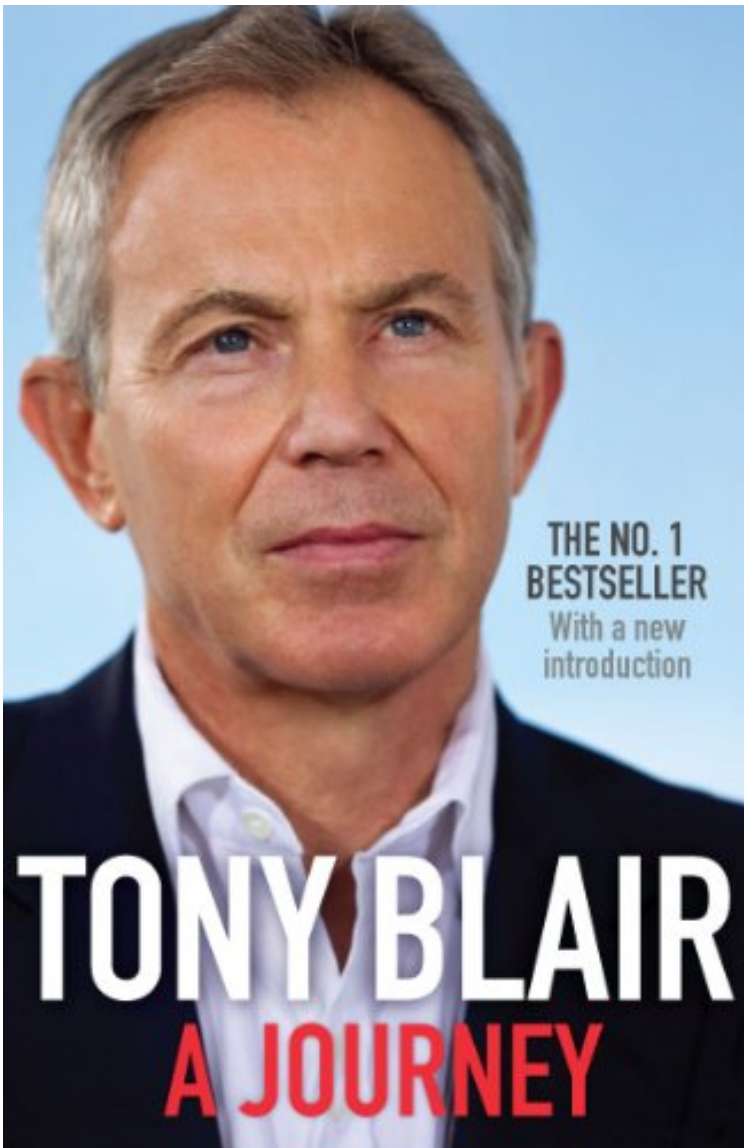


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A Journey



Par Tony Blair
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIn 1997, Tony Blair won the biggest Labour victory in history to sweep the party to power and end eighteen years of Conservative government. He has been one of the most dynamic leaders of modern times; few British prime ministers have shaped the nation's course as profoundly as Blair during his ten years in power, and his achievements and his legacy will be debated for years to come. Now his memoirs reveal in intimate detail this unique political and personal journey, providing an insight into the man, the politician and the statesman, and charting successes, controversies and disappointments with an extraordinary candour. A Journey will prove essential and compulsive reading for anyone who wants to understand the complexities of our global world. As an account of the nature and uses of power, it will also

