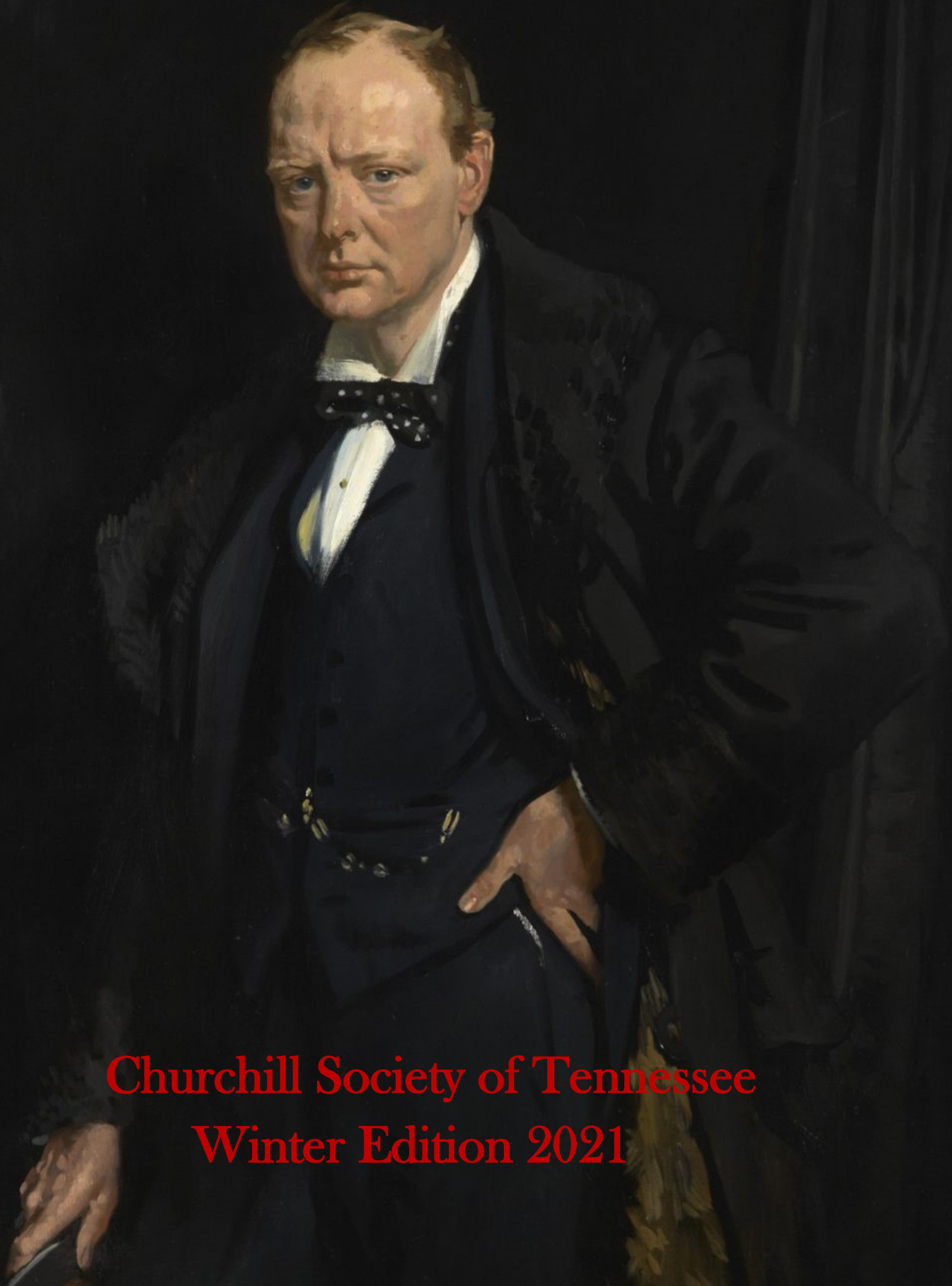


THE CHURCHILLIAN



Churchill Society of Tennessee
Winter Edition 2021

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Inside This Issue of *The Churchillian*

Cover art: Churchill Portrait from 1916 painted by William Orpen. Currently on loan to Blenheim Palace, we publish it here with the kind permission of the Churchill family.

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We are fortunate to have three articles about the 38th International Churchill Conference held at the London Marriott Grosvenor Hotel, October 8-9, 2021 on the theme of *Churchill and Freedom*. There were about 100 delegates in person and some 3,700 virtual ones online.

The first is a comprehensive report by Paul Forte on all aspects of the Conference. The second is Allen Packwood's introduction to the session on the Atlantic Charter. The third is a remembrance of Paul H. Courtenay by James W. Muller, given during the ICS Dinner.

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Churchill Society of Tennessee

Upcoming Events



April 9, 2022

National Churchill Day

CSOT presents

'Churchill's Art'

A talk by Michael Shane Neal

Time and location to be announced

From the President



Greetings Churchillians,

First of all, let's take a moment to mark the 147th birthday of Sir Winston S. Churchill. As we know, Winston was born in the wee hours of the morning on November 30, 1874 at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire. His mother was an American, Jenny Jerome Churchill, and his father was Lord Randolph Churchill, son of the seventh Duke of Marlborough. Happy Birthday, Sir Winston!

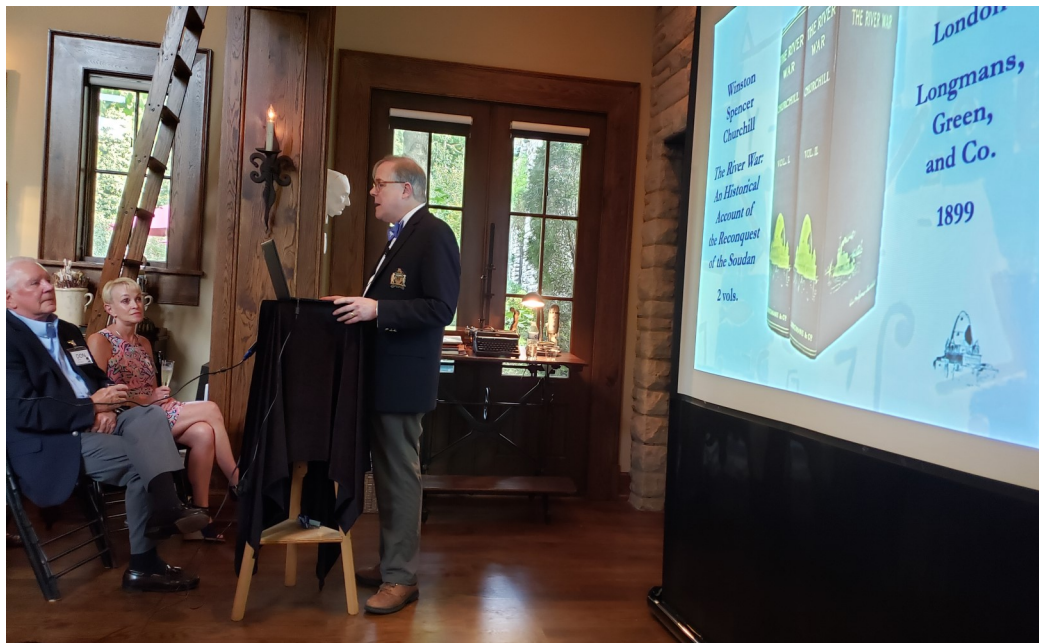
Well, another year has gone by. Despite Covid, the CSOT did manage to hold one very special in-person event in August. We were honored to host a talk by Professor James W. Muller. James has just completed an updated edition of Churchill's classic *The River War*. This is an account of the reconquest of the Sudan penned by a very young 24-year-old Lieutenant Churchill.

The talk was held at the beautiful Nashville studio of Michael Shane Neal. An overflow audience was treated to a friendly reception, along with lovely wine and hors d'oeuvres. It is always a pleasure to gather with our CSOT members and catch up. We were then on to the main event, Professor Muller's fascinating talk, *Churchill at War on the Nile*.





Yours truly had the honor of introducing Professor James W. Muller.



Jim Muller's presentation was impeccably researched and delivered in a thoughtful and entertaining style.

Looking forward to next year, we hope to get back on track holding more regular events. As you will see, we have an event planned for National Churchill Day on April 9, 2022. More details to follow soon. We are also planning our usual formal dinner for next fall and perhaps a summer meeting as well.

Finally, I would like to ask for your input. What would you like to see more of in our newsletter and website and what type of events would you like to see us put on in the future? Please drop me a line with your thoughts. drury55@gmail.com

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and prosperous New Year!

See you all next year.

Best wishes,

Jim Drury



International Churchill Society Conference

London, October 7-9, 2021

Paul E. Forte



Paul E. Forte is an independent scholar who has been hiding out in the business world for 40 years, the last 20 as the CEO of a U.S. federal government contracting firm specializing in insurance and benefits administration. Forte's principal area of study is western intellectual and political history 1500-1800. Forte's doctoral dissertation was on Richard Hooker (1554-1600), the theologian and political philosopher who in his lengthy treatise, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, defended the

Church of England against both Catholic antagonists and Puritan agitators determined to establish a Presbyterian church government like that created by Calvin in Geneva. Forte published portions of the dissertation in the *Folger Shakespeare Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker* (Harvard University Press, 1977-1998), and over the years has made forays into Graeco-Roman antiquity, economics, the Enlightenment, and leadership theory.

