WINSTON CHURCHILL'S THE SECOND WORLD WAR: METANARRATIVE, MARKETS, AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY

By

DAVID J. GOSSEN

B.A., The University of Lethbridge, 1979
L.L.B., The University of Victoria, 1982
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 1994

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of History)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2001

© David James Gossen, 2001
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of History

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date April 19, 2001

DE-6 (2/88)
ABSTRACT

The potency of memoirs to shape collective memory makes it important to seek a critical understanding of their political and historical functions. Memoirs offer insights into the character, motives, and influence of political leaders, yet many scholars question this genre’s ability to produce accurate history, insightful political analysis, or literature of merit. However, to the extent that memoirs contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the past they deserve closer study. Memoirs mediate remembrance of the recent past by functioning primarily in the interval between contemporary political discourse and professional historiography, where their reception molds historical memory. This study assesses how the past is remembered, and the political influences embedded in memory that shape collective identities, through a study of Winston Churchill’s metanarrative of the second world war, produced at a critical period in war memory formation.

Exposing the politicized aspects of social memory requires examining the means by which private memories are transmitted into the public realm of collective consciousness. In the early postwar era, the dominant transmitter of war memory was the political press, which responded to war narratives by amplifying, dramatizing, or challenging their underlying political messages. Thus, we examine how Churchill’s metanarrative of war was produced and promoted by his publishing syndicate, and how his messages were received by the political press and general reading public in Britain and America. After 1945, the main stimuli for contested political memory arose from widespread fears over security, freedom, rapid social change, and historical discontinuity caused by the war. Churchill’s metanarrative of legitimation offered an explanation of the traumatic past that contained conservative lessons for political culture. His messages fused an abiding faith in the righteousness of imperial memory with a sense of historical destiny that linked the English-speaking peoples in a common cause to resist totalitarian challenges in the 20th century. Their reception reveals that imperial memory and the archaic language of redemption through war did not end with the first or second world wars, but gained a renewed sense of relevancy and power during the early cold war era.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract................................................................................................................. ii
Preface....................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgments...................................................................................................... vi

CHAPTER I Introduction......................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER II Churchill’s Metanarrative: Messages and Leadership..................... 19

2.1 Imperialism and Democracy......................................................................... 19
2.2 Unifying the English-speaking Peoples......................................................... 27
2.3 Appeasement and Political Praxis................................................................. 32
2.4 Churchill’s Finest Hour.................................................................................. 46

CHAPTER III Memoirs and Markets: The Origins of a Publishing Syndicate......... 55

3.1 Building a Publishing Syndicate................................................................. 57
3.2 The Chartwell and Literary Trusts.............................................................. 65
3.3 The Artistry and Techniques of Production............................................... 71
3.5 Abridgements.............................................................................................. 83

CHAPTER IV The Messages: Lessons from the Past for the Present............... 93

4.1 Imperialism and the Civilizing Mission....................................................... 93
4.2 The “Special Relationship” of the English-speaking Peoples................. 103
4.3 Leadership, Character and Vision in War................................................ 115
4.4 Lessons of History and Origins of the Cold War...................................... 130

CHAPTER V Reading Churchill: Press Reception and the Public...................... 155

5.1 A Literary Phenomenon.............................................................................. 160
5.2 Empire, Commonwealth, and World Order............................................ 163
5.3 Appeasement, Leadership and the Preventable War.................................. 173
5.4 Forging the Anglo-American Fraternity.................................................... 185
5.5 Fighting the Cold War.............................................................................. 196
5.6 A Monument on Celluloid........................................................................ 210

CHAPTER VI Conclusion....................................................................................... 230

Bibliography.......................................................................................................... 251
This dissertation project had a long gestation period. It began more than 33 years ago, when a fourth grade classmate of mine handed me *Time/Life*’s one-volume edition of Churchill’s memoirs with the suggestion that I might be interested in looking at it; indeed I was. Lost in my memory is why a nine-year-old child of pacifist parents and conscientious objectors would be interested in such a book about war. What I do remember most vividly is being completely entranced by the picture-book’s stunning depictions of a world at war. Churchill’s stirring prose surely enhanced the experience, though I confess that it was the visual imagery of war that was most memorable at the time. Years later, while in undergraduate school, I became interested in reading *The Gathering Storm* during a summer recess, and found myself so taken by Churchill’s story of political failure and redemption in war that I read the entire memoirs with alacrity. I enthusiastically followed Churchill’s every step and decision on that long, tortuous road from the political wilderness to El Alamein and victory because for the first time in my life I felt that someone was providing a powerful explanation for the complicated postwar world into which I had been born. Unwittingly, and to large extent uncritically, I absorbed into my consciousness Churchill’s conception of the principal causes for the cataclysmic events of the interwar and war years.

Exactly to what extent my world view on war, peace, and international relations was molded by Churchill, and the glowing public memory of Churchill as the savior of the free world, only became apparent to me after entering graduate school in the 1990s, where I commenced a study of appeasement and the press for my Master’s thesis. Though a detailed recollection of Churchill’s metanarrative had receded into the background of my memory over the decade and a half since I had last read his memoirs, I retained a lingering bias against British leaders from the 1930s who had pursued appeasement for so long without realizing its inefficacy, and who had ignored viable political alternatives that might have prevented war. In my Master’s thesis, I focused on Neville Chamberlain’s political alliance with *Times* editor Geoffrey Dawson, as the chief architects of appeasement, who allegedly chloroformed public opinion in order to promote their foreign policy agenda. Only near the latter stages of my thesis research did I re-read *The Gathering Storm* to flesh out the perspective of anti-appeasers who had resisted Chamberlain and Dawson. It was then that I realized just how closely my general outlook on war causation, along with that of a great many secondary sources I consulted, was premised on a thoroughly Churchillian critique of appeasement.
contained in his memoirs.

About a year after completing the Master's thesis, my academic advisor Dr. George Egerton recommended a dissertation project centered on the production and reception of Churchill's war memoirs. Despite my abiding interest in Churchill and an obvious affinity for his ideas at the time, I hesitated at first to embrace the project. For one thing, so much had been written about Churchill that I naively presumed there was little unique or original left to say about the man or his political influence. In addition, being iconoclastic by nature, it was apparent that such a research project would involve critical analysis of a man whom I still considered in a heroic light. My study of appeasement had taken an unsympathetic view of revisionist historiography that undermined Churchill's political legacy, since he was to me an icon of historical greatness in a time of immense turmoil and crisis who towered above the petty maneuvering of present-day politicians. Nonetheless, having taken the plunge, my research into Churchill, his politics, and war writing prompted a major reappraisal of my previous views on appeasement as a policy of weakness and ignorance, and of the British leader's prophetic wisdom.

Studying Churchill's speeches, correspondence, and literature spanning six decades enabled his world view to come into much sharper focus, and enabled me to get out from under the awesome weight of traditional historiography which had invested such tremendous authority in the man and his messages. Re-reading The Second World War, I conceived a thematic approach to the study of Churchill's memoirs. Four thematic threads were found to comprise the author's metanarrative, all originating in his world view from before the war, and becoming entwined in the course of World War II and its aftermath. This analysis was then connected to a media study of Churchill's reception after the war. In this sense, my dissertation constitutes a continuation of research begun in the Master's thesis, in which I attempted to weave together an analysis of appeasement, political leadership, and press influence upon the shaping of foreign policy during the 1930s. But whereas the Master's thesis was concerned with the power of politicians and the press to shape public opinion before the war, this dissertation examines the issue from the perspective of postwar memory formation, and the power of politicians and press to shape conceptions of the recent past for advancing their specific ideological agendas.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation project has consumed many years of research and writing, more than this writer could have imagined possible at its outset. Yet it would have taken even longer to complete had I not received guidance and continued encouragement from my supervisor, Dr. George Egerton, who steered me away from numerous rocky shoals upon which my venture threatened to founder. My rather headstrong desire to go in directions that were perhaps interesting and exciting, but which were not always conducive to producing the focused results necessary for achieving the project’s objectives, were thankfully kept in check by Dr. Egerton’s timely and gentle admonitions. The end result of my research also would have been much less satisfactory without the patient and uncomplaining willingness of my advisor to vet draft chapters, and on several occasions the entire manuscript, in order to offer valuable criticisms which I have endeavored in all instances to incorporate into the thesis. My debt of gratitude to him is incalculable.

Many individuals along the way facilitated my research by enabling access to primary sources at Cambridge, England, the Public Record Office at Kew, and Harvard, Massachusetts. The professional archivist Clare Stephens at Churchill College, along with the librarians at Houghton and Lamont Libraries in Harvard, deserve special mention for their kindness in fielding my questions and going beyond the call of duty to track down sources of information. As a result, I cherish fond memories of my stays at those two institutes of higher learning. Finally, my wife Kayoko must be recognized as a vital source of inspiration and energy whose constant support, patience, and personal sacrifices, made this dissertation possible. I am supremely grateful for everything she has done to make this journey of learning a most memorable and enjoyable experience.
1 Introduction

For millions of people in the English-speaking world, Winston Churchill is remembered as democracy’s greatest political leader of the 20th century, credited with dramatically shaping the course of history by inspiring the successful defiance of Hitler’s armed forces in Britain’s finest hour during the second world war. Churchill did much to instill this heroic image in popular collective memory through a literary output that revealed his unique talent for conveying powerful emotions, dramatic images, and inspiring ideas to a wide readership. The making of an international icon was immensely facilitated by the intense publicity and acclaim accorded Churchill and his war memoirs by the press and public in most corners of the world. While all Prime Ministers since World War I who survived office considered it necessary to write their political memoirs, no one has matched the impact of Churchill’s account of war on subsequent historiography. He ranks among that rare group of leaders whose character stamped itself so powerfully on the political developments of an era that personality appeared to dominate over circumstances, making his memoirs much more than personal history. After the war, Churchill used his towering status as a war hero to shape memories of the recent past in the English-speaking world. Though memoirs as a genre of literature are prone to bias and special pleading, Churchill’s memoir constitutes a memory site of major significance, not least because of the author’s talent for writing with true historical scope. Churchill also possessed a treasure-trove of valuable historical documents and an exceptionally good team of research assistants which enabled him to create an impressive work on the second world war that greatly influenced scholars and general readers alike in the early postwar years.

Though memoirs represent a literary genre as old as antiquity, and remain ubiquitous in the modern age, they have not received a great deal of systematic critical analysis from scholars. Yet it is clear that they are capable of offering significant insights into the past, making them a potentially valuable historical source combining political, biographical, and literary characteristics. Though British historian G.P. Gooch pioneered the study of “political autobiography” in 1942, it was not until the 1988 UBC Political Memoirs Project, directed by Dr. George Egerton, that memoirs as a “polygenre” received focused scholarly attention in a series of monographs. Churchill’s memoir was not among those analyzed, a lacuna that this study seeks to fill by an appraisal of his second world war metanarrative, written between 1946 and 1954. Paul Fussell’s influential work on war and memory in 1975 asserted that memoirs were a kind of literary fiction, different from novels only by their “continuous implicit attestation of veracity or appeals to
documented historical fact." Thus, he felt that the same principles of analysis were applicable to the study of war memoirs as had been used in regard to other literary forms. In this respect, political memoirs can be treated like most other literature engaged in story-telling; i.e., as an instrument of power and social control that shapes collective memory of the past in order to legitimate the dominance of ruling elites.

In the Political Memoirs Project, Dr. Egerton defined political memoirs as a "fascinating but problematic genre" that was polymorphous in the way it appropriated a diverse range of literary forms, including autobiography, biography, diary, history, political science, and journalism. Most commonly, it is a term used to denote the writing by a retired politician who attempts to recount his or her years in office for the purpose of vindicating a political record or presenting a pedagogy of political wisdom. The fact that it seldom achieves the purpose for which it is produced does not diminish its value as historical literature that can be utilized by scholars to gain valuable insights into the functioning of political leadership and the political systems in which they operate. Most important for this purpose are memoirs that contain an overarching metanarrative structure that functions as a carrier of ideology by enhancing the appeal and potency of its political messages.

The primary function of political memoirs is to record events of historical significance that are within the writer's memory for the benefit of posterity. Except in confessional memoirs, the author attempts to place herself in the most favorable light while disparaging her detractors and political opponents. Nonetheless, her attempts to do so, as well as her evasions and omissions, can illuminate issues of authorial intentionality while enabling an appraisal of the memoirs for its "presentation of personality." In some instances, memoirs constitutes literature written by a person of letters or of action that closely identifies the author's personal experiences with the collective identity of a community through metanarrative. Literary theorist William Howarth identifies three essential elements in the creation of metanarrative: the writer, the work (and its technique of production), and the work's readership, which "form a single chain of relationships progressing from motive, to method, to meaning." By analyzing each of these elements in turn we can dissect the author's strategy while distinguishing between his actions and his recollection of them. Often, an author recollects the past to satisfy a troubled mind "searching his self through history," making it not an objective and disinterested pursuit, but rather a work of personal justification.

Roy Pascal notes that autobiographies by politicians are almost always memoirs, since true autobiographies are possible only "where their political activity stands in an essential relationship
to their personality, where it can appear as the efflux of their personality.” Rarely does a political figure reach such a status. But the manner in which Churchill fused private and public lives through a personality that imposed itself distinctively upon world events, his robust temperament, his gift for drama and vivid imagination, all made him well-equipped to write autobiography. His memoir of the first world war was largely autobiographical, as Lord Balfour acidly attested to in 1923: “I hear that Winston has written a big book about himself and called it *The World Crisis*.” One of Churchill’s most impressive literary works was his autobiography, *My Early Life* (1930), which wonderfully revealed his nascent world view at the turn of the century. Pascal notes, though, that Churchill was forced to write as a historian when constructing his memoir of the second world war, since the events depicted were so sweeping in scale that they overwhelmed the autobiographical aspect of the work. Nonetheless, like *The World Crisis*, Churchill attempted in his later war memoir to subsume national and global events into the story of his leadership in wartime.

In essence, Churchill’s memoir presented a personalized political drama that functioned as a powerful unifying narrative for a community of readers, satisfying their perceived needs and desires in the postwar era. Dr. Egerton notes: “It is the potency of political memoir in thereby shaping the popular, living generational memory of a culture which adds particular importance to promoting a critical understanding of its political and historical functions.” With the exception of memoirs of challenge written by those seeking to overturn or subvert the status quo, such literature tends to serve an essentially conservative function by affirming the centrality of political leadership while downplaying long-term economic and social forces that drive historical change. Sometimes, memoirists unwittingly undermine this function when they expose incompetence or disunity at the upper echelons of power. But invariably their intention is not to question the system of authority itself, or the established political culture, but rather to critique political opponents operating within it in order to enhance their own position as part of a simplistic appeal for different leadership, not structural change. Despite such limited objectives, memoirs are excellent sources for revealing the character of political leaders, while analysis of their reception offers insight into the source of their enduring popularity with the reading public. Critical analysis also enables us to perceive how memoirists can create an illusion of linear development in their political consciousness that masks differences between past perspectives and contemporary outlooks or identity. This is especially true where they enjoy privileged access to secret or restricted information at the time of production.

It is political elites who write the vast majority of war memoirs with the principal intent to
explain the meaning of a conflict by making sense of the slaughter. Writing their memoirs becomes a kind of memorial act that selectively commemorates and preserves the memory of a community. As a war recedes into history, the meaning of wartime experiences is constantly being negotiated between these “official” public commemorations and the private, or popular, memory that seldom finds its way into print. War becomes a dominant symbol of nationhood, as it did in Britain after 1945, when collective and individual narratives of the past are fused in cultural meaning in ways that reinforce each other within family, social, and political groups. What war narratives share, including Churchill’s sweeping nationalist commemoration of Britain’s finest hour, is a deep sense of irony derived from the fact that war is almost always worse than expected, and the end result less than anticipated. In Churchill’s memoir, this was expressed in his final volume by a sense of disillusionment that the glorious triumph over Nazi tyranny was compromised by the tragic failure of other nations and their leaders to learn the appropriate lessons from Britain’s past experience. Churchill’s pedagogical metanarrative was intended to enlighten present and future generations of English-speaking peoples of the necessity for unity of purpose to prevent future tragedies. In doing so, he sought to instill in readers the idea that changes in leadership had been the key factor in Britain’s tortured path from prewar ignominy to wartime greatness, followed by the slide into postwar weakness when ineffectual leaders compromised the peace and sacrificed the empire.

The power of war memoirs to shape national consciousness has been well illustrated by scholars studying the literature of post-World War I Europe. Fussell’s The Great War and Modern Memory examined war memory through the literature of middle class British poets and writers. He argued that a new form of remembrance was created by them which profoundly affected public perceptions of war during the 1920s and 30s. Fussell concluded that World War I caused a great caesura in the language of war memory, away from romantic and feudalistic discourse toward a modern form of ironic expression. But this conclusion was derived from an exceedingly narrow focus on the experiences of a small group of highly sensitive, middle class British writers who projected their personal sense of loss onto national memory through best-selling memoirs and novels. Consequently, historian J.M. Winter contended that the great historical caesura in the language of war did not really emerge until 1945, when the horrors of genocide and atomic holocaust produced a belief that there could be no redemption from sacrifice in war. While the carnage of the first world war had produced a sense of hope that “Never Again” would such a tragedy be revisited upon mankind, after World War II there could be no such optimism: “In contrast
to the post-1918 period, the rupture of language and imagery which followed the Second World War was profound and enduring.\textsuperscript{19} My study of Churchill’s war memoir tests this hypothesis by assessing public reception of the author’s imperial metanarrative and its language of valor, glory and sacrifice. Whereas J.M. Winter qualified Fussell’s thesis by suggesting that traditional motifs of war and redemption retained their appeal in the interwar era, this study questions whether his qualification needs to be extended well beyond 1945 before a caesura in war memory truly arose.

The study of war novels and their reception reveals that the politics of war memory powerfully shapes collective identities.\textsuperscript{20} The critical reception of war literature usually has more to do with the postwar state of mind than with wartime experiences. Reactions to war literature are intensified if publication occurs at a critical moment when the mood of hope and relief following victory intersects with a growing sense of fear and foreboding over the prospect of renewed peace and prosperity. Modris Eksteins’ case study of Eric Remarque’s 1928 novel \textit{All Quiet on the Western Front} concluded that everyone involved in the process of reception, including the author, his political supporters and critics, exploited the war memory expressed in the book for their respective political agendas in the interwar era. The same was true, he found, of the novel’s film adaptation, which turned the past “into a chattel of the present.”\textsuperscript{21} In a similar vein, this study will examine Churchill’s memoir for authorial intentionality and messages, the postwar context of production, and the politics of reception in the early cold war era.

Dr. Egerton observes that when the talent for historiography is present, the documents have been collected, and the writer is skilled at dramatic presentation, there exists the possibility for producing memoirs of “truly historical compass.”\textsuperscript{22} His study of Lloyd George’s memoir revealed that the British leader’s dramatic narration of the first world war greatly influenced interwar perceptions of political leadership in ways that acclaimed the heroism of a few and the bungling of many.\textsuperscript{23} This contrasts sharply with the ironic tones of the war poets and novelists, who could find little to praise in the conduct or outcome of the war. Analysis of middle-brow writers from the 1920s and 30s reveals that their interpretation of the war most closely paralleled that of memoirists like Lloyd George in their refusal to decry the conflict as futile or deny the existence of heroism. Unlike the war poets, these narratives were a staple of libraries and bookstores in the interwar era, dominating book review columns and best-seller lists in Britain. In fact, they formed the mainstay of the publishing industry, which promoted them vigorously through newly formed book clubs that appealed to middlebrow tastes.\textsuperscript{24} Through these works, the Victorian canon of war literature was
kept alive after 1918, re-invigorating its romantic and moral values against the onslaught of disillusioned modernism. In response to the disillusioned and fragmented tones of modernist literature, they offered positive assurances of cohesion and common meaning in the concepts of development, progress and moral perfectability.\textsuperscript{25} Thus, patriotic and romantic appeals that incorporated euphemisms of battle, glory, and hallowed dead continued to be widely disseminated in both popular and elite cultures after the first world war.\textsuperscript{26} In the interwar years, the imperial memory of British elites remained strong, with narratives of legitimation from this period waxing eloquent about empire as a force for good in the world, and the necessity for a strong navy to solidify Commonwealth and colonial ties.\textsuperscript{27} British writers elevated the idiom of war memory to such a level that Barbara Tuchman later quipped: “No nation has ever produced a military history of such verbal nobility as the British. Retreat or advance, win or lose, blunder or bravery, murderous folly or unyielding resolution, all emerge alike clothed in dignity and touched with glory....Disasters are recorded with care and pride and become transmuted into things of beauty.”\textsuperscript{28}

Churchill powerfully reinforced this tradition in writing his metanarrative of war after 1945, premised on notions of imperial greatness, a heroic people, wise leadership, and Anglo-American solidarity in combating tyranny. Churchill was evidently inspired by the earlier war narrative of T.E. Lawrence, whose \textit{Seven Pillars of Wisdom} (1935) he praised as “a grand and permanent contribution to English literature.” In producing his memoir of World War II, he adhered to Lawrence’s style of blending history, autobiography and epic in a grand metanarrative of power. Like Lawrence, Churchill was enamored with neo-classical epics in which facts were subordinated to the primary goal of achieving artistic effect, and where the author was himself portrayed as the hero of the story.\textsuperscript{29} But unlike Lawrence, who wrote at a time when Britain still dominated the counsels of Europe, Churchill’s war memoir appeared when its world role, and the author’s own political fortunes, were significantly diminished. Oddly, Churchill avoided any references to \textit{Seven Pillars} in his memoir, instead claiming to follow the method of Daniel Defoe’s \textit{Memoirs of a Cavalier} in hanging the chronicle of great political and military events on the thread of his personal experiences in wartime.\textsuperscript{30}

Churchill applauded those who espoused traditional values in writing about war, while he decried leftist intellectuals for anti-war abstractions.\textsuperscript{31} He believed that humans were primarily motivated to act through their emotions, not reason, and that words were not merely symbols but powerful emotive tools for stimulating the right action.\textsuperscript{32} To that end, Churchill refined his poetic
and artistic talents for writing gripping war stories so as to inspire the development of Anglo-American unity and strength after the war by representing the alliance as the pinnacle of human achievement to date. It was, he felt, a major step on the road to world unity and peace. However, with the notable exception of Paul Addison, historians of Churchill have focused primarily on his wartime activities, largely ignoring his important political influence after the war. Yet this period is also vitally important for an understanding of the man, less for what he did as a politician than for what he wrote in his memoir. Churchill succeeded more than any other contemporary of the war years in shaping collective memory in the English-speaking world through his postwar writing, when perceptions of the recent past were still highly malleable. Consequently, this study assesses how his metanarrative of war was produced and promoted by publishers, and received by the reading public, during this critical historical epoch of memory formation.

Analyzing the genesis and reception of Churchill’s war memoir takes its inspiration from the historiography of memory and identity formation. Scholarly analysis of historical events has broadened in the last few decades to include assessments of the manner in which events like the second world war are remembered and commemorated, and the political influences embedded in memory that shape collective identities. Social practices and forms that represent the past and perpetuate memory within a specific collectivity are considered politicized “memory sites” that assist in identity formation. This study focuses on one such site, the war memoir of Winston Churchill, in order to determine how his metanarrative of war influenced collective memories in Britain and America. Most political memoirs are subjective accounts of the past that reveal elitist power over the process of commemoration, utilizing compelling stories containing elements of truth and fiction. Nonetheless, the great memory theorist Jacques Le Goff contends that it is the very process of exposing the fictional and socially constructed dimensions to such narratives that enables students of history to preserve a sense of historical objectivity and truth.

Exposing the politicized aspects of social memory requires examining the means by which private memories are transmitted into the public realm of collective consciousness. In the early postwar years, the most powerful transmitter of carefully prescribed images of war memory remained the national print media. In publicizing and responding to war narratives, the political press amplified, dramatized, or challenged their underlying political messages. It did this through a process of “vilification or heroization” within social memory, whereby unexpected historical
consequences were reinterpreted into conscious aims, with past heroes depicted as if they existed only to bring about the present. In the decade following the war, right-wing print media in Britain played a central role in publically commemorating the past through politically constructed images of the world that lent legitimacy to imperial and conservative metanarrative. Churchill’s war memoir was a memory text that bolstered a shared sense of identity in Britain based on commonly perceived experiences of war. This study examines how war memory was politicized by Churchill and his allies in the media so as to advance their respective political agendas in the cold war.

Since personal and collective memory is always selective and usually contested, says Michael Kammen, major conflicts are critical for “stimulating, defining, justifying, periodizing and filtering” memories and traditions. In other words, identity is manifestly political, with social groups engaging in continuous political warfare to maintain or change collective perceptions. Most often, the political right uses memory to legitimize the existing social and political order, with people who are in positions of authority wielding their considerable power to manipulate public memory for conservative ends. National political leaders are inclined to seek social unity, the preservation of existing institutions, and hegemonic control over images of the past so as to minimize conflict or ambiguity in collective consciousness. The symbolic language of patriotism is central to the right’s efforts to mediate internal conflicts over national memory arising between political groups who contest the past. The left, on the other hand, often seeks to challenge such conceptions through a counter-narrative that urges class or “popular” struggle against the forces of social control. After World War II, the main stimuli for a contested national memory in Britain and America arose out of widespread fears over security, freedom, rapid social change, and historical discontinuity caused by the war and the advent of nuclear power. Into this atmosphere of frightening postwar disorder and danger, with its rash of domestic and foreign crises, Churchill’s metanarrative of legitimation sought to explain the past in ways that appeared to offer hopeful lessons for resolving the dilemmas of the present.

Metanarrative, Dr. Egerton notes, presents a sweeping vision of history, based on what the writer perceives as the significant past, in order to justify particular attitudes and meanings toward past events. The narrative structure which a writer of history creates is determined principally by his or her world view. Metanarrative derives its power from an ability to convert the apparent chaos of complex historical events into a dramatic, didactic, story that offers an imaginative presentation of history and destiny. It presents a paradigm of meaning that is intensely felt by particular social
groups or classes, such as hegemonic elites who advance their political interests through narratives extolling patriotic nationalism. Thus, effective metanarrative offers a didactic version of history that “serves ideology as a vehicle for the dramatization, communication, and socialization of political values and beliefs.” It engages the recipient’s beliefs and faith in forging a strong sense of collective identity. Today, grand metanarrative no longer dominates the writing of history, a caesura in historical consciousness that began in the aftershock of the first world war, when faith in the Enlightenment’s vision of social order and progress was undermined. But as this study will show, reception of Churchill’s war memoir suggests that metanarrative history continued to resonate powerfully during the 1950s, and for many still today.

A metanarrative of legitimation presents overarching political and historical assumptions that justify the conduct of powerful social groups or individuals, making it an apologia for power. It promotes national cohesion by instilling faith in a shared set of historical truths, whereas a metanarrative of challenge seeks to discredit and subvert the established order. Whenever a “conventional truth” no longer appears to comport with reality there is an opportunity for political leadership to reshape visions of nationhood, as occurred in America under FDR during the depression, and in France with de Gaulle after the humiliation of wartime occupation. In postwar Britain, Churchill sought to combat the rise of socialist visions of a new national identity based on anti-imperialism and collectivism, since he feared they would weaken national power and prestige. His war memoir grafted together an affirmation of Britain’s imperial mission with a vision of Anglo-American global hegemony through which the British people’s traditional sense of purpose could be sustained in the new world order. In writing his memoir, he sought to create an idealized version of Britain’s past that would inspire his countrymen to live up to what he considered their noblest qualities in advancing human civilization and leading the world toward political union.

This objective, while liberal in its sense of historical progress and purposefulness, was conservative in presenting a version of national character and history that promoted ruling class hegemonic memory over the popular memory of lower classes. Gramsci revealed that social control is secured not by ideological compulsion but by cultural leadership that manages to win the active consent of subordinate groups. Hegemonic control over such groups is achieved through the exercise of prestige that attains public consent rather than domination by coercion. Narratives of legitimation mask or defuse contradictions between social groups by establishing “common values” that render the existing power structure acceptable to all. Gramsci pinpointed the press as one of
the "most prominent and dynamic parts" of the ideological structure of hegemonic groups because of its ability to organize consent around certain ideas conducive to control, such as the mystique of leadership, through its promotion and dissemination of appropriate narratives. It is in civil society, dominated by schools, churches, media, and political organizations, that hegemony is primarily generated through the transmitting of belief systems. In the early postwar era, Churchill enjoyed an exceptionally close relationship with all of these powerful institutions of memory and identity formation, which greatly facilitated the production and reception of his metanarrative.

Ostensibly independent, media organs in the early postwar years were, in fact, ideological entities that mostly reflected and sustained Churchill's conservative messages. Benedict Anderson's seminal work on collective identity reveals that of all civic institutions, newspapers and book publishers are the two agents of communication most effective in the formation of national consciousness. After World War II, the press in Britain and America ensured that most citizens remembered the second world war through national and elitist "structures of signification" rather than through local totems of their own construction. The ruling classes, through control of media institutions, were able to elicit immense prestige for presenters of elitist memory, who were then able to shape and inform collective historical conceptions of the war that superceded personal experience. This was especially true when authors could disguise incompatible viewpoints through their monopoly on access to official information about the recent past.

Gramsci viewed the press as an agent of politicization through its shaping of messages that are conveyed to the public. He perceived the media as powerful hegemonic definers of value by facilitating the expression of ideas by political, military, and economic elites, while at the same time muting alternative voices of dissent. In the early postwar years, newspapers in Britain and America were still the most efficient links between politicians and the political public, providing them a central role in forging reader identification with Churchill's war narrative. The established press enabled influential writers like Churchill to utilize public space as a forum for the exchange, enhancement, and dissemination of conservative foreign policy views. Since most newspapers lacked the resources to cover international issues in depth, as most still do, they tended to rely on syndicated reporting from a handful of powerful national organizations whose news coverage and analysis of foreign affairs was distinctly right-wing. Consequently, several newspapers in a particular market did not necessarily ensure a multiplicity of voices receiving and responding to his metanarrative. A similar situation prevailed in the early postwar years in the book publishing
industry, where a small number of influential critics determined what was “serious” or “good” fare that the public should read. The writer John Farrell complained in 1945 that readers were being induced into accepting the inflated status of certain authors who had been elevated by the so-called critical elite. Most journalists reviewing books in the press, he claimed, had sacrificed their independence for the safety of wage-earning status with major publishing houses. Such critics tended to “iconize” a few great writers who they expected the public to receive reverently, while ignoring a great amount of literature that was equally worthy. Farrell maintained that these critics were backed by great economic and political power in performing the role of ideological policemen who imparted “appropriate meaning” to important political texts. Thus, it becomes imperative in media-based studies to assess the creator, content, and consumer of literary texts as a three-part communications continuum. In this respect, literary reception theory and the history of political thought are useful for determining how meaning is imparted to political texts through media channels connecting the author with her readers.

Both literary reception theory and the history of political thought are concerned with questioning the received canons of great texts in their respective fields. Literary theory has focused on the aesthetic of production, where textual meaning is derived from author intentionality, as well as the aesthetic of reception, where textual meaning is created in the act of reading. Thus, a literary work can be seen as possessing two poles, the artistic creation of messages by an author, and the realization of meaning by the reader. It is the convergence of text and reader that brings the literary work into existence. Postmodern reception theorists have shifted the weight of emphasis decidedly toward the reader, reducing the significance of the author as a creator of textual meaning, notes Robert Holub: “Perception and not creation, reception, not production, become the constituent elements of art.” While the story of an author’s life may be interesting, it is the image of the author and perception of his narrative that these reception theorists consider most important. They are concerned with the reasons why a given work or author becomes famous and how that fame is perpetuated over time, thereby shifting emphasis from the writer to those persons or groups that bestow fame upon him.

Literary theorist Martyn Thompson has offered a critique of this approach, arguing that it is too one-sided in accounting for how texts become effective. He maintains that such theorists are unduly suspicious of author intentions, leading to extreme ideas that a literary text can acquire whatever meaning the reader desires, and that only the receiver of a work is in a position to imbue
Thompson rejects this approach, and offers instead a modified reception theory that incorporates the text-based focus of new political thought.

Though postmodernist literary analysis offers its share of insights, taken to extremes it makes literary history impossible or pointless. Thompson’s answer is to incorporate political historical analysis from J.G.A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner to form a modified reception theory, an approach to literary reception that this project adheres to in its study of Churchill’s metanarrative. According to Skinner, textual meaning arises from a dialectical process involving author and reader equally: “[A]ny interpretation of the meaning of a text cannot be based on ‘the idea of a text as an autonomous object’ (as some reception theorists assert) but on an ‘idea of the text as an object linked to its creator, and thus on to the discussion of what its creator may have been doing in creating it.’”

One needs to analyze literature by assessing the power relations implicit in each stage of production, distribution, and consumption of a work. Collective behavior is shaped by the production of written histories containing national metanarrative, which are then transformed into collective memory and shared visions of the future through media dissemination and absorption by readers. In effect, the author’s messages and readers’ perceptions of reality react with each other in a particular historical context to produce political meaning for individuals and collective groups. Both reader and author enter into a kind of “referential pact” in which the reader accepts the author’s textual construct as a direct reflection of reality, reconstructing his story on the basis of textual clues to intentionality.

A reader’s responses are in turn shaped by knowledge of the author’s background, world view, previous achievements and writings, which set the context for his narrative. Issues of book distribution networks, edition, formatting, pricing, and display also play a role in determining who reads a book, when, with what expectations, and to what purpose. All of these issues affect the authority of an author and his work as received by the reading public.

Thompson’s synthetic approach recovers historical meaning by utilizing reception theory’s focus on readership as a creator of textual meaning along with new political thought’s concern with
an author’s rhetorical strategies. J.G.A. Pocock acknowledged that the act of writing and the act of publishing involve a process of discourse whereby a text invites a response, leading to a counter-text, or rezeptionsgeschichte. He saw analysis of this process as combining a search for responses by elites, whose ideas were recorded in book reviews and media commentary, along with a search for reception of the “silent majority” of readers. This perspective involves assessment of the manner in which ideological beliefs are created, revised, and promoted in texts, in the course of which they acquire authoritativeness with the reading public. Thompson’s synthetic approach also reconciles the conflict between reception theory’s emphasis on changing interpretations of texts over time and political thought’s emphasis on the historical understanding of meaning in texts as author-centered. It pays greater attention to publishing practices, the role of media institutions in the production process, and the ideology of a work’s all-important “first readers,” who in most instances constitute influential media opinion makers.

In adhering to this approach, my study analyzes Churchill’s memoir by a three-staged process that begins with an examination of authorial reputation, world view, and intentions in writing his metanarrative. It then examines press institutions, their ideology, and the author’s relationship to the media in Britain and America. Subsequently, it explores reception of The Second World War among politically influential opinion makers in the media, scholars, and laymen readers. My approach to reception analysis is premised on the notion that only by studying the inter-relationship of author, publisher, and reader can a balanced assessment of textual meaning be achieved as an answer to why Churchill’s work had such a powerful impact upon collective memory and identity formation. The issue of authorial intentionality is addressed in two stages, the first one dealing with Churchill’s developing world view up to the outbreak of World War II, discussed in Chapter 2. The next chapter proceeds with an assessment of the publishing industry in the 1940s and the creation of Churchill’s publishing syndicate after the war. The fourth chapter reconstructs how Churchill’s metanarrative of imperialism, power, and leadership was shaped through the various stages of drafting his memoir. In the penultimate chapter, we address post-publication reception of Churchill’s messages in the political press, academic community, and reading public during the early postwar years. Reception is analyzed primarily through book reviews or commentary contained in the political press, as well as from personal correspondence between Churchill and his readership. Finally, the conclusion carries my discussion of reception forward from the mid-1950s to the present day by providing an overview of second world war historiography.
Writing about war was a life-long endeavor for Churchill, who apparently was never happier than when he was involved in pursuing a war story. He was unique in playing a prominent leadership role during both world wars, after each conflict producing memoirs that totaled almost three million words. This massive war narrative spanned three decades of crisis-ridden history that Churchill likened to another Thirty Years’ War. His account of the second world war, published between 1948 and 1954, established a narrative structure for the conflict that profoundly influenced a generation of historiography. Reception of Churchill’s memoir was in turn greatly influenced by the altered postwar world order riven by bitterly contested ideological beliefs premised on capitalist democracy and communist totalitarianism. In America, influential rightist media power-brokers saw Churchill as a perfect symbol for marshaling public support behind their cause of resisting communism. Just as Churchill had assumed the mantle of free world leadership during the fight against Hitlerism, so again in the postwar era he was placed at the forefront of the cold war struggle against a new tyranny from the left. It was this commonality of purpose between Tory statesman and conservative publishers that created a powerful syndicate of press owners in the early postwar years to produce, promote and distribute Churchill’s memoir. Their mutual interest was to create a compelling war narrative that legitimized the existing political order in the West while dissipating support for radical social change from the left that had gained currency during the previous decade of economic, social, and political upheaval.

Churchill was an immensely marketable commodity after the war, both commercially as a source of great potential revenue for publishers of his writing, and historically as a powerful conveyor of collective memory for Britons and Americans who shared a common understanding of what the war experience meant for their nations. Publishers and readers revealed a strong personal and political interest in how Churchill’s war memoir was written and interpreted, evident by opinions expressed in correspondence with the author during the production process, and afterwards, when his volumes were published. Virtually everyone who commented on the memoir, whether approvingly or critically, was convinced that they constituted an authoritative text that would undoubtedly continue to be read and remembered for generations to come. Members of the publishing syndicate believed they were “building a property” based on Churchill’s war story that would become a permanent monument to Anglo-American greatness through unity. Many laymen
readers also felt a "proprietary" interest in Churchill's memoir in the sense that they considered the author to be their generation's most eloquent spokesman for a commonly shared war experience. Collectively, their letters depict a readership convinced that Churchill was writing not just for himself, or for his class, but was committing to print an epic tale of the British people's heroic struggle against tyranny that would long be remembered in the annals of history as an instance of unparalleled courage and sacrifice. Understandably, most readers viewed Churchill's memoir as the most important historical account of Britain's role in defeating Nazism that was likely ever to come out of the war.

At the time of publication, rightist press commentary attempted to bolster Churchill's messages about the war as a vital lesson against weak leadership, appeasement of tyranny, and divided counsels among the democracies that enabled totalitarianism on the left to gain control of eastern Europe. Collectively, the press bestowed immense prestige and authority upon Churchill's metanarrative that solidified his hold as a towering political icon in the minds of most Britons and Americans. His contention that the pursuit of appeasement caused British leaders to sacrifice the honor of their country by cowering before aggressive dictators, and in the process brought about the very war they had so earnestly sought to avoid, became conventional wisdom in the political culture of all English-speaking nations after the war. It was also widely accepted by American liberals and moderate leftists in Britain, who previously had been highly critical of Churchill's conservative world view. Though the war leader's metanarrative gradually lost its hold on scholarship in the course of successive waves of revisionism during the 20th century, it remains ensconced in the foreign policy thinking of many political leaders and lay readers in Britain and America, evidenced by repeated references to the lessons of appeasement by a Democratic President and Labour Prime Minister during the Balkan crises of the 1990s that culminated in the Kosovo intervention.

Chapter 1 Endnotes

4. Ibid., p.235.
5. Ibid., pp.234-35
25. Ibid., pp.11-13,200.
17

47. R. Johnson, Making Histories: Studies in History-Writing and Politics (Hutchinson, 1982), p.239.
60. Ibid., pp.248,251,255-58,267.
2 Churchill’s Metanarrative: Messages and Leadership

Churchill’s grand world view encompassed what he believed was the whole of the knowable past in conceiving of history as purposeful in that it was leading toward human enlightenment and world unity. At the forefront of this great tidal wave of human development was the British nation and empire, a force for good in the world that possessed a divine mission to lead humanity out of darkness and chaos. Churchill saw himself as a born leader for this greatest of nations because he knew best how to protect its interests and keep the world moving along the proper historical path. It was a world view fashioned in his Victorian youth and doggedly retained, with one major alteration, until his death at the age of 90. Churchill’s passion for preserving the empire did not blind him to its mounting structural weaknesses by the early 20th century, and he became alarmed by the deterioration in Britain’s strength following the first world war. Consequently, he revised his imperial world view in the interwar era to incorporate the idea of unity among all English-speaking peoples in the world under British guidance as the great hegemonic force of the future. He envisaged an Anglo-American ‘special relationship’ that would ensure world domination of the English-speaking peoples, whose combined powers would be put to benevolent use in lifting humanity from its misery by securing international peace and stability. There was a darker side to this world view, though, which was premised on notions of a world divided between the forces of enlightenment and evil. It was Churchill’s conviction that repeated failures of Britain’s political elites to follow the right course in past epochs were responsible for recurring outbreaks of calamity and war that periodically threatened to undermine national power. Thus, he felt it his duty to lead the country, and to teach future generations the lessons of statesmanship through his writing.

Imperialism and Democracy

As a young man at the turn of the century, Churchill was thoroughly imbued with the prevailing ethos of Victorian imperial grandeur. His nation was still the world’s greatest power, with large swaths of Africa and Asia under British dominion, though in Europe it was being challenged by newly industrializing powers. In the Western hemisphere, Britain’s navy and commercial enterprises dominated trade, as they had for most of the 19th century, though America was beginning to flex its economic and political muscle in the region. When Churchill died sixty-five years later, his beloved empire was at an end, its remnants transformed into a loose association
of independent Commonwealth nations averse to any form of direct control from London. America had become a global superpower, with Britain a very junior partner in the fight against world communism. British national identity, so long tied to its imperial heritage, had become unhinged, fragmenting into conflicting forms that undermined its very existence. Churchill’s life-long ambition had been to prevent such an eventuality by bolstering the foundations of empire, not because he held deeply thought out views on the meaning of imperialism, but rather because he considered it necessary for his nation to be a great world power.

In the first half of the 20th century, Churchill’s passionate and articulate defense of imperial greatness in books and speeches constituted a vain attempt to arrest long-term national decline. His doggedness was based on an abiding faith that history was on his side, with the trend of millennia moving toward a gradual coalescing of power into larger and larger aggregates, culminating in an all-conquering empire of English-speaking peoples. Such ideas were at the heart of Churchill’s metanarrative on war, making him the most powerful carrier of the imperial ethos among Britain’s ruling elite. It was an ethos that perceived history as a continuous evolution of democratic freedoms and liberalism originating in Saxon times and surviving into the modern era, where it was carried to the rest of the world through British imperialism. Thus, Churchill viewed the imperial tradition as liberating rather than confining or oppressively hegemonic; Britain was on the side of morality and justice in pursuing its national self-interests. Such historical assumptions of British identity and mission were class-based in considering patricians natural rulers and guardians of the institutions of empire and democratic government. Churchill absorbed this perspective in his youth during the reign of Queen Victoria, when it was commonplace, and retained it long after the second world war, when it was obsolescent. His imperial memory spanned a thousand years of history in which a heroic island nation repeatedly rallied behind a single great leader to defeat tyranny on the continent of Europe. From an early age, he believed that it was his destiny to be such a leader who would rise to the occasion in a great crisis to preserve Britain’s greatness and power.

According to William McNeill, more than “nationalistic self-flattery or contemptible error” was at work in Churchill’s reiteration of a historic British mission in wartime. Nations with an inherited tradition of resisting enemies successfully are more likely to act heroically in future crises than nations lacking such a tradition. Churchill was intensely proud of an imperial history imbued with a sense of courage and invincibility against superior foes, and he sought at every opportunity to instill in his countrymen pride in this tradition. His historical discourse with the British people
clothed imperial ambition in a moralistic rhetoric that sought to ensure public acceptance of colonial stewardship as “wise, enlightened and humane.” He feared that the British national character, based on hard will and realism during its Victorian heyday, was becoming soft and pacifist under the influence of socialist idealism in the 20th century. From his days as a young subaltern in the British army, it became his ambition to halt or reverse this apparently dangerous moral decay.

When asked in later years what was the most impressive sight he had ever seen, Churchill declared “without a doubt, the advance of the Dervishes at the Battle of Omdurman.” He considered the battle to have been “the last link in the long chain of those spectacular conflicts whose vivid and majestic splendour has done so much to invest war with glamour.” Such comments reflected a powerful self-image once prevalent within British political culture whose roots were in the “Disraelian spirit” of mid-Victorian Britain, when ruling elites were inculcated with martial values stemming from heroic struggles against foreign tyranny. The global conflict against Napoleon two generations earlier was part of a long and glorious record of English resistance to continental hegemony from hostile powers. However, the rise of social imperialism and mass politics in the late 19th century precipitated a new domestic danger that threatened to undermine the established order, prompting political elites to perceive foreign adventurism as an alternative focus for home-grown dissent and unrest. Churchill praised the Victorians for having taught children to appreciate “the greatness of our Empire and of our duty to preserve it....” He also paid tribute to one of the era’s pre-eminent imperialists: “Joseph Chamberlain’s greatest achievement that lofted him into the highest sphere for posterity was his ability to use Imperialist reform policy to revive the Tory party and make the world-spread peoples of the British Empire realise they were one.”

Before the carnage of the first world war, his views on imperial wars were not unlike his contemporaries who treated it as sport, a test of manliness, honor, and courage, with combat an altruistic act on behalf of the nation. In My Early Life he recalled his experiences as a subaltern at Sandhurst during the 1890s when only colonial “brush fires” interrupted the Victorian peace:

It did seem such a pity that it [military training] all had to be make-believe, and that the age of wars between civilized nations had come to an end forever. If it had only been 100 years earlier what splendid times we should have had. Fancy being nineteen in 1793 with more than twenty years of war against Napoleon in front of one!...Luckily, however, there were still savages and barbarous peoples.
Though many of his comrades died in the frontier wars of India and Sudan, he considered it "all very exciting, and for those who did not get killed or hurt, very jolly." Still, he thought colonial wars a poor substitute for great power conflicts, and he "longed to have a similar store of memories to unpack and display, if necessary repeatedly, to a sympathetic audience!"\textsuperscript{16}

As a young soldier, Churchill was contemptuous of civilians "hurrying to and fro engrossed upon their petty personal interests, oblivious and indifferent to the larger issues of human government." He doubted that such weak products of democracy could retain the vast provinces and domains "gained by centuries of aristocratic and oligarchic rule." His romanticism brought tears over British acts of heroism in war, but also to fear for the future of empire.\textsuperscript{17} He thought that conflict and the lust to kill were fundamental to man’s nature, and that all other institutions and events were subordinate to war in the shaping of humanity. It was the robust willingness of Englishmen to wage war that had allowed them to carve out the greatest empire in history.\textsuperscript{18} During the Boer war, he thrilled to the experience of a "real war" in a conflict pitting white against white. Churchill urged Britons to defend the empire by organizing a mass army, believing that the cost in blood and money was well worth it. When the response was less than expected, he chided his countrymen: "Are the gentlemen of England all fox-hunting? Why not an English Light Horse [regiment]? For the sake of our manhood, our devoted colonists, and our dead soldiers, we must persevere with the war."\textsuperscript{19} The savagery of the Boer conflict, with its guerilla warfare, village burning, and concentration camps did not lessen Churchill’s fascination with war. Only when mechanized slaughter in 1914-18 strained Britain’s imperial resources to the maximum did he begin to question the efficacy of modern war to advance national interests.

Nonetheless, his faith in empire remained firm, and he was greatly disappointed to find that his countrymen did not prove equally faithful to its cause in the interwar years, or that Americans lacked appreciation for its value as a progressive institution. In \textit{My Early Life}, he reflected: "I was a child of the Victorian era, when the structures of our country seemed firmly set, when its position in trade and on the seas was unrivaled....In those days the dominant forces in Great Britain were very sure of themselves and of their doctrine." That self-assuredness and faith in empire were strongly in evidence during his maiden political speech in July 1897:

\begin{quote}
The [Primrose] League has indeed set itself many hard tasks in the past fifteen years. It has been teaching the people of Great Britain the splendour of their Empire....But more remains to be done. We must carry out the work of popularizing those institutions which have made this country what it is, and by which we alone can maintain our proud position. (Cheers)\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}
In his first historical work, *The Malakand Field Force* (1897), Churchill justified Britain’s imperial rule over the vast Indian sub-continent as due to “the influence of that mysterious Power, which directing the progress of our species, and regulating the rise and fall of empires, has found a needed opportunity for a people, of whom at least it may be said that they have added to the happiness, the learning and the liberties of mankind.” His widely acclaimed study of *The River War* (1898), recounting Britain’s re-conquest of the Sudan, professed supreme confidence in the regenerative qualities of imperial democracy. Churchill depicted life as a Homeric struggle between the forces of enlightenment and barbarism; always lurking in the background of life were evil and chaos waiting to prey upon a civilization that had lost its vigilance, self-confidence, or willpower.

Churchill’s personal manifesto at the outset of his political career called for a firm and unrelenting grip upon non-white colonial populations who were unsuited to democratic rule. He advocated “Peace and Power abroad - Prosperity and Progress at home” through a revitalized imperialism that would assert its moral authority to win the hearts and minds of subject peoples. If they resisted, as later occurred in South Africa and Ireland, political authorities should not hesitate to use military force for preserving imperial hegemony, but that magnanimity ought to prevail after the rebels had been thoroughly vanquished. Though such views found a natural home in the Conservative Party, his political opportunism led to a falling out with Tory hardliners in November 1903, when he opposed increased spending on the army: “The strength and splendour of our authority is derived not from physical forces, but from moral ascendancy, liberty, justice, English tolerance, and English honesty.” After crossing the floor of the House of Commons to become a Liberal in 1904, Churchill became a vigorous advocate of Liberalism as a policy of social reform to ameliorate the worst hardships of workers while keeping them loyal to the imperial system and away from radical socialists. Thus, his rhetoric about the “glory and lustre” of the British empire continued to flow freely during his years as a Liberal social reformer.

Churchill believed that the British empire was a monument as great as that of Cologne cathedral, both of which took centuries to build. When constructed, these monuments served to “excite and evoke the inspiration and imagination” of all who beheld them: “This is the kind of work upon which we are engaged. Let us remember that the British empire is a far larger fabric than any that was ever planned by a man.” He lauded all the selfless Britons who had gone into the imperial system to protect natives from exploiters and speculators. But in order to preserve the gains that had been made, Britain needed to effect social reforms at home to produce more hearty members of an
"Imperial race" capable of shouldering the burdens of a great empire. Churchill appreciated that the era of British preeminence that followed the defeat of Napoleon a century earlier was nearing an end. The empire faced new daunting challenges in the century ahead, which he couched in terms of a stark choice between “melancholy disaster” or “the not unreasonable hope” of rejuvenation.27

Churchill’s main innovative idea on empire was to propose a federated imperial system that would appease the grievances of disaffected white Boers and Irishmen by granting them limited political autonomy. He noted that “the two most formidable and powerful and progressive Powers of the modern world, the United States of America and the Empire of Germany, conduct their business and carry on their development through a gigantic system of federated states and subordinate legislatures.” Thus, he called on Tories to end their obstructionism and work with Liberals in effecting the necessary structural changes to the empire: “We live in a world of unceasing change. The spirit of decay pervades all human arrangements. No race, no empire, no institution can repose for any length of time on past virtues or past achievements. Unless we renew our strength continually...we cannot hope to preserve indefinitely our happy and prosperous situation.” When world war erupted in August 1914, Churchill’s worst fears about Britain’s institutions and way of life under siege from the forces of barbarism and tyranny appeared to be confirmed.28 As First Lord of the Admiralty, he poured his abundant energies into fighting the war, oblivious of his many political enemies who despised his opportunism. They were quick to capitalize on a series of military blunders that were not of his making, but which he greatly exacerbated by his restlessness impatience for action and adventurism in pushing ahead the ill-fated Gallipoli landings, leading to his removal from office.

Despite the carnage and futility of trench fighting in Europe, Churchill retained faith in the necessity of war as an essential part of life and human advancement. In his memoir on the first world war, he reflected simultaneously on the horrors of modern warfare and the courageous sense of duty engendered by it.29 War, which used to be “cruel and magnificent,” in the democratic and scientific age had become “cruel and squalid.”30 But this somber verdict did not diminish his respect for the achievements of British forces, “inspired by love of country and human freedom,” which grudged no sacrifice in the fight against tyranny. Conscious of their “race,” British soldiers did their duty by throwing themselves at the enemy with honor and valor: “Unconquerable except by death, which they had conquered, they have set up a monument of native virtue which will command the wonder, the reverence and the gratitude of our island people as long as we endure as a nation among
The many acts of heroism by Britons during the bloodiest conflict known to man raised their moral claim to empire to its highest position in their nation’s history, he insisted.

The horror of the first world war did not cause Churchill to lose confidence in war as a rational instrument of national policy, asserting that there were worse things than bloodshed, even on an immense scale. An eclipse of the central imperial authority would be a far worse calamity, he felt. It was an eventuality he feared, since the British people habitually cast away hard-won victories by sliding into pacifism immediately after a danger had abated. Unlike most other politicians, Churchill delighted in the challenges and adversities of war, convinced that only through repeated baptisms of fire could an “imperial race” remain strong and united. He found the prospect of war “the key to future delights,” assuming that through it all the empire would be sustained, an idea that showed little appreciation for economic forces undermining Britain’s war-making abilities in the 20th century. He and the Colonial Office thought alike in the early 1920s, expecting the empire to pay for itself, which seemed only fitting since colonial rule was a benevolent system that brought enlightenment and peace to savage peoples: “The Empire...has been given to us as a means to that great end for which Christ came into the world, the redemption of the human race.” When the cost of maintaining imperial possessions became prohibitive after World War I, Churchill optimistically assumed that the mystical ties of blood and language between Britons and Americans could be strengthened for the purpose of reviving the sagging fortunes of empire.

In the interwar era, Churchill combined the views of a realist, romantic and idealist in perceiving the British empire as the most vital link in Europe’s balance of power, by which peace and world order was maintained. He was convinced that it would never fight a war to upset that balance, and since the League of Nations was also an instrument for preserving order, Britain’s imperial interests were considered to be in harmony with international law: “The fortunes of the British Empire and its glory are inseparably interwoven with the fortunes of the world. We rise or we fall together.” However, in contrast to the progressive internationalism of Wilsonian liberalism, Churchill’s conservative internationalism saw the League as complementing, not supplanting, the British empire and Commonwealth. While he defended the League against its many detractors in Britain, he never intended it to play a central role in foreign affairs. Rather, his strategy after the rise of Hitler to power was to solicit support from pro-League forces in Britain for his agenda of strengthening the empire through rearmament. In most other instances, he kept the pacifist-minded League of Nations Union at arms length throughout the 1930s.
Churchill was greatly disillusioned by the mounting nationalist challenges to British imperial control in the interwar era. His solution was to utilize the air force for bombing rebellious villagers in remote areas while shoring up imperial power by forging tighter bonds between the Anglo-Saxon peoples: "How was it," the historians of the future will ask, 'that these vast, fairly intelligent, educated, and on the whole virtuous communities were so helpless and futile as to allow themselves to become the victims of their processes, and of what most abhorred them?' The answer will be, 'They had no plan.' Churchill decried the "inertia and negativism" of the British people after 1918 that caused many of them to doubt their national mission and question the purpose of empire. Nonetheless, his interwar policies were far from consistent, as he largely ignored the empire except for occasional rhetorical outbursts reminiscent of Gibbon or Macaulay that struck many of his contemporaries as out of place in the bleak, deflationary, and disillusioned 1920s. At the same time, he opposed imperial reforms that would have given preferential tariffs to the Dominions and stabilized relations with India. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was the darling of those seeking imperial retrenchment through defense spending cuts. Only the air force was expanded, as an inexpensive terror weapon for imperial control.

In the 1930s, Churchill immersed himself in writing an epic history of ancestor heroes and empire builders. In his four-volume work on the life of Marlborough, he noted that after defeating Louis XIV in 1699, Europe's "Grand Alliance" tragically fell apart when the people of England began clamoring for disarmament and greater freedoms:

In fact, it has been an invariable rule that England, so steadfast in war, so indomitable in peril, should at the moment when the dire pressures are relaxed and victory has been won cast away its fruits. Having made every sacrifice, having performed prodigies of strength and valour, our countrymen under every franchise or party have always fallen upon the ground in weakness and futility when a very little more perseverance would have made them supreme, or at least secure.

Churchill blamed weak leadership for such lapses, though in the 1930s he too was slow to appreciate the new threat to British security from air power and fascist dictatorships. While he urged greater armaments to protect British power and prestige after 1933, the public would only accept increased arms expenditures for a higher moral cause, prompting him to couple rearmament policy with a plea for collective security. He expected Britons to faithfully support traditional imperial values and interests, but he offered few tangible benefits in return. Churchill considered the decision to grant Indians self-rule evidence of the nation's declining moral courage. His inflammatory rhetoric decried
“the greatest evil” brought upon the peoples of India and Great Britain. India was a source of imperial power whose loss he feared would reduce Britain to the status of a minor nation. Refusing to accept India as an evolving and sophisticated polity; he viewed it as a geographical abstraction of intense racial and religious rivalries that would collapse into tribal conflict if left to its own devices:\textsuperscript{51}

The rescue of India from ages of barbarism, tyranny and internecine war, and its slow but ceaseless forward march to civilisation constitutes upon the whole the finest achievement of our history. This work has been done in four or five generations by the willing sacrifices of the best of our race....Science, healing or creative, has been harnessed to the service of this immense and, by themselves, helpless population.\textsuperscript{52}

Churchill maintained that Dominion status for India would enfeeble Britain and make defense of the empire east of Suez virtually impossible.\textsuperscript{53} Unlike many of his contemporaries who saw the empire as a burden that weakened Britain’s ability to protect its vital interests in Europe, Churchill saw it as fundamental to national security and international order.\textsuperscript{54} On the eve of war, he fervently believed that if the British people were to save civilization from tyranny they must regain the moral courage of their great imperialist forefathers.\textsuperscript{55}

\textbf{Unifying the English-speaking Peoples}

In the same decade that Churchill came of age, Anglo-American relations underwent a sea change from the prior century-long rivalry and belligerency to an era of growing friendship and entente. In the 1890s, a series of treaty negotiations between Britain and the US over territorial and trading rights in the Western hemisphere eased economic and political tensions that had nearly instigated war on several occasions. Germany’s dramatic rise to power in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century after the Franco-Prussian war caused British leaders to perceive a new threat to national security, particularly after Kaiser Wilhelm removed the moderating influence of Chancellor Bismarck and initiated a massive naval arms race. British leaders immediately realized the mortal danger from Germany’s emergent blue-water navy, leading to a calculated decision to appease US interests in North and South America, and acceptance of an open-door policy for trade in East Asia. Befriending the US enabled Britain to concentrate its fleet in home waters where it could more effectively meet a German challenge and protect the vital economic lifeline to North America.\textsuperscript{56}

Churchill’s American heritage on his mother’s side prompted a keen interest in US history
and its development as a world power. At the same time that he was absorbing Victorian notions of Britain’s divinely inspired imperial mission, he came to appreciate American aspirations of manifest destiny and trans-Pacific expansionism. As a journalist observing the Cuban rebellion against Spain in 1896, Churchill thrilled to US intervention: “America can give the Cubans peace...and perhaps prosperity then will return. American annexation is what we must all urge, but possibly we shall not have to urge very long.” He welcomed American power on the international stage, largely because he saw it as complementing - rather than challenging - British imperial interests. He was not alone in perceiving Anglo-American rapprochement as a useful device for strengthening the empire. British elites in the early 20th century entertained romantic views of America that were an expanded version of social Darwinian concepts of Anglo-Saxon “racial” superiority. They continued to perceive the US as a land populated by predominantly white descendants of “British stock” with similar political values, cultural traditions, and national aspirations, even though by 1900 only one third of the population actually derived from British ancestry. Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe pouring into America after the 1880s had dramatically altered the social mix from earlier times.

Ties between the two countries grew warmer when the US also began to view Germany’s industrial power and aggressive imperial policy as a threat to its hegemony in the Caribbean, prompting Washington to welcome the British navy as a friend for the first time. In 1906, Alfred Mahan, author of *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, urged President Teddy Roosevelt to accept the British empire as based “substantially on the same lines of world policy as ourselves; that its strength will be our strength, and the weakening of it injury to us.” Mahan’s ideas on naval power and geopolitics profoundly influenced political culture in both countries, and his book was avidly read by a young Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt. When Churchill entered politics early in the new century he was already an advocate of Anglo-American friendship. Four years later, he joined the Liberal Party over the issue of free trade, criticizing the “wanton folly” of his former Tory colleagues who vehemently opposed it: “The union of the Anglo-Saxon race is a great ideal, and if ever it is to be achieved it will be by increasing and not diminishing the friendly intercourse of trade between this country and the United States.” Churchill believed America was a bastion of Anglo-Saxon virtue and power that should be harnessed by British leaders to bolster imperial power and more effectively confront the German challenge. By the early 20th century, the German and US economies were surging forward, while Russia was beginning to fulfill de
Tocqueville’s prediction of a nascent superpower, all of which left Britain vulnerable and in need of allies.  

At the same time, Britain was beset by a more immediate problem in the form of Irish sectarianism that threatened to provoke civil war. In promoting Irish Home Rule, Churchill saw an opportunity to ease tensions in Ireland while using constitutional reform to stimulate greater English-speaking unity in the colonies, and in America where a large Irish expatriate population was fomenting anti-British sentiment. Speaking in Unionist Belfast in 1912, Churchill urged the formation of a federalist imperial system as the best solution for quelling Irish-Catholic secessionism: “Great as are the difficulties which...stand in the way of a federation of the Empire, those difficulties would be sensibly diminished by a reconciliation between Great Britain and Ireland, and, far wider even than the unity of the British Empire, the great dream could be dreamed of good relations and ultimate unity with the English-speaking peoples all over the world.” Six months later, Churchill appealed for English-speaking unity in a speech on naval preparedness, contending that it would facilitate mutual defense against aggressor powers. Optimistically, he asserted that a political union was already well on the road to consummation.  

Churchill’s romanticism toward America was largely based on faulty historical assumptions, distorting emotions, and a poor understanding of the US constitution, rather than on close social and political analysis. Nonetheless, after the outbreak of war in 1914 he became convinced that American power could prove decisive to the outcome. In his memoir after the war, he asserted that only a handful of British vessels separated the world from Teutonic hegemony. If they had been lost, potentially in a single naval engagement lasting an afternoon, there would only be left “far off across the Atlantic unarmed, unready, and as yet uninstructed America to maintain, singlehandedly, law and freedom among men.” In the first three years of war, Churchill claimed that a great wealth of kinship and goodwill by Americans toward the allied cause overwhelmed all legal disputes over international rights of neutral nations to trade with belligerents. Though US demands for freedom of the seas clashed sharply with Britain’s naval embargo against central Europe, Churchill later lauded the wise leaders in Washington and London who had “guarded the English-speaking world and its destiny from measureless injury.” America’s entry into the war in 1917 revealed the “splendour of American manhood” marching together with their fellow Englishmen in Europe, proof of the reconciliation of two Christian civilizations who were united in a “great struggle against Teutonic and scientific barbarism.” For the first time since America’s independence, the two nations
were united militarily in a common cause against tyranny. Churchill’s views on America were widely reported in the US press during the war, greatly contributing to his growing popularity there. He believed it a development of epochal proportions that British and American troops were fighting side by side as “the two great branches of English-speaking peoples began again to write their history in common.” Americans, though, had stayed out of the war until Britain and France were near exhaustion from three years of unprecedented bloodletting, a fact that caused much resentment among other British leaders but which Churchill brushed aside in his effort to solidify the bonds of friendship.

His optimism, though, was not always reciprocated. After the war, President Wilson expressed such intense moralistic hostility to British imperialism that many British politicians became suspicious of US motives. While Churchill in public lauded American friendship, in private he was embittered by Wilson’s refusal to cancel allied war debts, complaining about the President’s “selfish and extortionate policy.” When British and US delegates at Versailles fought over the peace treaty, Churchill despaired: “If we fall apart all that we have achieved will collapse in ruin to the ground.” After America retreated into isolationism, undermining the future viability of the League of Nations, Churchill warned that the US “cannot leave that continent [Europe] in a welter of anarchy,” or it would bode ill for the stability of the postwar world order. At the same time, he refused to accept the fact that New York had replaced London as the financial capital of the world, maintaining that America was treating its allies as vassals on account of the unpaid war debt. In 1923, at the Washington Naval Conference, Churchill became further angered by US assertions of naval parity with Britain, telling colleagues that the “Americans are arrogant, fundamentally hostile to us, and... wish to dominate world politics....” At the same time, he noted that US demands to abrogate the Anglo-Japanese alliance “only shows how little advantage is to be gained by making such efforts to conciliate American opinion. Whatever may have been done at enormous cost and sacrifice to keep up friendship is apparently swept away by the smallest tiff or misunderstanding, and you have to start again and placate the Americans by another batch of substantial or even vital concessions.”

