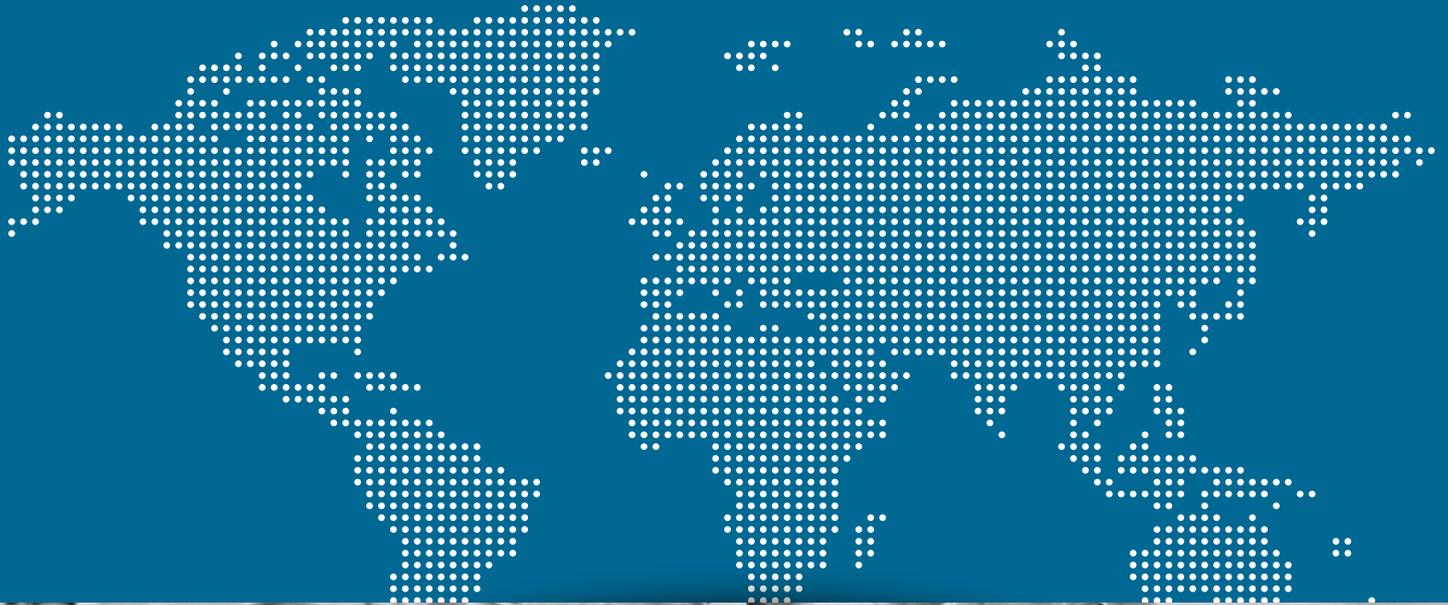


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Winston Churchill y Europa

Winston Churchill and Europe

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Nota del Coordinador del Número 7

As Director of the Churchill Archives Centre, home to the personal papers of Sir Winston and many of his contemporaries, it is a great honour to be asked to be the guest editor of this edition of the *Comillas Journal of International Relations*.

The idea of an edition on Churchill and Europe was first mooted because 2016 was the seventieth anniversary of Churchill's famous Zurich speech: a celebrated address in which he urged Franco-German reconciliation and called for "a kind of United States of Europe". Little did I know that I would be assembling these articles against the backdrop of the United Kingdom European Referendum Campaign and the withdrawal of Britain from the European Union: a heated debate in which both sides tried to trace the origins of their arguments back to Churchill in the immediate post war period. To the Leave campaign he was the icon of British independence who had claimed that Britain was with Europe but not of Europe: to the *Remainers* he was the leader of the British United Europe campaign and a supporter of the creation of new Council of Europe in which Britain would be represented. The truth of course is that we cannot know how he would have voted today, but we can gain much from studying his relationship with Europe and trying to understand how he approached international relations with his closest neighbours.

The volume draws on the work of a range of Churchill scholars from around the continent, and approaches it subject from a number of different perspectives. Professor Joao Espada from the Catholic University of Portugal argues that Churchill's driving philosophy was a belief in a European civilisation informed by a particularly English and American understanding of individual liberty. Professor Antoine Capet of the University of Rouen charts Churchill's ever present but changing personal and political relationship with France and illustrates how this "special relationship" is vital to any understanding of Churchill's wider engagement of Europe. But Churchill's European strategy was also shaped from without, as is illustrated by two early career scholars. Dr Warren Dockter of Clare Hall, Cambridge, reveals how Churchill saw and sought to use Turkey as the bridge between Europe and the Middle East, while Dr Cat Wilson looks at the impact of the Commonwealth on Churchill's post war European vision. I look at how Churchill developed the concept of "the United States of Europe" in his own writings and speeches, while Lord Watson explains the background and significance of his 1946 Zurich speech, and Dr Valentina Villa of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan documents his role in the post war European movement.

There is no doubt that Europe was central to Churchill's thinking on international relations, how could it be otherwise. I hope this volume will illuminate the philosophic underpinnings and the practical policies that informed his attitude to the problems of dealing with a continent that, for him, was both a source of inspiration, culture, history and enjoyment, and the cradle of so much division and war.

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CHURCHILL AND THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE, 1904-1948

Churchill y los Estados Unidos de Europa, 1904-1948

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Autor

The call for a “United States of Europe” is a recurring theme in the writings and speeches of Sir Winston Churchill from at least 1930, and reaches its culmination in his opening address to the Congress of Europe held at The Hague in May 1948. This article analyses Churchill’s own writings and oratory to trace the origins of his support for closer European union. Initially he envisaged Britain as a guarantor and facilitator of European unity, but by 1948 he had become an advocate of a role for Britain within Europe. This shift in thinking is followed through analysis of his language and explained in terms of the historical context.



Abstract

Winston Churchill; European integration; United States of Europe; oratory; rhetoric; speeches. *Winston Churchill; integración europea; Estados Unidos de Europa; oratoria, retórica; discursos.*



Key words

La propuesta de unos Estados Unidos de Europa es un tema recurrente en los escritos y discursos de Sir Winston Churchill a partir de al menos 1930, y culminó en su discurso inaugural ante el Congreso de Europa que se reunió en La Haya en mayo de 1948. Este artículo analiza los escritos y la oratoria de Churchill con el fin de rastrear los orígenes de su apoyo a una integración europea. Inicialmente, Churchill imaginaba que Reino Unido actuaría como garante y promotora de la unidad europea, pero en 1948 ya se había convertido en defensor del rol británico dentro de Europa. Este artículo describe el cambio de su pensamiento a través del análisis de su lenguaje y lo explica en relación con el contexto histórico.



Resumen

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Fechas

“We must build a KIND of United States of Europe”

Winston S. Churchill, University of Zurich, 19 September 1946

This article was written in May 2016, ahead of the United Kingdom referendum on membership of the European Union, when the subject of Winston Churchill and Europe was an especially emotive one. Both the leave and remain campaigns were trying to posthumously enlist his support. The ghost of Churchill was simultaneously being summoned both as an icon of modern British independence, and as a founding father of European unity. Boris Johnson, the former Mayor of London, and leading Brexit campaigner had perhaps already forgotten that his own chapter on *“Churchill The European”* in his 2014 biography of Sir Winston concluded that it was absurd to speculate on what Churchill would have thought about the European debate of today, writing, “We cannot tax the great man in this querulous way. He cannot hear us. The oracle is dumb” (Johnson, 2014).

This article seeks to explain the origin, development and changing meaning of the Churchillian phrase “United States of Europe” within the context, not of the recent debate, but that of the times in which Churchill was living and operating. It takes as a starting point the first appearance of the phrase in Churchill’s papers in 1904 and follows the concept through to its fullest expression by him at the Hague Congress of 1948. Wherever possible, the author has tried to let Churchill speak for himself, and so this article is grounded in his own writings, as preserved in his papers at the Churchill Archives Centre (and now published online by Bloomsbury) or published in the multi-volume complete edition of his speeches by Robert Rhodes-James.

On the 12th October 1904 Mr Jameson of Leadenhall House, London, sent a letter to Winston Churchill, the young twenty-nine year old MP for Oldham. In his covering letter he explained that he was enclosing a paper “which will shortly appear in the German daily press” written by “a friend of mine”. The title was *The United States of Europe* and in a handwritten codicil Jameson explained that its author was formerly a German army officer and a veteran of the war of 1890. The main thrust of the ensuing seven pages of typescript was to argue that the economic well being of Europe was being sapped by the huge proliferation of military expenditure on separate armies and navies, and suggesting a defensive alliance of Britain and France that would see the former supply the bulk of the navy and the latter the main army (CHAR 2/18/36). We cannot know for sure that Churchill read this article but it is interesting that it survives, preserved among his general political papers, with its title and theme perhaps lurking somewhere in his subconscious, just waiting for him to take up his pen on the same concept almost twenty seven years later.

Winston Churchill’s early life was not marked by any obvious particular political interest in European affairs. Between 1895 and 1900 he served as a soldier and war correspondent in the Victorian Empire, seeing action on the Indian North-West Frontier, in the Sudan and in South Africa, and his early books discuss these campaigns with only occasional reference to underlying European great power rivalries. He visited the United States of America twice, in 1895 and again in 1900-01, and so was at least exposed their federal system. As a young member of Parliament his first major Government position was as Secretary of State for Colonies (1905-1908), and thereafter as President of the Board of Trade (1908-1910) and Home Secretary (1910-1911) his focus was very much on domestic issues. From 1911, as First Lord of the Admiralty, he had a global brief, and one that bought him to focus more on Europe as he wrestled

Winston Churchill’s early life was not marked by any obvious particular political interest in European affairs

with the question of Anglo-German naval rivalry. Even so, like the rest of the British Cabinet, he was taken by surprise when the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914 triggered the complex web of ultimatums and alliances that plunged Europe into war.

It was only really after the First World War, and after his own fall from power in 1922 with the collapse of Lloyd George's national government that Churchill started to express strong views about the future of Europe. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they were views that were highly coloured by the military and financial devastation of the continent in the aftermath of the Great War, and by the threat to the established order now posed by communist and socialist revolution. Speaking at the Aldwych Club Luncheon in London on 4 May 1923 he criticised the socialist government for trying to prove "that Germany was innocent, that France was guilty, and that Britain was duped..." and he argues that, "The whole solution of European difficulties lies in a reconciliation between France and Germany. The only possible policy for Britain, and, I will add, for Italy, is to promote, to hasten, to press, as far as they possibly can to insist upon that reconciliation" (Rhodes-James, 1974). And the following year, addressing an English-Speaking Union event at the Savoy hotel in honour of the United States Ambassador, Frank Kellogg, he countered accusations that it was reparations payments to the United States that were ruining Europe by stating:

There is only one hope for the revival of Europe. That is in the growth and cordial cooperation of Britain, France and Germany [...] it is only by a great renewed attempt to revive the concord and harmony of the European family that we and the world are to be saved from a continuous procession of privation and misfortune. (Rhodes-James, Vol. IV, 1974)

In the 1920's Churchill was clearly not promoting pan European unity, but in identifying the need for greater European cooperation to advance peace and prosperity he was echoing the paper from 1904.

By 1930 he was prepared to go further, and, consciously or unconsciously, took the title of the 1904 paper for his own piece; an article for the *Saturday Evening Post* called "The United States of Europe". There were clear parallels with his speeches from the early 1920's. Churchill was once again out of government, having served as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Baldwin's Cabinet from 1924 to 1929, and Britain and Europe were once again suffering severe economic depression. But this time Churchill had just returned from a lengthy tour of the United States.

In 1929 he crossed Canada by train, entering the United States in Seattle and then worked his way down the West Coast to Los Angeles before crossing the country to Chicago, Detroit, New York, Washington and Richmond. He was entertained in Hollywood and at San Simeon by William Randolph Hearst, and arrived in Manhattan in time to observe the unfolding of the Wall Street Crash. These journeys gave him an overview of the Great Republic, which he wrote up as a series of newspaper articles (partly as a response to the money he had lost in the crash). What is interesting is how he sees the country in these "American Impressions".

Naturally, he was opposed to prohibition, and on American food he expressed mixed feelings. Yet what really caught his eye was the level of technological sophistication prevalent in the United States, and the strength and vibrancy of American business and industry. He toured the Bethlehem Steel Factory, with its mechanised production line, and contrasted this with the outdated practices of British heavy industry, and wrote:

In the 1920's Churchill was clearly not promoting pan European unity, but in identifying the need for greater European cooperation to advance peace and prosperity

The structure of American industry has qualities of magnificence not to be seen elsewhere and never seen before. In no other country has science so wide a field in which to range as in the vast territories of the United States. (CHAR 8/593/120)

His article *The United States of Europe* is a product of this same time and was first published in the *Saturday Evening Post* on 15 February 1930. He opens the article with a metaphor: describing the idea of “The United States of Europe as a spark that has set alight the “rubbish heap” composed of “the immense accumulation of muddle, waste, particularism and prejudice which had long lain piled up in the European garden”. He contrasts the condition which the three hundred and eighty million Europeans have reduced themselves to through their “quarrels and disunion” with the potential of scientific advances like electricity and aircrafts to improve life, and with what has been achieved in the United States. He writes about the need to preserve the best of European civilisation by stripping away “the tangled growth and network of tariff barriers designed to restrict trade and production to particular areas” thereby reverting to the “old foundations of Europe”, with the unity imposed by the Romans, the “catholicity of Christendom”, the Holy Roman Empire, and by Napoleon. Nationalism he sees as an agent of change in Europe, but as “a process and not a result”. The Treaty of Versailles has marked the “apotheosis of nationalism” and has had led to a reordering of Europe “upon a purely nationalistic basis” which is “more onerous and less economically efficient than it was before the War”, increasing customs barriers by more than seven thousand miles and introducing new obstacles to travel and trade, made more complex by a multiplication of currencies and languages. Later in the article he references the twenty million soldiers who are now guarding these new frontiers and national units, and the risk that poses to peace, perhaps harking back to the article he first read in 1904.

To Churchill progress is about moving towards ever larger units and loyalties, about preventing the revival of the conflicts that have just consumed the continent, and about working together on economic integration that will make it easier for all in Europe to meet wartime debts to the United States. He specifically references Count Koudenhove-Calergi’s Pan European movement and states that “The form of Count Calergi’s theme may be crude, erroneous and impracticable, but the impulse and the inspiration are true”.

What is interesting is where he sees the role of Britain, for “We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked, but not comprised. We are interested and associated, but not absorbed.” Like the Shumanite woman “we dwell among our own people”. Because of the British Empire, itself a larger unit within the organisation of the world, Britain is simultaneously a leading European power, a “great and growing” American power, “the” Australasian power, “one of the greatest” Asiatic powers, “the leading” African power, and “an equal partner of the English-Speaking World”. His position is clear and is grounded in Britain’s historical approach to the continent. We see ourselves as a guarantor of European peace and stability and we should support moves towards greater unity as these will reduce the risk of further conflict, into which we would be dragged, and will increase the opportunities for trade and economic prosperity from which we will benefit. But we are not part of the proposed “United States of Europe” (CHAR 8/303/3-11).

This then was the view that Churchill carried forward into the nineteen thirties. On the 2nd February 1938 he received a letter from Count Coudenhove-Kalergi asking for a meeting and suggesting Churchill accept the Chairmanship of the British Pan European Group:

*To Churchill
progress is about
moving towards
ever larger units
and loyalties, about
preventing
the revival of the
conflicts that have
just consumed the
continent*

As you will know, I formerly propagated the idea of a continental union cooperating on the basis of an entente cordiale with the British Empire. In the meantime things have changed. Actually it seems impossible to organise any kind of European union without the participation and even the leadership of Great Britain. (CHAR 2/328/30)

What had changed of course was the rise of the fascist powers, and particularly the resurgence of a militaristic Germany, and Kalergi goes on:

On the other hand, for Great Britain the risk of an isolation has become greater than the risk of a European participation. If things go on as they do, a war is inevitable and Great Britain would be entangled in this war as in 1914. (CHAR 2/328/30)

Kalergi ends by pointing out that the alternative might be a European Union under Bolshevik or Nazi hegemony.

This letter was cleverly crafted to appeal to Churchill's anti fascism and to his view of Europe, and it certainly led to further correspondence and a meeting. Interestingly it did not lead to Churchill assuming the Chairmanship. Nor does he accept the vacant Presidency of the Pan European movement in January 1946. It seems that both before and after the war, Churchill was prepared to say nice things about Kalergi and his movement but was not prepared to get actively involved. When he does take a clear interest in a United Europe movement between 1946 and 1948, it is on his own terms and to serve his own agenda.

During the war, there is no doubt that Churchill played a role in unifying Europe against Nazi hegemony. Britain offered shelter to the governments in exile of various European countries, as well as their armed forces, and in the dark days of June 1940 Churchill's government went as far as to offer a union with France. Max Beloff is surely correct to argue that this was the result of an all embracing determination to keep the struggle going, and to keep France in the fight, rather than a product of a deliberate policy, and this is clearly born out by the speed at which the suggestion is grasped and offered, but the bigger picture is that Churchill was desperate to construct a European alliance against the Axis powers (Beloff, 1993). By the end of the war he could see the need for the continuation of such an alliance in Western Europe against soviet domination of Eastern Europe.

Churchill travelled to Zurich in September 1946 to speak at the University. Yet his real interest lay in making an important intervention in the debate on the future of the continent. In his remarks, entitled *The Tragedy of Europe* he picks up on some of his pre-war themes, commenting on how Europe had squandered its natural advantages and rich inheritance in a "series of frightful nationalistic quarrels" (though his typescript carries the telling handwritten addition, "originated by the Teutonic Nations") and become so reduced that, "over wide areas a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, careworn and bewildered human beings gape at the ruins of their cities and homes, and scan the dark horizons for the approach of some new peril, tyranny or terror". His remedy is to recreate the European family, to build "a kind of United States of Europe" based around Franco-German reconciliation.

The idea of Franco-German reconciliation was of course controversial. Many in France, including De Gaulle, were not ready to forgive, and nothing was more calculated to raise the suspicions of Stalin, especially when coupled to the observation that "Time may be short... In these present days we dwell strangely and precariously under the shield [and protection] of the atomic bomb". For of course the Russians did not yet have the bomb.

During the war, there is no doubt that Churchill played a role in unifying Europe against Nazi hegemony

Yet on Britain, Churchill simply said that “We have our own British Commonwealth of Nations” and equates his new European grouping with this British bloc as two comparable but distinct groupings under the United Nations organization. In his conclusion he asserts that France and Germany must take the lead together and that Great Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations “must be the friends and sponsors of the new Europe”. This then is still essentially a vision of a Britain that is with Europe but not of Europe (CHUR 5/8/144-246).

Alan Watson is right to argue that Churchill’s Zurich speech was a key moment in his return to the international stage, after his defeat in the British general election of July 1945, and part of his strategy for combatting the threat of Soviet domination (Watson, 2016). It is not at odds with his speech at Fulton, Missouri, just a few months earlier, where on 5 March 1946 he famously described the “iron curtain” that had descended “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic” and called for a strengthened post-war Anglo-American political and military relationship as the “sinews of peace” (CHUR 5/4A/51-100). On the contrary, both addresses must be seen as part of his overall strategic framework in which the Soviet Union was to be contained by a united Western Europe and a strong Anglo-American alliance, with both working under the nominal umbrella of the new United Nations organization. It is also clear that he saw these arrangements as vital for the regeneration of Britain, which derived its power from sitting at the focal point of the three overlapping circles of Europe, the English-Speaking world (by which he increasingly meant the United States), and the Empire and Commonwealth. The three circles concept was one that he explicitly spelt out in a speech to the Economic conference of the European Movement on 20 April 1949, and which can be seen as underpinning all of the speeches quoted in this article (Rhodes-James, 1974). Though both the Fulton and the Zurich speeches were controversial, breaking with a wartime ally and urging reconciliation with an enemy, they can also be seen as a continuation of his pre-war thinking, which was itself built on a very traditional British foreign policy of building alliances to maintain the peace in Europe.

