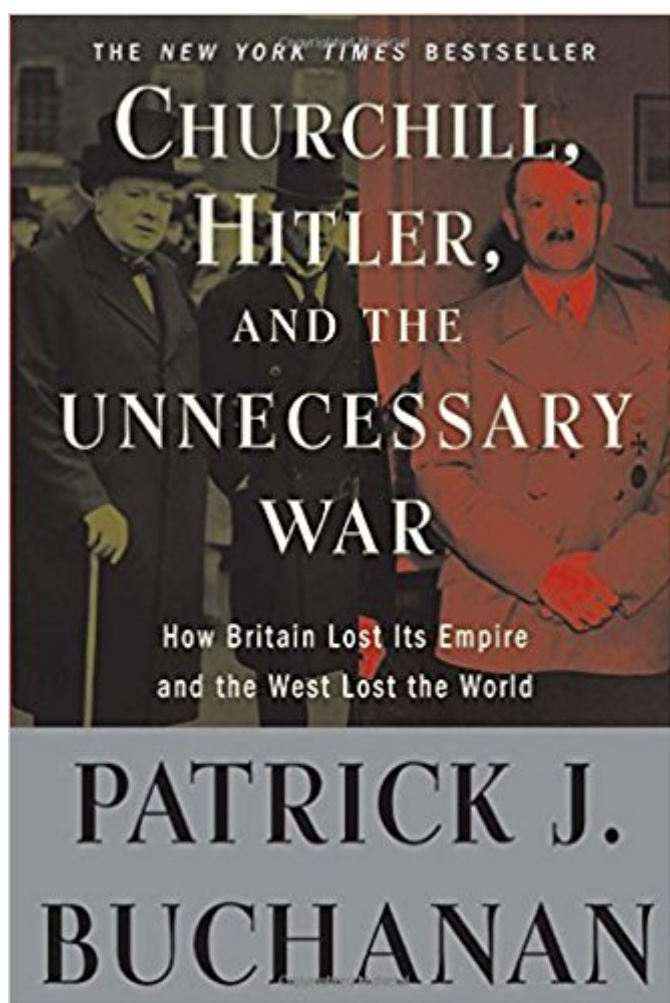


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Churchill, Hitler, And "The Unnecessary War": How Britain Lost Its Empire And The West Lost The World



Synopsis

Were World Wars I and II inevitable? Were they necessary wars? Or were they products of calamitous failures of judgment? In this monumental and provocative history, Patrick Buchanan makes the case that, if not for the blunders of British statesmen—Winston Churchill first among them—the horrors of two world wars and the Holocaust might have been avoided and the British Empire might never have collapsed into ruins. Half a century of murderous oppression of scores of millions under the iron boot of Communist tyranny might never have happened, and Europe's central role in world affairs might have been sustained for many generations. Among the British and Churchillian errors were: The secret decision of a tiny cabal in the inner Cabinet in 1906 to take Britain straight to war against Germany, should she invade France; The vengeful Treaty of Versailles that mutilated Germany, leaving her bitter, betrayed, and receptive to the appeal of Adolf Hitler; Britain's capitulation, at Churchill's urging, to American pressure to sever the Anglo-Japanese alliance, insulting and isolating Japan, pushing her onto the path of militarism and conquest; The greatest mistake in British history: the unsolicited war guarantee to Poland of March 1939, ensuring the Second World War. Certain to create controversy and spirited argument, Churchill, Hitler, and "the Unnecessary War" is a grand and bold insight into the historic failures of judgment that ended centuries of European rule and guaranteed a future no one who lived in that vanished world could ever have envisioned.

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Customer Reviews

Taking his swing at the origins of World War II, conservative pundit Buchanan incorporates the subject into his warnings, expressed in several populist "jeremiads" (State of Emergency, 2006), of the decline of the West. Certainly World War I, with which Buchanan begins, was a catastrophe for Western civilization whose ramifications continue to be felt. Buchanan's interpretation generally holds that British and American participation in both WWI and WWII was avoidable if British leaders had recognized that Germany was no threat to the vital interests of the British Empire. Banking his thesis on such supposed benevolence from Wilhelm II and Adolf Hitler, Buchanan criticizes various British policies of the 1920s and 1930s (who doesn't?), and argues collaterally with Hitler's statements disclaiming fundamental conflicts with Britain. The weakness in Buchanan's line of thinking, of course, is that by 1939, Hitler's international word was worthless; yet Buchanan hinges his case on what might have happened had Britain let Hitler go after Poland in 1939 as it had Czechoslovakia. Speculating a better future had the West permitted Nazi Germany a free hand in Eastern Europe, Buchanan cites the historical costs of Britain and France having at last drawn the line against aggression. Convinced? Controversial as is his wont, Buchanan reminds his large readership that the immediate ignition of WWII can still be disputed. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

PATRICK J. BUCHANAN was a senior adviser to three American presidents; ran twice for the Republican presidential nomination, in 1992 and 1996; and was the Reform Party candidate in 2000. He is the author of nine other books, including the bestsellers Right from the Beginning; A Republic, Not an Empire; The Death of the West; State of Emergency; and Day of Reckoning. He is now a senior political analyst for MSNBC.