In the interwar era, Churchill sought to counteract American isolationism by suggesting that their nations had a mutual interest in working for peace and stability. He conducted a speaking tour of the US and Canada in 1929, garnering much attention if not active support from Americans for his views. Hitler’s rise to power in 1933 caused Churchill to renew appeals for Anglo-American
cooperation. After Germany’s re-occupation of the Rhineland in March 1936, he urged the creation of a grand alliance involving the US, Britain, and France to prevent another war. Though Prime Minister Baldwin agreed that US cooperation was a high priority, his most powerful Cabinet colleague Neville Chamberlain was contemptuous of American politicians for talking big but doing little. As an isolated backbencher throughout the 1930s, Churchill could do little more than utter hopeful rhetoric about the warmth of Anglo-American relations and their mutual dislike of totalitarianism: “I declare my belief that a major war is not imminent, and I still believe there is a good chance of no major war taking place again in our time,” he said during an appeal in 1938 for the English-speaking peoples to unite in resisting German expansionism.

After the Anschluss of Austria, Churchill expressed his concern that the English-speaking nations were shirking their collective duty to protect humanity from chaos and ruin. He lamented this neglect of international responsibilities in allowing tyranny to rise again in Europe. Churchill argued that if the US supported France and Britain against Germany there would be no risk of war, ignoring the fact that American public opinion prior to November 1938 was sympathetic to revision of the Versailles peace settlement. In fact, US presidents from Harding to Roosevelt had maintained that Germany was Europe’s industrial heartland whose economic and political rehabilitation was vital to the region’s prosperity and stability. The advent of the Third Reich did not substantially alter that viewpoint. In 1936, FDR blithely claimed that the Rhineland occupation helped to dispel the “dark clouds of Versailles.” Though he had no illusions about Hitler’s lawlessness, he respected German culture and its desire for an enhanced international presence. Conversely, he disdained Britain’s upper classes and the “Bank of England crowd,” complaining that they “took eighty percent of every deal.” Feelings in the City were mutual; when Roosevelt proposed a summit in early 1938 to draft international codes for arms reduction and trade enhancement, the idea was peremptorily dismissed in London as preposterous.

The rebuff meant that during the ensuing Czech crisis Roosevelt remained politically inactive, privately favoring appeasement of German demands while warning European leaders that the US would not join an anti-Hitler front under any circumstances. The US ambassador to Britain, the ardent appeaser J. Kennedy, spoke openly of giving Germany a free hand in the east, though Roosevelt later rebuked him for such talk. Following the Munich Pact, Churchill broadcast to the US: “We are left in no doubt where American conviction and sympathies lie; but will you wait until British freedom and independence have succumbed, and then take up the cause, when it is three-
quarters ruined, yourselves alone?”

Even after Hitler’s takeover of Prague in March 1939, American leaders continued to support appeasement policies in Europe. Roosevelt’s most trusted State Department advisor remained the Anglophobic Adolph Berle, whose strongly isolationist views on foreign policy prevailed until August 1940 before he was replaced by Cordell Hull.

Despite Churchill’s inspiring rhetoric, America figured little in his calculations of world affairs prior to the start of World War II. Only after the war did he claim that FDR’s overtures in 1938 were the last slim chance of stopping Hitler by drawing America into European affairs before its hates and fears spilled over into bloodshed:

That Mr. Chamberlain, with his limited outlook and inexperience of the European scene, should have possessed the self-sufficiency to wave away the proffered hand stretched out across the Atlantic leaves one, even at this date, breathless with amazement....One cannot today even reconstruct the state of mind which would render such gestures possible.

The retreat into isolationism by the US was not reversed even with the outbreak of war in September 1939. American officials remained decidedly cool toward the dilemma of Europe’s democracies, and for the first seven months of the war FDR did not even bother to respond to Churchill’s telegrams. Meanwhile, Ambassador Kennedy informed the President that the prevailing mood in Britain was strongly defeatist, with an effete and decadent ruling class showing little desire to prosecute the war, a view shared by many Americans. Churchill sought to counteract Kennedy’s corrosive ideas by proclaiming in direct radio broadcasts to the American people that the British were resolved to die rather than surrender to Nazism: “It will then be for you, the Americans, to preserve and to maintain the great heritage of the English-speaking peoples....” Despite a policy of strict neutrality by the US in the first year of war, Churchill was convinced that eventually they would unite with Britain to stop Hitler and restore world order.

Appeasement and Political Praxis

Churchill’s influence on British political culture in the 20th century produced starkly contrasting impressions of the man and his policies. He has been perceived as a genius and prophet who heroically rose to prominence in a crisis to save the world for democracy, and decried as a reckless adventurer, warmonger, and would-be dictator who was dangerous to British democracy. Prior to the second world war, most of his contemporaries, whether Tory, Liberal, or socialist agreed with the latter perspective. They disparaged Churchill as a rank opportunist whose bold and restless
nature propelled him to dangerous adventurism. As one pundit in the mid-1920s noted: “He obeys no one, fears no one, reveres no one. He is his own superman and is so absorbed in himself and in his own fiery purposes that he does not pay others the compliment even of being aware of them.”

Liberals and Tories saw him as lacking in wisdom or judgement, while socialists despised him as a reactionary who never even attempted to understand the social and economic issues plaguing the working classes. His frequent calls to revitalize Britain’s political system were widely interpreted as masking a hidden desire for dictatorship. Ironically, it was his very audacity and egotism that enabled him during the second world war to radically reverse his negative image. Perhaps it is best to view Churchill’s political philosophy as a hybrid of 19th century liberalism and conservatism, since he was clearly not ideologically dogmatic. In this sense, he resembles the mid-19th century views of the philosopher J.S. Mill, who defended political democracy but recoiled from radicalism in his later writing, warning against the “tyranny of universal suffrage.”

When Churchill began his political career in 1900, he pledged to faithfully support the cause of his father’s Tory democracy, which sought to combine conservative values with amelioration of the worst social abuses. Yet Churchill always viewed himself to be above party orthodoxy, his only permanent allegiances being to the monarchy, empire, and personal ambition. Consequently, over the course of a long career, the major political themes animating his speeches changed constantly as he tacked for political advantage. As his first major biographer R.R. James notes, these twists and turns undoubtedly enhanced the longevity of his life in politics, but they also gave it an “unimpressive looseness.”

Churchill’s political inconsistencies can be viewed in terms of tactical maneuvering to ensure his continued proximity to the levers of political power, but at the same time, he held firmly to faith in the empire, Parliament, and the monarchy. He would not compromise politically when he felt that these institutions were threatened, which explains his die-hard stance on India in the 1930s and his defense of King Edward in 1936, even though such actions badly undermined his political standing. His bold adventurism and naked ambition for power, so different from customary British pragmatism and selflessness, led him to make tactical judgements about partisan politics that deeply angered and alienated virtually every major political group in Britain before the second world war. Churchill’s sheer brilliance at public speaking often worked against him because the power and pyrotechnics of his oratory in defending or advancing political causes roused the venom of political opponents that exceeded and outlived their disenchantment with the issues in question.
Churchill was already famous for his daring and cunning even before entering Parliament in 1900. Months earlier, he had stunned Britain and the world with a daring escape from Pretoria, where he was being held captive by Boer rebels fighting against British control. His colorful story of the adventure drew huge crowds wherever he spoke, and served to launch him on his political career. As a freshman Member of Parliament, Churchill immodestly lectured Tory leaders on the need to improve working class living standards by a policy of moderate social reform. Only in this way, he asserted, could the “dried-up drain-pipe of Radicalism” be prevented from gaining enough political backing to achieve power for implementing their utopian vision. When Churchill noted a “shocking lack of cohesion” in Tory ranks, he prepared to jump ship. Fearing the Party’s hold on power was slipping, putting in doubt his chances of gaining high office through Tory patronage, Churchill began a series of scathing attacks on the Party leadership that culminated in his decision to join the Liberals. Churchill used the opportunity of a debate on free trade reform in 1904 to burn his bridges in a speech that was jeered by fellow Conservatives. Soon after, secret negotiations with Liberal functionaries prompted him to cross the floor of the Commons to join a Liberal Party on the verge of wresting political power from Arthur Balfour’s Conservatives.

In 1905, Churchill asserted that free trade and self-government for white colonies were the only means by which a modern liberal democracy could reconcile its interests with the responsibility to create “loyal, prosperous, powerful, and profitable colonies.” He was cognizant of lessons learned from the Boer war, where reconciliation with the rebels had been swift following Britain’s decision to grant South African whites a large degree of political autonomy through self-government. Liberal leaders rewarded him with a Cabinet post as Secretary of Colonial Affairs following their election victory in January 1906. The Tories, embittered by defeat and Churchill’s acerbic attacks on their policies, carried their fight against reforms into the House of Lords, using obstructionist tactics that precipitated a constitutional crisis. Despite the fact that he was from one of Britain’s most venerable aristocratic families, Churchill immediately launched a sharp assault on the “effete oligarchy” of aristocrats that he alleged was the “laughing stock of Europe.” It was evidence of the lengths to which he would go in order to curry favor from those who wielded political power. Churchill issued the sharpest rebuke among Liberals against upper class privilege exemplified by the House of Lords: “Posing as a chamber of review, remote from popular passion...it nevertheless exhibits a taste for cheap electioneering, a subservience to caucus direction and a party spirit upon a level with many of the least reputed elective Chambers in the world; and beneath the imposing mask of an assembly
of notables...we discern the leer of the artful dodger...." From this time onward, many Tories would view him with suspicion as a traitor to his class.

Churchill’s class warfare reached its peak in 1909 with his articulate defense of Lloyd George’s People’s Budget while mocking Tories for their hostility toward it. Behind his radical rhetoric, however, lay the fundamentally conservative purpose of preserving the empire and the established political order by cautious appeasement of working class grievances:

It is here in our midst, close at home, close at hand, in the vast growing cities of England and Scotland, and in the dwindling and cramped villages of our denuded countryside. It is there you will find the seeds of Imperial ruin and national decay. The awful gap between rich and poor - the want of proper discipline and training in our young people...the absence of any established minimum standard of life and comfort among the workers, and at the other end, the swift increase of vulgar, joyless luxury - here are the enemies of Britain. Beware lest they shatter the foundations of her power.

Churchill dismissed the Tory dominated House of Lords as a “lingering relic of the feudal order” that had long outlived its usefulness. The vehemence of his speeches against the aristocracy and Tories, though popular with his working class constituents, began to arouse disquiet among his own Liberal colleagues who thought it excessive demagoguery.

Churchill’s brashness spun him in dangerous new directions in 1911, when a crisis erupted over labor unrest in England and Wales. It soon brought him into conflict with left-wing Liberals and Labour supporters for his use of excessive violence in quelling the protests. After the King declared that the situation in northern England appeared more like revolution than a strike, Churchill (now Home Secretary) ordered the military onto the streets to restore calm. As a result, he was vigorously attacked by the left for overreacting and using bad judgment, while Tories seized on the opportunity to criticize him for being too slow to act. Shortly thereafter, Churchill was removed from the Home Office and put in charge of the Admiralty when German aggressiveness during the Agadir crisis of July 1911 revealed that the navy was not prepared for war. A bold hand at the helm was deemed necessary to put British defenses in order. Churchill eagerly poured his restless energies into the task of modernizing the navy, vigorously fighting against left-wing resistance to further increases to military spending. At the Admiralty, Churchill again displayed a disconcerting quickness to contemplate military action in an ostensibly domestic dispute. With tensions in northern Ireland mounting over Home Rule, he hastily ordered a naval squadron to Ulster as a threat to Unionist rebels without first winning Cabinet approval. This time Tories were on the opposite
side of the intervention issue, vilifying the move as “the Ulster Pogrom.” The naval action added
to their grievances with Churchill, and a year later they exacted revenge by ensuring his downfall.92

Before 1914, many Britons also felt that Churchill was deliberately acting belligerently in
foreign affairs, inducing a war scare that was entirely out of proportion to the circumstances then
prevailing.93 Nonetheless, when war came the navy was ready, enabling Churchill to repair some of
the damage caused by his Ulster action, but among Conservatives he was still intensely disliked, and
his support with Liberals was not as firm as he believed. Thus, when he lost the confidence of his
service advisors for rashly insisting on two amphibious operations, at Antwerp in 1914 and in the
Dardanelles during 1915-16, both of which turned into disasters with considerable loss of life,
Churchill found himself “utterly and completely alone” in Parliament. His fall from power was
swift, yet he appeared not to have seen it coming until the last moment. In November 1915, he was
forced to resign from the Admiralty, and in deep despair took a battlefield commission in France.
But unlike his father before him, whose career had come to a screeching halt after resigning from
Salisbury’s Cabinet on a dispute over naval spending, Churchill was much luckier at reviving his
political fortunes. Many contemporaries thought they saw the same instability and unsound
judgement in Churchill that had marked his father’s meteoric career, making him an untrustworthy
ally. Nonetheless, disenchantment with Asquith’s leadership and the perceived need for desperate
measures led to a new government under Lloyd George in December 1916. Catastrophes on the
Western front and in the Mediterranean precipitated the accession to power of an energetic and
unconventional politician to lead the country’s war effort. Six months later, Lloyd George appointed
Churchill (another maverick who he hoped could energize the war effort) Munitions Minister despite
vehement opposition from Tories in the coalition.94

When the war ended a year later, Churchill was appointed Secretary of State for War in the
new government. But almost immediately he alienated his working class constituents by vigorously
supporting military intervention in Russia’s civil war. The Cabinet was uneasy about becoming
embroiled in the war, and Lloyd George soon distanced himself from it entirely. Yet Churchill
seemed oblivious to the thin ice he was on when he urged support for Russia’s disparate anti-
Bolshevik forces, whose chances of success he greatly exaggerated. He became completely
absorbed in the Russian war, delivering vituperative speeches around England that demonized the
Bolsheviks. In the four years after World War I, Churchill’s intense fear of communist revolution
caused him to rapidly move far to the right, jettisoning Liberal ideas like excess baggage in favor
of waging a struggle against “socialist subversives.” In the same breath as he attacked the “criminality and animalism” of the Bolshevik regime in Russia, he lambasted the growing political influence of Labour in Britain. Churchill decried as “misguided and degenerate” Labour supporters who defended the cause of the Bolsheviks. Fearing that Russia’s revolutionaries might ally with domestic socialism to subvert the British political system, Churchill appealed for bi-partisanship between the established centrist and right-wing parties against the left. In July 1919, he declared: “We must advance together, hand in hand. We have not only got a common cause and a common danger, but we have also got leaders who by their action and the risks they have run for their opinions have proved themselves in full harmony with modern requirements.” Six months later, having lost the intervention fight, he called on Liberals and Tories to unite behind a policy of confronting extremism at home and abroad.95

In the 1920s, Churchill was appalled by the advent of a mass electorate that enabled Labour to gain control of the government for the first time. He bitterly complained that broadening the franchise had debased modern British society and made the electorate unmanageable. In his autobiography, he declared: “I must explain that in those days [before universal suffrage] we had a real political democracy led by a hierarchy of statesmen, and not a fluid mass distracted by newspapers.” Churchill complained that the creation of a mass electorate had resulted in the “liquefaction of the entire British political system.”96 He decried the passing of an era when the upper classes controlled politics “as a matter of habit and duty,” and Parliament was filled with men of commanding intellect and personality. It seemed to him “a very great world” in which to live:

[A] few hundred great families who had governed England for so many generations and had seen her rise to the pinnacle of her glory, were interrelated to an enormous extent by marriage. Everywhere one met friends and kinsfolk. The leading figures of Society were in many cases the leading statesmen in Parliament....In those days the glittering parties at Lansdowne House, Devonshire House or Stafford House comprised all the elements which made a gay and splendid social circle in close relation to the business of Parliament, the hierarchies of the Army and Navy, and the policy of the State.”97

It was a perspective that subsumed British history into the biography of his own family, articulating a sweeping nationalist narrative through the lens of familial experience.98 His biographies of Lord Randolph Churchill and Marlborough displayed immense filial piety and ancestor worship, which of course helped to elevate his own standing as their successor. In both cases, he was motivated by a desire to vindicate their records of public service from detractors by glorifying them as great men
of vision and statesmanship: "Every prophet has to come from civilization, but every prophet has to go into the wilderness....He must serve periods of isolation and meditation. This is the process by which psychic dynamite is made."99

Vindication and self-gloration became central objectives for Churchill after the first world war, especially since the shadow of suspicion regarding his unstable character and unsound judgment continued to haunt him. In The World Crisis he sought to redeem his role in the Gallipoli operation that had ended so badly, producing what Balfour described as Churchill’s case "disguised as a history of the universe."100 Historian M. Weidhorn contends that Churchill “distorted history to suit the imperious needs of his voracious ego, private myths and romantic dreams” in recounting his conduct during the war.101 The humiliation of the Gallipoli fiasco strongly reinforced a pathological need developed in childhood to win praise and attention from an indifferent father, a disposition acknowledged decades earlier when he recalled the positive reception to his first book: “The reader must remember I had never been praised before....Now here was the great world with its leading literary newspapers and vigilant erudite critics, writing whole columns of praise!”102 In The World Crisis, he claimed that the terrible slaughter of World War I could have been avoided by his ingenious plan to turn the enemy’s flank in the Balkans, but there were no allied leaders with the courage or imagination to take the bold action required to bring it to fruition. Churchill attributed the campaign’s failure to great conviction and determination by Turkish leaders, and the lack of those qualities among British leaders, who “defrauded the attackers of the reward.”103

What Churchill did not mention in his memoir was the fact that his many shifts and turns in prewar politics, his adventurism and lust for action, had resulted in a reputation for unreliability that was increasingly difficult to overcome.104 Despite his impressive personal qualities of pugnacity, boundless energy, wit, and imagination, by the 1920s most of his contemporaries thought he lacked an essential characteristic of effective political leadership: the ability to build a network of reliable allies. Almost all of his close political associates were erratic and distrusted men, to whom he remained fiercely loyal while expecting their sycophantic devotion in return.105 It was this reputation more than his failure in the war that caused him to lose a succession of elections between 1922-24. Following Labour’s rise to power in 1924, Churchill sought to rehabilitate himself with the Tories by warning that quarrels and jealousies of the two historical parties were playing into the hands of socialists. He accused Liberals of becoming the cat’s paw of Labour, whose government under Ramsey MacDonald was “one vast monument of sham and humbug” that was deliberately and
wantonly corrupting the character of the British nation. Shortly before crossing the floor of the House of Commons for a second time, Churchill urged Liberals to abandon their flirtation with Labour and join the Tories to preserve British democracy.  

As a born-again Tory, Churchill urged his Party to seek working class support by using inflammatory anti-socialist rhetoric since the masses were allegedly more interested in watching a dog-fight than listening to a political lecture on party doctrine. His paternalistic strategy for sustaining political authority by Britain’s conservative elites was to brand socialism as anti-democratic whose leaders were unfit to rule, warning: “The Socialist party can only progress by destroying and devouring the Liberal party.” Churchill’s attacks on Liberals in the 1920s occurred just as the Party was slipping into terminal decline, and achieved a similar result as his anti-Tory diatribes two decades earlier, earning him the lasting enmity of his former Liberal colleagues. Nonetheless, it led to Tory leader Stanley Baldwin appointing him Chancellor of the Exchequer, marking yet another miraculous recovery of his political fortunes.  

Despite his obvious fascination with war and weaponry, Churchill gladly adhered to Baldwin’s pacific views in order to ingratiate himself with the Tory leadership after decades of estrangement. As a delegate to the Locarno conference in 1925, he supported arrangements to normalize relations with Germany, ignoring the fact that Britain’s refusal to guarantee eastern Europe’s borders signaled to German leaders that future revisions to the Versailles treaty were possible. At the Treasury, he supported sharp reductions in military spending and opposed strengthening Singapore’s defenses: “I do not think in our lifetime or in that of our children you are going to see an attempt by Japan to invade and colonise Australia by force.” As Minister of War in 1928, he drastically curtailed the Army’s Tank Corps, later claiming that he did not fully appreciated the revolutionary impact of fast moving mechanized armor in battle, an excuse contradicted by The World Crisis, where he had noted the tank’s great potential for future wars. Prior to 1928, Britain had been a leader in tank design, but Churchill’s actions, premised on economic imperatives, caused the country to rapidly lose ground to Germany, where the lessons of tank warfare were studied closely. In addition, Churchill’s placing of the Ten-Year Rule on a daily basis eliminated yearly reviews of war prospects and had a debilitating effect on the military’s ability to modernize its forces.  

During the 1920s, Churchill became the most hated politician on the left for aggressively resisting the 1926 General Strike, running the virulently anti-union British Gazette. Churchill’s
combativeness made him a target of Labour accusations that he was hostile to a negotiated settlement. Churchill responded that “a general strike in a great number of trades...obviously means, if it were continued for any length of time, the ruin of the country.” He inflamed passions further by contending that the strike was “an enemy to be crushed” by the Conservative Party, which “is now the only organized force strong enough to defend the popular liberties of Britain and to defend them against new dangers which everyone can discern quite clearly.” The danger alluded to was the presumed infiltration of Bolshevik influence into the Labour Party as part of an international conspiracy by leftist extremists. Consequently, he saw no middle ground on which the Tories could reach a compromise with Labour demands. His obsession with domestic subversion also caused him to misread the emerging fascist movements in Europe, which he initially thought were “rendering a service to the whole world” by providing a necessary antidote to the “Russian virus.” In connecting foreign and domestic affairs in this way, Churchill called on Tories to wage class warfare against socialism to preserve the British empire, which “must become for all of us, now and henceforward, the main and common purpose of political action and of public life.”

In 1929, Labour’s majority in the general election forced Churchill out of office and into a ten year long political wilderness. At first he remained an active member of Baldwin’s shadow cabinet, but his irascible personality and indelicate political posturing regarding imperial reform lost him the support of Tory leaders by early 1931. All of the major political parties favored granting some form of local self-rule to Indians. They were completely unreceptive to Churchill’s die-hard stance that inflated the rhetoric of doom to such an extent he was no longer taken seriously by most members of Parliament. For six years he waged an incessant battle against negotiating with Gandhi, who he decried as a “fanatic and an ascetic of the fakir type well known in the East.” He warned of anarchy in India, mass unemployment, and even the prospect of large-scale starvation in Britain if the reforms were implemented, arguments which only undermined his credibility and reaffirmed the worst opinions about his poor political judgement.

In the midst of Churchill’s attacks on imperial reform, foreign affairs began to occupy more of his attention when he sensed an opportunity to score political points against Labour’s arms policy. In 1930, he expressed disenchantment over a naval disarmament treaty between Britain, the US, and Japan, asserting that it represented the abandonment of parity for “a declaration that the British Empire accepts the position of a second Power at sea.” Churchill was irrate that Britain would no longer maintain a fleet equal or superior to the next largest naval power in the world. With typical
hyperbole, he called it a very grave matter that Britain had been made more defenseless than at any other time since the reign of Charles II. A year later, Churchill issued a broadside against the entire policy of disarmament, arguing that Britain alone among European and Asian powers had cut its defenses on land, sea, and air to a point of insecurity. He contended that Britain's navy should immediately be rearmed to levels commensurate with national security. At the same time, he called for closer military cooperation with the French before seeking to resolve German grievances: "I would say to those who would like to see Germany and France on an equal footing in armaments: 'Do you wish for war?'"\(^{114}\) It was an about-face from his prior policies in Baldwin's government, which raised questions whether it was just another ploy to regain political influence.

However, disarmament remained very popular with the British public. Churchill's warnings of dire peril in foreign affairs were not taken seriously, particularly since they were rendered in conjunction with his greatly inflated rhetoric of doom over India. Thus, few people were listening closely when in November 1932 he made a prophetic speech on "mounting European dangers," warning that Hitler and Nazi militarism were a serious threat to peace. But at the same time, Churchill equivocated on offering a response to fascism by signaling support for the traditional British policy of avoiding continental entanglements. He believed the first duty of leadership was to ensure that "if war should break out among other Powers, our country and the King's Dominions can be effectively defended, and will be able to preserve...that strong and unassailable neutrality from which we must never be drawn except by the heart and conscience of the nation."\(^{115}\)

Churchill's attempts to scare the British public into supporting faster paced rearmament by prophecies of doom from the air were based on fallacious extrapolations of World War I bomb damage. Unwittingly, his exaggerated rhetoric lent credence to pacifists and appeasers who argued that large-scale war in the modern age was unthinkable, the only viable alternative being the reconciliation of grievances through negotiation and compromise.\(^{116}\) In 1934, Churchill warned that Britain's military defenses were stretched too thin: "The idea that we can intervene usefully in sustaining the peace of Europe while we ourselves are the most vulnerable of all, are the beggars in fact, is one which cannot be held firmly by any one man who looks at this in the faithful discharge of his duty." He accused British leaders of lacking moral courage in their efforts to chloroform public opinion by masking harsh realities about military unpreparedness and foreign dangers.\(^{117}\) Though generally a poor judge of character, Churchill recognized with clarity that Hitler's ethos of violence, for a time expressed only in the domestic realm, made likely the extension of German
military force beyond its borders. Aware that rearmament was highly unpopular with the public, but disturbed by the rise of Hitler to supreme power in Germany, Churchill joined an appeal for greater military strength with a moral cause dear to the hearts of many Liberals and socialists: “I look to the League of Nations to rally the forces which make for the peace of the civilized world and not in any way to weaken them.” Until May 1938, though, he mostly avoided contact with pro-League groups like Focus and the League of Nations Union, only belatedly joining their campaigns to uphold the Covenant with an appeal for security through arms and collective security.118

Contrary to what he later claimed, Churchill did not unequivocally oppose the appeasement of German grievances during the Czech crisis. Rather, his main difference with British leaders until then was to advocate appeasement from a position of armed strength: “[T]he least risk and the greatest help will be found in re-creating the Concert of Europe through the League of Nations, not for the purpose of fiercely quarreling and haggling about the details of disarmament, but in an attempt to address Germany collectively, so that there may be some redress of the grievances of the German nation...before this peril of German rearmament reaches a point which may endanger the peace of the world.”119 Churchill genuinely hated Nazism’s excesses, but he also admired Hitler’s amazing success at revitalizing German economic fortunes and stimulating national pride. In 1935, he suggested that it was impossible to tell if Hitler would go down in history as a destroyer of civilization or as the man who brought Germany back into the European family circle. Though Hitler’s decision one year later to occupy the demilitarized Rhineland caused Churchill to decry it as an immense blow to the League of Nations, in the same speech he called Hitler a great leader “who has raised his country so high - and I honour him for that....” His respect for power caused him in 1937 to declare: “One may dislike Hitler’s system and yet admire his patriotic achievement. If our country were defeated I hope we should find a champion as indomitable to restore our courage and lead us back to our place among the nations.”120 At the same time, he was determined that British power not slip to where it would be vulnerable to attack. Citing Germany’s tremendous arms buildup, which he exaggerated, Churchill demanded that British leaders make air parity with other major powers their first priority. It would provide a deterrence against attack and enable a flexible diplomatic approach between continental commitments and splendid isolation: “We must be free. We must preserve our full latitude and discretion of choice....We could hold our own here and take what time we chose to make up our minds, and what time we required to raise the whole vast might of the British Empire.”121
Churchill’s attempt to present Britain’s dilemma in the starkest terms, as a choice between abject humiliation and submission to the greater power or a glorious defense of British rights and liberties, caused his warnings to be dismissed as overwrought. Yet German air power did render the nation vulnerable as never before in its history, prompting Churchill to vigorously attack Prime Minister Baldwin for the “fiasco, ludicrous if it was not so tragical” of Britain’s foreign and defense policies. After 1935, he hit hard at Baldwin’s alleged political incompetence for allowing Britain’s defenses to fall into such a poor state of disrepair while doing nothing to marshal international support against the dictators: “The Government simply cannot make up their minds, or they cannot get the Prime Minister to make up his mind. So they go on in strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent.” Churchill’s speech before the League of Nations Union at Albert Hall in December 1936 launched his public appeal for collective security through a grand alliance of League members. Only much later did he claim that it marked the culmination of a four-year long effort to join his appeal for rearmament with the Covenant.122 After a long period of political isolation, he appeared at last to be gaining a large and receptive following of concerned citizens who transected party lines in their concern for the darkening pall over world affairs.

But at this critical moment, Churchill made another error that cost him politically when he began a crusade to save King Edward VIII from abdicating on account of the monarch’s marriage to an American divorcee. Churchill’s credibility with leftists, who were beginning to gravitate to his idea of arms and the covenant, quickly evaporated. His support among fellow Conservatives was also shattered, especially after rumors that Churchill would be asked by Edward to form a government of friends to defend the King’s marriage. Churchill’s close association with Lord Beaverbrook brought his campaign into further disrepute, since the press baron was known to be using the abdication crisis to intrigue against Baldwin. Tory MP Robert Boothby lamented that Churchill’s defense of the King “has undone in five minutes the patient reconstruction work of two years.”123 Consequently, Churchill’s continued warnings about the German peril fell on deaf ears, or were dismissed as the ravings of an eccentric.

Churchill’s quirky ideas about the nature of modern dictatorship raised more doubts about his character and judgement. On the one hand, he saw fascist rule as “the fetish worship of one man - a passing phase,” yet at other times he appeared to offer an apologia for its existence:
Something may be said for dictatorships, in periods of change and storm; but in these cases the dictator rises in true relation to the whole moving throng of events. He rides the whirlwind because he is a part of it. He is the monstrous child of emergency. He may well possess the force and quality to dominate the minds of millions and sway the course of history.

Churchill later claimed to have maintained strict neutrality regarding the civil war in Spain, but in fact he disgusted the left by revealing strong support for Franco’s fascist rebels while attacking the legitimately elected Republican government as the tool of international communism.¹²⁴

In March 1938, Europe was thrown into turmoil after a year of relative calm by Hitler’s Anschluss of Austria. Neville Chamberlain, who had replaced Baldwin as Prime Minister in May 1937, was actively promoting appeasement of German grievances and did not feel that Hitler’s action warranted jeopardizing the larger goal of a general European settlement. Churchill was ever hopeful of a Cabinet post in the new administration and did not strongly oppose the decision to tacitly accept Hitler’s fait accompli. He seemed at a loss regarding what approach to take, speaking in vague rhetorical flourishes of making Britain strong again but not clearly defining how its foreign policy might further that objective. Nonetheless, the Anschluss did cause Churchill to abandon his optimism about the prospect of peace in Europe. He modified his vague advocacy of collective security through the League of Nations into a concrete proposal for a grand alliance involving Britain, France, and the Soviet Union to counteract German expansionism. Only in this way, he felt, could war be averted after Hitler had deranged the balance of power in Europe. But Churchill lacked support in the House of Commons, and even dissenters in the Conservative Party shunned him on account of his proven unreliability and suspected opportunism.¹²⁵

Anti-appeasement sentiment remained a minority opinion in Britain, and public support for Chamberlain’s agenda was still very strong as Europe slid into a prolonged Czech crisis culminating in the Munich accord of September 1938. From May until August, Churchill supported the general government line of urging the Czechs to make concessions to Sudeten Germans by according them greater autonomy. Only when Chamberlain and the Times in early September embarked on the dangerous course of urging Czechoslovakia’s partition by ceding the Sudetenland to Germany did Churchill part company with the government. However, his past reputation for adventurism and love of war came back to haunt him, as it caused even admirers to question his motives in opposing Chamberlain’s decision to negotiate a peace deal with Hitler. When his demand for a joint Anglo-French warning to Germany was rebuffed, Churchill hastily flew to Paris to meet with anti-appeasers in an effort to undermine British policy. It had little effect on French government policy, but it did
reaffirm Chamberlain’s suspicion of Churchill as politically utterly unreliable. He continued his verbal assault on the accord in the ensuing months, depicting it as a “disaster and humiliation” for Britain: “The time is serious and dire. Either Britain will rise again in her strength as a mighty, valiant nation, champion of lawful right, defender of human freedom, or she will collapse and be despoiled, plundered, mutilated, and reduced not merely to the rank of a second-rate power but to a dependent condition, a vassal state....” Despite such rhetoric, Churchill was feeling pressure from within the Party to conform, and he admitted that there was little point in launching another speaking tour as the public was hostile to his message. He even wondered whether it was not actually better for Britain to seek an accord with Hitler, or whether there was any hope of organizing an anti-German alliance. Adding to his doubts about the future was the fact that his Conservative constituency association chastised him for disloyalty and narrowly avoided voting to expel him from the Party.

Churchill’s political life was saved only by the fact that the constituency vote came in early March 1939 amid mounting rumors that the German army was concentrating on the Czech border, followed days later by Hitler’s occupation of Prague. It marked a decisive turning point in Churchill’s political fortunes after a decade in which many contemporaries had written him off as a failure. Between Munich and Prague, Churchill had resigned himself to writing his history of the English speaking peoples while staying out of the public eye. He turned down several requests to launch lecture tours on behalf of the League of Nations Union to alert the public to the threat of war. He also moderated his criticisms of the government’s rearmament program, admitting that great progress was being made in aircraft production that would soon put Britain’s front-line strength on a par with Germany. There was talk in Whitehall of the need for a Ministry of Supply, and Churchill harbored hopes that he might wheedle the post for himself by showing support for the government’s foreign policy. Thus, after the Prague takeover he claimed that there was no point resisting Germany’s action.

Germany’s liquidation of Czecho-Slovakia did not immediately end Churchill’s political isolation, but it did cause a groundswell of public support for his inclusion in the government. But Chamberlain continued to view Churchill skeptically, despite a shift in public opinion against appeasement and in favor of full-scale rearmament. Chamberlain publically acknowledged that
Hitler could no longer be trusted to keep his word, yet he still harbored notions of salvaging his peace policy as Europe slid toward the precipice of war. Just one day after stating that negotiations on the basis of assurances from Hitler were no longer feasible, Chamberlain accepted Nazi demands to un-freeze £six million of Czech currency reserves held by the British Treasury. In response, Churchill demanded that the government “not yield another yard” to the dictators, optimistically declaring that the nucleus of a grand alliance was already in the making: “We must go forward now until a conclusion is reached. Having begun to create a Grand Alliance against aggression, we cannot afford to fail.”

In fact, Chamberlain was not ready to consider a formal alliance in the spring and summer of 1939, least of all with the Soviet Union, telling associates that he deemed Moscow “not a respectable neighborhood” for British diplomatic initiatives. Though he abruptly issued a guarantee to Poland in April 1939 as a warning to Hitler, and then strengthened it with a treaty of assistance in the event of war, he was not prepared to make arrangements with Stalin which would have given substance to British promises. Rather than attacking this obvious flaw in British foreign policy making, in the months leading up to the outbreak of war Churchill assumed the role of a loyal but constructive critic of the government, approving most of its initiatives in anticipation of being invited into the Cabinet. However, no invitation was forthcoming, since Chamberlain remained dubious of Churchill’s political motives and untamed adventurism. Consequently, he kept the future war leader at arms length until Hitler forced Britain’s hand by initiating a Nazi-Soviet Pact to partition Poland, thereby precipitating a second world war.

**Churchill’s Finest Hour**

The first year of war produced a profound transformation of Churchill’s reputation from that of a dangerously eccentric and unreliable Victorian adventurer to the triumphant savior of democracy during Britain’s darkest - and finest - hour. The very audacious qualities that had gotten him into trouble in the past were still in evidence, but in wartime they were exactly what the British people needed to rouse themselves from business-as-usual complacency so as to meet the daunting challenges ahead. It was Churchill’s finest hour, and by his own admission the greatest time of his life. When Chamberlain declared war on September 3, 1939, Churchill enlisted history in the cause of freedom, speaking glowingly of a generation of Britons “ready to prove itself not unworthy of the days of yore and not unworthy of those great men” who laid the foundations of a great empire. He
also took the rather bold step for someone not yet officially a member of the War Cabinet to pronounce a set of sweeping war aims that would guide Britain in the future: “We are fighting to save the whole world from the pestilence of Nazi tyranny and in defense of all that is most sacred to man. This is no war of domination or imperial aggrandizement or material gain...It is a war, viewed in its inherent quality, to establish, on impregnable rocks, the rights of the individual, and it is a war to establish and revive the stature of man.”

It was one of several key speeches by Churchill during the first year of war that set a tone of indomitable courage and defiance which inspired the British people’s refusal to surrender when utter defeat stared them in the face.

In the first eight months of the war, some of Churchill’s speeches were broadcast to an international audience. He used the opportunity to paint a hopeful picture of Britain’s war effort by greatly exaggerating its successes in combating German surface raiders and submarine attacks on allied shipping. Churchill optimistically contended that “behind the brazen fronts of Nazidom” there were clear signs of mental and physical disintegration. In fact, this state of affairs would not come about until six years later, during the final months of the war. Nonetheless, Churchill’s radio addresses were a striking contrast to the tired and uninspiring efforts of his Cabinet colleagues, including Chamberlain, who still hoped that Germany might come to its senses before a land war engulfed the West. Churchill, however, was eager to vigorously prosecute the war from the outset by every means possible. Drawing on historical parallels, he declared to the nation that “our ancestors showed qualities of doggedness and phlegm deemed remarkable by all who observed it. But that is nothing to the ordeal which the British nation is today facing with complete composure.”

Such confidence proved an immense morale booster for the British public, and enabled Churchill to rapidly elevate his reputation as an inspirational leader. While he assured radio listeners that “freedom will not be trampled down” and justice would eventually reign supreme in Europe, he also won respect for not mincing words when he warned that the world faced “a hideous state of alarm and menace” from Nazi Germany. Churchill cautioned that no one should delude themselves into thinking that the war would end quickly or without sacrifice, defiantly asserting that there would be no peace until the sword of justice had done its righteous work.

Churchill’s rhetorical flourishes were more than simple window dressing, as he undoubtedly had an ulterior motive in rousing passions and steeling public resolve to see the war through to the end. He knew very well that Chamberlain and Foreign Secretary Halifax, the two most powerful members of the War Cabinet, as well as Geoffrey Dawson of the Times, one of the most influential
press editors, secretly desired a negotiated settlement to the war in Europe before Germany burned its bridges by striking West. But while hesitancy and uncertainty on how to prosecute the war continued to plague British and allied counsels, Churchill acted decisively and with spirited aggression from the outset of the war at sea. He fully appreciated the vital importance of winning the Battle of the Atlantic for preserving Britain’s economic lifeline. Therefore, he re-introduced the convoy system on trans-Atlantic voyages despite the advice of naval experts who initially thought it unwise. The result was a significant reduction in shipping losses once the system was fully in place. Churchill’s public statements on the early fighting at sea were frank about losses suffered, but they also exuded robust self-confidence that buoyed public morale at a time when inadequacies elsewhere in government brought Chamberlain’s competence to lead the war effort into question.

Matters came to a head following the fiasco of the Norway intervention that pointed out serious shortages and a lack of coordination between the armed services and other government agencies. One of the most dramatic debates in the history of the House of Commons ensued, resulting in Chamberlain’s resignation and the accession of Churchill. On the same day that he assumed supreme control of the war effort, Hitler abruptly ended the “phony war” by unleashing an armored blitzkrieg upon France and the Low Countries. As John Lukacs’ fascinating microcosmic study of five days in May 1940 reveals, though Churchill was now Prime Minister, he still faced a tough battle behind closed doors for control of the War Cabinet and direction of the war effort. Halifax was anxious to pursue negotiations through Italian intermediaries in London in order to determine Hitler’s demands when French resistance collapsed, and before the British army had managed to extricate itself from a seemingly hopeless situation on the continent. Churchill knew what many other British leaders refused to acknowledge at the time, that once negotiations were commenced and peace feelers made, no matter how tentative, the spirit of resistance in Britain would be badly compromised. The obvious question would arise in the minds of most Britons: why continue to fight so hard and risk death if a peace settlement was imminent? Over a five day period, from May 24-28, Churchill fought for control of the War Cabinet and the ability to pursue war aims premised on the absolute refusal to surrender short of total victory. Lukacs observes that nothing less than the fate of Western civilization rested upon the outcome of this political struggle. It was an exceedingly narrow margin by which Churchill ultimately defeated Halifax’s initiative and set Britain firmly on the course of an uncompromising, unrelenting struggle against Nazism that ultimately produced a grand alliance to overthrow Hitler’s nightmarish New Order. In a few days
during the spring of 1940, Churchill experienced his greatest achievement of war, and his greatest contribution to the future of humanity by putting the fight into British resistance.\textsuperscript{139}

Having won the battle for control of the Cabinet, Churchill set his mind to saving the remnants of Britain’s Expeditionary Force, desperately trying to escape annihilation in France, and preparing the nation for an imminent German invasion. The country’s prospects for survival hinged on succeeding in those two endeavors, and to many outside observers they appeared doubtful. Churchill later claimed that he simply expressed the “white glow” of defiance that was in the hearts of every Briton in 1940, but if so there was little evidence of it prior to his assumption of supreme power. His ability to combine eloquence that stirred emotions with decisive - and at times, brutal - action proved of immense value in Britain’s victory in the Battles of Britain and the Atlantic that forestalled a German invasion. His bold decision to appoint the much maligned and deeply distrusted Beaverbrook to head the Ministry of Aircraft Production broke the logjam of bureaucratic inertia that dramatically improved armaments output at a critical time. This action, probably more than any other, secured the necessary airplanes for Britain to win the air war over England that delivered Hitler his first major rebuff. Churchill also acted with ruthless efficiency in ordering the navy to destroy the French fleet at Oran, thereby ensuring it did not fall into German hands. Finally, Churchill defied the advice of his generals in order to succor the British army in Egypt with the remnants of Britain’s tank corps at the height of the invasion scare, enabling the army of the Nile to deliver a crushing defeat to the Italians in the North African desert.\textsuperscript{140}

After the suspense of 1940, Churchill spent the rest of the war attempting to overcome or disguise Britain’s limited ability to assume the strategic initiative. In June 1941, Hitler’s invasion of Russia shifted the decisive theater of the conflict to the eastern front. It was thereafter the Red Army, and not British, or later American, forces that tore the heart out of the Nazi war machine and brought Hitler’s thousand-year Reich to an end after years of unprecedented bloodletting. Until 1944, Britain was confined to resisting German advances on the periphery of Europe, without the slightest hope of mounting a serious challenge on the continent. Even after America entered the war in 1941 and began to marshal its vast resources behind the war effort, British leaders remained skeptical of successfully invading France. Only when the US threatened to shift its focus to the war against Japan did Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff relent to the Normandy invasion. By then, British military power, and Churchill’s ability to shape allied war counsels, had shrunk immensely in relation to the nations and leaders with the big battalions. Churchill’s triumphant
leadership in repelling Hitler in 1940-41 contrasts starkly with his frustration and sense of tragedy in 1944-45 when American and Soviet power left little room for British leaders to maneuver.

Chapter 2 Endnotes

7. McNeill, Mythistory, pp.13-22,47-48; for example, in 1940 Britain lacked the means to defeat Germany, but it continued the war out of a historic sense of righteousness that eventually transformed debacle into victory.
11. Ibid., pp.342-3.
16. Ibid., pp.88-89,147.
17. Ibid., pp.59,68; Jablonsky, The Great Game, p.10.
18. Thompson, Churchill’s World View, pp.55-57; Weidhorn, Harmony of Interests, pp.68-70,76.


53. Callahan, *Churchill*, p.35; Pedraza, *Winston Churchill*, p.44; Gilbert, *Churchill’s Political Philosophy*, pp.85,100: Pedraza asserts that Churchill was right in thinking that Britain liberated Indians from tyranny, pestilence, suttee, thuggery, and chronic civil conflict, while Gilbert sees evidence of humanity in Churchill’s outrage over the Amritsar massacre.


55. Ibid., p.466.


77. Ibid., pp.441.
81. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Victorian Minds* (New York: Knopf, 1968), see Ch. 5 on “high Victorians.”
84. First political speech, July 26, 1897 in R.R. James, *Churchill Speaks*, pp.22-23.
97. Ibid., pp.47-48,103-04.
98. Ibid., p.16; Thompson, *Churchill’s World View*, p.117.
105. Taylor, et.al., Churchill Revised, pp.20-25 such as Beaverbrook, F.E. Smith, B. Bracken, and F.W. Lindemann.
106. Speeches on May 7, September 24, and October 3, 1924 in R.R. James, ed., Churchill Speaks, pp.431-42.
111. Pedraza, Churchill, Powell and the Nation, p.43: the Rule was introduced in 1919, to be reviewed yearly. Churchill suggested a sliding Rule that assumed on a daily basis no war for ten years, eliminating the yearly review until 1932.
112. Speeches on May 3 and 26, July 2, and December 8, 1926, January 20 and May 6, 1927 in James, ed., Churchill Speaks, pp.479-90,494-96.
114. Speeches on June 2 and 29, 1930 in James, ed., Churchill Speaks, pp.508-12.
117. Gibbs, Grand Strategy, p.138; Churchill, Step by Step, pp.75-77; Stewart, Winged Words, pp.36-7,44.
130. J. Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, pp.356-57.
136. Speeches on October 1, 1939, January 20 and 27, March 30, 1940 in James, ed., Churchill Speaks, pp.694-703.
137. S. Koss, The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, pp.599.
54

139. J. Lukacs, *Five Days in London, May 1940* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1999); this theme was also dealt with in his earlier work *The Duel: 10 May - 31 July 1940: the Eighty Day Struggle Between Churchill and Hitler* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1990); a less complimentary view of Churchill at war is taken by D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, pp.618-20: the ordeal of war brought a host of “aristocratic adventurers” to the pinnacle of power, led by Churchill, who “were not patricians governing as of right or by virtue of their class position; they were individual rebels and gatecrashers who were in power by fluke and favour.”

When Churchill became Prime Minister in 1940, he brought to the office a deep appreciation for the potential of press and propaganda to influence political consciousness. Few British leaders in the 20th century were as intimately connected to the press through the pursuits of journalism and politics as Churchill, who assiduously cultivated friendships with every major newspaper owner and editor in the country. He carefully studied the major newspapers for their reactions to his speeches and policy decisions, and during the war did not hesitate to call proprietors at midnight to discuss the next day’s headlines. Churchill’s relationship with the press was at times stormy, as when they deserted him after the Gallipoli debacle, prompting his wife Clementine to rail against “the Fleet Street misinformation campaign” that nearly destroyed her husband’s political career. Yet the press remained a consistently lucrative source of income for Churchill, with Beaverbrook’s Evening Standard his biggest financial backer until 1938. Churchill’s critiques of appeasement eventually strained relations with the pro-Chamberlain press baron, forcing a shift to Camrose’s Daily Telegraph. Despite the fact that most of Britain’s press supported appeasement of German grievances prior to Munich, Churchill was seldom without the means for getting his political messages published, and after March 1939 won widespread support for his inclusion in the government. Even leftist intellectual Harold Laski, who previously had excoriated Churchill as a dangerous reactionary, wrote essays in Time and Tide and the New Statesman urging his inclusion in the Cabinet. On the left, only Labour’s Daily Herald and the communist Daily Worker remained unreconciled to Churchill’s “fascistic tendencies” once the war began.

During the war, Churchill’s enthusiasm for accumulating and wielding power confirmed suspicions of his enemies in the press that he was dictatorial-minded. His repressive impulses prompted him to squash “disruptive” news reports that were thought to be damaging to morale, shutting down the Daily Worker and threatening the Daily Mirror with similar treatment for publishing offensive political cartoons. After the fall of Singapore in 1942, Churchill complained that press criticisms were like wasps buzzing all around while he wrestled a tiger: “The war is not fought to amuse the newspapers, but to save the peoples.” But for the most part he delegated issues concerning the press to his crony Brendan Bracken, Minister of Information from 1940-45, who adroitly steered it in directions supportive of the government. Despite a string of military disasters suffered up to November 1942, most of Fleet Street emulated Churchill’s bulldog spirit that
contributed to his immense popularity. However, after the crushing victory at El Alamein assured Britons that the tide of war had turned, the press became increasingly partisan in its reporting.\(^5\)

Churchill was similarly concerned with his reputation in the US media, since he considered himself the personification of the Anglo-American “special relationship,” monitoring attitudes closely through British embassy summaries of press reactions to his policies.\(^6\) A collection of Churchill’s pre-war speeches published in 1941 became a bestseller in the US when 50,000 copies sold on first printing. The *Saturday Review of Literature* compared its author to Lincoln, praising him as one of the greatest defenders of liberty. By the time America entered the war, Churchill had become an iconic figure for Americans with little knowledge of his prewar reputation for political audacity and opportunism. American journalists stationed in Britain fed readers a steady diet of articles that expressed awe at the war leader’s ability to rally his countrymen against fierce odds. At the end of the war, influential publishers like *Time/Life* owner Henry Luce saw the inculcation of Churchillian values in American political culture as necessary to prepare the nation for its new role as world leader.\(^7\) The fact that Britain was no longer a rival for political and economic influence in the world made it that much easier to idealize Churchill.

As the most colorful and dynamic leader of the free world, there was a great deal of interest in the possible publication of Churchill’s war memoir, as the narration of war histories in personalized form have always powerfully attracted readers. Readership surveys and bestseller lists at the time revealed that political memoirs were the most popular form of historical literature. Like all major wars before it, the drama and personae of the second world war offered a wealth of exciting material for potential memoirists.\(^8\) In the early postwar, Churchill was in a similar position as Lloyd George was at the end of World War I. Both leaders constituted “a publisher’s dream” because they were controversial figures who had wielded enormous political power during a world crisis, and were renowned for rhetorical brilliance in vigorously defending their positions. Thus, Churchill had every reason to believe that he might also obtain vast advances from publishers for his memoir on the second world war.\(^9\) Speculation in the media began almost immediately as to whether he would produce an account of the great war drama in which he had played such a significant part. Consequently, by 1946 Churchill possessed a very solid base of interest in both Britain and America on which to construct a publishing syndicate for disseminating his lessons on war, while finally ensuring his family’s financial security.
Building a Publishing Syndicate

From the time he was a war correspondent for the Morning Post in the 1890s to the start of World War II, Churchill proved a prodigious writer. On the eve of war, he was engaged in several literary projects, among them a multi-volume history of the English-speaking peoples through Cassell’s publishing house, whose owners Desmond and Newman Flower specialized in producing high quality “worthwhile texts.” Each year they selected one or two books for special “artistic treatment” that utilized the finest formatting, paper, typesetting and binding to showcase their company’s capabilities. In the interwar era, Cassell specialized in war memoirs, professing an altruistic sense of duty to make available to English-speaking readers the most important works on the first world war. In the mid-1930s, Newman Flower acquired the rights to A History of the English-speaking Peoples, subsequently selling the US rights to Houghton Mifflin of Boston. In 1941, Churchill had second thoughts about the arrangement, and proposed exchanging rights to the History for anything he might write about the war. Given the tremendous wartime demand for Churchill’s published speeches, Flower was only too happy to accept the new offer. Luckily, the paper reserve, managed by a committee of publishers, subsequently released additional quantities to the company for what it deemed “an essential work” of national importance.

Churchill’s offer to Cassell was the genesis of an arrangement that subsequently grew into the greatest memoir publishing syndicate ever created. In effect, Churchill began to lay the foundations of his first draft in September 1939, when he joined Chamberlain’s War Cabinet and initiated a torrent of memoranda, directives, minutes, letters, and telegrams that did not abate until his removal from office in 1945. On occasion during the war, even after a matter was well in hand, Churchill would draft a memorandum setting out his strategic position so as to have a permanent record of his prescience or insights. At the height of the Battle of Britain in 1940, he informed John Colville that he planned to retire to Chartwell after the war to write a book about the events of that year, having already mapped out in his mind chapter by chapter the story he intended to tell. Churchill possessed a vivid historical consciousness that caused him to perceive contemporary events through the memory and knowledge of “the whole panorama of European military history stretching back over a thousand years.”

In 1940, Churchill was not alone in recognizing a war story of immense magnitude in the making. Immediately after the dramatic events of that spring and summer, publishers became attuned to the possibility of a bestseller from Britain’s newest war hero. Once the country was freed
from the peril of imminent invasion, Fleet Street buzzed with talk of a literary blockbuster from the man of the hour. Charles Eade, editor of the *Sunday Dispatch*, contended that Churchill’s memoir would be “the biggest seller that the Prime Minister’s works have ever attained.” Meanwhile, Churchill was content to publish five volumes of his speeches during the war. In July 1942, as Parliament debated his war leadership following a series of military setbacks, Churchill cast an eye to the future: “Nearly all my work has been done in writing, and a complete record exists of all the directions I have given, the inquiries I have made, and the telegrams I have drafted. I shall be perfectly content to be judged by them.” Later that year, when large American ground forces went into action for the first time in the war and Britain’s importance began to diminish, Churchill consulted his solicitor Leslie Graham-Dixon about the tax implications of signing a literary contract for his war memoir. Nothing substantive was arranged, and it wasn’t until late 1944 that he resumed efforts to line up publishers and agents to facilitate his war narrative. Churchill sought to vindicate his war record and replenish a depleted bank account when he offered Cassell first refusal rights for his memoir, which Newman Flower accepted without hesitation. Shortly thereafter, by gentleman’s agreement, Churchill offered Camrose’s *Daily Telegraph* serialization rights for the memoir. No papers were drawn up at the time because Churchill was still uncertain he would be able to actually commence the project any time soon.

As the war neared its end, British politicians jockeyed for political advantage in anticipation of impending elections. Churchill was confident of victory, since he was a world renowned war leader whose stature and popularity in Britain were unmatched by any politician, least of all Labour’s unassuming leader Clement Attlee. However, Labour had proven itself an able and loyal party in the war, whose operatives worked diligently to organize support for the war effort in factories and working class districts. Conservatives, on the other hand, lacked direction from the top, as Churchill was entirely absorbed in the military aspects of winning the war. In July 1945, the Tories were ill-prepared for a major campaign. Party stalwarts assumed they could ride to victory on the coattails of Churchill’s personal popularity. But memories of the Tories’ harsh fiscal policies of the 1930s were still vivid, and workers anticipated a payoff for their sacrifices in the war. Labour appealed to these interests by promising an ambitious program of social reforms that would usher in a new age of welfare benefits for ordinary Britons. The Tories offered in return a negative campaign that sought to scare the public away from the prospect of a Labour “Gestapo” to oversee public policy, a notion most voters considered ridiculous. Consequently, Labour swept into power.
in July 1945 with a landslide electoral victory, driving Churchill out of office.\textsuperscript{17}

Suddenly out of power, Churchill was free to devote his attention to reconstructing the events of the recent past. Nonetheless, he hesitated to announce plans to write his memoir, concerned that severe taxes in Britain would eat up all of the profits. Instead, he considered leaving his archive of documents to his children as a tax free gift. Camrose and Desmond Flower, however, urged Churchill to set the memoir project in motion, confident that it would be the biggest literary event since Lloyd George’s memoir of the first world war. Churchill agreed to begin the preliminary work of classifying his records, noting that the amount of original composition available in the form of personal war documents was substantial and naturally commanded the highest historical interest.\textsuperscript{18} He was also very much concerned by the fact that his role in the war was being tarnished by memoirs from former US government officials in Roosevelt’s administration.

Memoirs pouring out of US publishing houses after the war displayed a decidedly American perspective on the conflict. It was feared by a growing number of Britons that collective war memory in the English-speaking world was in jeopardy of losing its appreciation of their country’s enormous contribution to victory. In the fall of 1945, newspaper columnist Hannen Swaffer lamented that “Britain’s share in what we regarded as a noble comradeship-in-arms becomes increasingly maligned.” He maintained that a riposte from Churchill was essential in order to establish “the unchallengeable facts” of the nation’s role in the war so that future generations in both countries would know the truth. Swaffer asserted that the world must never forget the harrowing days of 1940-41, when all of Europe fell under the jackboot and Britain was forced to endure alone. While Europe was in flames and democracy imperilled, Americans showed a strong inclination to stay out of the war, making it particularly galling that writers like Ralph Ingersoll (who served on the US General Staff Corps from 1943-45), Harry Butcher (a veteran of the Italian campaign), and Eliot Roosevelt (FDR’s son) should spout falsehoods and distortions that disparaged Britain’s war effort.\textsuperscript{19}

In London, \textit{British Books to Come}, a publishing industry newsletter, noted that Churchill’s wartime speeches demonstrated a pungent vocabulary, robust phrasing, and eloquence that would also be found in his war memoir, ensuring their highest literary standing for centuries to come. It noted that Churchill’s unparalleled ability for prose was “quick with the stirring flavour of an Elizabethan tradition, but also was the true expression of the spirit of a people. Generations to come will be moved, as we have been moved, by the unflinching purpose of his oratory through Britain’s
darkest hour to her most triumphant." Thus, before a single word was published, and before Churchill even had made known intentions to produce his memoir, commentators were fueling extraordinary excitement for what was considered a sure literary masterpiece. Churchill was pressed from many quarters to write his story "for the ages." Mountbatten wrote: "Never has the world had the history of a gigantic war written by the Napoleon himself....If you will do this, posterity will gain something unique." General Montgomery made a similar appeal, contending that Churchill was the only man in Britain who could deal the American bias a mortal blow, and restore appreciation for Britain's selfless stand against fascism.

In August 1945, Churchill poured over his war minutes while vacationing in the Mediterranean. Moran later recounted that Churchill said to him:

'People say my speeches after Dunkirk were the thing. That is only a part, not the chief part,' he complained. 'They forget I made all the main military decisions. You'd like to read my minutes, Charles.' I asked him had they worn well. He smiled comfortably. 'They are mine. I can publish them.'

Though he was not yet in the mood to do so, quoting Dr. Johnson to the effect that only a fool wrote when he wasn't paid for it, Churchill began organizing an army of research assistants, advisors, secretaries, and proofreaders into a production team that later enabled him to churn out an average of one large volume per year. His military advisors, Generals Ismay and Pownall, Admiral Cunningham, and Commodore Allen, assisted in reconstructing key battles from the war. In addition to drafting sections of text, they utilized their contacts in the services to gain access to classified war records that allowed detailed and authoritative accounts of military operations.

In March 1946, Churchill asked his former literary assistant F.W. Deakin to help in preparing and editing material for the memoir dealing with political and diplomatic events. Deakin fulfilled the role of "in-house" editor until becoming an Oxford Don later that year, whereupon Churchill's archivist Denis Kelly assumed the chief editorial duties at Chartwell. Deakin played a central role in organizing a five-man research team to consult with former officials, military officers and politicians. They submitted detailed questionnaires and obtained personal diaries or dossiers from key figures in the war. Even after his move to Oxford, Deakin continued to work closely with Churchill throughout the memoir project, and wrote large portions of the manuscript dealing with diplomacy, especially after Churchill's second stroke in 1949. One of Britain's top scholars, Isaiah Berlin, was also hired to work on drafts and proofs, verifying facts, figures and arguments. Finally,
government officials and publishing editors vetted sections of the narrative prior to publication. The advice Churchill received from Whitehall went beyond technical issues to include recommendations for strengthening the dramatic aspects of the story, and even suggestions on how to accentuate his image as a decisive and prescient war leader while disguising his amateurish conjectures.25

In the months before the release of each volume, Churchill worked feverishly on revisions, expecting his research team to show the same level of dedication. Six full-time secretaries working in six-hour shifts were kept busy typing for up to 16 hours a day. Prior to assuming editorial duties, Kelly worked in the basement of Chartwell to bring "cosmos to chaos" in Churchill's personal archive. Kelly produced the required documents that Churchill used to scribble notes or cut into sections, writing a short introduction to link each fragment together. Churchill worked virtually non-stop throughout the year, taking with him wherever he traveled a full office staff and all of their necessary equipment. Within one hour of de-planing anywhere in the world, his office was up and running. In addition to secretaries and literary advisors, Churchill employed an army of couriers to relay drafts between England and the US, where publishers anxiously awaited the latest proofs.26 Such intensive labor in the production process added immensely to overall costs, prompting some publishers to lament that their profits were being eaten up by Churchill's method of writing.27

Before he could publish anything, however, Churchill needed to get around the hurdle of Britain's secrecy laws. In the first world war, government policy regarding use of Cabinet documents in political memoirs had been based on informal practices that varied considerably from one administration to the next. The Official Secrets Act (OSA) of 1911, which laid the groundwork for modern day disclosure of government secrets, was originally limited in its application to cases of treason and terrorism. The man most responsible for utilizing the OSA as a device for protecting Cabinet secrecy was Maurice Hankey, who developed a set of rules governing ownership and use of Cabinet papers in memoirs. Hankey had been instrumental in creating the Cabinet Secretariat under Lloyd George during the first world war, using the office to streamline communications between the War Cabinet and government departments. During Hankey's long tenure as Cabinet Secretary from 1916-38 he sought to protect Cabinet secrecy by expansively interpreting the OSA, making it applicable to any unauthorized publication of government documents deemed prejudicial to the state. Prejudice was presumed in the case of unauthorized disclosures, placing the burden of proof upon an author to establish that there was no harm caused. Hankey further tightened government control over minutes and memoranda produced in Cabinet by threatening departing
ministers with prosecution if they did not surrender documents in their possession.  

It took Hankey most of the interwar period to win acceptance of the new procedural rules. For most of that time, the OSA was never invoked to stem the flow of memoirs from former ministers who used official Cabinet documents to write about their time in office. It was tacitly accepted by political leaders that the Act did not operate at the ministerial level, despite Hankey's efforts to apply it to all former officials regardless of rank. Nonetheless, Churchill freely submitted drafts of The World Crisis to relevant ministries, thereby giving birth to a procedure whereby former ministers vetted their memoirs with the administration in office at the time of production. In 1934, Hankey finally succeeded in imposing stricter guidelines by making an example of a former intelligence officer who published his memoir without authorization. The new rules made Cabinet ministers subject to prosecution for unauthorized disclosures, and required departing ministers to return all documents in their possession to the Cabinet Secretariat. Unlike other government records, Cabinet documents were deemed permanently closed to the public, a prohibition that remained in effect until 1966. The success of Hankey's reforms was most evident in the interwar memoirs of Samuel Hoare, John Simon, Lord Halifax, and Duff Cooper. These former ministers were prevented from incorporating detailed political and diplomatic information into their accounts of appeasement policy, causing their stories to appear banal and weak. Churchill and Lloyd George, however, refused to surrender their papers when asked in 1934, snubbing Hankey and the Cabinet's clear directive. Churchill asserted that his practice of seeking consent of the government of the day was a sufficient safeguard.  

While the Cabinet Secretariat between 1934-66 maintained a tight grip on Cabinet secrecy by denying minor officials and historians access to Cabinet documents, a massive exception to the 1934 rules was made for all memoirs produced by former War Cabinet members. This wholesale suspension of the disclosure provisions was effected on the final day of the coalition government's existence in May 1945, when the Cabinet gave its assent to a special memorandum on "Return of Cabinet Documents," which specified: "Ministers are entitled to keep all telegrams, minutes or documents circulated to the Cabinet which they wrote and signed themselves....These must be regarded as their personal property except that they will be bound by the rules governing the use of official papers which are well established." In effect, it re-defined the concept of "property" to exclude War Cabinet documents, though Hankey's successors did manage to retain the practice of governmental vetting of any memoirs based on such records.
In May 1946, Churchill informed Prime Minister Attlee that he had always adhered to his father’s dictum that no document or state paper relating to official government work should be made public “without the approval of the Departmental Minister concerned and of the Prime Minister of the day,” though such approval ought not to be arbitrarily denied. When he was Prime Minister, Churchill had granted such consideration to Baldwin, despite their bitter political rivalry before the war. Churchill explained that it was his method of doing business to put everything in writing, and he felt strongly that such documents deserved to be published, adding that it was not solely for reasons of personal vindication:

These pieces, written at the moment and under the impact of events, with all their imperfections and fallacies of judgment, show far better than anything composed in subsequent years could do, the hopes and fears and difficulties through which we made our way. I am by no means certain that I should wish to publish these documents in my lifetime, but I think they would certainly win sympathy for our country, particularly in the United States, and make them understand the awful character of the trials through which we passed especially when we were fighting alone, and the moral debt owed to us by other countries.

Churchill claimed that books recently published in the US sullied his personal reputation and that of Britain, requiring a forceful and authoritative rejoinder. He was particularly upset by American criticisms that he delayed the Normandy invasion, supported wholesale bombing of civilians, approved a draconian plan to pastoralize Germany, deviously maneuvered to secure total British control of Operation Overlord (the D-Day invasion), and insisted on the ill-fated Anzio landings near Rome while in a feverish state of mind. Ingersoll alleged that Churchill bore full responsibility for the Italian fiasco because of his amateurish meddling in military operations. He also blamed Churchill’s belligerence and deceit toward the Russians in trying to renege on the Yalta agreement as the cause of the tragic chilling of relations between the allies after the war.

Churchill was determined to refute these allegations before they became widely accepted by the American public as true. In a letter to Cabinet Secretary Edward Bridges, Churchill intimated that he was being pressed from many quarters to give his account of Britain’s war story and noted his intention to rely on personal memoranda from the war. Nonetheless, conscious of the government’s ability to obstruct access to official sources, he promised not to publish anything that might be harmful to the public interest. He also offered to submit all final proofs to interested ministries, and to accept the excision of any sensitive matters prior to publication: “I feel I have a right, if I so decide, to tell my tale and I am convinced that it would be to the advantage of our
country to have it told, as perhaps I alone can tell it ....I should be glad to receive the Prime Minister’s view upon this matter at his convenience in order that I may consider what course to take.”

Attlee thought the arrangement acceptable, but Foreign Secretary Bevin objected to granting Churchill such privileges, arguing that his memoir was likely to damage Britain’s relations with foreign nations at a time when he was seeking a comprehensive peace settlement in Europe. Attlee brushed aside this objection since publication of the memoir was not expected for several years. He officially approved Churchill’s request in October 1946, permitting the author free access to whatever government archives he desired.

