



## Triumph and Tragedy

*Winston S. Churchill*

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## **Triumph and Tragedy** Winston S. Churchill

Winston Churchill's six-volume history of the cataclysm that swept the world remains the definitive history of the Second World War. Lucid, dramatic, remarkable both for its breadth and sweep and for its sense of personal involvement, it is universally acknowledged as a magnificent reconstruction and is an enduring, compelling work that led to his being awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Triumph and Tragedy recounts the dramatic months as the War drew to a close - the Normandy landings, the liberation of Western Europe, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the surrender of Germany and Japan.

## **Triumph and Tragedy Details**

Date : Published May 5th 2005 by Penguin Classics (first published 1953)

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Author : Winston S. Churchill

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## From Reader Review Triumph and Tragedy for online ebook

### Jim Gallen says

About six years ago I began my re-read of Winston S. Churchill's Second World War and now with "Triumph And Tragedy" I have now completed the work. We have come full circle to the point that the Great Democracies were able to resume the follies which had soon nearly cost them their life.

This sixth and final volume begins with D-Day and ends with Churchill's defeat in the 1945 national elections. On these pages the reader becomes acquainted with the Prime Minister's views on the invasion of Normandy, V-1s and V-2s, Hitler's military inflexibility, Mulberry harbors, the invasion of southern France, the Battle of the Bulge, the final assault on Germany, victory and plans for the final assault on Japan. While not ignoring the war in Asia and the Pacific, this series focuses heavily on the European Theatre and the British involvement.

I usually value the insights of people who were characters in the great dramas being studied. Churchill is the premier historian of the summit level of allied planning. We are taken into the conferences and controversies that united and divided the Big Three. Many controversies arose from differing British and American war aims. While the Americans' overriding goal was the defeat of Germany, Churchill, like a good chess player, was thinking several moves ahead. Roosevelt gave priority to working out an agreement with Stalin whereas Churchill tried to push the meeting of GI Joe and GI Ivan as far to the east as possible. These differing aims lead to debates on what to do with the Armies in Italy, whether to try to capture Berlin and what direction offensives should take. The U.S. insisted that some of the troops in Italy be transferred to Southern France to aid the Normandy invasions despite Churchill's urging of a continued effort in Italy followed by landings in the Balkans to try to beat the Russians to Vienna. Supportive of the ultimate decision but never reconciled, the Prime Minister lamented an opportunity lost.

Conferences at Yalta and Potsdam are depicted as contentious negotiations over post-war governments, particularly that of Poland whose independence was Britain's casus belli. Potsdam gave Churchill his first opportunity to size up Harry Truman and his last hand at Big Power politics during the war.

I picked up some facts that I had missed previously, such as that V-2s were used against continental targets and the uproar over Eisenhower's letter to Stalin. What I really like about this series in general and this book in particular is Churchill's personal perspective on events and people. He could see FDR's frailty when others could not, he could foresee future rivalries with Russia when others looked forward to continued harmony and gives us his assessment of Stalin and Truman.

While in college or law school I took my father's advice to read all six volumes of "The Second World War" and now, 40 years later, I have re-read it. He gave me good advice in then and it is still good advice. For World War II reading this is the best advice I can give you is to read Churchill's six volumes from cover to cover.

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### Sshelline says

Having read the entire six-volumes series over the last few months, it was chilling to read about the missed opportunities, appeasement and general unwillingness to confront the looming Soviet threat that would take nearly four decades to undo.

With a recalcitrant Iran and a distracted Europe, this series is a powerful warning that our generation faces similar choices to those that confronted Churchill and the West in the years before WW2. I have little faith that today's leaders in Europe and the U.S. have the same courage and conviction as Churchill, which makes the inevitability of avoidable bloodshed all the more disturbing.

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## **Manny says**

The final volume of Churchill's incredible history of WW II. There's absolutely nothing else like it, and he turns in another masterpiece. The things people quote most often are his bitterness about being voted out of office just as the war is ending, and Stalin's bare-faced lies concerning the atom bomb. He claimed to know nothing about it, which Churchill believed, but it later turned out that he'd had a spy in place who'd passed out all the secrets.

