

CONCLUDING VOLUME VI OF HIS NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING MEMOIRS:

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

By SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

The end of the war in Italy and Germany . . . The iron curtain clangs down . . . Trouble in Trieste . . . A-bomb and frustration at Potsdam . . . The lost election . . . Farewell from a 'servant'

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HITLER'S Western Front had collapsed; Eisenhower was across the Rhine and driving deep into Germany and Central Europe against an enemy who in places resisted fiercely but was quite unable to stem the onslaught of our triumphant armies. On April 25 spearheads of the United States First Army from Leipzig met the Russians on the Elbe. The German Army was disintegrating before our eyes.

In spite of the victorious advance of Eisenhower's armies, President Truman found himself faced in the last half of April with a formidable crisis. I had for some time past tried my utmost to impress the United States Government with the vast changes which were taking place both in the military and political spheres. Our Western armies would soon be carried well beyond the boundaries of our occupation zones, as both the Western and Eastern Allied fronts approached one another, penning the Germans between them.

I became convinced that before we halted, or still more withdrew, our troops we ought to seek a meeting with Stalin face to face and make sure that an agreement was reached about the whole front. It would indeed be a disaster if we kept all our agreements in strict good faith while the Soviets laid their hands upon all they could get without the slightest regard for the obligations into which they had entered.

I so addressed myself to the new President. His reply however carried us little further. He proposed that the Allied troops should retire to their agreed zones in Germany and Austria as soon as the military situation allowed.

The Russians had not been long in Vienna before we got a foretaste of what would happen in a zone of their occupation. They announced that a Provisional Austrian Government had been formed, and they refused to let our missions fly in. All this made me fear that they were deliberately exploiting their arrival to "organise" the country before we got there. On April 30 I telegraphed to Mr. Truman as follows:

"... Would you be willing to join

me in sending Marshal Stalin a message in the following terms:

"... It has been our understanding that the treatment of Austria, as of Germany, is a matter of common concern to the four Powers who are to occupy and control those countries. We regard it as essential that British, American, and French representatives should be allowed to proceed at once to Vienna in order to report on conditions there before any final settlement is reached."

On May 3 President Truman replied that he entirely agreed with my telegram and was himself sending a protest to the Soviet Government. Mr. Truman concluded his message by asking the Soviet Government to let the Allied representatives fly to Vienna at once.

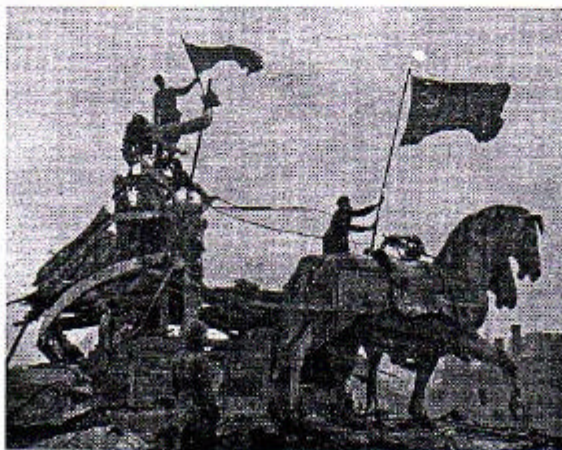
These representations were quite ineffectual.

The Soviet menace, to my eyes, had already replaced the Nazi foe. I could not rid my mind of the fear that the victorious armies of democracy would soon disperse, and that the real and hardest test still lay before us.

Obviously the first aim must be a conference with Stalin. I cabled the President:

"I think we should offer an invitation jointly or severally at the same moment to Stalin to meet us at some agreed unshattered town in Germany for a Tripartite Meeting. . . ."

On June 1 President Truman told me Marshal Stalin was agreeable to a meeting of what he called "the Three" in Berlin about July 15. I replied at once that I would gladly go to Berlin with a British delegation, but I thought that July 15, which Truman had suggested, was much too late for the urgent questions demanding attention between us. "Although," I cabled, "I am in the midst of a hotly contested election I would not consider my tasks here as comparable to a meeting between the three of us. If June 15 is not possible why not July 1, 2, or 3?" Mr. Truman replied that after full consideration July 15 was the earliest for him, and that arrangements were being made accordingly. Stalin did not wish to hasten the date.



THE END FOR BERLIN comes as Russian soldiers hang flags atop the Quadriga of Victory statue on Brandenburg Gate. The Reds later tore down statue as a symbol of Prussian militarism.

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CHURCHILL'S MEMOIRS CONTINUED

On June 4 I cabled to the President these words, which few would now dispute:

"I am sure you understand the reason why I am anxious for an earlier date, say the 3rd or 4th [of July]. I view with profound misgivings the retreat of the American Army to our line of occupation in the central sector, thus bringing Soviet power into the heart of Western Europe. . . . I hoped that this retreat, if it has to be made, would be accompanied by the settlement of many great things which would be the true foundation of world peace. . . ."

On June 12 the President replied to my message of June 4.

He said that the tripartite agreement about the occupation of Germany, approved by President Roosevelt made it impossible to



'FATEFUL MILESTONE'

By May 8, 1945 the Western Allies had reached the line shown by the dotted blue border above. Previous agreements on postwar occupation zones, however, called for them to retreat to the solid blue line. Churchill wanted to honor these agreements but not until the Potsdam meeting. Truman insisted on moving back before Potsdam, and on July 1 the troops returned to the occupation zones. This was, Sir Winston now writes, "a fateful milestone for mankind."

delay the withdrawal of American troops from the Soviet Zone in order to press the settlement of other problems.

This struck a knell in my breast. But I had no choice but to submit.

