THE ESSENTIAL MAN: WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, BY MICHAEL E. BERUMEN

TAKEN FROM AN ADDRESS TO THE LA BREAKFAST PANEL IN 2003.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2004

The Essential Man

We have a tendency to look upon history with a sense of inevitability, as though what happened was the certain outcome of antecedant causes, and, perhaps most particularly, that the "good guys" were preordained to win. The major conflagrations that beset the 20th Century are no exception. That America would emerge the dominant superpower, and that Nazism and, in due course, communism, would both succumb to the dustbin of history, seems to many today to have been a forgone conclusion, a fulfillment of destiny. Eminent historians of the period, including John Keegan, John Lukacs, William Manchester, Martin Gilbert, and many others, all agree, things might have taken a very different trajectory.

The worst of the hydra-headed dangers was National Socialism, an unholy alliance of socialism and industrial capitalism, conjoined with a perverted strain of nationalism. The various species of Marxism could at least claim well-intended, though often questionable, utopian ends. The means to these ends were more immoral than the objectives themselves. Communism was in any case doomed to fail as an economic system, and as Ludwig von Mises and Fredrich Hayek

predicted long ago, it would eventually collapse from its own weight.

Nazism was different, though, for it conjoined evil means with evil ends, with the goal of eradicating entire races and enslaving others, a lust for conquest, and the worship of power, producing a dystopia of sadistic horrors. And here is the critical difference: Nazism did not depend on a particular economic modality for its nefarious efficacy; nationalism was its essential feature. It was compatible with either industrial capitalism or socialism. And remember, this odious regime emerged from the most educated nation on earth, the land that produced Goethe, Kant, and Bach. Naïve members of the corporate class and their representatives in the government mistakenly saw Bolshevism as the greater threat, for it appeared to be a more direct assault on their way of life. Given the Nazis' ardent hatred of Marxism, it is not coincidental that many prominent people in both America and Britain saw Nazism as a bulwark against Bolshevism. Only a handful of people in the twenties and thirties were able to discern that Nazism was the more insidious malefaction.

By the middle of 1940, Adolf Hitler stood at a pinnacle of power, exceeding even anything Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon may have imagined. He had suzerainty over Europe, either outright or through his client states, and a couple of shamefully cooperative, "neutral" states. In due course, he controlled much of the Mediterranean and North Africa. All of this, with the most technologically advanced and powerful military in the world, coupled with an unquenchable appetite for territory, death, and enslavement. The only monument to his rapaciousness consists of 40 million dead in 7 years.

Had the appeasers kept England out of the war, which they came very close to doing, Hitler would have turned his attentions to the Soviets. The Soviets would have been no match for the undistracted, combined forces of the Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe. Once the East had been subdued, with the appeasers at the helm, he would have cowed England into submission. Alternatively, had he not lost the air war over Britain, he would have landed and overwhelmed the British, for as the Normans and Vikings and Romans all learned, landing on the island is not all that difficult once the problems of crossing the channel were surmounted. England would become a client state or worse, having a readymade vassal in the ignominious Sir Oswald Mosley, head of England's Fascist movement. In either case, Hitler would eventually gain control of the far-flung British seaports and the British Navy, then the most powerful in the world, giving him effective control over the high seas across the globe.

PAGES
The Essential Man

ARCHIVES
October 2004

In due course, the world would have been Hitler's to lord over, if not through direct rule, indirectly, for no one dare stand in his way. Japan, his ally, would have had access to the oil of the Middle East and, by virtue of German control of the high seas, unfettered access to Southeast Asia, China and the Philippines, giving Japan little reason to attack the United States. In the best case, the U.S. would have been boxed in and isolated as a second-rate power; in the worst, in a world dominated by Nazism, with its own budding Nazi movement, it is not inconceivable that the U.S. would become a client state.

In my view, one man made all of the difference in preventing these horrible scenarios: Winston Churchill. Throughout the thirties, in fact, from as early as 1933, he warned his countrymen about Hitler. In this period, he was scorned and mocked by his own party; he was called a warmonger, an anachronism from another age; indeed, it was not uncommon for detractors to question his sanity. He was systematically excluded from holding office under Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain, relegated to the backbenches of Parliament. He relied on a network of civil servants and military contacts for his information about the Nazi's military build up and Britain's shabby military preparedness. With this information he constantly warned Parliament and the British people of the need for action or of the impending doom. Today, we see these speeches as possessing unequalled eloquence and courage; at the time, however, they were considered by most to be the grandiloquent rantings of a washed-up man.