Churchill was now free to circumvent the OSA and breach the barriers of Cabinet secrecy in ways that no historian or other writer on the war could hope to emulate for at least fifty years, giving him a tremendous advantage in generating collective memory about appeasement and the war. Even the blanket prohibition against revealing wartime Enigma decrypts of German and Japanese top secret codes did not seriously hamper him. Churchill’s rise in stature during and after the war as a man of great strategic vision was to some extent due to his secret knowledge of enemy decrypts that the general public did not learn about until the early 1970s. In the meantime, his decisions were cast in a more prophetic and far-sighted light than they undoubtedly warranted, greatly enhancing his reputation for military and political genius. There remained the issue of the Copyright Act which stipulated that minutes and documents “prepared by or under the direction or control of His Majesty” were government property and subject to a fifty-year non-disclosure rule. Narrowly defined, it could have precluded Churchill from using his documents. His solicitor A. Moir concluded that all of the author’s personal minutes from the war fell outside the statute’s domain, and the government made no attempt to challenge that assessment.

Churchill’s success in securing the Attlee government’s full cooperation in producing his memoir signified the national importance and quasi-official status that was attached to his war narrative. This is also apparent in actions taken by the Historical Section, an agency under the direction of the Cabinet Secretariat responsible for producing official war histories. Its work began in 1941 under Churchill’s authority, but the final volumes were only completed thirty-five years later. Nonetheless, historians working on official accounts of the war during the late 1940s readily made their unpublished research available to Churchill, enabling him to glean the most pertinent and interesting information for use in his memoir. This close working relationship also influenced the shaping of the official histories.
metanarrative, though later volumes, such as those on grand strategy written by Norman Gibbs in the 1970s, took a more critical line that reflected revisionist thinking on the war years.

The Chartwell and Literary Trusts

In July 1945, just days after the Tories’ election defeat, Churchill began the legal business of organizing a publishing syndicate with the help of his solicitors and Lord Camrose. A scheme was devised whereby Churchill’s papers were given to a trust in favor of his children. The trustees then contracted with a publisher (the *Daily Telegraph*) to hire an author (Churchill) to write a history based on the former war leader’s records. The Literary Trust was managed by Churchill’s old friends Lord Cherwell and Brendan Bracken, along with his wife Clementine, who undertook to administer the proceeds from sales of the memoir for the benefit of his children and grandchildren. The terms of the trust were only finalized when Camrose and Churchill’s foreign agent Emery Reves (see below) settled the US publication rights in December 1946. Churchill appears to have become so intimate with Camrose, in whom he felt an absolute trust, that he dispensed with the usual practice of hiring an independent literary agent, except in regard to foreign language publication rights. Camrose combined a great deal of experience in producing memoirs, having serialized Lloyd George’s literary effort in the 1930s, with a strong personal affection for Churchill that flowered in the late 1930s and persisted for the rest of his life. Consequently, Churchill readily entrusted Camrose with full powers to negotiate the US rights to his memoir.38

In mid-1946, Camrose learned that financial woes had forced Churchill to put Chartwell up for sale. Camrose promptly devised another clever scheme to establish a property trust that would purchase the estate for double its market value. It was then leased back to Churchill for a nominal sum for the duration of his and Clementine’s lives, and upon their deaths the property reverted to a National Trust memorial to Britain’s great war leader. On short notice, Camrose solicited sixteen wealthy friends of Churchill to put up £5000 apiece toward the purchase, with the *Daily Telegraph* owner contributing £15,000 himself. The trusts put Churchill’s literary and financial affairs on a solid footing, allowing him to concentrate on writing his memoir. His research assistants, already hard at work on the text, were finally offered formal retainers of £1000 each.39

For another year, Churchill publically denied plans to write his memoir, partly because he was uncertain they could be produced in his lifetime. Rumors spread, eliciting an unprecedented publishers’ bidding war for what was perceived as the literary plum of a lifetime. Churchill appeared
to enjoy playing cat-and-mouse with eager American publishers seeking an audience with him while flooding his mailbox with contract offers. Before the end of 1945, nineteen publishers in the US had submitted formal offers to produce his memoir, though none matched the sums that Luce was prepared to spend, nor the prestige or publicity that he could bring to the project. By the 1940s, Luce was a legend of the publishing world due to his remarkable success at redefining the form and content of popular weekly journals in the US. For him, the profit motive in pursuing the memoir was of secondary importance, as he was willing to spend lavishly on winning the rights even without clear knowledge of potential sales revenues. Rather, he saw Churchill’s memoir as a feather in his cap that signified he was “top dog” among publishers. In addition, Luce had become an ardent anti-communist by 1944, and he envisaged that Churchill’s memoir could be used in the fight against communism at home and abroad.

Luce began his quest for Churchill’s memoir in July 1945, when he dangled publishing plums before the now underemployed British politician. Life’s London bureau chief Walter Graebner offered $75,000 (US) for three short articles on topics of Churchill’s choosing, but tax concerns caused the deal to be rejected. Instead, Churchill suggested that some of his paintings be reproduced in lieu of an article, since their publication was subject to a lower capital gains tax. Luce recognized that buying reproduction rights to the paintings would give Life an inside track to the memoir, and so agreed to pay $20,000 for them. In January 1946, Life published twelve of Churchill’s oil paintings in a full-color spread with commentary on the war leader’s artistic passion. Aside from providing Churchill with some easy money, the feature article presented a warm, humanistic side to his image that countered his reputation among some Americans as a man who reveled in war. Churchill next offered Life three of his secret session speeches from the war for $75,000. Though Luce thought the speeches were boring and of little interest to Life’s readers, he agreed to the deal, informing a skeptical Dan Longwell:

It was, of course, a pig in a poke. And I believe that Life has got to buy some such pigs in order to keep a position in the meat market. Also, the prestigious flam flam may make it worth while. Also, it can be worth the space plus the money if, in some sense, Churchill becomes ‘our author.’

Longwell, a co-founder of Life who handled the creative side of the magazine, personally chose the layout and illustrations for Life’s feature articles. Three weeks after Life reproduced Churchill’s paintings, it published the first secret session speech, causing an uproar in Britain over its use of
secret government documents. Many British readers felt they should never have reached the public via a popular American picture magazine famous for its displays of buxom women.\(^{45}\)

Negotiations for the memoir continued during Churchill’s trip to the US in March 1946 to deliver his “Sinews of Peace” address at Fulton, Missouri. Luce ensured that \textit{Life} representatives feted and coddled the British leader so as to monopolize his time and attention. He also offered Churchill $50,000 for a radio broadcast on national hookup, which was turned down out of concern it might ruffle feathers in Washington. Just before returning to Britain at the end of March, Churchill was honored at a lavish dinner hosted by Luce and a hundred specially selected \textit{Time/Life} employees. Unbeknownst to Churchill, Luce invited his biggest advertisers to the event in order to “show off” his client. Luce personally reminded employees that it was imperative Churchill have an enjoyable evening, meaning he be permitted to do most of the talking. Weeks later, Luce made a return visit to Churchill at Chartwell, and instructed Graebner to make follow up “social visits” to keep abreast of Churchill’s thoughts and plans.\(^{46}\)

In September 1946, four days after Churchill complained of unfair allegations made in the US about Britain’s role in the war, \textit{Life}’s European correspondent John Osborne informed him that the American press was not giving British affairs or Tory policies adequate attention. Osborne offered to write a story about Churchill’s international agenda in order to educate American readers “that in fact there still is a British policy which is worth reporting.” He suggested that Americans were “shocked and disillusioned” by Labour’s victory, believing it a betrayal of allied war aims and contributing to perceptions of Britain as a greatly diminished power that had lost its way. \textit{Life}’s pages were offered as a forum for disabusing American readers of the notion that the values of capitalist democracy were no longer alive in postwar Britain.\(^{47}\)

While Luce and company pursued their quarry by dispensing generous quantities of cash and flattery, another publishing dynamo was working just as hard to court Churchill’s favors. Emery Reves had been Churchill’s foreign publishing agent before the war, but had lost touch with his client in the intervening years. The day after the Conservatives’ election defeat in July 1945, Reves cabled Churchill to offer his services again regarding any articles or memoirs he might contemplate writing. When he received no response, Reves continued to send telegrams to his former client almost daily, informing Churchill that his many contacts in American publishing circles could be of invaluable service to the author, such as his close ties with \textit{Readers’ Digest}, a popular monthly journal with ten million subscribers and an estimated fifty million readers. Reves also claimed to
have received million-dollar offers for Churchill’s memoir that would guarantee the British statesman financial security for the rest of his life.\textsuperscript{48}

Churchill knew Reves to be a man of the highest integrity with a genius for turning literary ventures into lucrative world-wide best sellers. Born to a Hungarian Jewish family, Reves (Imre Revesz before changing his name in 1936) went to Germany in the 1920s to study commerce and earn a doctorate in economics. However, journalism was his true passion, and in 1927 he created an innovative business to distribute world-wide articles and speeches from major international figures. No such service then existed, but in a short time Reves built up an impressive list of prominent clients. His Jewish background, and the practice of distributing pro-democracy essays, forced his hasty departure to Paris after Hitler came to power in 1933. He first met Churchill in 1937, and shortly thereafter began placing the British leader’s anti-appeasement articles in major newspapers throughout Europe, Africa and Asia.\textsuperscript{49} It enabled Churchill to disseminate his messages in ways that would otherwise have been impossible for someone without political power. Aside from the income it earned, Churchill undoubtedly valued the international attention Reves garnered for him at a low point in his career. Reves’ business made it possible for Churchill to reach 15-20 million foreign readers in twenty-five different languages. Pleased by the results, in 1938 Churchill granted Reves exclusive rights to distribute all of his articles outside of Britain, but shortly thereafter the relationship was disrupted by the outbreak of war. Reves was forced to relocate again, first to Britain, where he worked briefly with Bracken and Camrose at the Ministry of Information, before moving to New York in 1941, where he re-established his distribution service.\textsuperscript{50}

In early fall 1945, Reves informed Churchill of offers from leading US newspapers for serializing his memoir. He noted that some newspapers were offering a half million dollars for the rights, but claimed even better offers awaited. Though he had no authority to act on Churchill’s behalf, in October 1945 he solicited an offer in excess of one million dollars for North American publishing rights. Reves suggested that the intense interest shown by US publishers and readers for Churchill’s war story presented the British leader with an opportunity to repair Anglo-American relations, which had deteriorated following Labour’s election victory. He believed that a proposal comprising magazine, newspaper, radio and film rights for the memoir could yield up to two million dollars, since an all-inclusive package deal guaranteed higher profits in the US than separate deals for articles now and memoir later. In January 1946, Churchill authorized Reves to be his publishing agent in America, albeit under the general direction of Camrose. In return, Reves agreed to pay
Churchill £80,000 for foreign language rights to the memoir.\textsuperscript{51}

That autumn, Reves and Camrose traveled to the US where they discovered two competing syndicates vying for the memoir, each comprising a major national magazine and a New York daily newspaper. There were also several lone publishers interested in the memoir who were offering to pay high fees. The inside track was held by \textit{Life} and the \textit{New York Times} against their next closest competitors, the \textit{Saturday Evening Post} and \textit{New York Herald Tribune}. Camrose handled the newspapers, since he knew all of the principals well, while Reves dealt with \textit{Colliers}, \textit{Life}, \textit{Readers' Digest}, and the \textit{Saturday Evening Post}. During negotiations, great care was taken by the two men not to disclose the existence of the Literary Trust, since it might reveal that Churchill was eager to complete a deal. Nothing was mentioned about the previously arranged book and serial rights for British and Commonwealth markets (excluding Canada). Among US book publishers, Doubleday, Harpers, and Simon & Schuster initially expressed the strongest interest in Churchill’s memoir, but it was Houghton Mifflin that eventually won the book rights, thanks to Reves’ close business relationship with its owner Harry Laughlin.\textsuperscript{52} After weeks of negotiations, Camrose was ready to close a $1.1 million deal with \textit{Colliers} when Churchill suddenly accepted a long-standing offer of $25,000 from its owner for an article on current affairs. \textit{Colliers} promptly reduced its offer for the memoir to half a million dollars, causing Camrose and Reves to decide that the offer of \textit{Life} and the \textit{New York Times} was more prestigious in addition to providing much more money.\textsuperscript{53}

While in New York, Camrose learned that the Republican-dominated Congress was putting intense pressure on Roosevelt’s estate to have all of the deceased President’s papers made public. Many Republicans, including Luce, resented FDR’s immense popularity with the American people, whose fame had not diminished with his death in 1945. Republicans hoped that declassifying FDR’s papers would produce revelations damaging to his reputation, thereby enhancing their party’s chance of recapturing control of the White House. The prospect of early publication of Roosevelt’s papers was most disconcerting to Camrose, who feared that it would steal much of the thunder from Churchill’s account of their wartime relationship.\textsuperscript{54} Consequently, he rushed to finalize the deal, urging Reves to make a late-night visit to Luce’s home to pressure the publisher into a final offer of $1.4 million, bringing the total sale of publication rights to £633,000 (the equivalent of £12.3 million, or $9.8 million US in 1999).\textsuperscript{55} While most of this money went to the trustees, administered for the children and grandchildren of Churchill, the author received advances of £35,000 per volume for delivery of a completed manuscript. Camrose was ready to close the deal on a handshake, but
the more litigiously minded Americans determined that a formal contract was necessary, meaning it could not be made public until the following May. Matters were complicated by *Life*'s insistence on a clause in the contract guaranteeing that Churchill would write for no other American magazine, something he thought too restrictive in light of his deal with *Colliers*. Luce settled the issue by buying the *Colliers* article for $25,000 in return for a gentlemen’s agreement that Churchill only write for *Time/Life* publications for the duration of the memoir project.56

The Agreement stipulated that Churchill was to produce five volumes of about 200,000 words each, but as it turned out his memoir ran to six volumes and over two million words. This created legal complications in the US, when corporate lawyers for *Life* and the *New York Times* insisted on adhering strictly to the terms of the contract. In Britain, however, publishers had no difficulty overlooking legal strictures to permit production of another volume. The contract specified a tight production schedule that called for Volume I to be completed in 1947, Volumes II and III in 1948, and Volumes IV and V in 1949. It was an ambitious plan, even by Churchill’s prodigious literary standards, and he wisely insisted on an escape clause stating that there would be no penalty for failing to maintain the designated schedule.57 His declining health and increased political commitments after the Tories’ victory in 1951 made it impossible to produce the volumes as quickly as originally intended. Nonetheless, Churchill was still paid his full fee of £175,000 in five equal installments, and even managed later to secure an additional payment of £60,000 from his British publishers for the sixth volume, though they were under no obligation to do so.58 He also enjoyed lucrative fringe benefits, as when Luce bankrolled expenses totaling $13,600 for a trip Churchill and his entourage made to Marrakesh in 1947 to work on the memoir, and in 1949 when *Life* funded two dinners in Churchill’s honor costing over $8000.59

When Churchill expressed an interest in writing an article on the Truman Doctrine in 1947, Reves initially warned against the idea, but a few months later his attitude changed when he recognized the interest it was attracting.60 The article on aid to anti-communist forces in Europe included secret information about Britain’s controversial intervention in Greece late in the war. Reves saw it as an excellent primer for the first volume of memoir due to be released a few months later. But while he was happy for the publicity, Reves objected to the manner in which Luce handled the article’s distribution whereby *Life* gained exclusive publishing rights for one week prior to its release elsewhere. Reves resented Luce’s arrogant attempt to establish a position of preeminence within the syndicate, complaining to Churchill: “You must realize that the publication
of such an article by you is a major event in the world press and that in order to organize worldwide
distribution you must appoint one commanding general who plans the overall strategy.” This was
not possible under current arrangement, Reves felt, because *Life* and its editors were “suffering from
some sort of a persecution mania which induces them to dictate intolerable conditions.” The people
at *Life* were treating the British and European press as their subsidiaries, rather than as colleagues
in a joint venture.\(^{61}\)

Churchill’s article was published in twenty-five countries and received immense attention
wherever it was sold. Its publication was a dress rehearsal for the syndicate, serving to iron out
kinks in the relationship between author and publishers. Reves informed Churchill that foreign
reception of the article showed that his position in the world was “absolutely unique.” Newspapers
in small and impoverished countries fought intensely for the publishing rights, offering up to fifteen
times the highest previous price paid for an article in their respective markets, enabling Reves to
capitalize by maximizing the fees attained for Churchill’s memoir.\(^{62}\) As work on the memoir
progressed, Churchill confided to Luce his annoyance at the rubbish being produced in the US about
Anglo-American friction during the latter stages of the war. Confidently, he asserted that his
memoir would “blow it all away” while vindicating his war leadership.\(^{63}\) As a token of gratitude for
Luce’s generosity, he gave the publisher one of his paintings. Luce promised to cherish it as long
as he lived, after which it would pass to his son so that he might carry it into the 21\(^{\text{st}}\) century: “How
brightly then will burn the fame of its author, when civilization will have known that it was saved
by his efforts and by his eager love of all that is not barbarous.”\(^{64}\)

The Artistry and Techniques of Production

For a year prior to the release of Volume I, the media syndicate publicized Churchill’s
memoir, urging prospective readers to subscribe to the “literary event of the century.”\(^{65}\) In the *New
York Times*, a front page story complete with photograph of the author (the only one on the page)
declared that his war narrative would constitute “one of the greatest and most brilliantly written
historical documents of all time” from a writer with an outstanding literary record. The syndicate,
and many media sources not directly affiliated with the project, excitedly noted that Churchill’s
memoir would constitute the crowning literary achievement of his life, just as his direction of
Britain’s war effort marked the pinnacle of his political career. *Time* magazine called the planned
production of one million Churchillian words the literary jewel of World War II that was not to be
After the syndicate’s somewhat shaky start over publication of the Truman Doctrine article, Churchill requested that publicity campaigns be carefully coordinated by all of the publishers. In order to generate interest in the memoir prior to publication, the syndicate conveyed a sense of public involvement in the writing process, implying that readers were observing history in the making. For example, *Life* noted that Churchill was one of the most brilliant historians of the English-speaking world, and was currently the only major figure from World War II writing its history, making this combination of statesman and historian without parallel since Julius Caesar wrote his *Gallic War*.67 Churchill was pleased with publicity that kept him in the public eye and on the front pages of newspapers, even as he neglected his political duties as Tory leader. Far from subordinating his personal writing to his public responsibilities, Churchill utilized the Conservative Party’s Central Office as a communications link for messages between himself, his staff, and the publishers. It appears that lesser paying members of the syndicate were forced to rely on Party officials for communicating with the author, whereas Churchill always made himself available to Camrose or Graebner on short notice. But even *Life*’s editorial staff found it difficult to persuade Churchill to grant permission for taking photographs of Chartwell, one sanctuary to which the author felt he could escape the pressures of daily life.68 In early 1948, the international media were also primed for the impending release of Churchill’s memoir. Newspapers in virtually every major city fueled the mood of excitement by reporting regularly on the whereabouts of the famous author and his work-in-progress. Every sighting of Churchill on his travels around Europe, North Africa, and America became front-page news stories. Journalists reported that Churchill’s memoir represented the most important personal narrative likely to come out of the war.69

The issue of timing the first volume’s release concerned most syndicate members, preoccupying a good deal of their correspondence with Churchill in the year leading up to publication. The book publishers were anxious that Volume I be in bookstores by autumn 1948 in order to capitalize on reader interest fueled by the earlier serialization. It also would allow book publishers to benefit from the annual Christmas shopping spree. Consequently, Longwell drafted a note to all syndicate members on how best to harvest their literary plum:

Let’s always remember that the Churchill Memoirs are the biggest literary and historical project that *LIFE*, or for that matter any other publication, has ever undertaken. There is no doubt about its success, but the problem is how to present the material so that it will achieve
an impact which is equal to the importance of the work. To accomplish this there must be complete co-ordination and co-operation between the magazines, newspapers and book publishers involved, and the publication of the volumes must be perfectly timed.

The ideal cycle - and one that would create the greatest effect on the largest number of people - would be for LIFE and the New York Times to publish one volume in the first two months of the year and one volume in the summer. This would then allow the book publishers to bring out their volumes in the spring and autumn which are the best seasons for book publishing and, in this instance, are the times when the book publisher can best capitalize on the publication, promotion and publicity by LIFE and the New York Times.

If this cycle can be maintained the necessary momentum will be developed. A long break between the publication of two volumes would destroy the momentum and necessitate a fresh start. The three American publishers involved fully realize the importance of this element and are ready to co-ordinate their efforts in this direction.

Naturally, we are most eager to begin publication as soon as possible and at the most propitious time.... We do not, of course, wish to press Mr. Churchill, but I feel that he will want to know and consider the facts in planning his work. 70

However, Churchill refused to be rushed, feigning disinterest in the project whenever pressure became too great. His insistence on making “overproof” corrections (overtakes, according to his publishers) to the typed and set final proofs delayed production of each volume by many months. Even after “final” corrections were sent to the printers, he continued to re-work the galley proofs, driving book publishers to distraction. Houghton Mifflin chose to ignore most of these late and costly corrections to the text, publishing an incomplete version, but one that appeared right after Life’s serialization. Cassell, however, was obliged to wait, resulting in a definitive British version, but one which was released up to six months after the American edition arrived in bookstores. 71

The issue of book titles also excited much debate among syndicate members. Desmond Flower thought that publishing all volumes under a general title would harm book sales, since readers might defer making purchases until the full set was available. He wanted separate titles for each volume, which would be more eye-catching to readers and accord with Churchill’s notion of writing a contribution to history rather than a definitive account of the war, as a general title might imply. 72 It was eventually agreed to combine both approaches, with each volume separately titled under a general name, The Second World War. Churchill wanted to call Volume I “The Downward Path,” to reflect the course of British foreign policy from the end of World War I, but Laughlin preferred a title that would give readers a sense of living the war again at the side of the man who bore a major responsibility for its conduct: “It is vitally interesting to know the facts of the war but what you have to say goes far beyond that.... What makes it intensely exciting reading is that the reader put himself in your place and for the moment identifies himself with you....My point is that this book is not just history or just narrative. It is our (italics mine) presentation of it to the
Reves disliked any use of "memoirs" in the title, fearing that most readers considered the genre "frightfully dull." Given the tremendous interest in memoirs before and after the war, his concern was clearly misplaced. Nonetheless, references to memoirs were omitted from the general title, and explicit instructions given to all publishers to emphasize volume titles in their advertising. For Volume I, Churchill and Laughlin finally settled on *The Gathering Storm* for its title.

Days before serialization began, Kelly received copies of *Life*'s extracts that revealed dubious editing practices. Sections of narrative had been inserted alongside text from entirely different chapters, without any apparent regard for their original order. *Life*'s editors appeared to demonstrate little respect for the author's narrative structure, creating composite paragraphs comprising sentences from several different sections. They justified the distortions by claiming that readers in the US would find their version more entertaining and dramatic. Excising paragraphs from the original version was deemed necessary to reduce the quantity of material that was of little interest to American readers. Surprisingly, Churchill did not demand that this wholesale re-working of his text be stopped, though he did insist that it "would be wrong to omit in these days" his prewar prophecies of doom. Kelly, however, was incensed by *Life*'s editorial practices:

Isolated paragraphs have been picked out of various chapters and strung together in an entirely new order. In many cases only portions of the paragraphs have been extracted. I have already found several instances of sentences from one paragraph being tacked on to sentences from an entirely different one. In two cases only half of your sentences have been included. The whole effect, to my mind, is misleading and I feel that you should consider whether they should not be asked to abstain from mutilation of the text, and to include whole paragraphs as opposed to 'snatches.'

His indignation spurred Churchill to write Longwell that he was deeply troubled by *Life*'s practices. Graebner replied that *Life* merely wanted to use the best material with revealing and lively anecdotes, succinct historical recapitulations, and as much Churchillian rhetoric as possible. Each installment constituted a story that required a unity of its own, with a clearly identifiable beginning, middle and end. He denied that *Life* had damaged or distorted the prose in any material way, but where it had been altered for the sake of clarity or concision the installment was better for it. As for newspaper extracts, Kelly and Churchill were generally satisfied, though they urged the *Daily Telegraph* to allocate even more space to them on account of intense reader interest in Britain.

Serialization began simultaneously in twenty different countries in April 1948. While *Life* ran only six installments of Volume I that featured a few dramatic episodes from the memoir, the
New York Times and Daily Telegraph published thirty installments over two months, incorporating 40% of the original text. While extracts were being published, Time presented an article on the business of producing the memoir, revealing some of the author’s work habits while noting the unprecedented global interest in Churchill’s story and praising him as the greatest living man in the world. In Britain, the Daily Telegraph informed readers that Churchill’s memoir constituted the most expensive copy in publishing history. Readers were titillated by suggestions of revelations from a great number of secret documents of the highest importance. They were reminded that Churchill was the man of destiny, untainted by any responsibility for the diplomatic debacle of the 1930s, who mercifully arose out of the political wilderness to lead his people in their hour of peril. At the same time, the BBC’s international radio service offered readings from Churchill’s memoir that were broadcast around the world in fifteen different languages. Each reading, preceded by “an important announcement” warning, was narrated by popular British radio personality George Rhodes and earned Churchill £4 in residual fees. The interest generated by the serialized extracts prompted Britain’s National Institute for the Blind to seek permission to publish a special Braille edition, while its American counterpart released an audio version of the memoir.

Since serialized extracts contained the most dramatic parts of the narrative, book publishers sought to launch their editions as soon as possible thereafter, when reader interest was at a peak. This required bookstores to have copies of each volume well before its release date. Only through advanced distributions could publishers meet the demand of every bookstore and retail outlet in their respective markets, with prominent storefront displays of Churchill’s memoir in place on the last day of serialization. Houghton Mifflin succeeded in adhering to this schedule, but only by ignoring Churchill’s later revisions involving hundreds of corrections to the text. Britain’s chronic paper shortages and rationing made it impossible for Cassell to act as quickly, but it took consolation in the fact that it had published the definitive version. Postwar austerity caused many headaches for Cassell, such as when the government Controller initially refused to allocate enough paper for more than 200,000 copies of Volume I. Based on advanced subscriptions, this figure was at least 30% short of what was needed to satisfy consumer demand. The restrictions forced Cassell to limit its run of proofs, much to Churchill’s annoyance. When the book went to press, Flower was forced to apologize to an irate author that quotas on paper and cloth prevented a better end-product. Among other things, Churchill was displeased with the exceedingly small print after being embarrassed by friends who received complimentary copies they apparently could not read.
In May 1948, Laughlin reported that advanced orders for Volume I were running very high, and that the book would surely be reviewed in the American media “to an extent which no book has ever been reviewed here before,” an outcome sure to boost sales further. He added: “The publication of The Gathering Storm which so far as Houghton Mifflin Company and I are concerned is simply the result of a great many happy chances which swung in our favor is, nonetheless, in my opinion the most worthwhile venture in our century of publishing and the book most significant for our time and likely to last in influence for countless years to come.” The determined efforts of Laughlin and Reves to promote the book in America secured its selection to the Book-of-the-Month Club’s June list, guaranteeing an enormous sales spurt from the Club’s 750,000 members. Houghton Mifflin’s Riverside Press worked closely with the Book Club, leasing printing plates to the Club for use at its own facilities. The fact that Cassell’s release came four months later caused Flower to complain that the Americans for violating the spirit of the syndicate’s arrangement to publish simultaneously. Churchill’s overproofs also increased the cost to Cassell of producing each volume by up to 40%, yet the author’s chief proof-reader still complained that the machining of Volumes I and II made them look like “a cheap, third-rate production.” In his memoir, Flower refuted accusations that Cassell was not up to the task of producing “our national hero’s history,” claiming that its version was definitive and artistically superior to Houghton Mifflin’s product.

In Europe, retail stores used photographs and Churchill memorabilia in special shop window displays when their editions were released. The Times correspondent in western occupied Germany observed that everywhere he went Churchill’s name was on people’s lips. However, publication of the German language edition proved a great disappointment for Reves, with sales figures of only 5000 on the first printing. Elsewhere, Reves adroitly coordinated releases in 20 different countries, despite the complication of last-minute special revisions to some foreign editions. The launch in Paris of the French-language edition was orchestrated in “a brilliant ceremony” with dignitaries and the press in attendance. However, this auspicious start in France was not to be sustained. The next volume frayed sensitive nerves with its uncompromising account of France’s humiliating defeat in 1940. A firestorm of controversy erupted over Churchill’s alleged insults on French military honor, particularly regarding criticisms of prominent officers who were accused of incompetence. Reves was also confronted with concerns arising from copyright violations and pirated editions of Churchill’s memoir. In countries where copyright laws were poorly enforced, Reves fought a constant battle against black marketeers. The situation in China was so chaotic because of the civil
war that he was unable to do anything about pirated editions that appeared within days of the authorized release.\textsuperscript{87} Ironically, British readers were virtually the last in the world to obtain their copies. Nonetheless, within weeks of Cassell’s release Flower proudly asserted that sales in Britain had surpassed all other markets combined, a clear exaggeration, but a true reflection of the immense interest in the memoir. Churchill was soon inundated with correspondence from readers offering “salient facts” and advice for enhancing his story of Britain at war.\textsuperscript{88}

In December 1948, Churchill belatedly offered a retainer to his chief Chartwell assistant Denis Kelly, who the Trustees were told was essential for the success of the project and deserved to be paid £1200 per annum, more than what was being paid to Ismay, Pownall, or Cunningham.\textsuperscript{89} One day after serialization of \textit{The Gathering Storm} commenced, the syndicate turned its attention to ensuring a timely release of the next volume. \textit{Life} wanted to begin serializing Volume II within eight weeks, immediately after the US political conventions (1948 being a major election year) but well before the fall campaigning began in earnest. Laughlin objected that it would follow too closely upon the book release of Volume I, while Cassell would not even have its edition out yet. Longwell acknowledged: “We are building a literary property, and we need the sound success of the first volume as a serial and [emphasis in original] a book as a firm foundation for that property.”\textsuperscript{90}

Churchill’s advisors continued to urge greater paraphrasing of documents to enhance the flow of his narrative. Cabinet Secretary Norman Brook, who had succeeded Bridges in 1946, was most generous with his time, offering to rewrite chapters to condense and tighten their structure. He also assisted Churchill in connecting narrative threads so as to make the story more dramatic and interesting for the general reader. Bill Deakin later recalled the invaluable assistance in editing the memoir provided by the Cabinet Secretary: “Norman Brook saw everything. He used to come down quite often to Chartwell. He was a man of limitless integrity. He was of enormous help. He and I would go through everything in detail. He was the most responsible and most learned witness.”\textsuperscript{91} Brook and Reves were both bothered by the plethora of military code names, dry statistical tables, and abbreviations that they feared would confuse laymen. Reves reminded Churchill that his memoir were being written not just for the present generation but for a thousand years to come: “It is like reading Goethe’s ‘Faust’ with a dictionary. It is certainly a great pleasure to be able to read it without a dictionary.” The \textit{New York Times} complained that too many important events were recorded only in the minutes, giving the effect of a Greek tragedy in which nothing but talk occurs on stage, while all the action happens offstage. Nonetheless, all were smiles when Churchill
traveled to Boston in early 1949 to promote the release of *Their Finest Hour*. The author was honored at a dinner where he spoke to an audience of distinguished historians, writers, and prominent politicians about world affairs.\(^92\)

In spring 1949, Kelly feared that Churchill’s pace was slackening due to physical fatigue and an inefficient method of preparing drafts. The procedure was for Churchill to personally select all documents for publication, while Pownall, Allen, Ismay and Deakin supplied factual briefs used for transitional and explanatory narration. This formed the basis for early drafts, which were then checked, commented on, and expanded by proof-readers, after which the burden of more revisions shifted back to Churchill. Such back-and-forth re-working of the text caused each chapter to pass hands six or seven times before completion, an “assembly-line process of production” that Kelly felt was terribly inefficient and ended up producing too many errors. He proposed weekly meetings between Churchill and his advisers that would involve open and frank debates of key narrative points, with detailed notes prepared so that subsequent drafts were not revised in isolation. Kelly emphasized that these meetings should not entail a mere dictation of the author’s own perspective on events. The new approach would also relieve Churchill of many technical aspects of production, allowing him to concentrate on the overall framework and final polish.\(^93\)

Churchill’s declining health led to suggestions of a ghost writer at this time, but Kelly strongly opposed the idea, noting that it was the author’s memories and insights that the reading public and publishing syndicate were paying such large sums of money to receive. Hiring a ghost writer would undoubtedly result in a reassessment of the publishing contract, and in addition to hurting Churchill’s pocketbook, his reputation would be permanently damaged. Churchill’s flagging attention may also have been due to the narrative’s shift after Volume II from Britain’s solitary stand against Nazism to its marginalization within the Grand Alliance.\(^94\) Kelly’s unpublished memoir suggest that after August 1949 most work on Churchill’s memoir was done by himself and the research team, with the author limited to vetting near-final proofs. But the Christmas 1949 publicity blitz by *Life* for Volume III signaled no change in Churchill’s involvement:

> Expert and skeptical by training and temperament, *Life’s* staff of checkers are accustomed to question every single factual statement they see in writing. Digging into our own files and library and consulting outside experts, they search for the best authority to back up every fact set down by the writer....In Mr. Churchill our staff has met a historian whose personal files contain more documentary material than we could ever uncover, and a meticulous and considerate writer who carefully cites his evidence as he goes along.
Life praised Churchill’s perfectionism and attention to every detail of the literary work, disguising the fact that his practice of revising “Provisional Final,” “Almost Final,” “Final,” and “Overproof” drafts of galley proofs appears to have produced as many errors as it caught. All told, there were up to twenty full revisions with seventy sets of galley proofs required to complete each volume. In January 1950, serialization of Volume III began, despite Churchill’s efforts to delay it when Attlee called a general election for the following month. Camrose considered it too late to stop publication, and he thought that Churchill’s critique of Labour leader Cripps mission to Moscow in 1941 was excellent grist for the political mill. High demand for the memoir in Britain continued unabated, with Cassell printing five times as many copies as Houghton Mifflin. After preliminary sales figures for Volume III were gathered, Flower triumphantly informed Churchill that while US sales had fallen with each successive volume, British sales exceeded the entire number of books sold in the rest of the world. At 25 shillings per volume (£1.25), the memoir was proving very profitable, though at that price a large potential market of readers was being missed. Flower persuaded Churchill to authorize the Reprint Society to produce a cheap version of each volume, sold at six shillings apiece, since its readers were “studious, cultured citizens” of limited means who were the very people thought to benefit most from the author’s lessons of peace and war.

As work proceeded on the final three volumes, Longwell sounded a note of exasperation that Churchill’s narrative was becoming ever more laden with lengthy documents. He implored the author to eliminate this blight on his memoir, since it detracted from Churchill’s great talent as a historian. But neither flattery nor criticism caused any significant change in the nature of the text, prompting Luce to write: “What more can an author ask? Why, he can ask for a super-satisfied customer. If you don’t have that at the moment, it is for an altogether flattering reason - namely that it is so easy to imagine how superlatively good some passages might have been had you written them.” Despite efforts to keep Churchill’s deteriorating health a secret, Luce’s comments suggest that he was aware of ghost writers at work. Deakin, Kelly, the generals, and Brook were writing more and more of the text, with Churchill acting in mainly a supervisory capacity, meaning that his rhetorical flourishes were noticeably absent from later volumes.

Churchill admitted that The Hinge of Fate needed to be completely recast into narrative form. But having promised to do it, the final proofs were constructed much as before, by stringing a series of lengthy documents together with only the barest connecting narrative. Concerned that Churchill was becoming depressed by mounting criticisms of the memoir, Laughlin broke ranks to
send an adulatory note to his client:

I remember very well your saying to me before I had seen the galleys of the first volume that your history of the war was going to be different from all other histories in that you were going to write it directly from your own records and your history would differ from the accounts of other leaders in great national crises, for you would write it not as you recollected it or as you wished it had been but as it actually was. I contended that too much of that would lessen the interest, for people enjoy reading your writing as it is today as opposed to the more restrained and often less colourful language of the records, but in Volume IV your plan seems to have worked admirably.  

But Houghton Mifflin’s decision to publish the volume in November 1950 angered Flower, who bitterly noted that this production schedule would make Cassell look inept in the publishing community and cut into its export sales. Churchill agreed that a Christmas deadline was not reasonable, especially because of his increased political activities since the outbreak of the Korean war and the likelihood of a general election that fall. But he was also cognizant of the drop in US book sales for Volumes II and III that was making publishers there anxious to reverse the downward curve by releasing their volumes earlier. Cassell suffered further delays by having to publish a 3rd edition of The Gathering Storm and a 2nd edition of Their Finest Hour in 1951 to incorporate corrections arising from heated reception among Poles, Belgians, and Frenchmen. Compounding its misfortunes was a wildcat strike by book binders producing work stoppages and delays that an unsympathetic client blamed on the publisher.

When Churchill shifted his focus to Volume V in late spring 1950, time was of the essence, since the Conservative Party looked set to win the next election due to public discontent over Labour’s six years of austerity. It had raised expectations of a “New Jerusalem” in 1945, but had followed with increased rationing and shortages that made the public restive for change. The war in Korea also heightened public concern for national security and rearmament, issues that played to Churchill’s strength as an international leader. Despite the urge to wrap up the project, Churchill decided that he could not do justice to his war narrative without a sixth volume, even though the New York Times and Life strongly opposed extending the memoir out of fear that reader interest in the US would drop off. On the other hand, Laughlin, the Daily Telegraph and Cassell agreed to give Churchill a £60,000 bonus to complete his sixth volume in the manner he saw fit.

Frustrated by the American syndicate’s resistance to his plans, Churchill grumbled that he was apparently building a property, not a book - “something fit for publishers, but not for
publication.” In October, he officially announced that he could not finish the memoir without a sixth volume, causing foreign language publishers to vent their extreme displeasure. The Europeans protested that they had sold the memoir as a set to subscribers, which in 1947 was calculated on the basis of five releases. If a sixth volume was to be published, they would be legally bound to deliver it to readers at no extra charge, effectively wiping out their profits from prior sales. Anxious to avoid a financial bath, the publishers warned Reves that they would seek legal redress from him for any losses suffered. Caught in a bind, Reves informed Churchill of the dilemma and asked for an apology, but got an excuse instead:

The story yet to be told is certainly the most interesting part of the entire drama. I still have to tell of the liberation of Europe, the Conferences of Quebec, Teheran, Cairo, Washington, Yalta, and Potsdam, where the most important decisions were made, decisions which are in direct relationship with the present and the future. I feel strongly that it is my duty to tell the story in full.\textsuperscript{106}

Churchill even briefly considered producing a seventh volume before abandoning the idea when his publishers expressed their unanimous displeasure.\textsuperscript{107}

In May 1951, rumors of a delay in publishing the final volume added to the already considerable headaches of foreign publishers. The Danish publisher was dismayed by rumors that Volume VI was being delayed until after the US elections in 1952 because it contained revealing details of the Potsdam conference, where many disagreements between British and American leaders arose. The rumor caused a flood of enquiries from booksellers and readers about the status of the memoir, and whether the final volume would ever be completed. Churchill avoided making any public comment on the matter for seven months before suddenly announcing his intention to defer publication at least until 1953. As a result, sales of the memoir in the US stalled because of uncertainty over the final volume.\textsuperscript{108} The decision to delay publication led to speculation that there were serious problems with the project not being acknowledged in public. Churchill’s reluctance to be more forthcoming about his health or future intentions only fueled more rumors.\textsuperscript{109} Finally, in June 1952 he announced that official obligations made it impossible for him to complete the literary project any time soon. Though the final draft was virtually done, there was nothing the publishers could do to change their client’s mind.\textsuperscript{110}

Reves urged Churchill to utilize the additional time to revise his draft by focusing on what counted most in the last year of war, omitting discussions of minor battles: “At this stage of the war
and at this stage of your War Memoirs, (when your readers have nearly two million words) the great strategic moves and the vital political struggles are of interest.” Months later, with the US elections over, he urged Churchill to bring his work to an “artistic and triumphant conclusion.” Reves was delighted with the title, Triumph and Tragedy, which he thought reminiscent of Crime and Punishment. But not everyone was happy with the go-ahead to publish the final volume. Flower bitterly complained to Kelly that it was impossible for Cassell to match Houghton Mifflin’s plan to publish in August 1953: “I see the usual rat race looming, with the Americans trying to cut every corner and beat every gun. Could you do your best to urge the noble author towards brutally telling Houghton Mifflin to jolly well wait for the final text?” Once again Houghton Mifflin and the Book-of-the-Month Club acted hastily so as to release their versions the day after serialization in Life. Churchill made no complaint, accepting what had become standard practice for the American book publishers since 1948. In Britain, the Daily Telegraph was also in a hurry to publish so that it could complete its run of extracts before Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation in June 1953. Life incongruously planned to end its serialization on an upbeat note, with colorful anecdotes about the book’s reception, including a story of Saudi prince Ibn Saud ordering a copy for each of the seventy ladies in his harem. Cassell again brought up the rear, only releasing its edition in April 1954, nine months late. Though the memoir project was officially at an end, revisions to the manuscript continued to be incorporated into additional printing runs until 1962.

In writing his memoir, Churchill’s strategy had been to use a crushing weight of documented evidence at key points in the story to enhance the authority of his judgements and actions taken. Despite a text that publishers complained was overladen with documents, he made little or no use of key records from the Committee on Imperial Defence, Cabinet Office, or Chiefs of Staff Committee. By selective presentation of evidence, Churchill excelled as a creator of his own image as a historical hero whose actions and decisions were entirely justified. The portrayal of himself as a great strategist and statesman in wartime may have distorted history, but flaws in the argument were counterbalanced by a cleverly engaging, lucid, erudite, and witty style of writing. Churchill openly admitted that it was his case before the bar of history, with a jury composed of his readers whose sympathy he cultivated through the power of rhetoric. Like other great polemicists, Churchill concealed crucial facts so as to influence readers’ emotions and sense of context. Dramatic narrative was a method of persuasion that he utilized like a great fiction writer, with the crucial exception that he claimed to be offering a truthful rendition of historical events.
Abridgements

Talk of abridgements from publishers on both sides of the Atlantic began as early as the release of Volume I in October 1948, when a British publisher recommended a juvenile edition targeted at the swelling postwar population of pre-15 year old readers. It was considered a sure success so long as a competent editor provided "a scholarly yet vivid and inspiring interpretation of your immortal story." Pitkin Publishers believed that there were thousands of parents and teachers who wished for their children to read an "undistorted history of the war years" like the one offered in Churchill's memoir. Churchill was intrigued by the proposal, which he conceded had real possibilities, but deferred making any commitment at that time. Luce was also considering a children's edition in 1948, since he was confident the memoir would continue to speak to future generations of young readers. Life was already the undisputed world leader in integrating visual and print mediums, having invented the genre of photojournalism in the 1920s, making it a logical choice to produce a children's picture history based on Churchill's memoir.

In Britain, the high cost of production, which Flower had regretfully been forced to pass on to consumers in March 1952 by raising the volume price to 30 shillings (£1.5), prompted Kelly to renew calls for an abridged edition. He offered to undertake the task of editing the volumes himself, adding that an abridgement would sell well enough to produce a substantial windfall for non-beneficiaries of the literary trust, like Churchill's wife. Several months later, the vice-president of Avon Publications wrote Churchill: "I have to tell you that the satisfaction I have enjoyed [reading the memoirs] is something that is beyond my limited powers of expression." He deemed it required reading, especially for the generation of young readers born after 1930 who had no conception of what it meant to their security and peace to realize how easily the last war could have been avoided. He suggested a "Penguin-type" edition in one or two volumes for young readers, who would carry the memory of Britain's greatest wartime leader into the next century. However, Deakin recommended that Life be given the task of publishing an abridgement as soon as hardcover editions sold out of bookstores, since it had proven adept at fostering interest in the memoir among the young by giving free copies to libraries at schools and colleges around North America.

In 1954, Churchill was more interested in publishing A History of the English-speaking Peoples. Consequently, it was another two years before Laughlin urged an abridgement by offering Churchill £15,000 for him to write a preface to it. Another year passed before the subject was again
raised by Reves, who tendered £20,000 for a 10,000-word epilogue in which Churchill would carry forward his narrative from the end of the war to 1957. At two pounds per word, the retainer represented the highest publishing fee ever offered for a manuscript. Churchill accepted after Kelly agreed to do most of the editing work. Kelly urged Churchill to use the epilogue to rebut the memoirs of Eisenhower, Truman, and others who had criticized his wartime mixing of politics and military matters. Political considerations were precisely what should guide the conduct of a war leader, he declared, disparaging the Americans for their narrow focus on victory in battle.119

In paring down six large volumes to a single book of a thousand pages, Kelly felt that it was "rather like killing someone else's child." In deference to Churchill, he submitted all proofs for approval, though the contract specified that the publishers retained full authority to vet proofs of the abridgement. Kelly's loyalty to Churchill bordered on worship, making him wary of doing anything that might compromise the author's trust. When approached by the BBC for an interview, he assured Churchill that under no circumstances would he appear on television to discuss the book or any aspect of his long association with the author: "My relationship with you is sacred and I am proud of the trust and confidence you have shown me since we first met on May 12, 1946." The abridgement was completed in early 1959, and following publication of extracts in the Daily Telegraph and the American Look magazine, Cassell finally had the satisfaction of beating its rival Houghton Mifflin to the bookstores by two weeks.120

In his epilogue, Churchill's defense of imperialism remained as strong as ever. Concerning the creation of Israel, he sharply criticized Jewish terrorists for their violent campaign to end colonial rule, contending that it was a black mark on the nation's history. Reves objected to the comments but Churchill persisted, arguing that everyone knew he had been a supporter of Zionism since the Balfour Declaration of 1917.121 On Asia, Churchill claimed to have always desired Dominion status for India. But in 1957 he perceived the sub-continent collapsing into chaos and violence following the end of imperial authority. The bloodshed and dislocation that ensued from Labour's "scuttling of India" in 1947 created carnage on a scale never experienced during centuries of British rule. Churchill heaped scorn on the Indian National Congress, denigrating it as "a small political faction" that did not represent the will of the people. In the case of southeast Asia, he credited Dutch colonists with having created "a model of effective administration" in Indonesia that was tragically overthrown in "an orgy of bloodshed" after the war. Churchill ignored the fact that Indonesians for a long time had bitterly hated colonial oppression and exploitation. Likewise, he
praised an “efficient French colonial administration” in Vietnam, but failed to mention that it had facilitated the virtual enslavement of labor on the rubber plantations of colonial land barons.\textsuperscript{122}

Churchill’s epilogue revealed his limited understanding of the profound changes to the international system wrought by the second world war. The man who professed to know exactly what the war was about, and who spent over two million words explaining it to his readers, did not comprehend the forces of decolonization unleashed by the conflict, arguably the most profound historical development of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. At the same time, Churchill repeated his egotistical effort to meld personal biography with national history by equating the loss of British resolve with his own political defeat after the war: “The election results and figures were an even greater surprise to Europe and America. They naturally thought that the steadfastness of the British people, having survived the grim ordeals of 1940 and having come triumphantly through the five years struggle, would remain unshaken.”\textsuperscript{123} It never occurred to him that perhaps the “shaken” British people had demonstrated their democratic resilience by dispensing with his leadership in favor of a more forward-looking political party bent on building an egalitarian social and economic order.

By the time Churchill wrote his epilogue, the most dangerous period of cold war hostility had passed, with the notable exception of the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. Nonetheless, he confided that during the late 1940s, while the US held a nuclear monopoly, he had contemplated a demonstration of Western power over Soviet cities as a means of producing “a more friendly and sober attitude” from the Russians. Paradoxically, he maintained that Stalin should not be judged too harshly by historians, for the dictator’s actions were based on a profound concern for Russia’s safety following three devastating invasions during the previous one hundred years. Churchill did not explain how a nuclear demonstration over Russian cities would have alleviated the Kremlin’s deep suspicions of the West; surely it would have exacerbated them. In discussing the Korean war, Churchill asserted a domino theory as justification for the US-led intervention, arguing that if South Korea had fallen to communism, it would have emboldened leftists throughout the world, making a third world war more likely. He maintained that these facts were obvious to everyone but the left wing of the Socialist Party (Labour), who “true to their tradition, alone stood out from the courage and wisdom of what was being done.”\textsuperscript{124} Churchill ended his epilogue on an upbeat note, contending that Russians in the 1950s were becoming capitalistic in ways that would render Marxism obsolete in the near future. At the same time, he asserted that the Anglo-American alliance assured “opportunity for all who claimed it” by its guarantees of freedom and peace.\textsuperscript{125} Thus, while he still
considered nuclear bombs a legitimate weapon of war, he was also eager to urge detente, a approach he broached to a very reluctant Eisenhower and Dulles in late 1952.

Following Kelly's abridgement, Life published a two-volume juvenile edition of Churchill's memoir aimed at young teenagers. The editors of Life were named contributing authors, evidence that Churchill's hold over his literary property had been reduced to a symbolic presence. One year later, Life produced another abridgement, a one-volume special children's edition which was predominantly a picture-book of dramatic war scenes. In this version, Churchill's narrative was relegated to a secondary function of supporting a heavily visualized presentation of the war. The volume was designed for pre-teenage children, thus rounding out the marketing of Churchill's memoir to virtually every age group and financial class in existence.126 In Britain, two national dailies reviewed the abridgements. The Yorkshire Post presented its usual string of accolades for anything bearing Churchill's name. Its review ("The Voice that Will Reach to the Ages") commended the power of Churchill to hold his readers in thrall, the abridgment only adding concentration to an already intense story that was the "most certain classic of the Britain we know."127 Oddly, no mention was made of the central role performed by the book's editor D. Kelly, who performed the difficult task of producing an abridged text that was both enjoyable to read and retained the essence of its much larger original.

The Manchester Guardian was more guarded in its praises, and in some respects was critical of Churchill's epilogue. On the one hand, it held that the abridgement succeeded even better than the original volumes in creating a sense of mounting tragedy over the collapse of the Grand Alliance into cold war hostility. But it also pointed out that postwar events revealed how Britain's great war leader suffered from serious mental blind spots. Churchill may have understood Europe, but in a global conflict he was woefully ignorant of Asia, and had learned nothing about India in the intervening years. Considering the fact that India by the late 1950s was the leading non-communist nation in Asia, and the impetus for a non-aligned movement that eventually encompassed half the United Nations, Churchill’s allegation that Indians had sunk into a well of despair since Britain’s departure seemed badly off the mark. Also revealing was Churchill’s incomprehension of the Middle East, since the epilogue’s narrative, carried up to February 1957, inexplicably said nothing about the Suez crisis and its significance for Britain or the Arab world.128 By 1958, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Suez fiasco constituted a defining moment in British history. For a new generation of historians, it signaled the end of British imperial pretensions in the postwar era.
Revisionist scholarship regarding Britain's role in the 20th century was born in the Suez episode, which historian D.C. Watt claimed as unequivocally marking the end of empire. But in his declining years, Churchill appeared oblivious to these momentous changes in intellectual thought about national identity.  

Nonetheless, book publishers continued to find the general reading public interested in Churchill’s war story. Up to the mid-1950s, his memoir had appeared on the New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists for a combined total of 185 weeks. At the time of Cassell's release of Triumph and Tragedy, 3.63 million copies of the volumes had been sold in America, Britain, and Commonwealth countries. Thus, new and old publishers alike were eager to devise inventive ways in the ensuing decades to market Churchill’s war memoir to laymen readers of history. In September 1960, Penguin Books marked its 25th anniversary by publishing twenty-five specially selected titles that included The Gathering Storm. A year later Bantam books reproduced the entire set of volumes unabridged in paperback for a modest $2.25 (US). At the time of Churchill’s death in 1965, the National Union Catalogue listed eight editions of the memoir contained in the Library of Congress. In 1974, on the centenary of Churchill’s birth, Houghton Mifflin and Cassell each issued commemorative editions of The Second World War. Finally, in 1998 Houghton Mifflin released Great Battles and Leaders of the Second World War, a re-titled one-volume version of Churchill’s memoir containing 500 photographs and selected narrative from the original work, with an introduction by British military historian John Keegan. It was promoted on the publisher’s Internet site, which declared that Churchill’s account “remains the definitive work on the war and a monumental literary achievement.” The continuous stream of new editions has helped to ensure that in the new millennium, Churchill’s memoir remains a fixture on retail store shelves in North America and Britain, a tribute to the public’s enduring fascination with the man and his times.

Chapter 3 Endnotes


5. Colville, The Churchillians, pp.57-8; Addison, Churchill on the Home Front, p.334; Koss, The Political Press, pp.602,606-7; Taylor, Beaverbrook, pp.550-60; partisanship became overt in spring 1945, when Beaverbrook’s pro-

6. June 14, 1904, April 30, 1929 in James, ed., Churchill Speaks, pp.68,504-06; Gilbert, Road to Victory, pp.494-95.


13. CHUR 4/1: C. Eade (Sunday Dispatch) to Mrs. Hill, August 7, 1941.


17. Gilbert, Never Despair, pp.28-41,46-59,105-08.


22. Moran, Struggle for Survival, pp.311,313-314: still depressed over the election debacle, he informed his physician while in Italy that he did not care if he ever returned to England.

23. CHUR 4/18: Churchill to Commodore Allen, June 18, 1947; Allen to Churchill, July 24, 1947, 4/22/83; Moran, Struggle for Survival, p.316; Callahan, Retreat from Empire, p.246.


27. Houghton Mifflin Archive, MS Stor Box 1, “Reves,”: Reves to Laughlin, September 2, 1950; Emery Reves was Churchill’s foreign agent who was employed to handle all matters relating to publication outside the North American and British markets; “Misc.,”: Memo (unsigned) to J. Olney, Sept. 24, 1951: “Here are the devastating overtake...God help us one and all”;


29. Ibid., pp.118,125-6,206, 214-18,236.
32. Gilbert, Never Despair, pp.235-36,259; see Ben-Moshe, Strategy and History, p.317: his analysis of Churchill as
strategist suggests that allegations of amateur adventurism were largely true.
34. Gilbert, Never Despair, pp.269-70; Churchill next sought US approval for publishing messages between himself
and Roosevelt, but encountered strong opposition in Washington; the matter was not fully resolved until 1952.
35. Naylor, A Man and an Institution, pp.3,229; B. Lenman, Eclipse of Parliament, p.175; Great Britain, Parliamentary
Debates (Commons) 5th series, 426 August 1, 1946, cols.1207-8.
(International News Service) to Churchill, April 1, 1945.
for the Control of Official Histories, January 31, 1941 and July 9-11, 1941; 98/13: Advisory Historical Committee,
Minutes, December 9, 1941: stipulated that narrators be people who Ministries felt “belonged the them” and who would
work together “for a common purpose;” the histories to be directed at young military cadets.
38. Gilbert, Never Despair, pp.244,274.
40. CHUR 4/4: Churchill to A.J. Christiansen, January 13, 1947; Literary Offers dossier, January 9, 1946; K. Smith
(International News Service) to Churchill, April 1, 1945.
41. Graebner, My Dear Mr. Churchill, pp.16-20; Elson, World of Time, pp.153-55.
42. Ibid., p.155: he claims that Life offered $25,000 for each of four articles; Graebner, My Dear Mr. Churchill, p.16.
44. Elson, World of Time, p.157: Churchill and Luce settled on a fee of $50,000; the speeches, all from 1942, dealt with
the fall of Singapore, the state of British shipping, and allied negotiations with Vichy prior to the invasion of North
Africa.
46. Ibid., pp.158,211-12.
47. CHUR 4/17: J. Osborne (Life Chief European Correspondent) to Churchill, September 27, 1946.
49. Ibid., pp.1-4; Aldritt, Churchill the Writer, p.161.
50. Gilbert, ed., Churchill and Reves, pp.7-16.
51. Ibid., pp.16-17,260,311: it eventually covered 70 countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East.
54. CHUR 4/42: Camrose to Churchill, November 15, 1946.
Flower, Fellows in Foolscap: the breakdown of payments in British pounds was Life and New York Times 287,500,
Montreal Standard 27,500, Houghton Mifflin 62,500, Daily Telegraph 75,000, Cassell 25,000, Reves 80,000, K.
Murdock’s Australian syndicate 75,500; Cassell’s initial offer of £20,000 was deemed too low by Camrose, who readily
got Flower to raise it by £5,000, since the memoirs’ tremendous success made it Cassell’s “sheet-anchor” in the 1940s;
Lane, 1979), p.273; Aldritt, Churchill the Writer, p.161; Elson, World of Time, pp.212-213: Churchill insisted that it
not be made a written term of the contract.
57. CHUR 4/41: Chartwell Literary Trust - Legal Issues; A. Moir to N. Sturdee, April 24, 1947; Agreement between
59. CHUR 4/63: Laughlin to Churchill, April 15, 1949; 4/17: Churchill to Sulzberger, September 26, 1949; Swanberg,
Luce and His Empire, pp.278-279; Gilbert, Never Despair, p.376.
60. CHUR 4/71: Draft “One Way to Stop a Third World War;” 4/12: Reves to Churchill, January 10, 1947; Churchill
to Reves, January 12, 1947.
62. Ibid.


68. CHUR 4/11: Conservative Office to Miss Sturdee, October 29, 1947.


70. CHUR 4/15: Memorandum, Andrew Heiskell to London Group, undated.


73. CHUR 4/14: Laughlin to Churchill, February 17, 1948.


76. CHUR 4/52: Churchill to Longwell (Life); CHUR 4/16/266: All other foreign publishers used the New York Times’ extracts; Churchill received copies of all extract proofs, often making line-by-line comments on style and pleading for more space due to reader interest; CHUR 4/52: W.J. Gold (Life) to Graebner, “Notes on Life Selections from “Second World War,” April 11, 1948;


78. CHUR 4/15: “Churchill,” Time, May 17, 1948; Memorandum, Churchill to Life, May 2, 1948; Time draft; 4/16: N. Sturdee to Churchill, June 11, 1948; Churchill to NYT, June 18, 1948: money was undoubtedly the primary reason.


80. CHUR 4/47: BBC Broadcasts to Europe, 1948-51: Since an average of twenty-five broadcasts were made in each language, total payments for Volume I exceeded £1500; CHUR 4/56: BBC to Miss Sturdee, July 20, 1949; 4/56: CBC (Canada) to Daily Telegraph, undated: A year later, Churchill’s memoirs were adapted for television. Canada’s CBC-TV filmed dramatic readings of extracts to accompany radio broadcasts; 4/42: National Institute for the Blind to Miss Gilliatt, May 21, 1948 and July 14, 1949.


82. CHUR 4/24: Cassell (D. Flower) to Churchill, March 18, 1948, June 14, 1948 and July 2, 1948; Nowell-Smith, House of Cassell, pp.229-30: Cassell reduced the point size by 2, which allowed it to produce 20,000 extra copies; Churchill insisted that all future editions be printed with a larger font size.


86. Flower, Fellows in Foolscap, p.276.


88. CHUR 4/18: Churchill to N. Brook, August 2, 1948; 4/22: Society of British Aircraft Constructors to Churchill, November 10, 1948; there were many letters from former military officers as well.


90. CHUR 4/25: Office Memorandum, Editors of Life to Luce, April 27, 1948.

91. Gilbert, Never Despair, p.315.


102. In 1947-48, Cassell and Houghton Mifflin divided the world into exclusive markets. Cassell would sell its edition to Britain and the Commonwealth, Houghton Mifflin to America and Canada. Cassell was also accorded exclusive rights to Europe, while Houghton Mifflin would control English-language sales in South America. Asia was left open for either publisher. By 1949, however, the arrangement had fallen apart, with Houghton Mifflin accusing Cassell of selling in South America, and Cassell representatives alleging that they had found copies of the American edition on sale in Europe.

103. CHUR 4/25: Churchill to Laughlin, August 4, 1950; Cassell (Flower) to Churchill, August 2, 1950.

104. CHUR 4/14: Laughlin to Churchill, July 26, 1951; HM Archive, MS Stor 318, Box 1: Houghton Mifflin’s sales of Churchill’s memoir had declined from 145,000 for The Gathering Storm to less than 68,000 for The Hinge of Fate; Book-of-the-Month Club sales dropped from a high of 385,000 for Volume I to 210,000 for Volume IV; 4/24: Cassell (A. Hayward) to Miss Marston, January 15, 1951; 4/25: Cassell (Flower) to Churchill, July 4, 1951.