It must not be overlooked that President Truman had not been concerned or consulted in the original fixing of the zones. The case as presented to him so soon after his accession to power was whether or not to depart from and in a sense repudiate the policy of the American and British Governments agreed under his illustrious predecessor. He was, I have no doubt, supported in his action by his advisers, military and civil. His responsibility at this point was limited to deciding whether circumstances had changed so fundamentally that an entirely different procedure should be adopted, with the likelihood of having to face accusations of breach of faith. Those who are only wise after the event should hold their peace.

GLEAMING successes marked the end of our campaigns in the Mediterranean. The long, obstinate, and unexpected German resistance on all fronts had made us and the Americans very short of artillery ammunition, and our hard experiences of winter campaigning in Italy had forced us to postpone a general offensive till the spring.

In the evening of April 9, after a day of massed air attacks and

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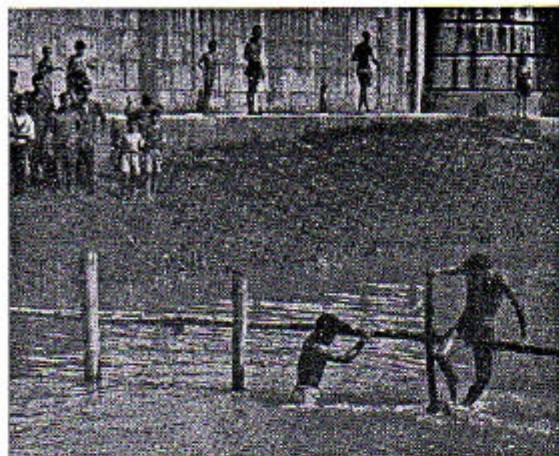
CHURCHILL'S MEMOIRS CONTINUED

artillery bombardment, the Eighth Army attacked across the river Senio. By the 14th there was good news all along the Eighth Army front. That same day the Fifth Army began the centre attack. After a week of hard fighting they broke out from the mountains and struck north. The right flank of the Army joined the left of the Eighth. Trapped behind them were many thousand Germans, cut off from retreat, pouring into prisoners' cages or being marched to the rear. The offensive was a fine example of concerted land and air effort, wherein the full strength of the strategical and tactical air forces played its part.

We crossed the Po on a broad front at the heels of the enemy. Italian Partisans had long harassed the enemy in the mountains and their back areas. On April 25 the signal was given for a general rising, and they made widespread attacks. In many cities and towns, notably Milan and Venice, they seized control. Surrenders in North-West Italy became wholesale.

Two plenipotentiaries were brought to Alexander's headquarters. On April 29 they signed the instrument of unconditional surrender in the presence of British, American, and Russian officers.

For Mussolini also the end had come. Accompanied by a handful of supporters he attached himself to a small German convoy heading towards the Swiss frontier. But the little party was



DEATH FOR A COLLABORATOR

Peace came slowly to Italy. Here, three months after the fall of Rome, Italians drown Donato Carretta, who had run a prison under Nazis. His corpse was then strung on the prison walls.

stopped by Partisan patrols. On Communist instructions the Duce and his mistress, Signorina Petacci, were shot. Their bodies, together with others, were sent to Milan and strung up on meat-hooks in a petrol station. Such was the fate of the Italian dictator.

Nearly a million Germans surrendered as prisoners of war. Thus ended our twenty months' campaign in Italy. The principal task of our armies had been admirably fulfilled. In August of 1944 no fewer than fifty-five German divisions were deployed along the Mediterranean fronts. Nor was this all. Our forces rounded off their task by devouring the larger army they had been ordered to "contain." There have been few campaigns with a finer culmination.

IN the early hours of April 25 a telegram arrived in London from Sir Victor Mallet, British Minister to Sweden. He reported that at 11 p.m. on April 24 he and his American colleague, Mr. Herschel Johnson, had been asked to meet Count Bernadotte, who had an urgent mission. Bernadotte told them that Himmler had asked to meet him and they had met the previous evening. Himmler said that Hitler was so desperately ill that he might be dead already, and in any case would be so within the next few days. He then asked if the Swedish Government would arrange for him to meet General Eisenhower and capitulate on the whole Western Front.

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Both Ministers remarked that Himmler's refusal to surrender on the Eastern Front looked like a last attempt to make trouble between the Western Allies and Russia. Obviously the Nazis would have to surrender to all the Allies simultaneously.

In view of our experience of Russian suspicions over "Crossword,"* I think it well to record our attitude in detail.

That evening I telephoned the President, and then dictated the following note for the next meeting of the Cabinet:

"I spoke to President Truman at 8.10 p.m. He knew nothing of what had happened at Stockholm, except that when I asked to speak to him he inquired what it was about, and I told him about the important message from Stockholm. . . . I also told him that we were convinced the surrender should be unconditional and simultaneous to the three major Powers. He expressed strong agreement with this. . . ."

Here is the text of my covering message to Stalin:

" . . . There can be no question, as far as His Majesty's Government is concerned, of anything less than unconditional surrender simultaneously to the three major Powers. We consider Himmler should be told that German forces, either as individuals or in units, should everywhere surrender themselves to the Allied troops or representatives on the spot. Until this happens the attack of the Allies upon them on all sides and in all theatres where resistance continues will be prosecuted with the utmost vigour."

His reply was the most cordial message I have ever had from him.

" . . . I consider your proposal to present Himmler a demand for unconditional surrender on all fronts, including the Soviet front, the only correct one. Knowing you, I had no doubt that you would act in this way. I beg you to act in the sense of your proposal, and the Red Army will maintain its pressure on Berlin in the interests of our common cause."

I answered:

"I am extremely pleased to know that you had no doubt how I would act, and always will act, towards your glorious country and yourself. British and I am sure American action on this matter will go forward on the lines you approve, and we all three will continually keep each other fully informed."