Reception at the Royal Air Force (RAF) Club, 128 Piccadilly, London



The opening reception was held at the legendary RAF Club, whose members hold or have held commissions in the RAF, PMRAFNS Reserve Forces, and Commonwealth. The club's patron is Queen Elizabeth II. The walls are decorated with many historic aircraft in scenes of action, as well as maps and photographs of flyers.

Champagne flowed liberally, courtesy of Pol Roger, Churchill's favorite vintner. A talk was given by Colin Bell, now 101, one of the original pilots of the famous Mosquito Squadron. The Mosquito, a twin-engined, shoulder-winged, multi-purpose combat

aircraft had a frame made of wood. Bell told stories of his more than 50 bombing missions over Germany, 33 of which were directly over Berlin, the most dangerous target, given its defense installations. Afterward, I spoke to Bell, introducing myself as an American. Bell asked to be excused for a moment and returned to give me his coin, bearing his image on one side and the de Havilland Mosquito on the other. It was hard to believe that I was talking to a WWII combat survivor of this caliber. Here was someone who had lived through and shaped a critical moment of 20th century history. Indeed, Bell's wartime service had helped to secure our collective freedom. It was a privilege to make his acquaintance.



Churchill and South Africa

This session, which was presented by the Honorable Celia Sandys, Churchill's granddaughter, the Honorable Lord Boateng, and Candice Millard, covered the importance of Churchill's experience in South Africa as a war correspondent, the origin and nature of Britain's war with the Boers, and Churchill's daring escape from a Boer prison, which catapulted him to

international fame and election to Parliament.

The Boer War (1899-1902), which was fought between Great Britain and the two Boer (Afrikaner) republics, Transvaal and the Orange Free State, was a forerunner of other wars that followed: it was the beginning of modern guerrilla warfare, concentration camps, and machine guns, with many soldiers reporting symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS). The British had to overcome difficult terrain, long lines of communication, and logistical hurdles. The presenters addressed such questions as what might have happened if the British had not defeated the Boers, whether Churchill's view of Africans was any different from the Boers he fought, and other topics of interest.

Afterward, I asked Lord Boateng whether, if the British had decided not to fight, the outcome would have been different. He said that "If the British had pulled back into the Cape, as the U.S. left Vietnam in 1975 and Afghanistan in 2021, it is likely there would have been a great conflagration. The Boers were brave, knew the land, had modern rifles, and were fine marksmen, but they were not numerous and their conduct was quite brutal. There was no question of their ingrained racism. The tribes would have eventually overwhelmed them. Governor Smuts, who was voted out of office, maintained to the end of his life that the

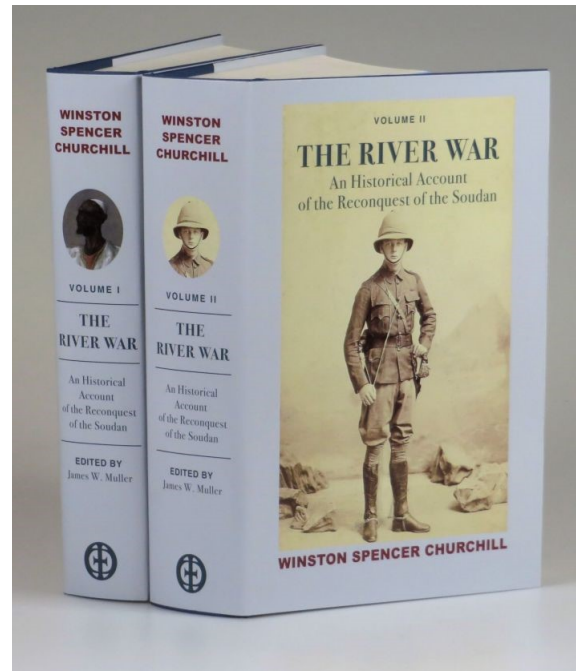
hard-right politics of the Boers doomed them to failure.”

Churchill, who was labeled public enemy Number One in South Africa, was indeed an Imperialist, but he recognized that all had to rise, not just the privileged elite. This could be achieved with the right government and administration. Churchill believed the British Empire would bring the necessary change. He would have resisted calls for African independence that would come only much later with Nelson Mandela, even as he resisted independence for India. While he believed all peoples had the right of self-determination, independence was something that a people had to be ready for, if they were to avoid being torn apart by sedition and tribal conflict. Churchill objected to any political changes that might destabilize an entire region or lead to atrocities.

Launch of the New Edition of Churchill’s *River War* 2 vols., ed. James. W Muller St. Augustine Press, 2021

This session, hosted by Dr. Piers Brendon, former keeper of the Churchill Archives Centre, and featuring Professor James W. Muller of the University of Anchorage, Alaska, was one of the high points of the conference. Professor Muller has been at work on his edition of *The River War*, which he has termed one of Churchill’s five most important books, since 1989. The original edition that Churchill published in 1898 was

in two volumes and consisted of roughly 1,000 pages. Churchill worked on it a full year.



The book covers efforts by the British to reconquest the Sudan, a land south of Egypt the size of Western Europe that includes both the Blue Nile and White Nile rivers and that had been the home of many tribes long before it was conquered by Muhammed Ali, Khedive of Egypt in the 1820s. Professor Muller’s new version restores all of the material of the 1898 edition that was cut from the 1902 edition, which is the version that most people know. The 1902 edition left out seven chapters of the original 26, including controversial remarks on Lord Kitchener and other criticisms, as well as episodes such as how Churchill got lost on his way up the Nile to Khartoum, and background material on the Madhi (“the Guided One”), a self-proclaimed prophet who would lead a rebellion in the western province of Darfur.

Also cut was Chapter 21, *After the Victory*. This chapter describes the losses on both sides at Omdurman, the climactic engagement, but especially those of the Dervishes, which numbered some 10,000, many of whom were killed at a distance by British cannon; the suffering of the Dervishes who survived the battle; the destruction of the Madhi's tomb; and other facts available only to an eyewitness. The graphic detail is important not only as evidence of Churchill's skill as a journalist, but for the even-handed treatment of which the "arch-imperialist" was capable. No one reading this chapter could conclude that Churchill had no respect for the bravery of the enemy, however misguided he thought their leadership. It is this content Muller has restored, presenting the expurgated text in red ink.

I found Churchill's chapters on the Dervishes revealing. It is evident that Churchill understood Islamic fundamentalism, including the uses of jihad, and saw it (rightly) as a political movement and not simply as an expression of religious faith. Churchill underscores the harsh conditions to which the Sudanese tribesmen were subjected by the Egyptians, who sold thousands of them into the Arab slave markets. Of course, slavery was deeply entrenched, "woven," as Neil Faulkner has recently written, "into the social fabric, creating a complex mesh of vested interests" (*Empire and Jihad*,

2021). It would prove difficult to eradicate, as the British were to learn. General Gordon, the celebrated Victorian military hero, would be unable to quash it, falling as a martyr to the cause. The British sought to reimpose the corrective of their imperial government, and with it, the traffic in markets for ivory and other commodities. But at least, in Churchill's view, it brought the necessary reform. Here as elsewhere throughout Churchill's long writing career there emerges the theme of the British Empire as ultimately a benign force in the world, the repository of human values and basic rights not respected by many other regimes of the last 300 years.

What would it have been like to ride as a 21st Lancer in the Sudan?

This presentation, made by soldier and championship jockey Brough Scott, MBE, author of *Churchill at a Gallop: Winston's Life in the Saddle* (2018), aimed at providing background for Churchill's ride with the 21st Lancers at Omdurman, the last cavalry charge of the 19th century.

For Churchill, horses and riding were a source of competence and pride from an early age. They were, writes Scott, "his escape in childhood, his challenge in youth, his transport in war, his triumph in sport, and his diversion in dotage." Churchill sat a horse well and excelled at polo, which he played in India. He passed his equestrian tests for Sandhurst with

relative ease. Still, Scott points out, riding horseback into a battle as part of a charge was extremely dangerous: while the British had modern artillery, there were only some 400 cavalry facing 60,000 Dervishes, armed with edge weapons. Churchill was mounted on a small Arabian pony and owing to a recent fall could not use his right shoulder well. This made it necessary for him to carry his Mauser pistol, which weighed less than a revolver and had a ten-shot magazine. That pistol probably saved his life, enabling him to shoot three of the enemy who were about to dispatch him at close range, something he could not have managed if he had been carrying his saber. Churchill certainly saw more action in his crowded hour than did Theodore Roosevelt on San Juan Hill.

Queen's Royal Hussars

Captain Jonathan Nice captured for us some of the history of Churchill's unit over the past 120 years. Tracing the unit is difficult, as there have been numerous reorganizations. Today, the 4th Lancers, like the 21st Lancers, have been merged into the Queen's Royal Hussars, a tank unit which does war exercises regularly with the Challenger II tank. Despite mechanization and the changes wrought by technology, traditions of valor remain. It was a pleasure to meet Captain Nice and his fellow officers, who attended the reception and the sessions and were available to answer questions.

Presenting History, Making History

This panel on curating Churchill exhibitions by Katherine Carter, (Chartwell), Dr. Rob Havers (American Civil War Museum), and Dr. Xavier Bray (Wallace Collection), emphasized the importance of archival collections for scholarly research, the need to promote exhibitions, and the challenges of ensuring their relevance for younger audiences. There was also the recognition that we downgrade the study of the humanities to our detriment. Churchill is a supreme example of how a strong background in the humanities can be harnessed for leadership. An avid reader of Gibbon and Macaulay, Churchill studied history to understand the past, but he also became a very good journalist, which enabled him to compose quickly and eventually to write a lot of history himself.