105. CHUR 4/63: Bernstein (NYT) to General Adler, April 8, 1949; Laughlin to Churchill, April 15, 1949; 4/25: Cassell (Flower) to Churchill, May 9, 1950; 4/300: Kelly to Ismay, June 6, 1950; 4/299/1; 4/63/34-35; 4/392A/5


111. CHUR 4/392B/7: Reves to Churchill, September 21, 1952.


113. CHUR 4/63: Cassell (Flower) to Kelly, August 14, 1953.


121. Gilbert, Never Despair, p.1233.

123. CHUR 4/400: Draft of Epilogue, undated.
125. Ibid., p. 972.
129. Ibid.
4 The Messages: Lessons from the Past for the Present

When Churchill's memoirs were published, they offered what were perceived to be essential lessons for facing the awesome new perils of a dangerously polarized world in the nuclear age. In chapter 2, we examined the foundation for Churchill's historical world view through analysis of his speeches and written works from before the second world war. In this chapter, we focus specifically upon the memoirs and their messages as constructed by Churchill, the media syndicate, government officials, political and military advisors, and research assistants, all of whom vetted drafts of the memoirs. Our concern here is with Churchill's postwar world view and the construction of war memory within the context of a bitterly contested cold war. The ideological divide strongly affected his desire after 1945 to produce a metanarrative of the war years that would speak to the fears, interests, and foreign policy concerns of the postwar era. Press treatment of Britain's foremost cold warrior also polarized between near-uniform adulation in the rightist press and vilification in many leftist publications. In contrast to Labour's Clement Attlee, who claimed to be allergic to the press and did little to facilitate public relations, Churchill enjoyed a long association with Conservative press lords and their newspapers. It was this intimate relationship that had enabled him in the early postwar years to create a publishing syndicate for the purpose of advancing his metanarrative.¹

Imperialism and the Civilizing Mission

In the waning days of World War II, Permanent Undersecretary of State Cadogan gloomily surmised that the country's imperial problems were "too numerous and awful to contemplate." Whitehall could see few means beyond propaganda to protect Britain's foreign interests and disguise evidence of national decline.² Government officials and the Tory press deemed self-promotion necessary for bolstering the prestige of the empire and Commonwealth as a global community of peoples connected for mutual benefit, not exploitation. But rhetoric alone could not disguise the fact that after the war national political consciousness gradually shifted its focus from empire to the Atlantic community.³ Churchill welcomed the tightening of bonds with North America, but at the same time sought to strengthen the empire and Commonwealth by heaping glory and honor upon it for being victorious in war, a view shared by moderates in the Labour Party and press.⁴ Churchill strongly disputed the radical left's notion that postwar realities demanded a retreat from empire, accusing anti-imperialists of "crazy theories and personal incompetence" in pursuing independence.
for India, a policy of scuttle that he claimed sacrificed centuries of progress in southeast Asia.\(^5\)

Though his rhetoric was toned down from the 1930s, he remained unrepentant about his opposition to Indian self-rule, viewing it as a sad milestone on Britain’s downward path. He accused British politicians of “fatuity and fecklessness” in appeasing Indian nationalism, then and now.\(^6\)

Churchill’s defense of empire was central to his war story, which he connected to the politics of appeasement by rebuking all parties, including the Tories, for ignoring Britain’s traditional balance-of-power strategy of utilizing the empire as a counterweight to European hegemony. In *The Gathering Storm*, he argued that the life, endurance and greatness of the British people and their empire was the government’s foremost duty, and in this task the nation’s political leaders failed miserably by acting in an “unchivalrous and dishonorable” manner before the war. It was Britain’s alleged failure to live up to its great imperial heritage that Churchill believed was a direct cause of war. Though severe in his criticisms of a few named Tory leaders, he tempered his attack on the Party by broadly accusing all politicians in the 1930s of being wrong in their views on empire.\(^7\)

In his memoirs, Churchill maintained that the decline of Western power in the world was due to a weakening of imperial control in the 20\(^{th}\) century. Without a moral and spiritual revival of Western imperialism, he foresaw “a prolonged eclipse of our civilisation.”\(^8\) He attempted to bolster sagging faith in Britain’s imperial mission by accentuating its vital contribution to victory in the war against tyranny: “I do this with no desire to make invidious comparisons or rouse purposeless rivalries with out greatest ally, the United States, to whom we owe immeasurable and enduring gratitude. But it is to the combined interest of the English-speaking world that the magnitude of the British war-making effort should be known and realised.”\(^9\) Churchill held that in 1940 “the life of Britain, her message, and her glory” were in mortal peril. Thus, he had considered it his duty to alert the English-speaking peoples in their hour of peril to what was truly at stake:

You ask. What is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory - victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no Empire; no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal.\(^10\)

For Churchill, the spring and summer of 1940 was a time of epic drama, glory, self-sacrifice, and heroism for the British people: “There was a white glow, overpowering, sublime, which ran through our island from end to end.” He could never have countenanced a compromise peace that would subvert such a great nation’s status as a strong imperial power.\(^11\) Ignored in this glowing tribute to
nation and empire was evidence of national disunity and resignation that in some places bordered on defeatism in the wake of France’s collapse, though as John Lukacs notes, morale never sank into abject despair or panic during Britain’s ordeal, and it quickly recovered after the armistice shock.¹²

Churchill’s memoirs gave the erroneous impression that the War Cabinet in 1940 unanimously supported his resolve to fight on, when in fact Halifax strongly urged negotiating with Hitler while Chamberlain appeared sympathetic to the idea.¹³ In calling for an all-out struggle against Nazism, Churchill chose to ignore Britain’s economic plight. He continued to shape policy in the war under the illusion of power that considered political and spiritual will to be more important for achieving victory than economic considerations. In other words, Churchill simply assumed British greatness during the war so as to play the role of world statesman. He also naively believed that American gratitude for British sacrifices and its sense of goodwill would restore national solvency after the war.¹⁴ At the same time, he harbored doubts in 1940-41 about the British people’s ability to withstand the strain of war. Strict censorship of the media was imposed, sweeping emergency powers enacted, and a system of regional commissioners established to snoop on local government authorities, none of which he mentioned in his memoirs.¹⁵

Churchill saw himself fulfilling destiny’s call by leading the British empire from the brink of ruin to new heights of greatness in defiantly resisting Hitler. Though Britain had no way of winning the war in 1940, the public was misled with wishful thinking that Germany’s economy was near collapse, or that Britain’s strategic bomber force offered a quick and cheap means of achieving victory. In reality, Britain’s only choice at the time was between accepting German hegemony in Europe or waging limited warfare indefinitely. Churchill deemed both of these options unpalatable and instead mobilized the nation for total war, presuming incorrectly that this objective was synonymous with the preservation of British power.¹⁶ His memoirs disingenuously claimed that the War Cabinet never discussed whether Britain should seek a settlement with Hitler, alluding to a millennium of British history in order to infer continuity and inevitability in the his government’s war aims.¹⁷ Omitted from this glorious chapter of national history was any mention of labor strikes, which were actually more frequent in 1940 than during the previous year. Few Britons relished the thought of a long war against Germany, and even fewer of them had any idea how to achieve victory.¹⁸ Nonetheless, he praised the Commonwealth for rallying to Britain’s cause, proving that it was capable of bearing the full weight of the world’s destiny. For Churchill, this was its finest hour, leaving no doubt that humanity owed a great debt of gratitude for fighting the “good cause”
while other nations cowered before the Nazi jackboot.\(^\text{19}\)

Cabinet Secretary Brook considered Churchill’s glowing praises for the British people in his memoirs admirable and without controversy. However, he questioned the wisdom of contrasting the honor and glory of Britain with the shameful ignominy of other nations and peoples who succumbed to Nazi militarism. It was an overly harsh contrast between good and evil that Brook thought would surely cause protests from foreign governments and citizens. He also disliked Churchill’s use of statistics on the number of divisions in the field during the various stages of the war to compare Britain’s overall war effort with the US. Brook felt it misleading in that it failed to reveal US army divisions were at least one-third larger than their British counterparts. Finally, Brook questioned Churchill’s inflated casualty figures that listed 412,240 British and imperial soldiers killed in the war compared to 322,188 Americans killed; the White Paper on Casualties (1946) reported total empire losses of only 266,273.\(^\text{20}\) After consulting with Pownall, who had provided the figures for use in the memoirs, Churchill decided not to modify his figures, stating that he was citing the “somber roles of honour in the confident faith that the equal comradeship sanctified by so much precious blood will continue to command the reverence and inspire the conduct of the English-speaking world.”\(^\text{21}\)

Brook was most troubled by Churchill’s occasional bluntness regarding foreign relations during the war. For instance, he asked Churchill to omit allegations that many Irishmen in 1940 were eager to support Germany, and to confine his discussion of Ireland to concerns about a Nazi invasion and plans to counteract it with a British brigade in the north. Regarding Franco’s Spain, Brook disliked Churchill’s allegation that it had considered seizing Gibraltar while Britain was distracted by invasion fears. The Cabinet Secretary feared that Churchill’s acknowledgment of contingency plans to rebuff a Spanish attack would anger Franco into publicizing secret British promises to support Spain’s claim to French Morocco.\(^\text{22}\) Such revelations would surely cause a storm of controversy in France over British perfidy in bargaining away part of its empire at a time when Paris was under German occupation. At the same time, Churchill agreed to tone down his provocative references to “vulgar Spanish prejudices,” but later complained that the revised text was too tame. Likewise, his accounts of British plans to seize Crete and the Cape Verde Islands without the consent of Greece or neutral Portugal were removed. Finally, Churchill’s admission that “all our military men disliked the Jews and loved the Arabs” was removed after Brook questioned the wisdom of publishing comments sure to inflame anti-British passions in Palestine.\(^\text{23}\)
While Churchill agreed to soften his criticisms of European nations and leaders, his patronizing views of colonial subjects caused him to entertain only a modest appreciation for the vital role Indian troops played in the defense of empire during the war. This attitude did not sit well with Kelly, who had spent most of the war in India fighting alongside Sikhs and Hindus, where he acquired a great admiration for their dedication and tenacity in battle. He complained that Churchill had grossly underestimated India’s contribution to the war effort, which he feared would worsen the author’s reputation in the region. But Churchill refused to modify his text to incorporate greater praise for India at war, offering only a single tribute in all six volumes to the contribution of Indian troops in the various theaters of combat. Kelly also disagreed with Churchill’s contention that India was an economic liability during the war, with an exchange rate fixed at an artificially high level that was completely disproportionate to the rupee’s true value. He pointed out that the currency’s value had been set in the early 1920s, and remained unchanged during and after the second world war. Consequently, Kelly disputed Churchill’s assertion that it cost the British Treasury £1 million per day to feed and defend the Indian people, since this sum included the cost of supplies sent from India to succor troops in the Middle East. The actual cost to Britain for India’s defense was thus considerably lower, and it was more than compensated by the loyal service of Indian military units in the Middle East and Asia. However, once again Churchill chose to disregard Kelly’s advice in writing his memoirs.24

In contrast, Churchill could not say enough about British “fortitude, phlegm and courage” worthy of a great imperial race. Recounting a visit to Bristol during the Blitz, he compared British resolve in carrying forward the torch of freedom and liberty with “the ancient, unconquerable, spirit” that imbued Roman and Greek civilizations. In The Grand Alliance, he paid equally glowing tribute to the sacrifices of Dominion forces in Greece and Crete, whose deeds represented “an inexpressible relief to the Empire.” Canadians, New Zealanders, and Australians all received credit for standing steadfastly with the mother country in its hour of peril. Subsequent volumes continued to emphasize the empire’s predominance in fighting the Axis, even after America had entered the war. Sensitive to American opinion that Britain had used its colonial and Dominion troops for most of the hard fighting, Churchill stressed that in the desert war British casualties until 1942 exceeded those of all other allied forces combined. The martial vigor, efficiency, and discipline of Britain’s soldiers was comparable to none, the story of their hard fight to thwart Rommel ranking alongside Blenheim and Waterloo in the annals of warfare.25
In recounting the long road to El Alamein, a battle that helped to turn the tide of war, Churchill rebuffed his American publishers' concerns that he was not doing justice to Britain's ally. While he devoted seventeen chapters in Volume III to the desert campaign, he gave scant attention to American issues prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The New York Times editors maintained that the volume did not begin to deal with matters of interest to American readers until the battle of the Atlantic mid-way through the book. As a result, they feared that serialization in the US would get off to a slow start, with reader interest lost even before all the extracts were published. Life's Dan Longwell agreed that Britain's desert war was discussed in too much detail given its limited success and significance for the overall war effort. He urged a major realignment of the chronology so as to deal with the US buildup in Europe earlier, but Churchill brushed his concerns aside, arguing that the final draft would appeal equally to American and British readers.

In The Hinge of Fate, Churchill dealt with Britain's humiliating defeat in Malaya and Singapore following Japan's surprise attack. Australian officials urged Churchill to clarify the controversy surrounding deployment of imperial troops in early 1942, and Britain's failure to anticipate the Japanese attack that led to an ignominious surrender of 130,000 troops. Many Australians believed that their efforts in the Far East, where they had contributed eighteen divisions and many air squadrons, were not sufficiently appreciated in Britain or America. Churchill ignored these concerns, portraying Australian leaders as foolish and faint-hearted in demanding the return of their troops from Egypt in 1942 to counter a Japanese invasion threat. Likewise, he was contemptuous of Singapore's civilian authorities who wished to exonerate themselves for the terrible defeat they suffered. In his memoirs, Churchill asserted that he did not wish to become a court of inquiry to pass judgment on "the worst disaster and largest capitulation of British history," stating that he would confine himself to "the salient facts" from which readers could form their own opinion. But he then proceeded to dismiss the work on field defenses by local authorities as bearing no relation to the mortal needs of the army at the time. In 1942, caught off-guard by the speed of Japanese forces moving down the Malay peninsula, he had desperately ordered a fight to the finish: "The honour of the British Empire and of the British army is at stake. I rely on you to show no mercy to weakness in any form. With Russians fighting as they are and the Americans so stubborn at Luzon, the whole reputation of our country and our race is involved." No mention was made then or in his memoirs of the large contingent of Indian and Malayan soldiers defending Singapore. Instead of praising these troops for defending a white-man's empire, Churchill criticized the
coddling of Indians during the war, implying that they derived far more benefit from the imperial relationship than the mother country. He asserted that FDR's appeal for Britain to surrender its imperial control in 1942 was "sheer madness," arguing that he had an obligation to defend four hundred million of His Majesty's subjects from chaos. At the same time, however, he worked to sabotage S. Cripps' mission to India designed to reach an accommodation with Indian nationalists.31

Despite Churchill's efforts to promote the British imperial mission, at times he argued at cross-purposes, such as when he expressed disenchantment with the hesitancy of British officers to engage the enemy while enjoying a large superiority in manpower and resources. Churchill complained that British generals were obsessed with waging set-piece battles, requiring the time-consuming stockpiling of supplies before launching an attack. He compared this practice unfavorably with Rommel's imaginative use of a few German divisions and a very restricted supply line to harry allied forces for two full years. Churchill reiterated this point in discussing the Burma campaign, claiming that on one key sector of the front 33,000 British troops were arrayed against five thousand weary and ill-equipped Japanese soldiers.32 In 1942, Churchill had been humiliated in front of FDR by news of the British capitulation at Tobruk to a German force alleged to be less than half as strong, calling it a "national disgrace." It was one of the heaviest blows he experienced during the war, and led to a vote of censure on his direction of the war effort. Churchill claimed that the criticisms in Parliament only steeled his determination to beat Rommel, referring to the fight for Egypt as "a Homeric struggle" that turned unmitigated defeat into total victory. The successful defense at El Alamein, followed by Montgomery's crushing offensive in November, was hailed by Churchill as one of the most glorious chapters in the history of war. Secrecy laws prevented him from mentioning that top secret Enigma decrypts of Hitler's communiques had revealed to the allies that Rommel was desperately short of fuel and supplies.33

Churchill attempted to put a brave face on another debacle in 1942 at Dieppe, arguing that the raid on the French coast revealed the utmost gallantry and devotion of the troops involved, even if its results were disappointing.34 Many Canadians retained a lingering suspicion that their soldiers had been used as cannon fodder on a suicidal mission without adequate logistical support or planning, merely for the sake of achieving a propaganda coup at a particularly low point in the war.35 Churchill tried to dissociate himself from its military planning, even though in virtually all other instances he had become immersed in the details of battle.36 When asked for his comments, Mountbatten placed responsibility for its planning and execution squarely on Churchill's shoulders:
That you were (as ever) the moving spirit behind carrying out another operation that summer.... You and the Chiefs of Staff went into the revived plans carefully (which were hardly changed except in respect of substituting Commandos for airborne forces to silence the flank batteries) and gave your approval. You decided to tell the Foreign Secretary but not the Defence Committee.37

In his memoirs, Churchill offered only a two-page explanation of Dieppe, claiming that he merely adhered to the recommendations of Canadian and British generals in charge of operational planning. He ignored the advice of his military research team that the Dieppe raid deserved a chapter of its own in light of its importance to Canadians, and because a thorough vetting of the issues of command and responsibility was needed.38 Instead, Churchill contended that he first gave the operation serious consideration only after receiving a report of the attack in mid-August 1942. He blamed the commanding officers for an ill-devised plan that defied conventional military wisdom by using amphibious forces in a frontal assault on a heavily fortified port.39 Nonetheless, his contention that the raid offered valuable lessons for planning Operation Overlord became widely accepted by a generation of historians who studied the war.40

In Closing the Ring, Churchill continued to emphasize the preponderant role played by British forces in the war against Germany, though he readily acknowledged US domination of the Pacific theater. His account of the conquest of Sicily asserted that it was primarily a British effort with the Americans playing a supportive role. At the same time, he criticized American attempts in mid-1943 to assume overall control of Mediterranean operations, insisting that British forces had done the lion’s share of fighting to that date and still comprised two-thirds of all fighting units in the region. However, for all of his rhetoric acclaiming a nation of valiant and courageous warriors, he could not disguise the fact that Britain in 1943 could no longer undertake even modest operations in the Aegean without US logistical support.41 A few months later, at the Teheran conference in November 1943, the scales fell from his eyes when he realized just how low Britain had slipped in the opinion of its wartime partners, making him lament that he wished “to sleep for a billion years.” For the first time since the war began, he feared that Britain was being marginalized and the global balance of power completely overturned. However, Churchill refused to believe that sheer willpower could not somehow achieve an imperial revival through victory in war.42 He had hoped during the war to revive British prestige in the Mediterranean by making Arab nationalism and British imperialism partners in a new Middle East, but instead his efforts only exacerbated Arab rivalries and heightened suspicions among Zionists.43 Elsewhere, Churchill proved he was unable
to think beyond the failed imperial structures of the past. For example, he urged the re-establishment of monarchies in Italy, Greece, and Yugoslavia as the best means of bringing stability to those nations. When Roosevelt acted independently after Mussolini’s fall to establish a republican government in Italy, Churchill complained that Britain had borne most of the casualties in the war against Italian fascism, and therefore deserved a major say in such matters.\textsuperscript{44}

In \textit{Triumph and Tragedy}, it was impossible for him to accord a central role to Britain’s war effort as he had done in previous volumes. After June 1944, a great expansion of US forces on the fighting front in Europe meant that Britain’s contribution quickly diminished to a distant third among allies. In recounting the D-Day invasion, Churchill praised the brotherhood in arms of America and Britain, making special note of the British effort for its importance more than its results. He claimed that the heaviest fighting on the entire Normandy front prior to US General Patton’s breakout in July occurred in the British sector around Caen. He referred to it as the hinge upon which the entire leftward pivot of the American advance was based, a convenient bit of hindsight for what transpired after the British army became bogged down in Caen’s rubble. He did not mention that frustration at the British army’s lack of progress had prompted a rash decision to flatten Caen in a massive aerial assault, an action that caused great bitterness among the local French population that was not soon forgotten.\textsuperscript{45}

As Churchill finalized his manuscript of Volume VI in anticipation of publication in the fall of 1953, he received support from an unlikely source for projecting his theme of continuing British power in the final months of the war. \textit{Life}’s Walter Graebner suggested that Churchill accentuate comparative allied losses in the first three months after D-Day, since most Americans still thought that the British had been too reticent about incurring casualties, thereby delaying the rollback of Hitler’s army. However, when casualty figures were compiled, they revealed that US losses up to September 1944 actually exceeded those of British and Canadian forces by a factor of two. Kelly believed that to quote such figures would only reinforce American impressions that they had made the predominant contribution to victory after D-Day. Instead, Churchill emphasized that Montgomery repelled the “only substantive German counter-attack” during the summer fighting.\textsuperscript{46}

In Volume VI, Churchill affirmed Britain’s right to regain on the field of battle its “rightful possessions in the Far East” rather than have them handed back after the war. He argued that when the war finally ended Britain had the greatest moral claim of any nation to a prominent place at the peace table, since it alone had resisted tyranny from beginning to end: “Weary and worn,
impoverished but undaunted and now triumphant, we had a moment that was sublime. We gave thanks to God for the noblest of all His blessings, the sense that we had done our duty.” In a victory speech, he urged his countrymen not to fall into a rut of inertia again, as had happened after the last war, nor should they be overwhelmed with “the craven fear of being great.” He exhorted them to “go forward, unflinching and indomitable,” to make the whole world safe. Oblivious to Britain’s financial bankruptcy, he insisted on stopping moves to reduce the RAF’s gigantic strategic bomber force, arguing that the country must remain a great military power in the postwar era.47

In his biography of Marlborough, Churchill depicted Britain as a heroic nation that repeatedly triumphed over more powerful foes in the name of freedom. In his war memoirs, he strongly reinforced this metanarrative of British national identity and power. Cultural nationalism, based on the image of Churchill, the spirit of Dunkirk and the Blitz, and atomic military power, became prevalent totems in the early postwar years that appeared to vindicate the British way of life. For Churchill, it was the fulfillment of Britain’s historical role as leader of the free world and principal carrier of civilization. His memoirs gave historical intentionality, and hence justification, to the events of 1940, when in fact they were contingent and in doubt. He combined facts about the war that were known or believed to be true with inspirational values and compelling rhetoric, while ignoring much that did not fit his romantic image of nationhood.48 In wartime, he had the benefit of patriotism and propaganda to achieve a national consensus. After the war, he used his memoirs to promote a war memory that disguised social divisions, sometimes shaky morale, and the loss of national power. He ignored a good deal of anti-English hostility in many parts of the empire where nationalism was ascendant, creating instead appealing images of Britain’s empire and Commonwealth as a family of free peoples that starkly contrasted with the Nazi slave state.49

Churchill felt that after six years of war “[t]he island and empire have received no damage in any permanent sense.” It was a remarkable assertion, given that the strain on the imperial system caused by the war meant that only substantial US assistance in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia enabled Britain to maintain a semblance of its prior influence in the postwar era.50

Nonetheless, the power of Churchill’s war memoirs is reflected in the fact that it enhanced a postwar consensus in Britain supportive of imperial revival as a counterweight to the world’s superpowers. There was no attempt by leaders in either major political party to forge a new post-imperial identity, though the left-wing of Labour did resist the Churchillian hegemony. In contrast, Attlee’s foreign and imperial policy was remarkably Churchillian in the sense that his government
supported rearmament after 1949, advocated containment of communism, and proved quite unsympathetic to indigenous independence movements. Even Cripps, a passionate anti-imperialist before the war, pursued a nationalist policy that sought economic integration of the empire and Commonwealth in a new sterling bloc.\textsuperscript{51} The dreams of leftist intellectuals to make decolonization movements a basis for eradicating Britain's culture of imperialism and national identity were stymied.\textsuperscript{52} Instead, both political parties sought to foster a stronger Commonwealth, though these ambitions foundered on the rocks of economic austerity, budget cuts, and sterling devaluation that forced severe import restrictions.\textsuperscript{53}

The “Special Relationship” of the English-speaking Peoples

Churchill's abiding faith in an Anglo-American mission to protect freedom in the world had its roots in the late 19th century rise of US power. But it was the immediate necessity of British survival in 1939 that caused him to make an “indissoluble family connection” of English-speaking peoples an urgent political ambition. When war ended six years later, Britain’s weakened position in the world was partially disguised by the formalities of early postwar conferences where it was accorded the status of victor alongside Russia and America. The new Labour government initially pursued an independent course, but within two years the political right and moderate left reached a consensus that national security required American assistance. Only the radical left challenged this perspective by arguing that it would make Britain a vassal of the US.\textsuperscript{54} Churchill’s appeal for an Anglo-American partnership was premised on equality of status that was belied by the reality of a greatly weakened imperial grip and vastly unequal military and economic resources after the war.

Rather than integrating Britain into a reconstructed European order, Churchill urged an Atlantic triangle for Britain’s primary foreign policy focus. Britain might oversee the creation of Franco-German entente in a United States of Europe, but it would not join in such a federation. Between 1945 and 1947, Labour toyed with the idea of “a third course” in which the French and British empires would combine to form a customs union rivaling the economic might of the US, but eventually Attlee and Bevin accepted Churchill’s view of Britain within an Atlantic orbit of English-speaking nations. Churchill’s ambitious notion of Britain’s geopolitical destiny based on three concentric rings that placed empire and the Atlantic community above Europe in importance was to have a baleful impact on British attitudes toward continental integration in later years.\textsuperscript{55}

In enunciating his world view after the war, no speech has garnered more attention than his
"Iron Curtain" address at Fulton, Missouri on March 5, 1946. When the war ended, Churchill’s incredible reception from adoring crowds wherever he traveled encouraged him to think that even out of office his immense prestige might be used to “start some thinking that will make history.” Anglo-American relations in the early months of the postwar had fallen into the doldrums, with British leaders doubting US dependability and fearing its economic strength. Concerned that the Russians might capitalize on disagreements between the democracies over trade and empire, Churchill traveled to Fulton with President Truman to lay out his vision of Anglo-American hegemony as the world’s only salvation. He told his audience that the US “stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power.” It was a solemn moment in history that demanded wisdom from its leaders to “rule and guide the conduct of the English-speaking peoples in peace as they did in war.” But “[n]either the sure prevention of war, nor the continuous rise of world organization will be gained without what I have called the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples.” Churchill argued that the moral strength of the English-speaking peoples was a powerful world force premised on the unshakeable principles of freedom and liberty. However, his suggestion of a formal partnership between Britain and the US startled many Americans, who thought it contrary to their national interest. After his speech, Churchill was accused by many liberals of advocating “a poisonous doctrine” that sought to create a hostile alliance against the Soviet Union. Left-wing liberals in America in early 1946 were cool to a fraternal association with Britain because their suspicions of empire were still greater than their fear of Soviet expansionism. Liberals soon changed their perspective as cold war rivalries intensified in the months following the Fulton speech, with Churchill’s talk reinterpreted as an early warning against the world-wide communist peril. Thus, within a year of the end of World War II, the makings of a bipartisan consensus on foreign policy toward the Soviet Union was being forged in America, one that would survive intact until the 1980s.

A year later, Churchill’s publishing syndicate worked to change American perceptions of their client while promoting his memoirs. Longwell noted that all publishers in the syndicate were inspired by “the common cause” and a sense of duty toward the project: “We feel that we are engaged on a most important historical record for our people - something that might well prove important in the memories of our two countries.” But Churchill’s campaign for a fraternal association soon became caught up in Washington’s partisan politics when he promoted his wartime relationship with FDR as a model of Anglo-American amity. In 1947-49, President Truman was
involved in a battle with Republicans over the publication of FDR’s wartime papers. Truman was resisting Congressional pressure to publish the papers because he deemed it not in the national interest, but partisanship lay at the heart of the dispute. The messages which Churchill wished to use in his memoirs revealed that FDR had quietly abandoned strict neutrality in the summer and fall of 1940, despite attempts by an isolationist Congress to mandate American neutrality through legislation. Truman was in the midst of promoting US participation in a North Atlantic security system, and he feared that publishing the wartime messages would encourage Republican critics to assert that Democrats were again drawing America into another European conflict, just as FDR had done in 1940-41. In order to win approval for publication, Churchill assured the White House that nothing discomfiting would be divulged in his memoirs until well after the 1948 election.59

In contrast, the Republican Luce urged Churchill to ignore Truman’s concerns, since complying with the President’s request “would only cause more trouble.” He believed that Churchill’s account of US policies from 1938-41 offered a valuable critique of FDR’s delay in coming to Europe’s rescue. The fact that Roosevelt moved faster than either Congress or the American people in coming to Europe’s aid did not negate what Luce believed was the administration’s isolationist and pro-appeasement failings. Looking ahead, Luce realized that Churchill’s subsequent volumes would discuss the crucial summits at Casablanca, Teheran, and Yalta, where he believed FDR would be exposed as an incompetent appeaser of Stalin. Churchill’s publication of FDR’s correspondence in 1948 would open the door for Republicans to compel complete disclosure of the former President’s papers, inviting yet more embarrassing disclosures.60 Churchill claimed to hold the highest sense of responsibility in everything he wrote to defend the interests of their two nations, but he also desired a fair chance to defend his honor and reputation by using all available documents to refute his detractors, some of whom had been subordinates in the Roosevelt administration. Truman finally relented after assurances from Churchill that the White House could vet all final proofs. With relief the President wrote: “I am more than happy that the publication [of Volume II] will not come out until January 1st, 1949 because, as you know, we are in the midst of a very bitter political presidential election in this country and it will be better for all concerned if this publication comes out after the election is over.”61

In return for the favor, Churchill authorized the US State Department to transmit excerpts of his memoirs to eastern Europe over the Voice of America. Luce agreed that it would be of great use in the propaganda war against communism, since the war narrative offered “the greatest service
to Britain, to the United States and our common cause." He also asked Churchill in 1949 to meet with Jewish philanthropists dedicated to dispelling anti-British sentiment among fellow American Jews that had arisen from the colonial war in Palestine. Their organization maintained that Britain currently occupied an unhappy position in the eyes of many other US citizens because of its socialist government, which was thought to constitute a betrayal of Anglo-American war aims. Since Churchill was a foremost critic of socialism, and had recently attacked Bevin’s foreign policy and Labour’s allegedly anti-American views, the philanthropists thought that he was an ideal person to effectively bridge the gap in understanding between their countrymen.

In contrast to the scolding tone with which he criticized America’s pre-war policies in *The Gathering Storm*, Churchill’s second volume stressed the warmth, friendship, and harmony of interests between the two nations’ leaders from 1940-41. Though not formally allied at the time, Churchill praised FDR for doing everything possible to coax and cajole the American people into supporting Britain’s war effort. He asserted that a perfect understanding was gained between the two countries through his personal exchanges with the President, blurring the distinction between American appreciation of Britain’s plight and willingness to take decisive action on its behalf. He merely acknowledged that FDR had “not found it convenient” in May 1940 to seek Congressional approval of the sale of fifty aging destroyers to the beleaguered British nation, despite the fact that France’s collapse left the only democracy remaining in Europe very poorly equipped to defend against the vaunted Wehrmacht. At the time of the French armistice, Churchill informed the world that Britain’s fight was to save not only itself but all of mankind: “We have become the sole champions now in arms to defend the world’s cause.” A month later he declared: “We are fighting by ourselves alone; but we are not fighting for ourselves alone.” In his memoirs, Churchill claimed never to have doubted that America would come to the rescue, omitting to mention that the cash-and-carry terms of assistance in 1940 guaranteed Britain’s financial bankruptcy before the year was out. According to J.M. Keynes, Churchill sacrificed Britain’s independence by “throwing good housekeeping to the wind,” pouring the country’s gold reserves into US hands in the vain hope that Anglo-American friendship would ensure Britain’s vital interests in the long run. It is true that Churchill abandoned a balanced budget to facilitate the acquisition of arms from America in 1940, but given the dire military peril that Britain faced, he had little choice in the matter. Britain’s formerly tight-fisted Chancellor and Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, appears to have fully assented to the Cabinet’s decision to spend massively on arms in 1940.
But while Churchill had looked hopefully upon US actions that extracted maximum economic gain from British desperation in 1940, his advisors were furious at American "grab." After the destroyer-for-bases deal was finalized, Beaverbrook complained that the Americans had not given fair compensation, and were taking advantage of the war to muscle into British markets. Churchill’s memoirs defended the deal as a good bargain for both countries: "Believing, as I have always done, that the survival of Britain is bound up with the survival of the United States, it seemed to me and my colleagues that it was an actual advantage to have these bases in American hands." He realized that US aid came at a high price, but sought to make those sacrifices more rhetorical than real. Thus, in August 1941 he made a public declaration of war aims in a meeting with Roosevelt that promised support for self-determination, while privately maintaining that the Atlantic Charter applied only to sovereign states and not to Britain’s imperial possessions.

In the war, Churchill had sought to erode US neutrality through a series of agreements and concessions, starting with cash-and-carry in October 1939, Lend-lease in late 1940, and the Atlantic Charter in August 1941, which came close to a joint declaration of belligerency against Germany. But in the process, Britain was transformed into a garrison state tethered to the interests of the US. Its armies, strategic bomber force, and navy were less manifestations of resurgent British power than indications of American hegemony in the West. Nonetheless, Churchill was ecstatic over the President’s agreement to supply Britain with weapons in 1941: "All this reads easily now, but at the time it was a supreme act of faith and leadership for the United States to deprive themselves of this very considerable mass of arms for the sake of a country which many deemed already beaten. They never had need to repent it." For this act of selflessness, Churchill paid fulsome tribute in his memoirs to American leaders who he claimed never lost faith in Britain’s resolve or ability to resist invasion, omitting to mention that many US officers at the time doubted the country could hold out against Germany. He also waxed poetic about the American people’s support for Britain’s fight in the air campaign of 1940-41:

Away across the Atlantic the prolonged bombardment of London, and later of other cities and seaports, aroused a wave of sympathy in the United States, stronger than any ever felt before or since in the English-speaking world. Passion flamed in American hearts, and in none more than in the heart of President Roosevelt....I could feel the glow of millions of men and women eager to share the suffering, burning to strike a blow.

Opinion polls did reveal overwhelming sympathy for Britain against the Axis, but on the key issue
of whether Americans were willing to risk war, they were badly divided. Churchill had to admit that it took Pearl Harbor for the US to finally unite behind Britain in the war against fascism. Knowing that the terms of American aid risked a backlash in Britain from those who thought it too beneficial to the US, in 1941 he elevated the deal onto a higher moral plane by claiming that it reflected the common interests of the two great branches of English-speaking peoples: “I do not view the process with any misgivings. I could not stop it if I wished; no one can stop it. Like the Mississippi, it just keeps rolling along. Let it roll. Let it roll on -full flood, inexorable, irresistible, benignant, to broader lands and better days.” In his memoirs, Churchill recalled with satisfaction that in America’s intensely partisan election of 1940 there was a clear consensus in support of the “Supreme Cause.” Though he had hoped Wendell Wilkie would win, he claimed in his memoirs that it was an immense relief to learn of FDR’s victory, contending that the election results unleashed a wave of admiration for Britain, as Americans came to realize that their fate was bound up with their cousins across the ocean. It was this growing appreciation for their common interest in defeating Hitlerism that prompted the Lend-lease policy, “the most unsordid act in the history of any nation.”

Churchill’s American publishers agreed that it was a matter of vital importance for their two nations that readers in the US come to appreciate the story’s relevance for their own lives. They felt that the author’s stirring rhetoric and many dramatic high points in Their Finest Hour went a long way toward achieving that objective. Yet for all his praise of FDR’s “refined comprehension of the Cause,” Churchill could not disguise his frustration in recalling that upbeat messages about Britain’s heroic fight were not matched by an all-important declaration of war, and the President seemed nonchalant about the prospect of a British collapse in Egypt. It was largely to allay Roosevelt’s suspicion that Britain was militarily overextended in 1941 that Churchill arranged for the two leaders to meet at Placenta Bay in a “deeply moving expression of the unity of faith of our two peoples...” From this historic gathering emerged the Atlantic Charter, which Churchill took the initiative in drafting to demonstrate he was not a reactionary and to show the world Britain’s righteous intent. It was intended to appease US concerns in the short term while reserving Britain’s freedom of action on imperial issues after the war. Thus, Churchill was pleased with FDR’s “remarkable expression of realism” that after the war Britain and the US would police the world.

Though they possessed remarkably different personalities and outlooks on life, Churchill portrayed himself and FDR as adhering to similar principles. In fact, FDR’s intentions in 1940-41 were radically different from those of British leaders. Roosevelt wished to keep Britain in the war
against Germany while avoiding direct US involvement, a policy that enabled it to replace British imperial control in Asia and the Middle East with a new world order based on American economic hegemony. Roosevelt effectively made the US pre-eminent economically by 1941 at virtually no cost in American lives, even though it remained a relatively weak military power until the latter part of 1943. Only then did the US emerge on the world stage as a colossus that dwarfed Britain, a new reality reflected in its growing assertiveness at the conference table, much to Churchill’s chagrin. Churchill’s glowing assessment of his relations with FDR is belied by a full reading of their correspondence, which reveals that from the start of the war Churchill waged a battle to protect the British empire against American pressure for reform. While he saw the empire as a carrier of democratic values, the White House was hostile to imperial systems as a barrier to commerce. Though Churchill never wavered from his conviction that victory could only be achieved through an alliance with the US, he was frustrated by American financial pressure, which he thought was not in the spirit of a great democratic crusade against tyranny.

During the war, the Foreign Office had surmised that FDR’s primary objective was to achieve US hegemony over foreign markets through a system of informal empire, making America not so much a land of opportunity in 1941 as “a land looking for opportunity.” After the US entered the war, Whitehall felt considerable ambivalence over the prospect of Americans sweeping into Europe and establishing a world order conducive to their economic self-interests. For very different reasons, Churchill also doubted American war aims, which he thought naive and in need of guidance from a wiser hand. But in fact it was Churchill who lacked a clear vision of the future with which to give his war strategy momentum, whereas FDR proved highly adept at enhancing America’s strategic position during the war at the expense of Britain’s global interests.

Churchill’s American publishers were intrigued by revelations in The Grand Alliance that Roosevelt in 1941 put the US navy on a semi-war footing in the Atlantic by gradually expanding its activities under cover of strict neutrality. By the summer, navy vessels were in a state of undeclared belligerency against German U-boats after an executive order authorized them to shoot-on-sight. The New York Times’ Arthur Sulzberger feared that the disclosure would cause a major stir in Washington, where Republicans were already intensely suspicious of Democratic interventionism:

I have a feeling that what you have written may very well cause a storm of Roosevelt criticism, and that if it were to occur at this time it might even go so far as to jeopardize congressional action on the Atlantic Pact and the Military Aid programme. The blunt
statement made by you in Chapter 10, galley 2, ‘Our job is to get the Americans into the war’ will not help.\textsuperscript{82}

Concerned lest he become embroiled in partisan politics in the US, Churchill agreed to soften his account of FDR’s willingness to use military force to aid Britain in 1941.\textsuperscript{83}

During the war, Anglophobic Americans were convinced that Churchill was wedded to notions of empire and old world spheres of influence, two aspects of the international system they were determined to overthrow. In an open letter to the British people in October 1942, Luce had declared: “One thing we are sure we are not fighting for is to hold the British empire together. We don’t like to put the matter so bluntly, but we don’t want you to have any illusions. If your strategists are planning a war to hold the British empire together they will sooner or later find themselves strategizing all alone.”\textsuperscript{84} Churchill’s attempt to disguise sharp differences over foreign policy with rhetoric that touted an Anglo-American mission to combat world anarchy were met with silence from Washington during the war.\textsuperscript{85} In his memoirs, however, he contended that the US military fully recognized that Britain was a “bastion of American security.” Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor in December, he said, had brought into being an all-conquering alliance of English-speaking peoples that they owed to mankind not to dissolve or allow to fall apart in the postwar era.\textsuperscript{86}

Churchill alleged in his memoirs that with America in the war, he easily won approval of Britain’s strategic focus on the Mediterranean theater of operations. Only the timing of various military actions, he claimed, was altered to accommodate unforeseen circumstances that arose during the course of the war. In discussing plans for a cross-Channel invasion, however, it was apparent that disagreements had become progressively worse during the war. Churchill had walked a fine line between showing his support for Operation Overlord and pursuing “alternative prizes” in the Mediterranean. Realizing that US officials were determined to launch the main assault against Germany in 1943, he still fought for approval of operations in the Aegean, thereby risking American anger which almost caused them to redirect their main effort to the Pacific. When his military advisors questioned Churchill’s idea, he denied that additional operations in the Mediterranean necessarily precluded a cross-channel invasion in 1943. But this assertion directly contradicts evidence of his intentions stated in a memorandum to Ismay in August 1942. It is an example of how Churchill often outlined two or more non-complementary threads of strategic thought in his wartime correspondence, which allowed him to later choose the one that presented himself in the best possible light based on the actual turn of events. Thus, while urging diversionary operations in Norway, Burma, Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily during 1943 that would have allowed the British army
a greater role in strategic planning, Churchill quixotically urged FDR not to abandon plans for a late summer invasion of France, despite insufficient resources to do both.\textsuperscript{87}

In recounting the Casablanca conference of January 1943, Churchill admitted that Anglo-American harmony was only restored when FDR accepted his Mediterranean strategy for the next year. Immediately, he began devising a scheme to involve allied troops in the Aegean in a forlorn effort to embroil Turkey in the conflict. In his memoirs, Churchill claimed that bringing Turkey into the war had always been an objective of American and British leaders. In fact, his own Cabinet thought it futile, while the Americans were utterly opposed to him trying to vindicate his Gallipoli strategy from the last war. Nonetheless, Churchill contended that all was harmonious in May 1943 when he visited Washington to seek approval for a permanent Anglo-American fraternal association and combined military command structure. He offered no evidence to support this claim, and in fact contradicted it when he noted that American leaders took pains a few months later to ensure that the US and Britain were not seen to be colluding in a way intended to dictate allied policy to Moscow.\textsuperscript{88} Stalin was deeply suspicious that the Western allies were deliberately delaying a second front in order to bleed Russia white. While American generals were anxious to prove him wrong, Churchill’s bitter experience in World War I had taught him that massive and sustained logistical support was essential to the success of any amphibious operations on the continent of Europe. In his memoirs, he complained that American plans to invade France in 1942 or 1943 utterly failed to appreciate the mortal dangers involved in such an undertaking.\textsuperscript{89}

Following the Teheran conference in November 1943, Churchill confided to his personal secretary that there was no use beating up on the Americans over strategy; it was now for history to judge the issues, and he planned to be one of the historians. Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff agreed that the central objectives for 1944 were to secure control of the Mediterranean, eliminate Italy from the war, and ensure Turkey’s cooperation in driving the Germans out of the Balkans. They were frustrated, however, by strong resistance to all of these objectives from American officials who suspected they were intended principally to bolster British imperial interests while undermining preparation for the Normandy invasion. When Churchill proved unable to sway American decision-making as he had done during the previous two years, he became sullen and morose.\textsuperscript{90} In writing his memoirs, he was anxious to prove his case regarding the strategic controversies surrounding Overlord (D-Day). In 1948, while still working to complete his account of prewar politics, he sent a preliminary draft of his views on D-Day planning to Montgomery for
comment, whose response was reassuring: "It is a very remarkable and accurate forecaste [sic] by
a master brain; it is a great privilege to have been allowed to read it at this stage. It is my view that
a landing in Normandy [in 1943] would not merely have been a 'terrible hazard'; it would have
failed." Bolstered by this assessment, Churchill proceeded to attack the strategic thinking of
American military planners in 1942-43, claiming they were inflexible, single-minded, and apolitical.
Laughlin was impressed by the critique, believing that it would serve as a useful reminder to
American readers of the wisdom and foresight of Churchill, and of the British leader's desire to
pursue policies that were in the best interests of their two countries:

[The bond that held the two nations together eight year ago will be renewed through reliving
in memory those stirring days. The cooperation and leadership you gave then will rekindle
the flames which have burned low in the aftermath of the war. We need this stimulus....It
is, I think, a matter of real significance to you and to the welfare of the British Empire and
the United States in this decisive hour.]

In *Closing the Ring*, Churchill reiterated his theme of Anglo-American wartime cooperation as
proof of the tremendous achievements possible when Washington and London worked as one. For
example, the turning point in the war against Axis submarines came only after Britain and America
coordinated air and naval operations in one great maritime organization. Churchill linked this
account of wartime success to his postwar lesson that both countries faced a stark choice between
world anarchy if they became divided or world order under their joint stewardship. The wartime
system of coordinated policy was a model of international cooperation that he lamented had been
abandoned after the war due to "unwisdom" among political leaders in both countries.

While Churchill dreamed of an English-speaking fraternity that would enable Britain to
remain a major player in world affairs, his memoirs highlighted growing friction from 1943-44 over
his Mediterranean strategy. In retrospect, he called it a glorious success, when in fact the Germans
managed to create a deadlock on the Italian front that was not broken until mid-1944. Brook
considered Churchill's account of American opposition to the Italian campaign overly provocative
in implying that US officials were unreasonable and petty. Churchill's draft portrayed American
officers as inexperienced and obsessed with an invasion of France, stymying a united British
command eager to obtain glittering prizes in the Mediterranean, when in fact there was no consensus
between the Prime Minister and his military commanders on that point.

In *Closing the Ring*, Churchill disparaged "all of the loose talk" since the war that he had
sought to lure a large allied force into the Balkans, reiterating his commitment to Overlord and claiming that he only favored reinforcing the army in Italy for the purpose of capturing Rome. This may indeed have been his stated objectives in November 1943, but as documents cited in his memoirs reveal, several months later he advocated extending well beyond Rome into the Po valley by diverting forces slated for Normandy. He considered it not unreasonable to delay the cross-channel invasion by a month or two until late summer 1944, claiming that he could easily have won Stalin’s consent to such a move. This is doubtful, however, given the fact that Stalin had chided him mercilessly at Teheran about lack of British resolve in coming to grips with the enemy. A few chapters later, Churchill admitted to never having believed that a direct assault across the Channel was the best way to win the war.\(^96\)

In 1951, Churchill was well advanced on the final volume of his memoirs when he again became Prime Minister. Following his election victory, he declared in a speech that “the fraternal association is unbreakable,” but in private he feared that cold war hostilities were spiraling out of control. When he visited Washington the next year, he preached the theme of a common Anglo-American front as the only basis for securing concessions from Moscow. Hoping to ensure a favorable reception to his ideas, he informed Eisenhower that publication of *Triumph and Tragedy* had been delayed so that the manuscript could be carefully culled of all criticisms of American strategy during the final year of war.\(^97\) Eisenhower was wary of Churchill’s quest for rapprochement, and while admiring “the great man” for his accomplishments in the war, thought the British leader was trying to live in the “glorious past.” Though personally an Anglophile, Eisenhower was strongly influenced by his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, an intense Anglophobe who was suspicious of Churchill’s ability to weave spells over American leaders.\(^98\)

In *Triumph and Tragedy*, Churchill’s account of continued Anglo-American disagreements after the D-Day landings became inextricably wound up with his cold war narrative of a failed peace. He ended up arguing at cross-purposes, on the one hand praising allied unity as capable of removing all obstacles on the road to victory, while on the other hand blaming Americans for failing to respond more quickly to the growing Soviet peril. Continued disputes over war strategy after D-Day led Churchill to complain in his memoirs that US leaders never comprehended the great potential for military success by strengthening Alexander’s army in Italy. While FDR had held that military objectives superceded political goals in war, Churchill averred that he had always believed in using armies to secure political goals. In fact, he too had been so absorbed in military planning
in 1943-45 that he failed to consider the political consequences of victory. In his memoirs, he complained that “splendid victories and widening opportunities” in 1944 did not bring US and British leaders closer together, conceding that he had intended to use Italy as a springboard for a move into the Balkans. American hostility forced him to confine British intervention to Greece, where he reinstated a corrupt monarchy despite strongly republican sentiment.99

In early 1945, Churchill had tried to patch over rifts in Anglo-American relations caused by the Greek action by deferring to American wishes regarding Poland: “I am most relieved that you [FDR] do not feel that there is any fundamental divergence between us, and I agree that our differences are only about tactics. You know, I am sure, that our great desire is to keep in step with you, and we realise how hopeless the position would become for Poland if it were ever seen that we were not in full accord....” He assured FDR that their friendship was the rock upon which he built for the future, since it was absolutely essential that Britain and America walk hand-in-hand into the future.100 But just weeks later Roosevelt died, a tragedy that Churchill alleged had prevented the West from presenting a united front against Stalin’s growing intransigence. The arrival of a new president in the White House in April 1945 did little to mitigate American distrust of British imperial ambitions: “It seemed to me extraordinary, especially during the last few months, that Roosevelt had not made his deputy and potential successor thoroughly acquainted with the whole story and brought him into the decisions which were being taken. This proved of grave disadvantage to our affairs.” Churchill had been troubled by Truman’s insistence on withdrawing US troops in Germany to their pre-arranged zone of occupation before first securing Soviet concessions on Poland, arguing in his memoirs: “Thus in the moment of victory was our best, and what might prove to have been our last, chance of durable world peace allowed composedly to fade away.”101 At Potsdam, the new President had appeared to treat Britain’s empire as a greater threat to order and stability than Soviet imperialism, which Churchill deemed a major factor in the development of the cold war.102 In considering Churchill’s account, Norman Brook urged him to pay greater tribute to FDR’s leadership in the war. Early drafts only referred briefly to the President’s death, inserted in the middle of a chapter on mounting Soviet paranoia toward the West and heated allied differences over war strategy. It was an ungracious way to discuss Roosevelt’s final days, and jarringly contrasted with the author’s previous volumes that extolled their great friendship. In the final proofs, Churchill declared that FDR died at the supreme climax of the conflict, and at a time when his wisdom and experience were needed most to ensure a smooth transition from war to peace.103
After delaying the release of Volume VI for almost a year, Churchill realized that Eisenhower’s election victory in November 1952 meant that anything published about the general’s conduct in the war might adversely affect British relations with America, especially since the author was himself again Prime Minister. Ismay feared that Eisenhower’s enemies might use Churchill’s memoirs to attack the President’s lack of political acumen, so he convinced Churchill to insert a lengthy passage applauding the general’s character and importance for the allied victory. However, Brook felt that Churchill’s critique of Eisenhower’s strategy for attacking Germany on a broad front in 1944-45 was essential to the author’s theme of cold war origins, and thus could hardly be omitted as Ismay desired. Instead, Brook urged Churchill to soften his criticism of the general by emphasizing British disagreements with officials in Washington and removing references to Ike’s refusal to seize Prague or Berlin. Churchill acknowledged to Brook that those cities were beyond the West’s reach in 1945 anyway, even if they had been made a top priority in the last months of the war. Nonetheless, in his memoirs he maintained that glittering political prizes were lost because of American failure to recognize the tremendous psychological impact of occupying these cities.

Churchill’s pointed criticisms of US policies and leadership in the latter part of the war did not impede his American supporters in both major political parties from making him a symbol of resistance to communist tyranny in the 1950s. His idea that America and Britain had a common duty to lead humanity toward a brighter future became a foreign policy pillar of the new imperial Presidency. Churchill’s rhetoric was frequently invoked in Congressional debates on war and national destiny, though his argument that English-speaking unity was essential for world stability was undermined by increasing American unilateralism in the postwar years. The romantic vision of a “special relationship” between Britain and America was espoused by both nation’s elites, but primarily to suit their respective self-interests during the cold war, a marriage of convenience involving mutual manipulation of Churchill’s memory.

**Leadership, Character and Vision in War**

In Churchill’s world view, a few powerful individuals of genius were the principal engines of historical change through their wisdom and force of personality. One such titan was his ancestor the Duke of Marlborough, in whose footsteps Churchill imagined himself following when he was returned to power in 1940, after the short-sightedness and folly of his political predecessors had failed to ensure that Germany remained disarmed and Prussian militarism thwarted. The hard-won
spoils of victory after the first world war were needlessly squandered, he asserted, when small-minded politicians reverted to living from one election to the next on false promises and deceit. His memoirs grimly depicted Britain’s march on this downward path, while the nation’s savior-in-waiting languished in the political wilderness. Churchills view of leadership had been developed in earlier works that contrasted the weakness of other politicians with his own unshakeable vision and prophecy: “[T]hose who can win a war well can rarely make a good peace, and those who could make a good peace would never have won the war. It would perhaps be pressing the argument too far to suggest that I could do both.”

Obsession with the role of personality in shaping history caused him to focus exclusively on high diplomacy as the cause of war in 1939, ignoring evidence of Britain’s economic frailty and the people’s psychological exhaustion from the first world war. Instead, Churchill argued that moral weakness at the top of Britain’s political order was responsible for public apathy and lost willpower that emboldened aggressors to embark on a war of expansion.

The depiction of appeasers as “guilty men” actually originated in a polemical treatise by three leftist journalists in 1941 writing under the pseudonym “Cato.” Their highly simplified account of Britain’s political and foreign policy dilemmas in the interwar era was later enshrined into national memory and orthodox historiography by Churchill’s memoirs. Cato’s Guilty Men caricatured Baldwin and MacDonald as do-nothing political hacks who allowed a nation victorious in World War I to be run down to the brink of ruin. In contrast, a clear-eyed and courageous Churchill saw the menace of Nazism all along, but was kept from power by these small-minded and mean-spirited men of little talent. Baldwin was demonized as a kind of Roman tyrant and mad Caligula, with Churchill the savior saint of Britain who rode to the rescue.

Churchill’s memoirs were more subtle but carried the same essential message. He attributed his political isolation in the 1930s to his adherence to higher moral values that did not allow him to seek short-term gain at the polling booth by disguising from voters hard truths about the nation’s security. He believed that his whole life before 1940 was a preparation for the climactic epic struggle in war. In assessing the 1930s, Churchill criticized political leaders of all parties for weakness in resisting faster rearmament and ignorance in failing to comprehend the full magnitude of Europe’s terrible political and social upheavals:

We must regard as deeply blameworthy before history the conduct not only of the British National and mainly Conservative Government, but of the Labour-Socialist and Liberal Parties, both in and out of office, during this fatal period. Delight in smooth-sounding
platitudes, refusal to face unpleasant facts, desire for popularity and electoral success irrespective of the vital interests of the State...obvious lack of intellectual vigour in both leaders of the British Coalition Government, marked ignorance of Europe and aversion from its problems in Mr. Baldwin, the strong and violent pacifism which at this time dominated the Labour-Socialist Party, the utter devotion of the Liberals to sentiment apart from reality, the failure and worse than failure of Mr. Lloyd George, the erstwhile great war-time leader, to address himself to the continuity of his work...[A]ll these constituted a picture of British fatuity and fecklessness which, though devoid of guile was not devoid of guilt, and though free from wickedness or evil design, played a definite part in the unleashing upon the world of horrors and miseries which, even so far as they have unfolded, are already beyond comparison in human experience.\(^\text{112}\)

His account of interwar politics and diplomacy depicted a litany of folly among Western leaders in feebly responding to Nazi challenges to the Versailles settlement. For instance, he decried British pressure on France in the early 1930s to unilaterally disarm, blaming misinformed pacifists for failing to appreciate the threat to national security posed by Franco-German military parity. He asserted that British diplomacy lacked realism at interwar conferences to discuss Germany’s breaches of the Versailles Treaty, especially the refusal to even consider using force to uphold League sanctions against fascist truculence and naked aggression in Abyssinia. When directly confronted by fascist belligerency in Europe, as in Hitler’s brazen march into the demilitarized Rhineland, British leaders lost their nerve by pursuing weak and irresolute policies. Churchill considered the fact that he had played no part in this pre-war bungling as “divine will” that ensured he was not tainted with the stain of appeasement: “Over me beat the invisible wings.”\(^\text{113}\) If, however, appeasement was indeed such an odious and malign policy, as he alleged to have recognized from the outset, one wonders why he required divine intervention to save him from it.

For Churchill, the crucial turning point in European affairs came with the 1936 Rhineland occupation that tore up the Versailles and Locarno treaties. War could easily have been prevented, he argued, if British leaders had cooperated with France in forcing a prompt German withdrawal. But British pacifism allegedly created an excuse for inaction, which in turn caused the French to slide into apathy. Churchill claimed to have foreseen the consequences of this development, though he provided no evidence of having anticipated Hitler’s next move against Austria, nor did he admit that his alarmist warnings at the time were based on exaggerated figures about German arms production. He argued that a display of French and British resolve in 1936, or at any point during the succession of crises leading to Munich, would have stopped Hitler in his tracks. He failed to note, however, that at the time of the Rhineland occupation Western nations were completely unprepared for war, and were not in a position to force a German withdrawal from Austria in 1938.
As for the Sudeten crisis later that year, testimony of German generals at Nuremberg after the war revealed that Hitler was irrevocably set on crushing the Czechs, even at the risk of a general war. Nonetheless, Churchill insisted that a tougher Western stance in 1938 would have precipitated a military coup against Hitler, but instead British and French leaders displayed "the quintessence of defeatism" in pursuing a policy of peace at any price that reneged on promises to Czechoslovakia. The argument relied on self-serving assertions of German generals after the war, who sought to blame the West for their own inaction in the face of Hitler's criminally aggressive conduct. Churchill drew a lesson from these events, asserting that nations and their leaders must always act morally and honorably by respecting their obligations no matter the consequences. His memoirs accused British leaders of failing to appreciate that only a grand alliance involving Russia could prevent war, though he had not advocated such a policy himself before mid-1938. Churchill maintained that Chamberlain's stiffness with the French, hostility toward Russia, and contempt for America revealed "a terrible lack of proportion" by failing to consider their potential for containing Germany. What Churchill omitted to mention was the state of France's abject pacifism and political turmoil at the time, the power of America's isolationist and anti-European lobby, and the heavy price that Stalin would have exacted for any arrangement with the West to stymy Hitler.

Despite a prewar record that was far from consistent, Churchill declared in his memoirs that the events of 1939-40 proved seven years of prophecy that he had foretold. He fused past history with cold war realities to create a morality play about leadership. In the process, he denigrated as "criminally irresponsible" peace and disarmament movements of pacifists and socialists who spread disunity and weakened morale before the war, and who he claimed were doing so again in the postwar. Such defeatist and divisive mentality was contrasted with the rock-solid unity and resolve of his wartime leadership after he became Prime Minister: "[T]he attitude of all those I sent for was like that of soldiers in action, who go to the places assigned to them at once without question." But Churchill's memory of a popular war leadership united with the masses in a common cause overlooked considerable hostility, disillusionment, and cynicism towards the political system that lingered throughout the war. Working classes retained a deep distrust of strong central leadership that they thought was out of touch with the realities of wartime privation and suffering. Churchill's account disguised the fact that government officials often found his ideas "unrealistic and disruptive." Colville noted on April 25, 1940: "The country believes he is the man of action who is winning the war when in fact he is ineffective and harmful." Churchill's depiction of complete
unity in the War Cabinet in May hid the fact that Halifax had wished to offer Gibraltar and Malta to Mussolini as part of a general peace initiative toward the Axis powers. In whitewashing this episode, Churchill sought to draw a line under years of Tory appeasement while strengthening the idea that the world owed a moral debt to Britain for refusing to give up the fight.118

Churchill imagined himself a warrior-statesmen whose actions formed the centerpiece of a great historical pageant, an image that contrasted with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Alan Brooke, who lamented the Prime Minister’s constant meddling in strategy. Throughout the conflict, he harbored the illusion that Germany might fall apart from internal pressures before a massive clash of arms in the West became necessary. For this reason, he urged a less effective peripheral strategy of resisting Germany while awaiting the inevitable collapse, a policy that historian Ben-Moshe claims extended the war’s duration by a year or more.119 When a series of military disasters in 1941-42 brought Britain to its lowest point in the war, Churchill bitterly complained about the army’s lack of martial spirit, though part of the problem was his penchant for initiating schemes that Brooke called “half-digested products of Winston’s impatience.” Churchill’s memoirs defended the Mediterranean strategy for tying down nineteen German divisions to the allies’ eleven, but neglected to mention that in terms of actual manpower the figures were two million allied troops to 412,000 German soldiers in-theater.120 Alan Brooke complained frequently that Churchill’s military thinking was ineffectual, and distracted the Prime Minister from important political issues relating to postwar reconstruction. But Brooke’s opinion of Churchill’s war leadership was not supported by official historians and the memoirs of most other British generals, as Ben-Moshe notes: “It was they who managed to embed the Churchillian-British version of events in historical consciousness and to persuade U.S. scholars of its veracity. The latter had accepted it even before the relevant documents were opened to public inspection. And recently Churchill’s official biographer, Martin Gilbert, has also echoed his subject’s record....”121

During the war, he traveled extensively in a vain attempt to use the power of personality as compensation for declining British influence in world affairs. He naively thought that summit diplomacy could gloss over serious differences between the allies. Thus, he devoted considerable space in his volumes to Big Three conferences, depicting himself as a master negotiator able to resolve the most intractable differences between the great war leaders. Unknown to most readers was the fact that insiders were incredulous of Churchill’s suggestion of “bliss and harmony” at the summits. Moran recalled US General Marshall complaining that the Prime Minister was incapable
of listening: "It is as if he had lived for years in a foreign country without picking up the language. He must lose a chunk of life in this way, and must often be lonely, cut off from people." Churchill appeared to see and hear only what confirmed his preconceptions of British power and influence.

In his role as Britain's supreme war leader, Churchill portrayed himself as indispensable and above party politics, disingenuously alleging that he enjoyed total loyalty from all major parties. In fact, during the war many Tories continued to treat him with apprehension, disparaging his neglect of duties as Party leader. They also resented the fact that he permitted Labour to become an effective governing party for the first time by mobilizing the working classes as never before. Thus, while weakening Tory prospects of winning a postwar election, he actually enhanced Labour's chances by elevating it to the position of a responsible and patriotic party. By September 1944, he was unable to master his brief, and was having misgivings about the future: "I have a very strong feeling that my work is done. I have no message. I had a message. Now I only say 'fight the damned socialists.' I do not believe in this brave new world."

While Churchill had become despondent as the war neared its close, the left was invigorated to attack the ruling plutocracy for its moral failure in once believing that fascism was a bulwark against socialist revolution. Labour rallied around the slogan "Never again," in reference to the Tories' prewar policies that had failed to alleviate unemployment and poverty. In contrast, Churchill's disinterest in domestic politics after the excitement of grand strategy caused his campaign in 1945 to appear listless and without direction. In his memoirs, he alleged that the Tories' election defeat occurred because Party members had patriotically joined the military while Labour activists stayed at home to consolidate their political base. In fact, voters were fed up with the Tories for years of ineffectual appeasement, inadequate military preparedness, harsh economic policies, and resistance to social reforms.

Despite no new vision of conservatism in the postwar era, Churchill refused to relinquish his hold on the party's leadership after 1945. Attempts to remove him failed because of his huge popularity as Britain's war hero, an image he inculcated in his memoirs by waging retrospective warfare against political opponents. While Churchill cultivated his own legend, Tory supporters lauded his memoirs in Party conferences and manifestos, despite growing misgivings about his capacity to lead. Conservatives knew that his memoirs could play a major role in aiding their political comeback, principally by winning the war of collective memory that saddled socialists with responsibility for pacifism, factionalism, and opposition to rearmament before the war. At the same
time, the Tories connected these issues to the present in their attacks on Labour’s postwar austerity, economic crises, and inadequate military preparedness, which distracted voters from the left’s claim to have banished the old evils of unemployment and privation. In addition, Tories were able to capitalize on growing nostalgia about the war years in the early 1950s, which Churchill’s memoirs stimulated by the claim that a spirit of selfless devotion and grand sense of purpose had unified Britons in a glorious cause between 1939-45.

Among his publishers and literary advisors, Churchill’s theme of a preventable war got a mixed reception. His attack on “guilty men” was precisely the kind of political message that Luce hoped readers in the US would internalize and apply to Roosevelt’s administration. In contrast, Laughlin thought that Churchill was overdoing his critique of guilty politicians and human folly, conveying an overly gloomy scenario for American readers. Laughlin preferred Churchill’s “triumphantist message” of democracy’s glorious victory over fascist tyranny. Though Europe may have thrown up a retrograde politician like Hitler, Laughlin saw a silver lining in the lesson that evil was destined for defeat from the forces of human goodness, with the path of progress resumed after a brief but violent interruption:

The first book of your MEMOIRS for anyone to read is unfortunately the account of the mistakes of others which led from the first to the second war. To the average man looking back on it, it seems dreary and he must be spurred on to read it. The spur is the fact that you understood what was happening and in the end reached the position which enabled you to do something about it.127

Laughlin’s primary concern was to build on the initial surge in interest for the memoirs by presenting the first volume as an exciting and uplifting story for general readers, not a lamentation of human error and perfidy.

Luce agreed that uninformed American readers did not understand or care about the “arcane political maneuvering” of Britain’s interwar politics, fearing that the narrative was too closely tied to European political history in general, and to the House of Commons in particular. Churchill countered that his story was extremely relevant for Americans in the present day, suggesting that readers should appreciate how his political themes related to contemporary international problems. Luce acknowledged that the documents proved Churchill’s prescience and farsightedness, while offering an “edifying and purgative moral:”

Therefore all the things you said at all the various moments in those years of the locusts is of the essence of Western European history....You interpret the drift to catastrophe mainly in terms of
unnecessary folly and unnecessary weakness. All history may indeed be so interpreted, and to repeat, your own record is the clear proof that if leaders and the led had thought and acted in a different way, as was continuously and actually proposed to them by you among others, mankind could have been spared unspeakable sorrows. Nevertheless, the question still remains: why were leaders so studed (sic) and weak? Why did the nations and peoples of Europe throw up such bad leadership?...I accept and am carried along by all that you say about folly and weakness but even if now and then I get clues as to your analytical insight (e.g. the suggestion about monarchy) still as a reader I would also like to know more explicitly what you, my chief guide through purgatory, has to say about why the human race in this period was doomed or doomed itself to so much folly.\textsuperscript{128}

Despite these substantive concerns with the memoirs, Luce praised Churchill’s “unique mission to history” and hoped that the British people would soon “awaken to their predicament” of moral and economic stagnation by re-electing their great war leader. Churchill replied:

\begin{quote}
The reason is because in those years there happened exactly what is happening today, namely no coherent or persistent policy, even in fundamental matters, among the good peoples, but deadly planning among the bad. The good peoples, as now, drifted hither and thither, to and fro, according to the changing winds of public opinion and the desire of public men of medium stature to gain majorities and office at party elections from electorates, who were absorbed in earning their daily bread, whose memories were short and whose moods changed every few years....[T]he lack of will-power and conscious purpose among the leading states and former allies drew us upon these slippery slopes of weak compromises, seeking the line of least resistance, which led surely to the abyss. The same thing is happening now, only with greater speed, and unless there is some moral revival and conscious guidance of the good forces, while time remains, a prolonged eclipse of our civilisation approaches.\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

Given American isolationism and Britain’s leading role in appeasement during the 1930s, Churchill could hardly have written his narrative to make it more interesting to uninformed American readers, and Luce conceded that Churchill’s story was crucial for their two nations: “Here’s to you, Sir - the modern Joshua, making his strategy and blowing the trumpet against the walls of foreboding.”\textsuperscript{130}

In Britain, civil servants who vetted Churchill’s memoirs were skeptical of his thesis that resolute leadership by Britain and France in 1936 or 1938 could have forced Hitler to pull back from the precipice of war. In \textit{The Gathering Storm}, he exaggerated the power of Britain to determine the destiny of European affairs and avoid war by making its intentions known to the dictators. Former Permanent Under-Secretary of State Sir Robert Vansittart replied that Churchill’s memoirs contained “glaring misrepresentations of fact,” bluntly informing the author that in numerous instances he was only telling half-truths at best, and “fabricating myth out of whole cloth” at worst. Vansittart particularly objected to Churchill’s inflated notion of British power and the ability of officials in London to control the destiny of European affairs during the interwar era.\textsuperscript{131} Churchill held
Vansittart in the highest regard for his anti-appeasement stance before the war, but the author now chose to ignore the civil servant's criticisms in constructing his thesis. Nonetheless, they remained on close terms, and three years later in June 1950, upon the outbreak of the Korean war, Vansittart wrote: "Here we are again in a most awful mess despite the many warnings that you and I...have uttered. How damnably and idiotically history does repeat herself. The unpreparedness is even greater than under Chamberlain."\[132\]

In 1947, however, Vansittart's successor Orme Sargent tried to disabuse Churchill of his preventable war thesis by urging a review of comments from Britain's Ambassador to Berlin in the waning months of peace, a plain reading of which unequivocally refuted the idea that Hitler could be dissuaded from war.\[133\] Sargent believed that Churchill's memoirs badly overrated the prospect of a German army revolt during the Munich crisis, since declassified documents of troop movements contradicted later claims of an imminent coup against Hitler. Sargent's interview of Goering after the war revealed that Hitler saw 1939-41 as the most favorable time for Germany to start a war. Hitler was worried by mounting economic difficulties in Germany brought on by years of stupendous military and naval expenditures. If war booty were not obtained soon after the autumn of 1939, Germany's autarkic economy would have slipped into severe recession. Brook agreed with Sargent that a more even-handed account of appeasement was needed, noting that Churchill quoted so many of his own documents it created the impression no one but he took any initiatives to resist Nazism. However, Churchill continued to insist that a tougher stance by British leaders in 1938-39 would have resulted in Hitler's overthrow before he could plunge the world into war.\[134\]

Contradictory recommendations from Churchill's advisers highlighted a significant rift in their understanding of the memoirs' character and meaning. On the one hand, some advisors urged the author to produce a definitive analysis of all available evidence that minimized personal digressions and stuck to broad historical developments. Those vetting the drafts in Whitehall wanted Churchill to give greater attention to the bureaucratic machinery in wartime, which in their minds was the key to victory. On the other hand, Churchill's Service advisers preferred to emphasize military organizations which they thought responsible for ultimate victory. They wanted the memoirs essentially to constitute a military history of Britain at war, rather than a moral tale of human weakness and redemption, contending that prewar politics should be downplayed in favor of addressing "greater matters," like the decisive land battles in North Africa and Europe.\[135\] Military officers understood the central meaning of World War II as simply an armed struggle. The
profoundly altered political landscape of the postwar world had little impact on their opinion of war meaning, reflected in the lack of second-guessing of military operations in their own memoirs. Yet another perspective was offered by the publishing syndicate, whose editors complained that Churchill spent too much time re-hashing abortive military plans and minor operations that bore little relationship to the broader story line, while political themes and personal anecdotes revealed Churchill at his greatest. Desmond Flower felt that “for me, personalities make history, not vice versa....” The desire to heighten the dramatic quality of the political narrative by personalizing it, so as to accentuate differences between “good” and “bad” leaders, was foremost in the minds of all publishers, who felt that readers would relate more easily to a simplified story of human drama than to technical accounts of military operations. But Churchill considered military matters to be inseparable from his discussion of political issues: “After all, it is my personal narrative, and the political and military were all one in my mind.” Consequently, neither his publishers nor advisers were entirely happy with the end result.