Chamberlain was the head of the Conservative party, which had nearly two-thirds of the seats in Parliament. He represented the prevailing view of his party and, by virtue of its commanding majority, it might be said, even the nation. This view is one of moderation, men seeking reasonable, practical solutions to international problems, and finding common ground through discussion, assuaging the aggrieved through compromise. There was nothing controversial about this doctrine, nor, at the time, about the word that encapsulated it: appeasement. The pejorative meaning came later. It was the sensible doctrine of sensible people, both in Britain and in the U.S., especially by those who thought the financial reparations imposed on Germany after WWI too onerous. Indeed, appeasement was the apotheosis of rational behavior, and the antithesis of belligerence and intransigence, the views with which Churchill was associated.

You know the sad cavalcade of events. With increasing Nazi representation in the Reichstag, Hitler became Chancellor in 1933. He

became Fuhrer in 1934 upon the death of President Hindenberg. Reparations having been set-aside in 1932, Hitler began the systematic violation of the remainder of the Versailles Treaty, which he repudiated in 1935. In 1936 he instituted the anti-Jewish laws. In the same year, he faced down 350,000 French soldiers with a relatively small force and reoccupied the Rhineland, showing boldness he would repeat again. With the Anschluss in 1938, he incorporated Austria into the Reich. In the same year, Chamberlain sold out Czechoslovakia at Munich, trading the Sudetenland for the false promise of peace. Hitler, exactly as Churchill predicted, soon claimed the rest. Hitler then signed a pact with Stalin. Both cynically carved up Poland, which Hitler invaded in September 1939, precipitating declarations of war by Britain and France.

All Churchill had foreseen came to pass. People were finally beginning to realize he was right all along. Chamberlain was finally forced by public opinion to admit Churchill into the cabinet as First Lord of the Admiralty, his old post in WWI. Chamberlain's colleagues even urged this as a means of controlling him, which, of course, was impossible. While Chamberlain still had the majority of Conservatives on his side, there was a growing minority of against him. The smaller Labor and Liberal contingents were already opposed to him, and there were now bipartisan calls for a coalition government. Labor refused to serve under Chamberlain in a national government, but they would serve under their old foe in domestic policy, Churchill. The next in command and Chamberlain's choice if it had to be someone else, was the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax. However, he was a peer in the House of Lords, which he thought disqualified him. On May 9th, Chamberlain, Halifax, and Churchill met. All agreed only Churchill could lead a national government.

On the next day, though, Chamberlain was feeling more confident, and he searched for a way to hold onto power; but that morning, word came that the Blitzkrieg began with invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, thereby cementing his political fate. That evening, May 10, 1940 was arguably the most important day of the war, for, upon Chamberlain's recommendation, King George VI, who himself preferred Halifax, reluctantly called for Churchill to form a National Government. Not a day too soon. Nothing less than the future of the civilized world was at stake.

General Rundstadt had amassed over 2 million German soldiers on the French border. The cream of the British army, some 220,000 men, was concentrated in Flanders. The British thought the Germans would cross

through Belgium as they did in the previous war. Instead, they came across the Ardennes, surging through Sedan and behind the British and French forces, encircling them in a matter of several days and trapping them on three sides, near the town of Dunkirk, their only escape being the sea. Hitler did not want to squander his tanks and ground troops, so he relied principally upon the Luftwaffe, thinking he could destroy them at Dunkirk. The British committed 25 air squadrons to defend France, leaving only 27 at home. The RAF leaders thought they needed at least 50 squadrons to defend the island. The French wanted even more; but Churchill wisely refused their demands. The fact that Hitler did not use his ground troops bought sufficient time for the British to evacuate some 330,000 British and French soldiers and civilians, using an enormous flotilla of civilian and military water craft. Tons of munitions and the army's best equipment had been destroyed by the enemy or left behind.