So far then a consistent line can be traced in Churchill’s thinking from the 1920’s, if not before, to the 1940’s. Yet in the aftermath of the Zurich speech, I think there is a shift in emphasis. Having assumed the Chairmanship and leadership of the British United Europe movement, Churchill was the main speaker at the rally for this cause at the Royal Albert Hall on 14 May 1947. The statement that had been issued on the formation of the movement in January of that year, and which Churchill had approved, stated that:

United Europe would have the status of a Regional Group under the Charter of the United Nations Organization (...) It would be premature to define the precise constitutional relationship between the nations of a United Europe. (...) Britain has special obligations and spiritual ties which link her with the other nations of the British Commonwealth. Nevertheless, Britain is part of Europe and must be prepared to make her full contribution to European unity. (CHUR 2/18/6)

Now, in his speech, Churchill set out a new vision of Europe that defined the continent not by its geography but by its values, “a system of beliefs and ideas which we call Western Civilisation”, and which surely included Britain. Europe would be one of “the four main pillars of the world temple of peace” under the United Nations, along side the United States and its dependencies, the Soviet Union, and the British Empire and Commonwealth, but crucially “there is Europe with which Great Britain is profoundly blended”. He refuses to be drawn on detail, stating that he is interested in the big picture, and that it is “for the statesmen to deliver

In his speech, Churchill set out a new vision of Europe that defined the continent not by its geography but by its values, “a system of beliefs and ideas which we call Western Civilisation”

the structure of constitutions”, but even so this seems to me to mark a significant shift, and to accept that Britain will be a part of a United Europe and not just a guarantor (CHUR 2/18/6).

The immediate culmination of the work of the United Europe movement across the continent was the Congress of Europe at The Hague in May 1948, which was attended by seven hundred and fifty delegates, including some from Germany. Once again, Churchill signalled his leadership of the movement by delivering the opening address, and he began by acknowledging that events had moved on: “Since I spoke on this subject at Zurich in 1946, and since our British Europe Movement was launched in January 1947, events have carried our affairs beyond our expectations.” He was clear that, “It is impossible to separate economics and defence from the general political structure. Mutual aid in the economic field and joint military defence must inevitably be accompanied step by step with a parallel policy of closer political unity”, while now he saw not four pillars of world government, but three: the Soviet Union, the United States, and “The council of Europe, including Great Britain linked with her Empire and Commonwealth, would be another.” He also identified the aim of the Congress as being the constitution of a European Assembly that would “make itself continuously heard” (Rhodes-James, 1974). Though still deliberately vague on structures, Churchill was more clearly advocating a Britain in Europe.

It seems clear that several factors came together to bring about this shift. Firstly, the Britain United Europe movement had developed a clear momentum and there was no doubt that Churchill was enjoying riding this new wave. The success of Churchill’s intervention in Zurich and the role it played in helping to relaunch him on the international stage gave him a platform and a cause that helped him consolidate his position as an active political leader in both the United Kingdom and in Europe after his election defeat. But it also did so in such a way that advanced his three circles argument: if Britain wanted to maintain her influence with the United States and avoid further retreats from Empire, then she had to involve herself more in Europe, participating in initiatives that would restore trade, increase stability and security and oppose the Soviet Union. This is perhaps captured by Leo Amery in a letter he wrote to Churchill’s son-in-law and political aide Duncan Sandys on 20 September 1946, stating:

Winston has indeed done the big thing in a big way. There was a stupid leader in the Times this morning and the French are naturally shocked by the boldness of his suggestion about Germany. But they will get over it and what he has said may save Germany from Bolshevism (...) I do not see why he shouldn’t develop the idea further at Blackpool [Conservative Party Conference], possibly treating the theme of a European Commonwealth or United States in the light of a justification of the British Commonwealth and Empire. (CHUR 2/18/43)

To Amery, the creation of a more united Europe provided a justification for the continuation of the British Empire and Commonwealth, against American objections, as a similar regional bloc, which he described in his accompanying letter to Churchill as “a preferable alternative to a mere black and white ideological fight between American mid-Victorian individualism and Russian State Slavery” (CHUR 2/18/44).

The idea of a United Europe allowed Churchill to rally a cross section of political forces behind him in a cause that opposed Bolshevism, and although he was careful in his set piece speeches to avoid the specifics of how greater union might be achieved, the reports being produced by his movement’s committees naturally tended towards a greater British participation. Thus the

On 27 November 1946, Churchill wrote that “Europe must federate or perish! I cannot think it is contrary to party interests of any kind that such an all-party movement should be started”

draft political report of 1948 “embodying results of discussion at meeting of Joint International Committee in London on March 6th and subsequent exchanges of view in Paris on March 12th”, which survives among his papers, stated that:

No scheme for European union would have any practical value without the full participation of Great Britain. The United Kingdom is an integral part of Europe. At the same time she is the centre of a world wide Commonwealth. But Britain’s dual position need raise no insurmountable difficulties.

Economically, Europe and the Commonwealth would be greatly strengthened by being associated together. Politically, the Dominions have as much to gain as the peoples of Europe. Twice in a generation, they have had to send their young men to die in wars which started in Europe. (CHUR 2/19/109-110)

However difficult to implement, you can see why Churchill would have embraced the concept of a United Europe that involved not just Britain but also the Commonwealth. It played directly to his strategy of preserving and maximising Britain’s three circles of influence. By 1946, the third circle was the United States, and here there was also a shift in policy that supported greater British involvement in Europe. The Marshall plan signalled a more active American intervention in the continent, and one that was predicated on greater economic cooperation between the European powers receiving Marshall Aid. General George Marshall at his news conference of 12 June 1947 credited Churchill’s Zurich speech with helping to inspire his programme to provide thirteen billion dollars of aid to Western European economies. Churchill referred to the plan and its centralising effect in his Hague speech when he said, “It is necessary for the executive governments of the sixteen countries, associated for the purposes of the Marshall plan, to make precise arrangements” (Rhodes-James, 1974). The United States, first through Marshall and then through the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, was driving Western Europe towards greater union as a means of resisting Soviet encroachment, and in Churchill’s view, in both security matters and economic matters, it clearly served Britain’s interests to be at the heart of these developments, standing along side the United States, rather than on the periphery, even if it meant some loss of political independence.

You can see these strands being drawn together in Churchill’s correspondence with Prime Minister Clement Attlee about his new movement. On 27 November 1946, Churchill wrote that “Europe must federate or perish! I cannot think it is contrary to party interests of any kind that such an all-party movement should be started” (CHUR 2/1862-63). There is no indication here of the British role within such a European federation, but his letter of 27 July 1948, written after the Hague congress, and regarding proposals for convening a European Assembly was much less ambiguous

The creation of a European assembly would represent an important practical step in the advance towards a United Europe, and would greatly help to create a sense of solidarity among the European peoples in the face of the increasing dangers which beset them. In this the lead should be taken by Britain. (CHUR 2/18/76)

He enclosed a paper by a group of members of the British delegation, and he made the link to the Foreign Secretary’s initiative after the Marshall Plan as proof of the influence of such British leadership (CHUR 2/18/76). It is difficult to draw any other conclusion than that, after the Marshall Plan, he supported British involvement in a European Assembly. Attlee’s respon-

se was that the time was not right and that any such move should be led by governments not parliaments or independent organisations; a debate that has its echoes today (CHUR 2/18/77).

In conclusion, while Churchill was always in favour of greater European unity for the Europeans, and in favour of Britain taking a great power role in European affairs, there was a shift in his view between 1946 and 1948 in favour of Britain being a part of a United Europe. Of course, this has to be seen in the context of its time, as a response to the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and the American desire for a more unified Western alliance, and of the hope of using European unity to help preserve the Commonwealth. Assuming Churchill's foreign policy was dictated by his three circles argument, and the need for Britain to maintain a simultaneous relationship with Empire and Commonwealth, Europe, and the United States, then the most effective way to do this post 1946 was to try and shape the new unified Europe to meet British needs from within. This is certainly what worried the French left wing statesman and former Prime Minister Leon Blum by 1948 who warned in the socialist newspaper *Le Populaire* that:

Mr Churchill has a character too original and too powerful for him not to leave his mark on everything he touches...The stamp of his approval brought with it the danger that the European federation would have a character too narrowly Churchillian. (CHUR 2/18/102-110)

This article should be regarded as a first draft. A researcher with more time could go through additional material, in the Churchill Papers and in other relevant collections, and see if these initial conclusions stand up. It is also beyond the scope of this article to examine whether and to what extent Churchill's views on Europe changed on his return to Office as Prime Minister in 1951. Nor, as was indicated in my introduction, is it right to speculate here on his possible views on Europe today. This essay would suggest that it would certainly be completely wrong to regard him as anti European Union, the question is how he saw Britain's role in such a union. My view is that by 1948, faced with a Labour government that was retreating from Empire, a strong external Soviet threat, and an American ally that wanted a stronger Western alliance, Churchill had accepted that Britain's immediate future lay not just with Europe but in Europe.

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TWO SPEECHES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD: FROM FULTON TO ZURICH

Dos discursos que cambiaron el mundo: de Fulton a Zurich

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In this extract from his new book *Churchill's Legacy: Two Speeches to Save the World* (Watson, 2016), Lord Watson of Richmond draws on his own experience of post war British politics, as a television presenter and media commentator and then as a Liberal Peer and Chairman of the English-Speaking Union, to analyse the significance of Churchill's Zurich speech of 19 September 1946. He argues that, building on Churchill's earlier speech at Fulton, Missouri, it helped change the perceptions of the West and alter their response to the emerging Cold War and the future of Europe.



Abstract

Sir Winston Churchill; General George C. Marshall; Joseph Stalin; President Harry S. Truman; Cold War; Soviet Union; European unity; Marshall Plan; speeches.

Sir Winston Churchill; General George C. Marshall; Joseph Stalin; Presidente Harry S. Truman; Guerra Fría; Unión Soviética; unidad europea; Plan Marshall; discursos.



Key words

*En este extracto de su nuevo libro, *Churchill's Legacy: Two Speeches to Save the World* (El Legado de Churchill: Dos Discursos para Salvar el Mundo), Lord Watson de Richmond aprovecha su experiencia en la política británica de la posguerra, en la televisión como presentador y en el análisis de los medios de comunicación, así como en sus cargos en el Partido Liberal y la presidencia de la English-Speaking Union (Unión Angloparlante), para analizar la importancia del discurso de Churchill en Zurich el 19 de septiembre de 1946. Lord Watson defiende que, junto con el discurso anterior de Churchill en Fulton (Missouri), contribuyó a cambiar las percepciones de Occidente y a alterar su respuesta ante la Guerra Fría y el futuro de Europa.*



Resumen

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Fechas

In 1946 Winston Churchill made two speeches which he believed to be as important as those he made in 1940. Then he had given “the lion’s roar” of Britain’s lonely defiance of Adolf Hitler. Six years later he perceived a threat almost as great – Stalin’s occupation of Eastern Europe and his threat to Western Europe. He was gripped by a sense of urgency and danger.

There were two imperatives – to persuade the United States to commit its resources to the defence of Europe and to invest in the economic recovery of Europe. The former challenge would require America to provide the shield of its temporary monopoly of the atomic bombs. The latter challenge meant reversing the disastrous impact of the cessation of Lend Lease by agreeing a Europe wide programme of loans and investment.

Two immense barriers confronted Churchill. Americans wanted their armed forces to come home and they didn’t see Europe as worthy of their treasure. His speech at Fulton on March 5th 1946 described Stalin not as “good old Uncle Joe” but as a tyrant who had already established an Iron Curtain across Europe and whose ambition entranced everything he could gain without nuclear war. It caused immense controversy but it worked. The second he wanted to deliver in Zurich on the 19th September. It proved even more controversial. At Fulton he hinted at what was to come. His words were carefully chosen, as we have seen multiple times: “The safety of the world requires a new unity in Europe, from which *no* nation should be permanently outcast.”

The policy he would call for next would be an almost unthinkable partnership between the pariah of Europe – Germany – and its implacable foe, France. Churchill’s business for 1946 was thus far from over. After Fulton the platform would be Zurich. He had certainly determined not to retire from politics and his political activities would not be limited to Westminster. His agenda was to inspire a new Western alliance and a rejuvenated Europe was essential if the USA was to commit to its construction. It is the relationship between the Fulton speech and the one he was now about to deliver in Zurich that reveals his brilliance in that bleak year of 1946. The connection that he was to fashion illuminated world politics at the decisive moment forcing people to see their problems in a new light.

The sheer originality and force of what he intended he expressed exactly in an article he wrote for the *Daily Telegraph* at the close of the year. Europe’s predicament, as he saw it, was in some ways even clearer than it had been immediately before the war. In that war the European peoples tore each other to pieces with more ferocity on a larger scale and with more deadly weapons than ever before. But have they found stable and lasting peace? Is the brotherhood of mankind any nearer? Has the Reign of Law returned? Alas, although the resources and vitality of nearly all the European countries are woefully diminished many of their old hatreds burn on with an undying flame (Dockter, 2015, p. 184-185).

Churchill then conjures up an extraordinary image. He asks “is there ever going to be an end?” He answers his own question:

There is an old story of the Spanish prisoner pining for years in his dungeon and planning to escape. One day he pushes the door. It is open. It has always been open. He walks out free. Something like this opportunity lies before the peoples of Europe today.

Churchill had seen something no one else had seen. His vision stemmed from cardinal aspects of his character – his experience of dark depression, his courage, his compassion, and his extraordinary grasp of history and how apparent reality can be transformed if the motors of change are understood. He concluded his article “the only worthwhile prize of Victory is the power to

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forgive and to guide and this is the price which glitters and shines beyond the French people". It was the prize he offered them at Zurich.

In this speech he challenged the French to overcome their hatred of the Germans. His profound grasp of political realities was what ensured that this speech was not an overture in wishful thinking. Its bedrock was his insight into the motivation of his second country, the United States, and his sense of urgency because of the Soviet threat. Herein lies the link between these two speeches which together aimed to save the world. At Fulton he was confident that he could initiate the process of committing the USA to the defence of Western Europe. This was possible because of America's temporary monopoly of the atomic bomb. But Western Europe had to be revived economically, psychologically, spiritually. This could only happen with the reconciliation of France and Germany, impossible though that seemed. Any why was this so essential? Because without it the USA would never pour its treasure into Europe's recovery. He understood the pre-condition of US generosity.

He also understood what he was up against. The French showed an almost Russian desire for revenge based on fear. They wanted reparations to cripple Germany and prevent any chance of it ever threatening France again. They demanded a permanent Allied occupation of the Ruhr – one in which, of course, the Soviet Union would have been delighted to participate. Britain and America saw this as a route to catastrophe. There could be no European recovery and no chance ultimately of safeguarding democracy in Western Europe without a healthy and vigorous West German economy. The French were bitterly opposed as de Gaulle was to make clear after the Zurich speech.

However, Churchill knew something else. George C. Marshall had been recalled by President Truman from his negotiations in China and it seemed clear that his focus would now be Europe and the Atlantic Alliance. He also knew from Marshall's opposition to Soviet proposals that the United States was moving to its own initiative on the restoration of the shattered economies of Europe. He was aware that there were powerful minds in Congress who questioned the brutal ending on Lend-Lease to Britain and France. But to move American political opinion towards the grand ambition of what became the Marshall Plan would require a change of vision by the French. He could not have foreseen how events would conjoin to break through the impasse. He could not know as he approached his Zurich speech in September 1946 that Jean Monnet would persuade de Gaulle that without this plan for France's economic modernisation, France could never recover her greatness. Nor could he foresee that in Monnet's economic plan for France, George C. Marshall would recognise the outline of a "much larger scale" programme "involving several countries" (Reynold). Nor could he foresee that Monnet and France's foreign minister, Robert Schuman, would succeed within a year in persuading the French government to propose a merger of the coal and steel industries of Germany and France, thus meeting America's demand for a quite evolutionary level of European co-operation. Churchill could not have predicted this remarkable sequence of changing interests and perceptions. Neither could he have known that Marshall's plan would save Monnet's plan and this would mitigate de Gaulle's initial rejection of all he would say at Zurich. But what Churchill's instinct told him on the eve of Zurich was enough. He knew that once again he could grasp the mantle of history and, by doing so, demonstrate that democracies did not need to be imprisoned by the past. Like the Spanish prisoner they could find the dungeon door open.

In his Zurich speech, Churchill led the prisoner to the dungeon door he imagined locked for ever and urged him to push it open: France – defeated, occupied, liberated. France, exhausted

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and embittered, could “exercise the only worthwhile prize of Victory ... the power to forgive”. In understanding this potential for transformation and initiating the process through his words, Churchill demonstrated the power of his maxim “In Victory, Magnanimity”.

So it is now to Churchill’s Zurich speech that we must turn and to the extraordinary reversal of US policy towards Europe instigated by the arrival of George C. Marshall as the US secretary of state. Churchill’s two 1946 speeches – Fulton and Zurich – constitute a vital prelude to America’s change of heart, and of mind.

“I am now going to say something that will astonish you ...”

As with his Fulton speech, Churchill’s second great intervention of 1946 was activated by an academic invitation facilitated by a holiday. There was a conjunction of platform, pleasure and the hinge of fate. To put it another way, Churchill believed in seizing the hem of history and in September 1946 he did not doubt he held it in his grip. He was not the dispirited man who in the previous year had spotted the opportunity provided by Truman’s footnote on the invitation from Westminster College in Missouri. He was newly invigorated and confident. Thus the invitation now before him, to accept an honorary degree from the University of Zurich, represented an opportunity he grasped without hesitation. It was made all the more attractive by the Swiss government’s offer of an excellent holiday in their country, as their guest.

In August, accompanied by his wife, Clementine, and his daughter, Mary, he arrived in Switzerland to savour Swiss hospitality. Churchill rejoiced in its undamaged beauty, an oasis at the heart of war-torn Europe, and received endless tributes to his statesmanship and Britain’s wartime courage. He returned the flattery with his own. On arriving in Zurich at the Town Hall, showered with flowers and the cheers of the crowd, he said to the Swiss:

You have solved many of the difficulties which have led other countries into suffering and misfortune. You have thus managed to be united in spite of the differences of language and race and there is no reason why your example should not be followed throughout the whole of this wrecked continent of Europe. (CHPC 24)

His purpose was not to advocate the neutrality that had kept Switzerland out of the war. The last thing he wanted was a neutral Western Europe, helpless before Stalin. His wish, fervently held, was for Western Europe to unite, economically, politically, spiritually – overcoming the “differences of language and race”. The idea of a restored Europe would motivate and justify the commitment of the USA. It would be helped by Britain and the Commonwealth. It could turn the tide in what would soon be recognised as the Cold War.

For this to happen, however, Churchill would once again, as at Fulton, have to startle and indeed “astonish” the world. He knew he had the power to provoke and inspire and, since Fulton, he also knew that he had the authority to do so. This time was different in that he did not need the backing of the British Foreign Office, which he neither requested nor received. This was *his* moment and he would fulfil his mission by articulating a vision of European reconciliation so bold that Europe’s self-awareness would be reshaped for ever.

To the crowds around the Town Hall, who cheered him to the echo every time he waived his famous “V for Victory” hand-sign, Churchill paused to explain that this, his most defiant and famous gesture, now had a different meaning. It no longer “stood for the victory of one group of nations over another, but for the victory of personal liberty over tyranny everywhere” (CHPC 24). In a single sentence and a simple gesture, he had spelt out his leitmotiv with the

In his Zurich speech, Churchill led the prisoner to the dungeon door he imagined locked for ever and urged him to push it open: France

commanding clarity that occurs at productions of Wagner in Bayreuth. There a trumpet plays the leitmotiv of the opera before the audience enters the theatre. With his gesture and single sentence before his speech at Zurich, Churchill had sounded the note he needed and set the tone for what was to follow. The “V” sign was no longer about defiance but about reconciliation.

