moslem. As I was very interested in Indian emancipation, -mental as well as political, - I often wrote to him and really got to know him from his letters.

But before that he had been under-secretary for the Colonies, which, if you do the job properly, means protecting the Africans from exploitation. There too he might have been a Liberal, rather than one of the Old School. He failed; but he nearly established representative government in Kenya.

Of course those attempts to appease Hitler and Mussolini, after he took over the Foreign Office from Eden, were foolish; but I always felt that he was dragged along the "Dusty" road by Chamberlain and his two satellites / Arthur / Henderson and / Horace / Wilson. He put it to me that he always felt there must be some good, even in Hitler, if he could get at him as man to man and so find a settlement, - that it was his duty to shut his eyes to the hideous persecution of the Jews in order to prevent war.

It all comes from that exaggerated Christianity which thinks all war "wrong". Many pacifists just sit down and go on saying that, until they begin to doubt whether even self-sacrifice is justified. However, having now satisfied himself that Hitler is more wrong than war, he is firm-planted in his new faith, that we should die in defending humanity from Hitler. With nothing else but his faith to direct him, he will be the best of "stickers".

He is not an orator; and may be, I fear, too cautious to get on easy terms with the Press, or to help forward much the cause of Anglo-American reunion. But he knows Churchill's mind more closely than anyone who could be sent except Churchill himself, - and we can't spare Churchill, - and you have got the President!

(Yours ever)

JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD.

(P. 8.)

You can add ^{my} story about him and Hugh Dalton from my MEMOIRS if you have got them, -p.238.)

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Yours ever
Josiah D. Wedgwood.

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