The Russian troops were now fighting in the streets of Berlin. In the early hours of April 29 Hitler made his will. Of the personalities of his régime only Goebbels and Bormann remained with him to the end. The following day he lunched quietly with his suite, and at the end of the meal shook hands with those present and retired to his private room. At half-past three a shot was heard, and members of his personal staff entered the room to find him lying on the sofa with a revolver by his side. He had shot himself through the mouth. Eva Braun, whom he had married secretly during these last days, lay dead beside him. She had taken

*Described in LIFE's previous instalment. When the Germans made earlier overtures for peace negotiations, the Russians insultingly charged that the Western Allies were surreptitiously making a separate peace.

poison. The bodies were burnt in the courtyard, and Hitler's funeral pyre, with the din of the Russian guns growing ever louder, made a lurid end to the Third Reich.

The leaders who were left held a final conference. Last-minute attempts were made to negotiate with the Russians, but Zhukov demanded unconditional surrender. That evening a telegram reached Admiral Karl Doenitz at his headquarters in Holstein: ". . . The Fuehrer appoints you, Herr Grand Admiral, as his successor. . . . You will immediately take all such measures as the situation requires." BORMANN.

General Admiral Hans Georg von Friedeburg, Doenitz's emissary, went to Eisenhower's headquarters at Rheims, where he was

joined by Colonel General Alfred Jodl on May 6. The instrument of total, unconditional surrender was signed by Lieutenant-General Bedell Smith and General Jodl, with French and Russian officers as witnesses, at 2.41 a.m. on May 7. Thereby all hostilities ceased at midnight on May 8.

In the hour of overwhelming victory I was only too well aware of the difficulties and perils that lay ahead, but here at least there could be a brief moment for rejoicing. The President sent me a telegram of congratulation and warmly recorded his government's appreciation of our contribution to victory.

I replied:

"Your message is cherished by the British nation, and will be regarded as if it were a battle honour by all His Majesty's Armed Forces, of all the races in all the lands. . . ."

"Let me tell you what General Eisenhower has meant to us. In him we have had a man who set the unity of the Allied Armies above all nationalistic thoughts. In his headquarters unity and strategy were the only reigning spirits. . . . At no time has the principle of alliance between noble races been carried and maintained at so high a pitch. In the name of the British Empire and Commonwealth I express to you our admiration of the firm, far-sighted, and illuminating character and qualities of General of the Army Eisenhower. . . ."

When in these tumultuous days of rejoicing I was asked to speak to the nation I had borne the chief responsibility in our Island for almost exactly five years. Yet it

may well be there were few whose hearts were more heavily burdened with anxiety than mine. After reviewing the varied tale of our fortunes I struck a sombre note which may be recorded here.

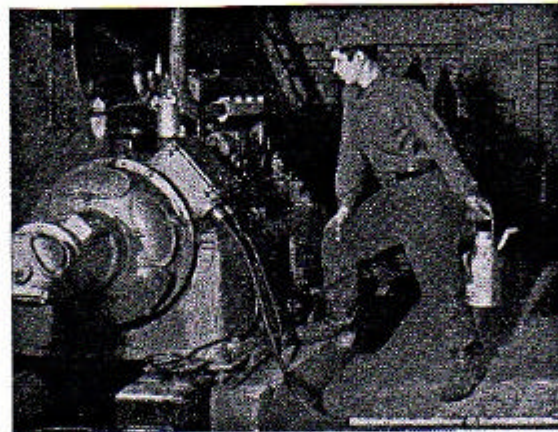
"I wish," I said, "I could tell you to-night that all our toils and troubles were over. But, on the contrary, I must warn you, as I did when I began this five years' task—and no one knew then that it would last so long—that there is still a lot to do. . . ."

"There would be little use in punishing the Hitlerites for their crimes if law and justice did not rule, and if totalitarian or police Governments were to take the place of the German invaders. We seek nothing for ourselves. But we must make sure that those causes which we fought for find recognition at the peace table in facts as well as words, and above all we must labour to ensure that the World



RUSSIANS TAKE BERLIN

When the Russians poured into Berlin, the occupation naturally led to some misunderstanding. Above: a Russian soldier tries to wrest a bicycle from the determined grasp of a German girl; he claimed he had paid for it, with rubles. Below: a Soviet GI has some trouble fathoming the workings of a German power station.





THE JOY OF VICTORY sent East End Londoners swarming into the streets to dance and sing around mammoth bonfires built from the rubble of the war that had ended at last. Britain's happiness, Sir Winston writes,

was even greater than that of her allies. It was, he says, "the greatest outburst of joy in the history of mankind. . . . Weary and worn, impoverished but undaunted and now triumphant, we had a moment that was sublime."

CHURCHILL'S MEMOIRS CONTINUED

Organisation which the United Nations are creating at San Francisco does not become an idle name. . . .

"I told you hard things at the beginning of these last five years; you did not shrink, and I should be unworthy of your confidence and generosity if I did not still cry: Forward, unflinching, unswerving, indomitable, till the whole task is done and the whole world is safe and clean."

As if to emphasize Prime Minister Churchill's somber warning, there occurred an incident on the Continent which momentarily threatened to disrupt the peace so newly won. There is another aspect of the incident which is revealing to Americans especially; that is the manner in which it was handled by the new President Truman.

→ It occurred in Trieste. This had long been a sore spot, as today's headlines still attest. Here Sir Winston describes the beginnings of Trieste's troubles.

As the German armies in Italy retreated Tito's forces had pushed rapidly into Italian territory in the north-east. They hoped to seize the lands which they claimed in this area, and in particular to capture Trieste before the Anglo-American troops arrived. Both the Americans and ourselves were not only determined to prevent any frontiers being settled in this manner before the Peace Treaty, but also intended to secure Trieste, with its splendid port, as the essential supply point for future occupation zones in Austria. We were clear on these issues, and General Alexander, who had visited Tito at Belgrade in February, was accordingly authorised to take the steps necessary to secure the position.