In Volume I, Churchill’s account of his relationship with FDR troubled Luce, who thought it too complimentary toward the President. Luce contrasted the peaceful world of the late 1920s, when a Republican President was in office, with the international calamity of the 1930s, when a Democrat controlled the White House. He contended that Roosevelt’s immense power and prestige during the 1930's allowed him unprecedented influence over American policy, thereby making him highly culpable for the failure to stop fascism from plunging the world into war. Luce accused FDR of deviously manipulating political debates on foreign policy by branding Republicans “Baldwinites,” when really it was the President who opposed proposals for closer military cooperation with France and Britain before 1940:

Your view of Roosevelt is whatever it is - as you saw him in the war and as you look back on him....What I want to remind you of, is that the responsibility for American international failure became a purely political issue -i.e. a weapon, that is, of partisan politics which Roosevelt used to divide and confuse Republicans. It was a very mean attack which Roosevelt launched on them from a very lofty and, especially in 1944, a very emotionally strong position.

Luce disingenuously implied that he did not want to influence Churchill’s account of Roosevelt, but merely to suggest how he might write about American isolationism in the 1930s. But surely it would have been impossible for Churchill to write in the way that Luce desired without criticizing the politician in Washington most responsible for directing the nation’s foreign policy.
Most of Churchill’s publishers saw his story of prewar folly as a poignant lesson for present day perils. Liberals feared a return of isolationism in America, and hoped that Churchill’s narrative would highlight the mistake of pursuing such a course. In 1948, Congress was dominated by newly elected Republicans, who viewed with wariness Truman’s continuing efforts to fulfill his predecessor’s internationalist agenda. But while Luce sought to enlist the lessons of history to vilify Democrats, liberals contended that it was the isolationist Republicans who were most in need of learning from Churchill’s narrative of the recent past. The New York Times believed that the policy of Wilsonian internationalist idealism pursued by FDR and Truman was the wisest course for America to follow. Luce, however, believed that Truman was a weak and ineffectual appeaser, ignoring the fact that since Potsdam the President had toughened his stance against “world-wide communism.” Despite their partisan stance on politics, all syndicate members agreed that Churchill needed to deliver a strong anti-appeasement lesson to the American people.\textsuperscript{140}

In Their Finest Hour, Churchill drew a sharp distinction between bitter political in-fighting before the war and a political landscape in 1940 marked by complete harmony and unity of purpose. Disguising an intense ambition to lead, Churchill implied that the mantle of power was thrust upon him by a desperate nation awakened to its terrible predicament, claiming that he accepted power for the altruistic purpose of preserving national unity. While some members of his administration had wished to purge all the “guilty men” in office, he was a magnanimous leader whose primary concern was not to disrupt the war effort. In marked contrast to the bitter divisions between “frocks” and “brass hats” during the previous war, Churchill alleged that he was able to maintain smooth relations with civilian and military personnel, omitting any reference to his many disputes with advisors over war strategy: “Our national War Cabinet, Tory, Labour, and Liberal, were hard, resolute men imbued with an increasing sense of playing a winning hand. So all the orders were given, and everything went forward under unchallengeable authority.”\textsuperscript{141}

In later volumes, Churchill sought to justify meddling in military affairs that often resulted in disaster. For example, in January 1941, Wavell’s offensive in Libya had produced a stunning victory, with thousands of enemy captured and the Italian army in head-long retreat. The Chiefs of Staff urged a rapid push to Tripoli that would drive the Axis out of Africa and secure British control of the entire Mediterranean. However, at that moment Churchill fatefully intervened in the campaign, hoping to reap rewards in both North Africa and Greece by diverting a large contingent of Wavell’s army to the Balkans. His rationale for this strategy was to bolster Greek resistance and
induce Turkey into joining the war on Britain’s side. But weakening Wavell’s army allowed Axis forces a critical breathing space, during which Rommel’s *Afrika Korps* was airlifted to Tripoli, the tattered Italian forces were reorganized, and a devastating Axis counter-attack launched.\textsuperscript{142} Within weeks, Rommel had stunned the world by turning a rout into victory, pushing the British army all the way back into Egypt. In the Balkans, British forces were too little, too late, and were soon forced into a hasty exodus with another loss of all heavy equipment. Churchill’s intervention had turned an impending victory in Africa into defeat on two fronts, but in his memoirs he blamed the setback on military commanders in Cairo who lacked drive and imagination. Nonetheless, he acknowledged several chapters later that victory in the desert was strategically all-important, with every other action in the Mediterranean paling in significance. Recalling C.I.G.S. urgent request not to overextend British forces, he declared: “Many Governments I have seen would have wilted before so grave a pronouncement by the highest professional authority, but I had no difficulty in convincing my political colleagues....My views therefore prevailed and the flow of reinforcements to the Middle East continued unabated.”\textsuperscript{143}

Despite the retreat from Greece in mid-1941, Churchill claimed the Balkan intervention was a success because Britain’s action delayed Germany’s invasion of Russia by five weeks, thereby saving the USSR from near-certain defeat. This argument overlooks the fact that *Wehrmacht* troops diverted to the Balkans were a minuscule part of the southern attack group that in fact attained all of its objectives in Russia in 1941. The failure of Operation Barbarossa was due to the sheer weight of numbers in terms of manpower, tanks, and willingness to incur losses, that Russia brought to bear in its fight against Germany. It was not due to Britain’s minor action in Greece. At the time, Churchill admitted that the plan to aid Greece was an ill-conceived failure, but his memoirs took a much different view that was later repeated by official historians.\textsuperscript{144} Further setbacks in the desert over the next year and a half almost cost Churchill his job when a restless Parliament demanded a vote of censure; in recounting those days Churchill was keen to redeem his leadership and refute his critics. Just as Lloyd George had used his memoirs to heap scorn on incompetent generals for Britain’s heavy losses in World War I, Churchill made Generals Auchinleck, Wavell, Portal, and Dill scapegoats for the defeats of 1941-42. He justified replacing them all by claiming they were tired and lacked fighting spirit, but it was an argument that even his publishers found implausible given how long the generals had been kept in command before being sacked. Churchill further undermined his argument when documents revealed that he had planned to remove Auchinleck one
month before expressing “the highest opinion” of the general.\textsuperscript{145}

For \textit{The Grand Alliance}, Churchill produced a chapter on “The Parliamentary Front” dealing with the grumbling and second-guessing at Westminster. The fall of Greece and Crete, followed by the reversal of fortunes in Libya, aroused strong criticism in the Commons regarding Churchill’s war leadership. Churchill asserted that the clarity and precision of his explanations soon silenced critics, including Lloyd George, who “sailed forward on the breeze of general uneasiness, and made a speech which I described in reply as ‘the sort of speech with which I imagine the illustrious and venerable Marshal Petain might well have enlivened the closing days of M. Reynaud’s cabinet.’” Deakin wanted the chapter strengthened by including reflections on the function of Parliament in wartime, the value of secret sessions, and differences between British and US systems of government.\textsuperscript{146} Instead, Churchill dropped the chapter from Volume III, eliminating most references to political criticisms of his handling of the war effort in 1941.\textsuperscript{147}

When America entered the war in December 1941, Churchill was convinced he knew how to achieve victory in Europe and Asia. In his memoirs, he reproduced three papers on strategy that had been prepared for FDR, contending that they predicted clearly the actual course of events: “All the objectives in these memoranda were achieved by the British and United States forces in the order here set forth.”\textsuperscript{148} They also reflected Churchill’s belief that success in battle depended on willpower and determination as much as superior resources and weaponry. The truth of this was proved, he claimed, by the fact that after replacing Auchinleck and Wavell in 1942 there was an astonishing transformation of spirit in the army of the Nile. Only passing mention was made by Churchill of the massive quantities of military supplies from America that began to pour into Egypt that year. In addition, he said little about the interdiction of Rommel’s supply line, which sank 90% of Axis ships headed for North Africa. Churchill also believed he was the man to provide the required energy and conviction at the pinnacle of power. Thus, he accused leftists of distorting the historical record when in 1942 they urged him to step aside in favor of Cripps, who they wrongly hailed as the man most responsible for making Russia an ally. While claiming the highest regard for Cripps’ political skills, Churchill argued that it would have been the height of folly to change administrations in the middle of war. Calls for revamping the command structure in London were dismissed as delusional since the best men for the job were already in place.\textsuperscript{149}

Churchill disparaged the wartime “shrill chatter and criticism” from Labour’s far left fringe, claiming that it had no significant bearing on the coalition, which remained strong and united behind
All its principal Ministers stood together around me, with never a thought that was not loyal and robust. I seemed to have maintained the confidence of all those who watched with full knowledge the unfolding story and shared the responsibilities. No one faltered. There was not a whisper of intrigue. We were a strong, unbreakable circle, and capable of withstanding any external political attack and of persevering in the common cause through every disappointment.\textsuperscript{150}

Proof of this fact was offered in testimonials to his leadership from American friends that poured in after he prevailed over a vote of censure in August 1942. He reflected upon the striking historical parallel between himself and William Pitt, Britain’s hero of the Napoleonic wars, who also survived a no-confidence motion in the midst of a life-and-death struggle by the same margin of 25 votes.\textsuperscript{151} Churchill’s critique of the left prompted Cripps to complain to Attlee after being shown a copy of the manuscript. As a result, Churchill was forced to cut his narrative of this episode from seven pages to two, including his denunciation of Cripps’ plans to restructure the government, deemed “irresponsible and academic speculations which were vicious in principle.”\textsuperscript{152} Attlee personally intervened a second time to ensure that the earlier draft was not by accident published: “You will remember that this chapter was in large part re-written and you will readily appreciate that we cannot afford to run any risk of the original version being published in any form.” Churchill’s subtle allegation that the War Cabinet in 1942 was disenchanted with Attlee was also removed.\textsuperscript{153}

During the war, Field Marshal Smuts had suggested that Churchill attempt to guide US political and military leaders so as to ensure that control of the overall war effort did not slip from British hands. He considered Churchill’s handling of American and Russian leaders crucial for maintaining the alliance intact, view that the author bolstered in discussing summit diplomacy.\textsuperscript{154} He believed that: “Only the heads of State or governments face to face could settle the fearful questions that were open.” Churchill considered the Great Power conferences to have been crucial for the successful prosecution of the war. It enabled him to remain a major power broker despite Britain’s declining military status vis-a-vis its two main allies, and reach agreements with Stalin that no underling could have achieved through regular diplomatic channels. Such self-assurance seems naive, however, given that “concessions” rung from Stalin came at the price of Soviet control over most of eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{155}

In \textit{Closing the Ring}, Churchill tried again to vindicate his strategy of attacking Germany via Italy by accusing those who failed to support it for delays that prevented the capture of Rome until
June 1944. When leftists had criticized the slow progress up the peninsula, he had fired back: “When I hear people talking in an airy way of throwing modern armies ashore here and there as if they were bales of goods to be dumped on a beach and forgotten, I really marvel at the lack of knowledge which still prevails of the conditions of modern war.” Churchill disparaged political partisanship as indecent if it impeded the war effort, a rationale used to resist any criticisms of his administration. In fact, he claimed, the success of British authorities in countering German rocket attacks in 1944-45 was a model of competence: “The whole story may stand as an example of the efficiency of our governing machine, and of the foresight and vigilance of all connected with it.”

In his final volume, Churchill cited Smuts to justify his opposition to US-led plan to invade southern France so as to reinforce Alexander’s army in northeast Italy. Smuts thought Churchill’s proposal comported with “every sound military as well as political consideration.” But the Americans refused it, suspecting that Churchill was plotting to embroil them in a Balkan adventure. Churchill admitted that the American landings on the French Riviera proved a great success, resulting in rapid advances that collared 50,000 Germans in three weeks and forced Hitler to hastily withdraw four divisions from Italy. Nonetheless, he insisted that American obstinacy had sacrificed a golden opportunity to capture Vienna and Budapest. He ignored the fact that Alexander’s forces were ill-equipped for conducting such an extensive campaign to the east, and could not possibly have reached either city before the Russians.

One of the most contentious actions by Churchill in the latter stages of the war was his decision to have the British army intervene in the Greek civil war. In his memoirs, he scarcely disguised a feeling of contempt for the left’s hostility to it at the time, haughtily asserting that he had little difficulty withstanding their fickle dissent, and that subsequent events had vindicated his efforts to sty my a communist takeover of the country after the Germans fled: “[T]he War Cabinet stood like a rock against which all the waves and winds might beat in vain. When we recall what has happened to Poland, to Hungary, and Czechoslovakia in these later years we may be grateful to Fortune for giving us at this critical moment the calm, united strength of determined leaders of all parties.” He concluded that aside from a few renegades on the far left, the nation solidly supported his decision, omitting to mention that the Americans were apoplectic over Britain’s unilateral intervention in the Balkans. On the other hand, the Russians were silent on the matter, since Churchill had ensured Stalin’s acquiescence to British action in their October 1944 meeting.

Stalin’s consent to the Greek operation, and the warm hospitality shown by his Soviet hosts
during the Yalta conference in February 1945, had prompted Churchill to express a remarkable spirit of camaraderie and faith in Stalin’s “word of honor” when he reported back to Parliament. In his memoirs, however, he needed to balance these fine sentiments with a sense of outrage over the bitter postwar realities that ensued from a breakdown in relations between Russia and the West. Churchill attempted to finesse the failure of world leaders to secure a lasting peace from the “Yalta spirit” by claiming that Great Power summit meetings always left many grave issues unresolved; all depended on the spirit in which agreements were carried out. It was a tacit admission that his personal friendships with Stalin and FDR were not as decisive for the course of history as he sometimes wanted to believe.\textsuperscript{159}

In concluding the memoirs, Churchill claimed that amid celebrations of victory in 1945 he was oppressed by a vision of peril that made him seek another summit of Great Powers to head off impending doom. In the meantime, he had wished to postpone elections in Britain on the grounds that they would unduly divide the country and weaken its ability to reap the rewards of war. Churchill considered himself best able to lead the ship of state at that critical juncture in history, and had proven as much by his adroit handling of the war. Consequently, when the Tories were overwhelmingly defeated in the July 1945 elections, Churchill concluded that the change of leadership caused the Potsdam conference to “end in frustration.” In a parting critique of Attlee’s political skills, Churchill alleged in his memoirs that if he had been able to remain in power, Stalin would never have been permitted to get away with insulting the West at Potsdam. Churchill asserted that his government’s demise made it impossible for satisfactory solutions to international problems to be reached at the end of the war.\textsuperscript{160} Such criticisms, however, completely overlooked the fact that by mid-1945 the Red Army had imposed a fait accompli in eastern Europe that no amount of diplomacy could undo. Besides, Potsdam was to a large extent the reiteration of agreements already reached at Teheran and Yalta, where Churchill had played a prominent role.

The Lessons of History and Origins of the Cold War

Though Churchill was never a dogmatic Conservative, he firmly believed in a British social order premised on hierarchy and class deference. He feared the revolutionary implications of even moderate socialism, and at one time had decried FDR’s New Deal as “a milestone on the downward march of human progress.” Even in his most radical days as a Lloyd George Liberal reformer, Churchill reviled socialism as a destroyer of wealth, enterprise, and individual liberties; it was to
him a creed founded in “spite, hatred, envy, and inhumanity.” He perceived socialist internationalism as traitorous, fearing that Britain’s Labour movement before the war was on a slippery slope leading to full-blown communist conspiracies and revolutionary upheaval. In his memoirs, he renewed his warnings that the calamity of war and ruin stalked Europe and the world much as it had in the 1930s:

In their loss of purpose, in their abandonment even of the themes they most sincerely espoused, Britain, France, and most of all, because of their immense power and impartiality, the United States, allowed conditions to be gradually built up which led to the very climax they dreaded most. They have only to repeat the same well-meaning, short-sighted behaviour towards the new problems which in singular resemblance confront us to-day to bring about a third convulsion from which none may live to tell the tale.

It was a theme that he first raised in The Gathering Storm, but which formed the central thesis of his final volume of war memoirs produced at the height of the cold war. Churchill’s virulent anti-communism was a product of the Russian revolution in 1917, when he decried Bolshevism as “an insidious bacillus” that spread rapidly through a political culture by corrupting its institutions. In 1918, he urged Minister of Information Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook) to graphically depict Bolshevik outrages, ferocity, and treachery in newspapers and official propaganda so as to convince British workers that communism was a wretched system. Afraid that anarchy in Russia would spread to other countries, Churchill urged intervention in its civil war to hunt down Bolsheviks while quickly rehabilitating Germany’s army to defend Europe against the communist menace: “Russia is being rapidly reduced by the Bolsheviks to an animal form of Barbarism....Civilization is being completely extinguished over gigantic areas, while Bolsheviks hop and caper like troops of ferocious baboons amid the ruins of cities and the corpses of their victims.” Churchill became so obsessed with the Russian turmoil, he was said to have “Bolshevism on the brain.” However, Lloyd George had strong misgivings about getting embroiled in the “Russian jungle,” declaring that it was not British policy to overthrow Bolshevism by force, which he feared might incite violence at home. Churchill, though, considered Lenin “the most grisly of all weapons,” whose eradication needed to be Britain’s top priority after the first world war.

Churchill’s inflamed rhetoric appeared to know no bounds; he vilified Bolsheviks as mass murderers, enemies of the human race, and vampires who should be attacked with poison gas. He contended that atrocities committed by Lenin and Trotsky in the civil war were far worse than those for which the Kaiser was responsible, with Moscow a nest of vipers whose leaders were “a vile
group of cosmopolitan fanatics.” When coalition government in Britain gave way to partisan politics in the early 1920s, Churchill extended his venom to the “Socialist Party, behind which crouched the shadow of Communist folly and Bolshevik crime.” He tried without success to build an anti-socialist coalition in 1922, attacking Labour leaders as unpatriotic communists in mufti who were plotting revolution. Churchill’s overwrought warnings that civilization was imperilled caused friends and colleagues to fear that his mind had become unhinged. In the interwar era, he continued to decry the Soviet peril, preferring Mussolini and Franco to the socialist alternatives in Italy and Spain. Not until the later 1930s did he dramatically alter his stance toward Moscow when he called for an alliance of necessity with Stalin to contain an even greater evil in Hitlerism.

In 1938, Churchill revealed an unusual flexibility of mind in his willingness to set aside hatred of communism in order to advance a pragmatic agenda premised on maintaining Europe’s balance of powers. His belief that a balance of powers was essential to stability and order in Europe prompted a startling change of rhetoric when he began claiming in 1938 that Soviet leaders were actually peace-loving and trustworthy potential allies, a perspective that was met with incredulity by many fellow Tories. Chamberlain contemptuously saw it as another ploy by an opportunist to win political influence by pandering to the left. While Churchill had no illusions about Soviet brutality and cold-bloodedness, he sensed a degree of realism in Stalin that could be utilized to contain Nazi aggression. In his memoirs, he castigated British leaders for failing to seize on the opportunity to secure an alliance in 1939 with the only country capable of putting muscle behind a warning to Hitler not to violate Polish sovereignty. Churchill excused Stalin for concluding that the Western democracies were not serious about preventing Germany’s move eastward, forcing him to reach the best deal he could to deflect or delay Hitler from invading the Soviet Union.

His faith in Stalin’s sincerity and the genuine possibility for friendship between Russia and the West did not die with the war. Several months after the defeat of Germany, Churchill laid out his strategic vision for the future that anticipated English-speaking unity as the foundation for friendly relations with the Soviet Union and its realistic leaders. Churchill clearly still believed in the possibility of accommodation with the Kremlin, but only five months later he reversed course dramatically in delivering his most important speech of the postwar at Fulton, Missouri. His reference to an Iron Curtain across Europe precipitated a torrent of Soviet invective against Churchill and Western nations. It marked the beginning of Churchill’s efforts to view appeasement as a lesson in failed statesmanship that would mobilize Western hearts and minds against the new
threat to world peace. Churchill’s long hatred of communism had caused him twice in the past to urge containment of the Soviet Union. In 1946, he initiated a third call to arms for the English-speaking world to fight the Soviet menace.\textsuperscript{172}

Before his “Iron Curtain” speech, Churchill warned his countrymen against expectations of overnight utopias. He denied that a socialist paradise could be created through legislation, or that the United Nations could usher in a new age of international problem-solving. His view of foreign affairs was premised on an eternal struggle for power, with tyranny and evil always ready to strike if the democracies let down their guard. Until March 1946, British and American public opinion was generally sympathetic toward Russia due to its immense sacrifices in the war and contribution to victory. Thus, Churchill’s warning about the “dark shadows” gathering again in foreign relations was initially meet with mixed or hostile reactions from liberals.\textsuperscript{173} His main motive for delivering the Fulton speech was to enlist US support for upholding British influence in the world and countering communism, an idea that George Kennan (US diplomat in Moscow and subsequent author of America’s containment strategy) dismissed at the time as “an empty dream.”\textsuperscript{174}

Nonetheless, Churchill’s speech succeeded in causing a paradigm shift in American political debates on foreign policy as the international situation deteriorated. Prior to Fulton, American opinion leaders had said little about US-Soviet relations, but after March 5, 1946 the press wrote extensively on the subject, and increasingly it was favorable to Churchill’s toughened stance against Moscow.\textsuperscript{175} Within months, American politicians were outdoing each other to assure voters that they agreed with Churchill’s sense of urgency about world affairs. Historian Louis Liebovich notes that the threat of international communism was soon on everyone’s lips after Churchill elevated a European power struggle into an ideological crusade:

A speech by a single man, who no longer held public office, had far greater impact on the news organizations than did the movements of millions of soldiers or hundreds of edicts in occupied parts of the world. Such was the structure of the news business and the ability of someone like Churchill to capitalize on susceptible news organizations. The cold war of the 1940s would be a war of words and philosophies, and Churchill knew how to wage such warfare.\textsuperscript{176}

Churchill perceived the world divided between communist tyranny and Christian humanity. Since the pluralistic United Nations was considered helpless to resist the combined power of international communism, it was up to the English-speaking world to organize a response: “We cannot be blind to the fact that the liberties enjoyed by individual citizens throughout the United States and
throughout the British Empire are not valid in a considerable number of countries, some of which are very powerful.” Speaking specifically of the Soviet threat, he warned:

A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive and proselytizing tendencies...Communist parties or fifth columns constitute a growing challenge and peril to Christian civilization.\textsuperscript{177}

American isolationists and liberals initially criticized the speech as a poisonous plot to prop up the sagging fortunes of Britain’s empire with US blood and money. Churchill was accused of reneging on the promises of the Atlantic Charter by advocating postwar power blocs rather than an international system of law.

However, such attitudes shifted dramatically following a series of international crises between 1946-49 that caused advocates of rapprochement with Russia to be branded appeasers who had failed to learn the lessons of Munich.\textsuperscript{178} Even as Churchill spoke, the Truman administration was moving to confront Soviet influence on Russia’s periphery. When budget constraints in 1947 forced Britain to curtail its commitments abroad, the Truman Doctrine filled the void by proclaiming US readiness to aid anti-communist forces around the world. A few months later, the Marshall Plan introduced a massive aid package to prop up Western Europe’s struggling democracies. After a communist coup overthrew democracy in Czechoslovakia in 1948, the US and Britain established coordinated defense strategies that led to the creation of a North Atlantic military alliance (NATO) a year later. Churchill hailed it as a US guarantee to Western Europe against Russian aggression and a revival of the English-speaking alliance that would serve as the foundation for lasting peace. Political opinion in America and Britain had arrived at a postwar consensus that adhered closely to the “Iron Curtain” agenda.\textsuperscript{179}

The new consensus marginalized leftist opinion sympathetic to Soviet security concerns. In Britain, Attlee and Bevin moved to the political center as Labour’s pacifist platform was jettisoned. When the Korean war broke out in June 1950, the economy was militarized to a degree never before attempted in peacetime. Bevin’s defense of empire, support for containment strategies, and push to develop a British atomic bomb fit perfectly with Churchill’s ambition to bolster national and imperial strength in the postwar.\textsuperscript{180} Bevin and Attlee became convinced that East-West cooperation was dead, making Anglo-American collaboration essential for Britain’s well-being. They blamed the USSR for blocking all progress at the UN and using communist agents throughout the world to foment disorder. The far left’s Bevanite campaign for a socialist alternative to Soviet-
style communism and American-style capitalism was rejected by the centrist leadership, which threatened the renegades with expulsion. Like Churchill, Attlee was imbued with Victorian conceptions of an enlightened empire as a force for good, causing him to disparage indigenous nationalist movements. Labour politicians sought to contain communist insurgency in the colonies through military partnership with the US, though each country had different approaches to combating it. Whereas Americans took a hard line against politicians who were not avowedly anti-communist, British leaders preferred a more subtle approach to influencing local politics.

When Churchill began to write his memoirs after the war, ever present in his mind was the issue of cold war origins that tragically emerged out of the struggle against fascism. At the very outset of Volume I, he stated that the source of both conflicts lay in division among the democracies which had allowed the forces of evil to gain an advantage:

[I]t would be wrong not to lay the lessons of the past before the future....The human tragedy reaches its climax in the fact that after all the exertions and sacrifices of hundreds of millions of people and of the victories of the Righteous Cause we have still not found Peace or Security, and that we lie in the grip of even worse perils than those we have surmounted. It is my earnest hope that pondering upon the past may give guidance in days to come...and thus govern, in accordance with the needs and glory of man, the awful unfolding scene of the future.

Churchill’s account of democracy’s mistakes before the war were also considered by his publishers to be of paramount importance for understanding the postwar struggle. In May 1947, Adler noted worsening international tensions: “It seems vital to us that your views, particularly on mistakes of governments following World War I, be given the widest publicity and as soon as possible during this critical period.” Over the previous year, rigged elections and Soviet strong-arm tactics had resulted in the governments of Poland, Romania, Albania, and Bulgaria declaring themselves socialist republics, allied with the USSR, and undergoing internal Sovietization. Publishers hoped that Churchill’s words of wisdom would bolster faith in democratic values throughout the world. By early 1948, the mood in America was heavy with foreboding over the growth of communist movements in western Europe, Soviet dominance in eastern Europe, and the spread of communist insurgencies in Asia.

In spring 1948, after reading excerpts of The Gathering Storm, Britain’s UN ambassador Alexander Cadogan, remarked that the world was once again dealing with the kinds of perplexities and forebodings that marked European affairs a decade earlier. Cadogan entirely agreed with
Churchill that naive and inattentive democracies were in danger again of being duped by unscrupulous dictators: "The brilliant blatancy of the Russians is something that we can admire but cannot emulate." In America, *Time*/*Life* sought to mobilize its readers for the "next war," though in considering Churchill’s anti-Soviet messages in his memoirs, Longwell, who was disturbed by the author’s admission that in the conflict between fascism and Bolshevism his sympathies lay with the far right. Since most Americans saw the war as a moral crusade to rid Europe of its malignant fascist ideology, Longwell feared that Churchill’s comments would provoke sharp criticism:

> Shouldn’t you have a qualifying phrase there to the effect that ‘although you disliked fascism, etc…?’ European readers would, of course, understand your words better than Americans would, being closer to the reality of the gradations of democracy and freedom the various people have attained. So it would be largely in this country that this sentence might be misconstrued and misused.

But Churchill ignored the request to qualify or omit his statements on fascism, maintaining in his memoirs that Britain’s historical role in supporting Italy’s *Risorgimento* should have continued to form the basis for British foreign policy after the rise of Mussolini.

Communists had long suspected that Britain’s political elites had been sympathetic toward fascism as a bulwark against the Soviet Union during the 1930s. Soviet propaganda contended that Britain had tried to induce the fascist powers into attacking the USSR. Consequently, Brook urged Churchill to remove his admission in Volume II that “war between Germany and Russia was the first of our hopes.” The revised text downplayed Churchill’s advance knowledge of German intentions to attack while emphasizing Russo-German plans to partition the British empire:

Mussolini was not the only hungry animal seeking prey. To join the Jackal came the Bear….Germany and Russia now worked together as closely as their deep divergences of interest permitted. Hitler and Stalin had much in common as totalitarians, and their systems of government were akin.

Churchill alleged that he always knew the two dictators would eventually fall out. But in his memoirs, he mocked the work of his envoy Stafford Cripps in early 1941, who had endeavored to lay the groundwork for an alliance between Britain and the Soviet Union. In addition, Churchill ridiculed Stalin’s friendship with Germany as a colossal blunder. The Soviet leader’s failure to react to repeated warnings of an impending German attack in 1941 were evidence of gross incompetence:
War is mainly a catalogue of blunders, but it may be doubted whether any mistake in history has equalled that of which Stalin and the Communist chiefs were guilty when they cast away all possibilities in the Balkans and supinely awaited, or were incapable of realising, the fearful onslaught which impended upon Russia. We have hitherto rated them as selfish calculators. In this period they were proved simpletons as well.\textsuperscript{194}

Churchill’s hindsight made it appear clear cut, but in early 1941 his action in sending British forces to Greece suggests that he did not believe a German attack on Russia was imminent. Had he known of it, he would not have jeopardized the chance to gain a new ally by distracting Germany with a British incursion in the Balkans. Nonetheless, he was delighted when Germany attacked the Soviet Union, immediately promising the Kremlin full support in their fight. He told a sceptical Colville: “If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons.” In recounting this episode, Churchill distinguished his unshakeable contempt for the odious communist system with a heart-felt sympathy for the Russian people who had been set upon by a “band of villainous murderers.”\textsuperscript{195} He assured the Stalin that Britain would do everything possible to relieve pressure on the Soviet Union, but in private he soon began to fear the “measureless disaster” confronting Europe if Russian barbarism were to defeat Germany.\textsuperscript{196}

In \textit{The Grand Alliance}, Churchill depicted himself as the wise statesman who bore patiently Soviet rudeness and lack of appreciation for Britain’s efforts to succor the Russians. He noted the hypocrisy of Soviet demands for a second front in 1941 after they had spent the previous eight months anticipating with Germany the demise of the British empire. Disagreements quickly arose between the new allies over the fate of Poland and its government in exile. Questions of border demarcations were temporarily shelved after Stalin made vague assurances that territorial arrangements under the Nazi-Soviet pact were no longer valid. In a further gesture of goodwill, Stalin authorized Polish exiles to collect fellow nationals languishing in Soviet prison camps, no doubt aware that many of them would not be found.\textsuperscript{197} While Churchill claimed to be a hard-nosed realist who understood Soviet intentions, there is little evidence of it in the documents produced in his memoirs until the final months of war, when the emerging shape of the postwar order shocked him into realizing that communist hegemony over half of Europe was already a fait accompli.

Throughout his memoirs, Churchill said next to nothing about the greatest land battles in history being fought on the eastern front, choosing instead to dwell at length on the Mediterranean theater where Britain engaged a fraction of Hitler’s armed forces. He acknowledged only in passing the decisive nature of the conflict in Russia, and when he did so, it was to disparage the Kremlin’s
inordinate demands for military assistance. Churchill noted the complete lack of realism by Soviet officials regarding what was militarily feasible from a British standpoint. Though he appeased Stalin’s anger at Britain’s continued relations with Finland in 1941, an ally of Germany, he rebuked Moscow’s claim to the Baltic states.\textsuperscript{198} The \textit{New York Times’} Arthur Sulzberger urged Churchill to heap even more scorn on the Russians by recording the many fronts on which Anglo-American forces were engaged during the war, so as to undermine Soviet propaganda that communists had waged war against the fascists singlehandedly until mid-1944.\textsuperscript{199}

While Churchill worked on his last three volumes between 1949-53, cold war tensions escalated after the Soviet Union detonated an atomic device. The heightened fear of nuclear confrontation prompted greater interest in the West in understanding the workings of the Kremlin and its leaders. Graebner felt that Churchill’s chapters on Russia offered fascinating insights into Stalin’s character, and he urged the author to include as many anecdotes about the dictator as possible in order to reveal more forcefully “the absurdity of Kremlin policies.” In Washington, the US Information Service considered Churchill’s commentary on Stalin excellent material for its broadcasts to eastern Europe as part of its on-going propaganda war to undermine confidence in communist leaders around the world.\textsuperscript{200} However, Americans were less enamored with Churchill’s justification in \textit{The Hinge of Fate} of Soviet control over the Baltic states as a just reward for the immense blood shed by Russia in liberating those countries:

> When I was in Washington on the morrow of the American entry into the war, and Mr. Eden had reported the wishes of the Soviet Government to absorb the Baltic States, I had reacted unfavorably, as the telegrams already printed show. But now, three months later, under the pressure of events, I did not feel that this moral position could be physically maintained. In a deadly struggle it is not right to assume more burdens than those who are fighting for a great cause can bear.\textsuperscript{201}

The US State Department had flatly rejected the Kremlin’s annexation of the Baltic states, but Churchill was willing to accept Soviet claims after Stalin agreed to adhere to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. In his memoirs, he defended this stance by claiming that it ushered in a period of cordial relations with the Russians to the point where “Stalin was almost purring.”\textsuperscript{202}

Recalling his first visit to the Soviet Union in August 1942, Churchill expressed a fascination for Stalin that bordered on awe for the man whose ruthless use of power held a vast empire in an iron grip. His mission to “the sullen, sinister Bolshevik state” that he had tried so hard to strangle at birth awakened a wartime relationship with Stalin that Churchill described as “intimate, rigorous,
but always exciting, and at times even genial.” The Russians did not always reciprocate Churchill’s sense of camaraderie, as relations often became acrimonious over canceled Arctic convoys or delayed military action in the West that a paranoid Stalin suspected was politically motivated.\textsuperscript{203} Luce praised Churchill’s commentary on the Soviet Union in \textit{The Hinge of Fate}, since he thought that it greatly aided in the noble task of uniting all freedom-loving peoples against “the Enemy” by revealing the full extent of Russian duplicity and ingratitude.\textsuperscript{204}

In \textit{Closing the Ring}, Churchill admitted in passing to the lack of military action in the West in 1943 while the Red Army was busily tearing great chunks out of the German army. Two years of vastly expanded arms production in America and Britain had not resulted in any sizable escalation of fighting on land. In contrast, the Soviet army was waging a titanic struggle using “magnificent strategies” to wear down the Axis in ceaseless battles. At the time, Smuts had feared that ordinary people around the world would feel that the Russians were winning the war single-handedly, a perspective he judged likely to undermine Britain’s status as a great power and leave the Soviets master of the world. Churchill had reassured the Field Marshal that great events were in store for 1944, and in one telegram let slip that in addition to Overlord, the Italian front, and bombing campaign he “had always been most anxious to come into the Balkans.” Before that latter strategy could be implemented, however, he needed to foster good relations with the Kremlin to patch over differences and provide a foundation for friendship in the postwar era. If that failed, he intended to form a “fraternal association” between the British Commonwealth and US as a counterweight to Soviet power.\textsuperscript{205}

Churchill added these documents to his memoirs as proof that he had recognized the Russian threat by 1943, and had devised a strategy to counteract it, but was stymied by Roosevelt’s naive opposition to power politics. In fact, Churchill never created any plan for circumventing a Russian takeover of eastern Europe until June 1944, when he sought to reinforce Alexander’s army for a drive towards Vienna, and then it was primarily motivated by the desire to bring greater glory to British and Commonwealth forces in Italy. It was not until March 1945 that he spelled out to Roosevelt his fear of Soviet hegemony in eastern Europe. For most of the war, Churchill’s preoccupation with Anglo-American strategy and tactics caused him to ignore the political ramifications of rising Soviet power. When postwar concerns did arise, he was usually indecisive in dealing with Stalin, vacillating between idealistic support for East-West amity through the United Nations and a policy of realism based on spheres of influence in Europe.\textsuperscript{206}
Churchill’s account of the Teheran summit revealed considerable naivete regarding Russia and the postwar order. His casual attitude toward Soviet designs on eastern Europe was apparent, and in late 1943 he still believed that Russia, Britain, and America would remain great military powers after the war, as did one faction of apparatchiks in the Kremlin. Together, they would act as trustees to guide the world toward peace and security, though he did not explain how this squared with the promise of self-determination set out in the Atlantic Charter. Churchill frankly admitted in his memoirs that he and Eden initiated at Teheran the idea of Poland moving westward by absorbing a large slice of eastern Germany, while the Soviet Union retained its ill-gotten eastern territory from 1939. Stalin seemed quite pleased with this proposal, since it gave the Soviet leader virtually everything he desired in terms of border revisions in that region. Churchill then promised to pressure the Polish exiles in London into accepting the new frontiers, assuring Stalin that in any event the reconstituted government of Poland would have to be friendly toward the Soviet Union. It is difficult to imagine how Churchill hoped to reconcile the Polish government-in-exile to such arrangements, given that Stalin had severed relations with them a year earlier after being implicated in the Katyn massacre of thousands of Polish officers. In fairness to Churchill, though, he did what he could to work a settlement between two highly intransigent parties.

Churchill considered himself the most prescient and far-sighted statesman in the Western world, yet at Teheran in 1943 he considered the postwar too remote to spend much time worrying about, despite Eden’s persistent efforts to get him thinking about European reconstruction. Churchill argued in his memoirs that it would not have been right to base allied policy on suspicion of Russian attitudes once the German threat was removed. Thus, he seemed willing to accept Stalin’s wartime promises at face value, without considering the type of regime in Poland that the Soviet dictator would likely consider “friendly.” During the war, Churchill had placed all of his hope for future peace and stability on continued friendship of the Great Power leaders. In his memoirs, he claimed that his reversion to a hard-line stance toward the Soviet Union was because “vast and disastrous changes have fallen upon us in the realm of fact.” In considering this point, Norman Brook worried that Churchill was arguing at cross-purposes with his cold war theme of confronting expansionist dictators, since his account of the Teheran conference portrayed the Soviet leader as charming and sincere. Brook stated that what Churchill said made good sense in 1943, when the Soviet Union was a valiant ally conducting the lion’s share of fighting against Germany. But it was not the sort of thing that ought to be said in 1950, when the West was trying to roll back
communist influence in Asia and Europe.\textsuperscript{210}

In his final volume, Churchill blamed US leaders for naivety toward Stalin, but in fact, British and American leaders from 1943-45 were both overly hopeful of long-term cooperation with the Kremlin. After Stalin accepted Churchill’s proposal of a “percentage deal” during their tete-a-tete in October 1944 that delimited spheres of influence for Britain and Russia in eastern Europe, Churchill brimmed with enthusiasm for the future of East-West relations, despite the fact that months early Russia had demonstrated intransigence and unwillingness to cooperate over Poland.\textsuperscript{211} In June 1944, when the Polish underground surfaced to attack Nazis, Stalin had suddenly stopped Soviet tanks outside Warsaw. Whether this was due to a German counterattack, as Martin Kitchen alleges, or was based on more insidious motivations by Kremlin officials, the respite enabled the Germans to brutally liquidate Poland’s pro-West forces. The Russians had also refused to allow the West to airlift aid to the besieged rebels. Nonetheless, long after the events of 1944 in Poland, Churchill continued to express confidence in Stalin as “a man of his word” who could be relied upon to respect British interests.\textsuperscript{212}

Churchill’s final volume constituted a story of triumph and tragedy on a global, national, and personal scale. His publishers saw “serious political implications” in its revelations of the Grand Alliance collapsing in an atmosphere of suspicion and mutual recrimination, particularly Churchill’s contention that the Russians always had harbored expansionist ambitions. The \textit{New York Times} was startled to learn of the existence of serious disagreements in 1944-45 between Britain and America over strategy, considering it of paramount importance for understanding the genesis of the cold war. Raymond Daniell was sure that Churchill’s revelations would produce serious political fallout in the US, with Republicans using it as a cudgel to beat the Democratic record on foreign policy.\textsuperscript{213} On the other hand, Churchill worried that his critique of Eisenhower’s military strategy in the last year of war might subject him to accusations by Republicans that he was undermining their candidate in the impending presidential elections. Churchill was concerned not to give offense to the leaders of either major US political party, despite believing that Eisenhower had blundered in not pushing allied forces farther east in 1945 while Truman erred in withdrawing troops from central Germany well after Russia allegedly had violated the spirit of the Yalta agreement.\textsuperscript{214} Consequently, he toned down some of his criticisms and delayed publication of Volume VI for almost a year.

Churchill contended that the advance of Soviet armies into central and eastern Europe in mid-1944 had made it urgent to reach an arrangement with Stalin on the postwar administration of
those regions. His memorandum to Eden in May 1944 asked if the West would acquiesce in the
communization of half of Europe. But it took three more months, when the Red Army arrived at the
gates of Warsaw, for Churchill to give serious consideration to the political consequences of this
military feat. Yet even then, he still thought that an agreement with Soviet authorities to divide
control of eastern Europe was feasible. In his memoirs, Churchill noted that Soviet officials claimed
to have no desire to impose a communist political system on nations in the region. While he had
wanted a united Anglo-American appeal to assist the Polish uprising in August 1944, neither
Western leader was prepared to risk a breach with Stalin. At the time, he cautioned colleagues not
to cast reproaches on “the strange and sinister” behavior of the Russians in stopping their offensive
outside Warsaw at the very moment that partisans came out of hiding. Though Parliament had
condemned Soviet conduct as abominable, Churchill claimed that “terrible and even humbling
submissions must at times be made to the general aim.” For that reason he had not acted upon
suggestions to stop supply convoys to Russia.²¹⁵ Churchill had wanted to help anti-communist forces
in Poland and Hungary, but Britain could do little to mitigate Soviet influence: “Communism raised
its head behind the thundering Russian battle-front. Russia was the Deliverer, and Communism the
gospel she brought.”²¹⁶ Paradoxically, he asserted that he had hoped to take advantage of improved
relations with the Russians to work out a satisfactory solution to the new European order, with the
percentages deal serving as a useful starting point.²¹⁷

As German units fled the Balkans in late 1944, Churchill had ordered the British army to
seize Athens, claiming that his action enjoyed the full support of the Greek population. In fact,
Greece was in the midst of a popular uprising led by communist guerillas who appeared about to
take control of Athens. At first the British were greeted as liberators, but by December 1944 the
communist guerillas became convinced that Britain was planning to re-establish the conservative
prewar political elites. When the guerillas began to attack British forces, Churchill authorized
General Scobie to conduct a general crackdown on “lawlessness” by closing communist newspapers
and party offices. The British army was ordered to shoot “treacherous aggressors” who interfered
with their actions. Churchill claimed that his tough policy was necessary since Greek communists
had incited mob violence as a cover for gaining power, requiring force to be met by force. He
declared that those in politics and the press who condemned his actions in 1944 had since changed
their opinion in light of what was now known about the modus operandi of subversive movements:
It is odd, looking back on these events, now that some years have passed, to see how completely the policy for which I and my colleagues fought so stubbornly has been justified by events. Myself, I never had any doubts about it, for I saw quite plainly that Communism would be the peril civilisation would have to face after the defeat of Nazism and Fascism.\(^{218}\)

Churchill rebuked Britain’s left for painting a “wholly false” picture of his government trying to stymy a guerilla war for democracy. Only the strength of the English-speaking world, he declared, had saved the friends of democracy in Greece from falling into the clutches of tyranny.\(^{219}\)

Churchill’s memoirs sought to balance the author’s optimism about Soviet intentions in early 1945 with the bitter reality of Kremlin policies that ultimately denied all but the Lublin communists legitimacy as a political force in Poland. This contravened Stalin’s assurances to Churchill at Teheran that the Polish exiles would be allowed to participate in forming a new government following liberation. In early 1945, Churchill had thought that a panacea for resolving such problems was to convene another Big Power summit. In his memoirs, he claimed to have fought as hard as he dared for Polish independence and democracy.\(^{220}\) As for his expressions of admiration and praise at Yalta for Stalin’s war leadership, Churchill excused them as a necessary part of diplomacy, alleging that FDR was ill and detached in meetings, requiring the British leader to do what he could to retain harmonious relations with the Russians while three hundred German divisions remained in the field. Consequently, he had not wished to press Stalin on the Polish issue, even though it greatly concerned him.\(^{221}\)

Nonetheless, it took only days for the spirit of Yalta to disappear in a wave of recriminations over malign intent and breaches of promise. Churchill’s obvious shock in March 1945 when Polish communists took power by force undermines his ex post facto claim to have foreseen the cold war. He blamed the unwillingness of US officials to bring matters to a head for Stalin’s brazen disregard of the Yalta accords, but also acknowledged that his own percentages deal of October 1944 later hampered Britain’s ability to respond vigorously to Stalin’s policy on Poland. Much as supporters of appeasement had claimed that the Munich accord offered a useful test of Hitler’s good faith, Churchill now suggested that Soviet conduct in Poland tested Russian willingness to respect the principles of representative democracy, sovereignty, and self-determination.\(^{222}\)

In reviewing Volume VI, Brook thought it unduly provocative that Churchill cite Eden’s disparaging remarks about the pro-Soviet Lublin Poles as “the Skunk, the Rat and the Snake.” Since the first caricature referred to the current President of Poland, Brook asked Churchill to replace it with a more guarded reference to Eden’s low opinion of the Lublin Poles.\(^{223}\) He also removed a
reference in one of Churchill’s letters to Polish communists as “the greatest villains imaginable,” noting: “Strictly speaking, you ought to insert dots to show that an omission has been made; but I would not recommend this as it might leave an even worse impression than the original text.” Brook also thought that Churchill’s blunt account of Tito’s land-grabbing propensities was likely to provoke a row with Yugoslavia. But Churchill decided to retain his assertion that Tito’s communist guerillas in 1945 acted in an aggressive, brutal, and expansionist manner with the approval of the Kremlin, since it enabled the author to argue that only his determined efforts to prevent the unilateral seizure of territory had stabilized the region.

Shortly before the release of *Triumph and Tragedy*, Churchill was pleased to learn that Australian author Chester Wilmot’s acclaimed *The Struggle for Europe* vindicated his own view of strategic planning by the allies in the final year of war. Wilmot’s book was the first well-documented survey of strategy and tactics by allied and German commanders from D-Day to the end of the war, though he only had limited access to Western archives, and none at all to Soviet sources. In his analysis, Wilmot depicted Churchill as a champion of democracy, countering criticisms that the British leader was a political intriguer who wanted to embroil the US in protecting imperial interests. He argued that Churchill worked hard during the war to promote the democratization of eastern Europe. However, historian Michael Howard, in a forward to the book following Wilmot’s death, refuted this claim by arguing that Churchill had thrown full British support behind leftist guerillas during the war, since they were the only effective anti-fascist force in the region, willingly conceding to communists a sphere of influence long before Yalta.

Stalin’s death in 1953 removed the last of Churchill’s lingering inhibitions against publishing his account of Big Three politics in the final year of war, since the possibility of another Big Three summit was unlikely. He wanted those who felt that the slide into cold war had rendered meaningless victory in the second world war to know how it all might have been avoided. Churchill notified Eisenhower that *Triumph and Tragedy* would deal with war events from Overlord to Potsdam, “a period of almost unbroken military success for the Allied arms but darkened by forebodings about the political future of Europe which have since been shown to have been only too well founded.” He explained his intention to release the book that autumn, as it was more than ever necessary in the current international climate, not mentioning that another reason was Eisenhower’s refusal to consider a summit at which Churchill had hoped to play the role of Great Power statesman one more time. Nonetheless, great pains were taken to ensure that the text contained nothing
which might imply controversy or lack of confidence in Eisenhower’s generalship. Churchill asked publishers to included in their serialized extracts all the “nice explanatory things” he had written about Truman and Eisenhower. Brook reassured Churchill that US officials had no reason to take offense at the publication of his final volume of memoirs, since all references to disenchantment over American policies at the end of the war had been removed or toned down.\textsuperscript{228}

One week before serialization began, Churchill was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, primarily for his work on the war memoirs. Following on the heels of this good publicity came a less welcome report in the \textit{Sunday Express} that Churchill was having second thoughts about certain passages in his final volume regarding American policy toward the Soviet Union. It implied that the author had hastily revised his story to obscure inter-allied conflict during the last year of war. Reves complained that this nasty piece of journalism could have a very bad effect if it spread around the world, since the allegations made Churchill appear less than forthright in his writing.\textsuperscript{229} His fears were confirmed when Paris’ \textit{France-Soir} reported that the British leader apparently felt he could not write as freely of American war leaders now that Eisenhower was President: “Nothing can stop now this rumour to spread all over the world except a denial in the next \textit{Sunday Express}. Perhaps Lord Beaverbrook can find a form to correct this blunder, which may cause more harm to Anglo-American relations than anything that might have been printed in the volume.”\textsuperscript{230} Brook was also troubled by the adverse publicity, but felt that a formal denial would only draw more attention and incite further rumors. At the same time, \textit{Life} challenged Churchill’s critique of US military leaders who it claimed had acted strictly in accordance with the Yalta agreement:

\begin{quote}
Eisenhower (in \textit{Crusade}, p. 418), Bradley (\textit{A Soldier’s Story}, p. 549) and Wilmot (\textit{The Struggle for Europe}, p. 705) all indicate that there was some kind of agreement with the Russians that U.S. troops would not penetrate Czechoslovakia as far as Prague. We double-checked with the Army in Washington, and they confirm that there was a military agreement with the Russians to stop the U.S. from occupying Prague.\textsuperscript{231}
\end{quote}

Kelly suspected that \textit{Life} had given the Pentagon an advanced copy of the manuscript to enable it to respond in advance of publication. Kelly noted that US military historian Harry Latham called utterly false Pentagon assertions of a prior binding agreement with the Russians regarding the capture of Prague: “Latham thinks that the American Army Headquarters in Washington are still playing politics when they talk to \textit{Life}, and are trying to defend themselves from what they know now was a blunder.” Luce was also trying to avoid further criticisms of the military at a time when
Republicans were seeking major defense appropriation increases to fight world communism. As a result, *Life*’s extracts of Volume VI omitted all of Churchill’s criticisms of the US army and emphasized instead Churchill’s claim that weak diplomacy at Potsdam was to blame for the deterioration in postwar relations with Russia.232

Churchill set the stage for his discussion of the Potsdam conference by laying out a litany of prior broken Soviet promises and his frustration with American slowness to respond. In April 1945, Russian distrust led to an exchange of insults by leaders of the Grand Alliance over how best to secure the surrender of German forces in Europe. Despite mounting evidence of fundamental and intractable divergences in East-West views on the postwar order, Churchill at the time optimistically assumed that all issues could be resolved by another summit of great men. But since his involvement at Potsdam ended abruptly following the Tories’ election defeat in July 1945, Churchill concluded in his memoirs that the conference was a failure. He insisted that he had fully intended to orchestrate a showdown with Stalin at Potsdam over the Russians’ brutal treatment of Poland, something he had manifestly refused to do during the three previous years of war.233

At the conclusion of his memoirs, Churchill reiterated the central theme from Volume I that his wisdom and leadership could have saved the world from much grief, both before and after the war. While the public in 1945 rejoiced in victory, Churchill was once again the lone Cassandra warning about looming dangers from unchecked tyranny, while everywhere the locusts ate up false promises of a new golden age of prosperity and peace. He noted that unity of purpose among well-intentioned leaders had vanished in 1945, much as it had in 1918, while to the east a new peril threatened democracy, with the “vast manifestations of Soviet and Russian imperialism rolling forward over helpless lands.” In the midst of this disaster, British voters had foolishly forsaken their war leader, who had just brought them all safely to port in the storm.234

With his memoirs completed, Churchill believed there was one last opportunity for him to play world leader by utilizing his leadership to end the cold war through summit diplomacy. He was increasingly troubled by US brinkmanship, its willingness to consider using atomic weapons in Korea, and the mood of anti-communist hysteria among Americans. Churchill hoped to engineer “an easement” of cold war tensions and initiate a fresh start for the world’s leading nations. Harkening back to his prewar stance of rearmament and conciliation, Churchill now advocated a massive arms build-up in the West in conjunction with a revision of the doctrine of containment through detente. He hoped to undermine communism with the temptations of capitalist wealth, and
in the process play the role of peacemaker. The Americans, however, remained cool to the idea of moderating their cold war policy, and shortly thereafter Churchill left office.

Churchill’s successor Anthony Eden soon learned the consequences of deviating from US cold war policies when, during the Suez crisis of 1956, he was rebuked by Eisenhower for acting unilaterally. Eden’s obsession with exorcizing the ghosts of Munich and appeasement from British political culture had induced him into reacting violently against Nasser’s belligerence. He appeared not to appreciate that in the new world order, Egypt was an important cold war battleground in which the US and USSR were fighting to win hearts and minds. Britain’s efforts to protect its imperial interests there clashed directly with American concerns in the region. The Suez debacle, coming a year after Churchill’s retirement, signaled a caesura in British imperial history that marked the end of an age imbued with Victorian moral visions. Churchill never doubted the value of British imperialism’s contribution to civilization, seeking to reinvigorate its mission in the postwar era by marshaling US support. But by the mid-20th century, grand Victorian conceptions of Britain’s global role confronted the reality of a nation in terminal decline. Churchill may have succeeded in forging the West’s cold war agenda through his lessons on appeasement, but it was in Washington rather than London that the key decisions were made during the next four decades on how to implement anti-communist policies around the world.

Chapter 4 Endnotes


British leaders failed to perceive their nation’s weakness, causing them to eschew support for supranational organizations as a counterweight to superpowers.


7. Ibid., pp.178-81,266.


10. Ibid., pp.22,26.

11. Ibid., pp.100,112.


14. Ibid., pp.52-55.


21. Ibid: Pownall defended the higher British figures on account of the American practice of counting deaths from non-operational causes, including natural causes. In order to offer a fair comparison, he wished to account for British losses in the same manner; Churchill, *Their Finest Hour*, pp.4-8.


30. Ibid., p.87.

31. Ibid., pp.177-8,189-90,280-1,441-42; also R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Crises, and India, 1939-45* (Oxford: OUP, 1979): the Quit India Movement of 1942 was crushed by British forces. The ensuing calm caused Churchill to claim in his memoirs that it proved the INC possessed only a superficial hold over Indians, an argument belied by postwar events.

32. CHUR 4/342A: Brook to Churchill, April 16, 1951: The War Office considered the remarks “particularly challenging.”

34. Ibid., p.445.
43. Darwin, Britain and Decolonization, pp.54-58.
44. Churchill, Closing the Ring, pp.362,504-14,604-10: he referred to the US and Britain as “two great empires.”
46. CHUR 4/63: Graebner to Churchill, September 9, 1953; Life (H. Latham) to Kelly, September 17, 1953; Kelly to Pownall, September 23, 1953.
50. Quoted in Thomas, Churchill, p.129; Darwin, Britain and Decolonization, p.69-70,73.
51. Ibid., pp.71-72,124-5.
58. Dickie, Special No More, pp.xiv-xv; Taylor, Britain and the Cold War, p.59; Kemper, “The Rhetoric of Civilization,” in Churchill, p.28; Lenman, Eclipse of Parliament, pp.178-79; Gilbert, Never Despair, pp.204-07, 220; even then, only for intelligence sharing did the relationship become real and appreciated by US officials.
64. Churchill, Their Finest Hour, pp.4-6,23-25.
65. Quoted in Bryant, Turn of the Tide, pp.193-94.
68. Churchill, Their Finest Hour, p.403.
74. Ibid., pp.55,567-9.
75. CHUR 4/133: Notes of Proofs by Longwell, August 1947.
112. Ibid., p.87.
115. Ibid., pp.29,73-75,84,338; Robbins, Churchill, pp.152-3; V. Brittain, Testament of Experience: An Autobiographical Story of the Years 1925-50 (New York: Macmillian, 1957), pp.371-2: she denied that pacifists were irresponsible, claiming that Churchill was completely out of touch with public sentiment after the war, Churchill, Their Finest Hour, pp.8,10-17.
117. Colville, Diary, p.108: two weeks later, however, the new govt had the complete confidence of the country.
118. Churchill, Their Finest Hour, pp.124,570; Callahan, Retreat from Empire, pp.7-8; K. Young, Churchill and Beaverbrook: A Study in Friendship and Politics (New York: Eyer and Spottiswoods, 1966), pp.174-5: Yet he was not strong enough to remove Halifax from the Cabinet before December 1940; for an hour-by-hour account of these dramatic events, see J. Lukacs, Five Days in London.
121. Ibid., pp.241-3,252-4,258,269.
149. Ibid., pp.354-55, 556-8.
152. Ibid., pp.252, 272.
153. Ibid., pp.338, 429; Moran, *Struggle for Survival*, p.323: In private, Churchill confided that he was fascinated by Stalin, talking about him constantly, whereas he said virtually nothing about Roosevelt. Aside from the war, Moran felt that Churchill and FDR had little in common.
155. Ibid., pp.252, 272.
157. Ibid., pp.63-64, 71: Lenin’s Kremlin cabal were “sub-human crocodiles” who hunted political rivals like animals.
158. Gilbert, *World in Torment*, pp.246, 270-78, 355, 413, 429, 774, 881-8, 902-06; Charmley, *End of Glory*, pp.218-220: during the General Strike in 1926, he wrote in the *British Gazette* that TUC leaders were potential Lenins and Trotskys.
165. Ramsden, “Mr Churchill Goes to Fulton,” pp.25-26: he says it is a myth that opinion in the US press was strongly negative; in fact, only about 20% of newspapers were very critical, with most of those from the isolationist Midwest.


185. CHUR 4/16: J. Adler to Churchill, May 15, 1947; on same day, the *NYT* ran front page feature on memoirs project.


193. Ibid., pp.120,135-6,578,593.


195. Ibid., pp.316-23,331-33.


198. Ibid., pp.466-75,557-60,605-06: A joint declaration was signed on January 1, 1942 by the allied powers, including the Soviet Union, setting out a common program of purposes and principles based on the Atlantic Charter’s expressions of respect for national sovereignty and human rights.


202. Ibid., pp.284-96.

203. Ibid., pp.414-15,502-05.

204. 4/25: Luce to Churchill, August 30, 1950; *Life’s* first two extracts were “How Our Russian Troubles Began,” and “Face to Face with Stalin.”


207. Charmley, *The End of Glory*, pp.559-70; see also V. Pechatnov, “The Big Three After World War II.”


209. Ibid., pp.400-07.


216. Ibid., p.181.

217. Ibid., pp.179-82,206-10.

218. Ibid., pp.262.

219. Ibid., pp.94-98,250-63: Churchill devoted more space to Britain’s intervention in Greece than to the entire D-Day operation and subsequent fighting up to the liberation of Paris.

220. Ibid., p.310.


224. CHUR 4/63: Brook to Churchill, April 27, 1953; 4/392B: Kelly to Prime Minister: Kelly failed to see why the author’s “moderately expressed opinions” should have political repercussions in 1953, “more than eight years after the events discussed;” 4/392A: Brook to Churchill, August 22, 1951 and June 23, 1952.


229. CHUR 4/63: Reves to Kelly, October 19, 1953; ABC Whipple (*Life*) to Kelly, October 16 and November 12, 1953.


232. CHUR 4/63: Brook to Kelly, October 22,1953; Kelly to Pownall, November 3, 1953; *Time* (Caturani) to Graebner, November 3, 1945; *Life*, November 23, 1953.


234. Ibid., pp.487-91,495,555-6,574-5.


5 Reading Churchill: Press Reception and the Public

While the previous chapter examined the initial reception of Churchill’s metanarrative by insiders who vetted his proofs prior to their publication, this chapter examines public reception of Churchill’s messages in the form of reviews in the political press. It also extends the analysis of reception to film and television adaptations of the memoirs in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This latter form of reception is important for an understanding of the creation of collective war memory because it is estimated that more people “viewed” Churchill’s memoirs than ever read his account of the war. In our modified reception theory, textual meaning is perceived to be shaped by the interaction of authorial intentionality and public reception. Media studies reveal that the political press in the early postwar remained the most influential first reader in magnifying, interpreting, or qualifying Churchill’s metanarrative for the broader reading public. Examining this critical first reception of the politically conscious public provides insight into the postwar state of mind and political landscape of the cold war in which war memory was fashioned. Reactions to Churchill’s metanarrative were intensified by its publication at a critical point when the mood of relief and hope following victory in the war intersected with growing fears and foreboding over the prospects of peace and stability. Those involved in facilitating reception, including Churchill himself, his publishers, media supporters and critics, sought to exploit memory of the war for their respective postwar ideological agendas. This process continued right up until the author’s death in 1965, as the political press gave way to television and film as the most powerful conveyors of collective identity through metanarratives of legitimation.

In the first decade after World War II, though, the print media remained a key barometer of public opinion and the principal means by which the political public formulated and shared ideas about the world. It was through press dissemination of political messages that collective memory and a shared vision of the future were mainly absorbed by the reading public. Positive reception of an author’s metanarrative by literary and political elites in the press was not only beneficial for sales and profits, it could also establish a work’s authoritativeness as a critical foundation for its general reception. In the early postwar era, the reading public in Britain and America was highly receptive to an overarching assessment of the war years that would enable individual experiences to be situated within a broader contextual meaning. After a decade of war and privation, readers were ready for a narrative that would explain and validate their trauma. Churchill’s metanarrative of the
recent past advanced the cause of English-speaking unity in a mission to redeem humanity. His use of dramatic plot, characterization, rhetoric, and didactics to fashion a powerful metanarrative of the second world war elicited intense interest and strong emotive responses from readers. As a maverick politician, Churchill had always been controversial, inciting strong reactions of adoration or disgust from the press and public. Such responses arose from the fact that he was correctly perceived to be a strong-willed man of action whose decisions had a direct influence on the lives of millions of people, for better or worse. Memories of the war were still vivid when readers received Churchill’s memoirs and his messages on war meaning.

Reception of Churchill’s memoirs was powerfully shaped by attitudes toward growing ideological tensions between East and West. The ascendancy of domestic socialism and international communism after the war precipitated a rightist backlash in the political press that reversed a long-term trend toward political non-partisanship that began after the first world war, and resumed in the late 1950s. In America, the cold war rivalry in the first decade of peace produced anti-communist fears when conservatives whipped up sentiment that the American way of life was threatened. Liberal opinion, which in 1945 had sought cooperation and reconciliation with the Soviet Union, a few years later was under attack from the right as un-American, forcing its shift for at time toward a more stridently anti-communist stance. Churchill’s attempt to draw analogies between prewar appeasement of Nazism and postwar accommodation of Soviet Russia induced the liberal press to affirm the author’s conservative message of Anglo-American hegemony and leadership through a strategy of containment. This bipartisan consensus overwhelmed the small coterie of leftists who postulated a counter-narrative of East-West cooperation and disarmament.

Consequently, the left proved unable to challenge significantly the right’s hegemonic grip on presentation of collective war memory to the general public. Fragmentation of leftist opinion after the war prevented a united voice from forming to refute the resounding chorus of praise for Churchill’s imperial metanarrative. Even the Labour Party’s own press organs were split between the Daily Herald’s adherence to the Party line and the Tribune’s support for the disaffected left-wing. Pro-Labour independent publications were generally supportive of social welfare reforms at home, but largely accepted a Churchillian world view on foreign policy. Only the small-circulation radical left-wing press consistently attacked Churchill as a defender of the hegemonic right bent on pacifying or persuading the working classes to accept the political status quo after the war. The left readily acknowledged that Churchill’s dramatic presentation of history appealed to readers’ emotive
impulses, but argued that it was designed to disguise social injustices and divert working class grievances from radical solutions toward patriotic expressions of national unity and power that only benefitted the ruling elites.

Despite sharp differences of opinion between the right and left on contemporary political issues in the 1940s and 50s, most of Britain's press was imbued with common liberal values that informed political thought and practice in the mid-20th century. With the exception of a handful of radical journals, most publications and their editors adhered to a liberal world view premised on an Enlightenment faith in rational, progressive historical development and abhorrence of ideological extremes. This liberal consensus had shaped the unduly hopeful views of international affairs in the press before World War II that contributed to its failure to comprehend the dynamic energies driving fascism toward war. The liberal press' painful recognition of this failing made it receptive to Churchill's postwar message that warned of another menace to liberal democracy more dangerous than anything previously confronted. Liberals, Conservatives, and moderate socialists in the media were fearful of being tarred with the same brush as the appeasers of Hitler, who Churchill contended had jeopardized national security and world order by not heeding his warnings in the first place.