have a readership that extends well beyond politics, to all those who want to understand the challenges of leadership today. Extrait TWELVE 9/11: SHOULDER TO SHOULDER It is amazing how quickly shock is absorbed and the natural rhythm of the human spirit reasserts itself. A cataclysm occurs. The senses reel. In that moment of supreme definition, we can capture in our imagination an event's full significance. Over time, it is not that the memory of it fades, exactly; but its illuminating light dims, loses its force, and our attention moves on. We remember, but not as we felt at that moment. The emotional impact is replaced by a sentiment which, because it is more calm, seems more rational. But paradoxically it can be less rational, because the calm is not the product of a changed analysis, but of the effluxion of time. So it was with 11 September 2001. On that day, in the course of less than two hours, almost 3,000 people were killed in the worst terrorist attack the world has ever known. Most died in the attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center that dominated the skyline of New York. It was a workplace for as diverse a workforce as any in the world, from all nations, races and faiths, and was not only a symbol of American power but also the edifice that most eloquently represented the modern phenomenon of globalisation. The explosion as the planes hit killed hundreds outright, but most died in the inferno that followed, and the carnage of the collapse of the buildings. As the flames and smoke engulfed them, many jumped in terror and panic, or just because they preferred that death to being on fire. Many who died were rescue workers whose heroism that day has rightly remained as an enduring testament to selfless sacrifice. The Twin Towers were not the only target. American Airlines Flight 77, carrying sixty-four people from Washington to Los Angeles, was flown into the Pentagon. A total of 189 people died. United Airlines Flight 93, bound from Newark to San Francisco with forty-four on board, was hijacked, its target probably the White House. It came down in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Its passengers, realising the goal of the hijack, stormed the cabin. In perishing, they saved the lives of many others. It was an event like no other. It was regarded as such. The British newspapers the next day were typical of those around the globe: at war, they proclaimed. The most common analogy was Pearl Harbor. The notion of a world, not just America, confronted by a deadly evil that had indeed declared war on us all was not then dismissed as the language of the periphery of public sentiment. It was the sentiment. Thousands killed by terror what else should we call it? Opinions were forthright and clear, and competed with each other in resolution, not only in the West but everywhere. In the Arab world, condemnation was nearly universal, only Saddam ensuring that Iraqi state television played a partisan song, Down with America, calling the attacks the fruits of American crimes against humanity. Yasser Arafat condemned the acts on behalf of the Palestinians, though unfortunately, most especially for the Palestinian cause, the TV showed pictures of some jubilant Palestinians celebrating. The most common words that day were war, evil, sympathy, solidarity, determination and, of course, change. Above all, it was accepted that the world had changed. How could it be otherwise? The reason for such a description was also not hard to divine. The first attempt to attack the World Trade Center, in 1993, had been foiled, but the planning this time had obviously been meticulous. The enemy had been prepared to wait until it had accumulated the necessary means and opportunity. However, more than that, a terror attack of this scale was not calculated to do limited damage. It was designed for maximum casualty. It was delivered by a suicide mission. It therefore had an intent, a purpose and a scope beyond anything we had encountered before. This was terror without limit; without mercy; without regard to human life, because it was motivated by a cause higher than any human cause. It was inspired by a belief in God; a perverted belief, a delusional and demonic belief, to be sure, but nonetheless so inspired. It was, in a very real sense, a declaration of war. It was calculated to draw us into conflict. Up to then, the activities of this type of extremism had been growing. It was increasingly associated with disputes that seemed unconnected, though gradually the connection was being made. Kashmir, Chechnya, Algeria, Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon; in each area, different causes were at play, with different origins, but the attacks, carried out as acts of terror, were growing, and the ideological link with an extreme element that professed belief in Islam was ever more frequently expressed. Until 11 September, the splashes of colour on different parts of the canvas did not appear to the eye as a single picture. After it, the clarity was plain, vivid and defining. We look back now, almost a decade later when we are still at war, still struggling and managing the ghastly consequences which war imposes, and we can scarcely recall how we ever came to be in this position. But on that bright New York morning, not a cloud disturbing the bluest of blue skies, we knew exactly what was happening and why. We knew that so far as we were concerned we had not provoked such an outrage. There had been acts of terror committed against us: Lockerbie, the USS Cole, the U.S. embassy in Tanzania. We had tried to retaliate, but at a relatively low level. They were individual tragedies, but they did not amount to a war. They were the price America paid for being America. The other

