

FINEST HOUR

THE JOURNAL OF WINSTON CHURCHILL AND HIS TIMES • SPRING 2018 • NO. 180

Churchill's Adventures

FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY
of the INTERNATIONAL
CHURCHILL SOCIETY



1968 - 2018

Randolph Churchill | Theresa May | Stephen Hawking
Churchill on Foot at Witbank | On Safari in Kenya
On the Pitch in England | A Christmas in Athens

The Rail-Splitter and the Bulldog

Lewis E. Lehrman, *Lincoln & Churchill: Statesmen at War*, Stackpole Books, 2018, 526 pages, \$34.95. ISBN: 978-0811719674

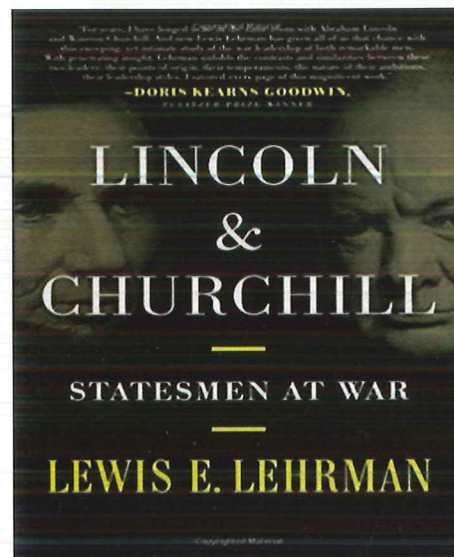
Review by Robert A. McLain

Lewis Lehrman has produced a wonderfully rendered comparison of two very different statesmen. Indeed, while the author's recent *Churchill, Roosevelt & Company* related the statecraft of two closely intertwined war leaders, the juxtaposition of Lincoln and Churchill would seem a stretch, until now. Lehrman quickly points out the radically different backgrounds and personality traits of the president and the prime minister, yet he also suggests compelling historical parallels. Both leaders guided their countries to victory through essentially existential crises unprecedented in scope, the American Civil War and the Second World War. Lehrman also notes that the modest and unassuming Lincoln served as Commander-in-Chief of an army that exceeded two million men, one of the largest in history to that point, while Churchill refused to yield even as the British Empire and Commonwealth, vast but imperious and poorly equipped, faced Hitler's might with no outside aid following the fall of France.

One of the most valuable aspects of this work is how cogently it reveals the similarity of traits that made Lincoln and Churchill such outstanding wartime leaders. Both men possessed an aptitude for military affairs and harbored a deep understanding of history. Most critically, Lehrman documents Lincoln's and Churchill's shared sense

of moral clarity with regard to the respective evils of American slavery and Nazism. This awareness created a determination in both leaders to see the fighting through to the end, even when defeat seemed imminent and those around them lost heart and clamored for peace, or some sort of shameful accommodation.

The two chief executives also shared great foresight. Lincoln began denouncing any Southern attempts at secession in the mid-1850s. As early as 1933, Churchill started condemning the Nazi tendency towards "ferocity and war spirit," as well as Germany's "pitiless treatment of minorities" such as the country's Jewish population.



The organization of Lehrman's work illustrates the similar efforts that Lincoln and Churchill went through to fashion effective military machines from the scattershot and inadequately led forces first available to them. Lincoln went through multiple commanders before choosing a harness maker from Illinois, Ulysses S. Grant, to command the Union armies. As Lincoln saw it, Grant was one of the few generals willing to press the Confederacy unrelentingly.

Churchill was also quick to dismiss officers whom he saw as ineffective, particularly in the early campaigns in the Middle East and North Africa. Lehrman suggests it was General Sir Alan Brooke, who replaced Sir John Dill as Chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1941, who best understood how to manage the relationship with the prime minister. Brooke's intellect and stubbornness easily matched Churchill's, with no small amount of mutual exasperation and respect.

