



CHURCHILL AND THE EUROPEAN TRADITION OF LIBERTY

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Churchill believed in the existence of a specific political tradition of the English-speaking peoples. But he also clearly believed that tradition to be part of the European and Western tradition of liberty. This article tries to identify some of the crucial ingredients that Churchill attributed to the Anglo-American political culture and to its contribution to the broader European tradition. It also recalls Churchill's political evolution – from the Conservatives to the Liberals in 1904 and back to the Conservatives twenty years later – trying to identify some of the main features of his political philosophy.



Abstract

Anglo-American and European political culture; Churchill's political philosophy; enjoyment; free trade; limited government; revolution; reform.

Cultura política angloamericana y europea; filosofía política de Churchill; libre comercio; gobierno limitado; revolución; reforma.



Key words

Churchill creía en la existencia de una tradición política específica de las sociedades angloparlantes. Pero creía que sin duda esa tradición formaba parte asimismo de la tradición occidental y europea de libertad. Este artículo trata de identificar algunos de los ingredientes esenciales que Churchill atribuía a la cultura política angloamericana y su contribución a la tradición europea. Asimismo, se repasa la evolución política de Churchill, de los conservadores a los liberales en 1904 y su vuelta al partido conservador veinte años más tarde, con el objetivo de identificar las características principales de su filosofía política.



Resumen

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Fechas

“Three months before his twenty-first birthday (in August 1895) Churchill embarked upon a self-taught course of [...] a liberal education”, Martin Gilbert (2004, Vol. I, p. 62) recalled in his masterful biography of Winston Churchill. Among the three books that he first selected, two were on European history: Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and Lecky’s *European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*. It was indeed within this European tradition that Churchill would later emphasise and praise the specific contribution of the English-speaking peoples.

What was this specific contribution? Churchill certainly thought it had been of the utmost importance. This only can explain his persistent commitment to writing *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, which he actually started in 1932 and only managed to publish more than twenty years later, in 1956 – the last of his more than forty books, incidentally¹.

Writing to one of his literary assistants about the book in April 1939, Churchill said:

In the main, the theme is emerging of the growth of freedom and law, of the rights of the individual, of the subordination of the State to the fundamental and moral conceptions of an ever-comprehending community. (...) Of these ideas the English-speaking peoples were the authors, then the trustees, and must now become the armed champions. Thus I condemn tyranny in whatever guise and from whatever quarter it presents itself. All of this of course has a current application. (Clarke, 2012, p. 224; Gilbert, 1981, p. 100)²

When the book finally came out, in 1956, Churchill wrote in the Preface to the first (of four) volume:

For the second time in the present century the British Empire and the United States have stood together facing the perils of war on the largest scale known among men, and since the cannons ceased to fire and the bombs to burst we have become more conscious of our common duty to human race. Language, law, and the process by which we have come into being, already afforded a unique foundation for drawing together and portraying a concerted task. I thought when I began that such a unity might well notably influence the destiny of the world. Certainly I do not feel the need for this has diminished in any way in the twenty years that have passed. (Churchill, 1956, Vol. I, p. VII)

What were the political underpinnings of this “common duty to human race”? Churchill presented them several times and at different occasions. One of the most striking still remains his broadcast to the United States on 8 August 1939:

It is curious how the English-speaking peoples have always had this horror of one-man power. They are quite ready to follow a leader for a time, as long as he is serviceable to them; but the idea of handing themselves over, lock, stock and barrel, body and soul, to one man, and worshipping him as if he were an idol – that has always been odious to the whole theme and nature of our civilisation. The architects of the American Constitution were as careful as those who shaped the British Constitution to guard against the whole life and fortunes, and all the laws and freedom of the nation, being placed in the hands of a tyrant. Checks and counter-checks in the body politic, large devolution of State government, instruments and processes of free debate, frequent recurrence to first principles, the

1 Churchill, Winston. (1956). *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. London: Cassel & Company.

2 WSC — Ashley, 12 April 1939, CHAR 8/626.

right of opposition to the most powerful governments, and above all ceaseless vigilance, have preserved, and will preserve, the broad characteristics of British and American institutions. (Gilbert, 1981, p. 100)³

This “horror of one-man power”, Churchill thought, went far back in the history of the English-speaking peoples. He thought it had had a significant expression, even though probably only half-understood at the time, in Magna Carta of 1215:

No one at the time regarded the Charter as a final settlement of all outstanding issues, and its importance lay not in the details but in the broad affirmation of the principle that there is a law to which the Crown itself is subject. *Rex non debet esse sub homine, sed sub Deo et lege* – the king should not be below man, but below God and the law. (Churchill, 1956, Vol. I, p. XIV)

Churchill then argued that, out of this concern with limited government which was at the heart of Magna Carta, a new concept emerged: accountability to Parliament. “If the Crown is to be kept within its due limits some broader basis of resistance must be found than the ancient privileges of the nobility. About this time, in the middle of the thirteenth century we begin to have a new word, Parliament. ... In two or three generations a prudent statesman would no more think of governing England without a Parliament than without a king.” And then, as he approaches the conclusion of his Preface to the first volume of *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, he states that

Unlike the remainder of Western Europe, which still retains the imprint and tradition of Roman law and the Roman system of government, the English-speaking peoples had at the close of the period covered by this volume achieved a body of legal and what might be called democratic principles which survived the upheavals and onslaughts of the French and Spanish Empires. Parliament, trial by jury, local government by local citizens, and even the beginnings of a free Press, may be discerned, at any rate in primitive form, by the time Christopher Columbus set sail for the American continent. (Churchill, 1956, Vol. I, p. XVII)

It would be a mistake to think of Churchill's view of the English-speaking peoples as standing outside the broader European and Western tradition of liberty

Britain at the Heart of the European Tradition of Liberty

It would be a mistake, though, to think of Churchill's view of the English-speaking peoples as standing outside, or isolated from, the broader European and Western tradition of liberty. This is not the place to discuss in detail the intricate question of how exactly Churchill understood the position that Britain should occupy in the post-war European arrangements that he himself encouraged and made possible.⁴ But Churchill certainly thought that the tradition of liberty belonged to Europe as a whole and not only to Britain or to the English-speaking peoples. In many of his speeches he insisted that Britain was defending the liberties of all Europe, not only Britain's interests. He had been a great admirer of European culture throughout his life and one of the first members of the “Pan-Europa” movement set up by his friend Count Coudenhove-Calergi in 1923-26.

3 Broadcast of 8 August 1939.

4 For a thoughtful introduction to this most complex matter see Beloff, Max. (1993) Churchill and Europe. In Robert Blake and Wm. Roger Louis (Eds.). *Churchill*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 443-455.

And one should not forget that he in fact played a crucial role in reconciling the European family after World War II. Opposing those who wanted to punish Germany and its allies after the war, Churchill said in the House of Commons on 5 June 1946:

Indescribable crimes have been committed by Germany under the Nazi rule. Justice must take its course, the guilty must be punished, but once that is over – and I trust it will soon be over – I fall back on the declaration of Edmund Burke, ‘I cannot frame an indictment against an entire people’.

[...] Let us proclaim them fearlessly. Let Germany live. Let Austria and Hungary be freed. Let Italy resume her place in the European system. Let Europe arise again in glory, and by her strength and unity ensure the peace of the world. (Gilbert, 2012, p. 541-542)⁵

In the famous speech at Zurich University, on 19 September of 1946, Churchill was even further and argued that the reconstruction of Europe should be based on the reconciliation between France and Germany:

I am now going to say something that will astonish you. The first step in the re-creation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany. In this way only can France recover the moral leadership of Europe. There can be no revival of Europe without a spiritually great France and a spiritually great Germany. (Gilbert, 2012, p. 546)⁶

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Allergy to Revolutions and Enjoyment of Decentralised Ways of Life

Churchill certainly perceived the British and the Anglo-American tradition of liberty as part of the broader Western civilisation. But, as we have seen, he certainly also believed in the specificity of the political culture of the English-speaking peoples within the West. One of the crucial elements of this specificity, I submit, is the understanding of liberty and democracy as the result of a long, gradual evolutionary process. On the continent, by contrast, democracy tends often to be perceived mainly as a rather modern innovation that was brought about through a rupture with the past. As I have argued at greater length elsewhere (Espada, 2016), this has created huge misunderstandings. A crucial one has been the acceptance of revolutions as normal, perhaps indispensable, instruments of change and of progress.