In victory, there needed to be more than magnanimity. There had to be, in the words of Gladstone, which he would borrow in his speech, “a blessed act of oblivion”. His call would be for “an end to retribution”. There was, in Churchill the warrior, a dimension of forgiveness and the realism of a statesman who understood that without forgiveness reconciliation would be impossible and that without reconciliation no restoration of Europe would be feasible. This perception was at the heart of what he was about to say to his audience in the Great Hall at Zurich University. Inside the hall was an audience somewhat smaller than that in Fulton but no less attentive. As at Fulton, there was also a global audience for media interest and the speech would be broadcast. Again, as at Fulton, there was academic formality. He was welcomed by the rector who was effusive in his praise of Churchill and of Britain, presenting him with an illuminated address of thanks. The rostrum was decked with flowers, the banners of all the student corporations were displayed. The scene was set.

The speech challenged the status quo as robustly as Fulton, and the response was just as divided. Churchill’s oratorical skill at Zurich matches that of Fulton, but the speech was shorter, less embellished and less Victorian, yet it depicts danger as graphically and advocates a response with greater simplicity and directness. In writing his Fulton speech, Churchill had grappled with a surfeit of themes – the two great “marauders” menacing free men, namely war and tyranny; the affinity of values and language binding together Britain, the Commonwealth and the USA in an alliance that had to be made militarily effective; and the reality of the Iron Curtain.

At Zurich he focused exclusively on a message he presaged at Fulton – “the awful ruin of Europe”, “a new unity” in Europe needed for the “safety of the world”, and how to initiate its creation. In both speeches the atomic bomb is both a window of opportunity and the harbinger of doom.

The power of the speech is its moral insight and the realism of its reading of relevant history. Its boldness lies in its call for Franco-German partnership – an idea made more shocking, even repugnant, by the daily revelations of German atrocities and war crimes emerging from the Nuremberg trials then under way. It pays tribute to the idealism of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and Astride Briand and their advocacy of a “kind of United States of Europe” – a phrase that he uses while remaining clear about Britain’s relationship with their initiative. In examining the reactions to the speech, we will return to the impact the Nuremberg trials and the seeds of ambiguity sown on Britain’s view of what eventually emerged in the Treaty of Rome as “ever closer Union”.

This was a speech that was careful to stress the compatibility of what he was proposing with other features of the emerging and established international order. It did not threaten the world organisation of the United Nations. It was important to emphasise this given Roosevelt’s urgent advocacy of the UN, which overrode all his other concerns during his last conversations with Stalin. Churchill had, as ever, a close eye on US public opinion. He had shocked many Americans by what he had said at Fulton, a negative reaction influenced, and to an extent, led by, the Roosevelt family. For the same reason he stressed specifically that he was “very glad” that two days earlier his “friend President Truman had expressed his interest with this great project”.

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Nor did his call for European unity, based on the reconciliation of France and Germany and indeed *led* by them, conflict with Britain's unique alliance with the USA and its ties with the Empire and Commonwealth. Indeed, all was not only compatible but inter-related, even inter-dependent. Yet no matter how emollient Churchill wished to sound, there was no disguising and no wish to disguise the salient features of the speech that determined the reactions to it both then and since then.

He had proposed that Germany be re-admitted to the family of the European nations despite all the German atrocities and crimes being reported afresh every day. He had proposed that all the hatred engendered by the barbarous behaviour of the Nazis be consigned to "oblivion" once the conspicuously guilty on trial at Nuremberg and elsewhere had been punished. He had proposed a "kind of United States of Europe" but not that Britain should be a member of it. Britain's posture would be supportive, not participatory. Above all else he clearly did not see Russia or its satellite states as members. He was urging an alliance capable of containing Soviet ambition.

Churchill's vision was shaped by two of his most powerful intellectual and emotional instincts. Having witnessed the utter devastation of Berlin in 1945, he confessed that his hatred of the Germans had died within him. But he also knew that the European tragedy had happened because the democracies, including the USA, had appeased evil. His Zurich speech was born of his own emotional accommodation with Germany and the Germans after their defeat, and his intellectual determination to ensure that tyranny not be appeased a second time.

Reactions to Churchill's Zurich speech were both immediate and long lasting. One of the first, however, proved less enduring than others. It was the fear that his words were, as *The Times* put it the next day, based "on the assumption that Europe is already irrevocably divided between East and West". In its editorial opinion it saw this as "the peril of his argument and of its enunciation at this moment" (CHPC 23).

This concern was exacerbated by the conviction that Churchill must be speaking on behalf of the British government although, as we have already seen, he neither requested nor received any endorsement from either the Foreign Office or Number 10. The *Manchester Guardian's* diplomatic correspondent writing from Paris was disapproving:

Great importance is attached here to the speech of the British Opposition Leader. Far too many people seriously believe that the Opposition Leader is expressing the views held by the Government, but which for diplomatic reasons, members of the Cabinet are unwilling to express ... it seems unfortunate that Mr. Churchill did not take this common misconception into account in drafting his Zurich speech. (CHPC 23)

In an echo of Lord Halifax's dismay after the Fulton speech – that Stalin would be so offended that any hope of maintaining or reviving the wartime alliance would be lost – some commentators deplored its likely effect. The *Manchester Guardian* was particularly distressed. It wrote: 'It would seem impossible to convince representatives to the Eastern bloc that members of the opposition [Churchill] play any other function than that of mouthpieces of 'British Imperial Policy'! (Churchill Centre Archives & Churchill Press Cuttings).

Churchill's Zurich speech coincided with a series of international conferences attempting to keep the diplomatic interchange of the wartime alliance alive. The last of these was to occur in 1947 in Moscow, attended for the first time by America's new secretary of state, George C. Marshall. It would set the seal on the rejection by both him and Britain's foreign

Reactions to Churchill's Zurich speech were both immediate and long lasting

secretary, Ernest Bevin, of Moscow's intransigence over Germany. But Churchill's initiative in September 1946 was the first clear call for a united Western response to Stalin based on the return of Germany to the European family. To Western commentators committed to the purity of the wartime alliance between the West and the USSR, this was anathema and they declared it so. Ironically they were right in one regard. Churchill was indeed, at that time, only speaking for himself.

Thus this editorial in Britain's *Reynolds News* on 22 September 1946, entitled 'Churchillism':

Mr. Churchill, in his Fulton speech, called for an Anglo-American alliance. In his speech at Zurich on Thursday he called for a new European alliance, headed by France and Germany, under the sponsorship of the Anglo-American alliance, and with the atomic bomb as its 'shield and protection'.

Mr. Churchill does not say so in so many words, but the whole tenor of his Fulton and Zurich speeches makes it clear that he wants this fabric of alliances as a means of isolating the Soviet Union. Between Russia and the West there are many differences still to be settled and a dismal chapter of mutual irritations to be forgotten. Mr. Churchill's plan will do neither. His persistent peddling of the idea of an American-West European Power Bloc can only deepen Soviet suspicions and make more difficult the task of reconciliation.

The British Government should make it clear that when Mr. Churchill hawks around his new version of the *cordon sanitaire* he is speaking for himself – and nobody else. (CHPC 23)

The reason the rejection of Churchill's approach so trenchantly explained above did not last long was that it was overtaken by events. Stalin's obduracy and Molotov's negativity proved beyond doubt to Britain and the USA at governmental level by 1947 that there was no deal available with Moscow on the future of Germany and that the reconstruction of Western Europe was the unavoidable imperative.

Far more problematic, in September 1946, was the French reaction. *The Times* raised the right questions after Churchill's Zurich speech. It stated that while the speech demonstrated his "familiar characteristics ... of courage and imagination", it prescribed a remedy "which Europe, 'in its present condition'; showed few signs of accepting". Why? Its reasoning was clear: "Germany today is in no position to offer partnership to anyone" and "it remains to be seen whether French opinion will be prepared to tolerate, even from Mr. Churchill, the suggestion that the first step in the recreation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany". Indeed Churchill's speech "dumb founded French opinion" in the judgement of both politicians and the press (CHPC 23). Indeed as Churchill had predicted, the French were astonished but, more than that, they were appalled.

A powerful reason for this was the confirmation from the trials at Nuremberg and from many other emerging sources of just how horrendous the atrocities perpetrated by the Third Reich had been, including those committed on French soil.

The French had recently executed Pierre Laval, the former foreign minister who had collaborated with the Nazis after the German occupation. He was shot on 15 October 1945. The International Military Tribunal set up by the four wartime allies, by then including France, met the same month. There was no precedent for what they decided. They would put on trial the

Churchill's Zurich speech coincided with a series of international conferences attempting to keep the diplomatic interchange of the wartime alliance alive

leaders of the Third Reich who they had in custody including Goering, Ribbentrop, Keitel, Streicher and Speer, among others. The trial was held in one of the few large buildings still standing in what had been Hitler's showpiece city for the Nazi movement – Nuremberg. It was an appropriate location as Nuremberg had hosted vast Nazi rallies. Had Hitler won the war it would have been turned into a marble and granite complex of buildings glorifying the Führer and his intended 1000-year Reich. Work had started before the war using Jewish prisoners from nearby concentration camps. Nuremberg had also been the place where the anti-Semitic legislation known as the Nuremberg Laws had been proclaimed – formalising the legal framework which would lead to the mass murder of the Jews, first deprived of all rights, and then of life itself.

Prominent Nazis who had not already committed suicide like Hitler, Himmler and Goebbels, or who had disappeared like Bormann, faced four indictments summarised by the pre-eminent historian of the Holocaust, Martin Gilbert. First, “a common plan or conspiracy to seize power and establish a totalitarian regime to prepare and wage a war of aggression”; second “waging a war of aggression”; third, “Violation of the laws of war”; and fourth, “Crimes against humanity, persecution, and extermination” (Gilbert, 1994, p. 364).

The charges were not only unprecedented, they were also controversial. The notorious president of the German Red Cross, the chief surgeon to the SS, shouted on the scaffold, “This is nothing but political revenge!” (Gilbert, 1994, p. 731). He fully deserved his death but of the four indictments only the fourth escaped any criticism. Even Churchill remarked to General Ismay at the time, “you and I must take care not to lose the next war”, an observation described wryly by A. J. P. Taylor as “a wise verdict on the proceedings at Nuremberg”.

It was their crimes against humanity, including extermination, that utterly revolted the world and turned Germany into a pariah nation. Yet it was this shamed and shameful people that Churchill now proposed should join with France. To the French, shamed by their capitulation and occupation, the concept was profoundly shocking and must have seemed extremely hazardous. Their wish was that Germany remain excluded and occupied in its turn. Their fear was that Germany was inherently stronger than France, larger by population, and once economically recovered, far more powerful.

As we have seen, France, in part, mirrored the Soviet attitude towards Germany. Both feared Germany and both were determined to prevent any restoration of its economic power. No one expressed this view more trenchantly than General de Gaulle. After Churchill had delivered his Zurich speech he penned a letter to de Gaulle seeking to explain why he believed France and Germany had to become reconciled. He entrusted the letter to Duncan Sandys, his son-in-law, who took it to his home in Colombey. What transpired must have been extremely upsetting to Sandys. Indeed, he went on to found the European Movement and to play a leading role in advocating the cause. What de Gaulle had to say to him at Colombey was the opposite of what he wished to hear. Martin Gilbert and others have recorded Sandys' account. The General said:

that the reference in Mr. Churchill's Zurich speech to a Franco-German partnership had been badly received in France. Germany as a state no longer existed. The French were violently opposed to recreating any kind of unified, centralised Reich and were gravely suspicious of the policy of the American and British governments.

If this was not clear enough, de Gaulle shared his deadliest fears. He believed that “unless steps were taken to reinvent the resuscitation of German power, there was the danger that a United

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Europe would become nothing else than an enlarged Germany". General de Gaulle's solution was brutal – the permanent allocation to France of all coal produced by the Ruhr, the long-term occupation by French forces of North Rhineland, which should be at once incorporated into France's Zone of Occupation, and the establishment of international control of all the industries of the Ruhr under certain conditions to be agreed by France. In conclusion, de Gaulle threw open his arms, saying "Voilà, mes conditions!" (Blake & Louis, 1993).

How was this French attitude changed? The impact of US aid to all Western Europe under the aegis of the Marshall Plan transformed the economic situation in both France and Germany. And at the heart of that strategy of transformation would lie the unique contribution of the remarkable French.

In 1946, Jean Monnet was little known to the public in France, Britain or Germany. But he was known to the architects of the emerging Atlantic Alliance – to Churchill with whom he had drawn up plans for a union of France and the UK in the terrible weeks in 1940 before the French surrender made them redundant. Of Churchill, he believed that he was a man with the courage and imagination to create new worlds. In his view, the French owed him an immense debt.

Monnet was also known to de Gaulle for whom he worked in wartime London. After the Liberation, de Gaulle turned to Monnet to develop and implement "Le Plan", the programme of investment and direction that began by early 1947 to modernise the French economy. "I told de Gaulle," he said, "you speak of French strength, of French power, but we have none until our economy is rebuilt as one that is modern and competitive".

To achieve this, Monnet would depend critically on the other people who knew him well, the power brokers in the USA. Monnet had worked in New York and Washington between the wars, winning the attention of both Roosevelt and George C. Marshall. Of the Americans, Monnet was impressed by "their energy, their instinct for a solution, and their optimism". But the quality he most admired was "their generosity ... whatever people may say, they did not enter the war for themselves. They did it because of their commitment to liberty". It was, of course, ultimately their commitment to liberty that drove their resistance to the threat posed by Soviet ambition. It was to that commitment to freedom that Churchill appealed at Fulton and again at Zurich. It is central to the Truman Doctrine enunciated in 1947 and the Marshall Plan's motivation.

It was Monnet along with the prime minister of France, Robert Schuman, who would together realise Churchill's vision of Franco-German leadership by proposing and successfully negotiating the European Coal and Steel Community, linking the industries of both countries and transforming "the sinews of war into the bonds of peace". There remains the longest-lasting reaction to the ideas proposed by Churchill in Zurich – the reaction of the British. Nothing was to compare to the protracted, bitter political division that had dominated so much of Britain's debate with itself and with others ever since Zurich.

In the Zurich speech, Churchill had acknowledged the earlier influence of a quixotic and formidable personality, Count Coudenhove-Kalergi. Churchill had renewed contact with the Count shortly before his Zurich speech and with the former French prime minister, Leon Blum, after the speech. At Zurich he claimed that he had "revived the ancient and glorious conception of a United Europe associated before the war with the names of M. Briand and Count Couden-

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hove-Kalergi which I had supported for many years” (Hart & Carr, 2013). In this correspondence, published in their study of “British Engagement with the Pan-European Ideal 1929-48”, the historians Richard Carr and Bradley Hart reveal how from the moment of Churchill’s public endorsement of European Union, he would find himself immersed in divisive argument. Blum’s criticism was that by championing the idea, Churchill would give the idea of European federalism “a character too narrowly Churchillian”, which would result in “the embarrassment, circumspection, and hesitation of the Labour Party and, in consequence, of international Socialism”. Churchill retorted that his support for this idea was absolutely not partisan in any political party sense.

The idea of European federalism had become a party political football in British politics, with the reoccurring pattern of British parties being sympathetic to European Union while in opposition, and hostile when in government. The reality is that even British Conservatives who recognised the imperative of European Union if future wars were to be avoided remained ambiguous about British involvement. Long before Churchill’s own reticence about the nature of British participation as opposed to membership, one of the first Tories approached by Coudenhove-Kalergi in the late 1920s rebutted him. Leo Amery wrote to him that the British “were much too far from Europe ever to enter wholeheartedly into its policies”.

I had the opportunity to examine this British reluctance with two key figures in the relationship. One was Duncan Sandys who, as we have seen, was sent to Colombey les deux Eglises to try to persuade de Gaulle to soften his attack of Churchill’s Zurich speech. Later Sandys founded the European Movement. He reminded me that as Britain emerged from the war, largely bankrupt but as a victorious power, its view of European Union would always be different from those defeated and occupied in the war, meaning France and Germany. Jean Monnet admitted to me that he had never tried too hard to persuade the British to join the Coal and Steel Community. Nor was he too dismayed by the UK’s refusal to engage in the Messina Conference which led to the establishment of the Common Market. He knew that it was not “natural” for nations to unite and that they would only do so when such a step became inevitable. That moment did arrive, for Harold Macmillan and Harold Wilson and subsequently Edward Heath sealed the deal with the French. On the way to that moment in 1973 and ever since, Churchill has been hijacked by Europhiles and Europhobes. For the latter, Churchill epitomises defiance of Europe. For Europhiles, he was the enthusiastic advocate of European union.

So he was, but critically he never advocated British membership. He had not succeeded in saving the Empire but he had saved a global role for Britain. It was based on the alliance with the USA, on the British Commonwealth, and it desperately needed a restored Europe. His two 1946 speeches addressed these themes – acting as a clarion call only just in time to enable the West to counter the Soviet threat.

Returning to London by plane with his wife and daughter, Churchill already knew that his speech at Zurich University would have profound influence. The short flight to Hendon did not match the excitement of his journey back to Washington in the president’s train after his speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. On the flight there was no non-family member to whom he could declare, as he had on returning from Fulton, that this was “the most important” speech of his life. Yet he deserved to feel that it was undoubtedly the second most important speech he had given in that critical year of 1946. In little more than six months, he had changed perceptions and altered the horizons of the West.

In the Zurich speech, Churchill had acknowledged the earlier influence of a quixotic and formidable personality, Count Coudenhove-Kalergi

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CHURCHILL AND THE EUROPEAN TRADITION OF LIBERTY

Churchill y la tradición europea de libertad

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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

Churchill certainly perceived the British and the Anglo-American tradition of liberty as part of the broader Western civilisation

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

At the dawn of the twentieth century, strong intellectual trends generated ardent enthusiasm for revolutionary tides, either from the left or from the right

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

Churchill was not impressed by the revolutionary language of innovation that produced so much enthusiasm among intellectual circles in the European continent and elsewhere

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

Churchill understood from the outset that the aim of Bolshevism (as he always called it) was world revolution

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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THE IMPACT OF THE COMMONWEALTH ON CHURCHILL'S EUROPE

El impacto de la Commonwealth en la Europa de Churchill

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Focusing from the time of his electoral defeat in July 1945 until the end of his second term as Prime Minister (October 1951-April 1955), this article examines the impact the Commonwealth had on Churchill's Europe. Following the end of the Second World War Churchill's Europe was fragile, yet not broken beyond all repair. Rather than weaken world organisations, such as the United Nations or a united post-war Europe, Churchill argued that the British Commonwealth would strengthen such liaisons. Analysing Churchill's key relationships with the heads of the Commonwealth, reveal him to have been a true European – where security and democracy took precedence. His realism and pragmatism in the face of ever-changing, ever-evolving world-wide post-war alliances, where the Commonwealth arguably played a significant role, offers a stark contrast to the more common image of Churchill the “die-hard” imperialist.



Abstract

Churchill; Commonwealth; India; Nehru; Australia; Menzies; Curtin; South Africa; Smuts; New Zealand; Fraser; Holland; ANZUS; America; Canada; St. Laurent; Cold War; Korean War; Malayan Emergency.



Key words

Churchill; Commonwealth; India; Nehru; Australia; Menzies; Curtin; Sudáfrica; Smuts; Nueva Zelanda; Fraser; Holland; ANZUS; América; Canadá; St. Laurent; Guerra Fría; Guerra de Corea; Emergencia Malaya.



Fechas

Centrándonos en el periodo de tiempo comprendido entre la derrota electoral en julio de 1945 hasta el final del segundo mandato como primer ministro de Winston Churchill, este artículo examina el impacto que la Commonwealth tuvo en la Europa de Churchill. Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial la Europa de Churchill era frágil, pero no aún no estaba descompuesta y sin remedio. Lejos de debilitar las organizaciones internacionales como las Naciones Unidas o la Europa unida de la postguerra, Churchill defendió que la Commonwealth reforzaría dichas relaciones. Analizando las relaciones fundamentales entre Churchill y los dirigentes de la Commonwealth, revelan que Churchill fue un verdadero europeo, para quien la seguridad y la democracia tienen prioridad. Su realismo y pragmatismo ante las alianzas internacionales de la postguerra, que se caracterizaban por ser siempre cambiantes y en continua evolución y en las que la Commonwealth desempeñaba un papel importante, ofrecían un duro contraste a la imagen común de Churchill, la de un imperialista rígido y tradicional.



