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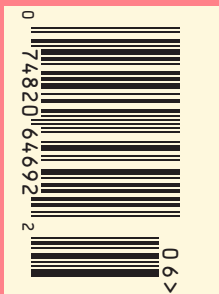
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Archera on a trip to Brasilia and an Uialapiti village. I feel that I've already heard enough about this. Back to Marshall. A new boyfriend, a new poem, Fitzgerald "leaving his wife of twenty-five years for a young professor of English literature at Yale." Bishop's new lover, Roxanne Cumming, in San Francisco. Back to Marshall in a chapter called "June 14, 1977: Sanders Theatre, Memorial Hall." A shock on page 235, "when Red Warren stepped to the podium." I think I knew Robert Penn Warren rather better than Megan Marshall did, but it never occurred to me to call him Red. In this book I've had to get used to Cal, Lizzie, Frank, Jimmie, and Adrienne. Back to Warren: "He was nearly spitting out the words of a poem called 'Red-Tail Hawk and Pyre of Youth,' but his stretched and battered words were at first unintelligible." Marshall must have consulted the poem between then and now because she quotes it generously before saying "How I wished for an end to Warren's savage bluster." No sign of Bishop.

Approaching the end. Alice Methfessel. Alice lost to Peter. Alice found again. Bishop writes "One Art," which I didn't know required seventeen drafts. I would prefer the eleventh, where she has "(Say it!)" instead of the definitive "(Write it!)." Bishop's illnesses, the persistent asthma, anemia, and now a hiatal hernia. "Elizabeth once boasted to Cal that she'd 'never met a woman I couldn't make,'" a boast hard to reconcile with the painfully shy, withdrawn woman we've heard so much about. She died of a cerebral aneurysm.

"Envoy: Patou Thai, Belmont Center, January 23, 2014" has another of those preposterous outbursts of autobiography, like the rage against Warren's reading. Marshall gets a job with the poetry editor of *The Atlantic*, Peter Davison. She is to read all the submitted poems and advise:

It was an important job, and it turned out I did it badly. I hadn't recognized the work of my boss's friends. Writers with three names and what I considered fussy poems, like John Frederick Nims and John Hall Wheelock, had been receiving D form letters. Peter Davison was outraged, and I was fired. I might write good poems someday, the burly blustering poet informed me in an exit

interview in his book-lined corner office, but I'd never be an editor. There would be no second chance: I learned afterward from the fiction editor that Mary Updike, John Updike's ex-wife, who had given up the job earlier that fall, wanted it back. Who could say no to a recently divorced mother of four? Mary Updike was another of Peter Davison's friends.

This strikes me as legally questionable, but I'm no lawyer. I am pleased to be reminded of Marianne Moore's comment on "The Fish": "one is not glad of the creature's every perquisite." The book would have been more acceptable to me if it had been called "Two Lives: Elizabeth Bishop and Megan Marshall."

Roosevelt's reputation

Lewis E. Lehrman

Churchill, Roosevelt & Company:
Studies in Character and Statecraft.
Stackpole Books, 472 pages, \$29.95

reviewed by Conrad Black

Lewis E. Lehrman is a friendly acquaintance, whom I have admired since he almost spared the state of New York the cascade of relatively unsuccessful government that the Cuomo family has inflicted on it with his narrow loss to Mario Cuomo in the race for governor in 1982. His new book, *Churchill, Roosevelt & Company*, is a formidable digest of most of the memoirs and serious historical analyses and biographies about and around the 1940–1945 era of alliance between Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin. As such, it is up to date and contains a great many interesting asides that even the devotees of that great drama will find enlightening. The book is a very interesting read and, in many places, is perceptive.

It suffers, as much writing on this subject does, from the facts that Roosevelt kept almost no records, died abruptly, and never confided in anyone, and that Churchill wrote voluminously and somewhat self-servingly. It was a time when the stature of the British Empire declined relative to its allied rivals,

and Churchill's own position as the head of a coalition government that was swiftly cobbled together in an immense emergency became more vulnerable. And of course Churchill, after rendering magnificent service, was shamefully put out of office by his countrymen even before the defeat of Japan. The result is that Mr. Lehrman pretty well subscribes to the rather tired and moth-eaten British mythology that only they knew how to conduct a war in Europe and deal with the Russians. There are many factual problems with this perspective, and I will deal with them here, but none of it should deter anyone from reading a very interesting and quite widely researched book.