Even before the surrender of the German armies I had raised the question of Trieste with President Truman. He agreed there was no need to ask the Russians beforehand while operations were going on. Before entering Venezia Giulia Alexander would explain his intentions to Tito and make it clear that any Yugoslav forces in the area must come under our command.

Alexander told me on May 1 that he expected troops of the Eighth Army to reach Trieste within the next twenty-four hours. At the same time he telegraphed to Tito informing him of his plans.

To me he reported:

"Tito's regular forces are now fighting in Trieste, and have already occupied most of Istria. I am quite certain that he will not withdraw his troops if ordered to do so unless the Russians tell him so.

"If I am ordered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to occupy the whole of Venezia Giulia by force if necessary, we shall certainly be committed to a fight with the Yugoslav Army."

Tito's troops had in fact entered Trieste on April 30. It was not until the afternoon of the following day that the Yugoslav forces made contact with the advance-guard of the 2nd New Zealand Division just west of Monfalcone.

On May 5 Alexander telegraphed:

"Tito . . . now finds himself in a much stronger military position than he foresaw when I was in Belgrade, and wants to cash in on it. Then he hoped to step into Trieste when finally I stepped out. Now he wants to be installed there and only allow me user's right.

"We must bear in mind that since our meeting he has been to Moscow."

A week later there arrived from President Truman a most welcome and strong message. He said he was becoming increasingly concerned at Tito's actions in Venezia Giulia. We must now decide, said the President, whether to uphold the fundamental principles of territorial settlement by orderly process against force, intimidation, or blackmail. We should insist, he urged, on Field-Marshal Alexander obtaining complete and exclusive control of Trieste and Pola, the line of communication through Gorizia and Monfalcone, and of a big enough area to the east to ensure proper administration. Mr. Truman said we should be prepared to consider any necessary steps to effect Tito's withdrawal.

He suggested informing Stalin of our plans in accordance with the Yalta agreement and concluded as follows: "If we stand firm on this issue we can hope to avoid a host of other similar encroachments."

I need not say how relieved I was to receive this invaluable support from my new companion. In a message to Eden, who was in San Francisco at the time, I called it "one of the most far-sighted, surefooted, and resolute telegrams which it has ever been my fortune to read."

I hastened to tell the good news to Alexander.

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CHURCHILL'S MEMOIRS CONTINUED

→ being given by our great Allies and by the new President. This action if pursued with firmness may well prevent a renewal of the World War. I recognise of course that it affects every theatre, and so, I am sure, does President Truman."

I answered the President:

"I agree with every word you say. . . . If the situation is handled firmly before our strength is dispersed Europe may be saved from another blood-bath. . . ."

"I trust that a standstill order can be given on the movements of the American armies and Air Forces from Europe [to the Far East], at any rate for a few weeks. We will also conform in our demobilisation. Even if this standstill order should become known it would do nothing but good. . . ."

It seems probable that a somewhat violent internal reaction at Washington followed the new President's bold telegram to me. The argument "Don't let us get tied up in Europe" had always been formidable. There was also at this time the desire to finish off Japan by concentrating all available and suitable forces in the Far East. This was supported by the powerful school which had from the beginning set the Far East before Europe. My suggestion of a "standstill" or a "standfast" order seems to have raised this issue abruptly.



HEADED FOR TROUBLE

Advance guard troops of the British Eighth Army roll into Trieste, where Tito's forces had arrived just ahead of them. The situation soon got so tense that fighting was narrowly averted.

ly in the President's circle. At any rate, his replies seemed couched in a somewhat different mood to that expressed in his telegram about Trieste.

On May 14 he declared that we should await reports about our messages to Belgrade before deciding what forces to use if our troops were attacked. Two days later he declared he was unable and unwilling to involve his country in a war with the Yugoslavs unless they attacked us, in which case we would be justified in using Allied troops to throw them back far enough to stop any further aggression.

Meanwhile the local situation around Trieste sharpened. Yugoslav posts and sentries were restricting our movements. Our men were obliged to look on without power to intervene at actions which offended their sense of justice, and felt that they were condoning wrong-doing. "As a result," cabled Alexander, "feeling against Yugoslavia is now strong, and is getting stronger. It is now certain that any solution by which we shared an area with Yugoslav troops or Partisans or permitted Yugoslav administration to function would not work."

On May 19 I replied to the President.

" . . . Tito's answer has arrived, and is completely negative. We clearly cannot leave matters in this state, and immediate action will now be necessary. Otherwise we shall merely appear to have been bluffing, and will in fact be bluffed out. . . ."

On May 21 Mr. Truman said he agreed we could not leave matters as they were. We should reject Tito's answer and reinforce our troops at once so that the Yugoslavs should have no doubts about our intentions. He proposed that Eisenhower and Alexander should make a show of force by land and air, and time it to coincide with our

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rejection of Tito's demands. He ended his telegram with a revealing sentence: "I must not have any avoidable interference with the redeployment of American forces to the Pacific."

Lieutenant-General Morgan, Alexander's Chief of Staff, eventually agreed with the Yugoslavs upon a line of demarcation around Trieste.

Inside this zone there was an uneasy truce. And the situation was not made easier by the stipulations of the Italian peace treaty, which divided most of the Trieste area into two zones: A, under Anglo-American influence, and B, under Yugoslav influence. The conflicting Italian and Yugoslav claims on Zone A are the cause of Trieste's troubles today, eight years after its liberation from the Nazis.