Churchill made six, perilous, cross-Channel forays in May to persuade the French leaders to continue the fight; but France had lost its will. General Petain, the aging hero of Verdun, took over from Paul Reynaud and sued for peace. France was then divided into two, one part fully occupied and the other, Vichy, a Nazi vassal state under Petain. Churchill□s War Cabinet consisted of five people. Chamberlain and Halifax represented the Conservatives, and Clement Atlee and Arthur Greenwood represented Labor. Unlike FDR, Churchill was not a natural politician, but his political skill in those early days was crucial. Chamberlain and Halifax, still representing the majority of Conservative MPs, were both inclined to negotiate a settlement after the fall of France. Halifax considered himself a realist and wanted to entreat with Hitler rather than risking the loss of everything. Twice burned, Chamberlain was more wary, but still inclined to compromise. Churchill understood compromise meant the Nazis would soon have England by the throat, control of its fleet and ports, and hence, all could be lost. He used every ounce of eloquence and cajolery to convince the cabinet to fight. Had Chamberlain resigned from the cabinet, a very real possibility, Churchill would have lost his government. He found himself in the unusual position of having the support of the socialists, Atlee and Greenwood. Attlee became his Deputy Prime Minister in the coalition government and, after the war, his successor as head of Labor. Churchill also had greater support from the outer cabinet among both Conservatives and Labor, support he used skillfully to pressure Halifax and Chamberlain on the inside.

Once Churchill had convinced the whole cabinet to continue the fight, Britain never looked back. One of the most difficult decisions Churchill

made in this period was to sink the French fleet docked at Oran, rather than let it fall into German hands. He ordered the Royal Navy to sink the ships if the French resisted, which they did. Over 1300 Frenchmen lost their lives fighting their erstwhile ally. He then moved to take over the French ships in English ports across the globe, most of which occurred without incident. He now prepared Britain for invasion with an eloquence not heard by any English statesman before or sense.

Ahead was the largest air war ever to have been fought. The United States had long since withdrawn into somnolence. It lost its appetite for foreign involvement after the last war, beginning with the Senate's rejection of the League of Nations. By the 1930s, the U.S. had its own menacing problems, what with a quarter of the working population unemployed. The isolationist, America First Committee had broad support in the heartland. The majority in Congress was against foreign entanglements. The Neutrality Acts outlawed giving credit to belligerents. Prominent men such as Charles Lindberg were promulgating dark sentiments, finding much to admire in the German Reich. While anti-Semitism never had deep roots in America, it percolated to the surface in populist quarters. Our homegrown Nazi movement, The American Bund, managed to fill Madison Square Garden for a rally. The former rumrunner and defeatist ambassador to St. James, Joseph Kennedy, reported that democracy in Europe and England was over. Fortunately, FDR understood and distrusted Kennedy, paying him little heed, preferring to deal directly with Churchill.

Churchill knew that the war could only be won with the United States in the long run. He was well acquainted with the peculiarities of American politics, and understood there was little appetite in Congress for war. His short-term strategy was to get loans for desperately needed military equipment. In 1939, Roosevelt began communicating directly with Churchill, bypassing Kennedy and Chamberlain. With facts and charm, Churchill persuaded Roosevelt that it was only a matter of time before Europe's German problem became America's. Churchill realized, in order to gain America's support, Britain would have to show it could fight. The sentiment among many in the U.S. was that Britain would not be able to hold on, and would soon come under the German yoke. This made victory in the ensuing Battle of Britain doubly important. Hitler had already formulated his plans to invade Britain, with the code name of Operation Sea Lion. He knew he had to destroy British air power to overcome the Royal Navy before he could land. He thought victory over the ragtag RAF would be easy.

The Battle of Britain began in July 1940, and lasted in earnest until October 1940. While bombings of England continued throughout the war, killing 100,000 civilians, this was the critical period. The Luftwaffe outnumbered the British 4 to 1. In these months, Britain lost 792 Hurricanes and Spitfires, and Germany lost 1389 assorted aircraft, mostly Messerschmidt 109s, which, in most respects, were superior to the British fighters. Hitler lost the air battle and he never again attempted to invade England. The Germans underestimated the skill and will of the British pilots. After their resounding defeat, the Luftwaffe and its leader, Herman Goering, never recovered Hitler's affection. Hitler soon turned his attentions to the Soviet Union, making the old anti-communist Churchill and Joseph Stalin into strange bedfellows.

The Battle of Britain demonstrated the pluck and capability of the British, and, it served to build American support for providing needed materiel. Lend-Lease was enacted in early 1941, creating the Arsenal of Democracy. Up to that point, Britain paid cash for its supplies, but they were running out of money. With Lend-Lease, they were able to borrow armaments to be returned after the war. FDR said at the time that one does not charge a neighbor to borrow a hose when his house is on fire. One simply expects to get his hose back. Churchill described this as the "the most unsordid act in history." It was the beginning of what Churchill called our "special relationship," a phrase we use even now.