Resumen

During the first two years of the Second World War, and out of abject necessity, Churchill isolated Britain from Europe. His first tenure as Britain's wartime Prime Minister is enduringly examined, re-visited and re-written. Despite serious ill-health for the majority of his second, peacetime, term as Prime Minister, he remained undimmed by age and his vision of a Europe where each country was free from tyranny and shared democratic ideals became his focus. Churchill described the less fortunate "wide areas" of a post-Second World War Europe as a "quivering mass of tormented, hungry, care-worn and bewildered human beings". He urged the building of a "kind of United States of Europe" which, working in concert with the United Nations, would prevent a return to the wartime Dark Ages (Churchill, 1948). Whether Britain was to be a nominal member of this European United States, or its leader, was a matter which even Churchill himself could not fully fix upon; not only because "consistency of opinion in a career of that length is hardly to be expected", but also due to the changing political and economic climate which affected Europe, the British Commonwealth, and its world-wide allies (Beloff).

The most obvious time when the Commonwealth impacted on Churchill's Europe was during the world wars – phenomenal episodes in world history where Dominion and Imperial troops played significant roles in the Allied victories. In contrast, this article looks at the extent of the impact the Commonwealth had on Churchill's Europe from his electoral defeat in July 1945 until the end of his second term as Prime Minister (October 1951-April 1955). The decade which spanned 1945-1955 witnessed three major events: the development of the Cold War; the inevitable decline of the British Empire; and the formation of the Commonwealth – occurrences upon which Churchill had a profound effect. This article examines Churchill's post-war vision of Europe, as set-out within a few of his key post-war speeches, and analyses the extent to which the advent of Indian independence affected not only the new Commonwealth, but also whether the post-war Commonwealth as a whole affected Churchill's Europe during his term as peace-time Prime Minister.

It truly was a "crippled, broken world" in which Churchill was living and writing during the early to mid-1920s (Churchill, 1923). Following the Great War, the Europe he had known was scarred both politically and geographically. In an article for the *Saturday Evening Post*,

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published in 1930, Churchill called for the creation of a United States of Europe in which Britain would be “interested and associated, but not absorbed” by it¹. This piece was written at a time when the British Empire was considered to be the largest and strongest of all empires, and when Europe was still recovering from the Great War. The “gathering storm” of the 1930s culminated in the Second World War – a war in which Churchill took the helm – and one which saw a continued, if not greater, contribution from the Dominions and Imperial troops to British and the Allied success. Following his unexpected exit from Downing Street, Churchill settled into the frantic rhythm of combining the literary production of his memoirs, entitled *The Second World War*, with his duty as Leader of the Conservative Party, as well as being the revered “Leader of Humanity” – as depicted in one of David Low’s most memorable cartoons (Low, 1945). It was in the immediate post-war era that the once pink shaded areas on the world map began to show signs of a soon-to-be rapidly reduced British Empire. Churchill’s carefully constructed image as a die-hard imperialist waned in the face of the British Empire’s ever certain decline and as the political temperature dropped from a hot into a Cold War, his attention turned once more to Europe.

Following the end of the Second World War Churchill’s Europe was fragile, yet not broken beyond all repair. It was under the mantle of “leader of humanity” that he gave his often-quoted speech at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri on 5 March 1946. He called for the English-speaking peoples to maintain a “fraternal association” in order to combat the threat of the “iron curtain” that had descended “from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic”. This fraternal association would help maintain a “new unity in Europe, from which no nation should be permanently outcast”. A third “new war”, Churchill claimed, was not “inevitable”, and Europe’s future peace and security was intertwined with the fraternal association of the English-speaking people as well as the strength and number of the British Empire and Commonwealth (Churchill, 1948, pp. 93-105). Churchill would later speak of how the “larger synthesis” of a Europe united through democratic processes would only survive if it were founded upon “natural” groupings; the main group to which he referred was the “Commonwealth of Nations”. He argued that rather than weaken world organisations, such as the United Nations or a united post-war Europe, the British Commonwealth strengthened such liaisons (Churchill, 1948, p. 200).

By the end of 1946, Churchill’s dedication to the British Empire was tested as Indian independence became an ever-closer and looming certainty. Churchill had a long, complex, and often emotionally charged relationship with India, its Nationalist leaders, and others who believed Indian Independence was necessary². He may have privately pronounced that the forthcoming independence for India was breaking his heart, but he was nonetheless resigned to

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1 Article by Churchill, quoted in Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, *An Idea Conquers the World*, London 1953, pp. 162-163. *Saturday Evening Post*, 15 February 1930.

2 See: Arnn, L. (2003). India in recent historiography: Perhaps Churchill believed in real liberation, *Finest Hour: Journal of the Churchill Centre and Societies*, 118 (2003), p. 22-3; Ziegler, P. (1996). *The Transfer of Power in India*. In R. Crosby Kemper (ed.), *Winston Churchill: resolution, defiance, magnanimity, good will*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press; Gopal, S. (1993). *Churchill and India*. In Robert Blake and Wm. Roger Louis (eds), *Churchill: A Major New Assessment of his Life in Peace and War* (p. 457-72). Oxford; Bridge, C. (1987). Churchill and Indian Political Freedom, *Indo-British Review*, 13 (2), p. 26-30; M.S. Venkataramani and B.K. Shrivastava, (1993). *Roosevelt-Gandhi-Churchill: America and the Last Phase of India’s Freedom Struggle* New Delhi: Radiant Publishers; Robin James Moore, (1979). *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939-1945*. Oxford: OUP.

the situation (AMEL 2/2/4)³. India had been the “jewel” in the British Empire’s crown. It had long been the training ground for the British Army. Of the 469,000 British and Commonwealth combatants (and non-combatants) who served in the Great War’s Gallipoli campaign the Indian force (both combatant and non-combatant) approximated 16,000 (Stanley, 2015, pp. 311-314)⁴. As the Second World War raged, the Indian Army was to become the largest volunteer force ever to have been amassed. India was not only a bastion of resources and manpower whenever imperial and world wars occurred, but also the bridge which spanned the British Empire’s western and eastern limits, and the geographical bulwark against Russian imperial expansionism. With the transfer of power having been completed at midnight on 15 August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru announced that while the world slept on that night, India would “wake to life and freedom”. The ensuing horror of Partition, quickly followed by Jinnah’s death and Gandhi’s assassination, meant that Nehru became the cohesive force in Indian politics. The man who had embodied (alongside Gandhi and Jinnah) India’s search for freedom from the “mother country”, and who had been imprisoned for lengthy periods of time during the interwar and Second World War periods, became India’s first Prime Minister. Within a year, the “ticklish business” of whether India should, or indeed could, remain in the Commonwealth was raised (CHUR 2/44/5)⁵.

Albeit somewhat graceless at times, Churchill’s pragmatism over whether the new republic of India should be included in the Commonwealth overrode his emotions. A little over a year later, keeping his gaze firmly fixed on Russia and ever more sure that a united Europe was the key to security, Churchill gave the clearest indication as to how he saw the link between Commonwealth and Europe at the Conservative Party conference in October 1948.

The first circle for us is naturally the British Commonwealth and Empire, with all that comprises. Then there is also the English-speaking world in which we, Canada, and the other British Dominions and the United States play so important a part. And finally there is United Europe. These three majestic circles are co-existent and if they linked together there is no force or combination which could overthrow them or even challenge them. (The Times, 11 October 1948)⁶

3 His resignation to the fact of Indian Independence did not, of course, mean that he was not frustrated by it as when he referred to the British withdrawal from India as a ‘shameful flight’ and ‘hurried scuttle’. See Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 5th Series, vol. 434, cols. 669 & 671 6 March 1947

4 The term Indian Army refers to the British-led Indian Army which comprised British officers, Indian VCOs (Viceroy Commissioned Officers), and Indian file. Figures extrapolated from Peter Stanley, “*Die in Battle, Do Not Despair: The Indians on Gallipoli, 1915* (Solihull: Helion & Company Ltd, 2015), Appendix V, pp. 311-14. This is not to mention the contribution that the Indian Army made to the trenches in France and Belgium. See David Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers’ Letters, 1914-18* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); Chandar S. Sundaram, *Arriving in the Nick of Time: The Indian Corps in France, 1914-15*, *Journal of Defence Studies*, 9/4 (2015); Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Indian Army and the King’s Enemies, 1900-1947* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988); Shrabani Basu, *For King and Another Country: Indian Soldiers on the Western Front 1914-18* (New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 31-37; Gordon Corrigan, *Sepoys in the Trenches: The Indian Corps on the Western Front 1914-1915* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2006), pp. 39-41; DeWitt C. Ellinwood and S. D. Pradhan (eds), *India and the First World War* (Columbia, Montana: South Asia Books, 1978).

5 Amery reiterated a point made in the official broadcast of the announcement of India’s continuing membership of the Commonwealth (28 April 1949) which stated that, “the traditional capacity of the Commonwealth to strengthen its unity of purpose, while adapting its organisation and procedures to changing circumstances”, see CCAC, CHUR 2/44/15: “Press Notice”, 27 April 1949.

6 Anthony Eden had previously used a similar theme in his conference speech as reported in “Mr Eden’s Three Unities”, *The Times*, 9 October 1948.

Even though Churchill acknowledged American influence in European affairs, especially the Marshall Plan, he appeared equally eager to not diminish Britain's influence over Europe due to the size and strength of her Dominion and Commonwealth subjects⁷. As the question of whether India could, or should, remain in the British Commonwealth still played on, Amery attempted to rally Churchill, not only over the seemingly irretrievable loss of the British Empire but also by accentuating how it was “the flexibility” of the British constitution and the way in which Britain bridged “the gulf between East and West” which could make Britain “the nucleus round which the ultimate world order will crystalise”. Dropping the “British” from the term “British Commonwealth”, so that India felt free to associate herself with the Commonwealth instead of the old and too restrictive imperial ties, occurred before Churchill was Prime Minister for a second time, yet his opinion was still sought (CCAC C. 2., 1949)⁸. “It is our duty to save what we can”, Churchill later wrote, “and one must not be embittered by the past however one may regret it” (CHUR 2/44/8)⁹.

Churchill's reactions to the ever-evolving changing circumstances in post-war Europe were shaped by his own experience, his knowledge of the historical and political problems which Europe had both faced, and the envisaged threats which Europe was about to face. One such threat was the way in which the India/Commonwealth question could possibly further destabilise the security of Commonwealth and Dominions. With the advent of Indian independence came the long-feared domino effect. Burma, Ceylon and Pakistan would all want their own independence but would they want membership on their own terms to the Commonwealth too? Such indecision on matters of Statute, the continuing austerity in Britain under Attlee's post-war Labour government, and the (while invisible to the general public) not-so-special-relationship ripples between Whitehall and Washington over Hydrogen and Nuclear device research, all pointed to a post-war Britain which was not capable of interacting with Europe, let alone leading Europe through the post-war darkness.

At the heart of Churchill's reactions to ever-evolving events and alliances, lay his belief that history was made by great men. Relationships with familiar grand men, with those who had lived during “an age of titans”, clearly continued to be important to Churchill as he continued his post-war quest of “Leader of Humanity” (Maudling, 1978, p. 44)¹⁰. One such man was Robert Menzies who had been Australian Prime Minister from April 1939 until August 1941 and who, like Churchill, had been re-elected for a second tenure from December 1949 until January 1966. Menzies had been privy to listen to a preview of Churchill's 1948 “three rings” speech when, after accidentally bumping into him at a garden party, he was invited to spend

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7 Churchill would later write that the “important campaign for European Unity is of course entirely complimentary to the Marshall Plan policy. It is in fact its unofficial counterpart”. CCAC, CHUR 2-26a-29: Churchill to General Donovan (head of the “American Committee for United Europe”), on the subject of the financial support offered to the “Campaign for European Unity”, May 1949. Along with Monsieur Leon Blum, Signor Alcide de Gasperi and Monsieur Paul-Henri Spaak, Churchill was one of the Presidents of Honour of the European Movement.

8 Amery also revealed that being open-minded regarding India's position acted as encouragement to those countries who might one day wish to join the Commonwealth as “associate members” – such as Norway and Iceland. CCAC, CHUR 2/44/3: Mr H. Spalding to Churchill citing correspondence with the Governor-General of India, Sri Rajagopalachari who wrote that “Mr Churchill's most magnanimous association with His Majesty's Government in this decision is widely and fully appreciated in India, as much as in your own country”.

9 Previously Churchill had written to Amery that they were to “save what we can from this wreck”, see CCAC, CHUR 2/44/7: Churchill to Amery, 26 April 1949.

10 Reginald Maudling, elected as MP for Barnet in 1951, commented that he had “never met...a man cast in the same mould” as Churchill and that the Second World War had been “an age of titans – Bob Menzies, for example, or Smuts”.

time with Churchill in Kent and given “the full Chartwell charm offensive” (Ramsden, 2002). Both men found a sympathetic and agreeable ear in the other; they agreed on how the removal of the word ‘British’ from ‘British Commonwealth’ was the death knell for the Dominions predominance in all Commonwealth matters.

Even if Churchill (or Menzies for that matter) had been in power, there is little to suggest that he would have attempted to reverse the decision; acceptance was the pragmatic and only realistic option as a wider and more inclusive Commonwealth would increase British prestige and power on the world stage – especially in Europe. Often considered to be the precursor to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the Treaty of Brussels had been signed in March 1948 by Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, and Britain. As the Soviet Blockade highlighted the European need for further security measures to be taken, the Western European Union’s Defence Organisation was formed in late 1948. Britain and her crumbling empire, despite the continuing allegiance of her Dominions, counted for little as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa each had their concern focused upon their own post-war problems. Allowing India to negotiate her own terms regarding her entry and status within the Commonwealth perhaps eased American opinion on the nature of the British overseas – how dogmatic imperialism had changed to a more rational, inclusive, and therefore stronger union. American military weight was seen as vital to world, and in particular European, defence as the Cold War simmered and by April 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington.¹¹ Whether a more inclusive Commonwealth would enhance the potential Britain and her Commonwealth could play within NATO may have added an extra depth of pragmatism to Churchill’s acceptance of a modern and inclusive Commonwealth.

Another man to whom Churchill had always paid heed was the South African Jan Christiaan Smuts, who became a loyal friend and confidant. Having passed the bar, Smuts followed a career in politics and was later to become Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa from 1919 till 1924 and then, like Churchill and Menzies, he returned to the position in 1939 until 1948. Smuts was a powerful and intelligent man who shared the same imperial mindset as Churchill: both men believed in the notion of imperial “duty”, and their right to assert imperial rule over an indigenous population (especially when justified as protecting and guiding the vulnerable and weak) (Bevin, 1950)¹². Although Smuts had originally advocated racial segregation, he later realised that complete segregation was impossible, and he lost the 1948 election to D. F. Malan – a hard-line Afrikaner. Smuts had not only always fervently supported and promoted the British Commonwealth, but also found himself to focus (especially during wartime) on European affairs. Following his electoral defeat, Smuts became more vehement in his views on the proposed new Commonwealth. Pre-empting the announcement which allowed India to “adopt a republican form of constitution” and still “continue her membership of the Commonwealth”, Smuts issued a statement (CHUR 2/44/15)¹³. This “personal view” revealed that Smuts was adamant of there being “no middle course between the Crown and a

11 Members of NATO were: Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Britain, America, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

12 Smuts was held in high regard by many. When Ernest Bevin heard Smuts had died, Bevin wrote: “It seems strange to feel that Smuts has passed. I always seem to see him in the Cabinet room or in my office. It was always very encouraging to listen to his profound contributions to world problems. Experience counts a lot”.

13 “Press Notice: Not to be Published, broadcast or used on club tapes in any country until 2.00 hours BST, Thursday, April 28th, 1949”.

republic, between in and out of the Commonwealth". He objected to the devising of terms for special circumstances as he feared that "the whole concept" of the Commonwealth would go and only "a mere name without substance" would remain. "Strike out the King, and the rest disappears", Smuts continued, and it was "the Indian plan" which violated "the very concept of Commonwealth" (The Times, 11 April 1949).

In a note signed "S" and addressed to Churchill, the author précised the Indian Commonwealth plan. Stating how "such an agreement" could not realistically "be opposed", "S" went on to warn not only of the domino effect such an allowance could have, but also how Smuts's opposition could prove problematic:

Once it is established that a Republic can remain within the Commonwealth, the idea will spread. Pakistan will, I expect, be forced to follow suit, though much against its will. South Africa may hesitate if the British element there and the Smuts' party hold out. (CHUR 2/44/19)

Churchill's pragmatism and realism won when faced with such doubt. The harsh light of the Cold War, the strength that an inclusive Commonwealth could provide (as one of his three circles of interlinked power), and the position that this could give Britain in vying for the position as the leading European power. "It is absolutely necessary", wrote Churchill, "for the Conservative Party to have a policy which is not unfavourable to the new India" (Gilbert, 1988, p. 473)¹⁴.

The new India, under its first Prime Minister Nehru, was concerned with building a socialist planned economy (akin to many European countries) and with ratifying its Constitution¹⁵. Although Nehru would later side with Nasser, amongst others, at the Bandung Conference of April 1955 (the precursor to the Non-Alignment Movement of 1961)¹⁶, to not the Korean War meant that the Cold War had, in some respects, already reached Indian shores¹⁷. On 25 June 1950, after several years of increasingly severe incidents of aggression along Korea's division between North and South, the North Korean People's Army (Soviet backed) invaded the Republic of Korea (backed by an American military administration). America invoked the United Nations Charter, and the member states were asked to respond with military assistance. Being members, Britain and the Commonwealth responded: the Far East fleet, two British battalions from Hong Kong, and an Australian battalion from Japan were immediately sent to the area. The Indian 60th Parachute Field Medical Unit was sent to Korea a little later. By July 1951, Canadian, British, Australian, New Zealand and Indian units formed the 1st Commonwealth Division.

Nehru's reservations over India's involvement in the Korean War stemmed from the potential threat that having an American force near a newly Communist China would pose to India; if aggression spilt over, India would be in the middle. Fearful that an increased American presence would tip China into backing Soviet-Korea, Nehru suggested the imposition of a demilitarized zone. While Nehru was acting as intermediary between American, Soviet and

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¹⁴ Churchill to Smuts. Elizabeth Gilliat dictation notes. 3 May 1949.

¹⁵ India's Constitution was made official on 26 January 1950.

¹⁶ The Bandung Conference, 18th April 1955 saw Nehru (India), Nasser (Egypt), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), and Sukarno (Indonesia) all join in their decision to not make alliances with the three world powers (America, Britain, and Russia) and thereby avoid playing a role in the Cold War.

¹⁷ At the Yalta conference of February 1945, Korea had been split in two; by the end of the Second World War North Korea was Soviet occupied, with South Korea being American occupied.

Chinese forces, Churchill returned to Downing Street (Moran, 1966)¹⁸. The modern India, as a member of the Commonwealth, was re-enacting an old imperial tie – it was acting as a brake against Soviet expansionism and threat, albeit in this case the threat from Communist China. Sending Indian units to Korea, to operate alongside their Commonwealth cousins as they had done twice before in the first half of the twentieth century, helped cement the supposed might of the Commonwealth to those who were not part of it – primarily America and Russia. In the aftermath of the Korean War, Indian-American relations deteriorated. Washington had assumed that Nehru would toe the British inspired Commonwealth line yet his actions proved otherwise. The new Commonwealth was an independent force in its own right, and Britain and her Commonwealth were proving their worth in international relations and therefore in being able to lead a post-war Europe into a unified association.

By 1951, with his return to Downing Street and with the publication of the volume of his Second World War memoirs which covered the fall of Singapore, Churchill's reputation in Australia was a double-edged sword. The bluntest edge demonised him and the British wartime Cabinet for having abandoned Australia in their hour of need. John Curtin, the Australian Prime Minister (October 1941-July 1945), and Churchill had entered into a battle of wills. With the unrelenting Japanese advance westwards, Curtin wanted Australian troops in the Mediterranean recalled to protect Australian shores, and deemed the negative answer to be an "inexcusable betrayal". In December 1941, as America entered the war following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Curtin had proclaimed that Australia looked towards America for protection rather than the British Empire – Australia was "free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship" (Curtin, 1941). On 15 February 1942, following the Japanese invasion of Singapore, the island surrendered. Four days later Darwin (on Australia's northern coastline) was severely bombed by the Japanese. Yet the sword's smooth side was that by war's end Curtin and his successors (Frank Forde (6-13 July 1945) and Ben Chifley (July 1945-December 1949)) sought to revive the imperial defence ideal while adding that Australia had a voice which not only deserved to be heard but was, in Curtin's words "more impressive as a member of a family than it could ever be" especially as it was a "separate and distinct entity" (Day, 1992)¹⁹.