Equally vital for effective war leadership was the ability of Lincoln and Churchill to see problems as a combination of political and military factors. Lincoln was shrewd enough to release the Confederate diplomats James Mason and John Slidell after the crew of the USS *San Jacinto* seized them from the British mail packet RMS *Trent* en route for Europe—"one war at a time," as Lincoln put it. Churchill had the opposite problem: how to cultivate President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the hope that the immense war-making potential of the United States could be brought to bear against Germany.

In making his comparisons, Lehrman astutely shows just how large the Anglo-American relationship loomed in both conflicts. One cannot but reflect that the lives of Lincoln and Churchill might have briefly overlapped if the former had survived just a few more years. And Churchill, ever alert to his American bloodline and his own historical moment, could not help drawing a direct comparison in a 1939 speech: "All the heroism of the South could not redeem their cause from the stain of slavery, just as all the courage and skill which the Germans show in war will not free them from the reproach of

Nazism, with its intolerance and its brutality." This compelling monograph makes one wonder how the respective leaders escaped more direct comparison for so long. ☸

Robert A. McLain is Professor of History at California State University, Fullerton and author of *Gender and Violence in British India: The Road to Amritsar, 1914–1919* (2014).

Leadership Lessons

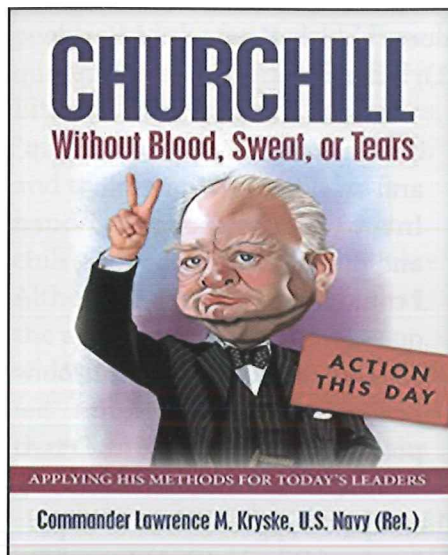
Lawrence M. Kryske, ***Churchill without Blood, Sweat, or Tears***, Homeport Publishing, 2017, 156 pages, \$15.99. ISBN 978–0692940174

Review by David Freeman

One of the most frequently received requests by the International Churchill Society is for material about Churchill's qualities as a leader. Lawrence M. Kryske is a retired US Navy commander and longtime Churchillian. No one is better qualified to write on the subject.

Churchill without Blood, Sweat, or Tears distills what Kryske has learned from more than fifty years of studying Churchill and a naval career that began with action during the Vietnam War and culminated as the first commanding officer of US Naval Station, Pascagoula, which was the Navy's newest, most technologically advanced, and most environmentally clean base in the world.

Kryske begins by identifying Churchill's formula for success: vision + courage + determination = success. The main sections of the book break down each of the three ingredients by identifying qualities that advance, cultivate, and deepen them.



Each section is supported with concrete examples from Churchill's career and copious quotations that illustrate the essence of his leadership philosophy. When it comes to explaining courage, for instance (which Kryske rightly judges "the most difficult step"), the author cites this incontrovertible wisdom: "We shall not be judged by the criticisms of our opponents but by the consequences of our acts."

Underlying Churchill's leadership was the clarity of purpose

that he championed his entire life against all threats: "The central principle of civilization is the subordination of the ruling authority to the settled customs of the people and their will as expressed through the Constitution."

Even with noble vision and great courage, however, determination is still essential in order to persevere towards victory. Here Kryske identifies another one of Churchill's greatest qualities: tenacity. Never did he express this better than in his famous injunction, "Never give in! Never give in! Never, never, never, never—in nothing great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense."

This brief, brisk, and powerful handbook is informed by a lifetime of study and experience and is highly recommended both for those only just beginning their career path and those looking for an excellent jolt in their continuing leadership development. ☸

David Freeman is the editor of *Finest Hour*.