This panel was followed by a talk by Dan Snow, "the History Guy", a well-known British historian and television presenter. Snow asked why Churchill is so huge, why he dwarfs strong leaders like Pitt, Gladstone, and even David Lloyd George, who arguably had a greater impact on different aspects of British life, especially domestic policy. The answer, suggests Snow, is the same as why Nelson eclipses all other admirals. It has to do with Churchill's "bloody-minded obstinacy", his personal courage, his resolution in times of peril. Churchill's leadership in 1940 separated him from many others who had

calculated the risks of opposing Hitler and decided that appeasement was the safest course. Such qualities are the basis on which his reputation rests.

Clearly, the presenters of these sessions all thought we still had much to learn from Churchill, in spite of the revisionism of Geoffrey Wheatcroft (*Churchill's Shadow*, 2021) and others who regard adulation of Churchill as a cult based on myth and nostalgia. It will be interesting to see how they handle the case against Churchill going forward. Wheatcroft talks about the “long shadow Churchill still casts”, indicting many of his enthusiastic followers as unwitting celebrants liable to repeat his mistakes, his strategic blunders, his bad decisions. Indeed, Wheatcroft contends that Churchill is the source of bad foreign policy decisions in Great Britain and the U.S. over the past 75 years. He regrets the actions of Margaret Thatcher, George W. Bush and Tony Blair, all admirers of Churchill who sought to imitate his warlike stance. Do those of us who roll in Churchill's wake obscure rather than illumine the past? This subject merits attention in a future conference.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

This interview with former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, conducted virtually by Dan Snow, capped the first day. Schwarzenegger needed no introduction: seven times Mr. Olympia, international film star, and the former

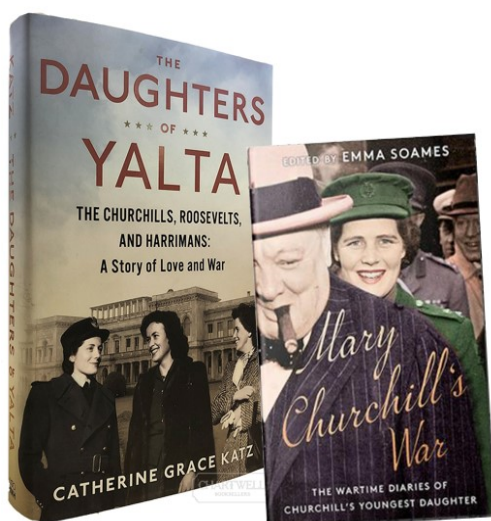
Governor of California, he has had a rich and envied life. Schwarzenegger spoke for almost an hour on the theme of freedom and the lessons he has learned from Churchill. He began with his childhood in Austria, describing the anger and hostility expressed by Austrians after the war, which was often taken out on children. Schwarzenegger did not hide his parents' bigotry or his mother's strong dislike of Churchill, which he recognized as both wrong and outmoded. He framed his decision to compete for the Mr. Universe body-building title in London at age 20 as a kind of escape to freedom.

Another important theme was how you handle defeat. Schwarzenegger observed that all of us are likely to experience a setback at some point in life, and so must learn to manage negative feelings engendered at such times. Schwarzenegger admires Churchill's ability to come back from defeat again and again – to overcome the opposition caused by his mistakes, to rally after losing elections, to surmount isolation and depression. Churchill did this by taking the longer view of things, finding ways to be useful, and adopting new avocations like painting. Schwarzenegger concluded his remarks by saying that while freedom is desirable in itself, it also brings obligations. Too many, he cautioned, are wrapped up in self-expression, regardless of the cost to others. But there are conditions in which we

all share and these affect the quality of life: environment, health care, infrastructure, basic security from want. Schwarzenegger's own contributions, both as a Republican governor of the largest and richest state in the U.S., and as a private citizen, substantiate his advocacy of working not just for oneself, but for the good of others. Examples include his support of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the USC bipartisan political group, and the Schwarzenegger Institute, which provides leadership around key issues dividing the U.S. I found the talk inspirational - a boost to political centrists in a time of polarization, and a helpful offset to unhealthy habits of mind engendered by social media and contemporary life generally.

Churchill's Daughters at War – Launch of *Mary Churchill's War*

This session put the focus squarely on notable women in Churchill's life. Catherine Grace Katz, author of *Daughters of Yalta: The Churchills, Roosevelts, and*



Harrimans: A Story of Love and War (2021) interviewed Emma Soames, Mary Churchill's daughter and author of *Mary Churchill's War: The Wartime Diaries of Churchill's Youngest Daughter* (2021), providing a stimulating exchange on a host of themes rarely touched on at these meetings. Topics included the "heady diet" of geopolitics on which Churchill's three daughters, Diana Churchill, Sarah Churchill, and Mary Churchill (Soames) were raised; the compelling sense of duty all three demonstrated; the effect on their sensibilities of military service during WWII (in Diana's case as an officer in the Women's Royal Naval Service; in Sarah's case, RAF reconnaissance, detection, and aerial photographic analysis; and in Mary's case the Auxiliary Territorial Service and manning anti-aircraft guns in Hyde Park). "Your sisters have chosen the roughest roads they could find", Winston wrote to his son Randolph in North Africa, "We think they are very heroic".

But military assignments were not the only ones. The daughters were expected to act with discretion and to assume challenging roles for their demanding father, including serving as trusted go-betweens with sensitive diplomatic messages for foreign leaders. This was somewhat precarious in Sarah's case, as she had become involved with Gilbert Winant, the married two-term governor of New Hampshire and a close

friend of Roosevelt who succeeded Joseph Kennedy as ambassador in 1941. The women in question all gained confidence as a result of their experiences, choosing different paths after the war. Each had important if lesser-known insights, such as Mary Churchill's perception that Churchill finally realized at Yalta the implications of Roosevelt's having already turned from Great Britain, regarding its once dominant empire as a decidedly lesser power that could be dealt with differently in the future. *Mary Churchill's War* is likely to be read in years to come when other books on Churchill are forgotten. Catherine Grace Katz's book will also find readers: written with verve and grace, it draws the reader into a world that might otherwise have been lost—one not just of war, but of love, beauty, and intrigue.

The Atlantic Charter – Its historic significance and legacy

This large panel featured curators, Churchill scholars, historians, a strategic research institute director, and the Director of the Churchill Archives Centre. Tim Riley of Westminster College in Missouri made the key point – namely that the Charter, written 80 years ago, launched the alliance that won not only WWII but eventually the Cold War. It was significant in other ways, such as being the first wartime meeting of Churchill and Roosevelt, the acknowledgement of common ends between the Great Britain and the United

States (though not necessarily, and to Churchill's disappointment, war ends); and the belated realization by Churchill that the United States might wait so long to enter the war that Great Britain would be broken irreparably. However, Churchill's determination to bring the U.S. in never faltered. He knew that Britain's short-term survival depended on it, and in the end, with the help of hymns and speeches, gestures and patience, the "great arsenal of democracy" was opened. Lend-Lease was executed for which the American taxpayer footed the bill, and Roosevelt found a way to sell it and more to a nation reluctant to enter another European war. Roosevelt's campaign was assisted, of course, by the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of that year, which tipped the scale.

The 1941 Charter was supported by 26 allied nations by 1942 and was a key step in the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. In the end, however, it proved better geared to war than to any kind of strategic convergence; such convergence, in any case, did not occur, as both the Soviet Union and China went their own way. One might say that its legacy – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom from fear – helped to win the war, but not to cement the peace. The panelists noted the signing this past June of the new Atlantic Charter by Prime Minister Boris Johnson and President Joe Biden, which aims at "building an

inclusive, fair, climate-friendly, sustainable, rules-based global economy while maintaining security and stability against modern threats, including cyber threats". None appears to have hope of its gaining much traction.

Defending Freedom Today

This special pre-recorded session was focused on more recent events in Iraq but suggestive of the way Churchillian values continue to influence political action. Justin Reash, Executive Director of the ICS and Program Director of the National Churchill Leadership Center, interviewed Omar Mohammed, an historian and blogger now teaching in Paris and affiliated with the George Washington University Program in Extremism. Omar, an Iraqi national, is the founder of the "MosulEye", a blog which had 3,000 online subscribers during the reign of ISIS. From 2014 to 2017, Omar conducted his blog anonymously, bringing facts about the ISIS occupation, ISIS depredations, and wanton cruelties to anyone who could access the internet. Omar, who says he had "a moral and intellectual obligation to take action", argues that history is not about the past but the future, and in a vein that echoes Orwell, insists that "Those who take possession of the past will control the future". ISIS made a vain attempt to rewrite the history of the past in an effort to do that very thing. Hence, for Omar, the need for

truth, for quality documentation. There were definite risks. To protect his family and friends, Omar had to remain underground and isolated, covering his tracks carefully, as ISIS members were trying hard to identify him. If ISIS had managed to find him, the end would have been bad both for Omar, his family, and his friends. At the height of ISIS's propaganda campaign, Omar considered spreading his own brand of disinformation as a tactic but ultimately decided against it. He concluded that while the narrative of history may be temporarily controlled by those who have no respect for truth, in the end truth will undermine any regime that rejects it and pretends that it doesn't exist.