But here's the bit that made the greatest impression on me. The British strategy has finally come to fruition. Way back in Volume II, Churchill made an brilliantly prescient decision: rather than going into a defensive huddle and putting everything into defending Britain from the impending German invasion, he diverted resources to hold Egypt. He wanted the possibility of counter-attacking later on. We did indeed win the Battle of Britain, and we also kept Egypt. Then we marched across North Africa, won the Battle of El Alamein in Volume IV, took Tunis, and invaded Sicily. After that, we fought all the way up Italy and finally forced the remnants of the Axis forces to surrender there in late April, 1945.

Simultaneously, Germany was falling to a combined onslaught from Soviet, US and British forces. It was clear that the end was very near there too. The question was what to do with the newly victorious army that was sitting at the top of Italy. Churchill argued that they should turn East. He could already see that Eastern Europe was going to be carved up between Soviet and Anglo-American forces, and he wanted to get as large a slice as possible. But Eisenhower didn't like this. He felt that it sent a bad signal to our Soviet allies, and he decided to go West instead, to mop up the last pockets of resistance in Southern France. It turned out that this was the wrong call. As Churchill bitterly complains, if only they had taken his advice then a substantial amount of Eastern Europe would have avoided becoming Soviet satellite states for the next 50 years.

With hindsight, it's clear that Stalin would never stay allied to the US and Britain longer than necessary. As soon as Germany, their common enemy, was out of the picture, he had no reason to do so. Loyalty wasn't an important concept to him. Unfortunately, this wasn't obvious at the time.

It's very difficult to understand that your key ally is just about to become your enemy and will ruthlessly exploit your naive trust. Tragedy indeed.

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## **Mikey B. says**

This is the last volume in Winston Churchill's war memoirs. It begins with the D-Day Normandy landings. The two chapters on D-Day are almost desultory constituting of only 33 pages. He writes more on the intervention in Greece at Christmas, 1944 (almost 44 pages) where Britain wanted to prevent the ascendancy of the communist party.

Page 181 (my book)

*Communism raised its head behind the thundering Russian battlefield. Russia was the delivery, and Communism the gospel she brought.*

This volume is brilliant on the origins of the Cold War.

It all started in August 1944, when Stalin withheld his troops from “liberating” Warsaw. He let the Germans do the dirty work and they ruthlessly eliminated the Warsaw Polish resistance – so that Stalin’s troops would have no opposition. This was the first indicator of Stalin’s real intentions in Eastern Europe. Churchill (and Roosevelt’s) letters to Stalin to intervene and help the Polish resistance were ignored.

After the Yalta Agreements in February 1945, Churchill pleads passionately for the Soviet Union and Stalin to adhere to them, particularly for Poland, but to no avail. After all Stalin had millions of troops in Eastern Europe and verbal pressure from his two Allies was not going to deter him. Stalin, in violation of Yalta, was going to appoint his own stooges to the Polish Government (and to those in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria...) and was certainly never going to allow free and unfettered elections to take place. He never permitted British or U.S. representatives to roam freely in Eastern Europe.

Still the Yalta Agreements led to the formation of the United Nations and, importantly at the time, a promise from Stalin to attack Japan once the Germans had surrendered. Churchill, with his constant bickering with Stalin over the fait accompli in Poland seemed to overlook this Soviet pledge. The U.S. saw only years of bitter and bloody struggle with the proposed Japanese invasion – the first successful atomic bomb test only occurred in New Mexico in July, 1945. Prior to this the Allies needed Soviet military participation to overthrow Japan.

Having now read these six volumes (over 4,000 pages) one does gain insights into this man Churchill. Significantly the writing can be majestic, for example in this last volume his tribute on the death of Franklin Roosevelt and his victory speech at war’s end on May 13, 1945. The prose is filled with passion and there is no dryness to speak of. Someone mentioned that there are probably thousands of pictures of Churchill and in not one does he seem bored with life. His writings reflect that.