There is no dispute that Churchill mobilized the British Commonwealth, masterminded its victory in the Battle of Britain, and retained the air and sea superiority required to keep Germany out of the British Isles. But the author gives insufficient credit to Roosevelt (someone who knew Germany well and spoke German even to bilingual people such as Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, and Hitler's finance minister Hjalmar Schacht) for seeing, even before Churchill did, that it was going to come to war with Hitler. Roosevelt warned France not to allow the remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936, and did his best to rouse Prime Ministers Ramsay MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin, and Neville Chamberlain to a more vigorous response to the Nazis. He told the British ambassador, Sir Ronald Lindsay, who was constantly importuning Roosevelt to talk tough to Hitler, that it was difficult to do so when the British and French were adopting what he called a "We who are about to die" attitude. When he learned that King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were coming to Canada, he invited them also to the United States in the summer of 1939, to try to open up some useful official contact with the British and because he judged, correctly, that the visitors would be popular with Americans.

Roosevelt welcomed Churchill's return to government in 1939 because Churchill was a fighter and, like himself, had never thought Munich would resolve problems, even though he had found Churchill bibulous, condescending, and reactionary when they had met at the

end of World War I, encounters Churchill did not recall. Mr. Lehrman gives Roosevelt no credit for resupplying the British army with rifles, artillery, and ammunition immediately after the Dunkirk evacuation, though he had to frog-march General Marshall and Admiral Stark before congressional committees to say this was not imperiling U.S. security. They were reluctant. Nor is Mr. Lehrman impressed that Roosevelt advanced the British fifty destroyers and imposed peace-time conscription for the first time in American history in the midst of an unprecedented campaign for a third presidential term. He does not record that Roosevelt, having extended American territorial waters from three to 1,800 miles, ordered the U.S. Navy to attack on detection any German or Italian ship. This author's principal comment on Lend-Lease—by which the United States gave the British and Canadians anything they wanted, allowing them to pay for it when they could—was that the Americans were hard-bargainers. (As a member of the British House of Lords, I was present when the last repayment was approved in 2002.) The British could not have continued in the war without such a measure. Roosevelt's was an extremely idiosyncratic definition of neutrality, but it was anything but a "conceit," which is what Mr. Lehrman repeatedly calls it.

The United States wasn't responsible for bungling the peace in Europe, though it was certainly not blameless for the Great Depression that helped elevate the Nazis. Roosevelt did everything humanly possible to assist Britain and to lead public opinion away from isolationism. His emphatic assertion of the moral implications of both the contest among Churchill and Hitler and Mussolini, and also the Nazi blitz on British civilians, and of the eloquence of Churchill and the courage of the British people and Commonwealth did move American opinion. But Roosevelt had not caved at Munich, had not given the hare-brained military guaranty to the shabby anti-Semitic dictatorship of Poland, and had not been directly provoked by Germany.

Mr. Lehrman focuses with great assiduity on eyewitness accounts of these men and events

and is a little erratic in the latter-day historians he consults (John Charmley, whom he describes as a “revisionist,” is an Americophobic crank). He seems not to notice, though John Lukacs and others have made the point, that Hitler was driven to attack the Soviet Union because he was convinced (with some reason) that Roosevelt was gearing up to find some pretext to go to war with him when he had concluded the greatest armament program in world history (ten battle-ships, twenty-four aircraft carriers, 50,000 tanks, and 100,000 airplanes, and the trained men to operate them all). Hitler had been warned by his pre-war ambassador in Washington, Hans Dieckhoff, that Roosevelt was vehemently hostile and would force war when he was ready, and Hitler reasoned that if he could dispose of Stalin before Roosevelt attacked Germany, he would be able to prevent the Anglo-Americans from challenging him in Western and Central Europe. Roosevelt was not only keeping Britain and Canada in the war, but rattling Hitler’s nerves, so Germany undid the Nazi-Soviet Pact and gambled everything on trying to conquer unconquerable Russia. This book does not make the point that Japan imported 85 percent of its oil and aviation fuel and gasoline—80 percent of that from the United States—so that when Roosevelt embargoed it until Japan ended its aggression in China and Indochina, he was almost certainly forcing war in the Pacific, though on morally high ground, as Japan’s activities in China were monstrous barbarities and naked aggression. Roosevelt’s neutrality wasn’t neutrality; it wasn’t a conceit either—it was grand strategy: keep Britain in the war, push Germany into war with Russia, and force Japan to attack to get its hands on the oil of the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). It all worked; as Churchill recorded on the day of the attack on Pearl Harbor (De Gaulle and Stalin came to the same conclusion), “The British Commonwealth, the Soviet Union, and now the United States . . . were twice or even thrice the force of their antagonists.” They would mobilize and deploy 40 million warriors.