The Inaugural Stephen and Jane Poss Distinguished Lecture: *Churchill and Russia: Opportunism or Consistency?* Andrew Roberts

Roberts gave the last lecture of the conference, as befits his status as one of the great historians of our time. His biography of Churchill, *Walking with Destiny* (2018), was reviewed to acclaim and deservedly so. Roberts was the first to be given unfettered access to the Royal Archives by permission of Queen Elizabeth II, which enabled him to review the whole of her late father King George VI's wartime diaries. His research and familiarity with primary sources is simply daunting. While other books will be written about Churchill,

it is not likely that another one-volume treatment will replace Roberts' book soon.

Roberts chose as his topic Churchill's perplexing relationship with Russia. Posing the question of whether Churchill's many apparent shifts in position on Russia resulted from inconsistency or mere political opportunism, Roberts concluded that charges of inconsistency "stem from ideology rather than evidence-based facts". In an apt metaphor, Roberts described Churchill's changes toward Russia in terms of the phases of Kubler-Ross's terminally ill patient's grief cycle: denial, anger, negotiation, depression, acceptance. There were Churchill's attempts to rationalize the gross corruption of government under Czar Nicholas II, his violent denunciations of Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, "when Lenin was sent into Russia by the Germans". Then came change, for by the 1930s Churchill started to think the Russians might have to join a coalition of European powers against the Germans. There was great anger at the short-lived alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union, which puzzled everyone, followed by admiration for the Red Army that suffered tremendous losses at Stalingrad and along the eastern front from 1942 to 1944. But then came depression following the war's end, with Stalin's lies at Yalta about the disposition of Poland, and finally Churchill's recognition and acceptance in the Cold

War that the Russians admired nothing so much as power, that they would do anything not to disclose weakness. Churchill also understood, however, that the Russians didn't want war so much as the fruits of war, which power could secure. Their national interest was paramount; it dictated all they did, just as it dictated the choices made by Britons to preserve their empire. There was a parallel here to Churchill's own apparent fluctuations, from Conservative to Liberal party and back again, from rages against the Soviet Union to a willingness to work with it for a greater good.

Roberts concluded that, far from haphazard, Churchill was consistent with respect to Russia and to the things that mattered most. An aristocrat born at Blenheim Palace during the high point of British dominion in global affairs, he could hardly be called "a man of the people". Rather, he believed leadership was necessary for nations, not to mention empires, and that it was uncommon. He saw the British Empire as ultimately a civilizing agency, a beneficent force in a cruel and largely uncivilized world. He thought neither that all governments were on an equal footing nor that they all should endure. Empires have always existed and will always exist, because cultures vary in resources, assets, learning, technology. For Churchill and for us, it is necessary to

consider whether those cultures which at least subscribe to values that are productive of freedom and the rule of law should cede their power to other cultures which do not. Roberts is persuaded they should not cede their power, and I suspect most Churchillians agree.

Mention should be made in this context of *Churchill, Race, and Empire*, the year-long educational series at Churchill College, Cambridge, and particularly of a panel discussion held in February entitled *The Racial Consequences of Churchill*. The panelists—Dr. Onyeka Nubia (Nottingham University), Dr. Madhusree Mukerjee, and Professor Kehinde Andrews (Birmingham City University), with Professor Priyamvada Gopal (Churchill College, Cambridge) in the chair, made serious criticisms of Churchill's philosophy and achievements, arguing that Churchill's role in the defeat of Nazi Germany has been exaggerated, that Churchill was of minor importance during WWII, that he was unpopular with the British people, that he believed in eugenics, and that his politics were deeply racist. For an effective, historically-based response to these charges, see Roberts and Gebreyohanes, *The Racial Consequences of Mr. Churchill: A Review* (<https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/the-racial-consequences-of-mr-churchill-a-review/>)

Other fine moments

There were other presentations to which I cannot do justice, given time constraints. Among them was a special recognition ceremony for public speaking that drew applications from some 1,300 students across 400 schools in the U.K.

Dr Charlotte Jones' gave an account of Pol Roger during WWII, which recounted the shelling of both Epernay and Reims, the demand for the wine by both sides during the war, and the risks of hiding good vintages from the Germans, followed by a question and answer period in which Jones estimated Churchill's personal lifetime consumption at 44,000 bottles.

Finally, there were scenes performed by London actors from a new play by Giles Cole about Churchill at the White House in December 1941, where not everyone was happy to see him. These sessions added richness and texture to the conference, providing a bit of ease from the more formal academic presentations and Governor Schwarzenegger's politically charged remarks.

The 2022 conference will be held 6-8 October in Kansas City, MO, a two-hour drive from the American National Churchill Center on the campus of Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. I plan to be there!

Paul H. Courtenay (1934-2020): A remembrance *James W. Muller*



Professor Jim Muller delivered the following remembrance of Paul H. Courtenay after dinner at the 38th International Churchill Conference in London on Friday, October 8, 2021. As Professor Muller points out in his new edition of Churchill's book *The River War*, in *The Making of This Book*, no one was "better informed about British ways that puzzle Americans" than Paul. As Professor Muller explains, "Not only has he read every word of the new edition and contributed to more of the footnotes than I can count," but he also "enlisted assistance from friends" (I xxiii). Paul's tenacity and dedication in tracking down particulars of the events and personalities of the book was a marvel and enriched the new edition immeasurably.

We honor the memory of our great friend of Sir Winston Spencer Churchill and the International Churchill Society, Paul Harting Courtenay, who was born on the 6th of March 1934 and died on the 15th of October 2020.

Paul belonged to parents who had come as immigrants to the United Kingdom from eastern Europe. His mother died when he was a babe in arms. His father William, who changed his foreign surname to Courtenay, became a war correspondent who wrote, spoke, and filmed the history of the Second World War as he flew all round the world. His travels and conversations were with the

full range of those who fought for liberty on the side of the Allies, from ordinary soldiers, sailors, and airmen to the leading figures in many nations, including Churchill. In 1945 he walked in the ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki only days after the bombs had fallen, which may have contributed to his early demise in 1960.

Paul Courtenay grew up in admiration of his distinguished father. Educated at Malvern and Sandhurst, he pursued a military career that took him to postings in Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America. Later he had a second successful career in business. He was accompanied throughout by his wife Sara, his help meet

and lifetime companion. They had four children—James, Lucy, William, and Caroline—two of whom, James and Lucy, are with us tonight. Paul and Sara have twelve grandchildren. They and their parents, who live and work all over the world from Hong Kong and New Zealand to Biarritz and the city of London, are following their forebears in outstanding achievements in their professions. Paul was a proud, loving father and grandfather, rejoicing in all that his family accomplished and welcoming them home to Park Lane Lodge, his house in Quarley in Hampshire, for impromptu visits and family reunions.



Paul Courtenay on his trip to Anchorage, where he was guest of honor at the annual birthday dinner of the Right Honourable Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Society of Alaska in 2013 © J. W. Muller

I first met Paul at the International Churchill Conference in Bath in 1999. He was the warm-up act to Dominic Walters, Sir Winston's great-grandson, who

delivered the speech Churchill gave at the house that is now the American Museum in 1897. Paul's introduction was so well researched and so interesting that I made a point to meet him afterwards. From that moment our friendship was perfect, and he helped teach me about British history, politics, and society as we worked together on new editions of Churchill's interwar books *Thoughts and Adventures* and *Great Contemporaries*.

He knew I had also been working for more than a decade on the new edition of *The River War*. Thousands upon thousands of e-mails flew back and forth between Quarley and Anchorage as we tackled together the detective work of identifying people, quotations, and events that figured in Churchill's history. Given the nine-hour difference in time zones, it seemed in those years that *The River War* never slept.

Paul generously introduced me to his friends who were experts on the Sudan, who also became my friends. Together we visited regimental museums and statues commemorating the Omdurman campaign. His work continued through all the years until the book went to the printer last fall. Paul helped with hundreds of footnotes; his memory was prodigious and his resourcefulness unending. His sense of humor was acute, and it was always great fun to be with him. He was an

English worthy, and it was a very sad day in our house when we heard he had died last October. I miss him every day. Before he died, he had read every page of the new edition of *The River War* except two pages, the dedication in each volume “To Paul Courtenay.” But his contributions to the International Churchill Society and to keeping the memory of Winston Churchill green, as Mary Soames put it, go far beyond his help in preparing new editions of Churchill’s works. For years he was senior editor of the ICS quarterly journal *Finest Hour*, offering answers to questions no one else could answer and saving us from countless mistakes. He helped Andrew Roberts with research for many books, and he served for years as honorary secretary of the International Churchill Society in the UK.

Paul leaves us a legacy of diligent work, ebullient humanity, and exemplary friendship. It is an honor to present to his children James and Lucy, of whom he was so proud, this bust in acknowledgment of all that Churchillians everywhere will always owe to Paul Courtenay.



Paul Courtenay's children James and Lucy, after a bust of Sir Winston Churchill was presented to them to commemorate their father's lifetime of work to honor Churchill by James W. Muller on behalf of the International Churchill Society, London, October 8, 2021 © ICS.

The Atlantic Charter – Its historic significance and legacy

Allen Packwood OBE



Allen Packwood OBE FRHistS is a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, and has been Director of the Churchill Archives Centre since 2002. He is a member of the International Council of ICS and its Operating Committee. He is the author of *How Churchill Waged War*. At the 2021 Churchill Conference: *Churchill and Freedom*, Allen introduced the session on *The Atlantic Charter – Its historic significance and legacy* and

we are grateful to him for allowing us to publish his speech.