Nothing could be farther from Churchill’s political philosophy. He expressed his allergy to revolutions on innumerable occasions. One of the most inspiring was certainly his description of his father’s political views:

He [Lord Randolph Churchill] saw no reason why the old glories of Church and State, of King and country, should not be reconciled with modern democracy; or why the masses of working people should not become the chief defenders of those ancient institutions by which their liberties and progress had been achieved. It is this union of past and present, of tradition and progress, this golden chain, never yet broken, because no undue strain is

5 Speech in the House of Commons, 5 June 1946.

6 Speech at Zurich University, 19 September 1949.

placed upon it, that has constituted the peculiar merit and sovereign quality of English national life. (Churchill, 1934, p. 52)

It is this commitment to the golden chain of gradual evolution that has allowed the British to perceive representative government limited by law mainly as a protection of their own decentralised ways of life. These ways of life exist as homes of real people, who have inherited them from their ancestors and will pass them onto their descendants. In this spontaneous dialogue between generations, these ways of life will gradually be adapted and made more convenient under new circumstances. But in no way can they or should they be redesigned by the arbitrary will, or an abstract scheme of perfection, of a single power. People, as individuals or persons, are there first, prior to governments, the main purpose of the latter being to protect the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 famously put it.

It was this allergy to revolutions that was at the core of Churchill's ability to perceive from the very beginning the threat coming from the two totalitarian forces of the twentieth century: Communism and National-socialism.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, strong intellectual trends generated ardent enthusiasm for revolutionary tides, either from the left or from the right, either from communism or from what would become national-socialism. Revolutionaries presented themselves as spokesmen for a new world. One should leave behind the paralysis of parliamentary democracy and the commercial pettiness of capitalism, they claimed. England and America were described as symbols of the old world. They were said to be hostages to the "Jewish conspiracy" and the "world financial plutocracy." England and America were accused of resisting the new centralised and innovative "total state" – the expression introduced by Mussolini.

And many people in Europe were sensitive to the new trends: Yes, the world is changing, – they would say – and we must change with the world. On the contrary, Winston Churchill remained immune to the language of revolution and innovation. He was described as an old-fashioned reactionary who did not understand the new times. But Churchill did understand the new times. And he did not like what he understood.

Churchill was an admirer of the European and Western tradition of liberty, to which he thought his country and the British Empire had given a significant contribution. He had carefully studied Macaulay and his whig view of English history. He therefore knew very well that the 1688 Glorious Revolution – the last revolution that England underwent – was made with reluctance and with the main purpose of making further revolutions unnecessary (Macaulay, 1848-55; 1898). He therefore was not impressed by the language of revolution that was growing on the Continent.

The language of ardent innovation did not impress him either. He had studied Edmund Burke and was aware of the fact that the English Parliament had grown out of resistance against the "despotism of innovation" promoted by Kings who aspired to absolute power. The system of Government and Opposition based on rival parliamentary parties had evolved to counter the so-called "court cabinet" which was not accountable to the tax payers. These unaccountable governments – Edmund Burke had said – wanted to promote "schemes of perfection in a monarchy which went well beyond Plato's Republic." (Burke, 1865, p. 454) Churchill was aware of this and was rather sceptical about innovative schemes of perfection. "We must beware of needless innovation, especially when guided by logic", he famously said in 1942 at the House

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of Commons, replying to a proposal to rename the Minister of Defence and the Secretary of State for War, on the grounds that their titles were illogical (Coote & Batchelor, 1992, p. 167).

Churchill was also indifferent, to say the least, to the rhetoric of the so-called 'general will', which was somehow used both by the revolutionary left and the revolutionary right in their mutual defence of a new 'total state', which should be able to act with a 'single will', unimpaired by rival political parties. He knew that the 'general will' or the 'single will' would always be the will of a transient majority – or, even worse, of an activist minority – and that all wills must be limited by constitutional checks and balances. As for the public interest, which Churchill had in the highest regard, he also knew that it could not be defined by mass demonstrations. The public interest should emerge from within a mixed regime based on the interaction of a monarchical, an aristocratic and a democratic principle.

