The "Imperialism" of Winston Churchill

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> *I hate all this international sharping . . . . . If the Empire is anything at all, it is something infinitely more than a combination in restraint of trade.*
>
> H. G. WELLS.

"I HAVE not", said Mr. Churchill, in an oft-quoted passage, "become the King's First Minister to preside at the liquidation of the British Empire." Since those words were used, events have moved fast. "British Empire" is a term now generally avoided (except by those who use it for propagandist denunciation of Britain). Even "British Commonwealth" seems to offend, preference being shown for the vague term "Commonwealth countries", omitting "British." In Canada the *British North America Act* has now little more than antiquarian interest, all its significant clauses having been superseded if not repealed. To speak of "British North America" is to invite the sharp retort (especially in Montreal or Quebec.) "There is no such place—any more than there is a British South Africa, a British India, or a British Burma."

These changes were not effected under the presidency of Mr. Churchill. On the contrary, his removal from the Premiership was held indispensable to their completion. Five years of a very different leader produced in the British electorate the revolt of 1950, and as these lines are written, Mr. Atlee's resolve to hang on as long as possible though in intense alarm at every division (with a majority, as Mr. Churchill says, of "two or three or whatever it is") indicates what he expects next time the people have a chance to express their will. Whether Mr. Attlee's liquidating the Empire was resented and led to his punishment at the polls, I do not presume to judge. But whatever may yet befall his policies, a great deal that was done during these last five years could be undone only by a process not inaptly compared to "the unscrambling of eggs."

Mr. Churchill, whose absorbing concern for half a century has been the government of his country, watched the process of liquidation since 1901 with intense concern. He discerned its beginning, to which others were blind, and exerted all his powers to remove or amend the circumstances which were facilitating it. For he *believed in* the British Empire, though not with an uncritical but with a reforming faith. To borrow a similitude from theology, he may be called a modernist, not a fundamentalist, in his imperialism. His political orthodoxy, like the orthodoxy of many a churchman, was such as he found it difficult and even painful to adjust. But he knew that adjustment was needful if the essence was to be preserved, and for preservation of the essence he feels that he has now to fight the extravagant modernists much more than the stubborn fundamentalists. Like many a theologian becoming "a reactionary" after years of "liberal" leadership?

It is to tracing this development in Mr. Churchill that the following pages will be devoted.

II

HOW radiant, and how uncritical, was his original imperialism may be seen in his youthful publications, such as *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria*, or *The River War*, or *The Malakand Field Force*, each of more than half a century ago. They have the unmistakable ring of what, in the jargon of the time, was called "jingoism"—the doctrine expounded to the world of business and finance by Cecil Rhodes, applied in foreign policy by Joseph Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner, instilled in song for the masses by Rudyard Kipling. "The day of small kingdoms, with their petty jealousies, has passed", said Chamberlain, in one of the rapturous speeches at the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria—whose heart Disraeli had won by having her proclaimed "Empress of India." Just two years later, the Minister who had spoken so would illustrate his doctrine by initiating imperialist war in South Africa on the Transvaal and on the Orange Free State. Books on foreign affairs by Englishmen of the late nineteenth century—such as Seeley's *Expansion of England* and Dilke's *Problems of Greater Britain*—belong by their very titles to a way of thinking which it now requires an effort to recall. But to Mr. Churchill in his early twenties this was the faith by which every Englishman should live. How completely he had absorbed the imperialism which his country's leaders are now so concerned to repudiate, is made plain in his autobiography of his early years entitled *A Roving Commission*. Those who now brand him (on the Moscow radio) as a "war-monger" might find there passages of at least very plausible effectiveness to quote. In that reminiscent book he recalls his thrill of joy at news of the Jameson Raid, his scorn for the scruples of "Little Englanders" about British occupation of Egypt, his hope that somehow international harmony would so break down as to give British soldiers a chance to practise the technique of Woolwich and Sandhurst against foes more worthy of their steel than either Zulus or Afghans[1]. The Winston Churchill of those late 1890's was dominated by martial instinct which took him wherever war was to be witnessed or shared—to Cuba with the Spanish forces fighting a native insurrection, to the Indian frontier for chastisement of Pathan tribesmen, to the Soudan and to South Africa on a mission to avenge Gordon by slaughter of Dervishes and Majuba by slaughter of Boers.