As the time for another Big Three meeting drew near, preparations for the Potsdam Conference became slightly complicated. This was because neither Marshal Stalin nor Prime Minister Churchill had met the new American President.

I hoped that President Truman would come through London on the way. Within three days of the German surrender I cabled the President:

"If you will entertain the idea of coming over here in the early days of July, His Majesty will send you the most cordial invitation and you will have a great reception from the British nation. . . . Thereafter we might move to the rendezvous fixed in Germany. . . . Mr. President, in these next two months the gravest matters in the world will be decided. May I add that I have derived a great feeling of confidence from the correspondence we have interchanged. . . ."

He replied that he and I ought to go to the meeting separately so as to avoid any suspicion of "ganging up." When the Conference ended, he hoped to visit England if his duties in America permitted.

Then on May 22 he cabled that he had asked Mr. Joseph E. Davies to come to see me before the triple conference, about a number of matters he preferred not to handle by cable.

Mr. Davies had been the American Ambassador in Russia before the war, and was known to be most sympathetic to the régime. He had in fact written a book on his mission to Moscow which was produced also as a film which seemed in many ways to palliate the Soviet system. I of course made immediate arrangements to receive him, and he spent the night of the 26th at Chequers. I had a very long talk with him. The crux of what he had to propose was that the President should meet Stalin first somewhere in Europe before he saw me. I was indeed astonished at this suggestion. For the President to by-pass Great Britain and meet the head of the Soviet State alone would have been an attempt to reach a single-handed understanding with Russia on the main issues upon which we and the Americans were united. I would not agree in any circumstances to what seemed to be an affront, however unintentional, to our country after its faithful service in the cause of freedom from the first day of the war.

In order that there should be no misconception I drafted a formal minute. The President received this note in a kindly and understanding spirit. I was very glad to learn that all was well and that the justice of our view was not unrecognised by our cherished friends.

WHILE all this was passing, I was plunged into the turmoil of the General Election. The war-time Parliament had lasted nearly ten years, or double the normal span. With all the new and grave issues pressing upon me, I earnestly desired that the national comradeship and unity should be preserved till the Japanese war was ended. Was this too much to ask of a nation we had not served ill? It certainly seemed to be in accord with the national interest. But only a friendly agreement between the two parties would render it possible. Naturally I hoped the power would be accorded to me to try to make the settlement in Europe, to end the Japanese war, and to bring the soldiers home. This was not because it seemed less pleasant to live a private life than to conduct great affairs. At this time I was very tired and physically so feeble that I had to be carried upstairs in a chair. Still, I had the world position as a whole in my mind, and I deemed myself to possess knowledge, influence, and even authority, which might be of service. I therefore saw it my duty to try, and at the same time as my right. I could not believe this would be denied me.

I had a long talk with Clement Attlee (Coalition Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the Opposition), in which I urged most

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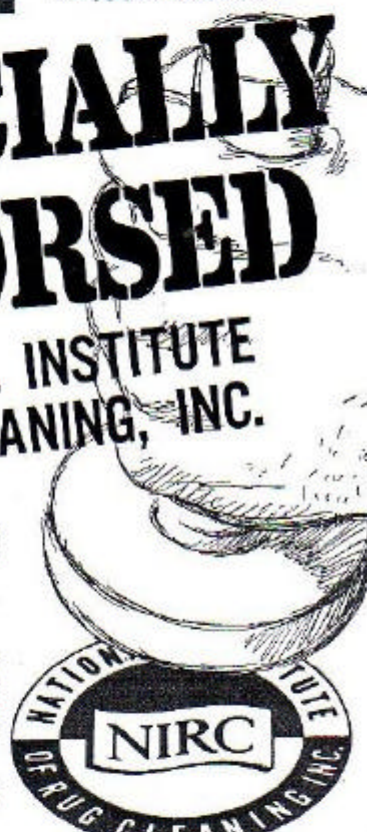
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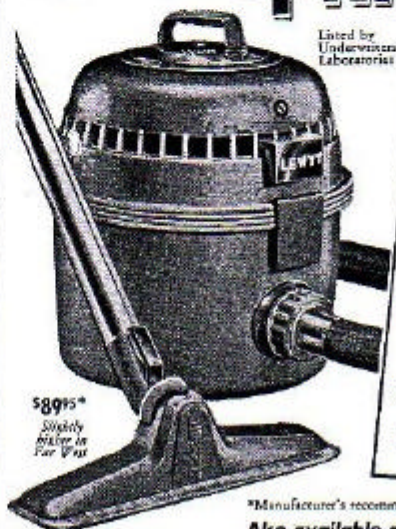


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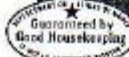


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CHURCHILL'S MEMOIRS CONTINUED

strongly that we should postpone an election in some way or other till the end of the Japanese war. He too was not looking at the issue from a narrow party point of view, and listened with much apparent sympathy to the appeal which I made. I certainly had the impression when he left that he would do his best to keep us together, and so reported to my colleagues. However, the tide of party feeling proved too strong.

Mr. Attlee rejected my proposal for the continuation of the Coalition. Accordingly on June 15 Parliament was dissolved. Ten days were to elapse before the nomination of candidates, and ten

FIRST MENTION OF 'IRON CURTAIN'

Before the Potsdam meeting, Prime Minister Churchill sent off a message to President Truman which contained the first mention of his now-famous iron curtain phrase. "Of all the public documents I have written on this issue," he says, "I would rather be judged by this."