There are some highlights of the Churchill–Roosevelt relationship that are not mentioned, such as that when Churchill described on a visit to Roosevelt the certainty of Tobruk be-

ing held to prevent Rommel’s advance on the Suez Canal, in June 1942, just before a message was delivered that Tobruk had fallen to the Germans, Roosevelt responded “What can we do to help?” and he and General Marshall immediately dispatched twelve fast ships loaded with 300 Sherman tanks and 100 artillery pieces which would participate in the Battle of El Alamein six months later. Churchill wrote, “Nothing could exceed the sympathy and chivalry of my two friends” (Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins). Churchill was the inspiring galvanizer and linchpin who held the forces of freedom together and kept them in the war until the powers that were ultimately going to win the war, the USSR and the United States, entered the war by Axis aggression which was partly defensive. As this is a study of statecraft, and generally a good one, Mr. Lehrman should have given greater weight to Roosevelt’s subtle initiatives that created the winning coalition. Between the summers of 1940 and 1945, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan all passed from being dictatorships hostile to the Anglo-Americans to being almost entirely occupied by the Western Allies and on their way to becoming flourishing democratic allies of the Anglo-Americans. And as between the three principal Allies, the USSR took 90 percent of the casualties and 99 percent of the physical damage, and received only temporary and illegal occupancy of less important strategic assets in Eastern Europe.

There is also insufficient credit to Roosevelt for overruling General Marshall’s mad idea of Operation Sledgehammer, which would have landed ten or more divisions in Northern France in 1942. The Germans would have killed, captured, drowned, or chased out all of them—it would have been an unspeakable fiasco, as Churchill and Roosevelt both saw. But Mr. Lehrman, though he frequently refers to the reluctance of Churchill and of his chief of the general staff, Sir Alan Brooke, to engage the Germans in northern France, does not mention the extreme lengths Roosevelt had to go to in arranging that this invasion take place in 1944 and not be put off to 1946. No mention is made of the danger of a Russo-German separate peace, talks toward which had occurred in Stockholm in the summer of 1943, as Sta-

lin mentioned at Teheran in November 1943. Roosevelt was convinced that if the Western Allies did not make a serious effort to end the European war, such a disaster would occur, and we would be stuck with Hitler, Stalin, and the Japanese controlling almost the whole Eurasian land-mass. That is why he stayed in the Soviet legation in Teheran: he wanted to be sure that Stalin would support the cross-Channel landings and a complimentary landing in southern France, over Churchill's current favorite alternative, which is not mentioned in this book, of charging up the Adriatic and prurupting into Slovenia (which would have handed all Germany and probably France to the Russians and the French Communists). Roosevelt knew his rooms in the Russian embassy were bugged, but he achieved an immense diplomatic coup: persuading Stalin to urge the course that ultimately kept him out of Western Europe, over Churchill who inadvertently opposed the course that would achieve that end. Mr. Lehrman, as he has clearly carefully read Brooke's diaries, must be aware that Brooke thought Stalin only favored the cross-Channel invasion because he thought it would be a failure. Mr. Lehrman also dismisses Anvil, the landings in southern France six weeks after the Normandy landings, but the operation bagged 150,000 German prisoners and got the American and resurgent French armies to the Rhine in September 1944.

The author is very critical of Roosevelt being impolite to Churchill; there is no evidence of this. The claim that he mocked Churchill at Teheran is based on Labor Secretary Frances Perkins's account of what FDR said to her, but it does not turn up in the memoirs of anyone who was there. Apart from Roosevelt's concern that British foot-dragging over the cross-Channel offensive would cause Hitler and Stalin to compose their differences, he also believed that the British and other colonial empires could not be sustained and did not want them falling into the hands of local communist insurgents. Roosevelt warned Churchill at Teheran privately that if he led his party in the next election on a platform of retention of the Empire and of the socio-economic status quo of the British class system,

he would lose, despite his magnificent war leadership, which is what happened. Roosevelt also recommended something like the G.I. Bill of Rights, which he was about to pass in the United States to reward veterans generally with free education and cheap loans to buy small businesses or farms, as they returned from war service. He spoke as a three-term victorious party leader with an electorate three times as large as Britain's, but Mr. Churchill paid no attention. Four years later, Churchill was in opposition, and British control in the Middle East, India, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon had gone.