Other observations:

Churchill brought a scientific and statistical approach to government. He wanted statistics constantly. He was able to use these for clarifications to pronounce and to judge.

He was a man of detail and would drill down to the source to determine the root of a problem. Also he was not beholden to protocol; obstacles and standard procedures could and would be removed.

Also in every volume Churchill writes page after page on the importance of Turkey in the war effort, and there were meetings with emissaries and government leaders – but nothing came of this.

He professed friendship and admiration for Franklin Roosevelt but I didn’t buy into this. Churchill needed U.S. might and production to win the war, more so after the fall of France. And he knew the U.S., having read its history and he had travelled there several times before the war. He felt the common ground between Britain and the U.S. – for language, democracy, personal freedom...

But Churchill and Roosevelt were two very different personalities and governed in divergent ways. Roosevelt was more politically astute – with Churchill it was more emotional and upfront. Roosevelt was more opaque and wouldn’t reveal all the cards in the deck. I could never see Roosevelt going into the details that Churchill would do almost on a daily basis; Roosevelt was much better at delegating. I would assume for

example that Churchill wrote far more letters to Eisenhower than Roosevelt. The written word was far more important to Churchill. And Roosevelt was pragmatic, he knew at war's end that "the game" was to be between the U.S. and the Soviet Union – and Britain relegated to becoming a junior player. I don't think Churchill wanted to acknowledge this new position.

However both were magnanimous and would not hold recriminations. And also both could be very flexible – if something didn't work, try something else.

These six volumes constitute a magnum opus of the Second World War. They provide a very important and impassioned portrayal of those tumultuous years.

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### **Jeff Elliott says**

The final of Churchill's volumes comes to an abrupt end with his surprising election loss immediately at the end of the war. I have been several years reading through these and, as always, Winston never is at a loss for words or opinions. Still convinced that every opinion he had was the best, we should give him credit for acceding to the demands of others as often as he did. He is quick to point out the error of thinking diverging from his own. I believe I will return to these often when seeking the proper words to confront enemies, encourage friends or communicate hard truth--Churchill was the master of all.

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### **Kathy says**

This is the last of Churchill's volumes on WWII. This one had a different tone than the other ones. Perhaps because the issues in this volume had not been resolved at the time of writing, or perhaps because Churchill himself was disappointed at how things ultimately turned out (apart from winning the war that is). The theme of this volume is telling:

How the great democracies triumphed, and so were able to resume the follies which had so nearly cost them their life.

Not bitter about being kicked out of office as soon as the war was over, is he?

Because this book opened with D-Day, Hitler was soon reduced to a paper villain, unimportant because his fall was inevitable. The real evil of the time was Stalin. Even if you add all the fatalities of WWII at Hitler's feet, Stalin still killed more people. He was shrewd, cunning and a virtuoso at public appearances. He could lie to your face and smile. He openly called for the underground of Warsaw to rebel against the Germans, then left his armies 10 miles away until they had all been slaughtered to enter the city. Though it trivializes the war a bit, the image that keeps coming to mind is Hitler's Count Dooku to Stalin's Darth Sidious. The present ineffectual design of the United Nations is the result of maneuvering to get Russia to join it. Field Marshall Smuts, who was tasked with finding a compromise that Russia would accept in forming the UN, optimistically wrote to Churchill,

The principle of unanimity will at the worse only have the effect of a veto, or stopping action where it may be wise, or even necessary. Its effect will be negative; it will retard action. But it will also render it impossible for Russia to embark on courses not approved of by the USA and the United Kingdom.

Russia soon proved that it would do as it liked and operated through its proxy states, even as early as before the Germans capitulated. Marshall Tito nearly got into open combat with Allied soldiers over the Italian port of Trieste, even though they were supposedly on the same side. When Churchill asked Stalin to reign in his underling, Stalin denied he had any influence over Tito at all.

It didn't help that France was actively empire-building and resisting all calls to free Syria and other held possessions and Greece was close to anarchy, with only British troops able to keep the peace. I think Churchill felt the war had only been paused and foresaw a rapid decline into anarchy with Russia a vulture, eager to devour the spoils.