Now, as I said before, Britain could not have won the war on its own; it could only keep the enemy at bay. Winning required the Soviet and American forces. However, the point I want to drive home is that Britain did not lose the war when all could have been lost, rendering our future involvement moot. Some Americans have the misconception we were there from the beginning. The American presence in the Western theatre was inconsequential until the end of 1942 with Operation Torch, and we did not match British divisional strength in ground forces until late 1944. Of course, while the British had a sturdy presence, we dominated the Eastern theatre soon after Pearl Harbor. This year, 1940, was the pivotal year, and Winston Churchill was the crucial man. He was not like other politicians. He did not mirror the population. Isaiah Berlin said he "imposed his will and imagination on his countrymen." In time, they "approached his ideals and began to see themselves as he saw them."

So, then, who was this man, Winston Churchill, the man who I claim made all the difference? He was the elder of two sons born of an American beauty from New York, Jenny Jerome, whose father was a

wealthy investor and part owner of the New York Times. His father was Randolph Churchill, the youngest son of the Duke of Marlborough, descended from the original Duke, John Churchill, one of the greatest military commanders in British history, the victor at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704, where he crushed the forces of the Sun King, Louis XIV, and thereby averted French expansion in Europe.

Young Randolph had a very bright political career, rising to Chancellor of the Exchequer at age 37. He, like his son, was known for his oratorical skills. At one point he seemed destined to become Prime Minister, but, in several impetuous missteps with Prime Minister Salisbury, he flamed out early. He was never to recover, politically, for he had contracted syphilis when he was young; and with its advancement, he experienced serious mental and physical setbacks, and died at age 45. Winston was only 20.

Young Winston was neglected and even treated rather cruelly by his father. He never quite measured up to his exacting standards; however, like all boys, he avidly sought his father□s approval. He was constantly told he was a disappointment and reminded of his inadequacies. Winston adored his mother, Jennie, but she was decidedly non-maternal. A socialite with many lovers, she left Winston largely in the care of his beloved nanny, Mrs. Everest, and a series of boarding schools, ending up at Harrow, where he had an undistinguished academic career.

He excelled in history and English, but he was incompetent in mathematics, science, French, and the classics. Churchill's grades would not qualify him for one of the more prestigious academic universities. After failing his first two exams, on the third attempt, he finally gained entrance to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. It was at Sandhurst that he discovered he had a talent for the military. His marks from Harrow were not good enough to land him in the infantry, which provoked his father's criticism; he ended up in the less fashionable cavalry.
He excelled at horsemanship and fencing, and he turned around his lackluster academic performance, and graduated near the top of his class.

Churchill received his commission as a subaltern in 1895 and was assigned to the 4th Hussars. While waiting for a permanent duty station, 1985 he took an eleven-week leave to go to Cuba to report on the Spanish-American conflict for a London newspaper. He was nearly killed under fire on his 21st birthday. He spent some time in New York

and struck up a friendship with a former paramour of his mother, Bourke Cockran, a wealthy Tammany Hall politician, congressman, and a former candidate in the Democratic presidential primary. A father-son relationship ensued. Churchill learned a great deal about politics from Cockran, with whom he remained close friends for many years.

Churchill finally received his first military assignment in India in 1896. He was very mindful of his lack of a university education, and thought this a great disadvantage. He had a lot of time on his hands, and on those long, languid days, he undertook a program of self-study in history, literature, and philosophy, with special emphasis on the works of Gibbon and Macualay, whose felicity of expression he much admired. Many years later he could recite from memory long passages from their works.

Churchill's second combat experience involved quelling a tribal uprising near the border of Afghanistan, in Malakand, not far from Kabul, a battle that involved pistols and swords, where captives were likely to be castrated before being killed. The experience inspired his first book, The Story of the Malakand Field Force. While in India, he began working on his one and only novel, Savrola. It became increasingly apparent he had a talent for writing. He would go on to write a number of books, including several multi-volumed histories, a biography of his father, and another of his great ancestor, Marlborough, which is considered one of the finest military biographies ever written. Churchill once remarked that his dismal performance in school required such intensive remediation, he eventually felt the structure of the English language in his bones.

After India, Churchill ended up in North Africa in Sudan, where he again participated in close combat and Britain's last, large-scale cavalry charge at Omdurman. He of course wrote a book about it: The River War. He was quite critical of the British treatment of the wounded enemy, the Dervish, thereby alienating him from some senior officers. Churchill returned to London in 1899 to run for political office. He lost his first campaign for a seat in Parliament in Oldham, a laboring district near Manchester. He made his living selling articles to newspapers and, of course, he continued to crave adventure and, many would have rightly said, publicity and glory. In this sense, he was more similar to the Homeric Greeks and Roman generals than the understated British.

