

party and joined forces with the Conservatives in forming a National Government to deal with the financial crisis produced by the crash of Wall Street in 1929. This National Government was primarily Conservative in nature and though MacDonald was Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin was the real power broker and King maker.

This was the dawning age of the common man, where the spoils of power, prestige and money were to be distributed to a greater swath of society than ever before. The 1930's marked the rise of the common man's perception that society's ills were not being repaired. He began to doubt the wisdom of being ruled by his so-called 'betters', those of the oligarchic aristocratic powerful elite, who by birth, money or talent and energy had hoisted themselves up to the summit of the noble ruling range. Was this system to continue indefinitely, the common man began to ask? And as he surveyed the scene of poverty, unemployment, lost opportunity and vast resources wasted on war and death, he rightly began to question why it was that security, proper wages, and better education and health were eluding his grasp? Industrial and political control became mandatory and very quickly the common man became the richest political prize and a requirement for all politicians to woo and master.

Churchill was concerned that the Labour party, in the early stages of its development lacked the resolve and skill to govern. Largely this was correct. He did and could not blame the working man for erupting against the grave state of unemployment and desiring the fulfilment of hopes and promises. However, he was sceptical of magical remedies to cure the issue of 1-2 million men out of work. The 'great' Keynes forwarded a mammoth plan of large borrowings for public works to relieve unemployment which Churchill readily denounced with veracity as 'camouflaged inflation'. Thankfully neither the Labour Government nor the Conservative opposition were tempted by such schismatic views. Balanced budgets and acceptable wage and price levels were deemed the wisest course.

Though it can never be forwarded that Churchill was a brilliant economist, he did have a solid grasp of the underlying principles of sound finance. What was distasteful to Winston was the blight that party politics radiated upon important economic questions. In June 1930 he delivered a lecture at Oxford University sponsoring the suggestion that economics must be separated from politics, "I see no reason why the political Parliament should not choose in proportion to its Party groupings a subordinate Economic Parliament of say one-fifth of its numbers, and composed of persons of high technical and business qualifications. This idea has received much countenance in Germany. I see no reason why such an assembly should not debate in the open light of day and without caring a half-penny who won the General Election, or who had the best slogans for curing unemployment, all the grave economic issues by which we are now confronted afflicted. I see no reason why the Economic Parliament should not for the time being command a greater interest than the political Parliament; nor why the political Parliament should not assist it with its training and experience in methods of debate and procedure.

What is required is a new personnel adapted to the task which has to be done, and pursuing that task day after day without the distractions of other affairs and without fear, favour or affection."

This was met with a cold indifference and Churchill found himself almost alone in its avocation. To compensate the pen provided distraction and he wrote his autobiography *My Early Life*, quite an amusing tale that finishes with his entrance into Parliament and his marriage ending with the words, "I married and lived happily ever afterwards." The public was amazed by the tolerant and gentle humour of the work, much of it directed against himself. It was not the evocations of a combustible politician, but more the reflections of a man detached from life's strife and living on high, above the corrupt daily battle of the House of Commons. This was soon followed by series of newspaper articles and essays ranging in subject from one on 'Moses' to 'Shall We All Commit Suicide?', bounded and reprinted in a book called *Thoughts and Adventures*. The last literary piece to appear in the early 30's was the thick fifth volume of the First World War, *The World Crisis, The War on the Eastern Front*.

Also revealing but seldom known was that Churchill seldom spent a week-end away from his country house, Chartwell, which was close enough to London that a long troupe of friends would motor down for dinner engagements. Winston's preferred element of relaxation was ardent political debate, late into the evening, with an early waking, working in bed, smoking of a large cigar and the afternoons engaged in children, farming and building. Churchill loved construction. He built a tree-top house, a goldfish pond, a bathing pool, a cottage, a brick wall, dammed a lake, and made miniature waterfalls. This love of design sprang from his interest in applying a methodical and systemic technique. The appeal of writing stemmed from matching sentences together to form paragraphs which then had to be arranged into a coherent pattern. Such it was with the creation of physical objects. The fabrication of the cottage and long wall induced Churchill, the arch-Conservative, to join the bricklayer's association as a professional that could lay one brick per minute. Needless to say the Labour party was not amused. The public had no opportunity to see this side of the man; devoted to animals, family and estate projects. To the general mass Winston was pugnacious and formidable with a robotic appetite for work, a brilliant mind, unstable character and a flaming ambition.

Churchill's immersion and occupation in the scholarly world was disturbed by one of the great debates in British history. In the early to mid 1930's it was India—and the granting of nationhood to India—which dominated Churchill's activities as he sat out of power. The Liberal, Conservative and Labour parties all supported the extension of dominion or independence to India and the details of the bill were in the hands of a multiparty commission. The Viceroy's of India (Lord Halifax followed by Lord Irwin) were in favour of granting India the freedom that she demanded; first in drawing up a Federal Constitution; and second in extending self-government in Dominion status. Undoubtedly public opinion had been sharpened

by the protracted struggle and lessons of Ireland. India was simply requesting what had already been granted to Canada, Australia and New Zealand. There was much to be lost by ruling with repressive force and much to gain by granting concessions and acting in accordance with the inclinations of a great subcontinent.

