



Clement Attlee

A Modest Little Man

a play by

Francis Beckett

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Sound effects: shouting, cheering, celebrating, maybe a snatch of "land of hope and glory" – it's VE day, May 8 1945.

Two revellers – man in uniform, woman perhaps in nurse's uniform – dance wildly across the stage, beer in hand, singing.

REVELLERS: Hitler has only got one ball
Goering has two, but very small
Himmler is somewhat similar
And poor old Goebbels has no balls at all.

RADIO VOICE: This is the BBC Home Service. Germany has surrendered. The war in Europe is over. The Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, will address the nation tonight. The coalition government has disbanded, and Mr Clement Attlee has relinquished his post as Deputy Prime Minister. As the leader of the Socialist Party, Mr Attlee has demanded an immediate general election.

[CHURCHILL comes in and stands at the front, facing the audience.]

CHURCHILL: My friends. We may allow ourselves a brief moment of rejoicing. A brief moment of dignified rejoicing.

[The TWO REVELLERS dance wildly back across the stage. CHURCHILL is visibly annoyed at the interruption.]

REVELLERS: *[singing to the tune of John Brown's body.]*
When the red revolution comes
When the red revolution comes
We'll made Winston Churchill scrub the steps of
Number Ten
When the red revolution comes.

[CHURCHILL looks for a moment discomposed, but recovers.]

CHURCHILL: Tomorrow there is a new struggle. For six years we have combatted Nazi tyranny abroad. We must now commence hostilities against socialist tyranny at home. The dire threat of a Socialist government is real, and we must confront it with all our might. Mr Attlee's socialists have smelled power, and will not