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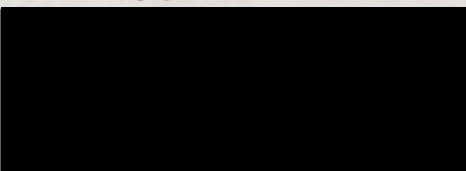
DEAR MR. LAMB:

I enjoy watching your fine book interview show with the authors of timely books on Sundays. I was wondering if you have been in contact with Harcourt, Brace, Inc. regarding their new book out this month by the British author/historian, Dr. John Charmley. His latest book which took Britain by storm earlier this year is a biography: CHURCHILL: THE END OF GLORY. Harcourt, Brace is bringing John and his wife, Lorraine, back to the United States later this month on a promotional tour. They arrive in New York on Saturday, Sept. 25; will be on the TODAY SHOW on Monday, September 27th, will fly to DC on Monday evening (9/27); to Boston on Tuesday evening (9/28); to Chicago Wednesday afternoon (9/29); to LA Thursday evening (9/30) and then back to England on Saturday (10/3). John is sharp, intelligent and would provide a great interview for your program. John and his wife spent the last academic year at the Winston Churchill Memorial, Westminster College, Fulton as a visiting professor of British History. He was interviewed by telephone with Australian radio, BBC radio, NPR, Monitor radio network, a radio network out of California, ITN evening news in Britain, via satellite with BBC TV evening news, and an Austrian TV network flew him to Vienna last winter from the US for a TV debate. He received much print attention in Britain, US, etc.

I'm enclosing some clippings and would be glad to assist you in any way.

Sincerely yours,

enclosures:



Churchill Biography Poses Fresh Questions

The fireworks started in England in January, when Hodder & Stoughton brought out a modest, 2000-copy printing of a "political biography" of Winston Churchill. Written by John Charmley, an obscure history professor, the book was hailed as "the most important revisionist text to be published since the war" by former British Defense Minister Alan Clark. A torrent of newspaper articles and radio and TV debates followed publication, and nearly every major British historian weighed in with an opinion on the book, much of it angry and outraged. *Churchill: The End of Glory* quickly sold out its first printing, went back to press two times and is a surprise bestseller in England.

News of the controversy reached across the ocean almost immediately, with stories appearing in newspapers around the country. The publicity aroused the interest of several American publishers, with North American rights secured at auction by Harcourt Brace, which will publish in October.

The book's central thesis is that Churchill's obsession with Hitler's unconditional surrender led him to an appeasement with Stalin that changed the balance of power in post-war Europe and ultimately mortgaged Britain's independence to the United States. Even more controversial, the book questions whether Britain would be better off today if Churchill had been willing to negotiate an earlier end to the war with Germany.

Charmley, 37 years old and Oxford-educated, is the author of four previous books: *Duff Cooper: The Authorized Biography* (1986), *Lord Lloyd and the Decline of the British Empire* (1987), *Descent to Suez: The Diaries of Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh 1951-6* (editor, 1988) and *Chamberlain and the Lost Peace* (1989). His last three were published here by St. Martin's, Norton and Ivan Dee, respectively.

Charmley, on leave from the University of East Anglia, currently lives in Fulton, Mo., the site of Churchill's famous Iron Curtain speech and the home of Westminster College, where he holds the first Robertson Founder's Chair in British History. "In a sense the Churchill book is the output of just about everything I've done since I started research 15 years ago," Charmley says. "I came to the conclusion that the accepted version of the

1930s and '40s owes a lot to one of the greatest literary artists of our age, Churchill himself. His books [on the war] had such an impact on everybody that we've all grown up with the conventional view of the '30s and the war as a success. You know, Chamberlain with the umbrella." That was his view too early in his career, he says.

Harcourt senior editor Anne Freedgood, who acquired the book just after a piece appeared in the *New York Times*, believes the news stories have produced a distorted picture of the book. "It's a full biography, as well as revisionist history," she says. "This is really a fascinating picture of Churchill from a small boy, being spoiled by his mother, right up until he was war leader and then lost the election."

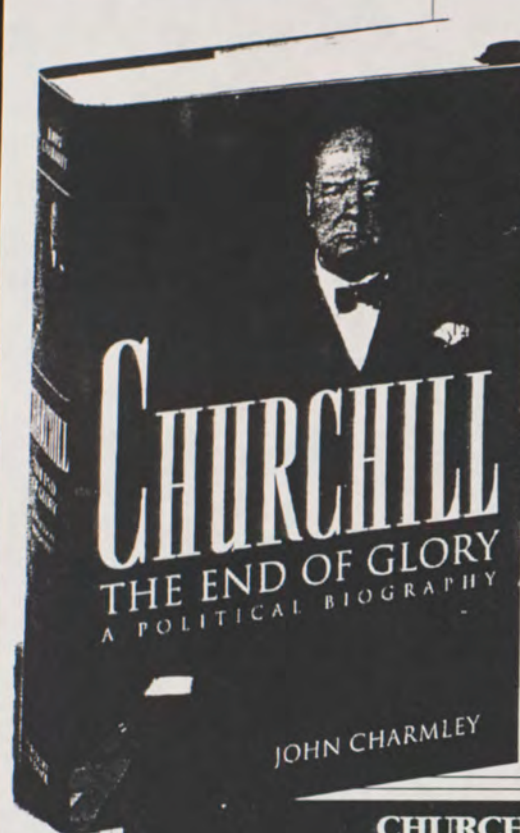
Freedgood thinks the market for Churchill is almost as large in the U.S. as it is in Britain, and Harcourt plans a first printing of 25,000. "If it gets the kind of attention we hope and think it will," she says, "everyone interested in modern history will jump at it. This is by no means a trashing of Churchill. Charmley thinks Churchill was a great man, but he thinks his faults were as great as his virtues." The American edition will have different jacket art and will appear without the 15 pages of photos that accompanied the British edition.

"I think the sort of people who, at the moment, are arguing in favor of intervention in Bosnia won't like the whole line of the book," Charmley says. "Not so much for the portrayal of Churchill, but for the fairly sort of right-wing, realpolitik ideas that underpin some of the arguments."

Although Charmley plans on returning to England in July and again "being 4000 miles away when the bombs go off," Harcourt is currently planning a series of lectures for him to coincide with the publication of the book, along with a push by the firm's college sales force for course adoption.

In the meantime Charmley presses on with his next book—*Churchill, Eden and the American Peace*. "I fully expect that in 20 years time one big criticism of my book will be that I didn't go far enough," he says. "That I was still hamstrung by the old myths. They'll say, yeah, it's very interesting, but he only goes half way. Other people will still object to the whole thing. And some bright spark will write saying Churchill was even more brilliant than we thought. But that's what history is about. It's a debate without end."

—MARTIN PEDERSEN



CHURCHILL
THE END OF GLORY
JOHN CHARMLEY

**A revisionist view of Churchill as war leader
which has created a furor all over Europe.**

In early 1939 the public clamor in England for Churchill's return to office led to his premiership, "England's finest hour," VE Day, and, for Churchill, immortality. But at what cost? The statesman who had struggled to destroy Nazism and restore Europe's balance of power ended by allowing Stalin to dominate central and eastern Europe.

Was this inevitable, or did Churchill's shortcomings contribute materially? Based on fifteen years' research in archives in Britain, France, and America, this new political biography reappraises the Churchill myth created by the man and his official biographer.

The author argues that Churchill deserves more credit for "their finest hour" than he has been granted, but just as his virtues were built on the heroic scale, so too were his faults and failures. In many ways, the complex man presented in these pages, who



longed above all to be a hero, is far more interesting than the traditional ideal leader he is so often presented as being.

And so, too, for an American audience, is the carefully documented account of his relationship with FDR. Some previous accounts have suggested that Churchill sometimes led Roosevelt. This book suggests that the reverse was closer to the truth.

John Charmley graduated from Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1977 with a First in Modern History, then got a Ph.D. for his thesis on British policy toward de Gaulle. Since 1979 he has been a lecturer in English history at the University of East Anglia. In 1992-93 he has been Robertson Professor of British History at the Churchill Memorial at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. He is author of, among other books, *Duff Cooper: Lord Lloyd and the Decline of the British Empire*; and *Chamberlain and the Lost Peace*.



FROM THE BRITISH REVIEWS

"A well-written book, lively, intelligent and lit by astringent wit. . . . [It] presents a case that needs answering. Unlike most contemporary Churchilliana, it is well worth reading."

—Philip Ziegler, *Weekend Telegraph*

"Probably the most important revisionist text to be published since the war."

—Alan Clark, *The London Times*

"This is not instant history run up to cause a sensation, but a meticulously documented reappraisal of Churchill's war leadership and of the career that led up to it. . . . The author accepts that Churchill was a great man. His starting point is that even great men make mistakes."

—John Keegan, *Daily Telegraph*

"John Charmley is an excellent scholar and no cheap debaser of the great. He clearly admires Churchill's courage and willpower no less than his prodigious talents. . . . Above all, [this book] is intensely readable and a stimulus to thought."

—John Grigg, *The London Times*

"For those who love Churchill *partly* because of his warts and feel they have waited too long to hear the case for the prosecution put eloquently and with impeccable soundness, [this book] is a delight."