Though the death of Roosevelt and Churchill's loss of political power enabled Stalin to set up puppet states all through eastern Europe, the Iron Curtain (Churchill coined the phrase) did not result in another world war. I think Churchill would have been surprised that the ideological conflict between democracy and communism never erupted into more than regional conflicts.

Through all of his distrust of Stalin, he was still as swayed by the dictator's personal magnetism as any. At the meeting where Truman told Stalin of the atomic bomb, Churchill reports, "I was certain that at that date Stalin had no special knowledge of the vast process of research upon which the United States and Britain had been engaged for so long." We know now that Stalin knew all about it. He had a spy at Los Alamos for years.

It is intriguing to think what would have happened if during the post-war negotiations, the Conservative party had stayed in office. The animosity between the US and USSR that developed would have been shared more equally by Great Britain it is almost certain.

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## GoldGato says

*Our strength, which had overcome so many storms, would no longer continue in the sunshine.*

With that sentence, Churchill neatly summed up this last volume of his massive WWII collection...the coming victory of the Allies would mean the end of office for the Great Lion, the man who stayed true from beginning to end. The theme of this book is ***How The Great Democracies Triumphed, and so Were Able to Resume the Follies Which Had so Nearly Cost Them Their Life***. Unlike the previous volumes, this one is more centered on politics as the post-war world began to come into play. The conniving Soviets, the bankrupt Brits, the still-don't-get-it French, and the we-pretty-much-trust-everyone Yanks all start divvying up the goods.

*We cannot go running round into every German slum and argue with every German that it is his duty to surrender or we will shoot him.*

It's been said that Churchill was the greatest civilian war leader of all time. His writing echoes that thought. When he is discussing the last gasps of Hitler's brood or, even better, taking the reader through the island-by-island battles of the Americans versus the Japanese in the Pacific theatre, it's almost impossible to stop reading. However, when Churchill goes off into the devious world of politics, it's a bit harder to pay attention.

*Only just in time did the Allied armies blast the viper in his nest.*

Decades later, hindsight has proven Winston Churchill correct in his view that the Americans had the chance to stop the Soviets before they raised the Iron Curtain. But unlike Churchill and his British subjects, the Yanks clearly were still newbies and still full of that heartland farmer trust which meant Roosevelt and Truman and Eisenhower were naive about the Soviets and the Chinese. The reader doesn't need to read between the lines here, as Churchill's frustration flows through. His bitterness is there, also. It's a bit hard to blame him, after all. His nation suffered, his nation became bankrupt, his nation lost its empire, and his

nation was pushed aside by the Yanks and Soviets. When they discovered the progress the Nazis had made with missile science and what was in store for Great Britain had the war continued, one feels the fatigue. It all must have hurt him greatly.

*In these great matters failing to gain one's way is no escape from the responsibility for an inferior solution.*

As usual, the appendix section is outstanding. I could barely wait to get there, as here be the jewels in each of the six volumes. Churchill discusses women

(*"Women ought not to be treated the same as men"*),

and Ireland

(*"we left the Dublin government to frolic with the Germans and the Japanese representatives to their hearts' content"*),

the wrongs of the Versailles Treaty of WWI

(*"there would have been no Hitler"*),

and the need for food for his own people

(*"we need another three or four thousand tons of fish, to help us through the hard years which are coming"*).

His letters and memos are magnificent.

While this wasn't my favourite volume of Churchill's WWII set, it resonated more than the others. Certainly, my respect for this man increased a hundredfold. Defy Hitler, hold back Stalin, partner with Roosevelt, withstand the destructive bombs, win the war...and get voted out of office. How the heck did he manage to survive all the stress?