I do not yield to Lew Lehrman or many other people in my admiration for Churchill, but from 1942 on he was a romantic at the head of a heroic country of declining importance. In barely a decade, Roosevelt had taken the United States from the depths of economic and psychological depression to what Churchill described in his parliamentary eulogy of Roosevelt as a position of "strength, might, and glory to a height never attained by any nation in history." He did not do this by underrating and mistreating Churchill or overly indulging Stalin. There are a couple of occasions where the author reveals an animus against Roosevelt: the assertions that his first two terms as president were not successful, and that "the evidence from Allied summits shows that Stalin . . . used his knowledge shrewdly to outmaneuver and deceive FDR completely, and Churchill to a lesser extent." I regret to say that this book half-heartedly breathes life into the Yalta myth that FDR was duped by Stalin into giving him Eastern Europe. After all, as the Roosevelt biographer Ted Morgan wrote, if Yalta had been a good agreement for Stalin, he would not have violated every clause of it. The Declarations on Poland and on Liberated Europe pledge democratic elections and restoration of independence; Stalin's violation of these undertakings provided the moral basis for resisting the Soviet threat in Europe, and President Eisenhower opened the first summit meeting after 1945, at Geneva in 1955, by demanding that the USSR honor its commitments at Yalta.

Mr. Lehrman reproaches the Western Allies for not strenuously defending the rights of the Soviet-occupied Eastern European countries. It was Churchill, in his visit to Moscow in October 1944, who signed away, against Roosevelt's wishes, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania to Stalin, with Greece under British control and an equal division of influence in Yugoslavia between the USSR and the Western Allies. In Germany, Roosevelt did not want a demarcation of occupation zones, because he correctly believed that once the Western Allies had crossed the Rhine, the Germans would give way relatively easily in the West (where the Geneva Convention and relatively civilized standards of occupation were observed) but would fight with their usual courage and ferocity to the end in the East to keep the Russians out of Berlin. Churchill was concerned that even counting the Canadians with the British (which was a liberty with the facts), Britain would only have twenty divisions in Germany, to seventy American, and over 100 Soviet, and would end up with a small occupation zone. This is why Churchill had Britain side with the USSR on the European Advisory Commission, which awarded equal zones to the three powers, but put Berlin in the Soviet zone, and allocated much of the Soviet zone in Germany to Poland, because it had been secretly agreed at Teheran to move Poland's eastern and western borders 250 miles to the west, rewarding the USSR with a chunk of Poland and compensating Poland with a chunk of Germany.

In all of the circumstances, it was a bit rich for Churchill to masquerade as the great defender of Eastern Europe against Roosevelt's lassitude, but Mr. Lehrman essentially buys into this myth. The author reproaches Roosevelt in many places for being concerned to involve the USSR in the invasion of Japan, where a million casualties were anticipated, (the United States took 50,000 casualties in Iwo Jima and Okinawa alone). Mr. Lehrman knows perfectly well that the U.S. Joint Chiefs (Marshall, King, Leahy, and Arnold) and the theater commanders (MacArthur and Nimitz) screamed in unison that they must have Russian collaboration to share the casualties. In these conditions, Roosevelt had little choice

but to defer a showdown with Stalin on Eastern Europe until he knew whether the atomic bomb would work, which was only determined three months after he died. His plan was to combine an atomic weapon monopoly, as he discussed with War Secretary Stimson, with an economic aid program for Russia of \$6.5 billion, with the prospect of pacifying Germany, the only country apart from the United States which Stalin feared, and play that hand opposite Stalin to encourage him to honor his Yalta commitments to Eastern Europe.