—Andrew Roberts, *Sunday Telegraph*

AUTHOR APPEARANCES

NATIONAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

HISTORY • 6 1/8 X 9 1/4 • 752 PAGES • 0-15-117881-X • \$34.95 (NCR) • SEPTEMBER

Whose Finest Hour?

A new biography of Churchill suggests that Britain shouldn't have gone to war against Hitler.

CHURCHILL: THE END OF GLORY

A Political Biography.
By John Charmley.
742 pp. New York:
Harcourt Brace & Company. \$34.95.

By Gaddis Smith

THIS is an entertaining, informative and infuriating book. The portrait of Winston Churchill's deeply flawed character will anger his acolytes. But John Charmley's underlying assumption in "Churchill: The End of Glory" — that Britain should never have fought Hitler — will cause as much righteous consternation in the United States as it already has across the Atlantic. Mr. Charmley's argument that Churchill's determination to destroy Hitler was suicidal folly mocks the moral code that has informed democratic nations' foreign policy since 1939 and raises uncomfortable questions about whether distinctions between good and evil have any meaning at all. A nation should not fight, Mr. Charmley implies, when the foe is powerful and victory uncertain, or achievable only at great cost. Is this the ultimate in unvarnished realism, or pernicious nonsense?

Mr. Charmley, a 37-year-old historian at the University of East Anglia and the author of books on Neville Chamberlain and the Suez Canal crisis as well as the authorized biography of Duff Cooper, writes with vigor and irreverent wit. The first half of "Churchill: The End of Glory" is rollicking biography of an old-fashioned sort, all about politics and nothing but politics: good script material for "Masterpiece Theater." Here we follow Churchill's service as a junior army officer in India in the 1890's, his meteoric rise as a politician in the years before World War I, his role in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign of 1915, his prodigious literary output and continued political prominence in the 1920's and his descent into the political wilderness of the 30's. Churchill's associates (friends were few) were men and women who wrote letters, kept diaries and made verbal indiscretion a way of life. They all had interesting and usually scathing things to say about the young and middle-aged Churchill, as he did about them. Mr. Charmley has read all the gossip and evidence of political intrigue, and he has missed nothing colorful, or negative.

There can be no doubt that Churchill's unequalled capacity for work and his habit of sticking his nose into everything made him insufferable to most of his colleagues. As Mr. Charmley pictures him, he had imagination without judgment, energy without discipline, and a tendency to shift his passionate convictions to conform with the interests of the Government post he happened to occupy. He could write and talk superbly, but he was never silent long enough to listen. He was insensitive to the feelings of others and resentful when others were insensitive to him.

Churchill's courage was monumental, and he was happiest when placing himself or others in harm's way. He was in love with violence employed in a good cause, and any cause he favored was good. All the better if violence led to glory. He considered himself a military and naval genius and bullied professional officers who would not immediately accept his genius, but his ideas were filled with more romance and bravado than with careful calculation of the relation of ends and means. He was above all an imperialist imbued with 19th-century Kiplingesque ideas of Britain's duty to rule the world's less favored people, to rule and grow mighty. Those who have read beyond Churchill's own memoirs and hagiographic biographies will acknowledge the validity of this aspect of Mr. Charmley's portrait — strident, yes, but less revisionist than he would have

Gaddis Smith, a professor of history at Yale University, is the author of "American Diplomacy During the Second World War" and other books.



Winston Churchill in London in 1948.

readers believe.

But when his narrative reaches the 30's and the great controversies over how, if at all, Britain should have resisted Hitler, Mr. Charmley becomes a very different kind of writer. His narrow focus on British politicians saying things about one another, forming cabinets and building coalitions serves him well in the first part of the book, but it is terribly inadequate for the large international events of the decade between 1936 and 1945. Mr. Charmley remains on solid ground in showing that Churchill's account of those years in the six self-centered volumes of "The Second World War" exaggerates the differences between him and Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on the eve of Munich. Churchill's character assassination did contribute to Chamberlain's abysmal historical reputation. But when Mr. Charmley moves to fundamental moral and strategic criticism, he loses touch with verifiable evidence and gives cause for outrage.

Here, in outline, is Mr. Charmley's opinion of World War II: Chamberlain and his supporters were prudent realists. They knew that Britain lacked the power to defeat Hitler, preserve the empire and remain an independent nation. Britain would either lose a war or become a slave to American power and witness to the rise of the Soviet Union in Germany's place. International relations was like a board game in which the purpose was to preserve power. The moral character of the players, the nations, was irrelevant.

All that counted, in Mr. Charmley's view, was how many chips each had when the round was over. When World War II began in 1939, Britain's principal asset was the capacity to let Hitler dominate Europe. Britain's reward for not causing trouble would be the undisturbed maintenance of the empire and global trade. Indeed, the Chamberlainites had said they had no problem with Germany assuming a dominant role in Europe except that Hitler's methods were rather coarse.

Bowing to the winds of passion, which Churchill helped stir, Chamberlain's Government went to war when Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939 rather than rationally accept a *fait accompli*, as it had over Czechoslovakia at and after Munich in 1938-39. But it was not too late in the fall of 1939 or even the spring of 1940, after Hitler had conquered Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. Hitler, Mr. Charmley believes, without presenting any trustworthy evidence, would still have paid for a free hand in Europe. But alas, Churchill used his rhetorical magic and superhuman energy to replace the feeble Chamberlain as Prime Minister.

For Churchill no price was too great to destroy Hitler. He made unwillingness to compromise the test of patriotism and inspired the British people beyond measure. Mr. Charmley writes: "The heart was uplifted — but was the mind eclipsed?" This was not Britain's "finest hour," in his view, but its slide toward lasting impotence. But Churchill lived only for the present. He did not see or care that by working so successfully to bring the United States into the war, as the only way to bring down Hitler, he was sacrificing Britain's economic and political independence. And toward the Soviet Union, the other partner in the not-so-grand alliance, Churchill followed precisely the course of appeasement that he had so condemned in Chamberlain's Munich policy. Churchill also ignored the domestic sphere and let socialist ideologues capture the hopes of the people for the postwar future.

Mr. Charmley's final paragraph bears quoting in full: "Churchill stood for the British Empire, for British independence and for an 'anti-Socialist' vision of Britain. By July 1945 the first of these was on the skids, the second was dependent solely upon America and the third had just vanished in a Labor election victory. An appropriate moment to stop, for it was indeed the end of glory."

Mr. Charmley's version of what was and what might have been must be challenged on three levels.

On the factual level, the evidence that Hitler sought a sphere-of-influence deal with Britain and would have been faithful to it — I take Europe, you keep the empire — rests on no more than a few casual comments from Hitler and some gossamer contacts among individuals with no demonstrable authority. And what evidence did Hitler ever provide of good faith? His assertion after Munich that Germany had no further territorial ambitions? His nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union? There is nothing inherently wrong with counterfactual speculation as long as it has some connection to known reality. Here there is no connection.

ON the logical level, Mr. Charmley's argument commits the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy: If one thing follows another, the first must have been the cause of the second. The war did hasten the devolution of the British Empire; European rule over Africa, the Middle East and Asia was doomed, war or no war. And it is unlikely that the aristocratic political regime of the late Victorian era into which Churchill was born could have been resurrected, or should have been.

But it is the argument's immorality — immorality, not amorality — that makes it truly offensive. A hypothetical reader knowing nothing except what is in this book, and accepting this argument, would learn that Hitler's ambitions did not threaten Britain's imperial power, while the real threat came from Franklin D. Roosevelt. It is almost as if the war had been between the United States and Britain, and Britain lost.

Nowhere does Mr. Charmley discuss Hitler's nature, beliefs and treatment of human beings. The Holocaust is not mentioned.

Mr. Charmley is right to ridicule the rhetorical excesses of Churchill's dream of a permanent alliance of the English-speaking people. No one today really believes that British and American interests were identical, beyond the defeat of the common enemy. But their shared ideals were real, not just so much Wilsonian claptrap as Mr. Charmley would have us believe. To imply that Britain should have trusted Hitler and not the United States is morally sickening. □

Was It His Finest Hour?

CHURCHILL: THE END OF GLORY
A Political Biography

By John Charmley
Harcourt Brace, 742 pp. \$34.95

By John Lukacs

JOHAN CHARMLEY is an ambitious young British historian, whose purpose in this big book is to revise the accepted view of Churchill—and of World War II. His thesis is as follows: Churchill had his talents, but his faults were enormous, leading to the end not only of the British Empire but of British power. Going to war with Hitler's Germany in 1939 was wrong; so was the refusal to make peace with Hitler in 1940 and again in 1941, when Hitler attacked Russia; the alliance with Stalin during the war was wrong; and the worst mistake was Churchill's "most servile groveling to the Americans" whom he "may have seen as a branch of the 'English-speaking Peoples' but they were, in fact, foreigners who disliked the British Empire even more than did Hitler . . ." "It was [Churchill's] policy to rely on American goodwill, but it seemed ominously short supply . . . Sceptics could have been forgiven for asking whether American policy was to help their neighbour—or beggar him." Roosevelt was a combination of Uriah Heep and Machiavelli; "the healthy distrust of all things British, which was part of the mental luggage of any good 'New Dealer.'" "One simple fact: the Prime Minister's policy of 1940 had, in effect, failed. Far from securing Britain's independence, it had mortgaged it to America."