In 1947, the Royal Commission on the Press investigating the ownership structure and function of the newspaper industry in Britain concluded that the political press constituted the central communications link between the government and the politically conscious public. Since the 1930s, its function to provide information and facilitate political debate had been shared with radio, but the new medium's qualities of impermanence, technical limitations, and emphasis on entertainment meant that the press remained the dominant news source for concerned citizens in the early postwar era. Politicians rightly placed great significance on the ability of the press to influence political attitudes and behavior because politically minded readers still relied primarily on newspapers for information and opinions about what was happening in Britain and the world. At their most powerful, British newspapers promoted political causes, captured the loyalties of journalists and readers, and maintained intimate contacts with major politicians. This made them the most reliable barometers of public opinion, as well as a major influence upon it.

Concentrated ownership had long been a feature of the British newspaper industry ever since unscrupulous press barons in the late 19th century carved out publishing empires using "yellow journalism" to attract the new mass readership. During the next sixty years, a handful of wealthy British plutocrats created six large newspaper combines that dominated the national and provincial
press. The nine major national morning dailies were roughly divided between low circulation “quality” papers and mass circulation “popular” publications. All nine newspapers were separately owned by mostly pro-Tory press barons who also controlled evening and Sunday papers, along with chains of provincial broadsheets. By the 1940s, much of Fleet Street was given over to the “popular press” that operated alongside the more established “quality” newspapers catering to the politically conscious middle classes. Though the “quality” press was small in circulation, it had tremendous influence since it was read daily by Party officials, political activists, civil servants, and influential opinion leaders throughout British society. Press readership, the Commission found, was slowly shifting toward major national newspapers at the expense of provincial papers, with the circulation of the former increasing 80-100% from 1928-47. In World War II, sales of national newspapers exceeded by two to one those of all provincial newspapers combined. This trend continued after the war, with national press readership peaking in the 1950s at sixteen million daily, and a Sunday readership of twenty-five million.

In contrast to the powerful national press in Britain, America’s political press in the 1940s and 50s was predominantly provincial, in that even the largest newspapers were marketed to limited geographical regions surrounding urban centers, with only a handful of them managing to transcend their locality to reach regional or national audiences. Geography and historical differences between regions of America thwarted most attempts to create a national press prior to the 1970s, the Boston-based Christian Science Monitor proving a notable exception. Even the New York Times sold the vast majority of its copies within a hundred mile radius of the metropolitan center in the 1940s. Daily newspapers mostly represented community over national political opinion, and seldom did they function as partisan political broadsheets in the tradition of leading European newspapers. Though there were no major national dailies like those based in London, the American print media did contain over fifty weekly political periodicals that were sold nationally, some of them enjoying sales in the millions.

There were also pronounced differences between America and Britain in book publication and reception. Literary critic John Hollander observed: “If in England the Establishment is under fire, the very weapons being used against it remain the property of a continuing Establishment of the Mind, which in any event gives some evidence of appearing to be in control of the printed page.” Nonetheless, Hollander criticized the shortcomings of American literary criticism, noting that book reviews were largely assigned space and prominence on the basis of anticipated sales or
the amount of advertising space purchased by publishers. Editors feared that critical reviews might drive away readers and violate the decorum of their Sunday newspapers (where most reviews were found) as “family” publications. Thus, newspapers in America seldom attained the quality of analysis found in such British publications as the *Times Literary Supplement, New Statesman, Observer, Manchester Guardian,* or *Spectator.* In Britain’s livelier publications, critics enjoyed being “sarcastic, ferocious, sometimes vicious and patently unfair,” whereas in America reviewers usually avoided deriding a work. Even reviewers for the *Saturday Review of Literature* or the nation’s two biggest newspapers, the *New York Herald Tribune* and *New York Times,* were often hesitant to interpret for their readers in the manner of European journalists, with the result that reviews were often banal or non-committal. The rush of deadlines, limitations of space, and enormous quantity of new books to consider each year made thoughtful literary judgements in review essays difficult. Too often, periodicals squeezed their reviews at the end of each issue, sandwiched between advertising, as if they were an afterthought. These constraints on the press in America meant that outside of academia there were few first-rate book reviews.

Reviewers in America and Britain offered a diverse set of opinions regarding the place of Churchill’s memoirs in the historiography of war. There were, however, a number of recurring themes that this chapter will highlight in its discussion of press reception. There was, for instance, virtual unanimity, even among leftist periodicals, that Churchill’s memoirs were a literary phenomenon, both in terms of the publishing industry and in regard to the author’s artistic talent for writing engaging prose. There was much grumbling about the excessive use of documents, but when the narrative was clearly Churchill’s, reviewers agreed that he knew how to grip his readers. In considering Churchill’s imperial metanarrative, reviewers in America and Britain largely remolded the theme into a discussion of democracy, with the right acclaiming the author as the greatest defender of democracy, whereas leftists and a few liberals looked skeptically upon him as a destroyer of democratic principles. The issue of leadership, a theme that runs through the course of Churchill’s memoirs, was divided into an assessment of the author as a military strategist and as a political motivator of people. Liberals and conservatives praised Churchill for both qualities, whereas leftists doubted his leadership abilities in both the military and political realm.

Least discussed among reviewers was Churchill’s theme of forging a permanent English-speaking fraternity on the basis of the wartime alliance. British reviewers preferred to accent national pride in Churchill’s story of a people at war, while most Americans were embarrassed by
anything more substantive than rhetorical pleasantries regarding a common spirit of humanity among the English-speaking peoples. The sharpest divisions of opinion came in regards to Churchill’s theme of cold war origins and confronting the communist peril. Leftists were understandably severe in rebuking the author for exacerbating the cold war, though among moderate socialists the Soviet Union was accepted as an international menace to democracy and civilization. The right, of course, offered exclamations for Churchill’s critique of Stalin and communism; American conservatives vilified without mercy their nation’s own political leaders who allegedly had impeded the author’s fight at the end of the war. Liberals were in many respects dubious of Churchill’s intentions, but fearful of a rightist backlash in the midst of an anti-communist witch-hunt in America, shifted rightward while at the same time attempting to elevate the discussion of cold war origins onto a higher moral plane that viewed the author as above petty partisanship.

A Literary Phenomenon

One thing virtually everyone in the press agreed upon, Churchill’s memoirs were a literary sensation and tour de force by Britain’s greatest statesman/author of the 20th century. The Tory press saw Churchill’s memoirs as a brilliant achievement that all patriotic Britons needed to read. Churchill did not just write history, he re-lived all the intensity and conviction of the war years in a work of unmatchable literary splendor. The *Sunday Express* praised Churchill as “the outstanding historian of the century,” a unique giant among statesmen who refused to hide behind ghost writers and editors. Churchill’s memoirs revealed him to be a natural leader who had no need for synthetic “myth” to disguise faults or foibles. Duff Cooper hailed Churchill’s high literary standards and lofty impartiality that would ensure his memoirs stood the test of time:

> A library of books will be written on the history of the war which we have recently survived, but it is safe to say that in that library the great work upon which Mr. Churchill is engaged will occupy the most prominent position....And how luck we are to have such an historian to tell us the truth of it! Every statement is authenticated, documented, and unarguable.

Churchill’s poetic writing, declared historian R.C.K. Ensor (“Scrutator”), displayed his genius for finding the exact words to give his account a clarity and ordered impressiveness in what could easily have been a tangled tale. His heavy use of documents gave the work a special authenticity uncommon to most memoirs, and did not undermine the vitality of the narrative in any way. Other Conservative papers echoed the view that these memoirs were essential reading, and a virtual duty
of good citizenship for young and old alike to absorb their messages.\textsuperscript{15}

The mostly Conservative provincial press contended that Churchill was an author \textit{par excellence}, whose “inspiring account” of Britain at war rose to fresh heights of literary power and moral grandeur. According to William Andrews in the \textit{Yorkshire Post}: “Here is nothing of the favoritism of memory which tempts a man to exaggerate the wisdom and foresight he showed in days long past.” Instead, readers were told they were getting “breathless realism” in a story that would never die: “What a theme for a painter in words!...Through chapter after chapter we never lose the realization that here is one of the lasting works of English literature, one of the enduring memorials of our time, one of the noblest tributes to the endurance and resourcefulness of the British people.” Andrews declared how incredible it was that people should doubt Churchill’s fitness to lead when his “long, disciplined march of words” revealed a national treasure of matchless history that was the richest literary masterpiece of a generation.\textsuperscript{16}

Independent right-wing dailies acclaimed Churchill’s “incomparable work of art” as highly relevant for the present day. Labour MP and literary critic Harold Nicolson proclaimed Churchill’s memoirs a success as history, autobiography, and literature: “Unlike his predecessors, he has no need of self-justification; his record stands unassailable for all to learn.” The architecture of the memoirs was a model of literary construction: “Such passages of deliberate decoration as occur are not purple passages; they are lapidary; they adorn the facades and porticos of his immense edifice with all the solemnity of Roman inscriptions.” Reading Churchill’s memoirs, claimed the \textit{Times}, was like watching a great batsman keeping the field on its toes in a test match: “There is no knowing whether point or the man in the deep is going to get the next nasty one.” They contained all the material for an epic drama that was “a possession of the ages.”\textsuperscript{17} Long forgotten were the days when the \textit{Times} had dismissed him for opposing Chamberlain’s appeasement policy. Churchill was deemed a master of narrative who marshaled the technicalities and chaos of battle into a coherent and engaging story. His memoirs dwarfed in scale those of all other great figures in the past, making him the “supreme historian” of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{18}

Reception in the left-wing press grudgingly acknowledged Churchill’s skills as a writer, and the Second World War as a literary phenomenon, but attacked the right-wing publicity blitz for creating misleading images of Churchill as a giant of historical prose. The memoirs might offer a masterly portrayal of men and events, but the author’s childish pretensions and special pleading made his narrative less a history of Britain at war than the story of Winston Churchill: The \textit{Daily
Herald contended: “It is a passionate, almost pathological endeavour by a haunted man to prove that for thirty-odd years he has been always right.” Churchill was credited for writing great speeches that were enjoyable to read many years after, but his memoirs were not considered real history, though they made for a good novel with the author as hero. Labour MP Michael Foot noted that by writing his memoirs at the end of his struggle rather than before it, as Hitler had done, Churchill was able to clothe his rationalizations in the garb of history; but all the same it was bad history for the benefit of the Churchill legend: “The Prince of Denmark is clearly present in this ‘Hamlet’, but where are Horatio, Laertes and the rest?” Among most leftist reviewers, Churchill was thought to have written a lively account of the war, but with serious omissions and distortions that subordinated events and collective history to the author’s personal role.

In the New Statesman, Labour MP Richard Crossman initially deviated from leftist opinion by declaring the memoirs a guaranteed classic that would stand the test of time. But by Volume III he was noting serious problems with Churchill’s strategy of hanging the war narrative on his personal experiences in a “Napoleonic mixture” of autobiography and objective history. While it worked fine for the first two volumes, as the war became global in scope, Churchill’s approach increasingly strained and distorted reality, with “more artifice and apologia than insight.” By the final volumes, Crossman had decided that Churchill was too self-centered and selective to write good history, concluding that the memoirs were a “passionately prejudiced” account from a participant who lacked the capacity for detachment. Churchill’s gilded facts ensured that historians would read them for what they said about the author, not for what they revealed about the war.

While the Liberal press disagreed with Churchill’s conception of history as a grand pageant dominated by great men of supreme willpower, they lauded his ability to create a dramatic and popular account of the British experience at war. The Manchester Guardian noted that Prime Ministers seldom wrote a history of their times: “We should have to go back to Clarendon for a fair comparison, for Lloyd George’s memoirs, though good, have not behind them the sure instinct for words, the historian’s temper, or the artist’s serenity....” The Guardian considered Churchill’s heavy reliance on documents no detraction from “the artistry of the canvas,” and in anticipation of Volume V, conveyed a sense of awe for his significance as a writer in postwar Britain:

Up and down the country in the back rooms and basements of bookshops there is unusual activity; the consumption of brown paper, strings and labels mount as September 3rd draws near. For on that day the fifth installment of Mr. Churchill’s war memoirs ‘Closing the
Ring’ will be published, and over a hundred thousand people who have placed their orders already will expect to have the book in their hands, no later. It is an extraordinary thing, this intensity of activity, this vast and well anticipated demand; no single bestseller can produce anything like it...It is queer to think that on the morning of the third thousands of fingers will open the parcels simultaneously and thousands of eyes read the first page or two with the avidity with which a morning newspaper is read. There are many bestsellers but none compares with this in massive and impeccable rhythm of demand and supply. Like the personality of the author, it is a formidable matter.22

Liberals were more complimentary than the left of Churchill’s genius for the narrative form, though there were criticisms of flaws in his history. Viscount Templewood, a pre-war critic of Churchill’s stance on India, questioned why the author thought it necessary to write an apologia given the unanimous recognition among contemporaries of his courage. While Time and Tide called it a narrative for the ages, it complained that Churchill’s account was often vexatious and unfair to other leaders.23 The Economist, however, observed that in the nine years since the war’s end, Churchill’s stature had grown on account of his “astonishing volumes,” which were a paragon. The Second World War was deemed an expansive conception of history that served as a guide to life. It was history conceived as morality play with Churchill the leading actor teaching by example in a magisterial survey and source-book of the utmost importance. While Volume I elicited shades of Gibbon, the somber and laconic final volume was reminiscent of Caesar.24

Considered as a whole, the number of reviews that lent authority to Churchill’s memoirs far outweighed the handful of pithy and biting commentaries from the left. Liberals and Conservatives appeared more than willing to concede that Churchill had written an engaging story of the entire British people’s struggle in war. It was a national history that was deemed to speak for all Britons, even though Churchill hardly mentioned the contributions of women or the working classes who produced the materiel to keep the armed forces in the field. In contrast, the left denied that Churchill’s memoirs were true history since it was entirely focused on a few “great men” who directed the war effort from the pinnacle of power, but who lacked an appreciation for the true experiences of the rank and file, whether civilians at home or members of the military abroad.

**Empire, Commonwealth, and World Order**

Britain’s right-wing press considered the publication of Churchill’s memoirs to be an event of national importance. After years of demoralizing economic austerity, social upheaval, and imperial retrenchment, the right was anxious to reinvigorate faith in the nation and imperial identity.
Consequently, they celebrated Churchill’s dramatic affirmation of Great Power status, contending that it was profoundly significant for the future of Britain as long as people learned the appropriate lessons and did not shrink from international responsibilities. Foremost among Churchill’s insights was the British nation’s immeasurable contribution to victory over fascism, an achievement that revealed how imperative it was to maintain military strength in the postwar so as to keep the world safe for democracy. Film producer and author Milton Shulman contended that a central lesson of Churchill’s memoirs was that the survival of democracy required a sturdy people imbued with courage, faith, and confidence in resolute leadership. He feared that democracy was again imperilled by the British people’s slide into materialism, induced by hollow leftist utopian promises. Churchill’s appreciation for austere military virtues was deemed a valuable corrective to such misguided idealism, claimed the right.

The provincial press similarly praised Churchill for showing the rest of the democratic world the magnitude of Britain’s finest hour, and the debt of gratitude owed to the British people. It was considered a duty for all Britons to read about their nation’s wartime role in the memoirs of its greatest statesman; failure to do so was a demonstration of one’s “lack of patriotic virtue.” Churchill’s memoirs were thought to be a healthy tonic for the British psyche at a time when foreign powers appeared to delight in pulling the lion’s tail. Enhancing British self-respect was the first step in engendering the required degree of respect from abroad that was worthy of a victorious nation which single-handedly had beaten back the greatest tyranny known to man.

Churchill’s theme of appeasement and leadership was received warmly by the Conservative press, which argued that Britain’s past troubles had arisen as a result of political leaders who sought to divorce morality from foreign policy. Munich had been wrong politically because it was wrong morally for Britain to dishonorably abandon a weaker nation to the mercy of a predatory neighbor. Ignored by these reviewers was the obvious parallel between British appeasement of Germany in 1938, when part of Czechoslovakia was sacrificed to an oppressive power for the greater good of a general European peace accord, and Churchill’s appeasement of Stalin at Teheran and Yalta, when Polish autonomy was sacrificed for the greater good of ensuring a peaceful end to the war. Only the Catholic press expressed dissonance on the right regarding Churchill’s message on appeasement, complaining that he was grossly unfair to Poland in failing to show sufficient appreciate for the heroic contribution of loyal Poles who risked everything to fight for the allied cause.

In considering Britain’s finest hour, the right sought to fuse pride in Churchill as statesman-
hero with the nation itself. Duff Cooper praised Churchill’s memoirs as an epic of Homeric proportions and a modern detective story rolled into one. In this thrilling drama “there were two heroes, John Bull and Winston Churchill,” an invincible combination of complementary qualities. While the British national character was “eternal, sober, and pragmatic,” Churchill brought to the war effort “youthful vigor, flamboyance, and genius for innovation,” who surmounted the nightmare of 1940-41 when the nation stood alone. Churchill’s second immeasurable contribution to the nation was to proved in his memoirs that until August 1944 British and Commonwealth forces had performed the lion’s share of actual fighting in the West.

There was no retreating on the right from Churchill’s strong defense of British imperial memory. Before the war, Conservatives had been badly divided on how to reform the empire, with many Tories viewing imperialist “die-hards” as obstreperous fanatics out of touch with reality. After the war, Churchill’s claim that Britain had to win back its imperial possessions on the field of battle rather than have them handed back at the peace table was saluted as “noble sentiment” that embodied “everything grand about the proud spirit of the British people” who ruled a great empire. Churchill’s foresight in sending the Royal Navy to Pacific waters in 1944 to assist in the assault on Japan was credited with helping to ensure that Britain’s prestige in the Far East was not disastrously affected by “the previous misfortunes of war.” In stark contrast to such a noble policy, D. Cooper declared that the British people now found themselves with a “shrunken imperial heritage” thanks to Labour’s scuttle of India. The calm and order of India under Churchill’s management was contrasted with the chaos and violence that killed half a million Indians in 1947 on Labour’s watch. Churchill’s firm grip during the Quit India Movement had prevented a slide into defeatism and ethnic fratricide, a perspective that Americans badly failed to understand during the war. The right felt that Churchill’s memoirs had revealed just how prescient authorities in London were on empire, and how wrong FDR was to disdain imperial rule.

The right-wing press accepted Churchill’s contention that imperialism was a force for stability and order in the world that benefitted the humble masses as much as it did their overlords. Only Beaverbrook’s Daily Express dissented from Churchill’s argument that saving the empire required confronting Nazism earlier rather than later. It contended that Churchill’s thesis of a preventable war through early confrontation with Germany was not Britain’s only option before 1939, reminding readers of Beaverbrook’s prewar campaign for imperial preferences. Isolationists might have strengthened the empire by turning Hitler eastward while Britain focused on building
up imperial trade, it contended. Stated in 1948, this argument reveals a shocking incomprehension of the evil recently crushed, and how close Germany had come to defeating Russia and establishing permanent hegemony over Europe.

While the right amplified Churchill’s imperial message, the Liberal press was moderately critical of *The Second World War* as a monument to national and imperial greatness. The *Manchester Guardian* mildly rebuked Churchill for failing to acknowledge his wrong-headed attitude toward Indian self-rule in Volume I. But it praised Volume II’s stirring account of Britain’s finest hour as a great literary and political testament that was a service for future generations of Britons. The *Observer* went further, offering an ode to Churchill for his unparalleled account of the Dunkirk spirit, which brilliantly illuminated the national mood in 1940:

> Read this book and you will realise that the British action, in the year of the storm cone, was solidly based. The sums add up. The propositions are proved. But the legend [of Dunkirk] will defeat history...Long after the dust has gathered on the history, men will read, men will quote, the superb rhetoric of the speeches....Above and beyond the statistics will come a strange grunting voice that once spoke out of every little radio in every little house, here or in America: “We shall not fail nor falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle nor the longdrawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools, and we shall finish the job.” Do you think history is going to beat that? Think again.

Churchill’s memoirs were proclaimed a precious contribution to the nation that preserved for posterity the memory of its epic struggle against tyranny. National honor and greatness were inextricably linked in Churchill’s mind with his sense of historical progress, a perspective that the BBC’s *Listener* thought conformed with the values of 19th century Victorian humanism. Nonetheless, it saw nothing unduly archaic in Churchill’s conception of national character and willpower as the leitmotif of international relations, nor did it challenge his frequent references to “race” as akin to nationality. Only B.H. Liddell Hart among *Listener* reviewers disputed the idea that the British military at war merited the kind of tributes accorded it by Churchill.

Discordant notes regarding Churchill’s imperial metanarrative were prevalent, though, in Britain’s socialist press. Leftist reviewers denigrated Churchill’s elitist, patronizing, romanticized, but wholly inadequate treatment of the British people’s contribution to victory. The masses appeared in his narrative infrequently, and usually only as the subject for humorous anecdotes and platitudes about selfless devotion to duty. Omitted by Churchill was any reference to the fear, indiscipline, and indecision that came over the public at critical times during the war -at Dunkirk,
after the fall of France, during the Blitz, or when rocket attacks shattered the sense of safety in 1944. Crossman conceded tongue-in-cheek that Churchill’s memoirs served as excellent propaganda for selling Britain to the rest of the world. The radical press chastised the establishment press, including “Labour mouthpieces,” for eulogizing Churchill’s literary efforts whose aim was to reinforce confidence in the control of society by the ruling elites. Churchill was declared an enemy of the people who the right was falsely holding up as a symbol of national greatness. All that Churchill should be remembered for, it said, was to marshal the resources of British and American capitalism to defeat Hitler in order to safeguard the ill-got possessions of the propertied classes. While Churchill was credited with eloquently expressing the British people’s will to resist during the early war years, after 1941 he slid back into his reactionary ways, evident by his failure to mention the Beveridge Report, which had captured the imagination of millions of ordinary Britons with its promise of a better life after the war. As the war neared its end, Churchill had allegedly become fearful of revolution, seeking to end the conflict without disturbing the social and political fabric of Europe, so as to give no advantage to progressive forces at home and in the colonies seeking constructive change.

Whereas the right-wing press assumed that Britain should retain a prominent role in world affairs, the left was prepared to jettison international prestige and status for the sake of substantive domestic reforms to redistribute national wealth. The left felt no affinity for preserving national or imperial unity at the cost of improvements in living standards for ordinary Britons, or sovereignty for indigenous masses. Since the imperial system benefitted primarily economic and social elites who staffed its command structure, empire offered few tangible benefits to workers, the left argued. It correctly surmised that Churchill’s memoirs were an attempt to revitalize imperial memory by crediting the empire and Commonwealth with achieving a great victory in the war, rather than seeing it as a collective effort of common people whose enormous sacrifices demanded repayment.

In America, press commentaries on Churchill’s memoirs were written by an impressive array of poets, novelists, historians and literary critics, most of whom had military experience from the first or second world wars. They represented the cream of American journalism who impressed upon readers the importance of Churchill’s war history for their present day lives. In doing so, most American reviewers skirted the issue of Churchill’s imperialist message, focusing instead on the heroism of Britons in defying tyranny before the US became involved in the war. Ironically, the strongest criticisms of British imperial policies during the war came from the right. The isolationist
Republican *Chicago Tribune* reminded readers that Churchill remained an unabashed imperialist whose seductive rhetoric should not fool Americans into a postwar alliance to retain colonial possessions, while the moderate Republican *New York Herald Tribune* found his imperial sentiments in “disharmony with contemporary social realities.” Other reviewers focused instead on Churchill’s nationalistic ode to British heroism, since it was felt that only a handful of Americans truly appreciated the fire and spirit that animated Britons in 1940. It was an example of courage that Americans thought should rally democratic peoples everywhere to the cause of freedom.

Few American reviewers challenged Churchill’s contention that the Mediterranean deserved to be the main theater of operations from 1942 until D-Day. Not until Volume V did Robert Sherwood, playwright and wartime advisor to President Roosevelt, concede that Churchill was devoted to Egypt as a theater of war because he perceived it as an imperial frontier. Renowned US historian Henry Steele Commager praised the moral character of the British people and their war leaders for an offensive spirit that saved the Middle East from being overrun by fascists, thereby defending Churchill’s Mediterranean policy on strategic, tactical, and moral grounds as signaling to the world that Britain was still prepared to act honorably in meeting its global obligations. In the Republican *San Francisco Chronicle*, Casper Weinberger (future Secretary of Defense under Reagan), was already a devoted Churchillian, contending that American liberals were woefully ignorant of Britain’s empire and its role in the war. A former intelligence officer for General MacArthur, Weinberger claimed to possess “overwhelming evidence” of Gandhi’s subversive intentions to parlay with the Japanese in 1942, making Churchill’s decision to imprison leaders of the Indian National Congress entirely justified. America’s obsession with Britain’s imperial objectives during the war was seen as a tragic mis-apprehension that distorted allied strategy and benefitted Stalin. In Canada, newspapers expressed satisfaction that Churchill offered a corrective to the “American self-obsession” with their contribution to victory in Europe, but were disappointed that he hardly mentioned the Dominion’s role in safeguarding Atlantic supply routes.

Among US periodicals, there was an even split between left-liberal and center-right perspectives on Churchill’s imperial metanarrative. The mainstream liberal journals of the early postwar era were the *Atlantic Monthly, Nation*, and moderately reformist *New Republic*. In addition, the *Saturday Review of Literature* and *New Yorker* espoused mainly liberal values in their editorial policies. Reinhold Neibuhr, who wrote frequently for the *New Republic*, was the nation’s foremost liberal theologian who decried the politics of America’s right, whether it be the isolationism of
McCormick's *Chicago Tribune* or the imperialism of Luce's *Time/Life* publications. His associate at the *New Republic* was James Newman, a former intelligence officer and advisor to FDR. The slightly more left-wing *Nation* was more direct in criticizing Churchill's preoccupation with nationalism, empire, and militarism while ignoring economic and social concerns of common people in the war. For this reason, his memoirs were said to lack balance because of an obsession with presenting the best case for British imperial power rather than the strength of Britain's pluralist democracy. Unlike the Tory right, who lauded Churchill as the champion of democracy, the *Nation* considered him "the patrician savior of empire" who managed as an afterthought to save democracy. In the postwar, he had become a disgruntled imperialist trouble-maker who imperiled world peace, claimed Newman.\(^{54}\) The *Nation*'s other reviews by J.B. Brebner, a Canadian war veteran and history professor at Columbia University, noted Churchill's attempt to lump imperial and Commonwealth forces together under the rubric "British army." When the war broadened into a global conflict in 1941, Churchill appeared to lapse into hopeful dreams of Anglo-Saxon unity under his guiding hand. But Brebner defended Churchill against accusations that he was anti-democratic, praising his prudent use of war powers that did not subvert the traditions of parliamentary democracy.\(^{55}\)

In the *Saturday Review of Literature*, Harvard historian Crane Brinton, a protégée of Harold Laski, celebrated Churchill's dramatic story of Britain against the enemies of civilization: "He makes the most of this theme, with no concessions to the academic notion that the historian is above moral judgements as he is above emotion." However, Brinton complained that Churchill used the rhetoric of self-determination to win American sympathies without taking democratic principles truly to heart. Whereas FDR held a doctrinaire adhesion to abstract democratic principles that he thought could liberate millions of oppressed people in Asia and Europe, Churchill's limited sense of democracy precluded him from supporting its application to people under imperial authority, or even to Italians, Spaniards, and eastern Europeans.\(^ {56}\) But the most pointed liberal critique of Churchill's imperialism came from A. West, son of novelists H.G. Wells and Rebecca West, whose essays for the *New Yorker* noted that during the war US leaders were constantly bemused by Churchill's persistent efforts to induce them into serving British imperial aims. The man who had tried to hold Ireland and India down with bayonets and irregular forces, and who repeatedly pursued adventures in the Balkans, was not to be trusted. Churchill's intervention in Greece in 1944-45 confirmed peoples' worst suspicions about him, contributing to his election defeat in 1945.\(^ {57}\)

Among right-wing popular weeklies in America, very little was said about Churchill's
imperialist sympathies; most reviews were brief and descriptive, without serious analytical content. The British people's loss of will-power and sense of purpose after 1918 was said to have contributed to the second world war, with 1940 the hour of redemption that served to erase their national shame over past policies. Churchill's folksy anecdotes describing visits to communal air raid shelters, bombed neighborhoods, and front-line troops (urging more beer rations) were deemed proof of a sensitive leader in touch with "the common people." His frequent references to troop "wastage" as a normal cost of war operations were not seen as disproving his sensitivity in any way.\textsuperscript{58}

In stark contrast, scholarly reviews for monthly and quarterly journals were animated by questions regarding Churchill's attempt to reconcile his beliefs in empire, democracy, and Great Power status for Britain. Some intellectuals thought Churchill epitomized democratic principles in his alleged defense of liberty and human rights. However, more scholars critiqued Churchill's political conceptions as essentially elitist and anti-democratic, and a few saw evidence of racist and fascistic undercurrents in his memoirs. The author's assertion of national revival borne out of the war experience was widely accepted as true, though some reviewers contended that systemic weaknesses in Britain's economy made its decline into a second rate power inevitable. Some scholars saw Churchill's memoirs as indispensable for students of modern democracy in offering vital lessons on statecraft and war avoidance. In these instances, Churchill was depicted as a true democrat in touch with the pulse of contemporary pluralistic democracy, who made the baffling events of the interwar years explainable by revealing where Europe's liberal democracies had failed.\textsuperscript{59} For these reviewers, Churchill was a true democrat who never took advantage of flaws in Britain's political system during the war that could easily have led to authoritarianism, whereas the rise to power of Labour's "collectivist-minded politicians" after the war posed a greater risk.\textsuperscript{60}

For the most part, though, scholars viewed more skeptically Churchill's narrative of imperial and national greatness in war, and its relevancy for modern democracies. Yale professor Reed Whittemore depicted Churchill as a modern-day benevolent despot who saw himself leading the ignorant masses to triumph. Churchill wished to return to the ideals of an ancient past when heroic nations imbued with militaristic virtues were led by titans, believing that the rejection of militarism by liberal bourgeois leaders after the first world war had resulted in moral and physical decay of British power. Whittemore saw this as "Homeric myth" disguised as "straight history."\textsuperscript{61} A more sympathetic critic of Churchill's political values was Hans Morgenthau, political scientist at the University of Chicago and State Department consultant from 1949 to 1980, who advocated a form
of realism in which nations pursued national self-interest irrespective of world opinion. Thus, he interpreted Churchill as a “progressive conservative” who sought to ensure the survival of Britain’s empire using traditional foreign policy strategies based on balance of power considerations and diplomacy. But Churchill’s faith in the paramountcy of high politics meant that he understated the influence of economics or public opinion in democracies during the interwar era.

Churchill’s narrowly political view of the source of Britain’s problems in maintaining its power after the first world war did not convince most academic reviewers. History professor Preston Slosson, a US State Department representative to the Paris Peace Conference, criticized Churchill’s simplistic understanding of foreign affairs based on aristocratic sensibilities that glorified imperial rule as the pinnacle of political achievement. His apologias for imperial despots, including the decrepit and militaristic Romanov, Hohenzollern and Hapsburg dynasties, and later the corrupt monarchies of Yugoslavia, Italy, and Greece, were regarded as appalling. Churchill’s claim that war would not have occurred if the aristocracies of Europe had been allowed to retain their power and influence was belied by the case of Italy, where fascism easily gained control under a monarchy. Churchill’s views on fascism raised many eyebrows, since it revealed a glaring blind spot in the author’s understanding of this violently dynamic movement and raised doubts about the depth of his faith in democracy. His romantic view of history led him to display undisguised admiration for Mussolini as Italy’s savior from Bolshevism, whose fascist regime was overthrown only because he misjudged British staying power. Only James Farrell’s Catholic Historical Review chastised Churchill for being unduly critical of fascist regimes in Italy, Spain, and Vichy, contending that they were “continental hostages” of Hitler who deserved better than they got from the victors after the war: “Why, then, except as insurance against ‘liberal’ criticism in a general election, must he preserve the terms of abuse which were war-time distortions?”

Churchill’s respect for the dictators was premised on their successes in reviving national power, a view which two scholars related to the author’s Victorian romanticism and social Darwinian ideas from his youth. While the perversions of Nazism had relegated such notions to the dustbin of history well before World War II, Churchill clung to antiquated notions of racial hierarchies and the inherent superiority of Anglo-Saxons. One of his assistants on the memoirs project, Oxford philosopher Isaiah Berlin, observed in a review essay:

Mr. Churchill is one of the diminishing number of those who genuinely believe in a specific world order: the desire to give it life and strength is the most powerful single influence upon
everything which he thinks and imagines, does and is. When biographers and historians come to describe and analyze his views on Europe or America, on the British Empire or Russia, on India or Palestine, or even on social or economic policy, they will find that his opinions on all these topics are set in fixed patterns, set early in life and later only reinforced.

Berlin noted that Churchill always placed states, civilizations, and their people in a hierarchical order, with the English-speaking peoples at the top, followed by the peoples of Western Europe. Lower down the scale appeared Russians, a quasi-Asiatic, semi-barbaric people, while Asians and blacks were largely beneath his consideration. While reviewers clearly rejected such demeaning notions, they were more amenable to his efforts to elevate the English-speaking peoples. His stirring account of Britain’s finest hour, when Englishmen used audacity, cunning, and courage to overcome a dire shortfall in military resources and stave off invasion was lauded. All Souls Fellow A.L. Rowse considered it a masterpiece of military history that only leftist intellectuals and mean-spirited people would not thrill to, or be moved by the author’s pride in his nation’s accomplishments in war. The Battle of Britain was a great climactic in which British resolve and spirit won the day. For Berlin, the “textures and tensions” of Churchill’s “tragic operatic narrative” rose and fell, reaching their peak in a “tale of epic grandeur and heroism,” when good prevailed over evil. The blunders and defeatism of the Poles, Russians, French and Belgians in 1939-40 were contrasted with British resolve, moral integrity, and smashing victories in the African desert. Catholic World considered the desert campaign one of the greatest military feats in history, with Churchill’s account of the fighting in North Africa during 1940-41 proof that British national strength had been badly underestimated after Dunkirk by foreign observers. While these reviewers gave Churchill credit for raising British fighting capabilities after May 1940, William Willcox argued that the true hero was the British people, without whom even the most gifted leader could not have succeeded.

After 1941, there were few victories that Churchill could attribute entirely to Britain without the need to acknowledge the vital role of its Soviet and American allies. Consequently, his narrative after Volume III became more narrowly focused on his personal exploits at the conference table, and on the military operations of British forces in the Mediterranean. His effort to carry the theme of British military prowess beyond 1941 increasingly strained credulity, causing scholars to ignore or denigrate it in later volumes, especially when he continued to downplay the decisive struggle on the Eastern front or the colossal US arms buildup in the West that made victory possible. British novelist C.S. Forester, author of the popular “Horatio Hornblower” series, saw beneath Churchill’s
theme of British military achievement to perceive the core reality of a nation in decline. Churchill’s account of Britain’s intervention in Norway in early 1940 was deemed pathetic reading, revealing the nation’s difficulty in scraping up a single company of soldiers to undertake an action that had been debated in Cabinet for months. Political scientist William Fox was also struck by Britain’s fall from unchallengeable security in the early 1930s to near-capitulation in 1940: “Gibbon’s Rome took centuries to decline, Churchill’s Britain less than a decade.” Ironically, it was Churchill’s outdated conception of power, scholars argued, that gave him and the British people the courage to overcome a bad case of moral lassitude in their supreme test of strength.  

Appeasement, Leadership, and the Preventable War

None of Churchill’s messages received greater attention in the press than his contention that political leadership could have averted the second world war. Churchill’s memoirs placed himself at the center of events, the man of action who achieved results, in stark contrast to the faint hearted political leaders of the past who failed to recognize his genius or the hesitant generals who dithered when he wanted to strike. He was the far-seeing statesman and politician who combined a rare genius for strategic planning. This personalized account of past politics and war leadership met with mostly resounding approval from the Tory, Liberal, and conservative press in the US, qualified support from liberals in America, but ridicule from the British left.

Debating Churchill’s statesmanship proved tricky for British Conservatives, given that so many of them had shunned him before the war. In the 1930s, Beaverbrook was ardently isolationist and pro-appeasement, who refused to believe in the possibility of war. In reviewing Churchill’s memoirs, his newspapers held that the author’s assertion of a preventable war up to 1938 was unprovable, since his remedy of using greater force to cajole Germany into peaceful acquiescence might have caused a general war sooner than later. Nonetheless, the Daily Express agreed that war arose from weak statesmanship, and that Churchill had proven himself the greatest statesman the country possessed. The Rothermere press also praised Churchill’s greatness for “leadership, courage, toughness and chivalry,” lamenting the decline in national leadership since the war: “Now littleness, however well intentioned, is again in the seat of power; and Britain needs most sadly those qualities of courageous vigour which, all his life, Mr. Churchill has given to Britain’s cause.” Churchill towered above those petty men who had denied him power in the past despite his wisdom and unshakeable integrity. His tenacity, energy, wisdom, benevolence, and graciousness contrasted
with N. Chamberlain’s confusion and S. Baldwin’s lassitude prior to the war. Given the monumental follies of people and nations in the 1930s, Duff Cooper and Oxford scholar Gilbert Murray considered Churchill exceedingly charitable in his discussion of prewar politics.71

While the rightist press attacked Baldwin as “the monument of mediocre complacency” it mostly sought to deflect criticisms of interwar policies onto Labour. Britain’s “ghastly interwar politics” a was considered a great tragedy, with The Gathering Storm rendering a service to mankind by proving that men of stature were at all times required to lead Britain. The follies of interwar politics were blamed on the wilful complacency and dangerous self-indulgence of the public who demanded appeasement of their politicians. Churchill was considered too magnanimous to issue words of reproach against the fickleness of voters, who rejected him after faithful service to the nation in wartime, but his defenders in the press made the connection for him.72 Weekly rightist journals reiterated the theme of Churchill’s political acumen by contrasting it with the inadequacies of socialist leadership. James Squire argued that World War II, as well as the horrors of India and Burma, could have been avoided if Churchill’s warnings had been heeded. Tories suggested that while Churchill was consistently right, leftists were entirely wrong in opposing rearmament during the 1930s. Punch noted: "Here the scathing criticisms and heart-breaking warnings of the statesman agonizing in the wilderness through the long years of wasting hope are once again on record to form an apologia for his own conduct as complete as his scarification of his opponents is severe."73

Left-wing critics perceived Churchill’s political leadership rather differently. Churchill was seen as the “master of back-handed tributes,” such as when he alleged no personal bias against Labour’s Stafford Cripps, yet implied that the MP was dishonest and arrogant during the war. Churchill’s reputation for leadership was thought to be grossly inflated, which developments in the postwar era were slowly proving. Michael Foot claimed that Churchill lacked the virtue of wisdom that he sought to claim for himself, denouncing The Gathering Storm as a 500-page vilification of all the “weak, stupid, and vacillating men in the world,” with hardly a single admission of error on his own part. Foot accused Churchill of using artifice to discount Labour’s concerted opposition to Chamberlain and Baldwin in the 1930s so as to usurp for himself the role of prophet. In the war, Churchill revealed himself to be a nagging and petty leader who wrongly implied that Attlee had done nothing but sit adoringly at the war leader’s feet. Despite Labour’s total loyalty, Churchill had tried to curb its powers, proof to the left that he was at heart a political schemer hiding behind the facade of an impartial war leader.74 Some leftists even dismissed his famous speeches from 1940 as
“meaningless verbiage.” Too much attention was paid to Churchill’s wartime rhetoric, since during his long career he had publicly supported and attacked virtually every political position conceivable, making him less than a true prophet.75

Churchill’s reactionary past was repeatedly raised by the radical left to remind readers that at no time before the war had he enjoyed public confidence. He symbolized for too many poor Britons the dark miseries of a past epoch. In the interwar era, he had supported reactionary blunders in Russia and Spain, which were ignored in his memoirs in order to build a case for his prescience. The Socialist Leader attempted to discredit Churchill’s claim to the moral high ground by dredging up evidence of “despicable moral turpitude” in the Marlborough family. It accused Churchill of deceitfully hiding behind heroic posturing about resisting Germany in 1940 to the last British soldier, while in fact political elites were anxiously preparing to flee the country.76 Socialist weeklies tarred Churchill and the prewar Tory leadership with a similar brush as equally antiquated in their views of social democracy and world politics. Churchill, Baldwin and Chamberlain were all accused of being irresponsible and out-of-touch with working class realities before the war. Churchill’s class-ridden ideas kept him from offering a vision of the future. In an open letter to the author, Reynolds News declared that Churchill in the war spoke words of courage, but now he rarely talked without insulting half the population, “and you never argue a case without resorting to misinformation that is childish even for a Tory politician.”77

Britain’s Liberal press struck a balance between the extremes of hero worship and character assassination. The Manchester Guardian believed that the reputations of MacDonald, Baldwin, and Chamberlain were settled for good, as “no adulator is going to get round Mr. Churchill’s devastating picture.” On the other hand, his prophecies needed to be seen in the context of his own role in the tragedy of the 1930s. By crying wolf too often on issues of secondary importance, Churchill discredited himself in the eyes of his countrymen, who could be excused for looking skeptically on his warnings of German rearmament. Though the Guardian credited Churchill with objectivity in writing about the political battles of the war, it argued that he could have been more edifying in explaining the causes of disenchantment with his war leadership in 1942.78 More positive was the News Chronicle, which argued that Churchill’s political skills proved he was a natural leader who walked with destiny. The stolid English always had been uneasy with Churchill’s flamboyant genius, which explained why he suffered so many detractors in his own country. As a result, voters in 1945 chose Attlee, who for five years had watched “the great man” inspire the entire war effort.79
While some Liberal weeklies questioned the validity of Churchill's preventable war thesis, they all accepted his metanarrative of leadership. The Spectator's H.W. Harris denied that Churchill was consciously seeking self-glorification, even though the effect of his narrative was to elevate his stature as a war leader. Oddly, Churchill was deemed an excellent judge of men for his account of Kremlin leaders and others in high office. His memoirs elevated the author to such heights that he could never be dragged down by historians in the future, thought Harris. The left's belief in the centrality of the masses was felt to have been undermined by Churchill's "magnetic sensitivity" toward the British people and their needs in the war. Churchill was praised as the living embodiment of the Dunkirk spirit, whose memoirs served to preserve its memory for all time. Though ultimately the well-spring of that spirit and vitality came from the people, Churchill's political genius tapped into it at a critical moment, argued Liberals.

In assessing Churchill's strategic planning during the war, the Tory and Liberal press maintained that his decisions were sound. Many reviewers possessed military experience, and could not resist second-guessing some of the war leader's decisions. But on the broad strategic plan of attacking Germany through the Mediterranean rather than by frontal assault before 1944, they were virtually unanimous in affirming his approach. Churchill was perceived to have been at the center of the entire war effort, a human dynamo whose firm grip on strategic policy was unsurpassed in Britain or America. His actions in 1940 were brilliant, with the failed intervention in Norway no fault of his own. Churchill's urgent calls for action and innovation from his generals were contrasted with the delay and indecision of less imaginative minds. Even the Greek intervention in 1941 that ended in failure was considered an honorable policy well worth the effort. Only one reviewer on the right questioned whether the intervention was justified, given the Greek government's opposition to it, but he too concluded that Churchill had proven beyond any doubt the necessity of aiding "valiant Greece" in its fight against the German invader.

The Tory press dismissed wartime criticisms of Churchill's leadership as petty, especially since he had accepted more than his share of the blame for military tragedies. Reviewers focused instead on Churchill's success in steering US strategic planning toward Europe, marked by FDR's decision to crush Nazism first before focusing on Japan, an outcome that wholly justified his joint command of the offices of Prime Minister and Defence. With his enhanced powers, Churchill was able to push overly cautious service chiefs to the limit, achieving results much more quickly, claimed the Tory press. Churchill's justification for attacking Italy in 1943 also was seen as
warranted by circumstances, though some reviewers wondered if it didn’t undermine cross-Channel invasion plans, even if the southern strategy was well designed to secure British interests in the region. Rothermere’s *Evening Standard* fully supported Churchill’s strategy, calling him the undisputed architect of victory in the West: “His reputation indeed, in the minds of all thought-full critics, has been enhanced by the passage of the years and the difficult and saddening happenings since the end of the war. Again and again he has been proved right, and those who sought to denigrate his motives and belittle his deeds, have been shown to be sourly and dismally wrong.” Churchill’s leadership was seen as the key to victory, and could have secured lasting peace had it not been debased by the folly and inexperience of others. There was no doubt that the Italian campaign was secondary to Overlord in Churchill’s thinking, despite what American critics alleged. Churchill’s candor in discussing strategic differences with the US only enhanced his claim never to have doubted the necessity of a cross-Channel invasion.

The left-wing press, on the other hand, widely denigrated Churchill’s reputation for military genius propagated by his supporters on the right. Crossman acknowledged that for a few weeks in spring 1940 the spirit of resistance engendered by Churchill was more important than weapons. He also commended Churchill’s “maritime strategy” of concentrating on sea power in the Atlantic as Britain’s first line of defense, but strongly disagreed with strategic decision-making after 1940. Crossman considered the decisions to aid Greece in 1941, the saturation bombing of Germany, and the focus on Italy as all badly flawed, since they forced a vast diversion of war resources that delayed D-Day by a year. On relations with the US, Crossman complained that Churchill feebly capitulated to the Americans over vital wartime issues, such as the destroyers-for-bases deal and demand for unconditional surrender in 1943. Nonetheless, Churchill displayed strategic acumen in appreciating the vital importance of the Middle East and mounting the strongest possible resistance in Egypt, since it was the only theater in which Britain could significantly aid the Soviet Union before 1943. The US plan to sit idle for a year while building up an invasion force seemed terribly misguided in light of the titanic battles taking place on the eastern front.

However, Crossman’s colleague Anthony Bevan lambasted Churchill for allowing the war in the West to languish while Russia struggled valiantly to repel the Nazi horde. Bevan reminded readers that in 1943 he had pointed out Italy’s poor terrain for engaging large numbers of German troops, an opinion that was shared by Smuts, but which Churchill inexcusably disregarded. Churchill urged a landing far to the south of Rome, whereas the Americans wanted to attack farther
north where support for Mussolini was weakest, a strategy that Bevan thought would have short-circuited many months of hard slogging up the mountainous Italian peninsula. Thus, Churchill’s excuses for delaying the cross-Channel invasion in 1943 were deemed simply not credible. It was not for any grand strategic vision that he focused on the Mediterranean, but merely because it was a British sphere of interest. Churchill’s desire to reap glory for Britain at the expense of rational planning motivated his efforts to reinforce Alexander’s army in Italy, which would have ensured further delays of Overlord. Such antics severely tried American patience, leftists claimed, so that by 1944 he had lost what influence he once enjoyed over FDR and US strategists, thereby losing the opportunity to impose a coherent British strategy on the Grand Alliance.

In the Liberal press, Churchill’s strategic leadership in wartime was viewed as both masterful and amateurish. A few reviewers praised Churchill as a born strategist who more than any previous politician adroitly handled a war machine of incredible complexity. H.W. Harris suggested that proof of Churchill’s skills as a strategist was that no major disagreement arose between the service chiefs and Minister. At least that was how Churchill wished people to believe it, but as Alanbrooke and Major General John Kennedy later revealed, it was far from the truth. Nonetheless, Liberal reviewers argued that every document in Churchill’s war memoirs displayed his strategic imagination. A.J. Cumings concluded that Churchill “believed he knew better than anyone else how to run the war; and in cold retrospect it has to be admitted he was right.” Those reviewers with little military experience found it exhilarating to watch over Churchill’s shoulder as he directed the war effort, and they were chary to second-guess him.

Britain’s foremost military thinker B.H. Liddell Hart felt no such compunction, however. He argued that Churchill’s justification of the Greek intervention in 1941 was seriously undermined by knowledge at the time that there was a high probability of disaster. The heavy losses suffered by Britain on land and sea severely handicapped Wavell’s desert campaign, forcing him onto the defensive. Liddell Hart noted that for two years Rommel ran circles around British forces despite suffering an acute shortage of men and materiel. But he thought Churchill’s greatest blunder was in Asia, brought about by his wilful ignorance regarding the strategic importance of Singapore. Churchill maintained in *The Grand Alliance* that nothing could have saved Malaya anyway, but given Britain’s immense build-up of half a million men in Egypt by late 1941, Liddell Hart challenged this assertion. Worse, Churchill was guilty of focusing on short-term military objectives without considering until far too late the power vacuum arising in Europe from Germany’s defeat:
“This blindness is the more strange since Churchill’s latest volume prints abundant evidence of Stalin’s consistent hostility.” The author’s black-and-white contrast between the disasters of the early war years and his dynamism that achieved stunning victories later in the war was far too simplistic. Such a two-dimensional picture ignored the lack of resources that Wavell and Auchinleck experienced in 1940-42, and the abundance of supplies enjoyed by their successors Alexander and Montgomery from late 1942-45. In contrast, Chester Wilmot strongly supported Churchill’s war strategy in the last two years of the war, contending that it saved the Western allies from a disastrously premature invasion of France. Churchill’s firm and effective handling of military policy and resources ensured that “the cause” did not become a victim to political bickering.

In the US, newspapers displayed remarkable uniformity in appraising Churchill’s qualities as writer, statesman, and warrior. Even the Anglophobic Chicago Tribune, whose reviewers had reacted acerbically toward Churchill’s theme of British imperial greatness, praised his genius for leadership in war. The far right Tribune, the moderate conservative New York Herald Tribune, and the liberal New York Times were virtually indistinguishable from the Tory press in paying fulsome tribute to Churchill’s political and military genius. The uncritical tone of American reviews is exemplified by the New Orleans Time-Picayune, which asserted prior to the release of Volume I that Churchill’s memoirs were “unquestionably a classic,” destined to become an authentic and indispensable narrative for generations to come that “every thinking man and woman” had a duty to read. Churchill’s memoirs were “a historical and literary monument to inform and inspire generations of men,” it claimed. American reviewers considered Churchill a master of language who combined artful simplicity and majestic rhythms to produce a work of incomparable brilliance. The Christian Science Monitor considered the memoirs proof of a perfected writing style that placed Churchill among the great men of letters: “This first volume...is like entering a cathedral. The hush of greatness is all around.”

There was little to distinguish commentary in the daily press from weekend book reviews in major US newspapers. Anne McCormick’s review of Volume I for the New York Times Book Review observed that Churchill “is at once the hero of the drama and the dramatist. This dual character is immortalized in this book, the magnificent beginning of the crowning work of his life.” Though she felt that Churchill’s account of the war was far from definitive, what mattered was that “it will be The war book because it will be the only one in which the grand theme is matched by the grand style. Few books belong in the category of great events, and this is
one of them. Few books make history in the sense that the epoch they depict will always live as they saw it. This is such a book.” It was a solid masterpiece, brilliant but durable, which could not be surpassed. Churchill’s gift for “pathos, satire, invective, and urbane wit,” combined with awe-inspiring care for detail, put his work well beyond the category of ordinary memoirs. Before the publication of Volume II, some American reviewers already thought that Churchill was assured of imperishable fame as the foremost author of the second world war, “a modern-day John-the-Baptist,” articulating the dreams and hopes of millions. His memoirs were a moral epic of “burning, unforgettable memory,” its author’s genius flaring “with the intensity of an exploding star.” Some reviewers got so carried away with superlatives they felt that grandeur of Churchill’s theme and his memoir’s magnificent power and scope defied review, as there was little with which to compare it. The Republican San Francisco Chronicle and Democratic New York Times both considered that never before had one of the world’s truly great men written such a brilliant narrative of the history he helped to shape. Not until Volume VI did any hint of criticism for Churchill’s literary style appear, when reviewers noted the mainly descriptive account of the last year of war that lacked the author’s considered judgements. American reviewers in the press were equally positive about Churchill’s statesmanship and military strategy, at least until the events of 1943-45, accepting his interpretations as the last word. His pre-war opposition to appeasement and call for rearmament were considered vindicated beyond a shadow of a doubt, his thesis of a preventable war unchallengeable for generations to come. The memoirs were a lesson and a warning, said the Los Angeles Times: “...free people cannot and must not tolerate a dictator anywhere at any time, or believe of him anything save evil. Appeasement is death.” Chamberlain was “the prince of ineffectual appeasement,” whose policy paralleled the “unwisdom and carelessness” of Washington politicians. Americans leaders could not escape censure for smugly feeling before 1941 that the upheaval in Europe was no concern of theirs. Churchill’s memoirs offered documentary proof that he was overwhelmingly right in all essential details about international politics. At the same time, there was some concern that Churchill’s generalizations of interwar politics slurred over details of vital interest. But McCormick thought it unlikely that any British leader could have broken through “the pathological revulsion from war that blanketed the mind of England and France” in the interwar era. While paying tribute to his wartime leadership, the Christian Science Monitor questioned whether the author’s very brilliance as a military leader made him less than ideal as a statesman for building peace.
Most reviewers considered Churchill's realism most praiseworthy, expressing appreciation for his masterful political strategy in establishing the foundations for a Grand Alliance. The arch anti-communist might easily have turned his back on Russia in June 1941; instead, he carefully cultivated its friendship despite repeated Kremlin insults. Churchill's adroit handling of Anglo-American relations in 1941 was also critical for winning US support before Pearl Harbor. American reviewers were thankful that Churchill's realism had tempered FDR's naive idealism toward the Soviet Union, while his ability to mediate between leaders kept the alliance focused on its primary task of defeating fascism. Churchill appeared to understand European leaders much better than the Americans, who owed much to his management, diplomacy and strategy in bringing the war to a successful conclusion. The author's fantastic grip on the details of war policy was considered far superior to most other political planners. Churchill drew the last ounce of military potential from a stuffy bureaucracy that often sought to create obstacles to decisive action. Thus, American commentators readily conceded to him the honor of being the principle architect of victory, despite Britain's obviously weakened condition by 1943.

In assessing the most important strategic decision of the war, most US newspapers accepted Churchill's assertion that he always favored the cross-Channel invasion. They appeared unwilling to debate him on this point, as some US officials had done in their memoirs. Churchill's dynamic personality was said to have attained a strategic unity that gave him most of what he wanted, though only after much time was wasted by petty US obstructions. Only Robert Sherwood among newspaper reviewers thought Churchill's claim to have always favored Overlord was belied by "far too many 'chance phrases' in more chapters than one, and Winston Churchill is a master of language who chooses his words carefully, especially when such momentous issues are at stake." The author seemed increasingly defensive in Volume V because of his many disappointments and frustrations with US officials in directing war policy after 1942.

American liberal weeklies took a more critical stance on Churchill's statesmanship, strategy, and literary skills. Paul Hutchinson perceived the memoirs as a vital source-book on the second world war, crammed with unimpeachable facts that historians would utilize for centuries, The Gathering Storm a brilliant apologia that could not be overturned. However, in his next review Hutchinson sharply criticized Churchill's narrative as dull, badly arranged, and full of "turgid minutiae." While James Newman initially thought them the most colorful and literary of all postwar memoirs, with facts skillfully arranged like a great novelist, he later noted that Churchill's narrative
had stalled in a welter of documents. Nonetheless, for *Triumph and Tragedy* Newman again praised Churchill’s writing, “his huge final chords magnificently muted.” In contrast, historian John Lukacs’ review of *Triumph and Tragedy* for *Commonweal* attacked the “tawdry concert of praise arranged by our literary public relations experts” for superficial, ponderous, and uninstructed reviews of Churchill’s final volume. Though supportive of the author’s strategic arguments, Lukacs did not consider his narrative style in any way praiseworthy. Some liberal reviewers readily agreed that the memoirs were a publishing sensation, the author a brilliant chronicler who brought clarity to chaos, and who was too good a historian to indulge in wisdom after the fact. Dexter Perkins, though, considered the memoirs un-deserving of the Nobel Prize for Literature because they lacked literary brilliance, while Anthony West complained of Churchill’s failure to create a stimulating narrative to match the sweep and grandeur of the wartime events he depicted.

In contrast, conservative US weeklies considered the Nobel Prize for Literature awarded Churchill in 1954 entirely justified. *Newsweek* called the memoirs “the modern equivalent of the songs of Homer over the fall of Troy,” while *Time* praised them for their “lusty, unflagging readability” and the basis for all future histories on the war. Churchill’s candid account of the appeasement debate was esteemed an invaluable record of “unwisdom and carelessness” by the good-natured who succumbed to wickedness, whereas the author pursued an undeviating virtuous stance. Leftist critics of Churchill were dismissed as motivated by class hatred and pettiness. The memoirs revealed inner motivations of leaders in power, such as Baldwin’s crass opportunism contrasted with Churchill’s integrity and morality. The greatness of Churchill was seen in his ability to anticipate and master vastly complex situations that arose in world affairs, as opposed to the tunnel vision of lesser politicians and statesmen.

America’s liberal press perceived Churchill’s memoirs as an indictment of statesmen who had not mastered the arts of political and military strategy. Reinhold Neibuhr lamented democracy’s failings which Churchill sought unsuccessfully to correct in the 1930s, and finally did at a terrible price in the 1940s. World War II was a time when great men carried the burdens of leadership, Newman asserted, in contrast to the feeble sloganeers of today “who were not fit to wipe Churchill’s pen.” J.B. Brebner found himself transported by the memoirs to where the master of destiny performed with nobility, virtue and wisdom, despite being ignored, condescended to, and overridden by FDR, and being treated boorishly by Stalin. Few reviewers chose to remind readers that before the war Churchill’s egotism and eccentricity had made him an untrustworthy politician, though Paul
Hutchinson did suggest that Churchill was not quite as prescient as he alleged.\textsuperscript{107} Churchill's ignorance of Asia and his weakness for appraising past events in light of present circumstances, his outrageous self-esteem and conscious effort to re-live the role of Marlborough in his own life made him an uneven strategist and diplomat, with unrivaled skill matched by reprehensible action. In his final review, Anthony West recounted a long list of blunders by Churchill before the war that caused most politicians to distrust him.\textsuperscript{108}

Scholarly reviewers in monthly and quarterly periodicals were far and away the most critical yet of Churchill's faulty leadership, with only a few reviewers conceding that his personal narrative succeeded brilliantly as literature. British historian G.P. Gooch felt that all six volumes throbbed with the pulse of a dynamic and energetic personality, whose enforced leisure from politics after 1945 enabled him to compose "a masterpiece" of historical literature. For John Hubbard, it was to the everlasting good fortune of posterity that Churchill's stirring words, which rallied the democracies in war, were preserved in print to inspire readers in peacetime. He did not doubt that \textit{The Second World War} would become a classic of English literature, despite the fact that it constituted the standard apologia of a famous statesman. But his thesis of a preventable war was considered dubious and unproven, his account of the 1930s too simplistically premised on high politics, with broader historical processes beyond Churchill's ken of comprehension. John Cairns of the University of Toronto agreed that Churchill's memoirs were good history, but were far from the greatness that had been widely attributed to them: "[A] long, hard look at this historic sense reveals important limitations - crippling ones to anyone claimed to be the greatest living historian." Churchill's philosophy of history was based on the exploits of a few great men; power and achievement were the gods he worshiped, with fate and chance the only other engines of change he recognized. Unlike most contemporaries, Cairns perceived Churchill's world view as grounded in a profoundly pessimistic view of life, which explained why his memoirs ended on a tragic note.\textsuperscript{109}

Other scholars thought the memoirs terribly biased and vainglorious, meaning they did not succeed as either biography or history. It was rumored that Churchill wrote his speeches and dictated his books, which explained why the former were so much better than the latter. Churchill's narrative was elevated above the tedious only by his character and the events depicted.\textsuperscript{110}

Some scholars argued that Churchill's interwar narrative was highly problematic in trying to link his messages from \textit{The World Crisis} to \textit{The Second World War}. It meant that his account of
the interwar was stretched too thin, only gaining momentum with his discussion of the Munich crisis. Walter Hall was doubtful that war was preventable, though he conceded that the Nuremberg records proved a grand alliance in the late 1930s could have stopped Hitler in his tracks. But Churchill’s harsh judgement of Britain’s interwar leadership was attacked by critics who noted his own substantial errors in judgement, undermining the notion that a simple change of leadership might have averted war. Churchill appeared to have learned and forgotten nothing about Versailles, while totally ignoring the economic imperatives of appeasement. Structural weaknesses in the Versailles settlement and in Britain’s traditional power base meant that vigorous leadership could not have avoided the predicament of appeasing fascism before the war.111

Among scholars who agreed with Churchill’s thesis of a preventable war, his memoirs were said to offer a valuable lesson in statecraft. The lack of fearlessness among political leaders in interwar Britain was considered a major factor in the “misguided appeasement policy” and unwillingness to heed Churchill’s “truthful warnings.” His unique combination of experience and prose style was providential for the education of English-speaking peoples. The interwar years offered evidence of democracy’s unfortunate tendency to advance inferior men while geniuses like Churchill were kept from power. British historian A.L. Rowse contended that Tory leaders totally misread public opinion in the 1930s, which he alleged was solidly behind Churchill’s demands for greater military preparedness. Rowse urged readers to heed Churchill’s warnings by utilizing his text as a guide for building peace, while eschewing the “ancient irritations” of British leftists.112

Other scholars concluded that Churchill’s genius for leadership was justified by the record; his gift was the foresight of a realist rather than that of a prophet. They agreed that Churchill demonstrated brilliant political talent in forging a Grand Alliance out of such disparate entities as capitalist America, imperial Britain, and communist Russia. Regardless of the alliance’s many frustrations in the war, it held together until fascism was crushed in Europe, and for that Churchill deserved the lion’s share of credit. Even as British power waned, Churchill’s personality and remarkable political skills continued to inspire and lead in wartime.113

Churchill’s military skills were thought by many scholars indispensable for victory and showed exceptional competence for a civilian leader. From disaster in 1940 to crushing victory in 1942 and beyond, Churchill’s guiding hand was at work, ensuring that even minor concerns over weapons and logistics were not neglected.114 Churchill’s military intuition, by no means infallible, was deemed far superior to other political leaders, especially the dictators.115 But explaining away
the many military disasters of 1941-42 was more difficult. Determined leadership in London was credited by reviewers for what gains were made in those trying years, while the fiascos were blamed on incompetent generals, just as Churchill alleged. Few historians questioned his justification for a southern strategy of attacking Germany, except Francis Neilson, who castigated Churchill’s “Mediterranean stupidity” as responsible for the failure in 1943-45 to prevent communists from gaining dominance over eastern Europe. Reed Whittemore acknowledged that Churchill’s narrative succeeded on many levels, offering value for money to readers in the form of entertainment and education by converting the tragedy of appeasement into a modern version of the fall of man from moral virtue, with the author as hero who redeemed national honor and saved humanity. While Churchill’s leadership was vital to allied harmony and victory, Whittemore deemed his morality play incredulous when he attempted to superimpose it upon the entire war, extending his interesting story beyond the realm of plausibility for the cynical modern-day reader.

The moral dimension to Churchill’s leadership was accented by religious scholars. They emphasized that Churchill brought to policy making a history-shaping moral force superior to the calculated judgements of other officials. This morality permeated his memoirs, contrasting past mistakes with the principles of correct action that served to enlighten readers with political wisdom. Churchill’s greatness as a war leader elevated him above personal biases and shortcomings by combining the qualities of intellect and moral dynamism harnessed to a cause in ways that no one else could emulate. Some non-religious scholars agreed that Churchill had the intellect to recognize his mistakes and failures, the moral integrity to show humility, and a humane generosity toward the failings of others. Consequently, his memoirs brought great intellectual and moral force to bear upon the greatest issue of the day - the survival of the West. It proved, said H.S. Commager, that moral character counted for much, and Churchill was above all a moralist “clad in the armor of a righteous cause” that Americans found very appealing. Churchil’s leadership and resolution in the face of desperate odds were awe inspiring to American reviewers, proving to some that the spirit and soul were more important than military strategy and power in winning battles. Churchill’s book was a testament not to military brilliance but to a moral quality which gave him and his country courage, mental resilience and strength of spirit.

Forging the Anglo-American Fraternity

Churchill attached tremendous importance to the idea of an English-speaking “special
relationship,” which formed the lynchpin to his postwar metanarrative of British power. Thus, it is striking that British newspapers and journals did not have more to say about it. Reviewers in Britain fixated on Churchill’s memoirs as a monument to their nation’s glorious achievement in war, with Americans widely perceived as latecomers to the main event, having dawdled on the sidelines while Europe’s last surviving democracy fought for its life. No one could ignore the fact that US military strength was ultimately decisive in the West, but American policy, strategy, and leadership between 1933 and 1945 were compared unfavorably by the right to that of Britain’s wartime leadership. While the leftist press was critical of political elites in both countries, it saw in American power a new imperialism that was even more belligerent and threatening to world peace.

The right-wing press played up the nationalist message in Churchill’s memoirs, ignoring the full implication of Churchill’s theme from Volume I, “How the English-speaking Peoples Through their Unwisdom, Carelessness, and Good Nature Allowed the Wicked to Rearm.” The author’s contention that Chamberlain made a measureless blunder in 1938 when he forsook the American hand of friendship proffered by Roosevelt was only acknowledged in passing. Several Tory newspapers commented briefly upon US generosity and cooperation after the outbreak of war in 1939, reiterating Churchill’s notion that American sympathy was born of common traditions, ideals and beliefs among English-speaking peoples. Like Churchill, they did not recognize the existence of a large Anglophobic political lobby in America, preferring to focus on the tremendous postwar reception Americans were according Churchill and his memoirs, which was seen as a sign that they now appreciated fully what he and the British nation had meant to the war effort.