"I am profoundly concerned about the European situation. . . . The newspapers are full of the great movements of the American armies out of Europe. Our armies also are, under previous arrangements, likely to undergo a marked reduction. . . . Anyone can see that in a very short space of time our armed power on the Continent will have vanished, except for moderate forces to hold down Germany. Meanwhile what is to happen about Russia? I have always worked for friendship with Russia, but, like you, I feel deep anxiety because of their misinterpretation of the Yalta decisions, their attitude towards Poland, their overwhelming influence in the Balkans excepting Greece, the difficulties they make about Vienna, the combination of Russian power and the territories under their control or occupied, coupled with the Communist technique in so many other countries, and above all their power to maintain very large armies in the field for a long time. What will be the position in a year or two, when the British and American armies have melted and the French has not yet been formed on any major scale, when we may have a handful of divisions, mostly French, and when Russia may choose to keep two or three hundred on active service?"

"An iron curtain is drawn down upon their front. We do not know what is going on behind. There seems little doubt that the whole of the regions east of the line Lübeck-Trieste-Corfu, will soon be completely in their hands. To this must be added the further enormous area conquered by the American armies between Eisenach and the Elbe, which will, I suppose, in a few weeks be occupied, when the Americans retreat, by the Russian power. . . .

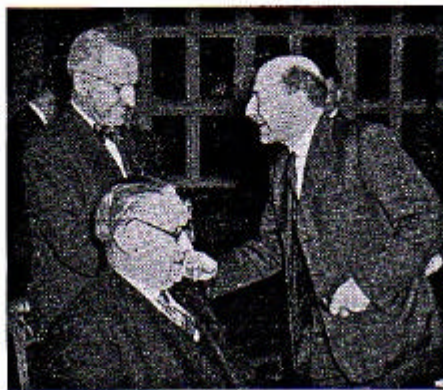
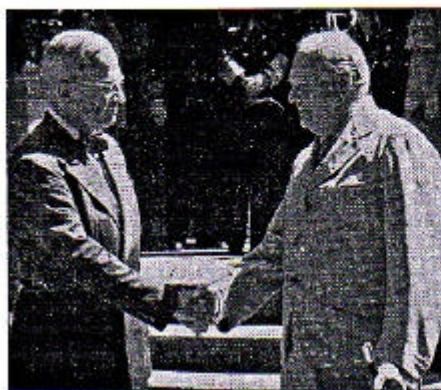
"Meanwhile the attention of our peoples will be occupied in inflicting severities upon Germany, which is ruined and prostrate, and it would be open to the Russians in a very short time to advance if they chose to the waters of the North Sea and the Atlantic.

"Surely it is vital now to come to an understanding with Russia, or see where we are with her, before we weaken our armies mortally or retire to the zones of occupation. . . . This issue of a settlement with Russia before our strength has gone seems to me to dwarf all others."

more before polling day, July 5. Every arrangement had been made on strictly equal terms about bringing candidates home from the front, about uniforms and petrol rations, and not the slightest reproach was ever levelled at those who held the executive power. Owing to the fact that the soldiers' votes must come home to be counted, a further twenty-one days had to elapse between the polling in the United Kingdom and the counting of votes and declaration of results. This final act was fixed for July 26. In several Continental countries, when it was known that the ballot-boxes would be in charge of the British Government for three weeks, astonishment was expressed that there could be any doubt about the result. However, in our country these matters are treated exactly as if they were a cricket match, or other sporting event. Long may it so continue.

On July 6 I sent Halifax a cable on details about which the President and his colleagues might be glad to be informed [before the

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CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT POTSDAM

In their first meeting (left), Churchill and Truman shake hands before the Potsdam Conference opens. In the middle of the conference Clement Attlee

became the new Prime Minister. At right, Truman's greeting goes to Attlee as he and new Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin take over at Potsdam.

CHURCHILL'S MEMOIRS CONTINUED

Potsdam Conference]. He replied next day with the following telegram, which shows how well he understood the Washington view.

"The President had already left for Potsdam when your telegram reached me. Your message will be relayed to him on board ship.

"I judge that American tactics with the Russians will be to display at the outset confidence in Russian willingness to co-operate. I should also expect the Americans in dealing with us to be more responsive to arguments based upon the danger of economic chaos in European countries than to the balder pleas about the risks of extreme Left Governments or of the spread of Communism. They showed some signs of nervousness in my portrayal of Europe (whatever the facts) as the scene of a clash of ideas in which the Soviet and Western influences are likely to be hostile and conflicting. At the back of their minds there are still lingering suspicions that we want to back Right Wing Governments or monarchies for their own sake. This does not in the least mean that they will be unwilling to stand up with us against the Russians when necessary. But they are likely to pick their occasions with care, and are half expecting to play, or at any rate to represent themselves as playing, a moderating rôle between ourselves and the Russians."

A few years later it was Britain and Western Europe who were urged in many quarters to play the "moderating rôle" between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Such are the antics of fortune.

I was resolved to have a week of sunshine to myself between the General Election and the Conference. On July 7, two days after polling day, I flew to Bordeaux with Mrs. Churchill and Mary, and found myself agreeably installed near the Spanish frontier at Hendaye, with lovely bathing and beautiful surroundings. I did not need to prepare myself for the Conference, for I carried so much of it in my head, and was happy to cast it off, if only for these few fleeting days. The President was at sea in the United States cruiser *Augusta*, the same ship which had carried Roosevelt to our Atlantic meeting in 1941. On the 15th I motored through the forests to the Bordeaux airfield, and my Skymaster took me to Berlin.

PRESIDENT TRUMAN arrived in Berlin the same day as I did. I called on him on the morning after our arrival, and was impressed with his gay, precise, sparkling manner and obvious power of decision.

On July 18 I lunched with the President, and we touched on many topics. I spoke of the melancholy position of Great Britain, who had spent more than half her foreign investments for the common cause when we were all alone, and now emerged from the war with a great external debt of three thousand million pounds. He followed this attentively and with sympathy, and declared that the United States owed Great Britain an immense debt for having held the fort at the beginning. "If you had gone down like France," he said, "we might be fighting the Germans on the American coast at the present time. This justifies us in regarding these matters as above the purely financial plane."