American help to Britain against Nazi Germany had many motives and purposes, but that of mortgagee was not among them. But then Charmley's interpretation of the American-British relationship issues from his interpretation of the entire war. According to Charmley, Churchill was wrong when he wrote that to allow "Germany to dominate Europe [was] contrary to the whole of our history." Churchill was a warmonger, while Chamberlain was right: "Chamberlain was planning for the future, Churchill for Armageddon." "Britain had gone to war in 1939 in a spasm of self-righteous indignation, convinced that as a Great Power it was her duty to defeat Nazi Germany." Both before and after the fall of France and before the Battle of Britain, "in the eyes of many sensible folk, the time had come to think about coming to terms with Herr Hitler." When Hitler invaded Russia, there was another supreme "opportunity which Churchill let slip." Thereafter Churchill "helped raise the spectre of a menace which was even greater than the one he had destroyed." Leaving aside the question whether a peace settlement with a victorious Hitler was at all possible, let alone desirable or enduring, Charmley does not see, or wish to see, what Churchill saw early in the war: either all of Europe ruled by Germany or the eastern half of Europe ruled by Russia; and half of Europe was better than none. (Not to speak of the fact that as early as 1944 Churchill saw that the Russians would not be able to digest the countries they would try to swallow.)

This is one of Charmley's three main faults: He knows much about Churchill, but his knowledge of World War II is alarmingly flawed and limited. Which brings me to this second fault: the selective character of his material. The book is fairly well-written, though with its share of trendy phrases—"emblematic," "window of opportunity," etc. But it is only partly "a political biography," as its title says; Charmley spends chapters and long pages on Churchill's psyche. Churchill's self-education "provided no training in learning how to think, how to weigh arguments, and how to judge your own ideas against those of others." He was marked by "egotism and naiveté." "Immensely self-absorbed, Churchill appeared to have had no time for the feelings of others. Such egotism is common in children, but it has usually been rubbed away by the time adulthood is reached." He "usually adopted subtler tactics when the truth was inconvenient for his version of history." "He was always apt to become the slave of his own ideas and to assume that to enunciate a brilliant phrase was to solve a problem." "Showman" that he was . . . Stalking through the bombsites with taurine glares of defiance, massive cigar stuck firmly in his mouth, he became the mythical "Good ole Winnie." (No one ever called him *ole* Winnie.) "His thinking . . . was stuck firmly in the past. Even when he

John Lukacs's most recent book is "The End of the Twentieth Century and the End of the Modern Age."



FROM A DRAWING BY RAY DRIVER

grasped new ideas . . . it was to do little more than deliver impressive speeches." Etc., etc. Yes, Winston Churchill had his faults. But this is not the proper revisionism of a historian; it is denigration by a pamphleteer.

WORRISOME is the avid reception of Charmley's book among defenders of the Third Reich in Germany, Austria, Hungary and elsewhere. We have seen lately entire books struggling against mere pamphlets written by fanatical deniers of the Holocaust. But Charmley has written a heavy tome, which will not only impress by its sheer bulk and "scholarly equipment" but will also serve as a quarry that all kinds of unsavory people will mine for their special purposes. It is not surprising that this book has stirred criticism in England, but not enough attention has been directed to its details. Space does not permit me to deal with its many factual mistakes, most of which are the results of Charmley's obsessive singlemindedness.

This leads me to the third basic fault, his dealing with his sources. Its distasteful evidences are latent in the many thousands of his Notes (51 pages in very small type). There he slyly inserts attacks on historians with whom he disagrees, while praising those with whom he agrees. Churchill's official biographer Martin Gilbert "prints only extracts [of a document] which support his contention." What an instance of a pot calling the kettle black! On the American Warren Kimball, whose edition of the texts of the Churchill-Roosevelt correspondence is good, though Kimball's commentaries include hundreds of errors, Charmley bestows the epithet of "Homer"; but then Kimball's interpretation of the Churchill-Roosevelt relationship often accords with Charmley's. A more deplorable symptom of Charmley's historianship is his frequent dependence on the Nazi sympathizer David Irving. Like Churchill's father, who was "bank-rolled by his Jewish friends," Winston was "certainly bank-rolled by wealthy Jews" and funded by an "ardent Zionist." All of this Charmley got from Irving. He also thinks it proper to at least raise the question: Wasn't Churchill the "hired help" [Irving] for a Jewish lobby, which, regarding Jewish interests as superior to those of the British Empire, was determined to embroil that Empire in a war on their behalf? In the note pages he tucks in a few words: "Mr. Irving is cited only when his sources have been checked and seem reliable. . . . The current author admires Mr. Irving's assiduity, energy and courage, even if he differs from him in his conclusions." The difference between John Charmley and David Irving may be a difference of degree; it is not a difference in kind.

Major-General Sir P. Mackesy was an overcautious British commander in the disastrous Norway campaign for which Churchill was responsible; Churchill criticized Mackesy in his *War Memoirs*. Mackesy's son Piers is a historian and Charmley's tutor, "who first showed me what a historian could be." In *Churchill: The End of Glory* there are five pages and 10 references to Churchill's quarrel with the incompetent general, while there is but one sentence about the Hitler-Stalin Pact in 1939 and one sentence about Hitler deputy Rudolf Hess's peace-seeking flight to England in 1941. This, in a book that claims as one of its main theses the potentiality of peace with Hitler at that time. A very peculiar ratio for a historian.

Chipping at the Churchill memorial

ROBERT RHODES JAMES

John Charmley

CHURCHILL: THE END OF GLORY
A Political Biography
742pp. John Curtis/Hodder and Stoughton. £30.
0 340 48795 X

Winston Churchill has indeed been much exposed to authors, a fact about which he could hardly have complained, as he wrote much about himself. This was at least partly because he considered the subject of absorbing interest, and also because, and especially in his memoirs of both World Wars, he wanted to set out his case before others got into the act. In the main, he succeeded brilliantly, being less interested in establishing the true historical record than in redeeming and enhancing his political position. *The World Crisis* (1923-9) went a long way to restoring his then grievously compromised reputation – especially over the Dardanelles – and his Second World War memoirs, and most notably the first volume, *The Gathering Storm* (1948), had an immense long-term impact on post-war thinking in the West about the lessons of the inter-war years. For many years, it was difficult to find even serious historians willing to justify or explain the policies of the Baldwin, MacDonald, and Chamberlain Governments. Apologists for Munich, in particular, were engulfed by the memoirs of the anti-Munichers, Duff Cooper, Eden and Boothby being the most articulate and convincing, following the Churchill lead. Keith Feiling tried to rehabilitate Chamberlain; Iain Macleod's attempt was an almost total failure, and also did nothing for his political career.

There was a time after 1955 when it was virtually impossible to write anything sensible about Churchill, because this would involve criticism, which was unthinkable about the Greatest Man of the Century – this benign, all-wise, heroic personality who was so much maligned and misjudged until, summoned by the nation in its most desperate hour, he became our saviour. When in 1970, I published my study of his career up to 1939 and entitled it *A Study In Failure*, I was much excoriated, notably by people who had only read the title. Many who actually read it, including members of the Churchill family, took a very different view. What I was attempting to do was to look at Churchill's character and career as a fascinating but fallible human being. It was not the case for the prosecution, but a serious endeavour to answer the questions that had always puzzled me – why, in 1939, had he so little support? Why had he been out of office for ten years? Why were so many people who were strongly opposed to Chamberlain and appeasement so distrustful of him? Why did so many actually detest him? The conventional answer, that pygmies always fear and therefore hate giants and geniuses, did not seem adequate. And it was already clear that the official biography was to be a massive memorial to his greatness rather than a coolly objective portrait of a very complex and not wholly attractive man.

John Charmley, the able biographer of Duff Cooper, is very kind to my book, but in my view the turning-point in the process of humanizing Churchill was his daughter's subsequent quite remarkable biography of her mother, which inevitably expanded into a portrait of both her parents. It was loving and admiring, but also truthful and very fair and objective. She did not conceal that her father was egotistical, reckless, and could be impossible; nor that her mother was herself a difficult woman. She was very much the Liberal, and, although intensely loyal in public, often disagreed with him, and was often right. It also

became sadly clear why their children's lives were so unfortunate – indeed, tragic – with the notable exception of Mary herself. Randolph had his qualities, as his cousin Anita Leslie has demonstrated, but there was a nasty side to him as well, and his estrangement from his parents was melancholy for everyone involved.

Then, in total contrast, David Irving produced a near-diabolical portrait, as unrecognizable as that drawn by Churchill's adulators, but, it must be conceded, with some telling points, obscured though they are by Irving's own insidious form of venom. There must be, one would have thought, a middle way between these extremes. And it is this that Mr Charmley has attempted in *Churchill: The End of Glory*.