Churchill’s diplomatic and strategic vision was credited by the right for having forged the close Anglo-American military alliance after 1941 through his personal influence on the US President. FDR’s wisdom was his apparent ability to appreciate Churchill’s genius by overriding the narrow plans and ambitions of his own advisors. Roosevelt’s memory was sanctified by Churchill’s memoirs, which depicted a President who was always wise, benevolent and helpful, in stark contrast to the roguish leaders in the Kremlin. An instinctive understanding was thought to have developed between the two English-speaking leaders, with Churchill’s brilliant statesmanship steering the decision-making process in Washington and London by shrewdly conceding on small points in order to win on the larger strategic issues.

However, there occurred a marked shift in the right’s attitude to US policies in the final two volumes. Many Britons still smarted from American accusations since the war that Britain had
prolonged the conflict because of timidity over incurring casualties. Some Americans claimed that
British leaders had undermined plans for the cross-Channel invasion by diverting US forces to the
Mediterranean in order to limit casualties and bolster imperial interests. The *Manchester Daily
Dispatch* thanked Churchill for exposing such allegations as “legends without factual foundation.”
R.C.K. Ensor (Scrutator) indignantly shifted responsibility for delays in the war onto Americans,
declaring that US officials “with not a tithe of Churchill’s war experience,” used cast iron theory to
oppose the British leader’s ingenious strategic conceptions, resulting in many missed opportunities
to prosecute the war. Churchill was deemed to have convincingly refuted the charge of British
obstruction in planning Overlord, the *Times Literary Supplement* reminding readers that he
appreciated better than any other leader the risks of a major amphibious operation against a powerful
land army. His primary concern always was to ensure its success, since failure would have added
years onto the war, and possibly induced Stalin to negotiate a settlement with Hitler.\(^{125}\) William
Andrews claimed that Churchill continually worked toward the fruition of Overlord: “He is ever
thinking how to ensure its safety. It is above all others, the way to victorious peace. In these pages,
Overlord is paramount.” Given Churchill’s vastly superior experience with war, rightist opinion
wondered why he showed such deference to the Americans for so long, forgetting that Britain had
little choice but to defer to the allies with bigger battalions. Alan Brooke’s diary reveal that if
Churchill had been any more obstructive of US plans, it was prepared to re-direct the main war
effort to the Pacific theater, a strategy that US commanders were eager to pursue.\(^{126}\)

The right feared that FDR was at heart anti-British, since “he was inclined to suspect our
most innocent motives” for something more malicious, thought Ensor. Americans revealed glaring
ignorance and naivete in overestimating the capabilities of China, interfering in British imperial
affairs, and badly misreading Stalinist Russia. Nonetheless, some Conservatives continued to affirm
near-perfect Anglo-American harmony to the very end of the war, as Andrews alleged: “The outlook
was darkened by the death of President Roosevelt, whose mind, though sometimes suspicious of
British tactics, moved so closely with the Prime Minister’s.”\(^{127}\) Yet documents produced in
Churchill’s own memoirs hardly justifies such a position.

If national pride and identification with empire on the right did not permit greater recognition
of America’s role in winning the war, disenchantment on the left with Anglo-American hegemony
in the West had much the same effect. Leftist critics perceived Churchill to be a symbol of elitist
social control, interpreting his dream of an Anglo-American fraternal association as a quest for
global hegemony over progressive political movements in the world. While the moderate left compared Churchill’s imperialist values unfavorably to the US President’s apparently progressive ideas on reforming the capitalist system, among the radical left they were both seen as part of the same social structure involved in propping up an essentially conservative world order. The far left saw the Anglo-American alliance as an insincere attempt by the two main capitalist powers to counteract communism’s ability to win hearts and minds around the world during the war against fascism. The actions of Western leaders were denigrated as “feeble” and ignorant when they proclaimed a policy of unconditional surrender in 1943 because it sabotaged the capability of leftist underground movements to gain support in occupied Europe, thereby prolonging the war by two years. It was just one of numerous instances when Churchill was alleged to have shown weakness and “political stupidity” in acquiescing to American initiatives for the sake of maintaining harmony between the two capitalist powers. Churchill’s glowing account of the Grand Alliance in action was ridiculed as a cynical attempt to disguise the intention of Western leaders to use it as a temporary expedient before turning against the Soviet Union.  

Moderate socialists were more sympathetic towards Churchill’s aim of promoting Anglo-American unity, though they too felt that the memoirs were being used as propaganda for “selling Britain” to Americans after the war. Crossman noted that Churchill appeared to comprehend precisely those aspects of his country that Americans found so enchanting, leaving out “the boring and sober realities” of English life. Churchill “personified Old England” that American visitors encountered with delight on their tours of Oxford, Cambridge, and London’s Horseguards Parade. But such mis-perceptions did not diminish the sincerity of Anglo-American friendship during the war, which Crossman noted was based on a mutual respect for liberty and freedom, and a loathing of tyranny, though the failure to achieve an equivalent rapport with Soviet Russia made the wartime alliance less that “Grand.”  

Crossman credited Churchill with uncanny skill in utilizing his understanding of American psychology to control the direction of the war effort. From 1942-44, Churchill knew that as long as he remained content to play second fiddle in public he could ensure that the British view prevailed in strategy sessions between leaders. But with the Russians, Churchill was forced onto the defensive appeasing Soviet suspicions of Anglo-American intentions about a second front. In order to preserve British honor and prevent Stalin from making a separate peace, Churchill urged a large-scale action in the West in 1942, rather than concentrating on a buildup for the main invasion
the next year. When fighting in North Africa extended into spring 1943, eliminating the possibility of a cross-channel assault that year, Churchill and FDR cast about for an alternative plan that would keep their forces busy. Short-sighted expediencies and reaction to emergencies dominated strategic thinking, claimed Crossman: “Anglo-American policy was a series of snap improvisations, adopted almost haphazard in the intervals of a continuous, all-absorbing argument about the relative merits of Overlord and the Mediterranean campaign.” Amateur generalship by both leaders and an obsession with waging total war prevented them from considering a negotiated peace that might have saved lives. They failed to foresee that their military strategy would create a power vacuum in central Europe that the democracies were ill-equipped to fill. Crossman did not explain, though, how Western leaders could have pursued a negotiated settlement as long as Hitler remained in power, or what the consequences of such action would have been on an exceedingly paranoid Stalin. Churchill’s memoirs suggested that war brought the English-speaking peoples close to fulfilling their historic destiny of establishing an enlightened hegemonic order over the entire world. In the postwar era, he tried to revive what he perceived as the harmony of sentiment that had proven so successful in war. But leftists believed this “special relationship” was a chimera based on Churchill’s romantic misreading of US policies during the war. Isaiah Berlin appeared to agree, noting that the abnormal imperatives of war drew closely together two civilizations that were in essence profoundly different, a reality epitomized by the starkly contrasting world views of FDR and Churchill. While Churchill looked to the past for inspiration, Roosevelt was uplifted by an enthusiasm for the exciting challenges of the future in which America would be preeminent. For Britain’s Liberal press, the Anglo-American alliance was a great achievement of Churchill’s leadership. There was less agreement for his argument that better leadership could have secured active American involvement in European affairs in 1938. His denunciation of Chamberlain for spurning Roosevelt’s overtures before the war was discounted, since US politicians lacked the will to perform a *volte face* when public opinion strongly opposed “foreign adventurism.” The *Manchester Guardian* dismissed Churchill’s optimistic assessment of American policy before 1941, since it often entailed misguided advice and misinformed criticisms rendered from the safety of neutrality. Ambassador Bullitt’s “hysteria” over Britain’s refusal in May 1940 to send its last twenty-five air squadrons to aid French resistance completely overlooked the fact that France was already a lost cause. Sending the squadrons would not have turned the tide of war, but it would have seriously jeopardized British security. The US government’s vocal disapproval of Britain’s decision
to sink the French fleet at Oran rather than risk it falling into German hands was also seen as misguided, since it failed to recognize that at a stroke the entire balance of power at sea was thrown into Britain’s favor.  

Liberal commentary warmed to the US after Volume III, when the functioning of the Grand Alliance was considered. Liberals expressed a strong appreciation for how crucial close cooperation between Britain and America became for the survival of the free world. The idea of Anglo-American unity, so widely accepted in 1950 that its utterance sounded platitudinous to the *Economist*, had been vigorously resisted before Pearl Harbor by pacifists and a variety of leftist groups in the West. Since that time, the “blindness and folly” of isolationist sentiment in America had been entirely refuted. Liberals in Britain and America accepted Churchill’s rosy appraisal of his relationship with FDR. Sherwood praised Churchill’s account of FDR’s reaction to the fall of Tobruk in 1942 as intensely moving, filling him with nostalgia for “those generous and enlightened days when good friends were not hesitant to behave as such.” The *Spectator* and *Listener* considered Churchill’s personal friendship with FDR unparalleled and a central feature of Anglo-American relations that forged “one of the prime constituents of victory.” However, their enthusiasm for its successes was tempered by distaste for “unconditional surrender,” which ensured such an escalation of devastation before the war ended that western Europe was left utterly dependent on American assistance while eastern Europe was firmly under Soviet control. Liberals supported close Anglo-American cooperation during and after the war, but they regretted that it came at the cost of Britain’s independence of action.  

For Volumes V and VI, the Liberal press could hardly ignore Churchill’s bitterness about disagreements with the US over war strategy in 1944-45. Despite their admiration for FDR, British Liberals accepted Churchill’s contention that he was stymied by inflexible American decision making that refused to modify military plans to meet new political circumstances. Though the Americans appeared militarily more ruthless in their readiness to incur higher casualties that the British, politically they were thought naive about Europe, yet were unwilling to accept wiser councils in London which could have prevented many mistakes. The *Spectator* declared that time and again Churchill proved himself “so often, so incredibly and so magnificently right....”  

Ironically, in setting out his case for alternative strategies, Churchill undermined much of the sentiment of friendship between the two English-speaking allies that he had carefully built up in his first four volumes. Nonetheless, Liberals muted this point by continuing to emphasize the
cooperative nature of the relationship more than its sources of friction. When Churchill wrote after
the war of building an Anglo-American partnership on the solid foundations of the wartime alliance,
he was thinking very selectively of 1941-43 when he dominated strategic thinking. It was a view
that most Liberals in Britain found persuasive because Churchill couched it in terms of national
honor and transatlantic amity linked to a humanist philosophy of world progress.\textsuperscript{137}

In America, while liberals largely ignored FDR’s appeasement and isolationist foreign
policies from the 1930s, Republicans readily vetted the issue in reviews of \textit{The Gathering Storm},
despite Churchill’s contention that isolationism in the US was a major impetus for FDR’s prewar
stance. Churchill’s assertion that America shared responsibility for the failure to stem Nazi
aggression short of war was overlooked by liberals in all the finger-pointing at Tory leaders. It was
much safer politically for them to blast Chamberlain and Baldwin for pre-war follies. However, the
Republican \textit{San Francisco Chronicle} directly related British interwar folly under its pro-
appeasement leadership with FDR’s foreign policy, who was accused of perpetuating a “head-in-the-
sand” attitude among Americans. Likewise, the \textit{New York Herald Tribune} noted Chamberlain’s
“incredible folly” in spurning American overtures in 1938 while criticizing the President’s refusal
to act more boldly in shaping public opinion. \textit{Time} was more belligerent, blasting FDR’s foreign
policy record and that of his successor, which it decried as “wasteful, extravagant, mocking, [and]
painfully inept.” It expressed incredulity that he could have been so cool toward Britain in 1939-40
at a time when Americans were overwhelmingly supportive of the beleaguered democracies of
Europe. While it is true that public opinion polls at the time showed sympathy for France and
Britain in their war against Germany and Italy, those same polls revealed intense opposition
everywhere, save for the south, to becoming militarily involved in the war.\textsuperscript{138}

American liberals felt that Churchill was more sorrowful than angry at American foreign
policy before Pearl Harbor. The \textit{Washington Post} acknowledged US shortsightedness in the author’s
critique: “Again and again Churchill contrasts the frequent incantations against evil, which came
from Washington, with the desperate urgencies of the prewar years.” At the same time, it defended
Roosevelt’s policy by arguing that Churchill underestimated the numbing psychological impact of
the depression on millions of Americans. Anne McCormick in the \textit{New York Times} also parried
Churchill’s criticisms by noting that the documents reproduced in his memoirs gave little evidence
that the US entered his thoughts much prior to September 1939. His melodramatic account of seeing
a vision of death following Eden’s resignation, apparently over Chamberlain’s rejection of American
overtures, was startling to McCormick, given the prior indifference.\textsuperscript{139}

If Churchill’s critique of appeasement was meant to chastise Americans into right thinking on foreign policy matters in the postwar, his discussion of war strategy cut both ways in promoting English-speaking harmony. Republican newspapers happily criticized FDR’s leadership while praising Churchill’s strategic vision, though a few reviewers on the right felt there was complete unity among the allies on war strategy up to 1944. The Democratic press, on the other hand, was more inclined to point out flaws in Churchill’s exculpatory arguments regarding strategic errors that he alleged extended the war’s duration. These differences aside, there was largely bipartisan consensus in the American press that Churchill’s memoirs were proof of an Anglo-American wartime relationship that was special, displaying a unique and precious harmony of interests to resist all forms of tyranny in the world.

Republican newspapers downplayed the ambivalent attitudes to war in America prior to Pearl Harbor, contending that both Britain and the US were long-standing champions of high causes in the world, though it was acknowledged that in 1940-41 Britain’s finest hour was achieved without substantial assistance from abroad. Harry Hopkins’ “glowing comprehension of the Cause” in 1941 was seen as indicative of the unshakeable strength of the American and British peoples. This “intimate and natural fraternity of mind and spirit” was poorly understood by the Axis, and served as a refreshing contrast to the acerbic atmosphere of Anglo-Soviet relations during the war. Thus, Pearl Harbor was deemed the consequence -rather than cause- of an enduring alliance between English-speaking peoples, whose pursuit of global hegemony was a noble endeavor worthy of their two nations. Just as Churchill’s vitality energized the wartime alliance, his memoirs revitalized the sense of importance for world peace in preserving Anglo-American unity in the postwar era.\textsuperscript{140}

Moderate Republican considered Anglo-American differences before 1944 as secondary to the larger reality of a unified purpose in defeating fascism. What disagreements arose were due to the White House and State Department’s misunderstanding of European conditions. While Republicans noted the many vexations, difficulties and obstinate differences between the allies that arose after mid-1943, Churchill was praised for working doggedly “to soothe the prideful nationalisms and prickly personalities,” adroitly keeping the allies focused on the goal of victory.\textsuperscript{141} In contrast, liberals took a more sympathetic view of FDR and American strategy from 1940-44, defending US policies as shrewd and effective. Prior to Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt was credited with doing everything he could to bring about the closest cooperation short of a military alliance between
Britain and America in the face of serious domestic opposition. At great political risk, he aided Britain “through the backdoor” in ways which bent, but did not break, the letter of the law. Sherwood noted that the complexity of Asian and Pacific considerations complicated American foreign policy before December 1941, necessitating FDR’s cautious approach. Churchill’s memoirs were thought overly contentious in critiquing US strategies that put limits on his own ambitions, especially after America entered the war. Nonetheless, liberals and conservatives agreed that Anglo-American unity during the war overrode in significance any squabbling over strategy.

Liberal weeklies, however, were more equivocal than newspapers toward Churchill’s idea of a fraternity, arguing that his obsession with the US was based on his notion of it as a bulwark of empire. Churchill envisioned the wartime alliance as the harbinger of a supranational conglomerate under British leadership, an idea that J.B. Brebner noted had approximated reality in 1941-43, but was already deteriorating by the Teheran conference when US leaders assumed an independent, and at times condescending, posture toward their ally. Churchill’s memoirs sought to prove how detrimental this development was to the war effort and postwar world order. While Brebner was at least sympathetic to Churchill’s vision, most American liberals were critical of the author’s romantic contention that he and Roosevelt symbolized the workings of a common Anglo-Saxon spirit. Despite his obvious respect and admiration for the office of President, there seemed little actual warmth or friendship between the two war leaders, with Churchill’s imperious habit of command utterly alien to Roosevelt and the American way of life. British loyalties in the war remained centered around the Commonwealth and empire, with Churchill seeking to manipulate US decision-making to channel allied resources toward imperial ends. British strategists were thought to have succeeded only for a while in disguising their underlying contempt for FDR’s “naive political idealism.” In fact, strategic disagreements between the allies were seen as a routine part of the relationship by 1943, highlighting the growing confidence of American leaders and increasing irritability of Churchill at not getting his way. Liberals were astonished that Churchill supported the fascist Badoglio in Italy after Mussolini’s fall and his failure to comprehend American eagerness to establish a representative government, as Crane Brinton noted:

Here Churchill’s most Churchillian retrospect on Mussolini, a passage which deeply offended many Americans when it appeared in the newspaper version of this volume is a perfect case in point...[M]ay it also be the judgment of a man who believes deeply that democratic values realizable in England cannot be realized in Italy? Roosevelt, on the other hand, is a good American, convinced that at bottom all human beings are -or would like to be- good Americans.
A few months later, at Teheran, Churchill seemed subtly disturbed by Roosevelt's presence, thought James Newman, especially when he found that the President and Stalin had banded together to force agreement on a second front in France for 1944.\textsuperscript{146}

Like most liberals in the press, American intellectuals cherished the memory of FDR for his social reforms at home and Wilsonian internationalist foreign policy expressed in the Atlantic Charter and United Nations. Right after the war, they still believed in the possibility of cooperation and peace with the Russians, who were fondly remembered as the West's valiant ally in the fight against fascism. After Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech, liberals became torn between adherence to internationalist principles and mounting fear of communism as a threat to the American way of life. This ambivalence was apparent in reception of Churchill's call for Anglo-American global hegemony. Liberal intellectuals accepted his interpretation of US responsibility for war origins because their international idealism led them to maintain that it should have supported the League of Nations and taken an active part in European affairs in the interwar era. They largely accepted Churchill's lessons from the prewar era because they conformed to their view that America needed to assume a larger military and political role in policing world affairs. However, Churchill's argument that the postwar order could have been stabilized if Americans had adhered to his own strategic vision for winning the war in 1943-45 was less well received.

Churchill's memoirs highlighted the need to coordinate political and military policies in America. While Churchill had ensured the closest communication of interests between service departments and their political head in the war, in America FDR set policy directly from the White House through his personal envoy Hopkins, keeping the War and State Departments at arms length. Consequently, generals and departmental chiefs lacked an effective voice in setting war policy. Political scientist Dan Price believed that the British and American administrative systems actually complemented each other, and that a hybrid system was essential for the future survival of democracy.\textsuperscript{147} US military historian H.J. Maloney accepted Churchill's critique of Britain's prewar civilian leaders as highly relevant for Washington politics, making the memoirs a useful guidebook for civilians and military alike: "There will certainly form in the mind of every American reader the US parallel to the successive positions of Britain in the ghastly period between the wars." Maloney alleged that while highly competent and well trained military officers in the US had presciently warned of the need to rearm, civilian politicians foolishly ignored the warnings from Europe with
The result that America was ill prepared for war when it came.\textsuperscript{148} The gradual shift in US foreign policy toward belligerency after 1939 was seen as a major political triumph for Roosevelt and Churchill, since Britain was fighting the battle of the West against “the enemies of our civilization.” Churchill’s bold assertion in 1940 that the US must perform its “duty” if Britain and America were to achieve “our common purpose” had startled many Americans. Yet it was this confidence in the existence of a joint Anglo-American interest in crushing fascism, Deuel observed, that helped create the reality he so fervently desired. Churchill’s memoirs revealed the “phenomenal growth in Anglo-American cooperation” from 1940-41, facilitated by a common understanding of sea power as essential for their nations’ survival and security.\textsuperscript{149} Scholars agreed that up until 1943 Churchill articulated better than anyone else the mutuality of interests that strengthened an Anglo-American relationship capable of subduing the entire world. America’s war effort was thought to fully justify Churchill’s confidence in the power of this international nexus to transform the world order and set it on a stable footing. The intimacy between Churchill and FDR depicted in the memoirs was seen as proof in itself that allegations of major disputes over strategy were exaggerated. James Godfrey argued that there was full agreement between the two countries on the necessity of invading northern France, while Farrell thought Churchill had “driven his arguments home effectively,” proving his superior strategic grasp. Most impressive was the alliance’s strength in weathering the enormous stresses of war, proof of the extraordinary goodwill that persisted between the two nations in the face of all obstacles.\textsuperscript{150} Only Hamilton and Neilson dissented from this perspective, contending that Churchill’s memoirs were a facade of harmony to disguise the author’s true ambivalence toward the US President and American power. They felt that Churchill was less than candid in recounting the debates over war strategy because it was his aim to avoid exhibiting the Anglo-American brotherhood in arms “as a dog-fight.” Neilson went further, accusing Churchill of diplomatic artifice to entangle America in another European war, which “leave him not a rag of respect.” Churchill’s diplomacy had snared a guileless America into sending its youth “to the European shambles!”\textsuperscript{151}

Churchill’s faith in a divine will that was bringing the British Commonwealth and US together to form the greatest agglomeration of power in history permeated his writing on the war. He sincerely believed that it was providence that had forged the Anglo-American alliance, with himself the great facilitator. As long as his views held sway, all obstacles on the road to victory were supposedly overcome. Only when American leaders began to deviate from his leadership did
a glorious victory turn into the tragedy of cold war. Reviewers on both the right and left in America were generally supportive of the first part of this theme, at least in respect to the wartime role of the “special relationship.” Reception of the second part of his analysis became entangled in the author’s lessons about cold war origins in the latter stages of the war.

**Fighting the Cold War**

Churchill’s memoirs began with a personal account of interwar politics that blamed appeasement and faulty leadership for the failure to avert disaster. In concluding his memoirs, he was confronted with his own record of appeasement that involved sacrificing a small democratic nation (Poland) to its larger totalitarian neighbor. His last two volumes, published at the height of the cold war, sought to blame other war leaders for the division of Europe into hostile ideological blocs. As with his prewar narrative, he suggested that his leadership could have averted the cold war and saved British imperial power. His cold war narrative coalesced his prior themes into a metanarrative of war and redemption, produced when the democratic world was suffering from a crisis of confidence in its own ability to survive communism’s challenge.

The Tory press provided a solid phalanx of support for Churchill’s message of victory forsaken by misguided US leadership. In contrast, his diplomacy at Teheran and Yalta was accepted as statesmanship at its finest, without any hint that it entailed appeasement of Stalin. Likewise, Britain’s intervention in Greece in 1944 was justified by international events since the war that revealed communists as cruel tyrants whose word could not be trusted. Tory newspapers praised Churchill’s memoirs as a devastating critique of US and Labour policies for their failure to sufficiently counteract communist expansionism during and after the war. The right argued that Churchill presciently recognized before 1945 that the Soviet Union and socialist ideology were perils to world peace and stability. For this, Churchill was touted as the greatest champion of democracy in the 20th century who smashed two dictators in war, but was tragically removed from power with an even most formidable one still standing. While he fought the first two with the sword, he now battled the third with his mighty pen. The Tory press did not doubt that the judgement of history would confirm Churchill as the savior twice over of Britain and the free world. As for Churchill’s alleged appeasement of Stalin, W.L. Andrews sharply distinguished between the Nazi thugs who were appeased by Chamberlain and the Russian ally for whom necessary concessions were made as an act of expediency. Conservatives commended the memoirs’ cold war
message as an invaluable lesson for all democracies. Appeasement of Hitler was the 20th century's world tragedy that bore directly on contemporary cold war realities. Since British readers had little first-hand knowledge of the Soviet Union and its rulers, Churchill's memoirs were thought to offer brilliant insights into the "sinister nature of the socialist system." In 1949, as the NATO alliance was being implemented, the right in Britain asserted that Churchill's memoirs proved the need for regional alliances to supplement the workings of supranational organizations, which in the past had proven ineffective at stopping aggression from unscrupulous dictators.153

At the same time, the right accused British socialists of harboring anti-democratic values and displaying ignorance of international dangers. The Daily Mail reflected on the grim parallel between Labour policies in the 1930s and the postwar: "The Socialists who voted against their country's defence are now in office, and democracy is again in danger." Labour was enjoined to study Churchill's memoirs for their lessons on foreign policy and national security, warning against what was considered the current government's foolhardy appeasement of Russia. Rothermere's Sunday Dispatch ominously declared that "thunder was again in the air," requiring Churchill to intervene once more to steer the ship of state through the menacing storm ahead. Comparing Churchill to his socialist detractors, the Evening News stated: "Again and again he has been proved right, and those who sought to denigrate his motives and belittle his deeds, have been shown to be sourly and dismally wrong." Blindness to facts and sourness of temper were considered afflictions of both domestic and foreign types of socialism that had little in common with British decency and common sense. In castigating Stalin's abandonment of the West to its fate between 1939-41, the Tory press reminded readers that socialists had imperilled Britain and the free world prior to Hitler's invasion of Russia, and did so again in the postwar era.154

Only the Beaverbrook press on the right took exception to Churchill's cold war message, which reflected its owner's prior crusade for aiding Russia during the war. The Evening Standard and Sunday Express paid fulsome tribute to the Russians for breaking the back of the Nazi war machine between 1941-45. Churchill was chastised for not coming to Russia's aid sooner by diverting more convoys eastward, and for not accelerating plans to invade France to relieve pressure on the Red Army. At the same time, Churchill's percentages deal with Stalin in 1944 was questioned as not furthering the interests of world peace by re-establishing spheres of influence in Europe. As a result of that casual arrangement, the Yalta conference was bedeviled by complications and discord among the allies arising from American suspicion of British policy.155
Most other reviewers on the right, however, lauded Churchill’s “brilliant and far-sighted” negotiating skills with the Soviets. The percentages agreement with Stalin was excused as a temporary expedient that accurately reflected the military situation and enabled Britain to enter Greece just in time to expel communist guerillas without Moscow’s interference. For example, Ensor suggested that it was the disruptions in political leadership of Britain and America at the end of the war that gave Stalin such an advantage in 1945, allowing him to brutally impose his iron grip over Poland: “A great deal of the paralysing deterioration in the concert of the victorious Powers, which soon hardened into the international disaster of the ‘cold war’, must be ascribed to the change of Government brought about by the British electorate for internal and domestic purposes only.” Churchill was said to be too magnanimous to make recriminations in his memoirs, but documents produced in *Triumph and Tragedy* clearly revealed that blame lay with the White House and Pentagon. In addition to being a shrewd negotiator, Churchill showed “decency, forbearance, and loyalty” toward Russia, which was reciprocated by “abominable rudeness and crass opportunism.” The right was convinced that Stalin always intended to communize eastern Europe; remarkable was how patient Churchill acted with “the grudging, mean and unreliable” Russians who were chillingly uncooperative and unsympathetic to British concerns. Given such a treacherous and expansionist ally, there was not much Churchill could do to prevent the alliance’s break-up after 1945.

Whereas the Kemsley and Rothermere press was staunchly anti-Soviet in their commentary, the *Times* was ambivalent about Churchill’s conduct toward the Russians in the last year and a half of war, a reflection of its pro-appeasement editorial policy before the war, and leftist slant after it under Barrington-Ward. Nonetheless, it dismissed charges that Churchill deliberately delayed Overlord in order to take advantage of Soviet difficulties in the east, or that Churchill and Roosevelt pandered to Kremlin thugs in 1943-45. As Churchill had noted: “You always walk with the devil till you get to the end of the bridge.” At the same time, it disputed his argument that Americans were to blame for the cold war because they failed to push as far east as possible in 1945, noting that Churchill’s tactic of entrenching allied armies in central Europe to extract concessions from Stalin would only have accelerated the slide into a cold war rather than prevented it.

In the weekly press, right-wing journals rebuked the Russians for ingratitude toward Britain’s efforts to aid them in the war. James Squire rebuked both hardened foreign communists and home-grown socialists as duplicitous, incompetent ingrates “who couldn’t hold a candle” to Churchill:
Why Sir Stafford Cripps was ever sent to Moscow as Ambassador I can only conjecture; we had a Coalition government in office, and it may be that certain of our word-mongers, who think that the word ‘Socialist’ means the same in all countries, earnestly maintained that the right man to discuss things with ‘Socialists’ in the Kremlin was a Fabian, vegetarian Socialist from England; not realizing that, in the eyes of the 13 men in the Kremlin, the British Labour Party consists of petit-bourgeois, reformist milk-sops, or even capitalist cat’s paws.

Squire considered Cripps “an earnest bigot who made a mess of it” because he could not comprehend that in Russian eyes Churchill strode the world stage as a colossus. In contrast, Britain’s socialists were two-faced charlatans who promised a golden age that was a false utopia premised on faulty dogma. However, “the present ghastly situation” in 1950, when Russians controlled half of Europe and Britain was fighting in Korea, owed a lot to Roosevelt’s naivety. Churchill was never a “Babe in the Woods” about Russians, claimed Squire, but Roosevelt forced him into making too many compromises. It was left to Churchill “to beard the bear in his den” in 1942 when Stalin got too unruly. But the only evidence offered was a single incident in which the Prime Minister refused to accept a truculent telegram from Moscow berating Britain’s decision to cancel a convoy to Murmansk during the battle for Stalingrad. *Punch* was also scathing of Soviet guilt and ignorance, praising Churchill for getting tough with the Russians after they showed ingratitude over the immense help Britain was rendering through its risky Arctic convoys. Not mentioned was the scale of Russia’s titanic life-and-death struggle, and the very limited resources supplied by the West in comparison to what was required. In *Punch’s* final review, Keown acknowledged “the almost sycophantic friendliness” between war leaders at Yalta in February 1945, which served to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, despite Churchill’s “vast knowledge and experience” that surely alerted him to Russian deceit. Presumably, Churchill was playing a diplomatic cat-and-mouse game with the Kremlin, and had he been allowed to remain in office would have prevented the breakdown in East-West relations after the war. But once the Attlee-Bevin combination gained power, there was no hope of containing Soviet ambitions.

Churchill’s memoirs were said to reveal that despite efforts to propitiate Stalin, the Soviet dictator remained unappeasable. Though it was too soon to cast definitive judgements on the events of 1944-45, the *Times Literary Supplement* found appalling Churchill’s assumption of Soviet good faith after Yalta, chiding him for basing strategic policy on short-term military considerations that failed to anticipate the communization of eastern Europe. Documents in *Triumph and Tragedy* showed Churchill pursuing cooperation with Stalin and Tito’s communists at the same point that his narrative alleged a political showdown was inevitable. In fact, in 1943 Churchill cut off aid to non-
communist partisans in the Balkans when he became convinced that leftist guerillas could inflict more harm to the Germans. While Churchill’s motives were “plainly and quixotically non-political,” they were not necessarily misguided.\textsuperscript{162}

The left’s reception of Churchill’s cold war theme drew antithetical conclusions from those of the right. Churchill’s account of the Soviet ally was repeatedly criticized for failing to stress the decisive nature of the fighting on the eastern front, and the heroism of Russian soldiery. The \textit{Daily Herald} concluded that Churchill was not a true defender of democracy, but an anti-democratic reactionary whose cold war message was dangerously reactionary. His wartime policies led to the division of Europe into spheres of influence, and were not primarily the fault of American leaders. It asserted that Churchill had a poor comprehension of the Soviet Union despite his superficial camaraderie with Stalin. His anger and confusion about the abruptness of Soviet diplomatic exchanges revealed that he was unable or unwilling to comprehend the true scale and intensity of destruction in the east, or how little Britain was doing to assist its embattled ally.\textsuperscript{163}

In the radical press, Churchill’s memoirs were decried as propaganda for the cold war rather than representing a fair accounting of each ally’s contribution to victory. Churchill’s fleeting tributes to Russia were entirely inadequate, while he dwelt ad nauseam on the dubious record of Britain’s army in North Africa. The \textit{Daily Worker} contended that Churchill’s memoirs constituted “a cold war maneuver” to obscure the immense debt owed by the West to Soviet arms, using rhetoric to intoxicate and blunt the critical faculties of his readers “like sherry in a trifle.” Churchill was the personification of counter-revolutionary forces in his reaction to the growth of communist influence in eastern Europe during the war, supporting a host of reactionary and corrupt monarchies who had discredited themselves by previously flirting with fascism. Churchill’s “shocking record of double-dealing and deception” in the later stages of the war were revealed by his hypocrisy in sending Stalin expressions of comradeship and affection while he schemed to start the cold war, claimed Kartun. At Yalta, he told the world that past misunderstandings had been wiped out while he secretly plotted a new armed front against communism.\textsuperscript{164}

In attacking Churchill’s memoirs, the \textit{Daily Worker} ridiculed reviews in Labour newspapers as anemic and hypocritical, given the Party’s support for the wartime coalition. However, the \textit{Daily Herald} and \textit{Tribune} hardly pulled their punches in attributing the miserable state of the postwar world to Churchill’s “deceitful policies” toward Russia. Churchill’s memoirs were criticized for completely overlooking the importance of resistance movements in tying down Germany’s military
and providing vital intelligence information. Labour Defence Secretary Emmanuel Shinwell criticized Churchill’s suppression of Greek partisans as shameful. The Greek people had wanted to oust the king because of his dictatorial attitudes, he claimed, but Churchill feared that communists would gain the upper hand, and since that would not suit the ending to his book, he decided to intervene, provoking a confrontation with communist demonstrators as a pretext for armed action.\textsuperscript{165}

Independent leftist weeklies also were critical of Churchill’s cold war message. The editors of \textit{Reynold’s News} deemed the author’s ideas “worn-out” and lacking vision. Churchill could not comprehend the liberating forces on the left unleashed by the war against fascism, since he feared revolutionary change from progressive social movements. Thus, in 1944 he ignored public enthusiasm for the Beveridge Plan and engaged in “thumb-twiddling” over reconstruction, a move that contributed to Labour’s victory at the polls in 1945.\textsuperscript{166} The \textit{New Statesman} noted that leftist movements everywhere had been given a major boost by their opposition to fascism, but Churchill’s cold war mentality made him oblivious to this profound shift in social consciousness. As for Churchill’s alleged prescience, Crossman considered the Yalta agreement completely incredible if by 1941 the British leader was as wary of the Kremlin as he maintained in his memoirs. In fact, Churchill’s account revealed numbing mis-communication between Russia and the West. But unlike the radical left, Crossman also roundly criticized Stalin for his utterly unrealistic policies, evidence of the Kremlin leader’s “cussedness, ignorance and provincialism.” In “adapting the past to the conveniences of the present,” Churchill tried to balance his portrayal of the Russians as valiant allies in 1941-45 with his claim to have foreseen the growing Soviet menace. While the right lauded Churchill’s genius for negotiating with the devious Russians, Crossman argued that Stalin played the Prime Minister “like a fish and knew the abusive bait which would prove irresistible.” During the war, Churchill had appeased Stalin, but now that appeasement “is out of fashion, Mr. Churchill’s legitimate claims to fame -that he persuaded the Americans to appease Russia- is an embarrassment.”\textsuperscript{167} Crossman considered Churchill’s policy toward the Soviet Union as incoherent and poorly coordinated with the US. The Western allies pursued opposing strategies that were driven by the desire for national prestige, enabling Stalin to divide and conquer. Only after the war did Churchill interpret this development as proof of Soviet machinations. Churchill’s boast that he anticipated the policy of containment in 1944 by Britain’s intervention in Greece was deemed ridiculous. Instead, a British debacle was narrowly averted as a result of Churchill’s “romantic ruthlessness” in Greece, which set a terrible precedent that Crossman believed “destroyed the moral
position of the Western democracies and brought them down to a level on which the totalitarian has all the advantages." Churchill’s memoirs revealed that he had learned little from the intervening eight years of cold war.168

The Liberal press, which was philosophically supportive of international cooperation and understanding, nonetheless sided with the right in praising Britain’s war leader as the defender of democracy against communist tyranny. The sincerity of the author’s quest for a better world where freedom and justice would prevail was contrasted with Soviet cynicism and oppression. It was widely assumed that Russia was an expansionist power whose ambitions were anathema to Western interests. In the late 1940s, Liberals saw democracy once again threatened by totalitarianism, much as it had been ten years earlier. The editors of Time and Tide enjoined readers to study The Gathering Storm like no other book, since the very situation that brought about the last war was repeating itself, with Churchill once again out of power and unable to take action. There was “undescribable irony” in the fact that Labour was treating Churchill’s warnings about communism much as Baldwin had treated his concerns about the Nazi peril. The Observer decried the fact that democracies were making the same mistakes of the past by lacking vigilance and demonstrating an unwillingness to confront hard truths from visionaries like Churchill.169 Liberals found illuminating Churchill’s view of Russian communists as ingrates and a liability prior to 1942. After 1942, he was as preoccupied with keeping the peace among allies as waging war against Germans: “Stalin, with his ‘manifestations of ill-temper and bad manners,’ made inordinate demands on patience and restraint.” Tragedy marked the memoirs’ later volumes when other Western leaders failed to recognize Churchill’s prescience about Stalin.170 Time and Tide, which before the war was strongly leftist, now argued that the passage of time had only verified Churchill’s judgement of the Soviet enigma, making his memoirs compulsory reading for all “fellow travelers” who saw communism as a model for social reform. The Korean war only added emphasis to Churchill’s warnings.171

Churchill’s justification of his policies from the latter part of the war was defended by Liberals as a measured response to the “vicious, unprincipled and sustained campaign” of the left to discredit him. Wilmot’s The Struggle for Europe, which blamed FDR for making disastrous concessions to the Russians, was used to rebut Churchill’s detractors. His policies, founded in historically minded realism, might have prevented the loss of eastern Europe to communism had British views prevailed. Liberals saw the final opportunity for lasting peace irretrievably lost when Americans withdrew from central Germany in July 1945, despite Churchill’s ardent appeal to defer
the move until Stalin made concessions on Poland. The *Manchester Guardian* was appalled that Americans had assumed at the time that Stalin was not an imperialist: “As naively as Chamberlain thought he could get on with Hitler if they met face to face, so Roosevelt though he could get on with Stalin and make him a good democrat.” Churchill’s political prescience concerning escalating Russian bellicosity was ignored by the US, who “threw away” all the West’s cards.172 Liberal journals agreed, with only the BBC’s *Listener* offering a rebuttal to Churchill’s version of cold war origins. B.H. Liddell Hart countered that Churchill was as blind as FDR and the generals in focusing on short-term military objectives at the expense of grand strategy, giving Russia the chance to dominate Europe and Asia: “Their blindness is the more strange since Churchill’s latest volume prints abundant evidence of Stalin’s consistent hostility.” Churchill’s discussion of the decisive summit conferences in 1943-45 dealt largely with trivialities, saying nothing important about attitudes toward issues that came to dominate postwar politics. Churchill’s cyclical view of “history as the future” was considered the main reason he falsely elevated Soviet Russia in his memoirs to the status of evil totalitarian aggressor, with himself as Cassandra.173

In America, a postwar consensus emerged among liberals and conservatives that the US bore a heavy responsibility as leader of the free world to counteract the new totalitarian threat. Churchillian perspectives on Stalin, Russia, communism, appeasement of dictators, and the dangers of isolationism formed a central feature of this new bipartisan world view. Liberals and conservatives differed, however, on exactly how to fulfill this new role. Republican interventionists like Luce promoted “America’s Century” in which the US actively promoted its cultural and political values around the world. Many liberals disliked Luce’s imperialistic overtones, preferring to fight isolationism at home and communism abroad by promoting international cooperation through the United Nations and multilateral arrangements. Still, they lauded Churchill’s memoirs for providing a deeper understanding of Russians, the Soviet system, and Stalinist dictatorship. Russia in the late 1940s was likened to fascist Italy as “a jackal” in search of prey.

The rightist press recounted how the Soviet government and communist agents around the world had congratulated Hitler on his successes in 1940, ignoring the consequences of defeat in the West. For such “callousness and carelessness,” Churchill’s bitterest criticisms regarding the utter untrustworthiness of communists were said to be entirely warranted. Soviet wickedness was apparent in Stalin’s casual recounting to Churchill of collectivization in the Ukraine that caused starvation for millions of peasants. Walter Millis noted about *The Hinge of Fate* that “no other book
I know of gives so clear a picture of the mind of the monumental Georgian. The others are
guesswork. Mr. Churchill knows." Weinberger drew a harsh picture of Stalin’s sinister character
as “increasingly suspicious, unreasonable and surly” as the war progressed. Churchill’s revealing
portraits were “indispensable for politicians, diplomats and ordinary citizens” trying to understand
tyrranny in the modern world. His tact in dealing with this most enigmatic and tight-fisted ally was
much admired. The lesson that dictators should never be appeased from a position of weakness
was internalized by Americans to such an extent that it still animates foreign policy debates there
today. From the first volume of Churchill’s memoirs to his last, reviewers repeated as gospel the
author’s contention that appeasement of dictators was immoral if pursued from a position of
weakness. In applying this lesson to an American context, reviewers ignored Churchill’s
qualification by castigating appeasement as utter folly. Liberals who praised the United Nations but
failed to support US military intervention on its behalf were urged to read Churchill’s memoirs
carefully for their foreign policy lessons.

Churchill’s argument that wartime strategies were a direct cause of the cold war was widely
accepted by liberals and conservatives, both of whom blamed the naivete of US leaders for failing
to hold back communism in eastern Europe. Churchill’s Balkan adventure, severely criticized by
newspapers in 1944, was hailed in book reviews as a great achievement. On Poland, Millis noted
the “brutal and utterly callous immolation of the Warsaw Underground on the altars of Communist
imperial interests.” He praised Churchill for trying to salvage something out of the flood tide of
Soviet expansionism by his percentages deal with Stalin, though the White House had considered
it too scandalous to contemplate. Millis found shocking Roosevelt’s idea that the US should mediate
between Soviet and British imperialism, as was Truman’s adherence to this misguided policy at
Potsdam in 1945. Reviewers thought that the sad state of the postwar world gave Churchill cause
to chastise Americans for failing to construct a postwar settlement before the fighting ended.
Triumph and Tragedy was perceived as an articulate warning of how much could be won through
valor and how much lost through leaders whose wisdom and resolution did not match Churchill’s.
Soviet treachery was in plain view by the end of the war, yet the US government pretended that
allied harmony and cooperation could be sustained indefinitely. The lack of advanced thinking
by American leaders on the postwar order proved of immense benefit to the Russians, said columnist
Henry Jackson, who ignored the fact that Churchill too was obsessed with military considerations
for most of the war. FDR was blamed for disastrously combining misguided confidence with woeful
ignorance of world affairs and a fear of offending the Russians. For some reason, the President thought “that he alone ‘could handle Stalin’ by means of his personal charm.” Weinberger added that Churchill foresaw the precise course of Soviet postwar policies in 1944, but FDR’s “feebleness” meant that the US did not stand firm against “the fearfully consistent policy of aggression” practiced by the Russians.¹⁷⁹

The only chink in this armor of Churchillian righteousness came from a few obliquely worded queries by liberal commentators. Harrison noted the remarkably cordial relations between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin at their summit meetings: “One is tempted to ask if greater good will on the side of either East or West, or even both, could have produced that ‘permanent friendship.’” Sherwood wondered if Churchill was not being entirely forthcoming regarding his strategic aims in the last year of war. While Sherwood praised the author’s “magisterial work,” in private he complained to Harry Laughlin that Churchill’s justification of his policies was misguided and small-minded. In Volume V, Churchill spent too much time snarling at his critics and far too little time explaining the background to events that led to the cold war: “In writing my review, I dislocated several vertebrae in the attempt to lean over backwards out of respect for this great man, but he could have and should have done much better than this.” Laughlin agreed that it showed Churchill and FDR at their worst, as when they allowed Stalin to have a large part of Poland while joking about horse-trading populations.¹⁸⁰ But in reviewing Triumph and Tragedy, Sherwood revealed little of this frustration to readers, calling the book of overwhelming importance for an understanding of the postwar world. On Greece, Sherwood concluded: “The Prime Minister saved the day by an action which might be called foolhardy, but which must forever be called valiant...His daring venture so appealed to the imagination of the free world that controversy ceased - and today he must read with amusement of the cordial welcome given by Americans everywhere to the King and Queen of Greece who succeeded to the throne after George II’s death in 1947.”¹⁸¹

American liberal weeklies were less enamored with Churchill’s cold war message, but offered only moderate dissenting opinion. Reviewers in the Nation and New Republic sought to mitigate the criticisms leveled at FDR by accusing Churchill of being equally acquiescent in the establishment of Soviet hegemony in eastern Europe. Liberals accepted that the alliance with Russia was never an easy one, but not all of the blame lay with Stalin and the Kremlin, since Churchill’s contempt for Soviet foreign policy was manifest throughout his narrative. While he may have had good cause for such feelings prior to June 1941, when Soviet indifference led to Britain’s near-
destruction, after Germany invaded the Soviet Union Churchill should have shown greater appreciation for the scale of fighting in the east. His narrative treated Russia as mere background for events in the West. Britain and America filled Churchill’s field of vision, while Russia was an afterthought whose alliance with the West was seen by him as a historical accident of temporary significance. Future generations would puzzle over this distorted picture, claimed J.B. Brebner; the memoirs’ incomplete account of Anglo-Soviet relations “exhibited an unfortunate weakness for appraising past events in light of present circumstances.” Brebner also saw few insights into the emotional concerns of people that Churchill interacted with during the war. Likewise, the New Republic’s James Newman thought that Churchill’s memoirs clarified few of the “gloomy obscurities” about relations with the Russians. Newman even thought that Stalin had good reasons for being suspicious of the West over delays in opening a second front in Europe. Churchill and FDR deceived their indispensable ally over invasion plans, risking a serious breach.

Most American liberals saw Churchill’s memoirs as a pedagogical text for the cold war, but few thought that he could actually have prevented the ideological conflict, even had US leaders adhered to his end-of-war strategy. Churchill’s world view was deeply rooted in balance of power politics that liberals felt had given moral legitimacy to Russian hegemony over eastern Europe. J. Newman went further, arguing that Churchill was a “disgruntled trouble maker” whose outdated ideas imperilled the world. In the early war years, Churchill had been the savior of democracy, but he had since outlived the glory by descending into disillusion and betrayal of liberal democratic principles. Anthony West contended that Churchill’s entire career needed to be perceived in the context of his hatred for Bolshevism. During World War II, “[a]s victory approached, the theme of Mr. Churchill’s ancient fear of the Soviets became as important as the Dardanelles....” But his warnings were ignored because “memories could not be effaced” of his earlier adventurism in Russia. It was supremely ironic, thought West, that victory over fascism revived Churchill’s worst nightmare of a Bolshevized Europe that he had feared at the end of the first world war.

On the other hand, popular right-wing weeklies were perplexed by Churchill’s talk of friendship and camaraderie with Stalin in Triumph and Tragedy, though they justified his wartime praise for Stalin as a calculated move to shore up the alliance. At the same time, the right credited Churchill with a prevision of future trouble arising from the Kremlin’s insatiable appetite for territory and power. Newsweek and Time argued that personal friendship with Stalin did not in any way cloud Churchill’s vision of reality, evidenced by his outrage at Russian treatment of Poles in
1944-45. While Time suggested that Churchill was determined to avoid a premature breach in the alliance, Newsweek contended that he saw the war against Hitler as secondary by the start of 1945: “The great conflict [against communism] was too deeply embedded in the modern world to be ended by the defeat of one totalitarian power.” Churchill was depicted as champion of a “common cause” against international Marxism who was three years ahead of other leaders in recognizing the threat of a communized Europe. The editor of the evangelical Eternity, whose commentaries on the memoirs were widely quoted from pulpits around the country, exhorted American audiences on national radio to take inspiration from the British leader’s fight against godless communism. Churchill was seen as a “minister of the Word of God” in standing up to Stalin during the war, while his memoirs were a lesson to the world about communist wickedness.

Scholarly reviews were divided between those that saw Churchill’s memoirs as a pedagogical text of great importance and those that rejected the author’s interpretation of cold war origins. But whether reviewers accepted Churchill’s apportionment of blame for the cold war on American naivete and Soviet perfidy, or argued that British leaders shared responsibility for appeasing Stalin, they were traditionalists in believing that the Soviet Union was an expansionist “evil empire” that needed to be contained. Not until a decade later did revisionism begin to shift responsibility onto American capitalist aggressiveness for compelling a defensive USSR to counter the West’s push for hegemony in Europe with its own buffer zone in the East. But in the 1940s and early 1950s, Churchill’s account of the “Soviet enigma” was deemed to be extraordinary and essential reading for American leaders concerning the “cynical indifference” of the Kremlin to the fate of the Western Powers. After 1941, Churchill’s friendliness toward the Soviet leader was perceived as a shrewd exploitation of their common interest in destroying Nazism. He parried every offensive remark by Soviet leaders without losing his temper, while never forgetting the true nature of the “sullen, sinister Bolshevik state” he had once sought to destroy. Charles Rolo maintained that Churchill’s goodwill toward the Soviet ally was made a mockery by Kremlin conduct in the war.

Slosson agreed that Churchill’s memoirs wisely tempered sympathy for Russia in 1941-43 with evidence of Soviet guilt for past atrocities that enlightened readers about the communist mind. It was a mind that would not hesitate to betray the West by subversion from within, Slosson claimed. This open justification of postwar efforts to weed out domestic communism in America was reinforced by Robert Wilberforce:
In spite of the glory of victory, the chief theme of this volume, we who live in the postwar world are left with a sense of tragedy. The present seems so unworthy of that holocaust of lives....No doubt the grim fact of Russian Communism is largely to blame for the armed truce which has succeeded the war. But that is not the whole picture. If it was not for an insidious poison in Western civilization, Communism would be almost negligible.

For Wilberforce, the antidote to such poison was greater faith in the spiritual healing of the Catholic Church, a point he thought Churchill overlooked in discussing the rise in 1945 of a new tyranny “equally relentless and aggressive.” Churchill’s unparalleled understanding of war and its impact on the international order was what enabled him to enlighten readers about the significance of Stalinism, reviewers thought. Unlike FDR, Churchill recognized the Kremlin leader’s callous indifference to human suffering as a fundamental Russian characteristic, exemplified by his brutal conduct toward Poland. Triumph and Tragedy’s tone of sadness was considered the result of Russian trouble-making that prevented Churchill from ensuring a truly independent Poland. Churchill’s tenacious and heartfelt struggle with Stalin over Poland dispelled the glib criticisms of those who argued that Anglo-American diplomacy sold out Poland.

Intellectuals agreed that the failure of American officials to follow Churchill’s lead weakened the West’s position after the war. Diplomatic historian S.F. Bemis considered Churchill more of an internationalist than the cautious-minded Roosevelt, favoring a strongly-worded Atlantic Charter in 1941 that promised an international organization to preserve peace and ensure freedom. In contrast, Roosevelt’s “facile optimism” about his ability to influence Stalin caused him to delay implementation of clearly defined guidelines for a postwar world order. Rolo found it impossible to resist the conclusion that the West’s position after the war “would have been vastly more commanding” had Churchill’s long-range political objectives prevailed over the American doctrine that military expediency was paramount, a doctrine that US military officials adhered to as rigidly as President Roosevelt.

A few scholars saw the key lesson from Churchill’s narrative to be the vital inter-relationship between political policy and war strategy. Whereas Churchill was reputed to have seen the end of German and Japanese power leading inevitably to a new threat from Soviet imperialism, the US saw the defeat of fascism as the end of international crises facing the West, causing FDR to ignore the British leader’s view of a historical continuum to postwar problems. It was a lesson that the leading intellectual of political realism, Hans Morgenthau, warned had yet to be learned by Americans. In Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, US leaders continued to elevate military strategy above foreign
policy considerations. In Morgenthau’s opinion, Churchill’s memoirs were a repository of eternal wisdom that sought “to make us not clever for one day but wise forever.” Surprisingly, none of these commentators noted the British left’s critique of Churchill for the very same reason of failing to distinguish political from military considerations in the war.

American critics of Churchill’s cold war lessons of The Second World War derived mainly from the right. Most severe was Francis Neilson’s claim that Churchill incorrectly assumed benign intentions by the Soviets for too long, “babying Stalin along,” with the result that the world confronted problems now more terrible than those faced in 1939. Neilson’s extreme anti-communism prompted him to argue that the “virus” was spreading unchecked throughout the world, as Western democracies faced “a worse threat to Christian civilization than the Nazi forces ever were.” His vitriol extended to US officials, accusing Cordell Hull of being “the unwitting tool of Communists in the State Department.” Chillingly, Neilson claimed that in FDR’s entourage there were advisors more concerned about the success of Stalin’s armies than the fate of other allies, an allusion to the Alger Hiss case that implied there were more communist sympathizers still hiding in government.

Less extreme views nonetheless accorded with Neilson’s basic premise that Britain and America went too far in accommodating Russian demands in Poland. Churchill’s account of the Teheran conference convinced Slosson that the author inexplicably put great store in the Soviet leader’s assurances of future cooperation in 1945. Farrell accused Churchill of throwing overboard the Polish government in exile, and only “his guilty conscience” made him now ascribe trouble with the Soviets over Poland to the exile community’s “stubbornness.” It was nothing less than “a betrayal of the weak by the strong.” Also critical was Twentieth Century, which stated that when Churchill met Stalin in October 1944, “the wretched Poles were finally browbeaten into submission by the Western Allies’ threat to abandon them to their fate. In the end they were of course abandoned anyhow.” Churchill seemed to do everything possible to avoid annoying the Kremlin, including attempts to chloroform the British press from reporting vile Soviet behavior: “It is indeed difficult, after reading this account of the war-time conferences, to remain patient with the current cant about ‘Soviet trickery’ at or after Yalta. There was no trickery. The Russians asked for the moon, got a large slice of it, and calmed their allies with an assurance that they would not try to annex the Milky Way as well.” No serious attempt was made to keep the Russians out of eastern Europe, and they could hardly be blamed for capitalizing upon their opportunity.
Monument on Celluloid

Though the press depicted a wide range of opinions about Churchill’s memoirs, the right was clearly dominant in terms of sheer size. Their interpretation of Churchill’s metanarrative was further accentuated by the shift of liberal and moderate socialist opinion toward the right in the early postwar years. Even where there was sustained criticism, as in the leftist press and intellectual community, there was wide acceptance of the view that appeasement of dictators caused the second world war and cold war. In the late 1950s, such appraisals of Churchill’s war memoirs reached a new level of intensity when visual media adapted *The Second World War* for television and film. Since 1940, Churchill already was a celluloid hero of sorts, his image featured regularly in newsreels shown in movie theaters around the world. In the 1950s and 60s, film and television played a vital role in popularizing Churchill to a new generation of readers-cum-viewers who lacked direct experience with the war. The cultivation of a media image by politicians was still a new art form in the early postwar years; ironically (considering what was to follow) Churchill was initially hostile to the “vulgar” new medium of television. He even treated radio at arms length, accepting it only as an intrusive necessity on formal occasions. R.R. James notes that “radio was not his medium, and his thunderous declamations sometimes seemed comical when heard in the calm of a home.”

Though he is famous for his recorded wartime speeches, in fact he preferred speaking before live audiences, considering Parliament the primary forum for his perorations. In the late 1950s, just as scholars were beginning to reassess Churchill’s place in history and the merits of his metanarrative, the visual media swung into high gear to promote the war leader’s messages in the alluring form of popular entertainment. A second media chase for reproduction rights to Churchill’s memoirs began, and was every bit as intense as the publishing war a decade earlier. It culminated in film and television adaptations that were viewed by more people in more countries than were estimated had ever read Churchill’s war memoirs.

When *Triumph and Tragedy* was published in 1954, Churchill’s publishing syndicate had labored for almost a decade producing two million words of text. Aside from plans for several abridged versions of *The Second World War*, the memoirs’ project appeared at an end. Almost immediately, however, a surge in interest for a visual adaptation of Churchill’s war story arose. British film producers were first to broach the subject to Churchill, but it was the Americans who enjoyed the advantage as world leaders in commercialization of television and the production of big-screen feature films. Thus, it was American producers who first capitalized on Churchill’s memoirs.
as the perfect screenplay for a dramatic film of the war years. The man who succeeded in winning Churchill’s support for the new venture was Jack Le Vien, an enterprising New York film producer whose expertise was in war documentaries. His first achievement was to overcome Churchill’s strong aversion to television, since by the time Le Vien met him the author already had turned down several offers that he feared might cheapen his narrative. Before meeting Le Vien in mid-1958 aboard the yacht of shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis, Churchill had permitted only one other film producer to acquire production rights for any of his literary output, British film-maker Alexander Korda, whose jingoistic movies from the 1930s glorified the empire. Prior to the war, Churchill had been a consultant and script writer for a Korda short film, *Conquest of the Air*, released in 1940. Korda expressed an interest in producing a film based on *My Early Life*, but in 1941 Churchill sold production rights to his autobiography to Warner Brothers for £7500. The film was never produced, however, and its rights were later sold to Columbia Pictures by the Chartwell Trust for £100,000. Then in 1944, Korda acquired film rights to Churchill’s unfinished *History of the English-speaking Peoples* for £50,000, but again took no steps to bring the project to fruition.

Ten years passed before another British film producer, Roy Boulting, offered to create “a monumental film” based on Churchill’s memoirs that he claimed would be of great value for promoting Anglo-American relations. A US film on naval warfare, *Victory at Sea*, had just been released to public and critical acclaim, but Boulting felt that its American slant did not do justice to Britain’s war effort. He wanted to strengthen public awareness of the nation’s great contribution to victory, and believed that Churchill’s memoirs offered the perfect script for a film to balance the powerful and moving imagery of *Victory at Sea* with an account of Britain’s finest hour. He was convinced that only a British film company could do justice to Churchill’s war story, and would earn precious foreign currency for the cash-strapped economy. Churchill’s solicitor Anthony Moir was unimpressed by Boulting’s proposal, and the producer’s suggestion that an unauthorized American project was being considered struck him as a threat. For several years, while Churchill worked on *A History of the English-speaking Peoples*, all film proposals were put on hold. This did not deter television networks in the US and Britain from annually producing a flood of birthday tributes to Churchill in films celebrating his larger-than-life role in the second world war. Though weak on analysis, these films were strong on heroic imagery of Britain’s great war leader.

In 1958, Le Vien finally met with Churchill to propose a television drama based on his war memoirs, to be called “His Finest Hours.” Le Vien declared that the series would serve as a
postscript to *The Second World War*, as well as a family album that revealed the human side of the British war leader. He wanted to depict “the strong voice that cried out against the growing strength of Hitler and the growing weakness of Chamberlain,” using a unique film format in which the camera represented the memory of Churchill, seeing events, people and places as he saw them, with Churchill’s own image inferred from the context. Unsure of Le Vien’s credentials, Churchill consulted CBS personality Edward R. Murrow, famous for his broadcasts from London during the Blitz that helped sway American opinion on the war. Murrow warned Churchill against entering the deal since he considered Le Vien untrustworthy and unsuitable to the task, not mentioning that CBS was in the process of drawing up a film proposal of its own. Undeterred, Le Vien persisted in his quest until in early 1959 a deal was reached which promised to pay the author $75,000 (US) plus 5% of gross proceeds from the sale of television rights abroad.

Le Vien’s production company in New York worked in conjunction with ABC-TV and Screen Gems studios to come up with a script based on excerpts from Churchill’s memoirs. The producer intended to bring the memoirs to life by building inspiring musical and visual themes around its most stirring prose, so that Churchill would be portrayed as “the brave and intrepid Englishman who used the old-fashioned bow and arrow” to smite the evil Hun. In order to bring Churchill to life on screen, Le Vien planned to cast a theatrical voice to articulate his prose, with a narrator used for commentary and to focus audience interest and emotions on the subject: “This will enable us skillfully to weave a spell for an audience seeing and hearing our leading man - and then, by the second voice, being given an explanation of historical background, which is necessary at all times.” Le Vien envisioned a type of film presentation - the historical docudrama - never before attempted on television, but which became immensely popular afterward. Its central theme was “the struggle between good and evil, with Churchill the leading man.” His memoirs formed 70% of the dialogue, adapted for the screen by writers William Shirer (author of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*) and Quentin Reynolds (war correspondent and author of *Britain Can Take It*) so that each episode ended as a cliffhanger. Le Vien considered producing up to 78 half-hour programs but settled on 26 episodes, each based on specific chapters from the memoirs. Paradoxically, he told his staff that he wished to avoid “anything reminiscent of history or war per se” in the episode titles, instructing the script writers to always accentuate the personal and dramatic. Thus, rather than calling an episode “The Battle of Britain,” Le Vien preferred the more dramatic “City on Fire.”

In filming the series, Le Vien paralleled Churchill’s wartime exploits with Hitler’s actions
and appearances, so that the two historical figures came to symbolize in the minds of viewers “good
and evil, the lead and the heavy, the cowboy and the Indian.” Churchill was represented as the
symbol and embodiment of “Britain the good, alone and unafraid.” Despite playing fast and loose
with the historical record, Churchill and his advisors raised no objections to draft scripts as work
progressed from conception to production. In June 1959, Variety magazine broke the story that
Churchill’s memoirs were being adapted for television. By early August, filming in New York was
well advanced, though Le Vien still had not decided on the precise number of episodes to make.
Churchill’s advisors were more concerned about the choice of theatrical voice for the film, raising
doubts that Alec Guinness “was virile enough” for the voice of Britain’s war leader. Prince Philip
and Lawrence Olivier were considered before Richard Burton was finally chosen.205

In September 1959, the impending series produced intense competition among advertising
agencies in the US who fought for commercial air-time for many of America’s most prestigious
corporations. The entire television industry was abuzz with excitement, with world famous actors
clamoring for the chance to participate in what was thought to be the acting opportunity of a
lifetime. In Britain, the News Chronicle anticipated that the programs would contain “some of the
most dramatic and poetic use of the English language since Shakespeare.” Expectations that the
program would commence in the fall of 1959 proved premature, however, as film production
became ever more elaborate. Le Vien knew that his career rested on the success of the project, and
his meticulous care to ensure a ratings winner necessitated delaying its release until the following
year. He hired the top television producer of the late 1950s, Edgar Peterson, to direct the filming.
Peterson and the Chartwell trustees agreed to build on the strong reception of Churchill’s war
memoirs by referring to the volumes specifically by name and presenting them as the definitive
history of the war, which contravened Churchill’s own caveat placed in the preface to his work.206

In fact, the film project strayed far from any justifiable claim to historical veracity when Le Vien
decided that he needed to create a quality of freshness and youth in the program:

I am driving toward the point of avoiding the trap of making each episode seem an old
people’s war or an old people’s story. We need throughout a tone of freshness because we
are dealing with people and events 20 years ago, and many an atom bomb has gone under
the dam since then. [sic]

He demanded a tempo of immediacy, instructing his staff to avoid making the series too English,
in order to appeal to American and foreign viewers. Peterson’s directing was also utterly
unhistorical, claiming that the ingredients for making the series a success were the same as for a
good western: “There’s the chase, heavy, and a hero.” Nonetheless, the lack of historical veracity
did not preclude unprecedented sums of money being lavished on the film project. The Daily Mail
estimated that the total cost of production set an American television record. No expense was spared
to hire the very best artists in the business. For the soundtrack, Rogers and Hammerstein were
asked to compose an original musical score that would outdo their award winning work for Victory
at Sea. By the summer of 1960, Le Vien was at last ready after creating over one million feet of film
in producing his episodes.207

On November 28, 1960 Winston Churchill: The Valiant Years debuted on North American
television and was immediately greeted with public enthusiasm and critical acclaim. American
reviews effusively praised the innovative audio-visual techniques utilized in the program. Richard
Burton was credited with an inspired performance, waxing eloquent via a constant stream of
Churchillian quotations. The Philadelphia Inquirer lauded the stirring musical score, which it
compared favorably to Victory at Sea’s soundtrack. But highest praise was reserved for “the doughty
Briton whose six-volume history, The Second World War, inspired it all.” The Philadelphia Daily
News was equally smitten, declaring the series to be ABC-TVs finest half-hour ever: “The series
succeeds in translating Churchill’s eloquently wrought memoirs of World War II into ennobling
swatches of audio and video power and beauty.” Not to be outdone, the New York Daily News
declared: “In a world of petty men, appeasers, contrivers and compromisers he towered in pudgy but
rugged grandeur like a granite mountain above a soggy plain.”208 Television commentators were
awed by the enormous cast of prominent politicians and world leaders who were interviewed for the
series, including Attlee, Truman, Eisenhower, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Eden, Eleanor
Roosevelt, Adenauer, Nasser, Gromyko, Montgomery, and many others. The effect, according to
the Los Angeles Times film critic, was to reveal Churchill as “a giant rising among pygmies, a man
of divine providence who saved the world.” The Chicago Sun-Times praised “the classic theatrical
style” by which this largest chapter in contemporary history was presented.209

The US media was so impressed by the film that it exuded good feeling toward Britain, just
as some advisors had predicted it would. Britain’s Ambassador in Washington informed Churchill
that the series had done more than anything in recent years to enhance British prestige in America.
He acknowledged that Le Vien had produced a brilliant piece of propaganda disguised as
entertainment that would be shown around the world. While the series was still running, Telefilm
Magazine in the US honored it with an award for “Best New TV Series” and “Best TV Documentary Series” of 1960. Advertising sponsors were ecstatic at ratings figures for the first half-dozen episodes, assuring Churchill that they intended to maintain a higher than usual level of restraint in marketing their products out of respect for “the great responsibility” they felt in promoting the British writer’s story. President Kennedy was in tune with the messages too, declaring himself an avid watcher of the series, which he called the best film on television.\textsuperscript{210}

However, reception of the series was not unanimously positive in the US, even less so in Britain. A few media commentators rendered qualified criticisms, resisting the intense media “hype” surrounding the program. The TV critic for the New York Times was skeptical that the visual quality of the production came up to the standards of Churchill’s prose, but after several episodes he too gushed with praise for the program’s “stirring dramatization of great historical events and personalities.” Harriet Horne, media critic for the New York World Telegram, was impressed with the writing for the series, but expressed concern that the film did not do full justice to Churchill’s literary opus. In Britain, Le Vien noted in an interview for the BBC that there was enormous interest in the program, but also acknowledged that many Britons questioned the ability of an American film-maker to present a balanced and insightful view of the subject. It was apparent that some of the more literary and historical-minded British public considered the program a second-rate documentary at best.\textsuperscript{211}

Nonetheless, in May 1961 Le Vien declared his program an unqualified commercial success. Income receipts to date, along with projections of future earnings, were enough to make everyone associated with the project very happy indeed. The producers earned $1.3 million (US), with projected total distribution receipts ranging from $2.6 to $3.1 million (US). In September 1962, the series began a second highly successful run on North American television.\textsuperscript{212} A final tally of the program’s earnings in March 1964, not counting residual fees, revealed a total income of $2.5 million. The series was a media sensation, setting several precedents as the first television docudrama and the first major film adaptation of a politician’s memoirs. Within months of the series release, film producers were besieged with proposals from other political leaders to market their own memoirs for the small screen.\textsuperscript{213} Justified or not, the program was perceived by most viewers in the US as serious historical fare that offered an invaluable representation of the war experience.