We were interrupted by his officers reminding him that he must now start off to see Marshal Stalin. He was good enough to say that this had been the most enjoyable luncheon he had had for many years, and how earnestly he hoped the relations I had had with President Roosevelt would be continued between him and me. He invited personal friendship and comradeship and used many expressions at intervals in our discussion which I could not easily hear unmoved. I felt that here was a man of exceptional character and ability, with an outlook exactly along the lines of Anglo-American relations as they had developed, simple and direct methods of speech, and a great deal of self-confidence and resolution.

THAT night, July 18, I dined with Stalin. We were alone except for Birse and Pavlov [their interpreters]. We conversed agreeably from half-past eight in the evening to half-past one next morning without reaching any crucial topic. My host seemed indeed to be physically rather oppressed, but his easy friendliness was most agreeable. About the British election, he said that all his information from Communist and other sources confirmed his belief that I should be returned by a majority of about eighty. He thought the Labour Party would obtain between 220 and 230 seats. I did not attempt to prophesy, but I said

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CHURCHILL'S MEMOIRS CONTINUED

I was not sure how the soldiers had voted. He said that the Army preferred a strong Government and would therefore vote for Conservatives. It seemed plain that he hoped that his contacts with me and Eden would not be broken.

He asked why the King was not coming to Berlin, and I said it was because his visit would complicate our security problems. He then affirmed that no country needed a monarchy so much as Great Britain, because the Crown was the unifying force throughout the Empire, and no one who was a friend of Britain would do anything to weaken the respect shown to the Monarchy.

Stalin said that in all the countries liberated by the Red Army the Russian policy was to see a strong, independent State. He was against Sovietisation of any of those countries. They would have free elections, and all except Fascist parties would participate.

I then said how anxious people were about Russia's intentions. I drew a line from the North Cape to Albania, and named the



IN HITLER'S SEAT

At the time of the Potsdam Conference Churchill toured Berlin and Hitler's ruined air raid shelter and even tried out the late Führer's personal chair. Recalling the tour set Churchill to thinking about how Hitler's suicide had delivered him from the Nürnberg trials. "The moral principles of modern civilisation," Sir Winston writes, "seem to prescribe that the leaders of a nation defeated in war shall be put to death by the victors. This will certainly stir them to fight to the bitter end in any future war. . . . It is the masses of the people . . . who pay the additional cost. The Romans followed the opposite principle, and their conquests were due almost as much to their clemency as to their prowess."

capitals east of that line which were in Russian hands. It looked as if Russia were rolling on westwards. Stalin said he had no such intention. On the contrary, he was withdrawing troops from the West. Two million men would be demobilised and sent home within the next four months. Further demobilisation was only a question of sufficient railway transport.

In reply to my questioning, he explained the working of Collective and State farms. We agreed that both in Russia and Britain there was no fear of unemployment. He said that Russia was ready to talk about trade with Britain. I said that the best publicity for Soviet Russia abroad would be the happiness and well-being of her people. Stalin spoke of the continuity of Soviet policy. If anything were to happen to him there would be good men ready to step into his shoes. He was thinking thirty years ahead.

On July 17 world-shaking news arrived. In the afternoon Stimson called at my abode and laid before me a sheet of paper on which was written, "Babies satisfactorily born." "It means," he said, "that the experiment in the Mexican desert has come off. The atomic bomb is a reality."

The President invited me to confer with him forthwith. Up to this moment we had shaped our ideas towards an assault upon the homeland of Japan by terrific air bombing and by the invasion of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 99

CHURCHILL'S MEMOIRS CONTINUED

very large armies. To conquer the country yard by yard might well require the loss of a million American lives and half that number of British. Now all this nightmare picture had vanished.

There never was a moment's discussion as to whether the atomic bomb should be used or not. British consent in principle to the use of the weapon had been given on July 4, before the test had taken place. The final decision now lay in the main with President Truman, who had the weapon; but I never doubted what it would be, nor have I ever doubted since that he was right.

A more intricate question was what to tell Stalin. The President



AUTOGRAPH FROM STALIN

At the banquet at Churchill's Potsdam residence—temporarily called to Downing Street—Churchill's menu was being passed around for signatures while Stalin was circling the table getting his own autograph collection. When the menu reached Stalin he scrawled his name diagonally across Alexander's and almost across that of Truman, who had inscribed to Churchill: "To one of the world's great men."

and I no longer felt that we needed his aid to conquer Japan. Stalin's bargaining power, which he had used with such effect upon the Americans at Yalta, was therefore gone. Still, he had been a magnificent ally in the war against Hitler, and we both felt that he must be informed of the great New Fact which now dominated the scene, but not of any particulars. How should this news be imparted to him? Should it be in writing or by word of mouth? Should it be at a formal and special meeting, or in the course of our daily conferences, or after one of them? The conclusion which the President came to was the last of these alternatives. "I think," he said, "I had best just tell him after one of our meetings that we have an entirely novel form of bomb, something quite out of the ordinary, which we think will have decisive effects upon the Japanese will to continue the war." I agreed to this procedure.

Accordingly, on July 24, after our plenary meeting had ended and we all got up from the round table and stood about in twos and threes before dispersing, I saw the President go up to Stalin, and the two conversed alone with only their interpreters. I was perhaps five yards away, and I watched with the closest attention the momentous talk. I can see it all as if it were yesterday. Stalin seemed

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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to be delighted. A new bomb! Of extraordinary power! Probably decisive on the whole Japanese war! What a bit of luck! This was my impression at the moment, and I was sure that he had no idea of the significance of what he was being told. As we were waiting for our cars I found myself near Truman. "How did it go?" I asked. "He never asked a question," he replied. I was certain therefore that at that date Stalin had no special knowledge of the vast process of research upon which the United States and Britain had been engaged for so long. This was the end of the story so far as the Potsdam Conference was concerned. No further reference to the matter was made by or to the Soviet delegation.