The Atlantic Conference was the first wartime meeting between Churchill and FDR, and it took place off the coast of Newfoundland between 9-12 August 1941. The main result of that meeting was a joint declaration of common aims that came to be called the Atlantic Charter. We have to be very clear here and say that these were common aims, they were not war aims, because at this point in August 1941, the United States was not yet in the conflict; Pearl Harbour had not yet happened.

I think is vitally important to understand first of all that Churchill did not cross the Atlantic in August 1941, braving U-boat invested seas, with the intention of producing the Atlantic Charter. He crossed

the Atlantic because he wanted greater American involvement in the war in Europe. Ideally, he wanted America to enter the war in Europe, and, of course, that had been a central plank of his policy of waging war since the assumption of his premiership 15 months earlier in May 1940. Within days of his becoming Prime Minister his military leaders had told him that Britain would only be able to fight on in the event of a French collapse if the United States was willing to give full economic and financial support and the Chiefs of Staff had minuted, "without which we do not think we could continue the war with any chance of success".

During the Blitz, he called on the Old World and the New to join hands to rebuild the temples of man's freedom. In private, he told his private secretary, Jock Colville: "No lover ever studied every whim of his mistress as I did those of President Roosevelt". So, in August 1941, he made the journey to Newfoundland because Roosevelt had asked for a meeting and because this was a meeting that Churchill had been desperately waiting for and actively seeking for so long. He went because he believed this might signal a change in Presidential policy towards US entry into the war. He went because he believed in his own ability to convince the President of the necessity of greater American intervention. He was seizing an opportunity.

My second point, which flows, I think naturally from the first, is that the Atlantic Charter was not the result that Churchill anticipated from this first wartime meeting with President Roosevelt. He wanted concrete measures, and of course, he did get some. It was agreed, for example, that the American Navy would escort British convoys west of the 25th meridian, thereby freeing up British resources in the Atlantic and also making it more likely that US forces would be attacked, and therefore that America might be dragged into the war. Roosevelt agreed to protect the Azores if the Germans moved against Portugal and to take a harder line against

an increasingly bellicose Japan in the Pacific. But at the end of the meeting, the British were actually left frustrated that America was really no closer to sending forces into the European theatre.

So why did Churchill co-author the Atlantic Charter? It is clear that the document comes out of the private conversations between the Prime Minister and the President, conversations that were not minuted. We simply do not know what they said to each other in this first crucial meeting in private. Let me briefly speculate on Churchill's motivations and intentions. Firstly, I think he understood the importance of symbolism. He knew that this was a deeply symbolic moment, one that was going to be broadcast around the globe. He knew it was going to be broadcast around the globe because he took his own film crew with him and also two journalists. He took enormous steps to choreograph the occasion, deliberately stage-managing that famous divine service on the deck of HMS *Prince of Wales* on Sunday, 10 August when British and US sailors were pictured standing side-by-side singing *O God our help in ages past* and *Onward Christian soldiers*.

Those images sent a powerful message of America standing shoulder to shoulder with Britain. The Charter achieved the same thing, but it achieved it with words. I

do not need to tell this audience that Churchill knew that words mattered. To him, the most important provisions of the Charter were not those about respecting the rights of nations to choose their own boundaries or of peoples to choose their own government, but rather those that spoke about establishing peace after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny or facilitating freedom of the high seas and of disarming aggressor nations.

This was an Anglo-British document, in which I think we can most clearly see Churchill's hand and his input in those clauses because they are a continuation of his simple stated policy of waging war until victory. So, Churchill embraced the charter out of necessity, but he did not do it blindly. He knew that its clauses about self-government would cause him problems with the Empire, as they did. He knew it would cause him problems with

his Soviet ally, who wanted domination of Eastern Europe. But it accorded with both his short-term and his long-term aims. His short-term aim was survival, and for that, he needed to be in accord with President Roosevelt. His long-term aim was a New World order in which Britain and the United States would work together to guarantee global security. It is the same vision he articulated five years later at Fulton, Missouri. For that, he also needed to be in accord with President Roosevelt.

So, the charter has to be seen as a product of a moment in time, but it is interesting because like Churchill's speeches it also transcends that moment and becomes something bigger. It becomes a founding document for the new United Nations. Not all of that could be foreseen in August 1941, but of course that does not make it any less important.

Clarissa, Countess of Avon (née Spencer-Churchill)

28 June 1920 to 15 November 2021

Obituary and Remembrances by Celia Lee



Clarissa, Countess of Avon, when in her 80s. Photo by kind permission of Mrs Minnie S. Churchill

Christened Anne Clarissa Nicolette Spencer-Churchill, and known always as Clarissa, she was born, June 28, 1920, to Lady Gwendeline née Bertie, at home in Cromwell Road, after the end of the First World War. The family were Catholic, as their mother Lady Gwendeline was Catholic, and she and John (Jack) were married in the Catholic church in Oxford. Anne, Lady Islington, a friend of Gwendeline's was Clarissa's godmother.

Clementine Churchill already had three girls, Diana, Sarah, and Marigold, as well

as a son Randolph, and for years, Gwendeline had longed for a girl. Jack was delayed as an officer at the war's end, but his very religious and pious wife got her dearest wish when, twelve years into their marriage, a daughter was born.

Her mother lavished a great deal of love on Clarissa, and she was, according to her elder brother Peregrine, whom I interviewed in 2001, a spoilt little girl. The Spanish Influenza epidemic – so-called – was still rampant, and Gwendeline, being rather highly strung, feared for her infant's life. She insisted she be christened at home, so a priest obliged. Her fears were exaggerated when the following year, August 23, 1921, Marigold died of septicaemia, whilst on holiday by the sea-side, and Gwendeline became even more protective of her daughter, not allowing her to be taken out of the house.

As a young girl, Clarissa was clever, having for a time attended a private school, Downham, in Essex. At age 16, she was accepted for a course at the Sorbonne in Paris to study art, which was

unheard of for a girl in those days. Her sister-in-law, Yvonne Spencer-Churchill, who was herself French and from Paris and was a teacher, told the author that Clarissa returned speaking French fluently and perfectly, without a trace of an accent. There followed a spell at the University of Oxford, attending philosophy lectures, and she persuaded an old Etonian A.J. Ayer to give her tutorials. Ayer was an English philosopher known for his promotion of logical positivism, particularly in his books *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936) and *The Problem of Knowledge* (1956).

During the Second World War, Clarissa worked in London, first for the Ministry of Information on *Britansky Soyuznik*, an English-language propaganda newspaper, published in Russia, and later in a basement of the Foreign Office, decoding messages. It was a measure of her cleverness that she was appointed to each of these positions. She didn't live at home, but in a cut-price room on the top floor of the Dorchester Hotel that no one else would inhabit because of the risk that it would be bombed. Clarissa, it would seem, had strong nerves.

Clarissa smoked and drank and would later boast she'd experienced her first love affair at age 17, in an age when mothers protected their daughters' virginity until the wedding night. Her mother had become a

chain smoker during the First World War, worrying about her husband Jack, who served as a Major, first at the Western Front, then Gallipoli, and when that failed, returned to the Western Front, until the end of the war and beyond. Her smoking undoubtedly caused her lung cancer, and she was very ill during the late 1930s at a time when Clarissa was maturing into a young woman and could have benefited from a mother's guidance.

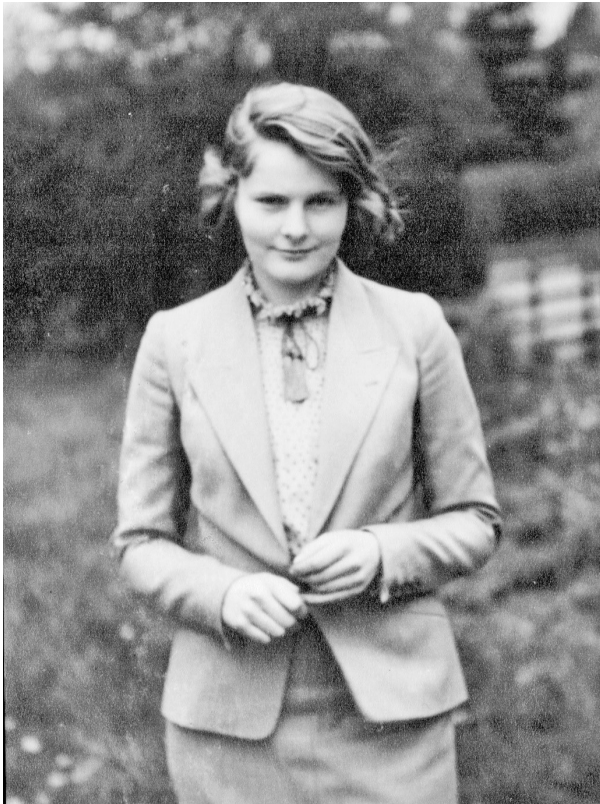


The Spencer-Churchill family enjoying a holiday (left to right): Major John (Jack), Peregrine, Lady Gwendoline, Clarissa, John (Johnny)

At the end of the war, Clarissa worked, reviewing theatre, music, and the arts, in *Vogue's* Spotlight column. Along the way, she rubbed shoulders with Orson Welles, befriended Greta Garbo, and later took a job working for George Weidenfeld's publishing firm. In an interview with the author, one was conscious that she was

too clever to criticize openly her uncle Winston Churchill. She said that along with her family, she spent each Sunday with Winston and Clementine, mostly at Chartwell House in Kent.