*Forward, unflinching, unswerving, indomitable, till the whole task is done and the whole world is safe and clean.*

Book Season = Year Round (you shall not pass)

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## Sara says

Time spent with such a compelling figure as Churchill is a humbling reminder of the merit of Thomas Carlyle's Great Man Theory. He was a giant of the 20th Century. Having just completed all six volumes of Churchill's Second World War series, I'm appropriately awed. Churchill's unique personal view of these momentous years is a wonderful counterpoint to the compelling and readable WWII histories by Rick Atkinson, Anthony Beevor and others. The telegrams, minutes and messages included add unparalleled veracity and remind us how much spirit and precision our written language has lost in the last 50 years. It's easy to think the outcomes we know today were inevitable but Churchill reminds us that nothing is predetermined, the unexpected is to be expected and events are shaped by the character and decisions of individual men. These works require a certain fortitude from the reader but the effort will be richly rewarded.

## **Maria says**

Battle of Italy, the Mediterranean conflicts, Normandy, and the division of Europe between the Soviet Union and the other Allies.

Why I started this book: While only the second book of the series was on the Navy's Recommended Reading list, I couldn't just read that one. I was eager to finish this series.

Why I finished it: My American prejudices prevented me from fully enjoying the last installment. I was frustrated by Churchill's insistence that it was American lack of foresight that let the U.S.S.R. gobble up Eastern Europe, especially Austria, and Yugoslavia; it was our selfishness that kept the atomic bomb research from the British; and mostly that it was his personal relationship with Stalin that could have worked out these issues if the Americans had only followed his lead. Followed by the idea that they should have flown a showcase bomber across Russia to demonstrate just how easy it was to bring a nuclear weapon to their former friend... cause that would have definitely calmed the Cold War tensions. Stalin is the definition of "does not play well with others" and I don't think that Churchill could have negotiated more favorable terms. Granted it's easier to be critical of Churchill's opinions because I know that the Iron Curtain fell without bloodshed just 40 years after it went up.

Read along: The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany for the German perspective and An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943 for the American perspective close to 60 years after.

Side note: Churchill's history of the Second World War was originally published in six volumes:

1. The Gathering Storm
2. Their Finest Hour
3. The Grand Alliance
4. The Hinge of Fate
5. Closing the Ring
6. Triumph and Tragedy

Churchill then condensed these into four volumes, which have since been released as one, rather hefty, publication. The audio version of the unabridged recordings of Churchill's condensed volume, divided into four parts, as follows:

1. The Second World War: Milestones to Disaster
2. Alone: The Second World War (Condensed) Series, Book 2
3. The Grand Alliance
4. Triumph and Tragedy

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## **Terry says**

Would highly recommend this series to anyone!!!!

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## **Karl says**

The final chapter of Churchill's personal view of WWII. Almost worth just for Churchill's writing in addition to the insights he provides.

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### **James Richardson says**

I just finished reading Winston Churchill's Triumph and Tragedy which is Volume 6 of Churchill's six volume masterpiece on the history of the Second World War. Suffice it to say that Churchill was ahead of his time and way ahead of the United States in seeing the danger of the Russian/Soviet menace! FDR and then Truman were too concerned with politics that might offend UJ. Churchill's response was we have to do something and the hell with worrying about offending Stalin. Great and insightful documents and letters are utilized throughout the volume. The Balkans and especially Poland are emphasized. Churchill eludes to and mentions the iron curtain well before his famous speech in Fulton, Missouri.

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### **Doreen Petersen says**

Great read with lots of details about the ending of WWII. I would recommend this one.

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### **Bob Wolniak says**

Churchill's 6th and final volume of his Pulitzer prize winning insider history of the Second World War picks up from Closing the Ring (which is mainly about defeating Mussolini's Italy) and resumes with the allied D-Day operations. It ends rather abruptly with his loss of elections in Britain at the end of the war. This is by no means a thorough war accounting of all the remaining theaters of battle but rather a book filled with correspondences and vital meetings between "the big three" world leaders (Stalin, Roosevelt and himself, near the end after Roosevelt's death, Truman) as well as some further correspondences with generals and ambassadors, and his rising fears and alarm about postwar Europe. Many aspects of the overall war effort are merely summarized or left out of this particular volume--noticeably very little to nothing about the Jewish Holocaust, for one example--but much attention is paid to negotiations concerning what would become of Poland, Greece, northern Italy and other post-WWII intrigues. It is in the second half, entitled The Iron Curtain, that the narrative increasingly concerns itself with his disappointment that the democratic world leaders could not have greater resolve in framing a better postwar alliance ("how the great democracies triumphed and so were able to resume the follies which had so nearly cost them their life"), and his fears realized about Soviet intentions. There's a tone of "I told you so" to the organization of this volume. A very fine WWII book about diplomacy, growing tensions between allies, the prevailing thinking that led to climactic decisions, as well as an account of the prime minister's correspondences and travels. Highly engrossing and still worth a read today even if it can't help but be characterized by the times (Red Scare) it was compiled in (1953-just as Stalin's reign ended).