When the Conference met for its second session at five o'clock on the afternoon of July 18 I at once raised another matter which, though outside the agenda, was of immediate importance. At Teheran it had been very difficult for the Press to get near the meeting-place, and at Yalta it had been impossible. But now, immediately outside the delegation area, there were a hundred and eighty journalists prowling around in a state of furious indignation. Stalin asked who had let them in. I explained that they were not within the delegation area, but mostly in Berlin. The Conference could only do its work in quiet and secrecy, which must be protected at all costs, and I offered to see the Press-men myself and explain why they had to be excluded and why nothing could be divulged until the Conference ended. I hoped that Mr. Truman would see them too.

Stalin irritably asked what all the journalists wanted, and Mr. Truman said that each of us had his own representative to stand between him and the Press. We had agreed to exclude them and matters should be left as they were. I submitted to the majority, but I thought and still think that a public explanation would have been better.

It fell to me to give the final banquet on the night of the 23rd. I planned this on a large scale, inviting the chief commanders as well as the delegates. I had another very friendly talk with Stalin, who was in the best of tempers. He spoke with enthusiasm about the Russian intervention against Japan, and seemed to expect a good many months of war, which Russia would wage on an ever-increasing scale, governed only by the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Then a very odd thing happened. My formidable guest got up from his seat with the bill-of-fare card in his hand and went round the table collecting the signatures of many of those who were present. I never thought to see him as an autograph hunter! When he came back to me I wrote my name as he desired, and we both looked at each other and laughed. Stalin's eyes twinkled with mirth and good-humour. I have mentioned before how the toasts at these banquets were always drunk by the Soviet representatives out of tiny glasses, and Stalin had never varied from this practice. But now I thought I would take him on a step. So I filled a small-sized claret glass with brandy for him and another for myself. I looked at him significantly. We both drained our glasses at a stroke and gazed approvingly at one another.

Frustration was the fate of this final Conference of "the Three." I take no responsibility beyond what is here set forth for any of the

conclusions reached at Potsdam. During the course of the Conference I allowed differences that could not be adjusted either round the table or by the Foreign Ministers at their daily meetings to stand over. A formidable body of questions on which there was disagreement was in consequence piled upon the shelves. I intended, if I were returned by the electorate, as was generally expected, to come to grips with the Soviet Government on this catalogue of decisions. All this negotiation was cut in twain and brought to an untimely conclusion by the result of the General Election. To say this is not to blame the Ministers of the new Government, who were forced to go over without any serious preparation, and who naturally were unacquainted with the ideas and plans I had in view, namely, to have a "show-down" at the end of the Conference.

I FLEW home with Mary on the afternoon of July 25. My wife met me at Northolt, and we all dined quietly together. The latest view of the Conservative Central Office was that we should retain a substantial majority. On the whole I accepted the view of the party managers, and went to bed in the belief that the British people would wish me to continue my work. Thus slumber. However, just before dawn I woke suddenly with a sharp stab of almost physical pain. A hitherto subconscious conviction that we were beaten broke forth and dominated my mind. All the pressure of great events, on and against which I had mentally so long maintained my "flying speed," would cease and I should fall. The power to shape the future would be denied me. The knowledge and experience I had gathered, the authority and goodwill I had gained in so many countries, would vanish. I was discontented at the prospect, and turned over at once to sleep again. I did not wake till nine o'clock. The first results had begun to come in. They were, as I now expected, unfavourable. By noon it was clear that the Socialists would have a majority. At luncheon my wife said to me, "It may well be a blessing in disguise." I replied, "At the moment it seems quite effectively disguised."

At seven o'clock, having asked for an audience, I drove to the Palace, tendered my resignation to the King, and advised His Majesty to send for Mr. Attlee.

I issued to the nation the following message, with which this account may close:

"The decision of the British people has been recorded in the votes counted to-day. I have therefore laid down the charge which was placed upon me in darker times. I regret that I have not been permitted to finish the work against Japan. For this however all plans and preparations have been made, and the results may come much quicker than we have hitherto been entitled to expect. Immense responsibilities abroad and at home fall upon the new Government, and we must all hope that they will be successful in bearing them.

"It only remains for me to express to the British people, for whom I have acted in these perilous years, my profound gratitude for the unflinching, unswerving support which they have given me during my task, and for the many expressions of kindness which they have shown towards their servant."

Finis



... BUT THE 'SERVANT' RETURNED

To the literary world Winston Churchill's retirement from office actually has been a "blessing in disguise." For during the six years he was out of office he wrote the greatest personal history of modern times. His memoirs of World War II, of which this is the sixth and last volume, have sold some six million copies. They have been translated into twelve languages, including Portuguese, Japanese and Turkish, and have been published and serialized in more than 40 countries. In the U.S. they have appeared in *LIFE* over a period of five and a half years, and upon their book publication by Houghton Mifflin Co. every volume has been a best seller. The memoirs' greatest honor came last month when they were awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature,

All this success is the more remarkable since part of the memoirs was written while Churchill was making a triumphant comeback to the office of Prime Minister. Recently at a Conservative Party meeting he was confidently summing up (left) the progress of his administration. He ended on a note that has illuminated his purpose during all the years when he was—in his own word—the "servant" of the British Empire, and indeed of the free world. He continues to serve, he said, "not because of love for power or office. I have had an ample feast of both. . . . It is because I have the feeling that I may through things that happened have an influence on what I care about above all else—the building of a sure and lasting peace."