III

WHETHER these were justifiable undertakings seems at that time scarcely to have suggested itself as a question to his mind. He was not surely too young (at twenty-four or twenty-five) to bother with such puzzle. Others, much younger, were considering it, but he had passed straight from school to a military college, immune from the provocatives to thought which Oxford or Cambridge would have applied. A quaint reminiscent passage tells how, when he was almost twenty-two, a friend remarked to him that Christianity was "the last word in Ethics", and how, though he had been enough at church to know something of Christianity, he was altogether at a loss to guess what "Ethics" meant. "They had never been mentioned to me at Harrow or Sandhurst"![2] And yet he must surely have observed at least in the British press of the later 1890's how some critics, with a *prima facie* claim to respect, were thinking about martial enterprises in a manner different from any to which he had been introduced at Sandhurst or at Harrow. For example, they were writing about the dreadful cruelty and selfishness shown to the natives of Cuba by Spanish officials—the sort of officials whose honoured English guest he had been in the war to castigate the natives. He had himself contemplated in Calcutta what Indian Congress leaders were denouncing as "palaces" of the magnates from the West, erected and decorated at the cost of an overworked, starved, exploited Hindu proletariat. Projects of avenging Gordon and avenging Majuba were being branded as infamous, inhuman, anti-Christian, by leaders of British liberal opinion. But for the time—an extraordinarily long time in one so highly endowed—all this questioning of the imperial purpose seems to have been dismissed by Second-Lieutenant Churchill as a piece of lower-class impudence. His spirit was that of the *jeunesse dorée*, whose tradition was the heritage from Beaconsfield guarded by Primrose Knights and Dames against the sacrilegious touch of a "Radical."

Something developed in the early 1900's to upset in the mind of this devout young imperialist the faith in which he had been nurtured and whose questioning by others he had resented.

IV

AFTER leaving the army, he had entered parliament, conformably to the custom of the ruling class in which he was born. He was elected, of course, as a Conservative, but the Conservative leader of the House (at that time A. J. Balfour) soon detected a restive tone in this young back-bench follower. In company with Lord Hugh Cecil he was criticizing the leadership—somewhat presumptuously, the Premier thought. He startled the Government Front Bench by declaring, while guerrilla war was still being waged in the Transvaal, that if he were a Boer he hoped he would be with the guerrillas in the field.[3] In a like mood he had characterized the farm-burning by imperial troops in South Africa as "a hateful folly." He joined with John Morley and C. P. Scott (of the *Manchester Guardian*) in denouncing Kitchener's desecration of the Mahdi's tomb,[4] and protested against the Government's embargo on the landing of speakers likely to advocate the Boer cause in England. As he went on to urge reduction of armament at a time when the Secretary for War was proposing its increase, and used the mottoes so familiar on Liberal Opposition lips about "peace, retrenchment and reform", the Tory party organizers who had worked to get him elected in Oldham began to wonder whether they had made a bad mistake. Balfour's cynical comment, that when they thought they had found a young man of promise they proved to have found only a young man of promises, was annoying to those who had chosen him. "So here was I already out of step", Mr. Churchill has reflected in his reminiscent mood about his first years in parliament. Those who remembered the doings of his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, in the House twenty years before were least surprised. "If there is anything at all in heredity of disposition", they exclaimed, "what else would you expect?"

No one indeed could say of him, as of the younger Pitt, that in politics he had been "taught by his dad on a stool." He has told us that between himself and his father there had never been a sharing of thought on public controversies. As far back as his school days at Harrow, Winston knew, and proudly mentioned, that his father was "a great man", but at no time did Lord Randolph encourage him to discuss in conversation the public issues upon which this "greatness" was showing itself. He died when Winston was barely twenty-one, but despite the paternal and filial affection which bound them to each other, the policies of the country were an excluded topic when they talked. "If ever I began to show the slightest idea of comradeship", writes Mr. Churchill, "he was immediately offended; and when once I suggested that I might help his private secretary to write some of his letters, he froze me into stone".[5] Lord Rosebery, who had known Lord Randolph Churchill intimately, lamented this lack of confidence between him and his son. One reads with amazement of Winston's visits to Lord Rosebery after his father's death, with the purpose of getting thus some indirect insight into that enigmatic personality. "I had a feeling," he says, "of getting nearer to my father when I talked with his intimate and illustrious friend". The intimate and illustrious friend made it perfectly clear that the revolt against traditional "Toryism" which was inspiring Mr. Churchill in the first decade of this century would have been recognized by Lord Randolph in the 1880's and early 1890's as like his own. "Ah", exclaimed Lord Rosebery, "he'd have understood."[6] But there is nothing to indicate that such ideas had even begun in the son's mind as far back as 1895.

