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

By Patrick J. Buchanan



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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.

From the Trade Paperback edition.



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Editorial Review

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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

About the Author

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. 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*, Buchanan is a syndicated columnist and founding member of three of America's foremost public affairs shows: NBC's *The McLaughlin Group* and CNN's *The Capital Gang* and *Crossfire*. He is now a senior political analyst for MSNBC.

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