

The Uncompromised Churchill

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A NEW edition has been published of a very old book* based on a series of Churchill's speeches in 1909. It was first issued at the beginning of 1910, and formed an important part of the armoury of the progressive forces in their battle for the "People's Budget," for free trade, for land-value taxation and the other great radical causes of the time. In reprinting this thoroughly readable and stimulating book the publishers have performed an important service in three quite distinct fields.

First, in the field of history, for through this book we can gain insight into the great struggles of the early years of this century; we can see why so many of the ideas of the radicals triumphed, and we can glimpse the minds of those who stood on the other side. We can see how men's standards have changed in the last sixty years: sometimes for good, but all too often for ill.

Secondly, this book helps us to understand just where this country was heading before the First World War intervened to alter the whole course of events. The first part of the campaign for the preservation of free trade had ended in the great victory of 1906. The struggles over the Budget and the constitutional issues which lay behind it were at their height. Men were actively disputing the inevitability of poverty and degradation. The great land campaign was about to begin. *This* was our direction until we went wrong. All too soon the men who had marched together like brothers in the great radical causes were to be divided and quarrelling. They quarrelled, not about the great issues of where we should go, but about which Party was the lesser or the least evil in confronting issues of a completely different kind, or about which band of politicians was the true repository of the Holy Grail.

No one can today see much logic in the state of affairs which ranged free traders and land taxers like Churchill and Asquith, Trevelyan, Outhwaite and Wedgwood in three different Parties. Sixty years later, we can see that nobody has gained from the confused quarrels which

have bedevilled our politics. The old world which the Conservatives sought to preserve has perished utterly—the good along with the bad. Men who once saw Socialism as the great hope of mankind have later seen it turn to dust and ashes in their mouths. Liberalism in its historical sense has been reduced from the dominant impulse of the greatest nation on earth to a splinter movement of a small party in a minor state.

Thirdly, this remarkable book throws light on the mind of one of the most important and interesting men of modern times. We see linked in one man the "Tory Democrat" of the turn of the century, the romantic reactionary of the inter-war years and the hero of 1940. In a sense we see here the most characteristic Churchill of them all: a man fighting for causes which he knew and understood, with the right allies and against the right enemies. Unlike the Churchill of 1900, he did not need to make common cause with the tired old Marquis of Salisbury. Unlike the Churchill of the 1920's, he did not need to link himself with protectionists, nor be

frightened like Burke out of his radical wits by the excesses of foreign revolutionaries. Unlike the Churchill of 1940, he did not need to ally with the tiger of Stalinist Communism in order to save the world from the ravaging wolf of Nazism. Here was pure Churchill, the uncompromised Churchill. Whether we agree or disagree with the various unpalatable choices

which he made earlier or later in his life, we can truly appreciate what course he would have struck had events left him free to do so.

Perhaps the most important thing about Churchill's speeches is their acute relevance to today's problems, which in substance are still the same as they were in Churchill's own day.

**The People's Rights* by Winston Churchill, with Introduction by Cameron Hazlehurst. Johnathan Cape, 30s.