It is certainly a valiant effort, though very strangely composed. There are times when the chronology becomes confusing, and the style is peculiar, sometimes unfortunate ("the Cabinet went each whichways", "If the sky above Downing Street was dark, it was with the wings of

which Charmley is excessively censorious, and about which Irving is obsessed (but Hitler, of course, was a teetotaler). Also, one of the great controversies of the Second World War, over the switch from the Chetniks to Tito, is simply put down to "bamboozled British agents". In a long book that goes into many topics at almost excessive length, we have too many examples of flip judgments of this type, to which A. J. P. Taylor was also prone in his later writings. These failing are all the more unfortunate because Charmley can write well, and his judgments are often shrewd and well argued. But for a book that devotes so much time to the Second World War, the total omission of any reference to Mountbatten, Slim, Wingate or the Dieppe Raid is not made up for by only two references to Montgomery and one to "Bomber" Harris. Indeed, the military aspects of the war are almost totally subordinated to the political and the diplomatic, so much so that the Manhattan Project is never referred to at all, and the desperate and vital Battle of the Atlantic,

widespread misgivings about his judgment were wholly understandable. And Beaverbrook's opinion that "Churchill 'up' is of the stuff that tyrants are made" was later echoed by many who worked with and under him between 1939 and 1945.

Irving's essential argument was that Churchill positively wanted a war, and worked for it, to satisfy his personal political ambitions. Charmley goes nothing like as far as this, but his argument is that the activities of Churchill and the other Tory malcontents over foreign policy forced public opinion in that direction, especially after the seizure of the remnants of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 – when it suddenly seemed to a lot of people that Churchill had been right all along and that Hitler did indeed have a careful programme of over-running Europe; the precipitate guarantee to Poland was the fatal result. Even a devoted friend like Alan Herbert thought that Churchill "rather liked a war, and I didn't" (he had been at Gallipoli).

I am sure the truth is that Churchill came to believe war was inevitable: "I felt it in my bones". For what it is worth, my soldier father felt it also, as did others. The question was, on what terms and in what circumstances, would a war be fought? These terms and circumstances turned out to be totally different to what anyone, including Hitler, had anticipated, but Churchill's warnings from 1934 onwards pointed to the new grim realities that had followed the rise of Hitler; he did not create them. As Charmley and others have demonstrated, his figures and facts often turned out to be exaggerated or wrong, but the essential truth was that Hitler was intent on a policy of brutal aggrandizement, backed by overwhelming military power, and could not be deterred by territorial concessions or treaties. Churchill's instinct was right, and it was certainly not his fault that the British Army in 1939 was worse equipped than that of 1914; and his total misjudgment of the morale and leadership of the French Army was shared by many others.

Charmley is good about the genuine discussions among Ministers after Dunkirk and the French collapse over the possibilities of a negotiated peace. This was not a case of some lily-livered defeatists begging for mercy and behaving like Pétain, but of some very realistic men who were calculating the odds and did not like what they were seeing. Churchill's inspired rhetoric may have galvanized the nation, but there was nothing cowardly or unpatriotic in asking the Service chiefs some very serious questions, as Churchill did. He then resolved to fight on, knowing better than anyone that survival alone was doubtful.

Here, the Churchill legend is emphatically confirmed by the historian. Under almost any other conceivable Prime Minister at that time, all logic would have pointed to the need to concede defeat and to come to the best deal possible. But – and here Charmley poses a very important question – was Churchill right?

Where he is excellent, is on Churchill's romantic vision of himself and England and the incomparable and undefeatable British people, descendants of the greatest warriors in history, creators of the greatest Empire in history. They would fight on, whatever the cost, and the Empire and the Americans would not let them go under.

Charmley emphatically does not share the idealized view of Roosevelt that Churchill, among others, created. While he underestimates Roosevelt's genuine difficulties in 1940 with Congress and American attitudes in a Presidential election year, the portrait of a wily and opportunistic politician of exceptional vanity and deviousness is a useful correction to that of a man who risked everything to rush to our aid. But, as the book continues, Roosevelt takes on the character of the person who, apart from Hitler and Stalin, most wanted to bring down the British Empire and whose only concerns were American ones, culmi-



Churchill visits the ruins of the citadel in Julich in March 1945

chickens coming home to roost"; these and other stylistic deficiencies are hardly improved by the use of adjectives such as "autochthonous"). There are some very odd errors – Eden did not vote against the Chamberlain Government on May 8, 1940 (he was a senior Minister), and Boothby was neither brought down by "Czech gold", nor was he "sacked" by Churchill. It is certainly news to me that the First World War opened with "the sinking of several British ships at Scapa Flow by German submarines" – this can only refer to the disastrous loss of three cruisers, the *Aboukir*, *Cressy*, and *Hogue*, on September 21, by a single U-boat in the North Sea; and the short-lived Common Wealth Party in the Second World War was not "the Commonwealth Party", which would have been a very different thing. Also, there was a lot more to Birkenhead than "a drunken Unionist" whose "drunken outburst" to Conservative Ministers in 1922 helped to precipitate the fall of the Coalition. This is, incidentally, a topic on

which nearly defeated us, receives nothing like the prominence that it should have.

Churchill subsequently came to believe that his whole life had been in preparation for his supreme moment ("Over me beat the invisible wings") and that his military and political experience equipped him uniquely for war leadership. With good cause, but fairly, Charmley disputes this, and emphasizes that several of Churchill's judgments on military, naval, and aviation matters were disastrously wrong, and would have been even more disastrous if he had been responsible for implementing them in the 1930s. He thought well of Mussolini, and as late as 1937 was writing a major article praising Hitler. He was on Franco's side for most of the Spanish Civil War. His responsibility for Gallipoli was far greater than he and his supporters have claimed, as it was for the British intervention in the Russian Civil War and the 1940 Norwegian fiasco. The list of his errors, usually clothed in his magnificent language, is such that

Winning the peace

How both Kennan and Gorbachev were right

MICHAEL HOWARD

Michael J. Hogan, editor
THE END OF THE COLD WAR
 Its meaning and implications
 294pp. Cambridge University Press. £30.
 0521 43128 X

Godfried van Benthem
 van den Bergh
**THE NUCLEAR REVOLUTION AND
 THE END OF THE COLD WAR**
 Forced restraint
 312pp. Macmillan/Institute of Social Studies. £35.
 0333 580117

Patrick Glynn
CLOSING PANDORA'S BOX
 Arms races, arms control, and the history of the
 Cold War
 445pp. Washington DC: New Republic. \$30.
 0465 008096

Doni Oberdorfer
THE TURN
 How the Cold War came to an end: The United
 States and the Soviet Union 1983-1990
 514pp. Cape. £25.
 0224 035207

John Lewis Gaddis
**THE UNITED STATES AND
 THE END OF THE COLD WAR**
 Implications, reconsiderations, provocations
 301pp. Oxford University Press. £19.50.
 019 5052013

How, if at all, does the Soviet collapse affect all these traditional interpretations of the Cold War? For the radicals, of course, the defeat of the Soviets is as irrelevant as was their presence in the original contest. American aggression against the Third World will continue. "An End to Which Cold War?" Walter LaFeber asks sardonically in his contribution to the Hogan volume, while Bruce Cumings sees the real confrontation being perpetuated in the Far East. For the conservatives, that collapse validates both their original interpretation of the conflict – after all, the Russians are now falling over themselves to endorse Ronald Reagan's condemnation of the "evil empire" – and the effort involved in sustaining it; for was it not ultimately Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative, and the prospect of a further endless arms race, that broke Gorbachev's heart?

For the liberals, that is by no means so clear. The evolution of the Soviet system itself, or rather the lack of it; the realization, as communications improved, that they could not hope to compete with the West in the post-industrial age; the *embourgeoisement* of the Soviet people, so far-sightedly prophesied by George Kennan forty years ago; all this certainly validated Kennan's original doctrine of "Containment" and the effort involved in implementing it. But the huge build-up of armed forces, the almost deliberate challenge to the Soviet Union to spend itself into bankruptcy by competing with the American military-industrial complex: did not this actually prolong the Cold War by strengthening the hand of the hard-liners in the Kremlin and impeding a process of *détente* that might otherwise have undermined the Soviet regime just as effectively and rather more rapidly?

This is the fundamental question about which we can expect a prolonged *Historikerstreit*. The first crackle of musketry comes in two of the

works under review here. In *The Nuclear Revolution and the End of the Cold War*, Godfried Benthem van den Bergh advances the thesis that the Cold War ended because both sides can see the impossibility of nuclear war, or indeed any war, between them. Whatever their "rational strategy", their actual policy was always of war-avoidance. Eventually, he suggests, Gorbachev realized the pointlessness, in the nuclear age, of retaining a hegemony over Eastern Europe, and made the essential concessions converted implicit co-operation into open agreement. This habit of co-operation, based on mutual recognition of the impossibility of nuclear war, would now, suggests Dr van Benthem, become the foundation for global peacekeeping in the post-Cold-War age.

Patrick Glynn will have none of this. Indeed, in *Closing Pandora's Box*, the approach of the "Arms Control School" was only useless but wrongly conceived and positively harmful. He traces its philosophy back to the Liberal belief of the pre-1914 era, arms races cause wars and that conflicts arise because of mutual misunderstandings and perceptions that can always be ironed out by rational discourse between intelligent men. This disastrous philosophy he gives commendable short shrift, before going on to trace what he sees as its pernicious influence on American policy, especially the policy of Democratic administrations – towards the Soviet Union in the nuclear age. Instead of seeing the Cold War for what it was, as a power confrontation between status-quo and revisionist states in which peace could only be kept by a preponderance of power in the hands of the former, American governments, he argues, sought to preserve peace by a policy of arms reductions and the creation of a "stable balance" on the assumption that the Soviet leaders either were, or could be made into, willing, like-minded partners in playing a complex game of the rules of which had been worked out by sophisticated American academics. The villain of the centre of Glynn's scenario is Robert McNamara, whose mixture of intellectual subtlety and political naivety prevented the United States from using its huge potential to gain victory in the Cold War decades sooner than it did.