While Churchill had worked with Curtin throughout the war, he had formed an altogether more cordial relationship with Curtin's predecessor Robert Menzies (Australia's Prime Minister April 1939-August 1941). In December 1949, Menzies became Australia's Liberal-Country Party Coalition Prime Minister²⁰. Aware of the local repercussions, Menzies offered military support to America on the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 – a move made not only independently of Britain but also before Britain declared its intent. It was under the aegis

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18 When Churchill was asked how he got on with Nehru, after the 1955 meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers, he would say that "I get on very well with him. I tell him he has a great role to play as the leader of the Free Asia against Communism". Churchill continued to say that Nehru wanted to undertake this role as "He has a feeling that the Communists are against him and that is apt to change people's opinions".

19 Cited Curtin's speech, 28 February 1945, p. 310.

20 When asked to describe Churchill, Menzies frequently replied "what a boy!". He succinctly elucidated the difficulty Churchill encountered in balancing the needs of the Commonwealth with the needs of Europe: "no man" could "serve two masters" and "hope to devote his thought and power to European balance" as well as the "affairs of the old world". Yet in Churchill, Menzies concluded, such a man existed. Menzies, "Churchill and the Commonwealth", in Marchant (ed.), *Churchill: Servant of Crown and Commonwealth*, p. 91 & p.94. The Churchill/Menzies familiarity continued. Long after his second stint at Downing Street came to an end, Churchill wrote to Menzies and described how he had often reflected upon their "long comradeship" (as well as to thank him for two swans that Menzies had sent to Chartwell to replace those killed by foxes). See CCAC, CHUR 1/59/163: Churchill to Menzies, 7 June 1964.

of Menzies that the ANZUS agreement was signed, and while it was thought to show how separate Australia and New Zealand had become from the Commonwealth, and how they may have swapped one dependency for another, this was not the case²¹. Australia would give military support to British troops throughout the twelve long years of the ‘Malayan Emergency’, and went against American opinion when they offered military assistance to British forces during the Suez Crisis of 1956. Australia’s actions as a Commonwealth force, and by going against American opinion, illustrated how strong the old Dominion ties remained.

Churchill entered into relations with New Zealand in the 1950s aware of the great contribution New Zealand troops had made to both world wars²². Peter Fraser had been New Zealand’s wartime Prime Minister with whom Churchill had worked closely; not without clashes, of course, but ultimately they had a firm foundation of familiarity. As Churchill entered Number 10 in 1951, it was Sydney Holland who was Prime Minister in the farthest flung corner of the Commonwealth²³. It was under Holland that the decision to proceed with shoring-up the prospect of peace in the Pacific was taken in the form of the ANZUS. Yet 1950s New Zealand, under Holland, still wished for a close union with Britain, and so agreed to contribute a division to the British forces stationed in the Middle East to protect British oilfields from the supposed Russian threat. The Cold War, so it seemed, stretched to each corner of the Commonwealth.

Eight Commonwealth Prime Ministers were present at the opening meeting of their 1953 conference in London²⁴. With Stalin’s death in March of that year still sending out reverberations on the nature and intensity of how or whether the Cold War would continue, Churchill attempted to unify the Commonwealth in its efforts to combat such an occurrence. Ironically, while Churchill may have sped-up the process of the Cold War with his “iron curtain” speech of 1946, he was also the man who attempted to thaw the frozen ground. Churchill spoke of how he “felt that if all held together in the anti-Communist front and strengthened their unity no risk would be run”. Such Commonwealth unity would not only act as a bulwark against an escalation of the Cold War but also serve to help the Commonwealth “retain their influence on the policy of the United States” and “carry the United States with them in seeking a period of détente” (Gilbert, 1988, p. 837)²⁵. One example of New Zealand’s show of Commonwealth unity, with the added effect of reiterating how seriously it took American power and opinion in light of ANZUS, was its joining British and Australian forces in fighting the Communist insurgents in Malaya in 1955. Illustrating such tight common bonds between the Commonwealth affected Churchill’s Europe in that it buoyed the prestige of Britain which, although it had lost an Empire, had gained an even larger post-imperial family; one that could almost hold its own in a world-wide context, and one which could likely lead Europe in the Cold War era.

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21 ANZUS was signed on 1 September 1951 and was an assurance of mutual defence in the Pacific between America, Australia and New Zealand.

22 The most contentious and notorious examples of New Zealand troops having played substantial roles in both world wars were: the Dardanelles Campaign of 1915-16, the defence of Crete in 1941, and the battle for Monte Cassino in 1943.

23 Peter Fraser was Prime Minister of New Zealand April 1940-December 1949; and Sydney Holland was PM from December 1949-September 1957.

24 Present at this meeting were: Menzies (Australia); St. Laurent (Canada); Senanayake (Ceylon); Nehru (India); Holland (New Zealand); Mohammed Ali (Pakistan); Huggins (Rhodesia); and Malan (South Africa).

25 W. S. Churchill in his opening address to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference on 3 June 1953.

Although Churchill never travelled to Australia or New Zealand, he did visit Canada²⁶. During his 1929 tour he enthusiastically described Canada as a “vast lush country” that impressed him greatly (Soames, 1999, p. 337). He visited Ottawa in 1952, and again in 1954 – both official meetings were tacked-on to his meetings in America and, as Jenkins observed, the Canadians seemed to be “admirably un-jealous” of this arrangement (Jenkins, 2001, p. 881). The wartime Agreements of Ogdensburg (August 1940) and Hyde Park (April 1941), may have drawn Canada ever-closer to America (in military and economic perspectives), but this did not stop Canada from ignoring either its wartime or post-war ties with the Commonwealth. Canada indirectly contributed to Churchill’s Europe by agreeing to supply Britain with the titanium needed for the production of hydrogen bombs. Having only recently come to the decision that Britain needed its own nuclear devices, and as America were withholding research and material, Churchill asked if the supply was possible when he dined with Louis St. Laurent (the Prime Minister) and C.D. Howe (the Minister of Defence Production) on 29 June 1954. The Canadian Cabinet agreed to the request the next day. While this hasty decision was perhaps due to Canada’s positively enthusiastic pursuance of the Cold War, it certainly illustrated how Commonwealth ties were not incompatible with those of European security.

Commonwealth relations had arguably saved the war-torn face and democratic body of Western Europe. They helped shape Churchill’s pro-special relationship vision of Europe in the 1950s in that the outward unity of their individual actions illustrated that the new Commonwealth was, in its own right, an inclusive and modern organisations which could hold its own against or alongside both America and Russia. Churchill revealed himself to be a true European; where security and democracy took precedence over his earlier incarnation as an imperialist. The legacy of Churchill’s post-war time as “leader of humanity” and his peacetime tenure as Prime Minister was his pragmatism and realism in the face of ever-changing and evolving world-wide alliances. The new Commonwealth was thought to be based upon principles of independence and interdependence. The movement for European Union shared the same principles; each European country to retain its independence yet be interdependent upon each other for security – maintaining democracy and keeping a watchful eye for any form of tyranny. Harold Macmillan clearly saw the way in which the British Commonwealth and the European Movement were allied by these principles of independence and interdependence. When tasked with organising the Dominions Conference of 1951, Macmillan wrote to Churchill and asked him to read Sir Harold Butler’s letter on how the conference was a “serious attempt to reconcile Imperial and European interests in the economic sphere” (CHUR 2/26A-B/63). Macmillan also encouraged Churchill to attend the conference’s opening proceedings so that it “would start under the best auspices” (CHUR 2/26A-B/64). Political unity and an envisaged common destiny were Churchill’s vision for the future of Europe; similar principles to how he had come to view the Commonwealth’s position within the post-war world.

Commonwealth relations had arguably saved the war-torn face and democratic body of Western Europe. They helped shape Churchill’s pro-‘special relationship’ vision of Europe in the 1950s

26 Churchill’s first visit to Canada was in late 1900. As MPs were unpaid, it was necessary for Churchill to build a financial nest-egg so, following his successful election as the Conservative and Unionist MP for Oldham on 1 October, he undertook a lucrative lecture tour in order to “pursue profit not pleasure”. See Churchill to Bourke Cockran, 25 November 1900 in Randolph S. Churchill (ed.), *Winston S. Churchill: Companion Volume 1: Part 2, 1896-1900* (London: Heinemann, 1967), p. 1219.

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CHURCHILL & FRANCE

Churchill y Francia

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There is no doubting the ambivalence of Churchill's attitude to France as a British Francophile but also as a British patriot. Much depended on whether he perceived the interests of Britain and those of France as coinciding, as was fortunately the case for most of the period, and the article examines the ups and downs of his relations with the French through his long career, beginning with his first stay in Paris in 1883 and ending with his obvious enjoyment of the French Riviera after his withdrawal from world affairs in 1955. In between, the way he managed to surmount the major crises in Anglo-French relations, notably after June 1940, is discussed in the light of what must definitely be seen as an indefectible life-long attachment in spite of all the difficulties.



Abstract

Winston Churchill; Anglo-French relations; Anglo-German relations; First World War; appeasement in the 1930s; Second World War; European integration.



Key words

Winston Churchill; relaciones anglofrancesas; relaciones angloalemanas; Primera Guerra Mundial; política de apaciguamiento en los años 30; Segunda Guerra Mundial; integración europea.

La actitud de Churchill hacia Francia fue sin duda ambivalente. Francófila por una parte, pero sin dejar de lado un gran patriotismo británico. La inclinación de Churchill dependía en si percibía que los intereses de Francia y Reino Unido coincidían; afortunadamente, así fue a lo largo de la mayoría de sus mandatos. Este artículo examina los ires y venires de sus relaciones con Francia durante su larga carrera, comenzando con su primera estancia en París en 1883 y finalizando en su claro disfrute de la Riviera Francesa tras su retirada de los asuntos políticos mundiales en 1955. Entre tanto, Churchill consiguió superar las principales crisis de las relaciones anglofrancesas, notablemente a partir de junio de 1940. Sus acciones se enmarcan en un indiscutible apego de por vida a Francia, a pesar de las dificultades a las que ambos países se enfrentaron.



Resumen

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Fechas

It seems appropriate to begin with what is arguably the best short summary of Churchill's attitude to France, from someone who accompanied him in many of his later travels to the country and heard what he had to say at first hand:

When it came to France, ambivalence was again evident. WSC's love of France was sentimental and long-standing, based on personal experience in peace and war. His greatest heroine, or indeed hero for that matter, was Joan of Arc. But this did not deter him from taking a firm line with the French if he felt it was required, and he told me that after 1940, and their breaking of a solemn agreement not to sue for a separate peace, he never felt the same about them. (Montague Brown, 1995, p. 160)

One might add that this ambivalence is also in evidence according as it is Churchill the statesman and impeccable British patriot or Churchill the private man and Francophile speaking. When the interests of France coincided with those of Britain, all was well – there was no conflict of loyalties deep in his heart. But when he felt that they did not and that British interests were threatened, he naturally gave them priority – somehow suffering from a sense of guilt towards France which made him irritable, often unpleasant with his pro-French British entourage (one may think here primarily of Anthony Eden) and his French interlocutors (there, de Gaulle springs to mind), and always ill at ease, impatient, dismissive of contrary arguments, all the more so as he knew that he was in obvious bad faith. But these inner conflicts only came at a late stage in his relations with France and the French – arguably at the time of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. It seems useful, therefore, to distinguish between several stages in this long relationship, his physical presence in France running from 1883 to 1963 – over some eighty years, with more than a hundred visits: by far the largest number of his sojourns abroad.

It seems that it is with the Agadir Crisis in 1911 that Churchill became fully aware of the converging interests of Britain and France in thwarting German ambitions

1: 1874-1918

The first obvious connection with France is of course his parents's wedding in the Anglican Chapel of the Paris Embassy, on 15 April 1874 – and the circumstances of his birth, officially “premature” on 30 November, allow us to conjecture that he was in fact conceived in Paris, his mother not being a paragon of virtue. His first stay in France took place in the summer of 1883, with his father, in Paris. Then, when he was 17, in 1891, he was sent to perfect his French at Versailles. It was a success in spite of his initial reticence. This avid reader of history books knew all about Napoleon's campaigns – he often cited them in his writings and it is well known that he always had the idea of publishing a life of the Emperor at the back of his mind¹. When he married Clementine in 1908, he in fact married another Francophile, who had spent some of her youth in Dieppe and spoke excellent French.

It seems that it is with the Agadir Crisis in 1911 that the young politician became fully aware of the converging interests of Britain and France in thwarting German ambitions. When at the Admiralty (1911-1915), he was an active supporter of Anglo-French cooperation, and it is often forgotten that the decision to launch the joint Dardanelles expedition was taken with the enthusiastic agreement of the French naval staff. Admittedly, Churchill was to apportion part of the blame for the failure to the priority given by the French Army Generals to the Western Front – but he also deplored that the British Generals had been more than lukewarm in their

¹ See Packwood, Allen. “A Tale of Two Statesmen: Churchill and Napoleon”. *Finest Hour – The Journal of Winston Churchill* 157 (Winter 2012-2013), pp. 14-19.

support. When he himself left for that Front in November 1915, serving with the British Expeditionary Force, he soon found himself on the best terms with the French Generals whom he met in the area: all his life he kept the *Poilu* helmet that General Fayolle gave him². He was very impressed by what he saw of the French Army then – an opinion which was reinforced when he became Minister of Munitions in 1917, the reason being that this involved close collaboration with his French opposite number, Loucheur, and frequent visits to France, including the front. The climax was reached in March 1918, when Clemenceau took him on a tour of inspection of the battlefields which included a stop at Foch's Beauvais HQ on the way. The way Foch explained his plans – which turned out to be a complete success – made a profound impression on Churchill, who repeatedly and admiratively related the event in his later writings. The fullest account appeared in a magazine article of 1926, "A Day with Clemenceau", which he reprinted in *Thoughts and Adventures*³. For him, the Beauvais scene encapsulated the best of the two Frances: that of the old Roman Catholic, conservative tradition – the Ancien Régime – (Foch) and that of the Radical atheists of the Republic (Clemenceau). He was awed by the understanding between these two apparently irreconcilable camps before the German peril: both put Country before Party, and for him nothing could be nobler. Unfortunately, he drew the wrong conclusions from this memorable day, believing that this reconciliation was definitive in the face of Germany, which misled him in the inter-war years.

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2: 1919-1932

Churchill's ambivalence was clearly visible at the time of Versailles and in the fifteen years or so which followed the Armistice. Churchill approved of Keynes's reservations as expounded in *The Consequences of the Peace* (1919). First, because he believed that Germany must be allowed to enjoy the prosperity to which it was entitled by the undeniable abilities of its people. Secondly, because pre-war Germany had been an excellent customer of Britain: the sooner its solvency was restored, the better for the British export industries, in dire need of orders after 1920. Thirdly, because France was no more to be permitted to dominate the Continent than any other country – this was of course a canon of British foreign policy. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, during a conference of Finance Ministers on the settlement of war debts and reparations in Paris in January 1925, he was received by the French President, who pressed for an Anglo-French agreement against Germany. His reply excellently sums up his position since 1919:

I said that of course I was only expressing a personal opinion, but one which I had expressed in public on many occasions, and which it was well known I had held for several years, namely that one real security against a renewal of war would be a complete agreement between England, France and Germany. (Gilbert, 2009, p. 339)⁴

At the same time, Churchill continued to cultivate his French contacts in high places. As he wrote to Clementine from Paris on the same occasion:

2 Now visible at Chartwell, together with the canvas by Lavery showing Churchill sporting it, "Winston Churchill, Wearing a French Poilu's Steel Helmet".

3 *Thoughts and Adventures*. London: Thornton Butterworth, 1932 (London: Odhams Press, 1947, pp. 120-132).

4 "Note of a conversation with the President of the French Republic. 11 January 1925". Churchill Papers 18/21.

Even meal times have been devoted to meeting people of consequence. I had an interview with Herriot [then Prime Minister]... We got on well. Tomorrow I am to see President Doumergue in the morning... & visit Clemenceau in the evening & dine with Loucheur. (Soames, 1998, p. 288)⁵

He was also to have long conversations with Poincaré, Finance Minister from 1926 to 1928, and in January 1927, he writes again to his wife about the conversations which he has just had in Paris: "Loucheur's luncheon in Paris was a considerable affair. [Aristide] Briand, [Raoul] Peret, Vincent Auriol, about 15 MPs representing leading elements in all parties - & vy advanced politicians" (Soames, 1998, p. 306)⁶. All this to say that no British politicians were better informed about opinion in French Government circles than he then was.

His report to the Cabinet two days after the Paris conference in January 1925 is interesting because it does not show France as having a domineering attitude – but rather showing the lack of fibre which was to prove so tragic fifteen years later:

Speaking generally, I find the French Ministers and politicians depressed. Having seen them so often during the last ten years, often in tragic hours, I have never found them so tame and sad. For the moment there is no resentment towards us. All that has passed to the United States. [...] In my opinion the new attitude of France, amid all her difficulties, deserves recognition at the hands of His Majesty's Government.

The position of France ground between the upper and nether millstones of American avarice and German revenge affords full justification for her present sombre mood. (Gilbert, 2009, p. 341)⁷

When exactly he got convinced that the Weimar Germans were using double talk – agreeing to pacts in favour of peace in public and making plans for rebuilding their war potential in secret – will probably never be established. Likewise, it is also extremely difficult to say when he finally chose the lesser of two evils – backing France at the risk of encouraging it to make fewer concessions to Germany. That danger seemed to be deliberately forgotten and ignored later in the 1920s, when Churchill wrote his articles in praise of the two great French leaders of the recent war – the obvious intention being to emphasise the military and other virtues of France. In 1929, he praised Foch:

His undaunted and ever-flowing combative energy, as a man in contact with other personalities and harrying remorseless detail, as a Commander with a front crumbling under the German flail, was proved inexhaustible even by the Great War. His power of endurance was the equal of his energy. [...]

The magnitude of the events which Marshal Foch directed is of course beyond compare in the annals of war. [...] In 1914 he had saved the day by refusing to recognise defeat. [...] But 1918 was created for him. [...] Then it was that the characteristic genius of Foch attained its full and decisive expression. (Muller, 2012, p. 184)

Churchill report to the Cabinet two days after the Paris conference in January 1925 is interesting because it does not show France as having a domineering attitude

5 "Letter to Clementine, 10 January 1925".

6 "Letter to Clementine, 28 January 1927".

7 Churchill Papers 18/21.

For good measure, he also used his glowing portrait of Clemenceau the better to stress the indomitable will of the French never to submit to the Germans:

The truth is that Clemenceau embodied and expressed France. As much as any single human being, miraculously magnified, can ever be a nation, he was France. [...] He represented the French people risen against tyrants – tyrants of the mind, tyrants of the soul, tyrants of the body; foreign tyrants, domestic tyrants, swindlers, humbugs, grafters, traitors, invaders, defeatists – all lay within the bound of the Tiger and against them the Tiger waged inexorable war. Anti-clerical, anti-monarchist, anti-Communist, anti-German – in all this he represented the dominant spirit of France. (Churchill, 29 November 1930, p. 290)

Churchill's description of the double face of France and how it was symbolised by the contradictory, yet complementary personality of the two joint saviours of the country in 1918, as he saw them, has never been bettered. After his portrait of Clemenceau and how he represented the dominant spirit of France, Churchill continued:

There was another mood and another France. It was the France of Foch – ancient, aristocratic; the France whose grace and culture, whose etiquette and ceremonial has bestowed gifts around the world. There was the France of chivalry, the France of Versailles, and, above all, the France of Joan of Arc. It was this secondary and submerged national personality that Foch recalled.