V

BY a process the very inverse of the one usual in such a case, Mr. Churchill's understanding and adoption of his father's opinions thus developed from a study of him historically—as he might have learned from Canning or Peel or Beaconsfield. When in 1905, he published the biography, he was therein reinterpreting family memories by the light of public records, not *vice versa*. He dwelt with special emphasis upon Lord Randolph's vain attempt in 1885 and 1886 to "modernize" the Conservative tradition. Lord Rosebery described this as "the wolf of Radicalism in the sheep-skin of Toryism",[7] and what Winston had in mind during the years 1901 to 1904 (until indeed he crossed the floor of the House and declared himself a Liberal in 1905) was much the same. Encountering again, as in the 1880's, this "democratic Toryism" would not only shock but enrage the guardians of the old Tory faith. Our Age has seen British Conservatives so compromise their inheritance that the explosion of wrath at such an innovator in 1886, and even in 1903, may surprise us as we read of it. But in truth it would have amazed the observer half a century ago if the proposed innovations had been given in Conservative circles even a patient hearing. Lord Randolph resigned after he had held the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer just a few months, and his resignation was not only accepted but welcomed by the Premier in whose following he had been incomparably the most effective of election campaigners. A story circulated about Lord Salisbury's cynical answer to the question "Don't you feel badly the loss of Lord Randolph Churchill?" He was reported to have said "Had you ever a boil on your neck? Did you get rid of it? Would you like to have it again?" Whether he said so or not, the answer expressed his mind.

What Lord Randolph had urged, in the famous programme he wrote for the Conservative party in 1885, included a breakup of the central authority by devolving on "Local Government Boards" far-reaching legislative powers in England, in Scotland, and even in Ireland. It included such changes of land tenure in the interest of the tenant as fairly horrified landlords (especially the Irish of that privileged class, whose ways the innovator had studied on the spot when he was secretary to his father, the Lord-Lieutenant, in Dublin). It included temperance legislation no less alarming to the brewers, and an Eight-Hours Bill which the great employers of Labor regarded as rank Radicalism. The climax was reached when the daring Chancellor's budget proposals were found to involve such cuts (for "social reform" purposes) in the appropriation for the armed services as made the Secretary for War confront the Premier with this dilemma—"One or other of us must go". Joseph Chamberlain described Lord Randolph as having borrowed from the cast-off policies of very different extreme men alike; his Socialism from Burns and Hyndman, his Local Option from Sir Wilfred Lawson, his Egyptian policy from Illingworth, his metropolitan reform from Stuart, and his Irish projects from John Morley. He asked, in high disgust, "Is this Toryism?" The answer was rendered in action, fiercely enough, by the party chiefs, for whom the Toryism in "Tory Democracy" had become so faint as to be hardly discoverable. Lord Randolph's continuing insistence, with ferocious emphasis, that Ireland must be refused Home Rule did not avail with the inner circle of the party to compensate for such vast sacrifice of other Conservative principles.

HIS son, in the first decade of this century, was at once fascinated by his general purpose and hostile to some of his special applications of it. Mr. Churchill declares that his father was no imperialist, and Lord Rosebery judged that Lord Randolph's views on foreign policy were hardly different from those of Cobden or Bright. But neither Bright nor Cobden made any pretence of being a Conservative, and neither of them thought of the British Empire after a manner whose expression Mr. Winston Churchill could have heard with patience. What would the writer of *The River War* or of *The Malakand Field Force* have said of the Minister who resigned from Gladstone's Cabinet in 1882 as protest against the bombardment of Alexandria? How fundamental has been Mr. Churchill's imperialism all through his public life was made plain by his return, after long and bitter exile, to the Conservative fold, because there alone was it cherished without taint. On the other hand, the single imperialist doctrine which his father continued to defend, the one about keeping Ireland agaist her will in the Legislative Union, Winston's "modernism" in the imperialist faith led him to abjure. He did so, as he argued in his Belfast speech delivered under such tumultuous menaces in 1912, because it was his conviction that only by such "reinterpreting" (as the theological innovators would say) could the essence of the imperialist faith be preserved.[8]

VI

IT is widely supposed that his breach with the Conservative Party in 1905 was on Free Trade, in which he passionately believed and from which Joseph Chamberlain had started a successful Party revolt. But if we may trust his own recollections, nearly thirty years later, of the influences which had then moved him, the "Tariff Reform" menace must be counted by no means the strongest.[9] From the South African War, into which he had entered with such eagerness, he came back a disillusioned man, and Conservatives who were then ecstatic over "the victory" drove him further into the reverse mood. Hence he tells us, when Free Trade was abandoned by Conservative leaders, he was "already disposed to view their actions in the most critical light".[10] He became as impatient under A. J. Balfour as his father had been under Sir Stafford Northcote, and the fate of his father's effort at reform from within was a warning to him.