In fact, Glynn maintains, the Soviet leaders always saw arms-control negotiations, not a means of mitigating the Cold War, but as an extension of it by other means. They regarded American initiatives as symptoms of weakness to be exploited in the creation of a favourable "correlation of forces" which, by the end of the 1970s, they thought they had achieved. No more than the United States did they intend ever to fight a nuclear war; but under a shield of perceived nuclear superiority they hoped to forward their cause all over the world. So long as they were successfully competing in the field of military power, their other shortcomings could be overlooked. It was only when the Reagan administration took the decision to face the down at their strongest point, argues Glynn, that the Soviet leadership realized the uselessness of further competition and suffered a collective failure of nerve. In the same way (this is me, not Glynn), though Ludendorff could face down turmoil on the Home Front in 1918 so long as the German armies remained victorious, the first signs of military defeat on the Western Front set off the search for an armistice that rapidly led to total collapse.

Glynn makes a strong case. It is all too true that the American (and European) arms-control policies, even if they did not buy the old disarmament fallacy, did believe that the issue of nuclear weapons could somehow be insulated from ongoing political rivalries, and that in dealing with the Soviets could be treated as partners rather than as adversaries. This is an illusion that did not long survive contact with the Russians, certainly not so far as I was concerned. Experience of the shamelessly exploitative tactics of Soviet delegates at some of the early Pugwash Conferences rapidly converted me from a once-carrying liberal into a staunch *Realpolitik*er, if not entirely a Cold Warrior, and taught me a lot about the Soviet capacity to manipulate the "useful

nating in the disaster at Yalta – for which Churchill himself was not at all free of blame, as Charmley emphasizes.

While this is a salutary corrective to another exaggeratedly praised Titan, there was rather more to Roosevelt than that – and he was right to realize that Churchill was trying everything he could to stretch American neutrality to the limit and to draw him into the war, and, when that fortuitously happened after Hitler unnecessarily declared war on the United States following Pearl Harbour, to concentrate upon Europe rather than the Pacific. The important thing, for us, was that Churchill succeeded. Without the Americans, we had no hope of being on the winning side. Politics is not an amateur sport, especially in wartime. Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin were all hard professionals; unfortunately, as the war developed, the latter had the big battalions.

Charmley's book ends on a note of gloom, in 1945. Nazi Germany is indeed routed, and largely destroyed, but Britain is exhausted and impoverished, the Empire is doomed, the Americans are about to quit Europe in triumph, leaving the shattered remnants to the domination of the Russians. By implication, it has all been in vain. It had been Churchill's "sentiment" that had led him to urge intervention in the affairs of central and eastern Europe in 1938-9, and it had all ended in disaster. In elegiac mood, Charmley writes:

Churchill stood for the British Empire, for British Independence, and for an "anti-Socialist" vision of Britain. By July 1945 the first of these was on the skids, the second was dependent solely upon America, and the third had just vanished in a Labour election victory. An appropriate moment to stop, for it was indeed the end of glory.

Well, our situation in 1945 could be regarded in another way. Unlike most of the countries of Europe, including Germany, Britain had not been invaded and occupied, nor had it been physically devastated. British casualties, although severe, had been on nothing like the scale of the First World War. On every front on which they had been engaged – and not least in Charmley's sadly neglected Burma campaigns – the British forces had emerged victorious. Our international reputation, especially in Europe, was at its zenith. How we threw all that away was the real tragedy, but historians should not deny Churchill, and us, our hour of real glory. And so we cheered Churchill with deep gratitude and love – and, remembering only too well the Party that had got us into this mess in the first place, and which he despised and which had despised him, voted in a Labour Government. Perhaps it was a mistake, but we had fought for six years for the right to make our own mistakes, as Churchill – after he had recovered from the shock of defeat – recognized. Six years later, he was back at Number 10 Downing Street.

The strange feature of this book is that no portrait of Churchill really emerges. He does things, he says things, he writes things, some of them wise and inspired, others less so, but it does not really add up to a satisfying biography. John Charmley is, however, a young political historian of much talent and assiduity, and I hope that he will continue his account, and that perhaps he might question his harsh and unreasonable censure that "Churchill had mortgaged Britain's future to his vision of Anglo-American co-operation."

At least, in 1945 we had a future. Things did not look that way to the seven-year-old child that I was in the summer of 1940; although I was comforted by my father's remark about the First World War, in which he had served with some distinction, that, drawn from that experience, "incredible though it may seem, the Germans were even more stupid than we were". He was talking of the German High Command, not the average German soldier. At every level in the Second World War after May 1940, we were far better led than in the First, and although many mistakes were made in the heat of the conflict, and many were Churchill's, the balance of historical judgment will surely be considerably more in his favour than Charmley's.

Sir Robert Rhodes James's books include Churchill: A study in failure, 1900-39, published in 1970.

The controversy over who caused the Cold War, and how it was won, is likely to provide job opportunities for all the historians made redundant by the exhaustion of comparable controversies over the two World Wars. Already we have the orthodox interpretations, the revisionists, the post-revisionists, the structuralists, and for all I know the deconstructionists as well. For traditional right-wingers (represented here by Patrick Glynn), the Cold War was caused simply by Soviet aggression, much as the two World Wars were caused simply by German aggression, and all three wars were ended only when the United States decided to mobilize and apply its overwhelming power. For traditional radicals, represented here in the contributions to Michael Hogan's symposium by Bruce Cumings, Richard Barnett and Noam Chomsky, the Soviet Union was an irrelevance: in their view the conflict was a by-product of aggressive American Imperialism whose target was and remains the Third World. Somewhere in between are cool analysts like John Lewis Gaddis, who see in the rise and confrontation of the superpowers the inevitable result of the collapse of the old European state-system. Finally, there are various hues of "liberals" who, like Arthur Schlesinger in his contribution to the Hogan collection, accept the inevitability of confrontation but believe that the confrontation was escalated by "authentic differences in principle, by real and supposed clashes of interest, and by a wide range of misperception, misunderstanding and demagoguery". For this escalation, believe the liberals, both sides must bear their share of responsibility.

All these views have been familiar for many years, and debates between their protagonists have been largely dialogues of the deaf. But all had one thing in common: the assumption that the Cold War was a permanent feature of the world scene, and a lack of interest in whether, or how, it might end. Gaddis raised this question at a seminar in 1985, shortly before Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union, and attempted to answer it in an article that he bravely reprints in the collection of his essays under review here. But not even he, the Cold War historian *par excellence*, could foresee the sudden and cataclysmic collapse of the Soviet Union five years later – an event as unpredictable, and certainly as unpredictable, as the collapse of an Imperial Germany apparently at the peak of its military triumphs in 1918.

It is the task of historians to explain, not to predict; and the difficulty that confronts "contemporary historians" is not only that they do not have easy access to the data needed for anything like a comprehensive explanation of events, but that they still do not know how the events with which they are dealing are likely to turn out. They are like interpreters trying to make sense of a long sentence in German, only at the very end of which will they know what the verb is going to be. The very last word will never be spoken, which makes the writing of history so continuously interesting; but individual sentences come to an end, and the main verb in the story of the Cold War has now been slipped into place. The Soviet Union lost. Perhaps the Russian people "won", much as the German people "won" as a result of the defeat of the Nazi regime. Certainly the costs to the West of our victory have still to be counted; but the political, economic, and above all ideological structure set up by Lenin and his followers in 1917, which maintained itself for seventy years in a virtual state of war with the rest of the world, has totally disintegrated. Whatever comes after may be better or it may be worse, but it will be different; and so will the rest of the world be as a result. For writers of history text-books, 1989-90 will mark a caesura as definitive as those of 1814-15, 1918-19, or 1945.

Quotations from reviews and articles on Churchill: The End of Glory by John Charmley

January 1993

"... the most important revisionist text published since the war."

- Alan Clark, *The Times*.

"... intensely readable and a stimulus to thought."

- John Grigg, *The Times*.

"... extraordinarily painstaking historical scholarship,"

- Andrew Roberts, *The Sunday Telegraph*.

"... a well-researched and thorough piece of work,"

- Peter Hitchens, *The Daily Express*.

"... a young political historian of much talent and assiduity,"

- Robert Rhodes James, *TLS*.

"... work has considerable merit (including the merit of readability),"

- Martin Gilbert, *The Guardian*.

"... a well-written book, lively, intelligent and lit by astringent wit."

- Philip Ziegler, *The Daily Telegraph*.

"The man who rewrote history"

- Valerie Grove, *The Times*.

Top historians join row over Churchill book

Attack is labelled 'counter-factual'

By R Barry O'Brien

THE BOOK

A NEW biography of Sir Winston Churchill which blames him for losing Britain its Empire by missing a chance to make peace with Hitler in 1940-41 provoked a furore among historians yesterday.