The link is cleverly made with the events which eventually led to victory, pointing to the decisive factors of convergence:

But when they gazed upon the inscription on the golden statue of Joan of Arc: “La pitié qu’elle avait pour le royaume de France” and saw gleaming the Maid’s uplifted sword, their two hearts beat as one. The French have a dual nature in a degree not possessed by any other great people. [...] It is an unending struggle which goes on continually, not only in every successive Parliament, but in every street and village of France, and in the bosom of almost every Frenchman. Only when France is in mortal peril does the struggle have a truce. The comradeship of Foch and Clemenceau illustrates as in a cameo the history of France.

Anyone not familiar with Churchill's two articles might easily be excused for thinking that they are the translation of some writings by General de Gaulle, such is the similarity in the style and reasoning. Here, Churchill was clearly “more French than the French”. Indeed, his Francophilia made him seize every occasion to go to Paris, to the French Riviera and to the châteaux of his wealthy British and American friends in France, with many private visits supplementing his official talks in the 1920s.

3: 1933-1939

Clemenceau and Foch both died in 1929, but during “the gathering storm” of the 1930s Churchill never forgot how “in the combination of these two men during the last year of war, the French people found in their service all the glories and the vital essences of Gaul”. (Churchill, 29 November 1930, p. 291) Hence his famous *cri de coeur* in the Commons, “Thank God for the French Army”, on 23 March 1933, less than two months after Hitler had become Chancellor

*Churchill
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friends in France*

of Germany. For the young generation, it would be easy to misunderstand the tenor of what he says of the episode in his Memoirs: “I remember particularly the look of pain and aversion which I saw on the faces of Members in all parts of the House when I said “Thank God for the French Army” ” (Churchill, 1948b, p. 77). Of course the Members mentioned did not foresee the routing of that army in 1940 – their “pain and aversion” was directed at Churchill’s plea for a renewal of the military alliance of the Great War.

Churchill’s isolation in British political circles during his “Wilderness Years” was paradoxically paralleled by his renewed presence among leading French statesmen. Once again, he availed himself of every opportunity to go to France, staying in luxury villas on the Riviera for pleasure or at the Paris Embassy for business. His visit to France in September 1936 is remarkable for the number of important people whom he met. Besides Flandin, who had been his opposite number when he was Minister of War and Air from 1919 to 1921 and was briefly Foreign Minister in early 1936, Churchill also saw his old friend General Georges, who invited him to the military manoeuvres near Aix-en-Provence on 9 September, followed by a visit of the Maginot Line. He duly followed the manoeuvres as a guest of General Gamelin, now commander-in-chief of the French Army. In the evening he wrote to Léon Blum, then Prime Minister: “I have had a most interesting day with General Gamelin at the manoeuvres. I was very pleased with all I saw”. (Gilbert, 2009, p. 340)⁸ In case one should think this is base flattery, totally insincere, he wrote to Clementine a few days later using almost the same terms:

The manoeuvres were very interesting. I drove about all day with General Gamelin the Generalissimo, who was communicative on serious topics.... To anyone with military knowledge it was most instructive. The officers of the French army are impressive by their gravity & competence. One feels the strength of the nation resides in its army. (Soames, 1998, p. 417)⁹

On the 12th, he had lunch with General Gamelin and on the 13th with Flandin. From there, he went back to the Embassy in Paris before leaving on the 15th for the Maginot Line with the British Military Attaché. After a ten days’ interlude in London, he was back in Paris with Clementine on the 24th, and they had lunch with President Herriot, Flandin and Paul Reynaud – then a backbench Deputy of Paris. In the evening he delivered a major speech in English at the *Théâtre des Ambassadeurs* on the importance of Anglo-French cooperation in defence of Parliamentary Democracy and Western Civilisation, in contrast with “the doctrines of Comrade Trotsky and Dr Goebbels” (Gilbert, 1976, p. 788).

One of the paradoxes is that Churchill’s good French friends were often from the Radical and Socialist Left: Léon Blum, Daladier or Paul Reynaud. Indeed he gradually fell out with Flandin in 1938. On 10 January, after dining with him on the Riviera, Churchill wrote to Clementine:

The dinner with Flandin was very depressing, the food lamentable. But the account he gave of France was most pessimistic.... It looks as if these French Right-Wing politicians thought that Germany would become undisputed ruler of Europe in the near future. (Soames, 1998, p. 433)¹⁰

Churchill’s isolation in British political circles during his “Wilderness Years” was paradoxically paralleled by his renewed presence among leading French statesmen

8 “Letter to Léon Blum, 8 September 1936”. Spencer-Churchill Papers.

9 “Letter to Clementine, 13 September 1936”.

10 “Letter to Clementine, 10 January 1938”.

The final estrangement occurred on 27 March 1938, when during another lunch in Paris, at the British Embassy, with Sir Eric and Lady Phipps, Flandin argued that the only possibility of recovery of strength for France was to bring down the Popular Front and introduce Government by decree, with Churchill objecting that this “would alienate all Left sympathies in Great Britain for France”. (Gilbert, 2009, p. 961)¹¹

That trip of March 1938, only a few days after the *Anschluss*, though much shorter than in September 1936, was also of major importance. We have all the details of Churchill’s meetings with prominent French leaders thanks to the daily reports which Sir Eric Phipps, the Ambassador, sent to the Foreign Office during Churchill’s stay. The schedule is most impressive. Friday 25th: meeting with Léger at the Quai d’Orsay in the morning, lunch with Paul Reynaud, dinner with Herriot. Saturday 26th: dinner with Léon Blum and Paul-Boncour at the Embassy. Sunday 27th: lunch with Flandin (not a success, as we saw) and dinner with Daladier, both again at the Embassy. Sir Eric Phipps also noted that outside these formal functions, Churchill saw “André Chaumeix of the *Journal des Débats*, Wladimir d’Ormesson of the *Figaro*, Louis Marin, General Gamelin, Mandel, Chautemps, Chastenet of the *Temps*, Sauerwein of the *Paris-Soir* and others”, adding “He wanted to see a Communist, but I strongly advised against this and he abstained”. (Gilbert, 2009, p. 963-964)¹² Thus it is clear that in what Sir Eric Phipps called “this hectic and electric week-end”, which took place “in an increasingly kaleidoscopic manner”, Churchill met all the men who were to count so much in *L’heure tragique*, to take up the French title of his discussion on June 1940 in *The Second World War* – with the exception of Laval, Pétain and Weygand. What did he tell them? We know, thanks again to the Phipps Papers: “Churchill’s share in the conversation was chiefly devoted to the urgent necessity of forming a solid Anglo-French block against Germany [...with] close and immediate Anglo-French staff talks”. We also learn that “these suggestions fell in the main on willing ears”. But then the British Ambassador intervened in conformity with Foreign Office policy: “Churchill’s French interlocutors naturally realise that he only speaks for himself and a very small section of British public opinion, and I lay great stress on this, and urge liberal sprinklings of salt on what he says”. (Gilbert, 2009, p. 960)¹³ As he wrote to Sir Alexander Cadogan, “I fervently hope that all these meetings will not unduly excite the French. In any case I shall do my best to calm them down and to convince them that Winston is not the arbiter of our destinies” (Gilbert, 2009, p. 959)¹⁴.

In *The Gathering Storm*, Churchill mentions the friendly atmosphere with Blum and Paul Reynaud. He also confirms his difficulties with Flandin: “We argued for two hours”. And he suggests that the first cracks in his absolute confidence in the French army appeared when hearing Gamelin, in contrast with his views after the manoeuvres in September 1936:

Gamelin, who also visited me, was rightly confident in the strength of the French Army at the moment, but none too comfortable when I questioned him upon the artillery, about which he had precise knowledge. (Churchill, 1948b, p. 282)

This was new, because until then he had only really been queasy about the French Air Force. Churchill also left Paris uneasy about the political developments there :

11 “Sir Eric Phipps to Lord Halifax, 27 March 1938”. Phipps Papers.

12 “Sir Eric Phipps to Lord Halifax, 28 March 1938”. Foreign Office Papers 800/311.

13 “Sir Eric Phipps to Lord Halifax, 27 March 1938”. Foreign Office Papers 800/311.

14 “Sir Eric Phipps to Sir Alexander Cadogan, 24 March 1938”. Phipps Papers.

The attention of the French Government to the dangers of the European scene was distracted by the ceaseless whirlpool of internal politics at the moment and by the imminent fall of the Blum Government. (Churchill, 1948b, p. 282)

Thus it seems clear that by the spring of 1938 behind the façade of absolute faith in French military invincibility in case of attack – he knew of course that what was later called the Maginot mentality precluded any French invasion of Germany – his faith in France’s political will to fight and ability to renew the *Union sacrée* of the Great War was no longer unshakeable.

Churchill and Clementine went to Paris again in July 1938, as official guests of the French Government during the Royal Visit, and Churchill continued to follow political developments in France extremely closely, keeping his correspondence with Blum and his successor Daladier. One instance of this is his exchange of correspondence with Paul Reynaud in October 1938. On the 10th, after Munich, Churchill wrote:

I cannot see what foreign policy is now open to the French Republic.... You have been infected by our weakness, without being fortified by our strength. The politicians have broken the spirit of both countries successively.... Not since the loss of the American Colonies has England suffered so deep an injury. France is back to the morrow of 1870. What are we to do?

To which Paul Reynaud replied on the 20th: “France is, alas, in a worse situation than in 1871” (Gilbert, 2009, p. 1208-9)¹⁵.

On his way to the French Riviera in January 1939, he spent a day in Paris, having lunch with Paul Reynaud and an afternoon conversation with Sir Eric Phipps at the Embassy before meeting Léon Blum “who was the most informing of all”, he wrote to Clementine in a long letter marked Secret in which he gave her a full account of his conversations, the gist of which being an evaluation of the odds which the French would have faced if they had invaded Germany at the time of the Czech crisis (Soames, 1998, p. 447)¹⁶. As he said to the House on 27 April, all this told on Anglo-French relations, but nothing should be allowed “to drive a wedge between us and France”. (Gilbert, 2009, p. 1477)

Churchill was again a guest of honour, on the official stand, for the 14th of July military parade on the Champs-Élysées. General Gamelin invited him to come again to visit another part of the Maginot Line and he wrote on the 21st to discuss the dates and details, ending his letter with flattering words on both the French Army and its supreme commander:

It was a great pleasure for me to see the splendid parade of the French Army and the French Empire on July 14, and if I may say so, to feel your hand upon this situation, which clearly approaches another climax. (Gilbert, 2009, p. 1572)¹⁷

Churchill’s last visit to France before the outbreak of war, in August, seems to deserve close attention since it tells us a lot about Churchill’s final attitude to France in those days of anxiety. His visit of the Maginot Line from the 14th to the 17th with Generals Gamelin and Georges greatly satisfied him, and on his return he wrote to the Secretary of State for War:

15 «Letter to Paul Reynaud, 10 October 1938”.

16 “Letter to Clementine, 8 January 1939 – Secret”.

17 “Letter to General Gamelin, 21 July 1939”.

By the spring of 1938 tChurchill faith in France’s political will to fight and ability to renew the Union sacrée of the Great War was no longer unshakeable

The French Front cannot be surprised. It cannot be broken at any point except by an effort which would be enormously costly in life, and would take so much time that the general situation would be transformed while it was in progress. (Churchill, 1948b, p. 384)

Retrospectively, however, Churchill reflected on the warning signs which he should have interpreted more percipiently:

What was remarkable about all I learned on my visit was the complete acceptance of the defensive which dominated my most responsible French hosts, and imposed itself irresistibly upon me. In talking to all these highly competent French officers, one had the sense that the Germans were the stronger, and that France no longer had the life-thrust to mount a great offensive. She would fight for her existence – *voilà tout!* (Churchill, 1948b, p. 384)

Back from the Maginot Line, he went for another painting holiday at a château where Clementine and their daughter Mary joined him. Shortening his family holiday in view of the deteriorating situation – the newspapers were full of rumours about a spectacular German-Soviet pact – Churchill stopped in Paris on his way back to England, having lunch once more with General Georges on the 23rd, who gave him a regained confidence in the French Army. This is confirmed by General Ironside, who wrote in his diary on the 27th, after having lunch at Chartwell with Churchill: “Winston was full of Georges, whom he had seen over in France. I found that he had become very French in outlook and had a wonderful opinion of the whole thing he saw” (Gilbert, 2009, p. 1597)¹⁸.

What is of course of considerable importance is that Churchill did not only say that he was impressed by the preparedness of the French Army in public speeches – this could be interpreted as perfunctory, insincere declarations – but in private, to close friends and associates. Now, that does not mean that he was naïve: he knew that the alliance with the French implied constant efforts, especially in view of the instability of their political leadership. Yet, one can notice how he was able to back the right horses in the long run – that is, the French leaders who emerged intact from the misdeeds and betrayals of defeatism, occupation and collaboration. By September 1939, Churchill had broken with Flandin – and he never got along well with Laval or Pétain. On the other hand, by then his two best political friends in France were Léon Blum and Paul Reynaud. The latter may have been unequal to the situation in May-June 1940, but he was not a traitor – and the same could be said of Gamelin, and also of Georges.

On the eve of the war, therefore, Churchill’s love and support for France was undoubtedly comforted by the substantial number of “sound” Frenchmen in high places with whom he was friends – and he would have no difficulty ignoring or fighting the rest during the war.

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4: 1939-1945

During the “Phoney War” period, which Churchill spent at the Admiralty, he naturally pleaded for the closest possible cooperation with France, as in 1914-1918. When he became Prime Minister on 10 May – the day of the German offensive – he never envisaged that the French could

18 “General Sir Edmund Ironside: diary, 27 August 1939”.

sue for a separate armistice, especially in view of the solemn agreement concluded between the two countries during Paul Reynaud's visit to London on 28 March. Admittedly, certain choices made by the French from September 1939 did not please him, like the confirmation of Gamelin when he would have preferred Georges as Commander-in-Chief, or their refusal to fill the gap in the Ardennes between the Maginot Line and the Allied Armies. But he was soon to despair of the French and their lack of nerve before the German breakthrough at Sedan.

Hardly ten days after the real start of hostilities, on 19 May, his secretary "Jock" Colville noted in his diary: "Winston also dictated a telegram to Reynaud, expressing his distress at the plight of the French army and insinuating that we had been rather let down" (Colville, 1985, p. 158). On the 25th, Churchill asked the three Chiefs of Staff to examine the options left to Britain if France withdrew from the war. The Dunkirk evacuation was of course linked to their conclusions, like the thorny question – never finally elucidated – of the sending of additional fighter squadrons to France. Churchill uneasily navigated between his military advisers who wanted to keep them and the French who clamoured for more: in so doing, however, he gave excuses to the defeatists. One thing is for sure: Paul Reynaud and de Gaulle were to approve of Churchill's decision to save most for the defence of Britain, the former in his Memoirs, the latter as early as 1940.

It seems that it is on 11 June, at Briare, that Churchill realised that all his efforts to keep France in the war had been in vain, particularly when his old friend General Georges intimated that suing for an armistice was inevitable. The confirmation came for Churchill on 13 June, at the Tours prefecture, where he had come to attend what was to be the last Inter-Allied Council of this phase of the war, when Reynaud officially announced to the British delegation that General Weygand had formally recommended that the Government should ask the German terms for an armistice. In his Memoirs, Churchill has very harsh words towards Weygand – in some way the exact opposite of Foch in his mind. On the extraordinary affair of the Franco-British Union proposed on 15-16 June, "my first reaction was unfavourable" he later wrote (Churchill, 1949, p. 205). But after the war, he did not doubt that if Reynaud had held his own on the 16th at Bordeaux, on the 17th the two Prime Ministers would "have uplifted and converted the defeatists round the table, or left them in a minority or even under arrest". In his Memoirs, Churchill proposes a scenario of speculation:

France would never have ceased to be one of the principal belligerent allies and would have been spared the fearful schism which rent and still rends her people. Her homeland no doubt would have lain prostrate under the German rule, but that was only what actually happened after the Anglo-American descent in November, 1942.

Now that the whole story is before us, no one can doubt that the armistice did not spare France a pang. (Churchill, 1949, p. 222)

France was to stay among the belligerents, but alas not the "principal" ones. In his own Memoirs, Colville suggests that Churchill would have liked Georges Mandel – a prominent anti-defeatist and moderate right-wing minister since 1938 – to take the lead of a movement which would "carry on the struggle from North Africa". But Mandel wanted to stay with his fellow Jews and his origins made him "unacceptable to many of his compatriots". Since "there was no other available politician of comparable experience... the lot therefore fell on Charles de Gaulle" (Colville, 1981, p. 196). Churchill of course does not say that de Gaulle was his second-best choice – on the contrary, he gives us to understand that he unhesitatingly spotted him as "the

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Constable of France” (Churchill, 1949, p. 215), thus immediately likening him to Du Guesclin, the implacable enemy of the English during the Hundred Years War.

Still, it would be an exaggeration to say that Churchill staked everything on de Gaulle, since he was careful to keep the possibility of arrangements with Vichy whenever they best served British interests. This infuriated de Gaulle, who is now seen as having been over-sensitive in his denunciation of Churchill’s supposed scheming in the Levant, both at the time and in his War Memoirs. Few historians today accept the Gaullist thesis that a Machiavellian Churchill tried to take advantage of France’s misfortune to further the interests of the British Empire. One only has to consider Churchill’s constant, undeniable efforts to impose the legitimacy of the Free French, first to a British public which was initially unconvinced, if not outright hostile, then to Soviets who were indifferent and finally to Americans who had long been negatively influenced by the Anti-Gaullists who had taken refuge in their country. The most obdurate of Churchill’s critics cannot deny his efforts finally to obtain the recognition of the Free French Government, a seat for France in the Security Council of the United Nations and a Zone of Occupation in Germany.

Churchill’s inner conflict between his personal tenderness towards France and the harsh facts of Britain’s survival probably reached a climax at the time of the “Greek tragedy”, as he calls it, of Mers el-Kébir (Oran) – when he gave orders to open fire in July 1940 in the face of Admiral Darlan’s refusal to yield, duly obeyed by his subordinates. Three elements were inextricably linked following this “hateful decision, the most unnatural and painful in which I have ever been concerned” (Churchill, 1949, p. 232): the enormous relief of warding off the threat of a German seizure of the French fleet, the self-satisfaction of hearing the Parliamentary Conservative Party applauding him unanimously for the first time, but also the realisation of the harm done by the death of so many French sailors to this Anglo-French alliance which he had so assiduously cultivated since at least 1933. Admittedly, de Gaulle rose to the occasion and put the blame on Vichy’s blind obstinacy – but how many Frenchmen followed him in July 1940?

Churchill patiently strove to heal the wounds, beginning with his fine broadcast in French on 21 October – which few people were in fact able to hear. Its importance lies in the symbolic dimension of the speech, which reaffirms his faith in the French and his love of France:

Frenchmen! For more than thirty years in peace and war I have marched with you, and I am marching still on the same road. To-night I speak to you at your firesides wherever you may be, or whatever your fortunes are. I repeat the prayer around the lousid”or, “Dieu protège la France”.[...] Never will I believe that the soul of France is dead. Never will I believe that her place among the greatest nations of the world has been lost forever! [...] Vive la France! (Churchill, 1941, p. 295-97)¹⁹

In his Memoirs, Churchill credits this broadcast with an impact which it was unable to have, if only because the German jamming made inaudible the passages which his English accent did not render incomprehensible. Linking it with the Oran tragedy as a sub-text, he suggests that it led to a general forgiveness:

There is no doubt that this appeal went home to the hearts of millions of Frenchmen, and to this day [1949] I am reminded of it by men and women of all classes in France, who al-

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19 The French text follows, pp. 298-300.

ways treat me with the utmost kindness in spite of the hard things I had to do – sometimes to them – for our common salvation. (Churchill, 1949, p. 512)

The great ceremony of reconciliation had to wait until the celebrations of 11 November 1944, when Churchill was the Guest of Honour, sitting on de Gaulle's right on the official grandstand before being received by the Resistant authorities of the City of Paris who – knowing his taste for military memorabilia – presented him with a Nazi flag taken from the enemy during the Liberation street fights. He resided at the Quai d'Orsay – which gave him occasion to remark on the contrast between 1940 and 1944: "Everything was mounted and serviced magnificently, and inside the palace it was difficult to believe that my last meeting there [...], with Reynaud's Government and General Gamelin in May 1940 was anything but a bad dream" (Churchill, 1966, p. 211)

The harsh constraints of *Realpolitik* re-emerged as the Nazi peril receded, but Churchill could rejoice once more that his personal feelings coincided with his country's interests. As he explained at Yalta to President Roosevelt:

To give France a zone of occupation was by no means the end of the matter. Germany would surely rise again, and while the Americans could always go home the French had to live next door to her. A strong France was vital not only to Europe but to Great Britain. She alone could deny the rocket sites on her Channel coast and build up an army to contain the Germans. (Churchill, 1966, p. 292)

This sounded very much like the "Thank you for the French Army of 1933". At the same time, Churchill entrusted the great Francophile, Duff Cooper, with the Paris Embassy. Thanks also to his beautiful wife, a perfect hostess, at a time when austerity was the order of the day in post-Liberation Paris, the glittering receptions given at the Residence made it the undisputed seat of intelligent conversation, gourmet food, fine wines, vintage champagne and old brandy: everything that Churchill enjoyed in France. He was a frequent visitor – and this was probably enough to convince him that his beloved *France éternelle* was back on the world stage after this detestable, but after all relatively short period of absence.