After a short period of outspoken but fruitless back-bench protest, upon which his leader tried the disciplinary effect of contemptuously ignoring it, Mr. Churchill crossed the floor. No one who watched this, and knew the record of the Government Front Bench in 1886, could fail to note how the new insurgent had learned from the experience of the old. Nor could such an observer miss the suggestiveness of one particular sentence in Mr. Churchill's biography of his father: "Great men, at the height of their power, often to their cost refuse to recognize the ability of newcomers". His attempt to freeze a rebel into submission cost Balfour much more than the like had cost his uncle, Lord Salisbury. Mr. Churchill led the terrific attack in the general election of 1905 upon the seven Tory seats in Manchester, one of which was held by the Prime Minister himself, and captured them all. The result was flashed to Liberal headquarters in an apt quotation from Wordsworth—"We are Seven".

BUT although no doubt personal resentment and filial memories had their share in barbing his political arrows, there is no reason to question the sincerity of Mr. Churchill's change in 1905. He was then one of a notable band of "Unionists" (amongst whom the Duke of Devonshire was the most influential) who regarded Chamberlain's project of abandoning Free Trade as a project of national ruin. He prosecuted the revolt indeed further, but more consistently, than most of them. Though late in beginning to think for himself on problems of social justice, he pressed forward rapidly the reflections once begun. On return from the South African War, deeply troubled about what he had witnessed there, he was in a mood to suspect further designs of the British leader who had chief responsibility for that one. He began to reconsider what David Lloyd George was alleging about the war as contrived for their own enrichment by magnates of the Rand gold mines, and Sir Henry-Campbell-Bannerman's charge of "methods or barbarism" in the manner by which imperial troops waged it on Dutch farmers.

Memories of what he had seen were haunting him, and they were not relieved but intensified by the chorus of exultation in British Conservative circles over the "victory". Now the arch-designer of the attack on the Boers was planning an attack on the Free Trade which experience had shown so vital to the masses in a congested island that must import most of its food supplies from abroad. Chamberlain too, this observer could not but note, was being enthusiastically applauded by those likely to make great fortunes through a protective tariff at the expense of the consuming poor. Were these, like the mining magnates of the Rand, finding an agent of their financial manoeuvre in Joseph Chamberlain. If this was what he saw Conservatism coming to, Mr. Churchill would cross the floor. That he was a "boil on the neck" of Balfour (as Lord Randolph had been of Salisbury) was sure to figure in the satiric Conservative press. But to Mr. Churchill such citation of the case of his father was a welcome though an unintended, compliment. The doom of the Party, led with so little discernment in 1905 as in 1886, was in his view but a question of time—and not of a very long time. He thought of the ten years of Tory rule, begun in 1895, as like the six years of Disraeli's political dictatorship begun in 1874, and he apprehended something like Gladstone's Midlothian campaign as impending for those whose boast was their inflexibility. As David Lloyd George put it, in the serene atmosphere of the House of Commons under Tory rule, his specially sensitive ear caught from outside at length a "thundering at the gates."

By the summer of 1905, even Conservative leaders were alarmed. A general election was almost due, and Joseph Chamberlain's diary records that reports from party agents over the country were "as black as night." But it was then too late to avert or even to mitigate the doom. When the votes were counted, it was found that the Conservatives, after nearly twenty years of power, would have against them a majority more than twice as large as the largest ever before recorded. Benches on both sides of the House would be needed for supporters of the Liberal Government, and in one of his earliest speeches after parliament met, Mr. Churchill—pointing to the remnant of his former associates—said "– call them not 'the party opposite' but 'the party in that corner',". To social reform projects far beyond any which as a Conservative he had fruitlessly pressed upon his leader he now, as a Liberal Minister, devoted his utmost effort. Side by side with David Lloyd George, he fought for old age pensions, for disestablishment of the Welsh Church, for Irish Home Rule, for Unemployment Insurance, for reducing the powers of the House of Lords, for a tax on the "unearned increment of land."