He eventually ended up as a war correspondent in South Africa during

the Boer War. A hospital train on which he was traveling came under attack by the Boers and several cars were derailed. Churchill, now a journalist, quickly took command of the situation, persuaded the lightly wounded to fight while disabled cars were moved, so the engine, still on track in the middle of the train, could flee with the remaining cars to safety. The train escaped. Churchill's personal courage undoubtedly saved many lives. Unfortunately, he was captured by the Boers and became a prisoner of war in Pretoria; but, not for long, for he soon escaped, and made his way by night in the countryside for nearly 300 miles until he reached friendly, Portuguese territory. "Churchill: Wanted Dead or Alive" posters were posted throughout Boer territory. This was enough to make him famous at age 26, not an inconsequential factor in his early political career.

Churchill returned to London with great fanfare. Again he ran for office as a Conservative in Oldham. This time he won, thus beginning his 65-year political career. Oldham was only one of several constituencies he would represent over his long life. He soon came under the spell of Lloyd George and became disenchanted with the Conservative Party, primarily because of its advocacy of tariffs. In 1904 he joined the Liberal Party, which supported free-trade policies. The Labor party with which we are familiar, which began as a socialist party, got its start in 1900. He held several ministerial positions in the Liberal cabinet. In his career, he would hold all of them but one, Foreign Secretary.

Even though he returned to the Tories in 1924, there was a great deal of residual bitterness over his apostasy, arousing animosity and suspicions among Conservatives that would haunt him until the eve of WWII. In the midst of all this, Churchill fell in love with Clementine Hozier in the summer of 1906. They married in 1908, a marriage that would last for 57 years. Her friends called her Clemmie. His affectionate nickname for her was "cat," and she called him her "pig." In old age they continued to sign their letters with little drawings of cats and pigs. Unlike many aristocrats at the time, indeed, unlike a great many powerful men of any time, Churchill never strayed from his "cat." To her credit, she put up with an extraordinarily difficult and temperamental personality. She is suspected of having one, brief, extramarital fling while on a cruise in the Pacific, but her love and devotion to Winston proved durable and, I might add, was critical to his psychological health.

Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911, which, given Britain's preeminence as a naval power, was the principal civilian defense post in Britain. As First Lord during the Great War, he

spearheaded the strategy to engage the Turks at the Dardanelles passage, believing a decisive defeat of the Turks would facilitate advancement through the Pomeranian plain to the German capital. Historians now agree, it was not an unsound strategy, but one that was poorly executed, constantly delayed, lacking coordination between ground and naval forces, and hampered by a recalcitrant military staff. The ensuing tragedy at Gallipoli resulted in the loss of thousands of lives.

Churchill took the brunt of the blame, though there was plenty to go around. He resigned from the Admiralty in 1915 in disgrace. At age 40, his political career seemed to over, and not for the last time. He took leave from Parliament, resumed his military service and ended up on the front lines in France on the Belgian border, where, as a Colonel, he commanded the 6th Royal Scott Fusiliers with distinction. More than once he risked life and limb with fearless expeditions in no-man's land. In his off hours, he would engage in his newfound pastime, painting, sometimes with shells bursting overhead. It was widely reported in all of his military exploits that he was personally fearless in battle.

In 1916, Churchill returned to politics. He managed to survive an investigation of Dardanelles, and soon rose again to cabinet level, holding several significant defense posts for the duration of the war. After the war, he became known as an anti-Bolshevik crusader, the archenemy of the homegrown socialists, and an advocate of Irish home rule, playing a principal role in negotiations with the Irish leader, Michael Collins. Had Collins not been assassinated, Churchill said he would have made him a member of his club, The Other Club, a dinner and conversation club consisting of people of various political stripes. Off and on he also belonged to the Carlton Club, a Tory bastion founded by the Duke of Wellington in the 19th century. The Carlton Club at this time would have made the California Club seem like a caldron of insurrection.

Churchill, as everyone knows, was no teetotaler. He loved nothing better, than drinking, eating, and conversing, particularly when he was the one doing the talking. He was increasingly at odds with the Liberal party in the twenties, especially when it would align itself with the socialist Laborites on various issues, which it did increasingly to hold on to power. In 1924, he crossed the aisle for the last time to rejoin the Tories. The party was then under the leadership of Stanley Baldwin.