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### **David Rubin says**

This volume concludes Winston Churchill's six-volume history of World War II. As previously noted, this is a highly personalized history, closely revolving around the Prime Minister's own participation in the military and political activities during the war. The book is constructed of two interwoven approaches: a narrative,

chronological history of the war and a set of source material composed of telegrams, letters, and notes sent and received during the course of the action. Much of the latter involved Churchill's communications with President Roosevelt and Marshall Stalin. Churchill successfully recorded his perspective of the military and political struggles for future generations.

The importance of this final volume for American readers is that we gain a perspective on the British activity during the war, with particular emphasis on the military campaigns in Italy and Greece; Great Britain's efforts against the Communist partisans in Greece; and, Churchill's ultimately unsuccessful efforts to create an independent, post-war Poland. As to the latter, Churchill's efforts take on a rather quixotic quality; England was clearly not powerful enough in 1945 to put any military pressure against Stalin's Russian juggernaut in Poland and the United States did not have the political will to oppose the Soviets. Yet, Churchill continually fought for Polish independence, ultimately to no avail. He was turned out of office by the British voters and this effectively ended his ability to tilt his lance at the Polish windmill.

The book ends very abruptly with the close of the Potsdam conference which determined the fate of Eastern Europe and the allies role in post-war Germany. We would like to have learned more about England's post-war recovery and the fate of the German state from the British perspective.

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### **Bryan says**

Wow, what a great conclusion to a magnificent series! Churchill really describes the ins and outs of the end of the Nazi menace and the beginning of the Cold War in this volume. Churchill spends a lot of time trying to show how he was overruled on the Polish question by a war weary U.S. In my humble opinion, the Poland question was decided the minute the USSR chased the Germans out of it. After reading this series, I realized why Churchill won the Nobel Prize as he is an outstanding chronicler of events. Highly recommended for those who want the inside scoop on World War II from the greatest man of the 20th century (in my opinion).

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### **Nishant Pappireddi says**

I thoroughly enjoyed the entire six-volume series.

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### **Dave Ewart says**

I've read all six volumes of these diaries over the past year, with many other books in between, but I feel an achievement having finished. Although familiar with much of the history & events, the inside view these diaries provide is magnificent.

It's a long slog getting through, and I tended to glaze over a little with all the references to the various armies & divisions, but absolutely worth it.

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### **Ryan says**

Interesting insight. Amazing how he, just like before the war started, could so well predict what was to come.

How might the world have been different if he had been listened to.

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## Tim says

Triumph and Tragedy  
Winston Churchill  
Houghton Mifflin, 1953

This is the final volume of the series on the Second World War. As with all the other volumes, Churchill states a "Theme of the Volume" on one of the cover pages. The theme here is utterly predictive of the content: "How the Great Democracies Triumphed, and so Were able to Resume the Follies Which Had so Nearly Cost Them Their Life". This theme constitutes the book ends for the entire work: it begins with Churchill warning of the existential threat posed by the rise of Hitler; it ends with the graphic metaphor of the Iron Curtain descending on eastern Europe and the virtual end of those ancient peoples. As the book comes to a close with Churchill being defeated as prime minister, you can feel in his lament how deeply he was grieved for the loss of opportunity to literally save the world from Communism. Even as he prepared for the Yalta conference (1945) he wrote in a communication with FDR, "At the present time I think the end of this war may well prove to be more disappointing than was the last." Later, after FDR had died he wrote to Truman as they prepared for what came to be the Potsdam conference, "I am profoundly concerned about the European situation. ... An iron curtain is drawn down upon their front. We do not know what is going on behind."