There, her uncle talked about the war, and thought 'we were all going to be annihilated'. He was not interested in the views of others, so he did most of the talking and the family members listened. Clarissa had a way of looking at one and lowering her eyelids in a manner that conveyed something other than approval.



***Clarissa Spencer-Churchill,
daughter of Lady Gwendoline and
Major John (Jack) Spencer-
Churchill, pictured in her 20s***

The only time he listened to the

conversation of another was when there was someone important lunching.

Clarissa bore no resemblance to her mother in either looks or personality, but had the jawline and eyes of her grandfather, Montagu Arthur Bertie, 7th Earl of Abingdon. When I asked her about their historic and magnificent ancestral home Wytham Abbey in Oxford, she told me her grandfather was a gambler and he lost so heavily he had to sell it.

Following a succession of boyfriends, Clarissa finally settled on a husband, Anthony Eden (1897-1977), later 1st Earl of Avon. He was 23 years her senior and divorced. They married in Caxton Hall registry office, which raised some eyebrows even as late as the 1950s. At the time she met Eden, he was a political star as Uncle Winston's Foreign Secretary, and tipped to follow him as a future prime minister. Clarissa was aged 32 which was considered late for a young girl to marry since most girls were married by age 21. There were no children of the marriage, but she told me she had 'suffered one miscarriage'.

Anthony Eden was Prime Minister of the UK from 1955 to 1957. The mess he made over the Suez Canal crisis in 1956 brought about his downfall. Clarissa was very defensive of him and put a brave face on matters to me. Referring to that



Pictured on the Edens' wedding day (left to right): Clementine, Lady Churchill; Anthony Eden; Clarissa Eden; Sir Winston Churchill

time, she said, 'Anthony was not well – he'd had two operations. Trouble with his kidneys.' Somewhat ironically, Clarissa would live to see another Suez crisis of a different nature, March 2021. The giant container ship *Ever Given*, that was the size of four football pitches, got wedged across the Suez Canal, blocking one of the world's busiest trade routes. How Clarissa must have looked back in time and chuckled as it was announced on the TV news that dozens of vessels were stuck, waiting for rescue boats to free the

400 m-long (1,312 ft) ship, which had been knocked off course by strong winds.

After her husband's death in 1977, succeeding him by nearly 44 years, Clarissa lived out her days rather frugally in a London flat on Bryanston Square. Short of money, she told me Anthony 'left everything to his sons by his first marriage'.

Clarissa Eden: A Memoir – From Churchill to Eden, edited by Cate Haste, was published by Weidenfeld & Nicholson, October 2007.

Cornelia, (Sally) Lady Ashburton, niece to Clarissa Eden

Her niece, Cornelia, known as Sally, Lady Ashburton, the daughter of Angela Mary née Culme-Seymour and John (known as Johnny) Spencer Churchill, the artist, who painted the famous mural in the grounds of Chartwell House, was dutiful and kind to Clarissa throughout her lifetime and to the end, earning her much praise from the Churchill family. Sally says of her years spent with her aunt Clarissa: I was very honoured to be involved in my aunt's care over her last years. The funeral was very beautiful.

Minnie S. Churchill remembers Clarissa

Minnie Churchill says: In December 1976, I and my husband Winston and our son Jack, in company with Clarissa and Anthony Eden, went to spend Christmas with Pamela and Averell Harriman, at Averell's lovely house Hobe Sound on Jupiter Island, Florida. We had a lovely time, and Clarissa and Pamela knew each other, as they had been at school together. On Christmas eve, Clarissa told Pamela that Antony wasn't at all well. We never saw her again, as she stayed in the room all over Christmas and looked after him. Then we got a call from her saying that Anthony was going to die, and he wanted to die in England. James Callaghan was Labour Prime Minister and Winston telephoned and talked to the Labour

Government to see if there was any way Anthony could be got back to England. They had an RAF plane on its way from Jamaica to England, and they stopped and picked up Anthony and Clarissa and brought them back to England. Anthony was suffering from an operation that had gone wrong several years earlier. He died on January 14, 1977.

Simon Bird's recollection of Clarissa

When we lived in Dorset, Clarissa came down to stay with us for the Bridport Literary Festival, November 10 – 11, 2007. She had brought a book about prime ministers' wives, titled *The Goldfish Bowl: Married to the Prime Minister*, written by Cherie Booth (wife of the Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair) and Cate Haste (wife of Melvyn Bragg, ITV'S editor and presenter of The South Bank Show). During the festival, Cate Haste interviewed Clarissa in relation to her role as Anthony Eden's wife. It was something of a question-and-answer exercise, and it all went terribly well, and the book was a sell-out. Somewhat ironically, Cate Haste died in April 2021.

The following day, we had to get Clarissa to a friend's house that was about an hour away from where she said she would be taken home to London. Time was running on, and I kept saying, 'Come along we are going to be late', and she replied, 'I don't

mind being late'. She told me she wanted to be driven via the magnificent views of the coastal road of Lyme Regis and Portland and then said, 'If I'm early, people are going to want to talk to me, and I don't want to talk back'. We took her along, and we were invited and had a very nice lunch in company with Cate Haste and Melvyn Bragg, for as it turned out it was their house from which Clarissa was returning to London.

Simon also recalls: We went to a wonderful party for former Conservative Prime Minister, Ted Heath's 80th birthday, in July 1996. He invited a number of friends, and it was held on a lovely boat on the Thames. We also went down to Greenwich to the naval college, where we had coffee and attended a wonderful concert in the Painted Hall. What was so nice was that Ted put party politics aside, and had Clarissa placed on one side of him at dinner, and Mary Wilson, wife of Harold the former Labour Prime Minister on the other. I thought it was really charming of Ted Heath to do that.



Clarissa and Anthony at home, in 1961

Fair-haired, and blue-eyed, with a perfect figure and brain to match, Clarissa was considered a great beauty and intellect in her day. Her youthfulness continued into her old age, and her passing marks the end of the Churchills of that era. She was cheerful, witty, and fun to be with, and this author enjoyed her company on several occasions during the early part of her last 20 years.

Funeral and Order of Worship for Clarissa, Countess of Avon

Clarissa's funeral was beautifully organised by Sally, Lady Ashburton. The service was held at St. Mary's Church, Alvediston, Wiltshire, at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, November 24, 2021.

Order of Worship:

The entrance music was Mozart's Mass in C Minor and The Heavens Are Falling, The Creation by Haydn. The organist was Mr. Richard Trahair. The Words of Welcome and Introduction were given by the Rev. Catherine Blundell and Rev. Canon Adrian Daffern, the latter formerly of St. Martin's Church, Bladon, Oxford. Sentences were read from the Bible: Job Ch.14: V.102; John Ch.11: V.25-6; and Ch.14: V.1; Timothy, Ch.1: V.6-7; and Job, Ch.1: V.21. The Lord's Prayer was recited by the celebrants and congregation.

The reading was by Mr Jack Churchill:

Wisdom, Chapter 3: verses 1-5, containing the lines: 'The souls of the just are in God's hand, and torments shall not touch them.'

The Address was given by Mr Hugo Vickers, containing the closing lines: 'Give us courage, constancy and hope; through him who died and was buried and rose again for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

The opening lines of the Commendation were: 'Go forth upon thy journey from this world, O Christian soul, in the peace of him in whom thou hast believed'.

Hymns included: Praise My Soul the King of Heaven; The 23rd Psalm - The Lord Is My Shepherd; Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation.

The procession left the church to strains of The Nunc Dimittis [Now let depart], composed by Geoffrey Burgon (1941-2010).

Clarissa Countess of Avon's remains were laid to rest in the church yard, beside those of her beloved, late husband, Sir Robert Anthony Eden, 1st Earl of Avon, KG, MC, PC (12 June 1897 – 14 January 1977).

The Interment included the words: 'God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth, and to all mankind, peace, justice, and safety, and to us and to all men, life everlasting: and may the souls of the faithful rest, through the grace and mercy of God, rest in peace'.

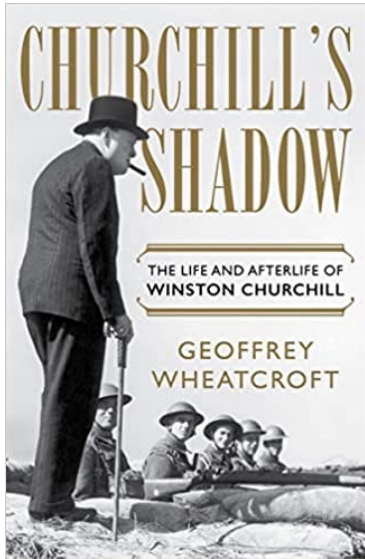
There was then a reading from John Donne's Holy Sonnets with the opening lines: 'Death, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for thou are not so ...'

[Celia Lee is author with John Lee of](#)
[THE CHURCHILLS A FAMILY POR-](#)
[TRAIT](#)
[paperback and e-book editions,](#)
[Lume Books, 2021: ISBN NO. 979-](#)
[8744592554](#)

A Churchill character assassination too far?

