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## Churchill & Orwell: The Fight for Freedom

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and its effect on global trade is particularly thorough and well argued.

Troubled by distance, information overload, and numerous local rivals to their scattered holdings, the Hapsburgs, Geoffrey Parker notes, were almost always at war, often in different places against different enemies. Their empire's status as the leading Catholic power further complicated the strategic situation and influenced important strategic decisions. Despite the logistical and operational problems the Spanish Armada faced, Philip II believed that divine favor would bring it victory against England. Religion often proved less an obstacle to the Hapsburgs' rivals, as demonstrated by France's alliance with the Ottoman Empire, which Andrew Wheatcroft's essay details.

Geoffrey Wawro, Williamson Murray, William M. Morgan, Robert M. Citino, and James H. Anderson, respectively, explore more-recent rivalries: France versus Germany, Britain versus Germany, the United States versus Japan, Germany versus Russia, and the United States versus the Soviet Union. Citino places the Nazi-Soviet pact in the historical context of earlier partitions of Poland and argues that "German-Russian strategic rivalry was the real and proximate cause of World War I" (p. 465).

Lacey's introduction ties the essays together and highlights their commonalities, such as the economic and financial systems needed to support protracted rivalries. Rivalries often begin and end with shocks to the international system, such as the rise of new powers or the collapse of old ones; examples include the Athenian-Spartan rivalry that arose after the Persian threat to Greece receded and the long-standing Anglo-French rivalry that ended when

Germany arose as a new threat to both nations. Fear, honor, and interest—categories introduced by Thucydides in his history of the Peloponnesian War—cause rivalries to endure.

Strategic rivalry is a topic worthy of more research, particularly since, as Lacey notes, disputes between enduring rivals are twice as likely to lead to war as disputes between nations without a history of rivalry. The breadth and depth of this book's essays make it an excellent choice for a course text.

STEPHEN K. STEIN



*Churchill & Orwell: The Fight for Freedom*, by Thomas E. Ricks. New York: Penguin, 2017. 352 pages. \$28.

George Orwell and Winston S. Churchill do not strike us as two men whose surnames would share a dust jacket. One only has to look at David Levine's clever caricatures in the *New York Review of Books* for two entirely different men to appear: Orwell the rustic, in tweeds, chewing on a piece of hay; and Churchill, clad in coronation robes, the king of his own dominion. Yet Thomas Ricks, a journalist formerly at the *Washington Post*, has written an interesting book, a dual biography of sorts that claims that the men had much in common as they fought fascism and Communism, two of the greatest evils of the twentieth century. Ricks focuses on the "fulcrum" years of Orwell's and Churchill's lives—the 1930s and 1940s. And this is just as well, because if they had died before 1940 they would be remembered little today, if at all. A sniper's bullet almost

took Orwell's life during the Spanish Civil War, and if it had he would be remembered today as a talented essayist and mediocre novelist; while Churchill, almost killed by a car in New York City in 1931, would be remembered as the man who lost Gallipoli and deserted one political party for another.

Ricks tells the tale of these two men, who, in their own ways—through their writing, speech, and actions—fought to “preserve the liberty of the individual during an age when the state was becoming powerfully intrusive into private life.” He begins by touching briefly on their early years: Churchill's journey as a soldier, journalist, writer, and eventually politician; and Orwell's time as a police officer in Burma, which would alter his life and lead him to write some of the best essays in the English language—namely, “A Hanging” and “Shooting an Elephant.” From there we are ushered quickly to the historical events that would make them the men we remember today.

Orwell's defining moment was the Spanish Civil War and his participation in a leftist (Trotskyist) political organization known as POUM. It fought against Franco's Nationalists, but owing to its anti-Stalinist platform the same Republican forces that supposedly were Orwell's allies placed a death sentence on his head. He barely escaped Spain alive, with the Soviet secret police in close pursuit. His experience in the war would provide the grist for his famous novels *Animal Farm* and *1984*.

Churchill's moment came a few years later, in 1940–41. During these two precarious years, Churchill was thrust into the fray as prime minister, staved off Nazi appeasers, and rallied England to endure and prevail during the

Battle of Britain, eventually securing much-needed support from the United States. The rest, as they say, is history.