Churchill was adamantly opposed to any relinquishment of British control or influence. He was almost alone in his extreme criticism. And though his opponents used some chicanery to push the India Bill through Parliament Churchill's hard and prickly position alienated and diminished his stature. His Demosthenic railings against Indian self determination were viewed with suspicion and then scorn by his contemporaries. Winston passionately and correctly believed that India was indispensable for the maintenance of the British Empire—it was certainly the jewel in the crown. Without it the rest of Britain's imperialistic holdings would surely slip away. He also correctly surmised that without the resources and captive markets of the great subcontinent Britain could have difficulty surviving as a prosperous country and that once granted independence India would be riven with sectarian violence and bloodshed. However his obstinate badgering and negative criticasting did not prevent the bill from being given Parliamentary approval in 1935 as it rightly deserved. You cannot keep a subcontinent like India in permanent subjugation.

The Conservative party was outraged with Churchill's obduracy over a 5 year period in trying to kill the India bill. Churchill was always consistent in his advocacy that India was inseparable from fortune in the affairs of Britain. However his pronounced, rash and incongruous campaign severed his ties with the Conservatives. He was a Tory in name, but the wilderness was his home. He became a political untouchable for much of the 1930's. Legendary, brash, and self serving—or so the great mass believed when Churchill's name was invoked. Though Churchill had a mystical belief in his own greatness and ultimate destiny most of his friends conceded during the early 1930's that his career was finished. He had now quarrelled heavily with all three parties. The boats were burnt, there was no retreat. The Conservatives had quite reluctantly forgiven him once, and now that their suspicions had in their own minds been justified by Churchill's extremity over India they were unlikely to grant absolution a second time. The Liberal party was dead and the Labour party viewed Churchill as the Beelzebub of the House of Commons. In what direction lay the future?

Strangely enough, when opportunity appeared at low ebb, Churchill began in 1931 the work on his famous ancestor the Duke of Marlborough which prepared him for the challenges of leadership during World War Two. It was the sweat, thought and inspiration poured into this literary masterpiece with its own story of weakness, subterfuge, tyranny and salvation that so peculiarly mirrored the events of the Second World War. This indoctrination prepared Churchill beautifully for the leadership of Britain at the darkest hour in its history. Ever since he was a young lad, Winston had consumed all the information he could imbibe on his great forbear John Churchill. Here was a tale that contained every element of drama; the story

of the poor youth who came from unknown origins to become one of the greatest generals of all time and who saved England and half of Europe from the despotic maniacal control of France's King Louis the XIV; of the pretty youth who fascinated the King of England's mistress; the ambitious man who became the richest man in Europe; the sought after hero who loved his wife with unbounded passion for over 50 years; the conquering god who never lost a battle; the political diplomatist who ruled England by effective power during his tenure as war-lord. Nothing was missing. It was the perfect tale of dash, flash, glory and power. Love, war, espionage, revolution, King's, Queen's, romance and success all weaved and threaded themselves into one astonishing life.

It is small wonder that Winston became attracted to writing this thrilling record. The skill of Churchill's account resides in his ability to bring all of the characters into life. The complicated relations are dealt with at a confident brilliant pace, and reveal a century (late 17th to early 18th) of resounding change. As a literary piece it compares with Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and as an artistic expression it has few historical equals. Thankfully this story of power and struggle was not written by a historian but by a politician hobbying as a historian. Only a man who understood the current of political life could have written such a detailed and satisfying explanation of the jostling that takes place in political circles. Even more vital it was a theme of freedom and the restoration of England's and of Europe's independence. Such a thesis fuelled all of the innermost fires of Churchill's fibre, "Since the duel between Rome and Carthage there had been no such world war. It involved all the civilised peoples; it extended to every part of the accessible globe; it settled for some time or permanently the real relative wealth and power, and the frontiers of every important European state."

These words were written during 1933, the year Hitler came to power. Away from artistic endeavours Churchill began to discharge time and energy into comprehending and communicating the threat of Hitler's Germany, collecting testaments and information on the gravity of Hitler's menace from all parties and sources. Winston in his speeches consistently exhorted a full support of the League of Nations and tried to draw Russia into a Grand Alliance to ring and contain German ambition. However, his appeals rang hollow in the halls of the pacifist representative democracy and in the circles of power. Almost by default it appeared that the dove Ramsay Macdonald and his Labour party would be a reliable guide to lead affairs for the 1930's. Militarism was scorned and war in the 1930's dismissed and pressing economic questions had to be resolved. The second Labour government under Macdonald was a disaster, not only due to ministerial incompetence but also to the stock crash, and the financial derangement which drove unemployment to over 3 million men, hastening the decline of important first and secondary industries, and showing to the world the inefficient work practices, and dearth of British business and entrepreneurial skills. British society was in tumult during the 1930's.

In 1936 fascist Italy was busy conquering Ethiopia and Franco was waging civil war in Spain supported by Germany and Italy against the government. In both cases