Churchill's Shadow: The Life and Afterlife of Winston Churchill Geoffrey Wheatcroft

Book Review Andrew Roberts



The veteran journalist Geoffrey Wheatcroft claims in his prologue to *Churchill's Shadow* that: 'This is not a hostile account, or not by intention, nor consciously "revisionist", or contrarian,' before launching into a long book that is virtually uninterrupted in its hostility to Winston Churchill, his memory and especially anyone who has had the temerity to admire Churchill or learn lessons from his life and career.

Churchill revisionism is hardly new. The very first book I reviewed was Clive Ponting's revisionist biography of 1994, since when there have been scholarly

books by John Charmley, a predictably vicious one by David Irving (whose hero's career was somewhat curtailed by Churchill) and a shelf-load by detractors such as Richard Toye, Madhusree Mukerjee, Nicholson Baker and Alan Clark. Abusing Churchill in print is thus a well-trodden path, but most of those earlier authors tried to stick to facts, whereas Wheatcroft has generally ignored them.

He claims, for example, that 'Churchill was never really a well-traveled man', when in fact he visited America 16 times and Canada nine times, crossing both from coast to coast. He served for years in India and Afghanistan, fought in Cuba, South Africa, the Sudan and on the Franco-Belgian border, honeymooned in Italy, holidayed in France, Italy, Florida, Monaco, Madeira, Morocco, Bahamas and Spain, mountaineered in Switzerland, twice visited Stalin in Moscow, held conferences in Cairo and Tehran, watched army maneuvers with the Kaiser in Germany, cruised the Mediterranean

and Caribbean, and also visited Palestine, Iceland, Turkey, Cyprus, Uganda, Tanganyika (modern-day Tanzania), Mozambique, Kenya, Bermuda, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Malta, Holland, Trinidad, Jamaica and Greece.

Wheatcroft cannot have read Churchill's book *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* if he believes that he viewed Afrikaners 'fondly'. Although Churchill admired their fighting spirit, and liked some individual Boers, such as Jan Smuts, that book is full of distaste for the Afrikaners' ill-treatment of the Hottentots, Xhosa and other native tribes.

Churchill's judgment was strategically flawed,' it is claimed. Yet it was he and Alan Brooke who not only came up with the Mediterranean strategy that liberated North Africa and Italy but also sold it to the Americans, and ensured no over-hasty return in force to the European continent before D-Day. In this unrelentingly anti-American book, Wheatcroft refuses to accept that Churchill had a genuine friendship with President Roosevelt. But together they stuck to the remarkably successful Germany First strategy, in the teeth of much pressure from Admiral Ernest J. King, Douglas MacArthur and others.

The tone of perpetual snideness grows wearing. Wheatcroft accuses Churchill of 'boasting of gambling with men's lives', when he did no such thing, and carps that

his phrase 'the Wilderness Years' for his decade out of office in the 1930s is 'absurd', 'nonsensical' and 'blasphemous', when it was a perfectly reasonable biblical and literary allusion. Wheatcroft further describes Churchill's courageous decision to serve in the trenches of the Western Front in 1915 as 'an unlikely and quixotic form of redemption'. The quotes he chooses as chapter headings give a flavor of the book: 'The transatlantic type of demagogue', 'A tragic figure of failure and folly', 'Our own Mussolini', and so on.

Wheatcroft's claim that after the death of her infant daughter Marigold, Clementine Churchill 'never afterwards mentioned the little girl' is disproved by her letters to her husband. Likewise, his insinuation that Churchill had fascist leanings in the 1920s is not supported by anything better than quotes from his avowed political enemies, rather than by any actual evidence (for there is none). Similarly, what Wheatcroft denounces as Churchill's 'frightening enthusiasm for eugenics' resulted in precisely nothing — even though Churchill was home secretary — and was widely shared by leftist figures such as H.G. Wells and the Webbs.

Wheatcroft's censorious accusations about Churchill's drinking fail to provide a single example of it having affected his strategic or political judgment. Churchill is accused

of having 'lamentable judgment of character', and his best friends of being 'charlatans'; but nowhere is it mentioned that he chose Alan Brooke, Andrew Cunningham, Clement Attlee, Ernest Bevin, Frederick Woolton, Norman Brook, Harold Macmillan, Harold Alexander, Bernard Montgomery and William Slim for high roles in this country's greatest ever crisis.

Some of Wheatcroft's factual errors could be easily made: the date of Kennedy's assassination, or the number of times Churchill contracted pneumonia in the second world war, or that he was run over by a van on Fifth Avenue (it was a private car). Others come from believing gossip and diary columns, such as the claim that the nightclub-owner Mark Birley met Donald Rumsfeld in 2003, which he did not. Many of the book's sources are frankly dodgy, including the use of internet articles by the former journalist Johann Hari, who was forced to return his Orwell Prize for inventing quotes.

Wheatcroft does grudgingly admit that Churchill performed well in 1940, but devotes only 4 percent of his book to that momentous year, in the course of which he scolds the wartime premier as 'a veritable Rossini of rhetoric, forever reusing his own material, as well as other people's'. So as well as saving the nation in its supreme existential crisis, Churchill was also supposed to eschew self-plagiarism and not

make any literary allusions in his speeches? Never in the field of Churchill revisionism have so many punches been thrown in so many pages with so few hitting home. When the author argues that in the immediate postwar era Churchill was 'sometimes babyish in manner, petulant and willful', in fact it was in this period that he delivered the Iron Curtain speech, as well as speeches in Zurich, Strasbourg and the Hague. Any sense of proportion is entirely missing from this book.

Churchill's Zionism comes in for much criticism from Wheatcroft, who evidently does not believe that the Jews ought to have had a national home in Palestine three years after the end of the Holocaust. Chaim Weizmann is described as a 'fantasist', and it is claimed that the Balfour Declaration was 'light-heartedly undertaken' by the British government, which it certainly was not. In highlighting that Churchill received £300 for articles from Jewish newspapers, Wheatcroft seems to insinuate that he was (as Irving also alleges) in the pocket of the Jews, whereas Churchill could command up to £1,000 for an article at that time. (There are descriptions that could have been used about Irving other than 'a self-educated, energetic young Englishman' in a book which claims it is not written to be contrarian.)

Wheatcroft's assertion that Henry Wickham Steed's *The Hapsburg Monarchy* (1913) is 'still one of the best' of all foreign ntain anti-Semitic tropes such as 'Have the Jews been persecuted because [their] characteristics have rendered them odious to the peoples that have harbored them?', especially such Jews as the 'degraded, bow-legged, repulsive type often to be found among the Ashkenazim'. No one should be praising such a book in the 21st century.

Wheatcroft's belief that the special relationship is and always was a myth and a hoax, and that Churchill was 'deluded by his airy notion of an English-speaking peoples', is supposedly supported by the claim that 'All of American society was isolationist and pacific' in the period up to Pearl Harbor. Of course the Roosevelt administration's attempts to lead public opinion towards interventionism, and its material help for the Royal Navy in the Western Atlantic before December 1941, are entirely ignored.

This book is incorrect in stating that Churchill 'committed the cardinal sin of compromising' the Ultra decrypts in his denunciation of the Germans' massacre of Jews in Russia in his broadcast of August 24, 1941, as his information could have come from any number of human as opposed to signals intelligence sources. If the Germans had suspected that Enigma had been compromised, they would simply

have stopped using it.

Wheatcroft's belief that the British Empire 'on which the blood never dried' was 'created partly by slavery' and 'disciplined' by 'frightfulness or brutal violence' is certainly fashionable. But the best historiography shows how much more subtly control was exercised, through collaboration, occasional divide-and-rule and a sense of genuine altruism on the part of many Britons, of whom Churchill was a prime example.

Churchill dies in chapter 17, and the last four chapters constitute a sustained diatribe against anyone who has sought instruction or inspiration from his life and career. Attacking what he calls 'the Churchill cult', Wheatcroft's (almost exclusively conservative) targets include Ronald Reagan, Charles Moore, Niall Ferguson, Nigel Farage, Benjamin Netanyahu, 'the egregious Boris Johnson', who runs 'an utterly incompetent government', Michael Gove, Margaret Thatcher, David Cameron, Donald Trump, Sir Martin Gilbert, the International Churchill Society, all Brexiteers, members of the Churchill family and your reviewer (I'm proud to say). This covers more than 100 pages, and contains even more factual errors than the previous 400.

As all objective biographers fully acknowledge, Churchill made a large number of serious blunders in his long career. But he tended to get the big issues right, and did so early on and regardless of opposition. In the acknowledgements of this book, in which almost every living Churchill detractor is thanked, the author quotes Voltaire: 'To the dead we owe nothing but the truth.'

With this relentlessly sneering and deeply misleading book, Geoffrey Wheatcroft has signally failed to discharge that debt.

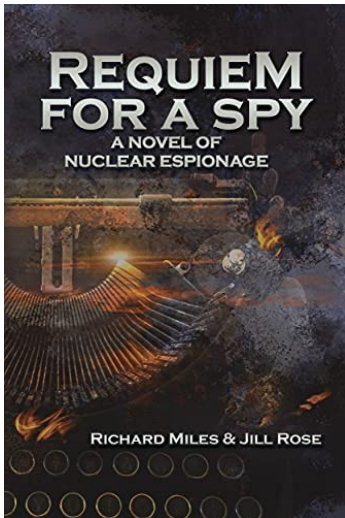
From The Spectator World Edition

Requiem for a Spy

Richard Miles and Jill Rose

Book Review Allister Vale

Texas: Black Rose Writing. pp221. \$18.75; £13.72.