This book misunderstands Roosevelt's pursuit of the United Nations Organization. To some extent it was unfinished business from the Wilson administration in which he had served, but it was also intended to disguise Anglo-American control of the world behind an egalitarian collegiality where cooperative Latin American and Commonwealth states would give Washington and London a durable majority. It was also designed to help convince American isolationists that the world was no longer as dangerous a place as it had been. This book is slightly critical of Roosevelt's championship of China as one of the Great Powers. It was not because he had much regard for Chiang Kai-shek, but rather that he foresaw that China would rise eventually, as it has. More, and more detailed, attention was heaped by Mr. Lehrman on communist Harry Dexter White, the assistant Treasury secretary, than was necessary, and one area where I would be grateful for Mr. Lehrman's conclusions is why Czechoslovakia was left entirely to the Russians. The Red Army occupied Slovakia, but the Czechs (Bohemia and Moravia) were not mentioned in the Teheran, Moscow, or Yalta Conferences, and the issue is scrupulously avoided in the memoirs or authorized biographies of Churchill, Marshall, Truman, and Eisenhower; Churchill and Eisenhower in particular were not slow to blame others for the shortcomings of the peace. I suspect that Eisenhower, even after his armies had entered Bohemia, steered clear out of fear of an inadvertent clash with the Red Army, but we may never know.

The German issue was the only reason that Roosevelt allowed Treasury Secretary Morgen-

thau to float his nonsense about the pastoralization of Germany. Roosevelt reduced the proceedings of the informal cabinet committee that considered post-war Germany to a farce by suggesting that Germans be deprived of indoor plumbing; this fact is reported in this book as if Roosevelt meant the idea seriously. He withheld the payment of any of the economic aid to Stalin because he instantly violated the Yalta and Churchill-Stalin spheres of influence agreements, and expressed his “bitter resentment . . . at [Stalin’s] vile misrepresentations” in a message of April 4, 1945, having for the previous three weeks told his entourage that Stalin was dishonest. Mr. Lehrman graciously referred to me in his end-notes as a “sympathetic” biographer of Roosevelt. I am, but I am primarily concerned with historical facts, and this author has read too widely among secondary sources not to know all the points I have raised here.

His short-changing of Roosevelt in his relations with Stalin is the only serious failing of an otherwise very fine book. As long as it is read with this concern in mind, I strongly recommend it for its insightful portrayal of almost all the key personalities in the upper echelons of Anglo-American leadership in the European part of World War II.

Person & place

Richard Holmes

This Long Pursuit:
Reflections of a Romantic Biographer.
Pantheon Books, 368 pages, \$30

reviewed by Carl Rollyson

Richard Holmes is the renowned biographer of Shelley and Keats and of books about biography, especially *Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer*. He is a Romantic in two senses: his subjects are Romantic poets, and his view of biography is suffused with the importance of feeling as a form of knowledge. So he writes in *This Long Pursuit* that the biographer should “*physically* pursue his subject through the past.” The biographer has to be there, Holmes insists,

to get inside his subject: “He must feel how they once were.” Among biographers this notion has taken hold and made of Holmes himself a romantic figure—the fellow who has been there and done that. He serves, too, as a rebuke to armchair biographers who do not rough it (sleeping outdoors and braving all weathers) as Holmes has done in his (it must be said again) *pursuit* of his subjects. In short, the biographer as hero, ladies and gentlemen.

Holmes’s biographical axioms disintegrate if, like Hegel, we push a thesis to its extreme. How limited is knowledge if it depends on your GPS? As Holmes himself knows, in fact it is not possible to position yourself in your subject’s place, since that place is forever changing—not only in space but in time. At best, the biographer can dredge for fragments of the past and like Proust get a whiff of history in a biscuit. For antithesis, I will cite a fictional example: In *Absalom, Absalom!* Quentin Compson reconstructs a Civil War scene in such vivid detail that he thinks (in italics): “*No. If I had been there I could not have seen it this plain.*” And when and where does he draw this conclusion? Not on a Civil War battlefield, not even in his native South, but in 1909, inside a cold—indeed, a freezing—Harvard dormitory room that Faulkner mentions fourteen times. As the novel makes clear, Quentin Compson cannot make sense of Thomas Sutpen or of his progeny when he is close to his home in Jefferson, Mississippi. Only at Harvard, only with the help of a Canadian, Shreve McCannon, who has never been to the South, can Quentin pull himself together to create what is, in essence, a biography.

Of course, it would be just as ridiculous to say to a biographer: “Don’t go there.” Nevertheless, it is a Romantic fetish to insist on proximity. Just as important to Holmes in those moments when he is not carried away by Romantic conceit is the “cumulative experience of the research journey,” a quest that can be physical but certainly is mental most of the time. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote about his travels on a donkey, but that does not mean that his biographer has to saddle up. That certain biographers cannot resist perambulation is fine with me—unless they produce bloated epics such as Norman Sherry’s multi-volume Graham Greene. Some