In other words, Churchill was not impressed by the revolutionary language of innovation that produced so much enthusiasm among intellectual circles in the European continent and elsewhere. On the contrary, he was very proud of the liberal world order that the 19th century had achieved under the benign rule of 'Pax Britannica' – and which, at the dawn of the twentieth century, people were being invited to despise and scorn. He did not hesitate to express those old-fashioned views to his constituents in 1922, even when he was still a member of the Liberal party:

What a disappointment the Twentieth century has been.
 How terrible & how melancholy
 is long series of disastrous events
 we have darkened its first 20 years.
 We have seen in ev country a dissolution,
 a weakening of those bonds,
 a challenge to those principles
 a decay of faith
 an abridgement of hope
 on wh structure & ultimate existence
 of civilised society depends.
 We have seen in ev part of globe
 one gt country after another
 wh had erected an orderly, a peaceful
 a prosperous structure of civilised society,
 relapsed in hideous succession
 into bankruptcy, barbarism or anarchy.
 ... And only intense, concerted & prolonged efforts among all nations
 can avert further & perhaps even greater calamities. (Gilbert, 1981, p. 83-84)⁷

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Hitler's revolutionary threat

All the fundamentals of the British political tradition Churchill knew very well – they were his fundamentals. And this is why he immediately perceived the revolutionary threat coming from both Bolshevism and Nazism. In brief strokes of the pen he captured the essence of both revolutionary populisms. Of Hitler, for example, he recalled his modest origins and his failure

⁷ Churchill's shorthand notes.

to gain entry to the Academy of Art in Vienna, as well as his life in poverty in Vienna and later in Munich, sometimes as a house-painter, often as a casual labourer. Under these circumstances, Churchill wrote,

Hitler bred a harsh though concealed resentment that the world had denied him success. These misfortunes did not lead him into Communist ranks. He cherished all the more an abnormal sense of racial loyalty and a fervent and mystical admiration for Germany and the German people. ... Lonely and pent within himself, the little soldier pondered and speculated upon the possible causes of the catastrophe [the German defeat in the First World War] guided only by his narrow personal experiences. ... His patriotic anger fused with his envy of the rich and successful into one overpowering hate. (Churchill, 1989, p. 24)

It is important to recall these passages of Churchill's book on the Second World War – and many more could be quoted – because decades of communist and leftist propaganda have tried to identify Hitler with capitalism. Churchill never made that huge mistake. Churchill was obviously a defender of capitalism and knew very well that Nazism and Communism wanted to destroy the market economy. They wanted to replace market mechanisms and private property by a centralised and militarised economy.

For this to be done, however, envy and resentment against success were not enough – even though they certainly were indispensable ingredients. But it was also necessary a philosophy which could destroy all moral scruples, all impartial rules of conduct – the rules that impose limits on the will and on power of one individual over another. Vulgar propagandists in Germany had used Nietzsche's philosophy with the purpose of promoting a world view of despair and suspicion. "Wherever I found life I found the will to power", was Nietzsche's favourite saying among the Nazis. (Hicks, 2010)

Winston Churchill immediately captured the appropriation of Nietzsche's despair by the Nazi vulgate. And he wrote:

The main thesis of *Mein Kampf* was simple. Man is a fighting animal; therefore the nation, being a community of fighters, is a fighting unit. Any living organism which ceases to fight for its existence is doomed to extinction. A country or race which ceases to fight is equally doomed. Hence the need for ridding it of foreign defilements. The Jewish race, owing to its universality, is of necessity pacifist and internationalist. Pacifism is the deadliest sin, for it means the surrender of the race in the fight for existence. The first duty of every country is therefore to nationalise the masses. The ultimate aim of education is to produce a German who can be converted with the minimum of training into a soldier. (Churchill, 1989, p. 26)

The Bolshevik Tyranny

So much for Churchill's views on Nazism. Let us now turn to the question of Communism, of which Churchill always remained a fierce opponent. In January 1920 Churchill presented his view of the Bolshevik tyranny:

We believe in Parliamentary Government exercised in accordance with the will of the majority of the electors constitutionally and freely ascertained. They seek to overthrow

Parliament by direct action or other violent means... and then to rule the mass of the nation in accordance with their theories, which have never yet been applied successfully, and through the agency of self-elected or sham-elected caucuses of their own.

