

of the most daring maneuvers in recent business history, and readers of this biography may find themselves worrying that Shawcross will replay the details of every last one of them. The author's research is prodigious—superhuman, even—but it is offered up entire. The MBA student may be rapt at the contortions required to buy a minor paper in Australia, but the popular reader will not be.

The accumulation of business detail fails in the end to illuminate the man. But you can't blame Shawcross for trying, and on the whole readers will be glad he did. Murdoch has always been a man of contradictions: the Oxford student who railed against the class system from a Rolls Royce; the anti-elitist who got Daddy to fix his visa through powerful friends; the promoter of Page Three Girls who disapproved of women wearing

slacks in the newsroom; the faithful family man, personally and (he says) politically conservative, whose television network airs the stupidest (*Studs*) and the most decadent (*Married... With Children*) shows in history.

Even so, it is hard to dislike anyone the *Columbia Journalism Review* calls "a force for evil." Some facts about him are plain. He is humorless, unreflective, and obsessed. He is also courageous, enormously intelligent, and even visionary, able to foresee opportunity and satisfy millions of ordinary people while his enemies fumble around without a clue. He is, in short, a great man. Whether he's a good one too is a question for America's moralists, of whom there are many.

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historian, and biographer. In total, Churchill published over 50 books in his lifetime (including a novel), while managing to hold and acquit himself admirably in virtually every major office in the British cabinet except foreign secretary—the Board of Trade in 1908, home secretary in 1910, minister of munitions in 1917, secretary for war and air in 1919, colonial secretary in 1921, and chancellor of the exchequer in 1924. And did I mention that he won the Nobel Prize for literature?

Gilbert gives you all of this and more, including Churchill's years out of power in the 1930s when, at the peak of his career, he refused to temper his outspoken views on the dangers of Hitler and of Great Britain's failure to re-arm—all at the expense of higher office.

Unlike many of the men with whom he shared the political stage in Great Britain, Churchill was a man of conviction. While he was frequently accused by his enemies of compromising his principles for political expediency, it was rarely true. Classical liberals and others of an individualist persuasion who wish to trace the development of political and economic thought of the young politician who so correctly identified the nature of modern government as "robbing Peter to pay Paul" should pay particularly close attention to Chapter 8, which covers the young Churchill's early years in Parliament.

Close attention is required because Gilbert does not provide as accurate a summary of Churchill's political philosophy in this book as he has elsewhere. One sketch he does furnish in the preface could be misleading: "Both in his Liberal and Conservative years, Churchill was a radical; a believer in the need for the State to take an active part, both by legislation and finance, in ensuring minimum standards of life, labour and social well-being for all citizens. Among the areas of social reform in which he took a leading part, including drafting substantial legislation, were prison reform, unemployment insurance, State-aided pensions for widows and orphans, a permanent arbitration machinery for labour disputes, State assistance for those in search of employment, shorter hours of work, and improved

The Last Liberal

BY MICHAEL McMENAMIN

Churchill: A Life, by Martin Gilbert, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 959 pages, \$35.00/\$19.95 paper

There are many reasons to admire Winston Churchill, including these words from a speech on protectionism in 1906: "You may, by the arbitrary and sterile act of Government—for remember, Governments create nothing and have nothing to give but what they have first taken away—you may put money in the pockets of one set of Englishmen, but it will be money taken from the pockets of another set of Englishmen, and then the greater part will be spilled on the way. Every vote given for Protection is a vote to give Governments the right of robbing Peter to pay Paul, and charging the public a handsome commission on the job."

It is in some ways unfortunate that Churchill's individualist beliefs on politics and economics are less remembered today than his role as the wartime leader who rallied Great Britain to successfully stand alone against Nazi Germany in 1940 and 1941. Saving your country, if not Western civilization, tends

to overshadow all that went before.

In this biography, Gilbert attempts to give a wider appreciation of Churchill's career beyond his accomplishments in World War II (to which only 200 pages are devoted). As Gilbert shows, Churchill was far more than a career politician with a gift for rhetoric who, achieving his country's highest elected position quite late in life, used his words and his voice to rally the British public to keep fighting against what had to seem at the time insurmountable obstacles. Churchill was also an immensely talented and prolific writer—one of the most highly paid of his day—whose liberal political viewpoint was often at odds with the leaders of the Conservative Party and later the Labor Party during his 50-plus years in public life.

