

businesses, groups and nations. Sometimes they have created the organization that they lead. Some have grabbed power by unfair means but some have been elected or appointed in some way. Some have come from royal or leading families who have been given certain traditional powers. Some leaders just happen – like the Bijani twins. I find leadership a very interesting subject. Many people want to be leaders but not everyone deserves to be a leader.....

One of the reasons it is very interesting to study history is to study the lives of the great people of the past who have been leaders. I grew up at a time when people were very aware of the way in which Adolf Hitler had come to power – and used it. I just remember the great speeches of our war-time Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. He spoke to us and the allies across the world through radio and he was a master of words. He gave people courage when it looked as though the evil of Naziism would spread all over the world. Remember that the people of Europe had appeased Hitler – they had let him invade certain countries. The British even signed a peace treaty with him, thinking, “Let him have another piece of another country. He will then stop.” But he did not – he wanted world power. I think that the attitude of the British – and others - to Saddam Hussein was influenced by the fear that, if we did not stop him, he could become another Hitler. Maybe we were wrong but it is very risky to do nothing about evil people – to say, “Leave him alone. It will be all right in the end.” That was not true about Hitler. He had captured the hearts and minds of the German people. Afterwards, they were full of shame for how he had deceived them. When Germany was defeated and occupied, the Allies made the people of the towns and cities of Germany that were near the concentration camps visit these camps and see, for themselves, the terrible things that had happened there and the thousands who lay dead. Some of them had said they did not know what was happening in these camps. Afterwards, none of them could say that. In Iraq now, they

are uncovering the bodies of thousands of Iraqis killed by Saddam Hussein and people are weeping for the evil he has done. Leaders can be very evil people.

Winston Churchill knew the power of words. He very cleverly used to mis-pronounce the word ‘Nazi’ – the name of the party that Hitler led. The word ‘Nazi’, when properly pronounced, sounds powerful and threatening. Churchill did not say ‘Nazi’, he said, “Narzy” – and talked about ‘the Narzy party’ which, of course, sounded very like the word ‘nasty’. Instead of imagining thousands of unconquerable soldiers high-stepping down the streets on parades, the word ‘narzy’ made us think of something nasty, crawling in the drains! This was very rude but good war-time psychology. In your own history, too, there were leaders who gave your people courage in your War of Independence and young men who gave their lives, fighting for their language and their country – people we remember and honour every year on Ekushey February 21<sup>st</sup>.

I want all of you, this week, to think about what makes a great leader. They come from all classes of society and live all kinds of lives and, of course, each one of us, in our little way, can be a leader – a good example that can help and inspire others. God bless you.



## **LEADERS - GOOD AND BAD - 2** *Assembly 97 - July 15<sup>th</sup> 2003*

This week, we are thinking of leaders – good and bad. I think that most of you already know a lot about leadership because some of the pupils in your class have a natural gift for leadership. Some of them lead you to do good things and some of them lead you to do bad things! Leadership is a natural gift but, like beauty and artistic



gifts, intelligence or charm, the gift of leadership can be used for good or evil. You and I know that there are some people that it is VERY hard to say, "No!" to. They just push and push us to follow them – but remember! Leaders need followers and you do not have to be a follower. You are free to say, "No!" if you think that what the leader wants you to do is not right.

But sometimes leaders are very exciting, and fashionable and everyone else is following them –so what do you do? When I was 19, I was working at a conference center in Switzerland before I went to Oxford. The rest of the team were mainly German girls. One afternoon, I was asked to be on duty and they were free to attend a lecture. Afterwards they told me that the lecture was by a German woman who had been a teenager at the time when Hitler was coming to power. She told them what it felt like to be German when Germany was feeling the disgrace, the *lodja*, of being defeated in the First World War, and so people were feeling very depressed. And then this man Hitler spoke of Germany being great again and proud and making the other nations respect it and building up its army and its weapons. Most of the German people did not test his character but just listened to his words and were carried away by the power of his words. Like thousands of other young people, this woman got involved in the German Youth Movements – wonderful movements that had field-trips and camps and activities of all kinds that gave the young people of this defeated nation a sense of identity and pride. "Later," she said, "when some of us realized how bad Hitler was, it was too late." They had given him power and now there were the secret police who would come and take you away if you spoke against Hitler. It took 6 years of war and millions of lives to defeat him and liberate the German people from the trap of this dictator.

But some leaders are a great blessing. You and I, in our lives, may know people whom we want to lead us when we have to decide something. We know they will always give us good advice. "What do you think, mother/father/grandfather/auntie/

friend/teacher?" I think of a wise man who was a church member of the village church where I was a minister. Edward was old and had had a hard life. As a boy, he had been trained as a book-binder and printer – a good trade. But Britain suffered a very bad economic depression in the 1930s and there was much suffering among the poor – and no work for bookbinders and printers – and he became a street cleaner to feed his family. But his quality of character was so fine that he ended up Head of the Cleaning Services for the whole of the district – a very good management job. In the group of churches I belong to, each church is governed by a Church Meeting of all the members so we did a lot of talking and discussion before deciding on anything. Edward would listen quietly to everything that everyone said and, right at the end, he would give his opinion. What he said was always very wise and he would thus influence the decisions that we made. He was the true leader of the congregation and time after time, people accepted his leadership by agreeing with him.

When people worry so much about examination results, I think, "Examination results prove that you are clever (*chalak*) but they do not necessarily mean that you are wise." I hope this school will help you to be both wise and clever so that your leadership is accepted because, when you speak, people will know that what you are saying is something right and good that they should agree with and act upon. God bless you.



## THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA – 1

*Assembly 98 – July 17<sup>th</sup> 2003*

When a country has a revolution, it usually means violence and war. But sometimes, just sometimes, a country has a bloodless revolution – a revolution with no war. But that cannot happen