The controversial thesis has been advanced by Dr John Charmley, a lecturer in English history at the University of East Anglia, in a critical reappraisal of the wartime Prime Minister under the title "Churchill: The End of Glory".

The dust jacket of the book carries an illustration of the notorious painting of Churchill by Graham Sutherland which so infuriated Lady Churchill that she burned it.

Dr Charmley, 37, argues that by not responding to German peace overtures, Churchill won his glory as a war leader at the cost of the cause to which he had dedicated his life — the enduring greatness of Britain and its Empire.

The claim was supported by Mr Alan Clark, 62, Conservative MP for Plymouth Sutton, a former Defence Minister and the author of several military history books.

In an article in *The Times* on Saturday he said that Britain should have made peace with Hitler after defeating the Italians in North Africa in 1941 and suggests it lost the empire by carrying on the war.

The thesis brought a critical response from two leading historians of the 1939-45 war, Lord Bullock and Prof Donald Cameron Watt, who both described it as "counter-factual".

Lord Bullock, 77, author of the book *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, said: "There is nothing fresh in this. It is what Hitler said. The Hitler thesis is that he never wanted the war with Britain and it was all that terrible warmonger Churchill. If you want to explore the Hitler

thesis and go on and say yes we won the war and destroyed the British Empire in doing it, that is what Hitler said would happen.

"Hitler wanted peace with Britain, but what the consequences of that would have been is a different story. You have to take it a stage further and say: what would have happened if we had made peace?

"Hitler wanted to attack Russia and he wanted Britain to be his ally, as he said in Mein Kampf. Anyone who has studied Hitler knows that was in his mind. He hated Churchill so much because he spoiled his plans.

"The final clash would have come when Hitler dominated Europe and had the wealth and resources of Russia. Then would have come the reckoning with the Anglo-Saxon powers, Britain and America.

"Britain would then have been brushed aside, so I don't think the British Empire would exactly have lasted."

Lord Bullock, Fellow and former Master of St Catherine's College, Oxford, said the thesis was "counter-factual".

He said: "It is a game of turning everything the opposite way round and seeing what it looks like. It is an unreal game to me and I don't think it takes us very far."

"I have never been attracted by counter-factual arguments. I am content to study what happened."

Prof Cameron Watt, 65, Stevenson Professor of International History at London University, said Dr Charmley and Mr Clark had failed to study German sources which showed that peace with Hitler was not a realistic option.

He said: "The problem of this is the narrowness of the



Churchill 'lost empire' by refusing peace, says book

school that writes about English history and never looks at any other evidence. This is what I think Charmley is guilty of.

"Alan Clark is simply misusing history to grind a political axe. The evidence whether or not there was a genuine offer from Hitler and what lay behind it cannot be deduced from British sources. You cannot assume on the basis of English evidence that Hitler would have left us alone."

"The idea which has been cited for ages by a lot of his would-be apologists that he wanted to live in peace with us if we would let him have Europe is simply not supported by the evidence."

"The evidence is that he wanted to go on once he had established himself up to the Urals. The next step was to turn on the United States

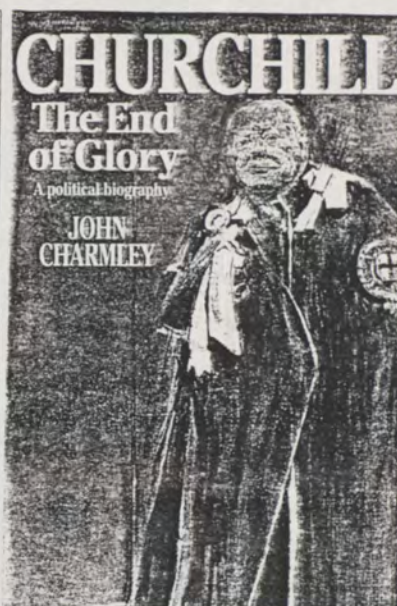
which he saw as the ultimate embodiment of Judaism. It wouldn't have been a matter of Britain simply having to stay out of Europe and Germany guaranteeing our empire against the United States."

"That was the offer Hitler sent us before war broke out in 1939. It was repeated in his so-called peace speech in

An assessment by
John Keegan and
Ivor Noakes — P16

November 1939 and in speeches in 1940 and in the terms Hess brought with him in 1940."

Prof Cameron Watt added: "I suspect that any Government that tried to accept any sort of Hitler offer would have been defeated in Parliament. If he had reached an



The cover bears the picture Lady Churchill hated

agreement with us it would have been a temporary one on his terms."

"There is no evidence whatever to suggest there could have been any kind of *modus vivendi* for more than a year or so between Britain and Hitler, particularly if, as a result of this, he had succeeded in overcoming the Russians."

"He wanted the British Empire on his side eventually by conquest but if by the same sort of satellite arrangement that he had with Vichy France so much the better."

"If there had been a Vichy Britain, that would have been okay for a bit but I don't think it would have been okay in the long run."

"I don't think that anyone like Alan Clark with strong feelings of national pride could have swallowed the

kind of peace settlement Hitler would have insisted on for a minute. It is just a piece of counter-factual history which he is using at the moment to beat a particular con-

temporary political drum. "It makes people like me who have been trying to write sensible history of the period over the last 40 years rather desperate, but we get a lot of it."

Philip Ziegler, the historian and biographer, reviewing the book in the *Weekend Telegraph* on Saturday, found it "well worth reading" despite the "hostile" treatment of its subject.

Andrew Roberts, in the *Sunday Telegraph*, said every assertion was supported by a wealth of contemporaneous quotation, "often from refreshingly new sources," but the verdict remained: "Not proven".

'I wanted to show the warts and all'

By Maurice Weaver in Washington

THE AUTHOR

THE author of the controversial book, Dr John Charmley, is on leave from the University of East Anglia, occupying a professorial chair dedicated to the memory of Winston Churchill in Filton, Missouri — scene of Churchill's famous "Iron Curtain" speech in 1945.

Dr Charmley, a history lecturer and biographer who is a long-time student of Churchill's life and times, said yesterday that his hosts were aware of the "wonderful irony" that the man they hired to give classes on their hero has turned out to have reservations about him.

But he added: "I did give an inaugural lecture last year on the theme of my book and they took it on the chin like scholars and gentlemen. I pointed out that I am not denigrating Churchill so much as trying to assess him as an historian should."

At the age of 37, having been born after Churchill ceased to be Prime Minister, he views himself as being in the vanguard of a new wave of historians able to take a clinical, unemotional view of the wartime leader's record.

"We are the first generation to view him only as a historical figure. I wanted to clean the varnish off the portrait, so to speak, to look in closer detail at the man, warts and all."

"He remains a great man by definition but great men always leave a fertile heritage. Oliver Cromwell apart, I believe no other great Englishman has bequeathed so sterile a legacy."

Dr Charmley, whose wife is with him in America, describes himself as "one of the last products of the grammar school system". From his native Birkenhead he won a scholarship to Oxford where he read history at Pembroke College. His first published book, a biography



Dr John Charmley, no stranger to controversy

of Duff Cooper, the pre-war First Lord of the Admiralty who resigned over Neville Chamberlain's Munich treaty with Hitler, entered the best-seller list in 1986.

He is no stranger to controversy. The Duff Cooper book led, in 1989, to a biography of Chamberlain himself, which defied historical convention by arguing that his "peace in our time" policies of appeasement might have been right. It was a view which gave those he calls "the curmudgeons of Tunbridge Wells" an attack of apoplexy.

The fur really flew. When I was interviewed on the radio, a listener phoned to say he was so outraged that the BBC should give me air time he was cancelling his licence.

"To those who might be offended by my latest work I can only say: 'Surely the freedom to express one's views is what the last world war was all about.'"

Dr Charmley rejects suggestions that his criticism of Churchill betrays Left-wing political dissidence. "My friends in Norwich would fall about laughing at that idea. Most of them regard me as a Thatcherite."

The Battle of Britain: historians at loggerheads over challenge to the image of a national icon

Could Churchill have stopped the war?

■ John Charmley's revisionist biography of Winston Churchill has shattered the scholarly consensus and broken taboos surrounding the legend of the man who led the nation through its finest hour

By MATTHEW D'ANCONA

NEVER has a work of historical revisionism upset so many in so short a time. In the space of three days, John Charmley's radical reappraisal of the life of Churchill and Alan Clark's article in *The Times* on Saturday have turned the history of the second world war into a battlefield and shattered the scholarly consensus on the war leader's achievements.

Dr Charmley's thesis, that the war might have been avoided and could certainly have been curtailed long before 1945, has already been strongly criticised by historians and MPs rallying to the Churchillian standard. On Saturday, Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, the Conservative MP for Perth and Kinross, called Mr Clark, the former defence minister, "a goon" whose review was "the most insulting piece of nonsense I have ever read".

Dr Charmley, who is in Fulton, Missouri, on leave from the University of East Anglia, said yesterday that the row over Churchill: *The End of Glory* illustrated the resilience of national mythology in the face of cogent historical argument — although his own views differed from those of Mr Clark.

"Alan goes a bit further than I would. I don't say that we should have made peace with Hitler. I'm not sure we should ever have done that. What was needed was better diplomacy. Churchill's obsession with Hitler, and his equation of Germany with Hitler, was a grave error. What he should have done after the invasion of Russia was make clear to Germany that the main obstacle to peace was Hitler."