Though he was the son of an English lord and a nephew and cousin of English dukes, Churchill was not a man of inherited wealth. He made his living—and a considerable fortune—as a journalist,

conditions on the shop and factory floor.”

All this is accurate so far as it goes, and it provides an antidote to the conservative, even reactionary, image that Churchill acquired, quite unjustifiably, in the latter stages of his career. Fair enough. But a person's positions on a selective list of social and economic issues are not a political philosophy. Labels and laundry lists—including this list from Gilbert—don't tell you the beliefs that motivate a person's opinions, the convictions that guide his actions. Churchill was not a conservative, but neither, while he had a natural sympathy for the underdog, was he a statist. Even Churchill's early call for a “minimum national standard” below which people would not be allowed to fall and above which they would be able to compete freely makes him sound no more radical today than Margaret Thatcher.

Basically, Churchill was an individualist who had an instinctive mistrust of government action in the service of vested interests, be they the church, the military, the aristocracy, or manufacturing interests—not to mention the Conservative Party establishment from Joseph Chamberlain in the 1900s to his son Neville in the '30s or the Labor Party of Ernest Bevin and Clement Attlee in the '40s and early '50s.

Gilbert offers a more accurate summary of Churchill's political beliefs and principles in his short 1981 book, *Churchill's Political Philosophy*, where he quotes unpublished notes of Eric Seal, Churchill's principal private secretary from September 1939 to mid-1941, on the essence of Churchill's convictions: “The key word in any understanding of Winston Churchill is the simple word ‘Liberty’.” Throughout his life, through many changes and vicissitudes, Winston Churchill stood for liberty. He intensely disliked, and reacted violently against, all attempts to regiment and dictate opinion. In this attitude, he was consistent throughout his political life. He believed profoundly in the freedom of the spirit, in the liberty of man to work out his own salvation, and to be himself in his own way. His defense of the British Government in India is not at variance with his ideas; he defended British rule in India

because he thought that it brought individual freedom in its train. He demanded for himself freedom to follow his own star, and he stood out for a like liberty for all men. All organized attempts to dictate to men what or how they should think, whether by the Nazis in Germany, or by the Communists in Russia, incurred his passionate hatred and fell under his anathema. In the last resort, this was the mainspring of his action.”

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Keep in mind this retrospective analysis of the post-65-year-old Churchill when you read about the development of the young Churchill in Chapter 8 as he staked out from 1900 to 1906 a series of consistent positions, based on classical-liberal principles, on a wide range of issues. Churchill opposed increased military expenditures, jingoism, the conduct of the Boer War by the British military, and the use of indentured Chinese laborers in South Africa. He supported open immigration, racial and religious tolerance, restoring legal rights to trade unions, and maintaining free trade.

Churchill's main battle during this period was a scorched-earth campaign for the soul of the Conservative Party over the issue of protectionism. His chief adversary, Joseph Chamberlain, sought preferential treatment for imports from throughout the British Empire—something akin to today's regional trading blocs.

Churchill supported unilateral free trade and was convinced that protection meant the end of the old Conservative Party. He predicted in 1904 that the Conservatives would become “a party of great vested interests, banded together in a formidable federation; corruption at home, aggression to cover it up abroad; the trickery of tariff juggles, the tyranny of a party machine; sentiment by the bucketful, patriotism by the imperial pint; the open hand at the public exchequer...” Less than three weeks later, Churchill left the Conservative Party of his father and “crossed the floor” of Parliament to join the Liberals.

Churchill's detractors have long accused him of “opportunism” for leaving the Conservative Party to join the Liberals in 1904 (let alone switching back again in 1924). Gilbert doesn't argue the point. He simply sets out what Churchill did and said on the issues of the day. By the time the chapter is concluded, you may well be convinced that the young Churchill was idealistic and occasionally intemperate—“Is it really necessary to be quite as personal in your speeches?” Joseph Chamberlain asked him in a private letter—but not opportunistic.

Gilbert covers the period leading up to Churchill's return to the Conservative Party in 1924 in the same way he did Churchill's departure in 1904. No arguments, only the facts of what Churchill said and did. Churchill had been defeated for re-election in 1922 but was still a Liberal when the Conservative Party called a general election in November 1923, promising a reintroduction of protectionism. Churchill campaigned unsuccessfully as a free trader, denouncing protection as “a monstrous fallacy.”

When he returned to the Conservative Party a year later in November 1924, running as a “Constitutionalist” with Conservative support, he did so without compromising his free-trade principles, and the Conservatives welcomed him back and, quite unexpectedly, made him their chancellor of the exchequer. The prospect of such an appointment, say his detractors, was why he left the Liberals.