They seek to destroy capital. We seek to control monopolies. They seek to eradicate the idea of individual possession. We seek to use the great mainspring of human endeavour as a means of increasing the volume of production on every side and of sharing the fruits far more broadly and evenly among millions of individual homes. We defend freedom of conscience and religious equality. They seek to exterminate every form of religious belief that has given comfort and inspiration to the soul of man. (Gilbert, 1981, p. 76-77)⁸

Churchill understood from the outset that the aim of Bolshevism (as he always called it) was world revolution, and he made his standpoint very clear: "The Bolshevik aim of world revolution can be pursued equally in peace or war. In fact, a Bolshevik peace is only another form of war. If they do not for the moment overwhelm with armies, they can undermine with propaganda". (Gilbert, 1981, p. 77-78)⁹ This view led Churchill increasingly to oppose the rise of the Labour Party in Britain, not only because of its socialist proposals but also, and perhaps mainly, because of Labour's leaning towards the Soviet Union. A labour government, he wrote in a letter to The Times in January 1924, would cast "a dark and blighting shadow on every form of national life" (Gilbert, 2011, p. 460). Three days later, when the Liberal Party joined with Labour to defeat the Conservatives and make Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald the new Prime Minister, Churchill rejoined the Tories. Only the Conservative Party, he then stated, offered a strong enough base "for the successful defeat of socialism" (Gilbert, 2011, p. 462).

Twelve years later, in 1936, Churchill would re-state his stern opposition to both Communism and Nacional-Socialism saying that, "between the doctrines of Comrade Trotsky and those of Dr Goebbels there ought to be room for you and me, and a few others, to cultivate opinions of our own." This would lead him "to refuse to become partisan of either side" in the Spanish Civil War. And he would add that "I hope not to be called to survive in the world under a Government of either of these dispensations. I cannot feel any enthusiasm for these rival creeds. I feel unbounded sorrow and sympathy for the victims" (Gilbert, 1981, p. 98)¹⁰. Also in 1936, in a speech in Paris, Churchill would restate his firm opposition to Communist and national-socialist tyrannies:

How could we bear, nursed as we have been in a free atmosphere, to be gagged and muzzled; to have spies, eavesdroppers and delators at every corner; to have even private conversation caught up and used against us by the Secret Police and all their agents and creatures; to be arrested and interned without trial; or to be tried by political or Party courts for crimes hitherto unknown to civil law?

How could we bear to be treated like schoolboys when we are grown-up men; to be turned out on parade by tens of thousands to march and cheer for this slogan or for that; to see philosophers, teachers and authors bullied and toiled to death in concentration camps; to be forced every hour to conceal the natural workings of the human intellect

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8 Speech at Sunderland on 1 January 1920.

9 *Evening News*, 28 July 1920.

10 House of Commons, 14 April 1937.

and the pulsation of the human heart? Why, I say that rather to submit to such oppression, there is no length we would not go to. (Gilbert, 2011, p. 97-98)¹¹

Limited and accountable Government

I now would like to submit that the main issue that opposed Churchill to Communism and Nazism was not in the first place a matter of ideological doctrine, in the strict sense of the word. He did not draw a systematic comprehensive rival doctrine against Communism and Nazism. What shocked Churchill was precisely the ambition of both Nazism and Communism to reorganize civil and social life from above, imposing on existing ways of life a deductive plan based on a total, comprehensive ideology. In Corporal Hitler, in the former socialist Mussolini, and in the communist ideologues Lenin and Stalin, Churchill saw the coarse fanaticism of those who wanted to demolish all barriers to the unfettered exercise of their will: barriers of Constitutional Government, of Judaeo-Christian religion, of gentlemanship, of civil, political and economic liberties, of private property, of the family, and other decentralised civil institutions.

One can find innumerable references in Churchill's speeches and writings to this fundamental idea of limited political will and limited political power. In a pre-war speech in 1938, for example, Churchill said:

Have we not an ideology – if we must use this ugly word – of our own in freedom, in a liberal constitution, in democratic and Parliamentary government, in Magna Carta and the Petition of Right? (Clarke, 2012, p. 225)¹²

In a message to the Italian people addressed in 1944, Churchill would put forward seven “quite simple, practical tests” by which freedom could be recognised in the modern world. Let me recall them, as they are still so topical nowadays:

Is there the right to free expression of opinion and of opposition and criticism of the Government of the day?

Have the people the right to turn out a Government of which they disapprove, and are constitutional means provided by which they can make their will apparent?

