

# 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 its 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.

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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