Churchill became Baldwin's Chancellor of the Exchequer, a peculiar assignment for a man whose own personal extravagance often

surpassed his financial means. By 1930, Churchill had alienated nearly everyone inside and outside of his party; he was now out of office, and Prime Minister Baldwin had become his nemesis, primarily because of Churchill's obstinacy about granting India dominion status and the government's refusal to confront an increasingly arrogant and powerful Germany, and its failure to gird its loins militarily. While Baldwin's successor, Neville Chamberlain, was responsible for the disgrace of Munich in 1938, it was mostly Baldwin who allowed the military to decline into disrepair. Both men shamelessly conspired to minimize Churchill's influence, often without his knowledge. Churchill naively believed both were his close friends. The truth is, they both loathed him. Churchill's only asset during this period was his dogged determination, his eloquence, and a handful of dedicated supporters in government and the press.

Of course, we all know what happened next. A couple of general comments on the remainder of the war are in order, though I am at a decided disadvantage with so many members of our greatest generation present. Britain's solitary successes were largely defensive, rather than offensive, except for several battles against the Italians and the battle of Al Alamein in 1942, the famous confrontation of Generals Montgomery and Rommel. It is well known that Churchill favored invading Continental Europe from the South, through Italy rather than through Normandy. After the Battle of the Bulge, he wanted the Yanks and Brits to take Berlin first, but Eisenhower, more interested in military tactics than politics, allow the Russians to do this.

By the time of Yalta in 1945, Churchill, the senior partner during the initial years, had become the junior member. While it is easy to second-guess the great actors in these days, I have little doubt that had Churchill's relative influence been greater at the end, not as much would have been given up to Stalin. It was during the Potsdam conference with Truman that Churchill learned the Conservatives lost the election at home, causing him to lose the premiership to Clemet Atlee, his former Deputy.

Churchill remained the leader of his party, and began publishing his memoirs of the war. He was an early supporter of Israel, having declared his support for Zionism as early as 1906; and with some prescience, he expressed his concern about the nascent nation's treatment of Palestinian Arabs. He again became Prime Minister when the Conservatives won a majority in 1951. He privately preferred Adlai Stevenson to Eisenhower, but either man to Taft, whom he despised.

He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1953 for his writing and oratory on behalf of freedom. During this period, his physical powers steadily declined, forcing him finally to resign from office in 1955 at the age of 80. He then finished his monumental History of the English Speaking Peoples, the bulk of which had been completed before the outbreak of the war. While an internationalist of the first rank, Churchill grew increasingly dissatisfied with the organization he helped found, the United Nations, especially with its ineptitude handling the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, when Hungarian patriots attempted to shed the communist yoke.

In his last years, Churchill spent a great deal of time in the South of France, his favorite vacation spot, and sailing about the Mediterranean with his new friend, the shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis. The United States Congress declared him a citizen of the United States in 1962. He was the second and last person to be so honored, the other being the Marquis de Lafayette. On more than one occasion, the great champion of freedom, himself born of the aristocracy, declined a dukedom from his sovereign, saying he ought to die "Mr. Winston Churchill, a man of the Commons," where he had served for so long.

On January 24, 1965, following a severe stroke, Churchill passed away in his 90th year, 70 years to the day after his father died. He was given a great funeral in the Imperial style. Breaking with custom, and in deference to her country's greatest citizen, the queen attended a commoner's funeral. She broke another custom and did not arrive last, but waited with everyone else at St. Paul's for the arrival of his funeral cortege. He was buried in a small churchyard in Bladon, near his birthplace at Blenheim Palace.

His courageous but troublesome ally, Charles De Gaulle, never given to modesty, summed up us contribution thusly: "In the great drama, he was the greatest of all." His socialist war partner, Clement Atlee, addressed the House of Lords and said: "My Lords, we have lost the greatest Englishman of our time, I think the greatest citizen of the world in our time."

Return, now, to those lonely, baleful, desperate days when France had just fallen, on the eve of the Battle of Britain. Here is what Churchill said to embolden his countrymen:

"**What General Weygand called the Battle of France is over. I expect the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. Upon it**

depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island, or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world can move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, *This was their finest hour*."

And so it was. No man before or since had so embodied and fulfilled British honor and glory. And that is why Winston Churchill was *the* essential man.

Sites on Berumen's philosophy. General. Ethics.

Kirkus Book Review on Do No Evil

Sites on Churchill. Churchill Centre. Short Biography.

Berumen's Bio and Philosophy Site. Philosopedia

Selected Essays by Michael E. Berumen

Berumen on Bertrand Russell in *Free Inquiry*

POSTED BY ARUSSELLIAN AT 10:11 PM