conflicts we reckoned were none of our business; or at least they were the business of our diplomatic corps, but not of our people. So those carrying out such acts were wicked; but they weren't changing our world view. George Bush had won the presidency after the controversies of the most contested ballot in U.S. history, but the battle between him and Al Gore had focused mainly on domestic policy. At my first meeting with him at Camp David in February of the same year his priorities were about education, welfare and cutting down on big government as he saw it. So there was no build-up to 11 September, no escalation, no attempts to defuse that failed, no expectation or inevitability. There was just an attack planned obviously during the previous presidency of unbelievable ferocity and effect. No warning, no demands, no negotiation. Nothing except mass slaughter of the innocent. We were at war. We could not ignore it. But how should we deal with it? And who was this enemy? A person? A group? A movement? A state? I was in Brighton that day, to give the biennial address to the Trades Union Congress. Frankly, it was always a pretty ghastly affair for both of us. As I explain elsewhere, I was frustrated they wouldn't modernise; they were frustrated with my telling them how to do their business. Not that they were ever slow in telling me how to do mine, mind you. And sure-fire election-losing advice it was too. They ignored my counsel; and I ignored theirs. For all that, we sort of rubbed along after a fashion, and in a manner of speaking, and up to a point. The great thing about Brighton is that it is warm, closer than Blackpool to London, and retains the enormous charm of yesteryear. Blackpool can be a great town and has a unique quality, but it needs work done on it. Brighton was where Neil Kinnock, posing for photos on the pebble beach on the day he became Labour leader in 1983, lost his footing and fell in the sea. You can imagine the pleasure of the assembled press. It must have been replayed a thousand times and became a slightly defining misstep; unfairly so, of course; but such things are never fair. In public, you are always on show, so always be under control. The trick, actually, is to appear to be natural, while gripping your nature in a vice of care and caution. Don't let the mask slip; don't think this is the moment to begin a new adventure in communication; don't betray excesses of emotion of any kind; do it all with the ease and character of someone talking to old friends while knowing they are, in fact, new acquaintances. Over time, I began to think there was never a moment when I could be completely candid and exposed. You worried that even sitting in your living room or in the bath, someone would come to photograph, question and call upon you to justify yourself. I became unhealthily focused on how others saw me, until, again over time, I refocused on how I saw myself. I realised I was considered public property, but the ownership was mine. I learned not to let the opinion of others, even a prevailing one, define my view of myself and what I should or should not do. The TUC took place in early to mid-September, and the party conference a couple of weeks later. Both always made September a little nerve-tingling. From the TUC you could get a sense of where the party were liable to be in terms of contentment and/or otherwise. Trouble at the first usually presaged trouble at the second. The 2001 TUC was no exception. Having just won our first ever consecutive full term, in a second landslide victory, you would have thought it an occasion for general rejoicing. I think mostly they'll want to congratulate you on the victory, Alastair said to me, po-faced, as we boarded the train. Do you think so? I said, perking up. Don't be ridiculous, he replied. Sure enough, the mood as I arrived at lunchtime was the usual mixture of sweet and sour, but with the sweet a decided minority. I went straight to the Grand Hotel. We had an hour and a half before I had to go to the new Conference Centre a hundred yards or so along the beachfront. I worked in the bedroom as the team gathered in the living room of the suite. Just after a quarter to two, around 8:45 Eastern Standard Time, Alastair was called out of the room by Godric Smith, his very capable deputy. Alastair came back in, turned on the television and said, You'd better see this. He knew I hated being interrupted just before a speech, so I realised I'd better look. The TV was showing pictures of the Trade Center like someone had punched a huge hole in it, fire and smoke belching forth. Just over fifteen minutes later, a second plane hit, this time graphically captured live on-screen. This was not an accident. It was an attack. At that moment, I felt eerily calm despite being naturally horrified at the devastation, and aware this was not an ordinary event but a world-changing one. At one level it was a shock, a seemingly senseless act of evil. At another level, it made sense of developments I had seen growing in the world these past years: isolated acts of terrorism, disputes marked by the same elements of extremism, and a growing strain of religious ideology that was always threatening to erupt, and now had. Within a very short space of time, it was clear the casualties would be measured in thousands. I ordered my thoughts. It was the worst terrorist attack in human history. It was not America alone who was the target, but all of us who shared the same values. We had to stand together. We had to understand the scale of the challenge and rise to meet it. We could not give up until it was done. Unchecked and unchallenged, this could threaten our way of life to its fundamentals. There was no other course; no other option; no alternative

path. It was war. It had to be fought and won. But it was a war unlike any other. This was not a battle for territory, not a battle between states; it was a battle for and about the ideas and values that would shape the twenty-first century. All this came to me in those forty minutes between the first attack and my standing up in front of the audience to tell them that I would not deliver my speech but instead return immediately to London. And it came with total clarity. Essentially, it stayed with that clarity and stays still, in the same way, as clear now as it was then. From the Hardcover edition. *Revue de presse* Deeply personal. . . . Full of candid revelations. . . . A priceless glimpse into the mind of the man who stood by America in some of its darkest recent hours. *Wall Street Journal* Engaging and insightful. . . . Detailed and nuanced. *The Boston Globe* Engrossing. . . . Informal and candid enough to keep the reader thoroughly engaged. *Fareed Zakaria, The New York Times* Book A political biography of unusual interest. . . . Blair is one of the great politicians of this generation and that makes his candid moments particularly interesting. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* Well-written and perhaps unintentionally self-revealing. . . . Blair reveals himself through his thrusting political ambition, his rationales for decisions, his preoccupation with public image and his determination to play a prominent role on the world stage. *The Washington Post* Book World Fluently written. . . . Engaging. *Michiko Kakutani, The New York Times* Absorbing. . . . Surprisingly candid. . . . A political argument about how to win elections and make social progress. *The Independent (London)* That Blair was a formidable politician can be seen in the glimpses we get of how his mind works. . . . You are left thinking two things: that it would be a blessing if some of today's politicians took note and that, whatever your view of Blair, you still wouldn't want to take him on in an election. *The New Yorker* Impressive. . . . Intellectually and emotionally engaging. . . . Blair writes well, practices transparency, and on almost every page explains his decisions in detail. *Christian Science Monitor* Unique. . . . A political biography of unusual interest. *Los Angeles Times* Unusually direct. . . . He is compellingly candid about how scared he was when he first became prime minister. *The Guardian (London)* Compelling. . . . Candid and comprehensive. *Tulsa World* Blair comes across as likable, if manipulative; capable of dissembling while wonderfully fluent; in short, a brilliant modern politician. *The Boston Globe*