Are their courts of justice free from violence by the Executive and from threats of mob violence, and free of all association with particular political parties?

Will these courts administer open and well-established laws which are associated in the human mind with the broad principle of decency and justice?

Will there be fair play for poor as well as for rich, for private persons as well as Government officials?

Will the right of the individual, subject to his duties to the state, be maintained and asserted and exalted?

Is the ordinary peasant or workman who is earning a living by daily toil and striving to bring up a family free from the fear that some grim police organisation under the control

¹¹ Speech in Paris, on 24 September 1936.

¹² Speech on 9 May 1938.

of a single party, like the Gestapo, started by the Nazi and Fascist parties, will tap him on the shoulder and pack him off without fair or open trial to bondage or ill-treatment? (Gilbert, 1981, p. 111)

This long quotation shows, I submit, that the crucial question for Churchill, as well as for the centuries-old English tradition of liberty under law, was that political power is not supposed to command over people's spontaneous and really-existing ways of life. This crucial point was beautifully expressed by William Pitt, who was British Prime Minister in 1766-1768:

The poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance to all the force of the Crown. It may be frail; its roof may shake; the wind may blow through it; the storms may enter, the rain may enter – but the King of England cannot enter; all his forces dare not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement! (Brougham, 1855, Vol. I, p. 42)¹³

This tradition of limited government and of liberty under law has often been associated with a specific English political tradition, the conservative one. Whether or not Churchill considered the principle of limited government as a specific conservative principle is a matter open to dispute. Churchill certainly expressed in a very telling manner his opposition to revolutionary plans to redesign a social order. But it seems to me that he associated this opposition to unlimited political power with a broad consensus between the two main British parliamentary families in the 19th century, the Conservatives and the Liberals. This is particularly striking when he recalled the political philosophy of Sir Francis Mowatt, a top civil servant who had been private secretary to Gladstone and had served both under him and Disraeli, the two rival leading statesmen of Victorian England, one Liberal the other Conservative. Sir Francis' political philosophy, such as described by Churchill, could hardly be more opposed to revolutionary and absolutist political projects:

He represented the complete triumphant Victorian view of economics and finance; strict parsimony; exact accounting, free imports whatever the rest of the world might do; suave, steady government; no wars; no flag-waving, just paying off debt and reducing taxation and keeping out scrapes, and for the rest – for trade, industry, agriculture, social life – laissez-faire and laissez-aller. Let the Government reduce itself and its demands upon the public to a minimum; let the nation live of its own; let social and industrial organisation take whatever course it pleased, subject to the law of the land and the Ten Commandments. Let the money fructify in the pockets of the people. (Churchill, 1934, p. 54)

In this sense, Winston Churchill was basically an interpreter of and heir to what he himself and many others have called 'the English spirit'. This is a spirit which is sceptic of dogmatic abstractions and of geometric plans to re-design decentralised institutions and traditions. As Churchill himself put it, it is a spirit of compromise and gradual evolution:

In England the political opinion of men and parties grows like a tree shading its trunk with its branches, shaped or twisted by the winds, rooted according to its strains, stunted by drought or maimed by storm. [...] In our affairs as in those of Nature there are always frayed edges, border-lands, compromises, anomalies. Few lines are drawn that are not smudged. (Churchill, 1934, p. 53)

Winston Churchill was basically an interpreter of and heir to what he himself and many others have called 'the English spirit'

13 William Pitt (the elder), Speech on the Excise Bill, House of Commons (March 1763).

This scepticism about dogmatic abstractions and geometric schemes of perfection was, I submit, at the heart of Churchill's political temperament. The impact of this disposition in his political philosophy was best described, I believe, by Martin Gilbert:

Here then were the three interwoven strands of Churchill's political philosophy: 'the appeasement of class bitterness' at home, 'the appeasement of the fearful hatreds and antagonisms abroad', and the defence of Parliamentary democracy and democratic values in Britain, in Western Europe, and in the territories under British rule or control. Wherever possible, the method to be used was conciliation, the route to be chosen was the middle way, the path of moderation. But where force alone could preserve the libertarian values, force would have to be used. It could only be a last resort – the horrors of war, and the very nature of democracy, ensured that – but in the last resort it might be necessary to defend those values by force of arms. (Gilbert, 1981, p. 82)

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