NO voice more resolute or more eloquent than his was heard either in parliament or on platforms throughout the country, commending the triple cause of "The People's Rights, the People's Budget, and the People's Insurance." In a mood specially vicious, his former comrades would explain him by a temperamental inheritance that went back far beyond his father. They would recall John Churchill, founder of his house, whose judgment of the side likeliest to win was shrewd and who at the nick of time "put out his apostasy to hire." It was a baseless taunt, excusable only by the high temper of a beaten party. That Mr. Churchill would yet himself not only rejoin but lead the Tories, ridiculing the party of his second as he had ridiculed that of his first allegiance, would have seemed forty years ago inconceivable. I well remember the bitterness with which a Scottish Tory said to me "At least he is fixed now: a man cannot 'rat' twice." But the inconceivable of one period has often proved the actual of a later, and the truth about Mr. Churchill's changes has been most convincingly as well as most clearly put by himself: "All through my life," he writes, "I have found myself in disagreement alternately with both the historic English parties."[12]

VII

HIS return to the Conservatives is as intelligible, with no suspicion of insincerity, as was his withdrawal from them. An underlying imperialism was a common element in the two, for this he conceived his second party to be forsaking as his first had served it ill.

The decision of the Liberals in 1924 to "put the Socialists in power" was what started Mr. Churchill on his return to Toryism. For Socialists in his conception were no *modernizers* of the imperialist Faith. Theirs was rank and traitorous unbelief. No doubt he would now quote the development of Mr. John Strachey and Mr. Aneurin Bevan to prove the wisdom of his advice "Stop it at its Beginning."

The election of 1924 had made the Labor members, led by Ramsay MacDonald, the largest single group in the House. Naturally its leader was invited by the king to form a government if he could, and he undertook to do so, having been promised by the Liberal leader (at that time H. H. Asquith) such support as would relieve him from fear of defeat in the division lobby—provided, of course, the need of Liberal auxiliaries was kept clearly in mind when the legislative programme was being drawn up. In Asquith's judgment, there was enough common ground for Liberals and Labor men (enough on which they were alike against the Tories) to make such arrangement practicable without sacrifice of principle by either group. How else, he asked, but by such coalition, in the circumstances which had arisen, could the king's government be carried on? What Mr. Churchill would have done, if he had been in Asquith's place in 1924, he has never, so far as I know, specifically stated. But it seems plain that he would either have insisted on an immediate new general election to secure an independent Liberal majority or have sought a coalition with the Conservatives as the group with which Liberals could cooperate more fitly than with Labor.

VIII

HERE lies my answer to the question this article set out to discuss, namely, what is Mr. Churchill's specific brand of "imperialism"? It is the doctrine that the organic connection among countries which were called until lately "the British Empire"—a connection not simply symbolized by One Flag and One Crown, but implied in innumerable historic institutions, customs, legal and executive rules—has been of the utmost value to the interests of each. Put negatively, Mr. Churchill's imperialism is the denial that those interests have been or will now be equally promoted by each going its own way, with no more heed of the rest in a nominal "Commonwealth" than of a foreign country, and that coincidence of policies thus voluntarily chosen may be trusted even more than organic union. "Alone among the nations of the world", he bade his Party to remember with pride, "we have found the means to combine Empire and liberty. Alone among the peoples we have reconciled democracy and tradition."[13]

Those words spoken a decade ago might be reiterated now, with many an illustrative warning from the experience of other countries since then which the liquidators of the British Empire have been rashly imitating. The great human values, in Mr. Churchill's view, such values as personal freedom, social justice, local progress, would be promoted rather than retarded by maintenance of organic connection, interpreted with the magnanimous insight which experience had taught British leaders of a generation ago to express in "Dominion status". "Why," he exclaimed, in a memorable speech, "should we break up the solid structure of British power, founded upon so much health, kindliness and freedom, for dreams which may some day come true but are now only dreams and some of them nightmares"?[14]