5: 1945-1965

In his first major post-war speech in France, at Metz on 14 July 1946, Churchill enthusiastically reaffirmed his faith in the Anglo-French alliance in spite of the events of 1940:

Never have I allowed the slightest recrimination between Britain and France and never must you allow the slightest recrimination between France and Britain. History will tell its tale, for us both, of tragedy, of triumph, of honour.

It has woven our two peoples together in a manner indissoluble and inviolable. We fought each other for many centuries. And now we must help each other all we can. Shame to any who deny this vital fact. (Churchill, 1948a, p. 173)

As Leader of the Opposition from 1945 to 1951, he never ceased to call the Anglo-American allies, in the Commons, in North America and during his European tours, to support the rapid recovery of France. Even more remarkable, in the course of his Zürich speech on "The United States of Europe" on 19 September 1946, he proposed for France no less than "the moral leadership of Europe" (Churchill, 1948a, p. 201). Those who subscribe to Freudian

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theories would argue that there was a dimension of self-interest, since a prosperous France would enable him to resume his travels – in style – to the châteaux and villas which he loved on the French Riviera. He in fact lost no time in taking up his old habits, for he spent a week at Hendaye before going back to Potsdam in July 1945. This was the first of a long series of extended holidays in the South of France, including Monaco, which only ended in June 1963, when he became too weak to leave Britain.

In Paris, he was always received as a major statesman. In May 1947, he was awarded the *Médaille militaire* at the Invalides by the Prime Minister, Paul Ramadier – dining in the evening with the President of the Republic, Vincent Auriol, a pre-war political friend. His presence at Metz for the 14th of July celebrations in 1946 is explained by an extraordinary *rendez-vous* given in November 1942 to General Giraud when his native city was liberated. At Strasbourg on 15 August 1949, where he received the Freedom of the City, he also gave an applauded speech to the crowds massed on the largest square. The following month, at the Hôtel de Paris in Monte-Carlo, they demolished a wall in the cellar which had hidden the oldest brandies from the occupiers to celebrate the return of their most famous guest.

What remains most surprising today is that he scarcely slowed the pace of his visits to France when he was back in power in 1951. His constant presence was excellent publicity for the local tourist industry and in September 1952 the Town Council of Cap-d'Ail made him Honorary Mayor. He came back in September 1953, to recover from his major stroke, and continued to often stay there with his old crony Lord Beaverbrook after his retirement in 1955. From a political point of view, one can perceive a wide difference between his insistence in Opposition on the restoration of France as a major power and his impatience with the French in 1951-1955: by then, they had become an embarrassment for his obsessive pursuit of a Summit of the Big Three, as he made it painfully obvious to the French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister during the Bermuda Conference of December 1953. We do not know what he answered to his wife, who wrote from London after reading reports of the discussions in the press: “The general impression is that the French have been as tiresome, obstructive & odious as usual” (Soames, 1998, p. 377)²⁰. But this is perhaps the place to quote “Jock” Colville’s magnificently percipient remark: “de Gaulle’s loyalty was [...] to France *alone*. Churchill’s [...] was merely to Britain *first*” (Colville, 1981, p. 209).

With the burden of the Premiership over, France became again only a source of pleasure and honours. Two partly overlapping attractions drew him to it from 1955: his literary agent’s splendid villa at Roquebrune, and Onassis’ yacht and Hôtel de Paris at Monte-Carlo. Both hosts organised sparkling dinner parties for him as he loved them, with important people reshaping the world in their informed conversations. At Roquebrune, he met old acquaintances like Paul Reynaud, former President René Coty and former Chancellor Adenauer. On his way to the Riviera, he often stopped in Paris. On 6 November 1958 he was made *Compagnon de la Libération* by de Gaulle, who decided to reopen the Order for him. Churchill was obviously flattered – and on that occasion all the old quarrels were forgotten. Further meetings between the Churchills and the de Gaulles took place at the Nice prefecture and in London. A final source of satisfaction for the aging Churchill was that he also saw de Gaulle introduce – not the Westminster Model which was Churchill’s lifelong ideal – but at last some form of stability in

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20 “Letter from Clementine, 8 December 1953”.

French political life, as he had always suffered from the lack of continuity in government action under the 3rd and 4th Republics.

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CHURCHILL, EUROPE AND TURKEY

Churchill, Europa y Turquía

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Autor

From the early 1930s until his peace time premiership (1951-1955), Winston Churchill was one of the strongest advocates of the concept of a United Europe. While this is well known among scholars of 20th century British history, Churchill's actual vision for what a United Europe might look like has received less attention. Still less attention has been paid to Churchill's opinions of the roles other nations might play within the new Europe. This article will examine Churchill's view of Turkey in the new European order and will reveal that Churchill saw Turkey as a part of, (or at least an extension of) Europe. However, this article will also reveal that Churchill's conceptualisation of Turkey's role was largely predicated on 19th century geostrategic thinking.



Abstract

Winston Churchill; Turkey; United Europe; European Council; Rebuilding Europe.

Winston Churchill; Turquía; Europa unida; Consejo Europeo; reconstrucción de Europa.



Key words

Desde inicios de la década de 1930 hasta su mandato en época de paz (1951-1955), Winston Churchill fue uno de los grandes defensores del concepto de una Europa unida. Mientras que los académicos de la historia británica del siglo XX conocen esa característica, la visión que Churchill tenía sobre la forma que tomaría la Europa unida ha recibido menos atención. Y aún se sabe menos sobre la opinión de Churchill con respecto al rol que otras naciones deberían desempeñar en la nueva Europa. El presente artículo examinará la visión de Churchill sobre Turquía en el nuevo orden europeo y, así, revelará que Churchill consideraba a Turquía como parte (o al menos una extensión) de Europa. De todas formas, este artículo también revelará que la conceptualización de Churchill sobre Turquía aparecía a menudo en el pensamiento geoestratégico del siglo XIX.



Resumen

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Fechas

From the early 1930s until his peace time premiership (1951-1955), Winston Churchill was one of the strongest advocates of the concept of a United Europe. While this is well known among scholars of 20th century British history, Churchill's actual vision for what a United Europe might look like has received less attention. In the shadow of "Brexit", the scholarly debate has remained focused on the role Churchill believed Britain might play in the European post war order; whether Britain would be an integral nation within the "United States of Europe" or if like a flying buttress, Britain would support the new Europe from the outside. This debate has overshadowed interesting questions which arise from Churchill's vision of post war Europe. For instance, this debate has overlooked what Churchill believed might be the structural and legal framework of European integration and other, far more basic issues like which countries could be members of the European order.

For Churchill, membership to the United States of Europe was simple. In Brussels, on 26 February 1949, Churchill's speech to the *Salle des Beaux Arts* said that, "[a]ny European country that sincerely accepts and adopts the principles set forth [in the Charter of Human Rights proclaimed the United Nations Organisation] will be welcome by the European Union" (Rhodes-James, 1974). Churchill envisioned a path which could be open to several countries to attain membership to the European Union, but perhaps the most interesting of these is Turkey. Despite his defeat by Ottoman forces at the Dardanelles in 1915 and the political collapse of the Coalition Government brought on by the Chanak Crisis in 1922, Churchill held no grudge against Turkey. He saw Turkey as a potential ally and partner much as he did prior to the First World War.

Turkey, like Britain, is a geographical outlier in Europe. Another crucial point is that to some degree, both nations struggle with their "European" identity. For Britain, there has been always been a tension between its imperial character and its European character. This of course posed no problems for Churchill who saw these two characteristics as a part of the three interlinked circles: "The first circle for us is naturally the British Commonwealth and Empire, with all that that comprises. Then there is also the English-speaking, World in which we, Canada, and the other British Dominions and the United States play so important a part. And finally there is United Europe" (Churchill, 1950). In terms of its relationship to Europe, Turkish identity is far more fractured. Turkey has dealt with questions of being Eastern or Western, being secular or non-secular, and of being European or Asian for centuries. Like Churchill's complex reading of British character and Europe, modern scholarship has moved beyond such mutually exclusive, binary questions (Massicard, 2013).

It follows that Churchill's interlinking circles of identity for Britain might be applied to Turkey as well. In this way, Churchill saw Turkey as more than just a European state or Near Eastern state. Rather, he retained strategic ideas of nineteenth century such as Britain's "Eastern Question" strategies and applied them to the post war world. After all, Britain had been an ally with the Ottoman Empire against Russian Imperial expansion in the nineteenth century. In Churchill's mind, this might help provide a model for dealing with Soviet expansion in the twentieth century.

In order to understand the role for Turkey in Churchill's Europe, there are three areas of his understanding which will need to be considered. The first is regarding the historical perspective of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire. This will need to be examined to gauge how his father's influence and indeed the influence of the Conservative party may have affected Churchill's

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understanding of Turkey's role in Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. The second area of understanding is to analyze Churchill's 1943 "Morning thoughts" and meetings with the United States which he records in his Second World War memoirs, where he most clearly articulates his vision for the role of Turkey in the future of Europe. The final area of thought is to consider the post war realities and to what extent Turkey's relationship with Europe and Britain reflected Churchill's vision.

Historical Perspectives

Winston Churchill, like his father Lord Randolph Churchill, came from a Conservative political background. Many in the Tory party approached British relationship with the Ottoman Empire in geostrategic terms. One of the loudest Tory voices was Benjamin Disraeli who championed the Ottoman Empire as an ally against Russian Expansion in Asia and the Near East. Winston Churchill later described the Tory mood on the Eastern question as "tremendous and inflexible" (Churchill, 1906). Despite this atmosphere, Lord Randolph welcomed the sacrifice of Ottoman holdings in the Balkans, though significantly not Turkey-in-Europe with which he was content. Lord Randolph reached out to the Liberal, firebrand Charles Dilke declaring that the aim of the British government should be "the complete freedom and independence of the Slav nationality, as opposed to any reconstruction of the Turkish Empire" (Churchill, 1906).

However, as Winston Churchill pointed out in his father's biography, these views were entirely private. In the fray between Conservatives and Liberals regarding the Eastern Question "Lord Randolph Churchill took no public part" and it is only from his "private letters that we may learn how decided were his sympathies" (Churchill, 1906). Perhaps this indicates that Lord Randolph Churchill was not particularly committed one way or another. But a more convincing view might be that Churchill was simply using the Eastern question to "sabotage his party's stance" and advance the standing of his Conservative splinter group, the "Fourth Party" (Roy Foster, 1981). In any case, understanding Lord Randolph's actual position is difficult because of his numerous contradictory and paradoxical positions on the matter. In an article in *Fortnightly* in 1883, Randolph Churchill praised the late Benjamin Disraeli's policies on "imperial rule and the great Eastern development of the empire" (Foster, 1981).

While the full complexities of the "Eastern Question" are too innumerable for this article to explore, it is clear how Winston Churchill understood his father's views on the government's occupation of Egypt in 1882. The biography of his father explains that Lord Randolph believed "the whole policy of intervention seemed a flagrant political blunder and a crowning violation of Liberal principles". Winston believed his father saw it as a "wicked" and an "unjust war" (Churchill, 1906). While the occupation was supported by some of the Tories on the grounds "the ministers had done their duty to the national interest", their support was most likely a gamble to undermine the Liberal party and its leader William Gladstone (Shannon, 1999). Though Gladstone was half-hearted about British intervention, he allowed his government, as Winston Churchill put it, to be "dragged deeper and deeper into the horrible perplexities of the Egyptian riddle" (Churchill, 1906). Eventually the liberal Gladstone embraced his role as imperialist and had "eager outbursts of triumphalism and vainglory" (Shannon, 1999).

This reverse in Gladstone's approach to foreign policy illustrates the cultural lens through which the Liberal Party viewed the British role the East and what the nature of Britain's relationship

with the Ottoman Empire should be. Gladstone saw the Ottoman Empire in religious terms and thus as an Asian power which was fundamentally non-European. In a letter to Edwin Freshfield, Gladstone said “[w]ith regard to the condition of the Turkish Empire I cannot regard the Musslaman rule in Europe as normal or permanent” though he stops short of saying they should be forced past the straits and out of Europe. He does add that “in Asia I have ever supposed they had a greater chance of duration with a fairer field” (Matthew, 1982). This is confirmed by his condemnation of the Berlin Treaty in 1880 which re-established a greater Turkey-in-Europe. Compounding Gladstone’s anti-Ottoman outlook was his sincere philhellenic approach to the Eastern Mediterranean. He supported Greek claims in Thessaly, Epirus, and Crete and lambasted the Berlin treaty as “insane” because he thought it supported the integrity of Ottoman holdings against Greek territorial ambitions (Shannon, 1999). These differences in world view of the Conservatives and Liberals had interesting effects on the young Churchill’s understanding of the Ottoman Empire (Toye, 2011).

One of Churchill’s earliest and serious reflections on the Ottoman Empire was before his departure for India in 1897. In a series of letters between Churchill and his mother, they argued over the situation in the Balkans and the impending Greco-Turkish War (Ekinci, 2006).

Despite initially criticizing the Salisbury government’s support for the Ottomans against the Greeks, Churchill ultimately declared that he would be embedded on the Turkish side. In a letter to his mother on 21 April 1897 Churchill said while his sympathies were “entirely with the Greeks”, he thought that “the Turks are bound to win, they are in enormous strength and will be on the offensive the whole time” (CHAR 28/23/36-38). By 28 April, Churchill was asking for money to be sent to the Ottoman bank. However, the Balkan War was over too soon for Churchill to get involved. According to Churchill’s autobiography *My Early Life* (1930), he met Ian Hamilton (later Sir General Ian Hamilton) on a transfer boat, and while Hamilton had promised his service to Greece, Churchill had promised his to Turkey. While Churchill’s allegiance to Turkey largely owes to his lust for glory, an additional explanation might be that he inherited a “Turkophile” attitude from his father. Churchill went on to write that Hamilton was a “romantic” and was thus “for the Greeks,” while he “having been brought up a Tory... was for the Turks” (Churchill, 1930).

The flexibility of Churchill’s views on Turkey might be seen in light of his own ambiguous political identity during the early years of his career. It was already evident that by 1897, Churchill “did not regard the Conservative Party as his natural political home” (Toye, 2011). In the same letter that he denounced Lord Salisbury’s foreign policy with Russia and Turkey as “foolish” and “wicked”, Churchill confessed to his mother that he was “a Liberal in all but name” (CHAR 28/23/31-33A). Despite this Churchill entered Parliament in 1900 as a Conservative but by 1902 he had become frustrated with the Conservative Party’s penchant for protectionist economic policies. In May 1904 Churchill formally switched to the Liberal Party, not as a rejection of Conservative policy regarding Turkey but from a desire to refute protectionism and an interest in domestic social reform (Toye, 2011).

Despite becoming a “Liberal *enfant terrible*”, Churchill’s view of Britain’s foreign policy toward Turkey remained closer to the traditional Conservative perspective (Toye, 2011). That is to say that the Ottoman Empire would be best treated as an ally, especially since there were so many Muslims in India who had an allegiance to the Ottoman Caliph. So Churchill went out of his way to create personal friendships with members of Committee of Union and Progress and

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even pushed for an Anglo-Ottoman alliance in 1911 during the Tripolitanian War (Dockter, 2015). Significantly, this was based on Churchill's belief that the British Empire was "the greatest Mohammedan power in the world" and that Britain was the "only power who can really help and guide [Turkey]" (Gilbert, 1972). Here it is obvious that Churchill sees Turkey as an Islamic power and thus Asian power while still being a European power, much like Britain is a European power with a large number of Muslim subjects in Asia.

As the First World War loomed on the horizon, it became clear that the Ottoman Empire would not be a neutral nation but would instead go to the Central powers. Churchill's fears remained focused on Turkey's theological power among Muslims. In November 1914 the Ottoman Empire declared war on the allied powers and shortly afterwards the Sultan and Caliph declared a jihad against Britain and the Allies. When news of this reached Churchill, he became very fearful that "the weight of Islam will be drawn into the struggle on the German side". Aware of the German desire to exploit Britain's position in Asia, Churchill became concerned the call to jihad would serious effect the outcome of the war. In January 1916 he recorded his thoughts:

The Mohammedan influence in Asia will carry with it all kindred forces along in Egypt and along the North-African shore. It is in Asia, through Mesopotamia, Persia, Afghanistan, and ultimately India that England will be struck at and her crown of acquisitions cancelled out. India is the target, Islam is the propellant, and the Turk is the projectile. (CHAR 2/71/6-9)

This further underscores Churchill's view of the Ottoman Empire as a religious and Asian power. However, he still simultaneously understood the Ottoman Empire (and thus Turkey) to be a European nation as well. After the First World War, Churchill kept a relatively positive view of Turkey. His Cabinet memorandum of 7 June 1920 strongly criticized the Treaty of Sèvres, which awarded Thrace and Smyrna to Greece, as unjust and noted that it was unenforceable, because it "would condemn to anarchy and barbarism for an indefinite period the greater part of the Turkish Empire" (Gilbert, 1977). In his memoirs of the First World War Churchill praised the Turkish nation saying "The Turk was still alive. In his breast was beating the heart of a race that had challenged the world, and for centuries had contended all victoriously all comers" (Churchill, 1929).

However, Churchill's views of Turkey as a European power changed in 1922 when he reluctantly accepted Lloyd George's position that the new Turkish nationalist forces led by Mustapha Kemal (Ataturk) must halt their advance toward reclaiming Constantinople and pushing back into Europe. On their march the Turkish Nationalists encountered the British garrison at Chanak and a standoff ensued. Lloyd George and the Cabinet issued harsh ultimatums threatening war if the Nationalists continued, but the nationalists refused to yield. Lloyd George released a press communiqué which implied that France, the dominions, and the Balkan States were all as resolute as Lloyd George and Churchill to halt The Turkish Nationalists. It was released to the press before any external powers were made aware of it and its aggressive tone alienated the allied and commonwealth powers as well as the British public who were not interested in fighting a new war. This ultimately destroyed the coalition government and Churchill found himself without an office, while Lloyd George was never elected to office again.

An explanation of Churchill's acquiescence to Lloyd George's liberal anti-Turkish view might be found in Churchill shock and disgust at the Armenian massacres which had taken place at the hands of the Turks (Dockter, 2015). Gilbert wrote that Churchill "had been shocked by

As the First World War loomed on the horizon, it became clear that the Ottoman Empire would not be a neutral nation but would instead go to the Central powers

the Turkish slaughter of Armenians throughout 1921" (Gilbert, 1979). Indeed, Churchill was circulating memoranda on the dangers to Armenia as early as August 1919 (CAB/24/87) and in his memoirs he noted that news of Turkish atrocities committed on Greek and Armenian Christians "appeared daily" (Churchill, 1929). This combined with Churchill's watchful eye on public opinion and his inclination toward action, probably made his switch to Lloyd George's position relatively simple, despite the years he had put in working to a more sympathetic resolution with Turkey. Though he lost his position, Churchill would take his sympathetic views of Turkey into the Second World War as well.