Dr Charmley argues that the British peace lobby was particularly strong in the early summer of 1940 — including Dunkirk but before the fall of France on June 23 — and that Churchill himself openly contemplated a negotiated settlement with Hitler in cabinet on May 27. The following day

invasion of Poland that his word was worthless, and by invading Prague in March 1939 convinced Churchill that his gut assessment of the Führer's intentions was essentially correct. In Dr Charmley's analysis, the best option open to the cabinet was to undermine Hitler's position by cultivating "non-ideological Nazis" such as Goering, just as it later cultivated Marshal Pietro Badoglio in Italy. Goering, who was eventually expelled from the Nazi party in April 1945, had lobbied actively for peace in October 1939 and evidence has recently come to light that he even wrote a valedictory letter to Churchill from Nuremberg.

According to the Charmley thesis, the greatest window of opportunity for peace was opened by the invasion of Russia in June 1941, which Hitler called a "march ... that, for its extent, compares with the greatest the world has ever seen". Already in control of Warsaw, Copenhagen,

Oslo, The Hague, Brussels, Paris, Belgrade and Athens, ruling from the Arctic to the Mediterranean, he now committed 3,200,000 troops against Stalin's army in Operation Barbarossa, named after Hitler's imperial hero.

If Dr Charmley is right, Churchill should have exploited this moment to disengage slowly from the European theatre, maintaining a steady flow of arms to Russia without committing the West to further involvement in the bloody conflict between the two totalitarian powers. More contentiously, Dr Charmley suggests that Germany would have withdrawn from western Europe — "it was never a long-term German aim to remain there" — and Hitler's credibility would have been eroded by the battle in the east.

Mr Clark takes this revisionist thesis further still, arguing that there were clear opportunities for peace in July 1940, before the Battle of Britain, and in April 1941, by which time the Italians had been routed in North Africa. Only Churchill's obsession with Hitler and obedience to the United States stood in the way of settlement. The cost, according to Mr Clark, was the loss of the Eastern empire, which might have been defended by the fleet and victorious Spitfires and, in the long term, the destruction of the British social order.

The Charmley-Clark axis has mounted the most vigorous attack to date on the Churchillian orthodoxy, and the literary industry controlled by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and epitomised by Martin Gilbert's magisterial eight-million-word official biography. Dr Charmley, who is only 37, regards himself as the first historian to approach the statesman's life without the cultural baggage of those who lived through the war. He has chosen his moment well: the prospective sale of Churchill's papers up to 1945, stored at

tation of much later history. Dr Charmley and Mr Clark agree that peace in 1941 would have saved much of the empire and yielded an entirely different social order in Britain. The Cold War — and the special relationship — might never have happened.

"Peace would have reinforced the position of the traditional ruling class and would not have allowed the egalitarian emphasis to develop," Dr Charmley said yesterday. "Churchill was defeated in 1945 by the extent to which he had allowed the Labour party to run the home front. The man in the street knew the names of Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison and Stafford Cripps, because Labour had been part of the war government." Rab Butler — who discussed the possibility of peace with the Swedish ambassador in London in June 1940 — would have been the natural successor to Churchill, committed to a patrician hierarchy, sweetened by Whiggish social reform.

equated the fate of the Reich with the fate of its leader, was already well-established, launched by the Nuremberg rallies and Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1936). By 1941, the supposed window of opportunity, the Hitler Youth and the SS were the vicious heart of Hitler's personality cult.

Britain might have kept out of the special relationship by reaching terms with Hitler in 1941 but would have effectively accepted the role of client state to Germany. And was Hitler, who described his visit to Napoleon's tomb in June 1940 as "the greatest and finest moment of my life", really so determined to get out of western Europe?

Correll Barnett, keeper of the archives at Churchill College, said yesterday that Churchill would have been negotiating from a position of weakness, in spite of victory in the Battle of Britain. "Germany controlled most of Europe from Norway down to the Spanish coast. What sort of

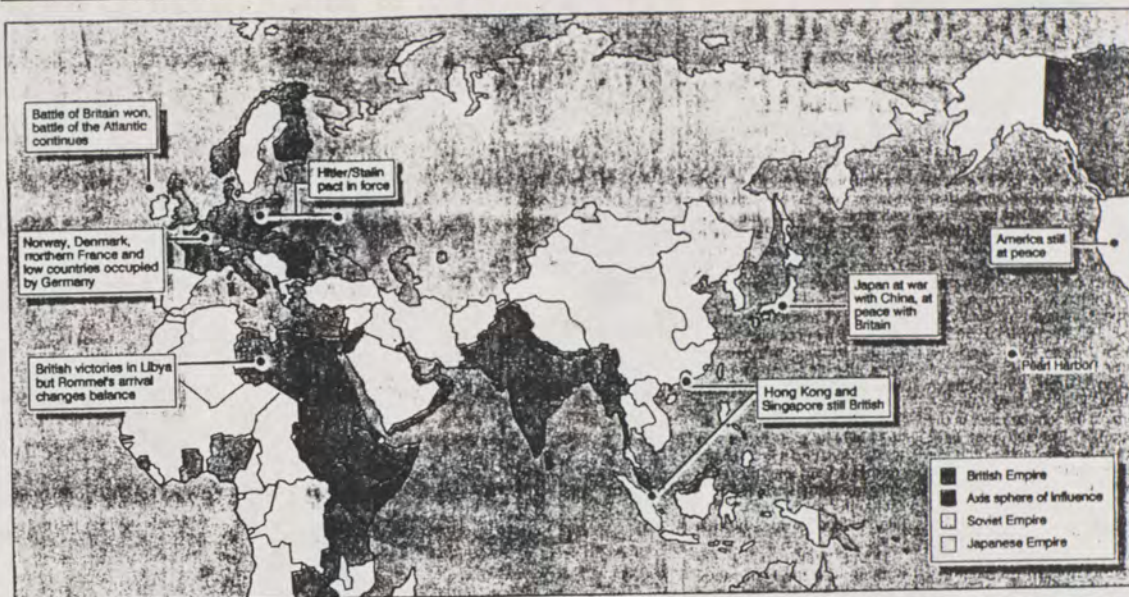
It's absurd to suggest that he could have been toppled or that there was a solid lobby in Germany to get rid of him." There was no reason to assume that the Final Solution would have been averted by peace in the summer of 1941, only a few months before it was initiated by the Wannsee conference.

By 1941, in any case, Britain had become too dependent on the United States financially to make a brisk withdrawal from action: her

reserves were exhausted. As the British ambassador to Washington put it, the nation was broke. Only "Lend-Lease", which enabled the American president to lease supplies to any country assisting the US war effort from spring 1941, held out any hope of keeping the nation afloat financially. The empire, in contrast, had become a financial liability and, as Enoch Powell put it in a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* yesterday, its decline had more to do with decay than with

remains powerful. Nonetheless, he has succeeded in wrenching what he calls the "warm blanket" of the Churchill myth from the nation and ending a taboo which has lasted almost half a century. Two years ago the Churchill trustees complained that "the average British citizen is less and less aware of Sir Winston Churchill". Now, the Lion of Chartwell has returned to the public domain — though scarcely in the manner they would have wished.

APRIL 1941: THE WORLD AS SEEN FROM DOWNING STREET



Fortunes of war: the balance of power in 1941, above. Below, how *The Times* saw the war of words in 1940, the year Churchill came to power

HITLER RE-TELLS THE OLD STORY
DEMOCRATIC "WARMONGERS"
BRITAIN TO SHOW "COMMON SENSE" OR BE DESTROYED
AN APPEAL BUT NO TERMS

BRITAIN'S ANSWER TO HITLER
NO COMPROMISE ON WAR ISSUES
UNITED VOICE OF THE EMPIRE
LORD HALIFAX TO BROADCAST



Hitler: an "obsession" for the prime minister



Churchill himself openly contemplated a negotiated settlement with Hitler in cabinet on May 27. The following day the prime minister, who had been in office for less than a month, had to fight hard to persuade his colleagues that war remained a viable option. Yet Hitler had shown time and again in the prelude to the



Stalin: the West's best hope of early peace

lived through the war. He has chosen his moment well: the prospective sale of Churchill's papers up to 1945, stored at Churchill College, Cambridge, has prompted a fierce scholarly row over the fate of the archive.

Like most revisionism, the reappraisal of Churchill contains the germ of a reinterpret-

the natural successor to Churchill, committed to a patrician hierarchy, sweetened by Whiggish social reform.

Yet this view will strike many as speculative wishful thinking as much as a useful exercise. Dr Charmley's thesis relies on the fragility of the Führer's position in 1940-1. But the Hitler myth, which

the Battle of Britain. Germany controlled most of Europe from Norway down to the Spanish coast. What sort of peace do you think that Hitler would have found acceptable?

ain had become too dependent on the United States financially to make a brisk withdrawal from action: her overseas assets had been sold off and the dollar and gold

financial stability and, as Enoch Powell put it in a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* yesterday, its decline had more to do with destiny than will.

The case against Charmley

Chartwell has returned to the public domain though scarcely in the manner they would have wished.