Buchanan has summarized historical data which he reasserts often enough to sink in, in various chapters and connections. His thinking on Churchill is quite historically accurate, and impossible to debate. Buchanan however, does become oblique regarding "Big 3" and "Big 4" meetings, refusing to acknowledge historical reference not leading to his professional fundamentalism. This includes no discussion at all of FDR-Stalin-Churchill agreements, during these historically relevant and incredibly important meetings. It becomes obvious this oversight is due to Buchanan's own anti-Russian ideology. While FDR (and his VP Henry Wallace) clearly conceived coming conflict with Russians, if they were not brought into world trade and provided FDR promised \$10 billion war reparations (which Buchanan ignores), Buchanan

demonizes russians with the one caveat they did win WWII. Neither does Buchanan note it was Churchill who knowingly forced Hitler to turn against Russia. Another aspect of intricate strategies and agreements in historical evaluation of Churchill. It was in fact this very point, which Stalin understood well, that caused FDR position of middle-man at important meetings between all. I am very impressed however, with Buchanan's comprehension of this reality, and his understanding of limits Hitler actually expected achieve. Primarily, reconstruction of "Austro-Hungarian Empire" though Buchanan, and all by now, likely see this "limit" as problematic...

The stupidest war ever, WWI, was doubly stupid for Americans to enter, but Wilson wanted to be important. In those days that meant being important in Europe, where influence was measured in battalions and battleships: So he got us into a war. Lots of great info here in a well-researched book about how the Great Game turned into the first chapter of the Death of the West.

Thank you Mr. Churchill ... you are the main reason the world did not have to eventually face a nuclear armed Hitler.

Was Britain's guarantee of Poland in 1939 heroically cynical or imperially suicidal? Why did the pacifist Chamberlain, who had no means of aiding Colonel Jozef Beck and Poland against the Germans, commit the UK to Poland's defense (encouraging Beck to spurn negotiation on Danzig)? Did victory over Hitler (six years later) preserve Britain and sacrifice its empire on an altar of vanity? Did the victorious UK, laden with debt and obligation to the US (which took full postwar advantage) fall irreparably to third world status? Did England (Churchill) amorally welcome an equally evil regime (Stalinism) into east Europe? Such questions are pondered in this book. Was Churchill the mythic hero routinely disinterred and used by ideologues to plan new wars, or was he a complex opportunist with a history of strategic blunders and (later) switching sides on same issues? Though some may say this is artful advocacy, this work raises many valid issues and is well worth reading. Churchill was indeed as human as the rest of us, and dear old England made some fatal choices in the mid-20C. Those choices (ultimately) led to the sacrifice of a grand empire that benefited the few at the expense of the many (readers may want to read Ian Kershaw's 'Making Friends with Hitler'). If there is a flaw in this book it's the author's allusion to the Britain's continental 'balance of powers' policy and subsequent failure to examine this policy in detail (after all, Chamberlain merely followed two centuries of successful policy in picking continental underdogs to

urge them to kill off each other). It's surprising (and laudable) the author didn't cite Rudolf Hess's 10 May 1941 enigmatic mission to the Duke of Hamilton as proof of spurned peace. Or the reconciliation attempts of Lord Londonderry (Churchill's cousin, a WWI veteran with an annual income of £100,000 unconnected from those that actually earned it for him). If there's a glaring omission in this work, it's the lack of any mention or discussion of the Hoofbach Memorandum, which recorded Hitler's clear intent to launch an aggressive war 5 November 1937 (it hung many of the Nuremberg defendants in 1945). It's lamentable the author omits the price France (as the underdog in British policy, immobilized by communists and apologists like Lord Londonderry) paid. France lost over 1.4 million men in WW1 (1914-18) - more men than the United States - a much larger nation - has lost in its entire history (1607-2008). Clemenceau uttered a gem when confronted 20 May 1919 ("Que voulez vous que je fasse entre deux hommes dont un se croit Napoléon et l'autre Jésus Christ?") "What do you expect when I'm between two men - one of whom (Lloyd George) thinks he is Napoleon and the other (Wilson) thinks he's Jesus Christ? Both (Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson) had no personal stake in the war - they had the luxury of academic interpretation and philosophy (they got France, under the 'balance of powers' policy to do the hard lifting). Clemenceau's nightmare materialized within six weeks in 1940: France lost another 90,000 men and 200,000 wounded (the US, wisely, sent its best wishes). This book is well worth reading, but incomplete. The warning it sends on imperial mistakes is timely, and I take that to be the real message. Certainly the past few years routine disinterment of Churchill to aid foreign adventures advocated by a few 'poly-sci' ideologues is warning enough.

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