The matter which mostly provoked his anxiety was the fate of Poland. Churchill was painfully aware that things must go right with Poland since it was the invasion of Poland by the Nazis that finally moved the British people and government to declare war on Hitler. Many long and divergent negotiations between him, Stalin, FDR (and eventually Truman) had finally lead to a stalemate on just how the post war government of Poland should develop. Churchill was desperate to see that government arise along the lines he and FDR had agreed to in the Atlantic Charter they had created back in 1941. In this document, among other things, it had been stated that upon defeat of Hitler Europe would be restored. There was to be: no territorial aggrandizement; no territorial changes made against the wishes of the people; restoration of self-government to those deprived of it; free access to raw materials; reduction of trade restrictions. But the Russian army had "liberated" Poland and had set up a new government comprising only those Polish leaders who they deemed to be friendly toward Russia. Churchill rightly saw that this was nothing but a puppet government for Russia - so much for the restoration of self-government. Territorial changes were matched to Soviet "needs" - so much for territorial aggrandizement.

To some extent (large ?) I think Churchill brought this on himself. He recounts in some remarkable detail and candor the give and take of negotiations between himself, Stalin, and FDR about how the countries would be administered once the Nazis were driven out. In a passage on page 227-8 he tells of how he and Stalin in a meeting in Moscow, October, 1944, came to an agreement on "the Balkans". It reads like some guy dealing with a car salesman: make an offer, verbally. Then, write it out in a bit more detail, e.g. "on a half-sheet of paper" and then "push this across to Stalin [the salesman]." "There was a slight pause. Then he [Stalin] took his blue pencil and made a large tick mark upon it, and passed it back to us. ... After this there was a long silence. The penciled paper lay in the centre of the table. At length I said, 'Might it not be thought rather cynical if it seemed we had disposed of these issues, so fateful to millions of people, in such an offhand manner? Let us burn the paper.' 'No, you keep it,' said Stalin." Churchill comments "we were only dealing with immediate war-time arrangements. All larger questions were reserved.. [for] .. a peace table when the war was won." Unfortunately, that is not how Stalin took it. For "on a half-sheet of paper" Churchill had sketched out which of the Allies would have "predominance", in percentage terms, over each

of the countries: Rumania, Greece, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria. Stalin interpreted this as an opportunity to apply his own modus operandi which entailed total takeover of whatever country he had been granted 50% predominance or more. Using this as a basis of how things should work everywhere, he applied it to Poland and it was his ultimate argument to defend his takeover of that country.

I found this passage very disturbing and finally disappointing. It was as though Churchill saw himself playing at the power game. It has the appearance, as he himself said, of being cynical. I should think he would have taken his own council and burned the paper. I can think of some reasons why he would have kept it and also have recounted the event. The only one that makes sense to me, however, is that it really does provide some basis for explaining Stalin's actions in Poland, and Churchill's inability to deter him. While Churchill had throughout his political life decried Communism as a political/economic theory, I think he had not adequately sized up the ruthlessness of its proponents - especially, Stalin. Time and again, Churchill talks of the almost chummy times he had with Stalin. Even in the last days, when they were at odds over the disposition of Poland, and Churchill had written to others of the Iron Curtain, he could not seem to bring himself to see the monster he was dealing with. By the time this volume was completed, 1953, he still keeps to the script and ends with his farewell address to the British people, July 26, 1945. He remarks on how much more work is to be done and that they must be vigilant to ensure the goals of peace, freedom, democracy win out. But he does not condemn Stalin directly. Perhaps, in other places he does.

Sidebar comment: the phrase Iron Curtain became famous with Churchill's speech March 5, 1946, Westminster College, Fulton, Mo. He used the phrase several times in 1944 and 1945 in communications with both FDR and Truman.

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