Letters, page 13

Robert Rhodes James defends the spirit of 1940

Leader who galvanised the British into a nation of do-or-die warriors

I HAVE the dubious distinction of being the first "revisionist" biographer of Sir Winston Churchill. In 1970, I published a study of his life and career up to 1939 under the title *A Study in Failure*, which was widely assumed to be the awaited denigration of the man who had become a kind of national god, and was duly excoriated by those who had read only the deliberately ironical title.

Those who actually read the book, including members of the Churchill family, realised that it was the first attempt to view Churchill as a fascinating, brilliant, flawed and fallible human being. Churchill's egotistical sense of his destiny has been mocked by many, but never by me.

What I was attempting to do was to answer a question that had long puzzled me. Why was it that by the spring of 1939 Churchill had only two Conservative supporters in the House of Commons, had been out of office for ten years, was almost universally distrusted and even hated, and then became, in May 1940, the national leader who galvanised the British into a nation of do-or-die warriors.

I was seven in 1940, I vividly remember the spirit, almost amounting to exhilaration, and the electrifying impact of Churchill's speeches. Leaderless for so long, we knew that at long last we had a leader. The Battle of Britain was the first defeat suffered by the all-conquering Germans.

The brouhaha concerning John Charmley's new biography of Churchill has concentrated on whether, after the fall of France, we should have parleyed with Hitler and come to terms that would have been, in Alan Clark's opinion, "excellent". Charmley's essential thesis is that Churchill, resolved to persevere, destroyed our independence, our prosperity and eventually the empire, by handing over our destinies to the Americans.

It would have been surpris-



Brilliant but fallible: Churchill, the man of destiny

ing if, after Dunkirk, ministers and their military advisers had not looked hard at the situation they now confronted. As we now know, things were far worse than anyone outside the inner circle of government then realised.

But the military situation, although dire, was not desperate. Clark considers that a German invasion in 1940 would have succeeded. This was certainly not the view of the German high command, and although the Norway campaign had been a disaster militarily, it had demonstrated the clear imbalance in numbers, quality and morale between the Royal Navy and the German surface fleet.

There were ministers who still thought that Hitler was a reasonable man with whom they could do business. But, and here Clark's analysis is

clearly wrong, the Conservative party, the House of Commons, and the British people would not have stood for it. Churchill's assessment of Hitler may have been intuitive, but it was right.

The Chamberlain government had been ejected by a Commons that was for once absolutely representative of a mood of national revulsion against politicians who could neither keep us out of war nor wage it. Churchill's political position was such that he had had to keep on many — too many, it was felt — of the Men of Munich in his government. But he had also acquired men from all parties who were resolute.

In terms of domestic British politics a negotiated peace, which would have been on subject terms, was impossible. We had had enough of hu-

miliations, and the hatred of Hitler was intense.

Where Charmley is right is that it was Churchill's spirit and his almost mystical faith in the indomitable British people that was decisive.

Charmley's portrait of Britain in 1945 is a dismal one. Our wealth gone, the empire "on the skids", the Americans preparing to go home, the Soviet Union dominant in Europe, the future without hope. The clear implication is that the whole thing had been a ghastly mistake, all the sacrifices for nothing.

Things looked very different to us in 1945. Of all the European belligerents, we had not been invaded or occupied. Our armed forces had been victorious in every area of conflict. Our reputation was at its zenith. How we threw all this away is another story.

The most extraordinary aspect of Charmley's account of the war is that Churchill is censured for his greatest achievement, which was to lure the Americans to our aid, and then persuade them to put the European war before that in the Pacific.

Churchill was not in many respects an attractive man, but what people who were not alive during the war do not understand is the immense debt of gratitude felt for him by those who were. It is right that his failings and errors — some of them colossal — should be coolly assessed by historians. But they should not forget the crowds that gathered in the bitter January cold for his funeral, and a lone man in a field in RAF uniform, at attention, with tears streaming down his cheeks, saluting the train that took his body to Woodstock.

□ Sir Robert Rhodes James is the biographer of Lord Randolph Churchill, the author of *Churchill — A Study in Failure 1900-1939*, and a contributor to a forthcoming new assessment of Churchill edited by Lord Blake and Professor Roger Louis.



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London Journal

History or Heresy? Churchill's War Role Attacked

By WILLIAM E. SCHMIDT

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, Jan. 8 — With a sudden ferocity, scholars, amateur historians and even politicians here have joined an emotional debate that seems as strange as it is inflammatory: Would Britain be better off today had Churchill been more willing in World War II to negotiate an earlier end to the fighting with Germany?

Over the last week, whole pages of London newspapers and entire television shows have been given over to historians, book critics and former Government officials blustering and fuming over a 649-page political biography that offers a starkly iconoclastic vision of the former Prime Minister, who is lionized as the nation's wartime savior.

In "Churchill: The End of Glory," John Charmley, a respected 37-year-old historian, writes that Churchill's preoccupation with Hitler's unconditional surrender led him into an appeasement of Stalin that fatally altered the balance of power in postwar Europe, as well as a subservience to Roosevelt that resulted in Britain's mortgaging its independence to the United States.

Some Pounce on Book

Mr. Charmley stops well short of arguing directly that Britain should have made a separate peace with Hitler. But he suggests that Churchill missed opportunities in the early years of the war that might have brought the fighting in Western Europe to an earlier end, and thereby preserved Britain's independence and its empire — and still undermined Hitler.

Several critics have pounced on the book, saying that Mr. Charmley offers no new evidence that Hitler or anyone else in Germany was interested in discussing a way out of the war, or that the British people would ever have accepted such a compromise.

Martin Gilbert, the official biographer of Churchill, declared Mr. Charmley's work impressively researched, but dismissed out of hand any interpretation that Churchill should have sought peace over war.

"You can't argue that the Nazis were not as bad as was thought at the time," he said. "If anything, they were worse."

Even so, The Times of London said in an editorial this week that the book was valuable if only because it had "introduced doubt to a field of history hitherto dominated by certainty and clubability."

The sudden public uproar caught the book's London publishers, Hodder & Stoughton, by surprise. The book, which sells for the equivalent of \$45, sold out on the first day, forcing them to triple the original press run of just 2,000 copies and to schedule a second edition for next week. Several publishers in the United States are said to



Malcolm Howard



The New York Times

John Charmley, left, whose new political biography of Churchill has stirred emotional debate in Britain.

A book chips away at the great man's pedestal.

be interested in the book.

Mr. Charmley, a historian at the University of East Anglia, is now serving as Churchill Memorial professor at Westminster College in Fulton, Mo., where Churchill gave his "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946. His Churchill thesis was foreshadowed by two earlier works that suggested that Chamberlain, the Prime Minister who was forced to resign over his appeasement policies, might have been more right than wrong.

Britain's 'Finest Hour'

But this work has struck an especially sensitive nerve, not only because of the Churchill mythology, but also because there are those who reject out of hand the notion that any kind of compromise could be justified, morally or intellectually, with the Nazis. Britain's resolute stand against Hitler, particularly in 1940 and 1941, endures as a central part of the British experience, what Churchill himself described as the country's "finest hour."

In a detailed narrative, drawn on personal letters, minutes of Cabinet

meetings, memoirs and private papers, Mr. Charmley discloses no smoking guns. But he assembles a portrait of Churchill that challenges the historical orthodoxy of a farsighted statesman who had no choice but to wage war to the finish.

Arguing that Churchill was preoccupied with "short- and medium-term considerations," he says he resisted using diplomacy to undermine Hitler's leadership, a strategy that Mr. Charmley says was used effectively with Italy, where Britain cultivated Marshal Pietro Badoglio as an alternative to Mussolini, and with the Vichy French, where Adm. J. F. Darnley emerged as an Allied alternative to Marshall Pétain.

'Some Painful Questions'

He also says Churchill missed his greatest opportunity to change the course of the war in June 1941, when Hitler invaded Russia. Here was a moment, he said, "to rethink priorities and foreign policy," to slowly disengage British troops from the battle with Hitler and leave Russia and Germany to fight to death.

"Surveying the situation in July 1945 it was hard to argue that Britain had won in any sense save that of avoiding defeat," Mr. Charmley writes in the epilogue.

John Vincent, a historian at Bristol University, said Mr. Charmley was worth hearing out. "It is only now, 50

years later, that we are looking at some painful questions about the war," he said. One of those, he added, is whether a policy that rejected anything but Germany's unconditional surrender prolonged the war and may even have indirectly contributed to the Holocaust.

The most exuberant response has come from Alan Clark, a former British Defense Minister who is a Conservative Party politician and an amateur military historian. He described the book in a review as "probably the most important revisionist text to be published since the war."

In many ways, Mr. Clark only confused the debate, by arguing that the Charmley book made the case for making peace with Hitler in 1941. Even Mr. Charmley denied that was so, and Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, another Tory politician, was so incensed by the idea that he called Mr. Clark "a goon."

Perhaps a more formidable critic is Winston S. Churchill, the grandson of the wartime Prime Minister and a Conservative Member of Parliament, who suggested that Mr. Charmley, born 10 years after World War II ended, didn't know what he was talking about.

"If some of these supposed historians had lived through the reality of Nazi occupation, they might have a slightly different appreciation," he said.

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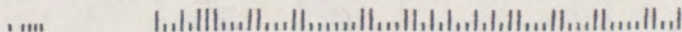
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