But they conveniently fail to mention what went before: Churchill would have abandoned his principles by staying with

the Liberals when, in January 1924, they embraced collectivism and struck a deal with the Socialists to bring Ramsay MacDonald and the Labor Party to power. Churchill recognized even then the threat that socialism presented to individual liberty and considered it only a more civilized version of Bolshevism. Gilbert quotes the *Glasgow Herald* as calling him at the time “a predestined champion of the individualism which he has served all his political life under both of its liveries.”

Churchill’s five successful budgets as chancellor in the ’20s marked the height of his post-World War I popularity, but that popularity abruptly ended in 1929 when he began his long, lonely campaign against independence for India, German rearmament, and, in the ’30s, the rise of Hitler. Accordingly, it is ironic that the place in history of a “predestined champion of individualism” rests today on his major roles in two world wars that did more to create the Leviathan state than all the socialists in Great Britain and the rest of Europe combined.

As W. H. Greenleaf has written in *The British Political Tradition, Vol. I, The Rise of Collectivism*: “In general, then, the two world wars...stimulated the development of collectivism and conditioned many people to believe that planned effort under government control, extending supervision on a broad scale, is required for the achievement of national goals and social justice: ‘As the war was managed, so would the peace be achieved.’ ”

Perhaps paradoxically, war may be the real paradigm of the welfare state and managed economy of peacetime. Indeed, Gilbert quotes Churchill’s daughter Sarah as making this same point in a cautionary letter to him after he had stated in a campaign speech in 1945 that socialism “was inseparably interwoven with Totalitarianism and the abject worship of the State.”

Churchill had already recognized this danger and tried, in vain, in the same speech to warn the British public of the perils of socialism: “It is quite true that

the conditions of Socialism play a great part in wartime. We all submit to being ordered about to save our country. But when the war is over and the imminent danger to our existence is removed, we cast off these shackles and burdens which



Churchill’s principles shouldn’t be forgotten even as we remember him as the savior of Western civilization.

we imposed on ourselves in times of dire and mortal peril, and quit the gloomy caverns of war and march out into the breezy fields, where the sun is shining and where all may walk joyfully in its warm and golden rays.”

But if Churchill’s single-minded waging of total war against Hitler had done the Labor Party an unintended service by increasing the role of the state and affording the Socialists an unexpected victory in 1945, he gained a small measure of revenge on his collectivist opponents when he and the Conservatives returned to power in 1951 campaigning on the individualist themes he had espoused all his life.

In one speech he accurately contrasted the underlying philosophies of individualism and collectivism: “We are for the ladder. Let all try their best to climb. They are for the queue. Let each wait his place until his turn comes.” A Conservative Party campaign pamphlet based on Churchill’s speeches elaborated on this: “The choice is between two ways of life; between individual liberty and state domination; between concentration of

ownership in the hands of the State and the extension of ownership over the widest number of individuals; between the dead hand of monopoly and the stimulus of competition; between a policy of increasing restraint and the policy of liberating energy and ingenuity; between the policy of leveling down and the policy of opportunity for all to rise upwards from a basic standard.”

Gilbert’s new book is especially timely as the remarkable events of the past few years have vindicated Churchill’s vision—his fighting on against Hitler in the dark days of 1940 so that “all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into bright sunlit uplands”; his condemnation of Stalin’s post-war domination of Eastern Europe; his 1946 proposal for a union of European states and a “partnership between France and Germany”; his post-war criticism of socialism and planned economies; and his lifelong devotion to free trade. So with the Nazis vanquished, Eastern Europe free and the Soviet Union dismembered, Western Europe united economically, France and Germany at peace, socialism discredited, and international trade at an all-time high, Churchill’s place as the Man of the Century seems more than secure.

Maybe, in the end, an individual deserves to be remembered more for the single act of saving Western civilization than for the political principles that guided his public career for 60 years and enabled him to be in a position to do so. But the role those principles played should not be overlooked or forgotten, and those who believe that one individual can make a difference in altering the course of history may well agree with the words of Churchill’s youngest daughter, Mary, in a note she passed to her 90-year-old father in his last days and with which Martin Gilbert closes his new biography: “In addition to all the feelings a daughter has for a loving, generous father,” she wrote, “I owe you what every Englishman, woman & child does—Liberty itself.”