HIS affirmation and his denial brought him into conflict with those who during the last thirty years either demanded or accepted without demur a constitutional upheaval in preference to better working of the historic system. The Labor Party (which Mr. Churchill always calls "the Socialists") did not, in his conception, believe in the British Empire at all; the Conservatives he knew to be passionate believers in it, but he found them combining that belief with policies of social injustice which by no means followed from it and might well prove ruinous to it; the Liberals, in turn, he judged to believe in it, but with such qualifications, such under-estimates of its importance, such exaggeration of other ideals relatively to it, as to make them willing to abandon it—at least temporarily—for the sale of something else. So it was indeed a hard choice, a choice of the least among evils, and he held the circumstances of 1924 to prescribe the reverse of what had been prescribed by the circumstances of 1905. Much as he had desired, and still desired, social reform, he would not sacrifice the unity of the Empire in order to secure it, nor did he believe that it could be thus secured. His choice again in 1945, that he would go no further in the political company he had kept for the war emergency with the Socialists, was like that of many a so-called "liberal theologian" who would return to fundamentalism rather than continue with associates modernizing the Faith into a mere acknowledgement of human brotherhood such as Confucius, or the Buddha, or Auguste Comte would have endorsed.

If this analysis of Mr. Churchill's mind is correct, he must view the present virtual extinction of the Liberal Party at the polls as showing an instinctive common sense in the British electorate. He must likewise see in the present rupture of the Cabinet of Mr. Atlee exactly what was inevitable sooner or later, when genuine Socialists should feel strong enough to risk throwing off the mask of an alliance they had made to obtain power. Why, then, it may be asked, did he welcome into the Cabinet he formed in 1940 such men as Ernest Bevin and Sir Stafford Cripps, Philip Snowden and Herbert Morrison, if they were of the sort to deserve the outpourings of his distrust and scorn and anger in his next election campaign? The answer is that the war suspended all other considerations. During that supreme effort, while regarding the cooperation of some party opponents as like that of the French, he looked on others as allies more like the Russian Communists, but he wanted them all, whatever their motive, for the common fight against Nazi Germany. Differences on other issues could and must wait. His motto, whether in apostolic language "This one thing I do" or in the language of the golf links "Keep your eye on the ball", forbade distraction by sifting of varieties in what he has called "The Grand Alliance"—whether international or domestic.

But a time was sure to come, after victory in war, when these conflicts of purpose would split the Allies both domestic and international. Discussions wisely postponed would be resumed. Like the rebuilding and reopening of structures demolished or closed under war-time instructions, a reproclamation of the imperialist faith must follow the strategic silence about it which had been needful to keep those who doubted or denied it in a common effort with those true to it against the common enemy. With how much misgiving his contemporaries—such of them as were left—acquiesced in the leadership of one between whose earliest and latest orthodoxy the heretical interval had been so long and marked by heresies so furious, we outsiders may conjecture.

Liberals (the group of nine in the House) are more outspoken. They dwell on "the betrayal of both parties in turn," Mr. Churchill's answer, alike to the murmurings of suspicion and the rhetoric of arraignment may be seen in his famous article *Consistency in Politics*. He there wrote:

> A statesman should always try to do what he believes is best in the long view for his country, and he should not be dissuaded from so acting by having to divorce himself from a great body of doctrine to which he formerly sincerely adhered. Those, however, who are forced to these gloomy choices must regard their situation in this respect as unlucky . . . .
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> Anyhow, where is Consistency today? The greatest Conservative majority any modern parliament has seen is led by the very statesman who a few years ago was one of the leaders of a General

Strike which he only last year tried to make again legal. A life-long Free Trader at the Board of Trade has framed and passed amid the loudest plaudits a whole-hearted Protectionist Tariff. The Government which only yesterday took office to keep the pound sterling from falling, is now supported for its exertions to keep it from rising.

IT has often been cited as an act of shocking ingratitude in the British people that Mr. Churchill was refused, at the post-war election of 1945, a mandate to remain as Premier. The refusal may have been unwise, but I dispute the reproach that it was ungrateful.

A very strong case might have been made in 1945 for continuance of that *Union Sacrée* which had been essential for victory over the Germans. The post-war settlement had much in it of national emergency which should suspend party strife. In 1940, on becoming Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill had chosen for his Cabinet representative men alike of Conservatism, of Liberalism and of Labor. The same year he accepted for himself the leadership of the Conservative Party, explaining that he did so with no purpose of leading in party conflict, but rather the reverse—to represent, in deliberations on what all could achieve together, the special contribution of the group whose principles he had come, on the whole, to share most fully. It might well have been argued in 1945 that reconstruction would call for what all must do together.