Churchill's vision for Turkey

As the Second World War raged Churchill sought to keep Turkey as a neutral nation. He also hoped he could convince President Ismet Inonu to join the allied cause. Churchill was right to be worried. The relationship between Britain and Turkey began to deteriorate going into the 1940s because of a reduction in the Anglo-Turkish chrome trade. As a result, the Foreign Office seemed to be unable to develop a policy that took into account in any coherent way "the realities of the Turkish economy and the daunting facts of German expansionism [...]. This had to wait until Churchill took over Turkey personally" (Dennison, 1997). This lukewarm approach to Turkey was enforced by Anthony Eden's ambivalence toward the Turkish policy, Harold Macmillan's personal relationship with Turkish officials and the British Ambassador, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen belief that neutrality was all Britain could hope for and that an alliance would never materialise.

Churchill sought to develop the relationship almost personally from 1943 and his reason for pursuing "Turkish belligerency" against Nazi forces was "a concept dating back to *at least* the First World War" (Tamkin, 2009). Churchill believed that advances in North Africa, lands previous held by the Ottoman Empire, might help bring Turkey into the war. Churchill corresponded with Roosevelt and Stalin to discuss the advantages of the Turkish alliance. Churchill believed this would allow the "the bombing of Romanian oilfields", "opening a shipping route to the Soviet Union" and "supply naval assistance in the Black Sea" (Tamkin, 2009). These strategic objectives replicate Churchill's objectives in 1915 during the Dardanelles campaign, another indication that Churchill's ideas were heavily predicated on nineteenth century ideals and Edwardian concepts.

Churchill's reliance on nineteenth century thinking regarding Turkey can be seen in two-distinctive but interconnected concepts. The first is Churchill's geographic imagination of where Turkey actually was. In 1942, when Churchill proposed to restructure the Middle East Command, his suggestion illuminates his view that he had "always felt that the name "Middle East" for Egypt, the Levant, and Turkey was ill chosen. This was the Near East" (Churchill, 1951). This is clear because Churchill used the term "Middle East" freely. At times, Churchill included Turkey in the "Middle East" and was thus "prepared to see the Middle East jump into Europe" (Davison, 1960). For instance, Churchill wrote General Wavell on 26 November saying that there was a possibility that the "centre of gravity in the Middle East" might shift from "Egypt to the Balkans and from Cairo to Constantinople" (Churchill, 1949). This letter also reveals that Churchill's failure to form a static version of the "Middle East" was, at least in some way, connected to Turkey's role as the former caliphate. This is further evidenced by Churchill's tendency to revert back to the Victorian designation of "Near East" (which was

As the Second World War raged Churchill sought to keep Turkey as a neutral nation

synonymous with the Ottoman Empire) as well as tendency to use the term “Constantinople” instead of “Istanbul” in official letters during the Second World War.

The concept that illustrates that Churchill continued his nineteenth century thinking regarding Turkey was his insistence that by being allied with Turkey meant that the entire Islamic World was also an ally. In a BBC broadcast on 12 November 1939, Churchill stated: “Turkey and the whole of Islam have ranged themselves instinctively but decisively on the side of progress” (Gilbert, 1993). Churchill’s speech indicated that his understanding of the Turkey’s position in the “Middle East” never really evolved past nineteenth century ideals. In the Edwardian era Churchill’s views would have been more logical, but it seems anachronistic in the early 1940s. By then, Turkey had become mostly secular and “Westernized” after Atatürk’s reforms. The Turkish connection to Islam as a religion was nowhere near as prominent as it had been in the Edwardian era. But Churchill maintained this view which connected Turkey to the Middle East and so he saw Turkey as something of a European fulcrum which could help secure Middle Eastern security.

At the Casablanca conference in January 1943 Churchill convinced Roosevelt that approaching Turkey was a good idea and he set off to meet with President Inonu in Adana, despite the War Cabinet’s advice that he not go and Eden’s apprehension at the plan. Churchill met with President Inonu on the 30 January 1943 and he laid out the case that Britain and the West could help build up Turkish defences with weapons if they would keep a neutral position and enter the war when they were ready (Tamkin, 2009).

The day after Churchill met President Inonu, he recorded his ideas on the post war order, which he called his “Morning Thoughts”. He preserved them in his memoirs laying out his vision for post war order in Europe and how Turkey might fit into that vision. As he imagined the first iteration of a European Union, he argued that this new “European government” would “only be made up of the great nations of Europe *and Asia Minor* as long established,” which not only implies Turkey had a major role to play in Europe but also that Churchill continued to think of the Turkey as a great power, much as it had been in Churchill’s youth (Tamkin, 2009). Churchill then imagines that this European Union will be made up of smaller units of countries including a Scandinavian bloc, a Danubian bloc and a Balkan bloc (Churchill, 1951).

While these outlines imply a role for Turkey in the European order, it wasn’t until Churchill’s meeting on 22 May 1942 with the American delegation at the British Embassy in Washington that he more fully articulated his vision. He explained to Henry Stimson, US Secretary of War and Vice President Wallace that the post war European Union might be composed of “some twelve states or Confederations, who would form the Regional European Council”. He continued that that he hoped in South Eastern Europe “there might be several Confederations”. Revealing just how much the nineteenth century strategy remained in Churchill mind he proposed “a Danubian Federation based on Vienna and doing something to fill the gap caused by the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire”. He also proposed that “the Balkan Federation” might be joined by Greece and Turkey who would “play some part in the Balkan system” (Churchill, 1951). It is also important to note that Churchill told his private Secretary Jock Colville as early as December 1940 that he envisioned the Balkan confederation would have “Turkey at its head and Constantinople as its capital” (Colville, 1985).

Based on Churchill’s view of the how the post war European Union would work it is very clear that he saw Turkey as playing a key role in not only European affairs but also in the global

The concept that illustrates that Churchill continued his nineteenth century thinking regarding Turkey was his insistence that by being allied with Turkey meant that the entire Islamic World was also an ally

order. However, Churchill's attempts to bring Turkey into the war were repeatedly frustrated until Turkey symbolically declared war on Germany in February 1945. He made it clear to President İnönü that in order to "have a seat at the Council" Turkey would have to be "among the victors". Turkey's reluctance to enter the war made Churchill fret about his ability to "protect them from Russia" (Tamkin, 2009). As a result of the Turkish policy of neutrality Stalin pressed his objective to control the Dardanelles straits. Relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey became so hostile that by March 1945, the Soviet Union terminated the "Treaty of Friendship" which the two powers had signed in 1925 with a view to renegotiate the terms including a new straits convention (Hale, 2000). This break down in Turkish-Soviet relations underscored the problematic nature of the Turkish policy of "active neutrality" (largely advocated by the Turkish Foreign Minister Numan Menemencioğlu) which was based on their own nineteenth century experience of playing European empires off one another. However, Soviet aggression and the revelation of a bi-polar world order revealed this approach would no longer work in the twentieth century and ultimately pushed Turkey toward Churchill and the welcoming West.

Post War Realities

The realities of the post war world were best articulated by Winston Churchill in his *Sinews of Peace* speech on 5 March 1946. Churchill described the "special relationship" between the US and UK as well as the "iron curtain" descending in Europe. Stalin's frustration with Turkey continued to grow as they continued to deny the Soviet Union shipping rights through the straits. Fears became palpable that Stalin intended to invade Turkey. Necmeddin Sadak, later the Turkish Foreign Minister, even claimed the Soviet Union intended to occupy the straits (fulfilling the Imperial Russian war aims in the First World War and Great Game) and install "a Communist government in Ankara" (Hale, 2000).

At the beginning of 1946, Turkey remained low among US strategic priorities but as the climate continued to deteriorate it became clear that something had to be done. With a view to reassure Turkey, the *USS Missouri* was ordered to enter the straits to return the body of the much loved Turkish ambassador Mehmet Munir Ertegun. While the full effects of the *Missouri's* arrival on 5 April 1946 (one month after Churchill's speech in Fulton) are still debated in Turkish historiography, it is clear this at least signalled to the Soviets the West's intention to prevent Turkey becoming a Soviet satellite (Bakin, 2010). Admiral Leahy, the US naval Chief-of-Staff proclaimed to Churchill that "the arrival and stay of such a powerful American fleet in the straits must be entirely beneficial" (Gilbert, 1988).

The intended effect was successful and pushed Turkey closer to the British and US sphere of influence. However, the Soviets continued to push for control of the Straits and at times press their claim on the Kars and Ardahan regions of Turkey. Amidst this tension and facing severe financial difficulties, the Attlee Government made it clear to the Truman Administration in February 1947 that it could no longer support Greece or Turkey. This was something of a disaster for Churchill's post war vision. The South Eastern flank of the European Union might begin to fall under the spell of Communism and Soviet intrigue. Much to Churchill's delight, Truman stepped into the breach by adopting the Truman doctrine a year after Churchill's speech at Fulton. The United States pledged to contain Soviet threats to Turkey and Greece and the primary objective was to ensure that Turkey maintained control of the Straits. In order

to achieve this, the US invested approximately \$100 million in Turkey as a component of the Marshall Plan (Bilgin, 2008). However, Turkey had relatively full gold reserves owing to a loan taken out with the allied powers prior to the war. This additional investment from the Marshall Plan became a sticking point for less well off countries in Europe and became something of “an embarrassment” for Turkey who still needed the funds to keep the Soviet Union at bay (Deringil, 1992).

Upon hearing the news, Churchill published a revealing article for *Life* magazine which exposes how much his world view was predicated on nineteenth century strategic notions, particularly concerning Turkey and the Middle East. Churchill proclaimed that “Great Britain is not capable alone of maintaining stability in the Eastern Mediterranean basin”. Implying that Truman’s Soviet containment was the intellectual inheritor of Britain’s “Game Game”, Churchill continued “The decline of British power has been accompanied by the rise of the expansion of Soviet Russia. The ambitions of this mighty communist Empire and oligarchy go far beyond the dreams of the Czarist days” (CHUR 4/72). Britain had supported the Ottoman Empire against Russian expansion, for Churchill Allied support of the Republic of Turkey must have seemed very familiar.

But Churchill was also wise enough to understand times were changing. The British Empire was in a serious decline. India and Burma were gaining independence and Britain had become a junior partner to the US. But Churchill still recognised a roll for Britain as a mentor State of the US in the post war order. He also recognised a role for Turkey as the guarantor of South East Europe and the Middle East against Soviet extremism and “Bolshevik barbarism”. As he told President Inonu in October 1948, “I rejoice that the United States as well as Great Britain are in such close sympathy with Turkey”. He added “I trust you are keeping your the gallant Turkish Army in good order to defend, if need be, your native lands” (Gilbert, 1988).

Churchill also continued to push for Turkey as a European state with Middle Eastern duties. He supported Turkey’s position on the Council of Europe in 1949. At Strasbourg on 11 August 1950 Churchill’s speech echoed his fear of Soviet expansion and called for a united “defensive front”, in which he called for all nations to do their best including Turkey (Gilbert, 1988). This indicates that Churchill felt strongly that Turkey should play a part of a united European Army, though Churchill later doubted the utility of a multi-national European army (CAB 128/25).

After 1951, Churchill regained power and his government sat until 1955. However, his interest in the European project began to wane in the face of cold war politics and pressure for the United States. Churchill’s government encouraged Turkey to join NATO in 1952, perhaps as a way of placating Turkey after it had been left out of NATO in 1949 despite Italy being invited in (Hale, 2000). However, it was becoming clear Turkey’s inclusion had more to do with its role as a strategic partner in the Middle East than its links to the post war European order.

To some degree this had to do with the change of government in Turkey. In 1950 the Democrat Party led by Adnan Menderes came to power for the first time. His administration pursued a policy to get formal American support much more aggressively than its predecessor (Bilgin, 2008). This meant accepting American terms regarding strategic regional roles and playing a strong Cold War ally. This led to Turkey’s inclusion in the Bagdad pact (1955) with Pakistan and Iraq and to their membership in the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). This “northern tier” strategy was meant to further contain the Soviets using Turkey’s position in the West and Pakistan’s in the East, with Iraq to hold the centre.

Churchill recognised the role for Turkey as the guarantor of South East Europe and the Middle East against Soviet extremism and “Bolshevik barbarism”

Churchill also embraced Turkey's Middle Eastern role because it was more in-line with American containment strategy, especially as Egyptian nationalism increased tension in the Eastern Mediterranean. Churchill hoped Turkey would help hold the Suez against Egyptian nationalist as part of a four-power-pact with the US, Britain, and France (Gilbert, 1988). At a cabinet meeting on 4 December 1952, it was agreed after Adnan Menderes' visit to London, that relations between the two countries were "more cordial than they had been for many years". It was also added that "[t]he full cooperation of Turkey, on which we could now rely, would be of great assistance to us in connection with the many problems arising in the Middle East" (CAB 128/25). Despite these strategic concerns, there were still echoes of Turkey's European cultural identity which Churchill's Government continued to indulge. One of which was the British Embassy's gifts of scotch whiskey as New Year's gifts for prominent Turkish figures. This tradition meant that in 1951 eight boxes of whiskey were sent to the Embassy to be distributed (FO 195/2675). Even when with full pressure of the United States operation view that Turkey was a Middle Eastern country and with geo-political demands of the Cold War, Churchill still thought of Turkey as something of a European power.

Conclusion

Winston Churchill's views of Turkey as European state are complex. They can be traced back to his Victorian youth and early days as an Edwardian statesman. During this period Churchill's own changing political alignments and the First World War meant that he pursued differing and at times contradictory strategies concerning Turkey. But he even as a Liberal he never succumbed to the blatant anti-Islamic feelings of Gladstone or the Phil-Hellenic desire to allow Greece to rule the Eastern Mediterranean which was encouraged by Lloyd George, though Churchill came close during the aftermath of the First World War concerning the Chanak Crisis.

However, those nineteenth century prejudices are virtually absent from Churchill's views of Turkey's role in the aftermath the Second World War. This could be explained by Churchill's desire to find an ally in Turkey against Germany and prevent something mirroring the Central alliance in the First World War. It could also be explained by Churchill's embrace of Atatürk's reforms in Turkey and the country's move toward Western style secularism. What were clearly left from the nineteenth century were the strategic notions of Turkey bolstering the Southern European flank and providing an alliance with other Islamic states.

These nineteenth century strategic concepts made their way into reality of the post war world. While political aspirations of the new government in Turkey and the United States preference for regional structures pushed Turkey into a more Middle Eastern sphere, Churchill continued to encourage the state into Western alliances such as the Council of Europe and NATO.

Churchill always celebrated the complex identity and dual role of Britain; at once a European state and an Empire and Commonwealth in its own right. There is no reason why Churchill would have not also celebrated the complexities of Turkish identity and its dual role as a European state and a Middle Eastern state. In fact, many of Churchill's strategies concerning Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean depended on Turkey's unique position as European, anti-communist power and an Islamic force for containment in the Middle East. Churchill remarked in his article for *Life* that he had to "go back to Europe and Asia because they showed

Winston Churchill's views of Turkey as European state are complex. They can be traced back to his Victorian youth and early days as an Edwardian statesman

him maps of these continents at school" (CHUR 4/72). In Churchill's mind, even in the Cold War, Turkey was at once in Europe and in the Middle East just like the maps he saw as a student at Harrow so many years ago.

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Which European Union? Europe after the Euro Crisis

Sergio Fabbrini

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Since the start of the euro crisis, several observers and scholars have focused on the problems of effectiveness and legitimacy that characterize the European Union (EU). Competing narratives of “debtor” and “creditor” states have occupied the public debate by creating a series of divides between “northern” and “southern” states or “fiscally responsible” and “profligate” states, with serious political consequences for an organization that aims to be a Union of States. According to Sergio Fabbrini, the main reason for this situation has to be found in the coexistence across the Union of different views on how the EU should redefine the sovereignty of member states and on the types of institutional mechanisms required to ensure its successful functioning. Fabbrini is a comparatist political scientist who uses the method of historical institutionalism (Skocpol, 1979; Tilly, 1992) to explore the evolution of international institutions. In this sense, the key concepts of Fabbrini’s analysis are “path dependence” and “critical juncture”. Processes of institutional integration among states can progress or stagnate, depending on how actors perceive opportunities and costs of actions. The euro crisis, with its capacity to question traditional institutional solutions, could potentially represent one of those “junctures” in which “actors with decision-making power can pursue potentially alternative courses of action because of the de-structuring of the previous context” (p. xxv).

In line with the institutionalist literature on the process of European integration (Sbragia, 1994; Caporaso, 2006; Hix & Hoyland 2011), Fabbrini studies the EU as an “internally highly differentiated political system” (p. 32), which must continually accommodate the different ways in which member states perceive the pace and goal of integration. After analyzing the institutional history of the EU up until the Lisbon Treaty and the euro crisis (chapters 1-3), Fabbrini critically discusses the three main perspectives of the EU – the economic community (chapter 4), the intergovernmental union (chapter 5), and the parliamentary union (chapter 6). He concludes that none of these represents the ideal solution to the problems of governance that exist in the Union. This is because the EU is a specific type of federal experiment that differs from most others – such as Germany and Canada – but which have similarities to at least two unions: the United States and Switzerland. The main feature of these two federal systems is that they evolved historically from a process of integration of units that were previously independent and sovereign. As such, these two states are examples of what Fabbrini defines as “compound polity” (Fabbrini, 2010), a complex institutional system in which territorial and historical reasons necessitate a double separation of power, one among institutions (executive, legislative, and judiciary) and one between the federal center and member states. The configuration of the EU as a Union of previously in-

dependent states makes it impossible to imagine the EU as a parliamentary federation, for example, because small states would feel inadequately protected and represented in such an institutional scheme. Moreover, the European demos lacks the essential characteristics of a national electorate. Nevertheless, the EU cannot merely be compared to a simple economic union either (as *Brexiters* and euro sceptics wish to believe), given the complexity and density of its policy-making system.

For Fabbrini, the Union should embrace the future by completing the development of its political system, which needs to be equipped with a clearer separation of powers and functions among its different institutional and political levels. Something that can only be achieved by a constitutional text, or at least a serious revision of the founding Treaties. In fact, in the midst of the financial crisis, member states largely favored the “inter-governmental method” by creating institutions (e.g. the Fiscal Compact), which pool key aspects of state sovereignty, such as in financial and fiscal policies. Nevertheless, states did not transfer these competencies to supranational institutions, based on the participation of the European Parliament and the Court of Justice in the decision-making process. Instead, these competencies have been transferred to intergovernmental institutions, which resemble more traditional mechanisms of international law rather than institutions of EU law. As a consequence, the majority of institutional actions taken by the EU reflect the preferences of the most powerful states, reintroducing a dynamic of competition among member states, which is not conducive to the sound working of the Union. In the confusion of functions and levels of power (who is responsible for what?), too many decisions have been delegated to institutions such as the Ecofin and the Council. For Fabbrini, the only solution is to revise the Treaties so as to integrate into EU legislation

the instruments of international law created to tackle the crisis and, above all, to clarify the separation among different levels of political and territorial responsibility. In the absence of clear rules, competition and jealousy among asymmetric and highly differentiated states will become the rule.

The book makes a fundamental contribution to enabling internationalist and comparative political scientists alike to understand the institutional and political gridlocks exposed by the crisis. The reader may sometimes be under the impression that the author remains at a very institutional level of analysis. For example, the different political and democratic identities that characterize member states are mentioned only briefly. The analysis deals primarily with their institutional visions of how the EU should work, without adding to the debate on how transnational institutions are perceived in democratic societies in an epoch of relative discontent with globalization. Nevertheless, this reads more like a work for social constructivist scholars who are keen to include in their theoretical frameworks variables such as identities, ideologies, and perceptions. From an institutionalist viewpoint, Fabbrini’s book effectively explains the dynamics of negotiation and coordination that led to the management of the euro crisis. The proposed solution does not always take into account the substantial lack of political consensus for a revision of the EU Treaties, especially at the national level. However, it provides a theoretically sound and empirically accurate account of the institutional nature of the EU. In this sense, Fabbrini’s explanations of why no credibility should be given to the transformation of the EU into a parliamentary federation or the return to a simple economic union of sovereign states are particularly insightful. The ability to evaluate competing and alternative policy scenarios will be the main goal of any politician and scholar interested in “repairing Europe”.

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