Ricks's book is a work of appreciation; he admits he has admired both men for some time. However, he does not appreciate them so much that he glosses over their less admirable traits. A quick flip through the (thorough) index reveals references to Orwell's anti-Semitism and Churchill's drinking. Ricks even manages to fit a sentence into the book referring to the unfortunate praise Churchill lavished on the fascist Italian dictator Benito Mussolini in the 1920s. Thus it is a credit to Ricks's pacing and power of distillation that he squeezed both men into a book that numbers around three hundred pages. This is no easy task; Orwell wrote over two million words in his lifetime, and reading Churchill's autobiographical six-volume series *The Second World War* alone requires one to scour over four thousand pages.

Placing Orwell and Churchill together in a single book does invite contrast, however. The late writer and journalist Christopher Hitchens once said that Orwell was right about the three big subjects of the twentieth century: Communism, fascism, and imperialism. On the latter, while Ricks's two subjects never met, we can speculate safely that they would have disagreed vehemently. Ricks does not delve into this contrast deeply, yet it was a defining issue for both men. Churchill would remain a staunch imperialist his entire life, and is callously quotable on the issue (on Gandhi: “[He] ought to be lain bound hand and foot at the gates of Delhi, and then trampled on by an enormous elephant with the new Viceroy seated on its back”). Orwell, on the other hand, saw imperialism up close during his posting in Burma, and would rail against power in all its

forms throughout the rest of his life. But readers be warned: do not invite a moral equivalency test between these two men. Orwell was a frustrated moralist, while Churchill, for all his success, was a politician—a man who, for most of his life, sought power and its trappings.

There are many great books on Orwell and Churchill. If you already have read D. J. Taylor's fine biography of Orwell and cracked William Manchester's biography of Churchill, then Ricks's work may seem like tilled soil. Consider, then, reading Christopher Hitchens's *Why Orwell Matters* or perhaps David Reynolds's *In Command of History*, a fascinating story of Churchill's production of his memoir *The Second World War* and a sure testament to the fact that those who win wars get to write the history. Regardless, this is a fine book for anyone interested in reacquainting themselves with either luminary, or for those curious to see both in a complementary light.

CHRISTOPHER NELSON



*The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought*, by Lukas Milevski. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016. 175 pages. \$80.

At first glance, telling the story of the evolution of grand strategy would seem to be a straightforward project. The term *grand strategy* is encountered often in a variety of disciplines, each of which attaches importance to the idea. However, as Lukas Milevski demonstrates, the task is far more challenging than it appears.

*The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought* is essentially Milevski's doctoral dissertation. It is not a book especially suited to the lay reader. Milevski is

thorough in this effort—he does not appear to have overlooked anyone of importance. Milevski explains that one of the major difficulties associated with grand strategic thought is a notable lack of a commonly agreed-upon definition of the term. He identifies six interpretations of the term in current use, of which five are associated with particular scholars and each of which presumably has passionate adherents. It is easy to imagine how Milevski must have felt as, in his own words, he began his doctoral research “believing I knew what a grand strategy was and how I would use the concept,” only to discover that “there were simply too many distinct and even contradictory definitions of grand strategy” (p. 1).

*The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought* takes a chronological approach to the subject, and explains how the context of the times affected contemporary thinking on grand strategy. Divided into eight chapters, the work starts during the Napoleonic Wars, anchoring grand strategy's origin as a military concept, as “interpreted” by Carl von Clausewitz and Baron Antoine-Henri de Jomini.

Those privileged to work within the halls of the Naval War College and its Royal Navy counterpart will not be surprised to find that great maritime strategists, notably Alfred Thayer Mahan and Julian Corbett, deserve places of prominence as theorists of grand strategy. Milevski reminds the reader that Stephen B. Luce brought Mahan to the Naval War College to teach strategy; however, as the College initially lacked students, Mahan had almost three years to refine this thinking before giving his first lecture. In comparing these two great naval strategists, Milevski identifies Mahan as the more influential, but considers Corbett superior as a thinker on grand strategy.