If, foreseeing six years ago what is now so painfully clear, party leaders had agreed to preserve the unity of the war period for at least another parliamentary term, Mr. Churchill would have had no competitor for the Premiership. But it was in no such character that he appealed for renewal of trust. It was as a party chief of the familiar pre-war fighting spirit, deriding and denouncing the very men whom he had entrusted through five years of constant national peril with the very gravest responsibilities. He cannot fairly complain because the gauge of battle he then threw down was taken up, and his colleagues of yesterday retorted to his taunts in kind. To Mr. Churchill's argument that the distinctive purposes of Toryism were vital to national recovery, they opposed the argument that pursuit of just those distinctive Tory purposes would, in the circumstances of 1945, conduct to national perdition.

NOT a few shrewd observers of the British scene at that time felt that if Mr. Churchill had secured a majority, with the policies he had announced, there would have been such an outburst of strikes as must have disorganized the whole industrial life of the nation. Some at least of the most grateful as well as the most discerning of his admirers were concerned in the refusal to grant him a further mandate in 1945 under the conditions for which he had stipulated.

But no one should excuse, far less justify, the deluge of abuse which return to party warfare has brought upon one to whom his country owes so much. Memories of public service are short. Mr. Churchill may now fitly recall how the Duke of Wellington in his old age had to protect his windows with iron railings from the stones of a London mob. Against one who had left each of two Parties in turn, the slumbering resentment of each was sure to arrive once party warfare had been resumed. An imperialist, like a theological modernist must confront attack on two controversial fronts, assailed alike by those who blame him for having gone too far and by those who blame him for not having gone far enough. At least in his policy of compromise between extremes Mr. Churchill is in the best English tradition, and his foreign critics (successively Nazi and Communist) may be left to answer each other. His early repudiation of the Dogma of Tory Infallibility was quite consistent with his later abandonment of those eager to "put out all the lights" on the imperialist altar. That somewhere between the doctrines of Arthur Balfour a century ago and those of Aneurin Bevan now lies the true policy for Britain, should not need to be demonstrated. But what *should* be needed is very different from what *is* needed, and in this controversial war, as in other wars Mr. Churchill has waged, there must be many casualties. At all events the sneer at "an unsinkable politician" is one he may remember with pride. What on earth would have been the fate of his country if that particular politician twenty years ago had been sinkable?

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[1] Cf. *A Roving Commission,* Chap. VII.

[2] *ibid.,* p. 109.

[3] *A Roving Commission,* p. 364. Cf. Mr. Churchill's explicit judgment (ibid., p. 94) that Lord Salisbury's ruling idea in foreign policy when he came to power in 1895 was to keep things quiet in Europe as preparation to take revenge in Africa for the Gordon affair and the Majuba affair of more than a dozen years before. For this, a quarrel had to be picked in the Transvaal and in the Soudan. Such reflection was a sufficient provocative, surely, to enquire about "Ethics" (Christian or any other sort.).

[4] All the Tories, Mr. Churchill recalled in 1937 with disgust, had "thought it rather a lark" to insult the Mahdi's remains and to profane his tomb (*A Roving Commission p.* 228). But what he thought of it on the spot and at the time he does not explicitly state. Did he reliably remember?

[5] *ibid*

[6] Rosebery, *Lord Randolph Churchill,* Cf. *Thoughts and Adventures,* p. 52.

[7] *ibid* p. 136.

[8] Cf. *Thoughs and Adventures,* p. 18: "Those strong Conservative elements some of whose deepest feelings I share and can at critical moments express, although they have never liked nor trusted me."

[9] Cf. especially *Thoughts and Adventures,* chap. I.

[10] *ibid,* p. 16.

[11] *Life,* I, p. 222.

[12] *A Roving Commission,* p. 330. Cf. Preface to *Arms and the Covenant* (p. 7) in which his editor says of Mr. Churchill: "He always finds it difficult to subordinate his views on public affairs to the current exigencies of party position." Cf. *Thoughts and Adventures* (the essay on "Consistency in Politics) pp. 39-47.

[13] *Blood, Sweat and Tears,* p. 458.

[14] *Arms and the Covenant,* p. 93.

[15] *Thoughts and Adventures,* pp. 45-47.

Diplomatic Polish

A foreign diplomat once walked unexpectedly into the office of President Lincoln to discover him blacking his shoes.

"Why, Mr. President!" he exclaimed superciliously, "do you black your own shoes?"

The President looked up with his slow, wise smile "Yes," he said. "Whose shoes do you black?"