CSoT members will recall Jill Rose speaking about her book *Nursing Churchill* at a meeting in Nashville in September 2019. This book was based on correspondence between her parents, written when her Mother nursed the Prime Minister when he was suffering from pneumonia in February 1943.

Jill has turned to another family archive for her second book, that of her late uncle, Richard Miles. Jill recalls her uncle telling her that he had written a *roman à clef* inspired by Donald Maclean, a colleague who worked at the British Embassy in Washington from 1944 until 1948 (as First Secretary). In 1951 Maclean defected to Moscow with fellow-spy Guy Burgess, the

first two of the infamous Cambridge Five exposed as Soviet spies.

Prompted by Jill, the manuscript was found by her cousin, Elaine, after Richard's death. "To my delight, the novel was complete; indeed, more than complete, as there were two drafts of much of the book, and even three of parts of it, as well as many handwritten notes and addenda. It was not always easy to figure out which was the older and which was the newer material. My challenge was to sort out the differing versions, to reconcile the inconsistencies, to fix the errors and make some judicious revisions and rewrites, and meld it all into one coherent final version that remained faithful to my uncle's original work."

Why should CSoT members read the book, particularly as it is not about their hero? Andrew Roberts believes that *Requiem for a Spy* "succeeds on all levels", "part spy thriller...part whodunnit with a dead body in the first sentence". I agree with historian David Dilks that this is a "novel of high tension...it is written with a sharp eye for telling detail, covers the ground at a fast pace". The main reasons for this are that Richard

Miles writes of what he knows, and his manuscript has been edited skilfully by Jill Rose.

Richard Miles graduated from Oxford in 1939 and enlisted in the Royal Navy. He served with the Arctic convoys before being promoted to Lieutenant. A hearing defect precluded him from further active service. However, in the summer of 1942, Richard was selected as the Royal Navy's representative to the International Youth Assembly in Washington DC. At the end of August, he arrived in the US capital, where he first met the President's wife, Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, a sponsor of the meeting. Richard was posted subsequently to the British Embassy in Washington, with responsibilities for White House Liaison with the Naval Attaché's Office. Richard Miles was a regular visitor to the White House and Hyde Park, the Roosevelts' home in New York. Mrs Roosevelt took a liking to the young naval officer, and this was the start of a warm friendship between them that would last for the next twenty years until her death in 1962.

Richard Miles later worked for the Embassy's Economic Advisor, Dr Redvers Opie, and in July 1944 was an adviser to the British Delegation at the Bretton Woods Conference. He was a member of the British team at the July 1945 Potsdam Conference, which formalized the division of Europe. By 1946 Richard was back in

the US as an adviser to the British Delegation to the United Nations and the UN Atomic Energy Commission; Donald Maclean was Secretary of the Combined Policy Committee on atomic energy matters at the time. Richard worked closely with Sir Alexander Cadogan, the UK's first Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Interestingly, Richard Miles was also a close friend of Richard (Director of the CIA) and Cynthia Helms.

The novel is set in the US and UK in the immediate aftermath of WWII. The protagonist is an idealistic young British naval officer named Tom Davis, working for the British Embassy in Washington, who is drawn into the world of spying. He becomes entangled in a daring scheme proposed by his charismatic superior and mentor to kidnap a leading nuclear scientist from Los Alamos and spirit him to Britain before the Russians can do so. As the plot unfolds, Tom is torn between his loyalty to his superior and his growing concern that his mentor is a Soviet spy.

The novel is accurate in its description of individuals, events and the phraseology used at the time. The book, written by an "insider", is closer to being an exposé than a novel, based as it is on the treachery of Donald Maclean. Richard Miles admitted that he had written a *roman à clef*, which makes the read even more interesting. You will enjoy!

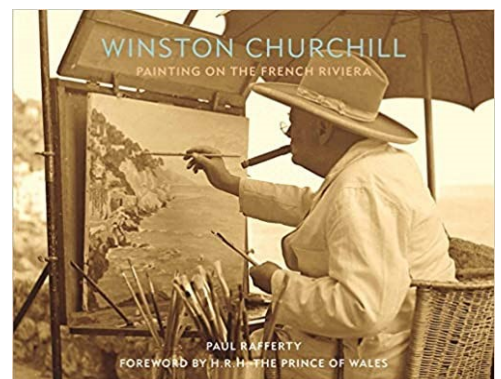
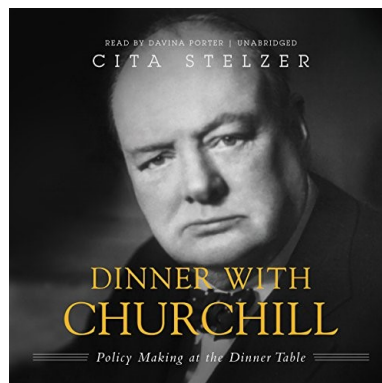
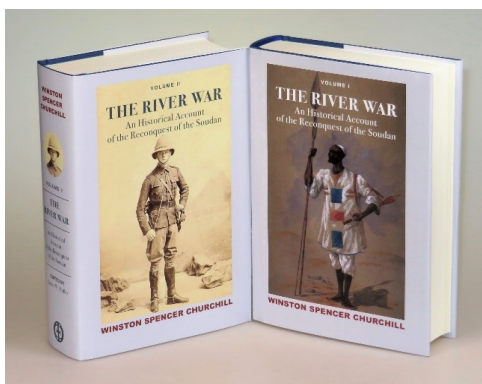
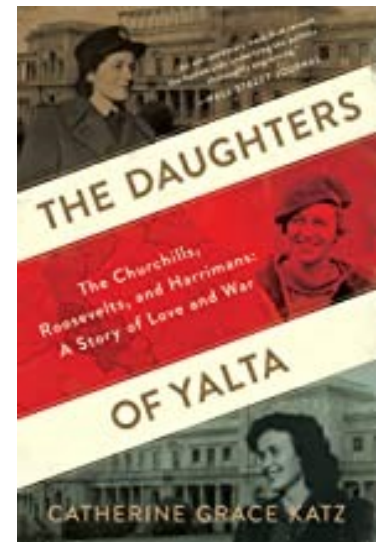
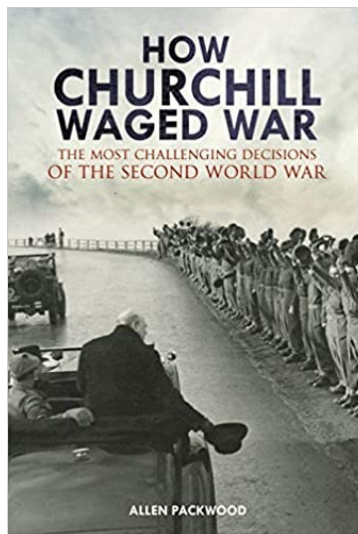
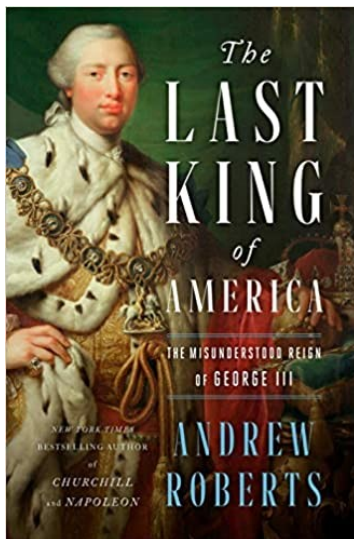
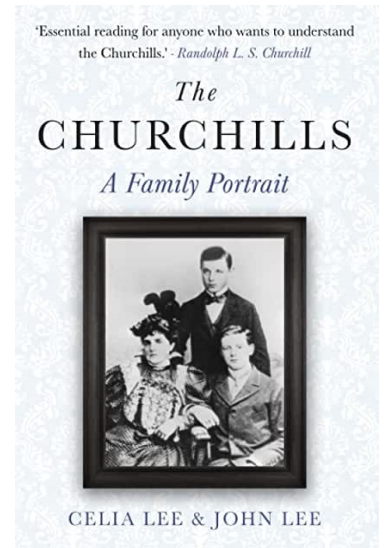
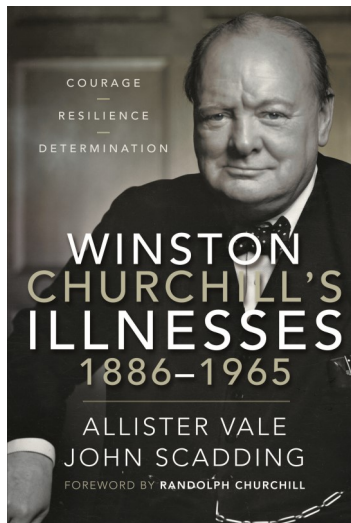
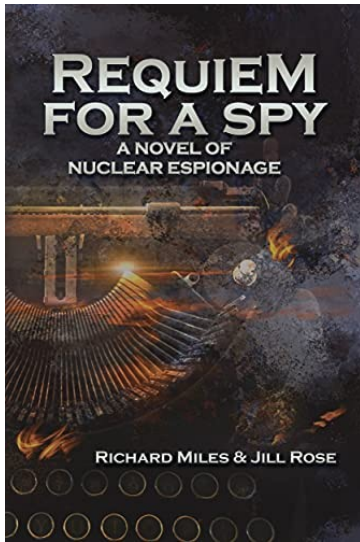


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