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MI CASA, SUE CASA

BY THOMAS W. HAZLETT

July 1992: "The old adage '*mi casa, su casa*' will be true when my house is the White House." —Candidate Bill Clinton

April 1993: "Several conservative Democrats in Congress complain that they and their constituents are being denied access to visit the White House in an ongoing war of nerves with President Clinton. House members who last month voted against the administration's economic policies say presidential aides are warning them they're on the White House's 'don't help' list. About 36 Democratic senators and representatives are on the list....Mr. [Pete] Geren, a conservative Democrat from Fort Worth, Texas, had worked for months to get approval for a [White House] tour for 80 senior citizens from his district. But approval for the full tour was denied suddenly after Mr. Geren voted against Mr. Clinton's \$16 billion economic stimulus package, and only 40 were allowed into the White House." —*Birmingham Post-Herald*

April 1993: "Parents of 46 Brea Junior High honor students are upset because the White House has refused to let them get a special guided tour of the president's house when the students come to Washington in two weeks. They think they might be victims of politics and President Clinton's efforts to put the squeeze on Congress members....'Clinton's talking about how [meeting President Kennedy at the White House when he was a student] made such an impression on him, and he's not offering the same opportunity to my kids?' said John Zucman, whose 14-year-old daughter, Natalie, is disappointed she'll be going all the way to Washington without touring the White House." —*The Orange County Register*

Mr. Clinton came to Washington riding the ghost of Jefferson; he claimed to be a noble statesman who would take America up and beyond the meanness of the 1980s. His would be a government that would unite, not divide; it

would bring the best in us together, rather than put the worst of us to predating upon our fellow man. It would bring peace and harmony out of strife, chaos, and gridlock.

Now his operatives target senior tourists and junior high school honor students for political retribution. And, naturally, lie to the press about it. The Clinton administration blithely dismisses "enemies list" accusations with a "tsk, tsk." But the public threats issued by representatives of the White House tend to undermine this claim of innocence: Howard Paster, Clinton's congressional liaison, says he will, "without apology," dutifully keep track of those representatives of the people who vote against the 43-percent president and consider the full panoply of reprisals—including cutting off tours for constituents—at his disposal.

Or, as President Clinton might put it today: *mi casa, sue me in court casa if you want to see my casa.*

In any language, Clinton's Conquistadores have focused like a laser not on the economy but on two key tactical angles: 1) talk sweetness (peace, brotherhood, bring America together, put people first, hugs, kisses, you're beautiful, babe) and 2) rip the internal organs out of your opposition.

Unemployment isn't merely bad; it's the "worst economy in 50 years." Leadership hasn't just failed to inspire; Republicans *hate* poor people. Now that Mr. Clinton is in power, the defamatory extremism of the campaign has been replaced by a viciousness unbecoming for a victor. As the Clinton administration continues its GOP rebuilding program with failure after failure, vindictiveness will become something of a civil-service obligation for federal employees.

This ugliness oozes not from one of the many gaps in Mr. Clinton's Swiss cheese-like soul but from the ideology

that he has brought to D.C. Contrary to popular belief, he does indeed believe in something. He is a fanatical devotee of Government. Of Programs. Of Commissions. Of Emergency Security Councils. Of Summits. Of Beltway Experts. Of Washington Trickle Down. If Bill Clinton could paraphrase Robert Duvall's character in *Apocalypse Now*, he would bellow: *I love the smell of red tape in the morning!*

Ever since that sultry evening he wildly proposed marriage to Hillary after learning of her body heat for full funding of Head Start, he has lusted after the top-down approach to public policy. Bill aches with missionary zeal to be seen as the Caring Solution to America's Problems. And if that means shafting a few junior high school kids...*sue my casa.*

Inducing the common folk to pay for ambitious government programs that reek of sizzling bacon is a sales task that would daunt even a Mary Kay pink-Cadillac owner. In this light, the divide-and-conquer reflexes of the Clinton *apparatchiks* are a symptom, not a cause. The only way you can get the masses to cough up the multi-billions is by bait-and-switch: Look at those Rich People! (Got you to look; I stole your wallet!) Only by diversionary tactics can one gather the resources to pay for fabulous new deals—the sort any healthy young presidential he-man like Billy Clinton truly craves.

It was this hormonal combustion that Jack Kennedy famously ignited in the pubescent Billy Clinton. Isn't it hypocritical to—Wait just a minute: I hereby endorse the administration's policies and go one step further, recommending that the White House deny *any* junior high school tour requests from Arkansas. The social savings could be enormous.

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