The enthusiastic reception of his film inspired Le Vien to produce a book based on episodes from the television program. He planned to publish it in early 1962, timed to coincide with
completion of the series' second television run. Churchill’s memoirs on the second world war had come full-circle, with the film “spin-off” of his massive literary project becoming the basis for yet another literary venture. Le Vien’s book, *Winston Churchill: The Valiant Years*, was praised by the *Christian Science Monitor* for skillfully culling from Churchill’s memoirs the most dramatic segments depicting the great leader’s statesmanship during the war. The *Monitor* only worried that Le Vien and co-writer John Lord had done too good a job, making the war “so dramatic and brave” that inexperienced readers might be misled about its true nature. But the newspaper conceded that any book dealing with the “irrepressible, sentimental, indomitable, sonorous, human and grand figure, that man of the ages, Winston Spencer Churchill, could hardly be dull for a moment.”

Following television production, film-makers next sought to put Churchill’s memoirs on the big screen. The *Daily Telegraph* and *Time/Life*, who together owned the rights to re-publish documents used in *The Second World War*, evaluated several film proposals before Churchill’s solicitors intervened, insisting that the author retained all rights to “new matter” which included screen adaptations of his work. Hence it was the trustees, not the publishers, who ultimately decided on how to proceed with a film project based on Churchill’s memoir. In 1960, as work on the television series neared completion, Le Vien and Paramount Pictures proposed a multi-million dollar feature film, but while the lawyers haggled, Paramount withdrew its offer. It was not until January 1963 that Churchill’s solicitor, Twentieth Century Fox, and Le Vien finally agreed to a contract ensuring the author $20,000 (US), plus 7% of gross proceeds from a film.

In April 1963, Le Vien started work on *The Finest Hours*, directed by two-time Academy Award winner L.C. Stoumen. Together, they created a dramatic, documentary-style movie blending historic footage with newly photographed sequences. Churchill’s war memoirs formed the story line, with filming conducted on-location at Chartwell. The narration was performed by Orson Wells. In a BBC interview, Le Vien stated that his intention was to condense Churchill’s war memoirs into a three-hour dramatization, so that “anyone could watch the film and learn all about the great man who saved humanity from tyranny.” Le Vien declared that the film was ostensibly “the story of a man’s triumph over evil; of a gallant warrior who led, at first alone, and finally in concert with others, the forces of freedom to victory.” His film premiered in mid-1964 at the Royal Festival Hall in London, attended by the Duke of Edinburgh, Attlee, Eden, Ismay, Prime Minister Harold Wilson, and a host of other dignitaries from British high society. It proved a sensation in Britain and in virtually every other country where it was shown, with a chorus of adulatory commentary from
movie critics impressed by the technically superb quality of production. Its cinematic techniques were ahead of their time, and in the early 1980s some were still viewed as exceptional. The Evening News and Star declared that Le Vien’s film crew venerated Chartwell as a sacred temple, adding that Churchill’s war memoirs offered a “grandly tailored” script for the most stirring of war films. The Daily Express called the film “splendidly colorful.” The Times, though, complained that it lacked balance because it did not reveal Churchill’s many mistakes and strategical miscalculations.

The BBC’s film critic declared that the movie proved there now existed a fourth perfect scriptwriter for the English cinema, after Shakespeare, Dickens, and Shaw, with the heart of the film’s verbal feast coming straight out of the war memoirs: “In a way, it gave me the same feeling as listening to ‘Hamlet’ does -so many words and phrases sailing back on the waves of that rugged, rhetorical grandeur, phrases that are now part of the English language, phrases that are part of one’s life.” When asked why it took an American to make a film about the greatest modern Englishman, Le Vien replied that the English temperament prevented them from saying about themselves “what the outsider knew to be true,” noting that Americans viewed the English people and their war leader much more heroically than Britons themselves did. Unlike many people in Britain, North Americans were content to view the man through the exceedingly narrow prism of his finest hour in war, ignoring his many personal and political failings that had preceded it.

Nonetheless, a great many Britons also responded enthusiastically to the film, which set an all-time box office record for attendance and revenues in that country, attracting audiences of all ages, gender, and classes. One film critic noted that audiences tended to linger after the movie for the playing of the national anthem, an example of patriotism which by the early 1960s was becoming exceedingly rare in Britain. Entire grade-school classes engaged in movie outings, after which one twelve-year old school-girl was moved to write:

Your colossal courage and invincibility...awakened in us a new sense of patriotism and loyalty towards our country, and one of its greatest men. It made us realise how worthless our ‘pop’ idols and film stars are, compared to you, Sir Winston. Thank you for giving my generation such a wonderful heritage, one which I and my friends will do our best to live up to.

A middle-aged man was also inspired to thank Churchill for “the wonderful and entirely happy experience,” declaring that all those who valued freedom and liberty, and anyone proud to call himself British, should be required to see the film.

Outside of Britain, reception of the movie was in most places overwhelmingly positive, with
the notable exception of communist bloc nations. The English-speaking Union of the Commonwealth sponsored gala events in many countries that were attended by politicians and celebrities. In the US, following the biggest opening day at the box office in film history, the New York Times declared it to be “an uncommon piece of entertainment, like an audio-visual symphony composed with all the elements and devices of cinematic orchestration to raise a grand hymn in Sir Winston’s praise.” It was deemed to be elegy in good taste. The chief editor of Scholastic Magazines, a publication widely distributed to students and librarians across America, honored the film with an award in a special issue featuring Churchill as “Man-of-the-Century.” Le Vien was so thrilled by the film’s terrific reception that he wrote Churchill’s solicitor to convey his unbounded appreciation for allowing it to be made, so that millions of viewers around the world who had not read his memoirs could know what he had accomplished in the war. The only sustained criticism of the film came from the communist press, which branded it a false representation of history and biography, symbolic of the worst form of Western hero worship, incongruously alleging that “Churchill was still dreaming of a third world war” so that he could return to power. At the British embassy’s premier showing in Holland, attended by Queen Juliana, the entire Dutch Cabinet, and a host of diplomats, the Soviet Ambassador loudly departed the theater twenty minutes before the film’s end, complaining of bias toward the Russian people, who had been compared in the movie to “aggressive crocodiles.”

The movie was still showing in theaters when Churchill died on January 24, 1965 at the age of 90. His death caused a week-long outpouring of commemorations in the world’s media for Britain’s greatest war leader. The queen ordered a funeral befitting royalty for only the second time in British history. In the US, special features were printed in major journals to mark Churchill’s death. In recounting his life, some publications noted how The Second World War had taken its place among the great classics of history. For the New York Post, the passage of time since the end of the war had seen Churchill’s stature and literature grow in significance. As a man of words and ideas, he knew how to make uncanny use of symbols, and to make himself one of them through the popularity of his writings. Time reiterated Churchill’s metanarrative in describing the stirring funeral service in which The Battle Hymn of the Republic was sung:

It was also symbolic of his lifetime dream of a closer union between the two nations whose blood flowed in his veins... The church that symbolized the survival of the British nation and the hymn that symbolized the endurance of the American Union - the suddenly mingled
echoes of Agincourt and Antietam -served to remind the world of a kinship that goes deeper than shifting alliances and new patterns of power. It was an Anglo-Saxon moment....

For the first time ever, flags flew at half-mast all over the US for the death of a non-American. An estimated 350 million viewers tuned into the funeral via satellite, the most elaborately televised memorial in British history before the death of Princess Diana in 1997. The three main US networks gave unprecedented coverage to it, canceling all commercials during the event. In Britain, the BBC produced a documentary ("Homage to a Great Man") in which Lawrence Olivier and John Gielgud read excerpts of Churchill’s prose. Reporters for the Daily Telegraph recounted the procession of mourners who viewed Churchill’s body while it lay in state, portraying them as participants in a solemn religious ceremony in which the “little people” of Britain enjoyed a moment of communion with greatness before “leaving the titan of history in the ghostly company of his peers.” Visions of Wagnerian opera and Wotan were conjured up by the newspaper to depict the historic moment when the ghost of Churchill passed before the collective eye of the world.

Churchill’s death also precipitated a further round of press commentary on his literary legacy. The Manchester Guardian declared that the success of The Second World War was well deserved, since it contained so much of his finest writing. It professed to be at a loss to see how posterity could judge Churchill any differently from the verdict of his contemporaries, suggesting that the hindsight of a quarter-century had not diminished the validity of his appeasement critique or the thesis of a preventable war. The formerly pro-appeasement Times echoed this viewpoint, calling Churchill “the Great Deliverer” who forever would dominate the British people’s memory of the second world war. But unlike the Guardian, the Times did not specifically endorse Churchill’s war history nor discuss the appeasement issue in its tribute. The Observer, a strong critic of Churchill before and after the war, now praised him as “a spurned prophet” whose warlike spirit the British people for too long resisted to their great detriment. But its glowing editorial was balanced by a less reverential eulogy from Attlee, who claimed always to have admired Churchill’s inspired prose more than its dubious content, complaining that for all the millions of words used in his war memoirs, too much important material was left out:

If there was one thing that marked him off from comparable figures in history, it was his characteristic way of standing back and looking at himself - and his country - as he believed history would. He was always, in effect, asking himself, ‘How will I look if I do this or that?’ And ‘What must Britain do now so that the verdict of history will be favourable?’ All he cared about, in Britain’s history, of course, were the moments when Britain was great.
He was always looking around for ‘finest hours,’ and if one was not immediately available, his impulse was to manufacture one.227

In a separate article, the Observer’s Patrick O’Donovan offered an insightful perspective on the meaning of Churchill’s death, which marked for him nothing less than the passing of an age: “This was the last time that London would be capital of the world. This was an act of mourning for the Imperial past. This marked the final act in Britain’s greatness. This was a great gesture of self-pity and after this the coldness of reality and the status of Scandinavia.”228

The Daily Mirror, another of Churchill’s sharpest critics in the past, now paid fulsome tribute to the fallen warrior, praising him as the savior of his nation during its greatest ordeal ever faced. It noted the speed with which he had produced his war memoirs, testimony to his unimpaired will-power and intellect in the postwar years. The historian Alan Bullock’s eulogy credited Churchill with an ability to write in “bold primary colors,” revealing the instinct of a man of action who wanted to reduce the subtleties of history to simple, straightforward issues. Bullock recounted that upon first meeting Churchill in 1940 he felt bewildered by the man’s powerful sense of British history rising to a climax under his direction: “So I think that Sir Winston’s writing of history was not something apart, a relaxation, a diversion, perhaps like his painting; it was central to him - central to his way of looking at the world.” He revered the heroic deeds and gestures of the 19th century that seemed so out of touch with 20th century realities: “It is not only that he himself lived life so fully and so magnificently and with these splendid gestures, it is also that secretly we all feel this is the way life should be lived. For this reason he has fastened on our imagination.”229

In all this commentary, there was barely a hint of the rising tide of revisionist historiography that was already starting to undermine the British leader’s hold on collective war memory. His metanarrative had stood supreme for a generation of war survivors, and those reading about the war for the first time in the early postwar years. Though its lessons about war and leadership would continue to inspire the hearts and minds of countless readers in the ensuing decades, Churchill’s imperial metanarrative would no longer form a central totem around which national identity coalesced.

Chapter 5 Endnotes


6. *Royal Commission*, p.80: most remarkable were the *Dailies Mirror* and *Daily Telegraph*, which achieved rates of growth equal to 246% and 480% respectively.


8. L. Bogart, “Newspapers in the Age of Television,” *Daedalus* 92,1 (Winter 1963): 120: even the *New York Times* was considered a regional paper in the early postwar, since it lacked the distribution network for being a truly national daily.


10. Ibid., pp.149-52.


35. D. Cooper, *BBC* I.


38. “Churchillian Conclusion,” *Times Literary Supplement*, April 30, 1954, pp.737-74: was the sole publication to make this connection overtly in its review of *Triumph and Tragedy*.

39. W. Barkley, “The Unnecessary War,” *Daily Express*, October 4, 1948; *Liverpool Daily Post* VI; also astonishing was Andrew’s claim that Churchill’s view of Mussolini as “the Italian law giver” was fair, though *Punch* questioned this extraordinarily generous treatment of the fascist dictator; B.A.Y., “The Real Tragedy,” *Punch*, May 5, 1954, p.561.


60. Don K. Price, “Notes from the War Memoir,” Public Administration Review 10-11 (1950-51): 197-207; Revelation, June 1949, pp.188-262: an apocalyptic tone was struck by this evangelical monthly, which devoted an entire issue to the review, declaring that Churchill’s memoirs proved democracies who deviated from the truth of God would be destroyed.


76. W. Rust, Daily Worker I; “Our Old Nobility,” Socialist Leader, May 8, 1948; “Churchill’s Memoirs,” Socialist Leader, October 9, 1948; Socialist Leader II.


81. “Mr. Churchill’s Book,” Time and Tide, October 2, 1948, pp.997-98; Wedgewood, Times Literary Supplement I; Reader’s Digest, August 3, 1951.


86. Crossman, New Statesman II, VI; Socialist Leader II.

87. Crossman, New Statesman III; Bevan, Reynolds News V.

88. Bevan, Reynolds News V; D. Kartun, “Churchill Tells How He Planned Cold War,” Daily Worker, August 3, 1951; Kartun, Daily Worker V; Cassandra, Daily Mirror V; Rider, Tribune V; Crossman, New Statesman V.

89. W. Harris, “Threshold of Victory,” Spectator, September 5, 1952, p.303-04; Bryant, Triumph in the West; Economist II; Cumings, News Chronicle II.


91. C. Wilmot, “Dangerous Year,” Observer, September 7, 1952, p.7; Economist V.

92. Among newspapers surveyed, this was true of the Cleveland News II, and New Orleans Times-Picayune VI.


108. Hutchinson, Christian Century I; Weiss, Commonweal III; Newman, New Republic III, IV; West, New Yorker VI.


111. Hall, Journal of Modern History I; J. Hubbard, Mississippi Valley Historical Review 37 (1950-51): 348-50; W. Hamilton, South Atlantic Quarterly I; Willcox, Yale Review I.


114. Slosson, American Historical Review II; Fox, American Political Science Review II; Farrell, Catholic Historical Review II; R. Wilberforce, Catholic World II; Willcox, Yale Review II.


117. Whittemore, Yale Review VI.


126. Tompkins, Sunday Dispatch VI; Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, p.706: At the Quebec Conference in August 1943, Brooke noted: “It is quite impossible to argue with him [Marshal] as he does not begin to understand a strategic problem...The only real argument he produced was a threat to the effect that, if we pressed our point, the build-up in England would be reduced to that of a small corps and whole war re-oriented toward Japan.”


128. Hughes, *Socialist Leader* II; Kartun, *Daily Worker* IV.


144. Weiss, *Commonweal* III; Brinton, *Saturday Review of Literature* III, IV; Ben-Moshe, *Strategy and History*, p.129: contrary to accepted opinion, imperial considerations were not the primary influence on his Mediterranean strategy.

145. Brinton, *Saturday Review of Literature* V.


158. *Times* V, VI.

159. ILN III, IV; *Punch* IV: Churchill was prophetic regarding the dishonesty of promises of a postwar “New Jerusalem” that were financially well beyond Britain’s means.

160. *Times Literary Supplement* IV: But if this were true, it is more likely that an innocent President would have been led astray by his wily colleague, not vise versa; Squire, *Illustrated London News* V; J. Squire, “Sir Winston Ends His History,” *Illustrated London News*, May 1, 1954, p.702.


162. Grigg, *Sunday Times* III; *Times Literary Supplement* V, VI.


171. Buckley, *Time and Tide* III; Sherwood, *Observer* IV.


177. Ruggles, *Dallas Morning News* VI; Millis, *New York Herald Tribune* VI.


182. Weiss, *Commonweal* III.

183. Brebner, *Nation* III, IV, V; Brinton, *Saturday Review of Literature* IV; Newman, *New Republic* III, IV, V; in contrast, H. Nicolson, *New Republic* VI, was full of adulation for “the great man who stared down the Russian bull,” and would have done so again at Potsdam if British voters had not intervened.

185. A. West, *New Yorker* VI.
186. “Epilogue,” *Time*, November 30, 1953, pp. 106-09; *Newsweek* VI.
187. CHUR 4/18: D.G. Barnhouse (Eternity) to Churchill, June 1, 1950; E.G. to Sturdee, June 5, 1950; N. Sturdee to Barnhouse, June 10, 1950; Barnhouse, *Eternity* III; Time II, VI; Lukacs, *Commonwealth* VI.
198. Sikorsky, “The Churchill Legend in the US,” pp.139-40: it was not until his last years as Prime Minister that he made a concerted attempt to utilize radio as a political tool to promote summit diplomacy.
201. CHUR 4/1: R. Boulting (Charter Film Productions) to Lord Bracken, Jan. 5, 1954; A. Moir to Boulting, undated.
207. CHUR 4/453: Le Vien Directive, undated; E. Gowing, “The Memoirs of Churchill - But No Sir Winston,” *Daily Mail*, April 21, 1960; ABC TV to Montague-Brown, May 31, 1960: all was not harmonious behind the scenes, however; Le Vien had a falling out with his producer just two months before the series was scheduled to begin.


228. Cockett, David Astor and the Observer, p.147.

6 Conclusion

Winston Churchill was undoubtedly the premier political memoirist of the 20th century. In terms of literary style, production, readership, and influence on historiography, Churchill’s memoirs of the second world war were exceptional. His powerful metanarrative and entertaining style of writing made the memoirs hugely popular with laymen and politically conscious readers alike. Though Churchill demurred that he was not writing history, but a contribution to history, his memoirs were nonetheless widely acclaimed by journalists and scholars as a literary and historical work of genius. His messages of war and politics were studied with great interest by millions of readers in the English-speaking world, and in the process profoundly shaped collective historical memory of the second world war for at least two generations. Why Churchill should have had such an impact on war memory through his memoirs has been manifested by assessing his work through the analytical prism enunciated in the UBC Political Memoirs Project. While the vast majority of political memoirs have a relatively “short shelf life,” soon becoming of interest only to antiquarians or a few historians, *The Second World War* is remarkable in terms of its enduring popularity, with new editions still being produced more than fifty years after publication of the original work.

A central factor in this longevity is that Churchill’s memoirs contain all of the elements required for a superlative record of the past. Its author was a charismatic political leader who was capable of writing sophisticated entertainment containing a powerful metanarrative of a seminal collective experience in the lives of his readers. Churchill personalized and dramatized the monumental scale of the war in a way that gave readers a sense of purposefulness to their experience of chaotic and traumatic events. In this respect, he facilitated a common vision of life through his metanarrative of war that made himself a totem of memory and identity formation during the unsettling years of the early cold war. Churchill was the first major British political leader to write his war memoirs, and in so doing achieved an enhanced sense of authoritativeness by his reliance on personal experience and a wealth of classified documents. This imbued his memoirs with the qualities of contemporaneity and historical understanding that proved highly alluring for readers hungry to learn the truth about the war. It enabled them to place within a broader historical context their personal memories of the war years, validating experiences and rendering them meaningful. In addition, Churchill’s psychological insights into other political leaders and the working of political systems, representing lessons in statecraft, were perceived by a great many readers as
informative, entertaining, and evidence of profound political wisdom. Such elements of literary
greatness are what helped to ensure that The Second World War would have an enduring appeal with
the reading public.

At the end of the war, Churchill was already seventy years old and had sustained a political
defeat that removed him from high office. Yet far from diminishing his energy or enthusiasm for
active political life, he was motivated to achieve a remarkable burst of renewed literary output that
won him the Nobel Prize for Literature nine years later while serving to enshrine his reputation in
the English-speaking world as the second world war’s greatest leader and dramatist. Aside from
being acclaimed as brilliant literature on a par with Shakespeare, Churchill’s memoirs were a
tremendous stimulus for public discourse in the early postwar years regarding the war’s meaning,
its lessons, and the role of political leadership in times of conflict. Churchill used his prodigious
literary talents to promote imperial revival through an Anglo-American nexus that would ensure
democratic capitalism’s global hegemony. It was a conservative metanarrative of legitimation that
sought to bolster the established political and economic order against threats from external
subversion. In expressing faith in Enlightenment and Judeo-Christian principles of human progress
and destiny, Churchill made himself the spokesman for deeply felt sentiments held by millions of
readers of all classes.\footnote{2}

Churchill’s memoirs succeeded in their overall objective of indelibly stamping the author’s
image as an indomitable war leader upon the collective consciousness of the early postwar years.
Ironically, his essentially conservative metanarrative was upheld by the liberal intelligentsia who
reviewed his memoirs in major journals and national newspapers. Even most leftist writers did not
seriously challenge Churchill’s depiction of himself as the central political figure in the war whose
country was owed an immense debt of gratitude for its efforts in defeating fascism. Much of the
political press accepted Churchill’s interpretation of appeasement and its implications for responding
to the communist challenge after the war. His literary legacy propounded political lessons that were
reinforced by a flood of press commentary at a critical historical juncture when largely inchoate
recollections of war experiences were solidified into collective memory. This process of
memorialization during the 1940s and 50s helped to safeguard Churchill’s reputation for political
greatness among laymen readers from decades of subsequent scholarly revisionism.

The outpouring of commentary on Churchill’s war memoirs at the time of their publication
became the foundation for an authoritative body of traditional historiography that dominated popular
and scholarly war memory for many years. In fact, for popular writers of history, members of the political right, and much of the reading public, Churchill remains a powerful totem that shows no sign of losing its appeal at the onset of the 21st century, much as Henry Luce had predicted. However, intellectual analysis of Churchill, his memoirs, and the war has undergone a sea-change of opinion that shifted the historical emphasis from political to social, cultural, and economic paradigms. The emergence of New Left revisionism in the 1960s was the first concerted challenge to Churchillian historiography in stressing the collective achievements of British society during the war, while minimizing the significance of political leadership in achieving victory. Beginning in the 1970s, a new revisionist historiography from the right issued a critique of historical orthodoxy that blamed Churchill’s wartime leadership for accelerating British imperial decline rather than revitalizing national greatness as he had alleged. But despite decades of such scholarly revisionism, public perceptions of Churchill as a great historical icon who was wise, ingenious, and prophetic remain largely unaffected. Keepers of the Churchillian flame remain powerful, numerous, and active in defending their hero against revisionists attacks, for reasons which are more political than historical in nature.

After 1940, Churchill’s reputation as the savior of democracy obliterated notions of him as a colossal failure that had dominated political opinion before the war. When asked in later years what time period of his life he would most wish to relive, he always said the early war years. In writing his memoirs, he succeeded brilliantly in reinforcing his heroic image in collective memory, erasing the bitter legacy of past politics by placing blame for prewar failures on his rivals in government. In this task, he enjoyed a great advantage, having privileged access to secret government documents that gave The Second World War an official tone, significantly enhancing its credibility with the politically conscious public. In 1969, historian J.H. Plumb asserted that all historians of World War II were directly or indirectly influenced by Churchill’s reconstruction of events: “They move down the broad avenues which he drove through war’s confusion and complexity....Hence, Churchill the historian lies at the very heart of all historiography of World War II, and will always remain there. And the book will continue to be read....It is, in spite of its theme -war and destruction- a heartening book.” Churchill’s genius was to dramatize a simple yet alluring historical pattern of national dishonor and defeat redeemed through personal courage and valor in war, with himself the guiding hand who led the way to victory. It was a theme that captured the
imagination and emotions of a wide readership in the early postwar years.

Another reason why Churchill’s memoirs proved so appealing and influential with readers was the author’s impeccable timing. His memoirs were produced at the confluence of several critical historical developments in the years following World War II. At the very point when public relief and joy arising from victory were confronting a growing mood of fear and despair over mounting postwar tensions in the world, Churchill’s memoirs appeared as the first authoritative account of the war years from a central actor in the drama. While several books from subordinates in Roosevelt’s administration had been produced right after the war, none of their authors enjoyed Churchill’s status as a world-renowned colossus. In Britain, no accounts of the war from Cabinet members or top military officers were published to contradict Churchill’s account of the war until Attlee’s memoirs appeared in 1954, which were written in an utterly nondescript style of writing that Malcolm Muggeridge described as “so flat and banal as to be quite fascinating.” In contrast, Churchill’s grand rhetorical flourishes, dramatic episodes, and massively documented story overwhelmed the senses of even the most critical of readers.

Churchill’s rendition of the recent past was powerfully reinforced in the early postwar era by Britain’s official historians, whose first publications were released just as The Second World War was completed. This voluminous body of historical orthodoxy served to validate Churchill’s reputation for political prescience and strategic genius, its early accounts of Britain’s government and people in wartime highly charged with social and patriotic idealism. The first official history, published in 1953 concerning the Royal Air Force, affirmed Churchill’s critique of Britain’s prewar rearmament policies. It argued that amid the hue and cry against increased expenditures from many quarters, Churchill was the lone brave “voice of reality” who warned that the country was extraordinarily vulnerable to air attack. In 1957, the first volume of the official history on grand strategy ventured some criticisms of Churchill’s audacity and impatience in war planning. But on the broader issue of his leadership and overall direction of the war effort, Churchill was deemed to have shown true greatness, far surpassing in depth of understanding his American contemporaries. The official account of grand strategy was only completed in 1976, when Norman Gibbs published his long-awaited appraisal of rearmament and foreign policy during the interwar era. Gibbs’ interpretation reflected the intervening revisionist historiography of the appeasement years, expressing strong sympathy for Chamberlain’s predicament and asserting the prewar leader had the full support of government and population. Nonetheless, in discussing Churchill’s prewar role,
Gibbs avoided attacking directly his reputation for having foreseen by the mid-1930s the tragic course on which appeasement policies were headed.6

Churchill’s defense in his memoirs of Britain’s Mediterranean strategy during the war, and his denials of ever having opposed the Normandy invasion, were affirmed by official historians, who denigrated American mistrust of British intentions in setting war policy. Ironically, most Americans after the war readily accepted the version put forward in Churchill’s memoirs and the official histories, treating it as conventional wisdom, even though the key documents on government decision making had not yet become available for public inspection. Reflecting on war strategy and the official histories, Ben-Moshe notes: “It was they who managed to embed the Churchillian-British version of events in historical consciousness and to persuade even respectable US scholars of its veracity.” Even after the archives on the war had been opened, this traditional interpretation of the war years was strongly reiterated by Churchill’s official biographer Martin Gilbert, despite evidence that London had wished to postpone the invasion of France until after German resistance collapsed.7

For much of the postwar era, criticism of Churchill’s memoirs were muted in Britain largely because of the second world war’s extraordinary hold on national political culture and collective identity. Churchill’s metanarrative of war placed Britain at the forefront of world historical developments at a critical turning point in human affairs, tightly connecting British identity with the war experience. Intellectuals at this time found compelling Churchill’s message of an all-conquering Anglo-American alliance against fascism, since after the war it was viewed as a template for addressing future international crises. World War II was seen by them as a seminal event in 20th century British history, notes Malcolm Smith: “The war in general, and 1940 in particular, acted through the 1950s, 1960s, and into the 1970s as the fulcrum of contemporary British politics.” Britons came to perceive 1940 as the end of bad times, marked by twenty years of indecision and incompetence in government, and the start of “good times,” marked by national consensus that rallied behind decisive and experienced leadership. It was a scholarly affirmation of the polemical thesis contained in Churchill’s The Gathering Storm.8

The Churchillian view of the war perceived it as a heroic struggle for democracy and Anglo-American power. It won widespread support in Britain and America from the bulk of the political right, liberal center, and moderate left. Some leftists, however, offered a contrary view of the war as a demonstration of the virtues of democratic collectivism. This idea, propounded by J.B. Priestley, J.M. Keynes, and William Beveridge among others, competed for public attention and
support in the early postwar era with the Churchillian metanarrative. In this battle for hearts and minds, the image makers on the right proved masters at dramatizing and disseminating Churchill’s messages through print and film media that legitimated conservative social hegemony. The right’s ability to counteract the leftist metanarrative of challenge was enhanced by the fact that victory over fascism in 1945 made most Britons highly nationalistic and conscious of their distinctness from the rest of Europe, which had succumbed to tyranny. This popular patriotism was encouraged through the development of a mystique of the war years that transformed it into a golden age of national unity, strength, and purposefulness. In contrast, the rhetoric of democratic collectivism, with its predominantly negative images of misery and hardship suffered under wicked Toryism before and during the war, proved less emotionally uplifting to ordinary Britons.⁹

Churchillian pride in national identity was further enhanced by a strong postwar reaction against the nihilism and pessimism of the previous generation of war writers who were often thought to have been responsible for weakening Western resolve to counteract the fascist challenge. In the 1940s, the specter of a new totalitarian menace was raised by the right that was said to be as threatening to democratic liberties as Nazism. In the midst of this new peril, Churchill offered a metanarrative that promoted nationalism and “public spiritedness.” Among Churchill’s countrymen, the experience of Dunkirk and the Blitz were seen as vindications of British democracy and its historic role as defender of the free world. Cultural historian R. Samuel contends that in the early postwar years Britain was a nation “in love with itself and its sense of national character,” a sentiment given powerful expression in Churchill’s memoirs.¹⁰ British national identity became centered on a fundamental belief in the country’s uniqueness and divinely inspired mission. School textbooks during the 1940s and 50s adhered to this theme in portraying Britain as the greatest embodiment of democracy and freedom in the world, advancing strongly nationalistic narratives that identified major historical personalities with the essence of nationhood. In contrast to Europe, where national identity was highly problematic after the war on account of the legacy of Nazi occupation, school texts in Britain reflected an unbroken national consciousness that focused on individual leaders and their actions rather than social or economic processes of historical change. Since there was no centralized curriculum in Britain, large commercial publishers were given virtually free reign to promote conservative messages among the young by commissioning texts that lauded the qualities of great British leaders.¹¹

Orthodox historiography held that Churchill’s memoirs spoke for all Britons who recognized
the war leader’s sense of national and imperial identity as their own. Leftists who disagreed with his metanarrative were branded by the right as hypocrites for decrying British imperialism in Asia and Africa while turning a blind eye to Soviet imperialism in eastern Europe. Consequently, Churchill’s memoirs were widely accepted by scholars as a thoughtful thesis on war and peace, the product of a great accumulation of experience by a statesman of the first order. His inflexible stance on the merits of empire and the dangers of ideological extremism were deemed to have been validated by postwar events, while leftist critiques of imperialism were dismissed as serving the interests of Soviet propaganda. Many fiction writers after the war followed Churchill’s lead in attacking the “anti-colonial myth” by depicting freedom fighters as opportunistic thugs out to oppress native peoples rather than liberate them from foreign occupation. Colonial movements that advocated self-determination were considered a swindle and power-grab by native political elites. Such attitudes reveal that many postwar narratives expressed a shrill urge to defend old traditions and mores in the wake of socialism’s political victory in 1945, and the growth of communist power abroad.¹²

Churchill’s anti-appeasement message acutely affected the reactions of political elites in Britain and America to international crises after 1945. His outlook on appeasement, leadership, and cold war origins were studied carefully by foreign policy elites. North Korea’s invasion of the South in 1950, Egypt’s nationalization of the Suez Canal Company in 1956, and the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 all came to be regarded as key tests of Western resolve and responsiveness to aggression by dictators in much the way that Churchill had perceived the Rhineland occupation of 1936 as a critical turning point on the road to war. The idea of appeasement as a policy symptomatic of national decline and moral decay became commonplace among politicians and foreign policy analysts in the two decades following World War II.¹³ By 1948, Labour’s centrist leaders had shifted from a prewar policy of pacifism and socialist idealism toward a Churchillian foreign policy that eschewed political radicalism at home or accommodation with communism abroad. Attlee was inspired by Churchill’s “unique gift” of leadership, which he praised in his memoirs as free from the “taint of Munich.” He also defended the archetypal image of Churchill as the savior of his country, rejecting radical leftist views of the war leader as a dangerous reactionary.¹⁴

In 1955, a turning point in British political history was reached when Attlee and Churchill both resigned from leadership of their respective parties. It marked the end of a political era imbued with confident Victorian moral visions of Britain’s place in the world. Though their parties belonged
in principle at opposite ends of the political spectrum, both leaders’ creeds stemmed from the same broad psychological roots: “They belonged, in Attlee’s words ‘to a generation which had believed that the world was more or less settled, that it had become to a greater or less extent civilized.’ Both Tories in their youth, neither had ever doubted the value of the English contribution to civilization and each, in his own way, had sought to extend it.” But by the mid-1950s, British leaders were painfully conscious of their country’s declining world power. At the same time, the shadow of Munich hung heavily over the nation’s political culture, serving as a major inducement for the Suez intervention in 1956. Few political thinkers at the time were willing to challenge Churchill’s assumption that Britain must endeavor to remain a great power, though they may have disagreed on the appropriate strategy for sustaining greatness. Conservatives had been angered by Labour’s “scuttling of empire” in Asia at the hands of “a few pro-communist agitators” a decade earlier. In 1956, the new Tory leader Eden felt that the lessons of 1940 meant Britain must retain the right and freedom to shape its own destiny. He accepted Churchill’s metanarrative of imperial greatness, but neglected his mentor’s stricture on the necessity of close Anglo-American cooperation in setting foreign policy objectives.

The impact of the Suez fiasco in altering perceptions of Britain’s role in the world is still a matter for debate among historians. Some scholars see few significant changes in British imperial policy before the 1960s, while others contend that Suez represented a last-gasp attempt to stem American hegemony in the Middle East, whose failure ended all further British pretensions of great power status. John Darwin’s multi-causal analysis of the end of empire considers it a mistake to exaggerate the impact of Suez on British imperial consciousness, since foreign policy elites continued to use ruthless methods against colonial “extremists” for many years afterwards. Eden’s fall from power in 1956 led to the accession of Harold Macmillan, another Churchill protegée who shared the war leader’s far-reaching conceptions of British power and influence. Darwin contends that not until the sterling crisis of 1967 did “the dikes of illusion and rhetoric” finally break, leading to Britain’s abandonment of all strategic commitments outside of Europe.

In his latter years, Churchill contented himself with reading the continuous stream of books and articles that exalted his war leadership. Memoirs written by officers from Britain’s military establishment mostly supported Churchill’s contention that he had dominated allied war strategy. For example, H. Ismay’s memoirs acclaimed Churchill as the master planner of victory in the war, while even Wavell, Auchinleck, and strategical thinker J.F.C. Fuller agreed that his personality and
leadership inspired war planning. Thus, the publication of Lord Alanbrooke’s highly critical diaries in 1957 shocked many people who saw them as a bolt out of the blue that was an affront to Churchill’s reputation. Privately, Lord Moran considered them the first serious contribution to the task of placing Churchill’s war leadership into its appropriate historical context, but a great many other readers in Britain and America lamented the tarnishing of a legend. Until the late 1950s, Churchill had been treated as a kind of infallible demi-god in Britain and America, but the publication of Alanbrooke’s diary began to loosen tongues outside of Parliament for the first time since the war. Ironically, Alanbrooke had sought to soften the harshness of his diary criticisms by writing a foreword to the published volume that glowingly praised “the great man to whom, above all others, we owe our national survival.” This tribute, however, did little to mitigate the anger from Churchill’s defenders, who rightly saw the diary as a direct assault on the postwar image of the war leader as a genius who enjoyed the full confidence of his Service chiefs. The hue and cry against Alanbrooke was such that he and his publisher were forced to issue repeated assurances in public that the diary was not meant as an attack on Churchill per se, nor a rebuke of his political leadership in wartime. That same year, Major-General John Kennedy produced his memoirs, which also challenged the Churchill legend by contending that Britain’s leader was little more than a cheerleader during the war who often proved more of a hindrance than a help with his long-winded and irrelevant distractions during strategy sessions. In response, Churchill’s supporters attacked the general as disloyal, disgruntled, and incorrect in thinking that the war leader was anything less than indispensable for the survival of Western civilization.

Churchill’s death in 1965 produced many accolades for the man millions of people in Britain and America felt was the greatest statesman of the 20th century. David Cannadine notes that it signified a “final display of national thanksgiving and global homage, unique in its intensity and unrivaled in scope....Whether predicting history, making history, or writing history, he dwarfed the pygmy ploddings of ordinary mortals.” The extravagant collective grief at the time of his funeral was a reflection of the fact that Britons were burying with Churchill their own imperial past, says Rees: “[I]t was a nation in mourning for his and its own past greatness.” But once the venerated warrior was laid to rest in a grand pageant befitting a king, the ensuing months and years witnessed an opening of the floodgates of restraint for those who wished to demystify the Churchillian totem that had been erected over two decades of historical orthodoxy. Moran’s diaries on his years as Churchill’s personal physician, published in 1966, offered startling insights into his patient’s many
physical and mental infirmities, a side to the British war leader that not even political confidantes had appreciated fully. Moran depicted Churchill as a morbid neurotic who was obsessed with his place in history, his memoirs a product of the author’s determination to prove to posterity that he was as far-sighted about the Soviet menace as he alleged to have been about Nazi Germany. Moran argued that this objective of Churchill’s compelled him to deliberately obscure his inconsistencies during the war, so as to disguise his many strategic and political blunders. Moran felt that Churchill had tried to take all the credit for the triumph over Nazism, while blaming others for the tragic failure to anticipate the Soviet postwar threat. Most damaging, Moran alleged that Churchill’s mind had become bereft of new ideas by 1949; his wartime optimism gone, the former war leader gloomily cast a glance at the future before hurriedly retreating into the glorious past.²²

Moran’s damaging commentary invited a severe riposte from Churchillians defenders of the faith, who closed ranks to rebut the physician’s “incorrect and misleading” book. In a collection of essays published in 1968, they maintained that during the “devil’s decade” preceding the war, and especially in the dark days of 1940-42, Churchill stood as a tower of inspiration to all democratically minded people. The war leader’s history of that period was praised as a “great pageantry works” by a titanic political figure. Lord Norman Brook (formerly Cabinet Secretary Brook), expressed deep appreciation for Churchill’s prescience and political genius, rebuking Moran for going beyond a doctor’s expertise when he offered personal assessments of his patient as war leader and writer. Leslie Rowan and John Colville, Churchill’s Private Secretaries during the war, indignantly asserted that they would never consider betraying the sacred trust of “the Secret Circle” as Moran had done; his book was an inexcusable breach of confidence. They dismissed the physician’s commentary as being unfairly based on a number of infrequent contacts with Churchill when he was ill.²³

This spirited rearguard action by Churchillian defenders was met a year later by R.R. James’ first comprehensive revisionist biography of the British leader in Churchill: A Study in Failure, using recently opened government archives on the war. James sought to place Churchill’s heroic reputation, based on his dogged defense of Britain in 1940, within the context of his entire political career. In doing so, he portrayed the “savior of his country” as a failure in virtually every one of his endeavors before the war. The wartime events from Dunkirk to Pearl Harbor, when Britain stood alone against Nazi tyranny, were depicted as a historical aberration rather than the culmination of some divinely ordained plan. James’ biography precipitated more revisionist assessments of Britain’s war leader through scholarly analysis of documents from the Public Records Office that
undermined Churchill’s reputation from the war. Nonetheless, the popular image of Churchill as the indomitable war hero who saved civilization seems to have been hardly affected. Churchill’s memoirs continued to be the first historical work that intelligent-minded lay readers turned to when they studied the war years. Furthermore, orthodox historiography of Churchill in books and film continued to be produced by popular historians in great abundance.

In America, many scholars continued to view Churchill’s wartime relationship with FDR as a glowing symbol of Anglo-American amity, overlooking a large body of historical evidence that revealed there were deep fissures in the allied leaders’ war aims and decision making throughout the conflict. For these historians, Churchill’s memoirs continued to serve as a guide for interpreting wartime politics and diplomacy, with the author seen as the wise and prescient elder statesman who foresaw dangers to democracy when others could not. Postwar developments were thought to have vindicated fully Churchill’s courage, strategy, and tactics during the second world war and ensuing cold war. Neo-orthodoxy, as it came to be called in the 1980s, saw Churchill’s policies and metanarrative as furnishing the basis for the eventual liberation of Europe from dictatorships of both the left and right, thereby proving that his messages were still a valid guide for international relations at the end of the 20th century. In 1988, the popular historian Martin Gilbert completed work on the monumental eight-volume official biography of Churchill’s life that had been initiated more than twenty years earlier by the subject’s son Randolph. After Randolph completed the first two volumes, Gilbert took over the project under the guiding principle that he was to allow his subject to speak for himself as much as possible through the documents. The result of this approach was that the later volumes on the war years adhered closely to the themes propounded by Churchill in his own memoirs. Gilbert defended Churchill’s controversial wartime policies at Teheran and Yalta, contending that the British leader was a victim of Stalin’s sinister duplicity and cunning, and was not a willing accomplice in the subjugation of eastern Europe as some critics maintained.

The British people’s ongoing absorption with the memory of their country’s war experience had given Churchill powerful leverage in the early postwar era to shape collective identity based on his imperial metanarrative. J.H. Plumb observed: “Unless one understands this instinctive attitude to the past held by most Englishmen, one cannot understand the astonishing dialogue which Churchill held with his people during the war.” This dialogue obviously continued well after the war, with Churchill’s history of past greatness influencing popular perceptions of the meaning of nationhood. Political culture in Britain retained a sense of faith in Churchill’s notion of national
history as a long and glorious progression of parliamentary democracy and a civilizing world mission.\textsuperscript{27} In contrast, leftist revisionism came to perceive such concepts of history and destiny as hopelessly archaic. Early postwar unease among a handful of scholars about Britain’s role in the world erupted into “full-blown neurosis” in the 1960s, claims D.J. Taylor, when the reality of economic decline in relation to other world powers became a dominant sub-text of intellectual discourse. Churchill’s massive symbolic authority was simply not enough to allay growing concerns that Britain’s economic and political retreat in the world was due to an acute inability of Britons to adapt to changing global circumstances. A wave of leftist scholarship by a generation of postwar historians seriously undermined the nationalist metanarrative, \textsuperscript{28} as intellectuals in Britain responded to the decline of empire in ways that were ambivalent toward Churchillian notions of national greatness. Socialist “Little Englandism” saw imperialism as an aberration in British history, and hence not a fundamental element of national identity. It rejected the grandiose foreign policies of Tory elites, criticizing Churchill’s notion of a cold war alliance with the US while supporting the cause of “third world” liberation movements.\textsuperscript{29} On the other hand, Labour Party centrists after the war promoted the Commonwealth ideal which maintained that Britain still had an important and constructive role in world affairs. Its viewpoint adhered to Churchillian notions of imperial revival, though Labour leaders preferred to use the rhetoric of “development.” Anti-imperialist leftists disparaged such ideas as socialism that had “ceased to decry the wickedness of empire past and exalted a better empire to come.” They believed that British imperialism in the postwar was doomed to collapse, a view that came to dominate New Left revisionism in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{30}

Leftist critiques were shaped by the breakdown of wartime solidarities and social consensus in the 1960s that were in turn brought about by economic decline. The apparent national malaise was exacerbated by unfulfilled expectations of a welfare utopia after 1945, contributing to social discontent, the decline of deference, and deep social divisions in Britain. British historiography in turn became increasingly fragmented through perceptions of national history as “the interaction of several peoples and several histories.” Linda Colley’s study of national identity, \textit{Britons: Forging the Nation}, argued that wars in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century had produced a general resurgence of nationalism in the world, but that in Britain the end of imperial power marked a crisis in national identity as the country slid into “a process of dissolution, into Europe or the mid-Atlantic, or a post-imperial fog.”\textsuperscript{31} Leftist revisionists saw Churchill as a war leader bent on “the biggest restoration of traditional values since 1660” in his desire to divert the radical groundswell emerging from the war with
palliatives of patriotism and glory. The state hegemonic machine carried Churchill’s government and the British people through an era of war and international crises while maintaining a conservative consensus premised on the social and political status quo. But beginning in the 1960s, revisionists argued, public spiritedness declined along with the ethic of duty, obligation, and sacrifice toward higher causes. This contributed to a decline in state prestige and the loss of social hegemony by establishment elites. According to Raphael Samuel, “British history is no longer, as it was in the heyday of imperialism, about the triumph of the nation-state - or the ‘genius’ of the British constitution - but rather a world of interiors.” He lauded the romance of everyday life in the study of ordinary culture, with patriotic metanarrative a necessary victim of this shift in focus.

This trend in intellectual thought produced harsher appraisals of Churchill’s political leadership that undermined the iconic image of him created by rightist orthodoxy. Churchill’s vision of national unity in wartime was contradicted by Tom Harrisson’s first detailed assessment of Mass Observation data in 1972, which revealed that at no time during the war was the public entirely united on anything. Perceptions of the war as a golden age of British national consciousness were found to be based on unchecked memory and a massive cover-up by ruling elites regarding the grimness of the war experience. However, contradicting the “myth of the Blitz” in the early 1970s was still a risky proposition for writers, and it drew a storm of protests from former officials, veterans, and ordinary citizens who insisted that indeed there had been much “gallantry, public spirit, and bravery” in the war. In a review of Harrisson’s study, historian Paul Addison made reference to incompetent local officials and a breakdown in the political system during the Blitz, prompting more sharp protests against this apparent besmirching of collective war memory. Critiques of local government in the war based on Mass Observation data appeared at about the same time that other historians were reassessing the role of central authorities during the war.

Manfred Weidhorn contended that Churchill’s war record varied markedly from the “Shakespearean monarch triumphing personally over his enemy” that was allegedly depicted in his memoirs. He disparaged The Second World War as a paean to “the Great Man of History” that reflected Churchill’s sympathetic identification with anyone in a position of high authority, even tyrants, in an attempt to ennoble his own status. Similarly, Robert Payne argued that “Churchill at his worst is scarcely credible, so ponderous, so pontifical, so self-indulgent that he might be an elderly archbishop gone to seed.” But despite these uncompromising attacks on Churchill’s memoirs and reputation, the New Left’s counter-narrative failed to excite the public’s imagination in the way that
Churchill’s stirring dramatization of war had managed decades earlier. Consequently, popular sentiment remained fixated on images of a heroic war that had been fashioned by the right through its dominance of television, film, and popular historical literature.

Beginning in the 1970s, the left’s refutation of Churchill’s metanarrative gained an unlikely ally in the rise of New Right revisionism. While the leftist critique of orthodox historiography marked the culmination of a long fitful decline in nationalistic literature that began in the aftermath of World War I, rightist revisionism constituted a sweeping assault upon all prior interpretations of Churchill, his memoirs, and Britain’s role in the world. The New Right asserted that all previous explanations of the war were fraught with “wilful distortions, mythologies, and coverups.” Therefore, it sought to re-write the history of World War II by arguing that a tragic mistake had been made in 1940 to continue the struggle against Nazism under Churchill’s leadership. If Britain’s leaders had made peace with Hitler after the fall of France, rightist revisionists argued, the empire and Commonwealth would have been preserved, Germany and Russia would have bludgeoned themselves into exhaustion and ruin, while America would have remained an isolated nation with only minor influence on world affairs. That would have left Britain to play the dominant role in regulating the international order, much as it had done in the 1920s. Consequently, the New Right saw appeasers like Chamberlain and Halifax as the true heroes of Britain, because they had been motivated by a desire to preserve national strength through an accommodation with Hitler. In contrast, Churchill was deemed the villain who mortgaged the nation’s power and wealth to America in order to carry on the war, while falsely claiming it was a fight for British freedom.

To some extent, right revisionist attacks on popular memory of Britain’s last great collective achievement as a nation arose out of disenchantment with socialist collectivism’s failed promises. That is, its proponents blamed Churchill for facilitating Labour’s rise to power in 1945, which resulted in the “ruinous effects” upon the economy and morale of postwar welfare reforms. It was felt that if Churchill had attended more closely to his duties as Tory Party leader during the war, rather than immersing himself in military affairs, Labour would never have won the first postwar election. New Right revisionists took much of their inspiration from the rise of Thatcherism’s “new orthodoxy” that sought to dismantle the welfare state and unshackle capitalist initiative. An early advocate of this perspective, historian Correlli Barnett contended that World War II was both the defining experience of Britain in the 20th century and the cause of its “sclerosis as a modern capitalist society,” an attitude that Addison likened to a social Darwinian assault on the British
tradition of "romantic humanism." Barnett remorselessly lampooned socialist policies that turned postwar Britain into "a dank reality of a segregated, subliterate, unskilled, unhealthy and institutionalized proletariat hanging on the nipple of state maternalism." At the same time, he blamed Churchill for being the person in charge when the mortgage came due, accusing the war leader of tunnel vision in staking everything on a single-minded pursuit of total victory that only guaranteed Britain's financial ruin. 39

In the 1990s, British historian John Charmley fused many of the postwar critiques from the right and left into a devastating assault on Churchill's reputation. Charmley claimed that Churchill badly overestimated American altruism and Soviet fidelity during the war, with disastrous results for British sovereignty and power. He maintained that Churchill passed up a perfectly good opportunity for achieving "reasonable" peace terms in 1940, and the chance for "excellent terms" in 1941, because he was bent on pursuing a delusional "chimera of power" through an Anglo-American alliance. Charmley's well-documented biography of Churchill in 1993 won strong approval from the liberal *Guardian*, which stated in a review essay that Churchill had "sold every stick of family silver to his American cousins....All went bust in 1945. Oh yes, and the Russians ended up with half of Europe, as Churchill spotted too late." In contrast, the conservative *Times* deemed Charmley's study to be mean-spirited and displayed a shocking lack of appreciation for the consequences of a negotiated peace with Hitler in 1940 or '41. 40 Charmley's views diverged most radically from traditional historiography in his interpretation of Churchill's war aims in 1940. While early postwar scholarship saw Churchill's call for total victory as evidence of the war leader's "indomitable stoutness and unflinching defense of democracy," says David Reynolds, Charmley ridiculed it as proof of his "pathetic self-delusion."

He argued that Churchill overextended imperial defenses by adopting romantic heroism as his guiding policy, oblivious of the country's limited economic resources that necessitated a compromise peace. In addition, Churchill's claim in his memoirs to have always perceived -and worked to minimize- the danger of a ruthless, immoral, Stalinist Russia gaining too much power in Europe was dismissed by Charmley as nonsense. Churchill's attitude toward Stalin during the war was judged uncertain and inconsistent, an assessment that was reiterated by military historian Tuvia Ben-Moshe. Charmley considered it supremely ironic that Britons in the 1990s found themselves in a German-dominated Europe despite having fought two world wars to prevent that very result, which he said cast serious doubt on any need for a "finest hour." As for Britain's ally in the war, Charmley saw Americans as motivated by
calculation, not sentiment or racial affinity as Churchill claimed, with FDR a Machiavellian master
strategist who ran rings around the Prime Minister. Charmley contended that British leaders should
have sought accommodation with Hitler during the war, which would have protected the national
interest far more than Churchill’s scheme of an Anglo-American world condominium.\textsuperscript{42}

In a critique of right revisionist historiography, L.D. Rubin notes that these scholars
perceptions of the war appear to have been shaped by their middle class education that led them to
anticipate rising to positions of privilege in class-conscious Britain. But having attained their career
goals, they discovered that Britain as a nation, and the ruling elite as a class, were much diminished
from what they had been before the war. It has prompted a rightist backlash that cast about for a
scapegoat, fixing on Churchill, who happened to be in power when Britain’s financial independence
was abandoned in the all-or-nothing fight against Hitlerism. But this perspective ignores the fact
that Britain and the empire had been in decline for more than fifty years prior to Churchill assuming
the nation’s highest office in 1940.\textsuperscript{43} It is most unlikely that any British leader could have halted
the nation’s slide into second-power status in an age of superpowers. According to the \textit{Times},
Charmley’s critique of Churchill is so sweeping and unrelenting that it raises questions if it isn’t
“politically motivated perversity rather than scholarship.” But while Charmley’s motives raised
eyebrows among Conservatives, fears of a much greater perversity have arisen in relation to the
revisionist work of David Irving, whose biography of Churchill in 1988 fell into the gutter by
rendering a gross caricature of the man. Irving maintained, among other things, that Churchill was
a drunken megalomaniac who deliberately prolonged the war to satisfy his mad craving for power.
His biography was so controversial that he could find no British publisher willing to handle it,
despite Irving’s previous popularity with non-academic readers of history.\textsuperscript{44}

Despite thirty years of revisionism that has sought to lessen Churchill’s popular reputation
for statesmanship and strategy, the press in Britain and America continues to recognize in his
persona good copy for selling newspapers. Newspapers eagerly report whenever possible any
plausible -and sometimes implausible- stories about Britain’s most famous war leader. For example,
a series of articles in the late 1990s alleged that Churchill was a debauched drug-addict who plotted
to assassinate Mussolini, deliberately withheld news of Japan’s plan to attack Pearl Harbor, helped
Hitler’s notorious Secretary Martin Bormann escape Berlin in 1945 (and found him a home in the
English countryside), and assisted a daughter-in-law to cuckold his son Randolph. In 1997, an
advance of half-a-million pounds was paid by one British newspaper for the right to publish such
Evidently, four decades of scholarly revisionism by right and left-wing writers aimed at contextualizing or diminishing Churchill's historical significance have proven unsuccessful in weaning the general public from its fascination for the man. In the 1950s, his memoirs repeatedly topped bestseller lists in the US and Britain, and in Gallup opinion polls he was the most admired living man among respondents. He topped the list of outstanding living personalities in the world in a December 1959 poll, even though by then he was 84 years old, nearly deaf, and senile. Public opinion does not appear to have changed much over the intervening years either. Nationalistic ideals associated with Churchill remain a powerful, half-submerged force in Britain, says Samuel: "Fantasies of national rebirth remain a stock-in-trade of political rhetoric, 'our threatened values' a favorite theme of newspaper editorials and pundits...1588, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and 1940, when Britain stood alone against the dictators, remain magic dates in the national calendar." Churchill, like Lincoln in America and de Gaulle in France, has become a kind of eternal symbol that is always available in times of crisis to remind people of past achievements, and to inspire them to greater deeds or sacrifice.

Churchill's long-term impact upon the American public and its politicians has been equally profound, if not more so. By the time of his retirement in 1955, he was already viewed as a living monument who perfectly symbolized the American ideals of liberty and freedom. Bruce Lenman notes of his countrymen, Churchill was "a mirror in which to admire themselves as they saluted him." A veritable Churchill cult has developed in the US, a product of informal public relations by right-wing organizations that is the envy of governments. According to British expatriate Christopher Hitchens, there is no other country in the world that matches America in its fascination for all things British, which most often manifests itself in a powerful urge to conjure up a sense of grandeur on occasions of war. Hitchens contends that "this relationship is really at bottom a transmission belt by which British conservative ideas have infected America, the better to be retransmitted to England." He argues that the notion of a "special relationship" between Britain and America has been artificially created by the two nations' ruling elites to suit their respective self-interests. In the 1960s, some of those elites created the International Churchill Society, based in Washington, D.C., as a nexus of scholarship, trusts, foundations and institutions to promote the British connection using Churchill as its most powerful totem. In one respect, Churchill is safer for Americans to quote freely than even Lincoln because he was never part of any domestic political faction. Though he is deemed to stand above the political fray in America, it is Republicans who
have embraced most openly his metanarrative. Casper Weinberger declared in a speech before the Churchill Society: “In many ways, you can find in the Churchill writings almost everything, as you can in the Scriptures.” Annual Churchill Society conventions are attended by an odd mix of war veterans, military buffs, and senior political officials, revealing a meeting of hearts and minds among patricians and plebeians around the image of Churchill, revealing that fascination for anything to do with Churchill extends far beyond an elitist American clique. In the media, conservative political pundit William Safire refers to Churchill approximately once every four columns that he writes in the New York Times. A Lexus computer survey conducted in the late 1980s found over 1200 references to Churchill in major American newspapers in just a nine-month period. Hitchens notes that a fascination with Churchillian ways is not confined to amateur Anglophiles, since it includes “the neuroses of would-be great politicians” in America, who occasionally take to “smoking cigars, drinking brandy, and giving dictation in the bath.”

In fact, the media and public in America appear to feed off each other in perpetuating the Churchill mystique. In a 1987 Los Angeles Times’ survey, Churchill was considered one of the top three figures used by American parents as a role model for their children, a finding that shows remarkable similarity to opinion polls taken in the 1950s. This sentiment is to a large extent based on a patriotic, idealized, and highly selective reading of Churchill and the Anglo-American partnership during the second world war. Anyone with the temerity to attack this image of the “good war” in a just cause is usually vilified in the media, as Paul Fussell discovered after writing his scathing rebuke of military incompetence and pettiness in Wartime. Churchill and the Churchillian metanarrative not only make good copy for the press, they continue to elicit the involvement of publishers in finding new ways to promote the British leaders’ war memoirs. In the publishing industry’s millennium commemorations, Churchill’s memoirs featured prominently in a series of “Top-100” lists. Random House chose The Second World War as one of its “top-100 nonfiction books” of the century, based on a survey of library editorial boards across the country. Churchill also appeared high on Time magazine’s readers’ poll of Person of the Century, after an intensive on-line campaign by Churchilians who tried to rally public support for placing their candidate at the top of the list. Finally, Churchill was also among the top fifteen names to appear on the US Historical Society’s lists of century and millennium greats.

The fact that books by and about Churchill continue to feature prominently in British and North American bookstores is an indication that the “Churchill industry” is a thriving business at
the dawn of the 21st century. As part of its millennium celebrations, Houghton Mifflin released a reprint edition of Churchill’s memoirs, introduced by acclaimed military historian John Keegan. It appears that four decades of historical revisionism have hardly made a dent in public perceptions of Britain’s war leader as the irrepressible hero who saved civilization. The emergence of postmodernist discourse in academia seems to have only widened the gap of incomprehension between the reading public and intellectuals. While deconstructionists may see Churchill’s metanarrative as a form of hegemonic social control propagated by ruling elites, among laymen readers its author is still an idealized figure of moral and martial vigor who can be unequivocally admired, unlike the corrupt and ineffectual politicians of our unheroic present. The grand imperial narrative that Churchill fervently believed in may no longer resonate as it once did among readers, the “special relationship” may lie dormant for extended periods of time, and the end of the cold war may have dissipated the sense of national purpose that heightened the relevance of Churchill’s messages in the 1950s, but his reputation for greatness continues to inspire many historically-minded people to believe that they stand upon the shoulders of a titan.

Chapter 6 Endnotes

3. Plumb in Churchill Revised, pp.149,166; Woods, Artillery of Words, p.139; but see Cairns, “Clio and the Queen’s First Minister,” SAQ; he saw a darker message underlying Churchill’s writing premised on belief in the inevitability of war; Ben-Moshe, Strategy and History, p.329: the 1988 New Encyclopedia Britannica referred to his war memoirs as historical writing of “classic proportions.”
4. Ibid., p.332; Pearce, Atlee, p.190.
5. Addison, “The Road from 1945,” in Ruling Performance, p.18: he claims that critiques come mainly from socialists or the radical right who constitute a minority of opinion.


19. Moran, *Struggle for Survival*, pp.758-62,770-2; Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, p.7; Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, p.166: such hindsight, though appears less than heart-felt, considering his frustrations over Churchill's strategic meddling, remarking about 1944: "I began to wonder whether I was in Alice in Wonderland or qualifying for a lunatic asylum."


22. Ben-Moshe, *Strategy and History*, pp.330-1; Moran, *Struggle for Survival*, pp.348-51,802-03: he also criticized the diffuseness of Churchill's memoirs, which he attributed to the author's physical and mental exhaustion: "He is inclined to repeat himself, the sense of proportion is gone."

23. Wheeler-Bennett, "Introduction," in *Action This Day*, pp.10-11; Normanbrook in *Action This Day*, pp.26,31; Rowan in *Action This Day*, pp.249-50; Colville in *Action This Day*, pp.47,138; Martin in *Action This Day*, pp.139-57.


38. Hennessy, “Never Again,” in *What Difference Did the War Make?* p.6; Seldon, “The Churchill Administration,” in *Ruling Performance*, pp.63-65; Morgan and Evans, *The Battle for Britain*, pp.165-68: Thatcher paid tribute to Churchill’s efforts to resist socialist dictatorship at home and abroad, but her political agenda did not adhere to the “One Nation” Toryism of Britain’s war leader.
47. Samuel, “Exciting to Be English,” in *Patriotism*, Vol.1, pp.xxxii; M. Howard, “Is Churchill Still Relevant?” p.21; A. Applebaum, *Intellectual Capital.com*, March 4, 1999 (www.intellectualcapital.com): In 1999, Germany’s cultural minister set off a storm of protest in Britain when he disparaged that nation’s obsession with World War II. It was the only nation, he said, that had made the war a “sort of spiritual core of its national self.”
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscript Collections:
Colindale Newspaper Archive, London, England
Mass Observation File Reports, UBC Library, Harvard Library
The Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society Film Library

Memoirs, Speeches, Diaries, Correspondence, and Compilations:
  • The Gathering Storm. 1948.
  • Their Finest Hour. 1949.
  • The Grand Alliance. 1950.
  • The Hinge of Fate. 1950 and 1951.
  • Closing the Ring. 1952.
  • Triumph and Tragedy. 1953 and 1954.


**Government Publications:**


**British Newspapers and Journals:**

*Birmingham Post*

*Bookman*

*Catholic Times*

*Contemporary Review*

*Daily Express*

*Daily Graphic*

*Daily Herald*

*Daily Mail*

*Daily Mirror*

*Daily Telegraph*

*Daily Worker*

*Eastern Daily Press*

*Economist*

*Edinburgh Evening News*

*Evening News*

*Evening Standard*

*Financial Times*

*Forward*

*Glasgow Herald*

*Glasgow Observer*

*Illustrated London News*

*International Affairs*

*Listener*

*Liverpool Daily Post*

*Manchester Dispatch*

*Manchester Guardian*

*Newcastle Journal*

*News Chronicle*

*News of the World*

**US Newspapers and Journals:**

*Atlantic Monthly*

*Boston Daily Globe*

*Chicago Tribune*

*Christian Century*

*Christian Science Monitor*

*Cleveland News*

*Colliers*

*Commercial Appeal (Memphis)*

*Commonweal*

*Dallas Morning News*

*In Fact*

*Los Angeles Times*

*Nation*

*New Republic*

*Newsweek*

*New Yorker*

*New York Herald Tribune*

*New York Times*

*New York Times Book Review*

*Philadelphia Inquirer*

*San Francisco Chronicle*

*Saturday Review of Literature*

*St. Louis Post Dispatch*

*Revelation*

*Time*

*Wall Street Journal*

*Washington Post*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Statesman and Nation</th>
<th>Academic Journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>American Historical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punch</td>
<td>American Journal of Economics and Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorder</td>
<td>American Political Science Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reynolds News</td>
<td>Catholic Historical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotsman</td>
<td>Catholic World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectator</td>
<td>Current History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Leader</td>
<td>International Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star</td>
<td>Journal of Modern History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Chronicle</td>
<td>Military Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Dispatch</td>
<td>Military Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Empire News</td>
<td>Mississippi Valley Historical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Express</td>
<td>The National Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Graphic</td>
<td>Public Administration Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Times</td>
<td>The Quarterly Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Tide</td>
<td>Social Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times</td>
<td>South Atlantic Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Literary Supplement</td>
<td>Survey Graphic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribune</td>
<td>Twentieth Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Mail</td>
<td>Virginia Quarterly Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Morning News</td>
<td>World Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire Post</td>
<td>Yale Review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Books and Articles (excluding book review essays from 1948-54):**


Eksteins, M. “War, Memory and Politics: The Fate of the Film *All Quiet on the Western Front*,” *Central European History* 31,1 (1980): 60-82.


