

# Western Ruling Elites Show Their True Colors by Revering a Moral Monster — Winston Churchill

None of the above. The correct answer is Winston Churchill.

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*In a March address to the U.S. Congress which earned him a standing ovation, Ukrainian **President Volodymyr Zelensky**, fashioning his country’s struggle against the Russians as one of good versus evil, echoed some of the rhetoric of British wartime leader **Winston Churchill**.*

The ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, **Michael McCaul** of Texas, told *Fox News* subsequently that Zelensky was [“the Churchill of our times”](#)—a claim repeated by former President George W. Bush.

Zelensky is actually nothing like the Churchill of popular legend who stood up to Hitler—he is the one who provoked the war with Russia and trampled on democracy by [banning eleven opposition parties and kidnapping and executing political dissidents](#).

The idolatry of Churchill, however, is even more grotesque than that of Zelensky.

As political activist Tariq Ali reminds us in his book *Winston Churchill: His Times, His Crimes* (London: Verso, 2022), Churchill was a zealous supporter of British imperialism and oversaw a man-made famine in Bengal that resulted in millions of deaths.

Churchill further a) deployed British troops in Vietnam-like quagmires in Greece and Russia following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution; b) helped coordinate the suppression of a miners strike in South Wales and general strike in London in 1926; and c) oversaw the suppression of an Irish Catholic uprising.

Henry Wallace, the U.S. Vice President from 1941 to 1945 who envisioned a world order free of colonization, wrote in his diary that “the notion of Anglo-Saxon superiority inherent in Churchill’s approach [was] offensive to many of the nations of the world, as well as a number of people in the United States.” Wallace said that when he met him, Churchill was

very frank about his views: “He said, why be apologetic about Anglo-Saxon superiority, that we are superior, that we had the common heritage which had been worked out over centuries in England and had been perfected by our constitution. He himself was half-American [and] felt he was called on as a result to serve the function of uniting the two great Anglo-Saxon civilizations in order to confer the benefit of freedom on the rest of the world.”<sup>[1]</sup>

## **Nostalgia for Empire and the Churchill Cult**

In the 1970s, the British public welcomed critical interpretation of Churchill’s life.

Howard Brenton’s 1974 *The Churchill Play*, which opened under Richard Eyre’s direction at Nottingham Playhouse to warm audience applause, included a scene from Churchill’s funeral, where a Marine carrying his coffin says: “We’ve never forgiven him in Wales. He sent soldiers against us, the bloody man. Sent soldiers against Welsh mining men in 1910....He was our enemy. We hated his guts. The fat English upper-class gut of the man. When they had the collection, for the statue in front of parliament...All over Wales town and county councils would not collect...”

When a Private responded: “But e’won the war ‘E did that, ‘E did that,’ the Marine responded: ‘People won the war. He just got pissed with Stalin....’”

This kind of critical presentation got drowned out by a renewed jingoism during the 1982 Falkland/Malvinas Islands war in which Britain tried to secure the islands off Argentina.<sup>[2]</sup>

The rebirth of Churchillism was part of the propaganda needed to secure acceptance of that conflict—just as it is now necessary to secure public support for Western intervention in the Middle East and in Ukraine.

## **A Child of Empire**

A child of the Victorian era, Churchill was born in 1874 when Britain was by far the world’s dominant empire. He spent his early formative years in a colonial setting in Ireland where his grandfather was viceroy. Churchill’s father, Lord Randolph, was a Tory Member of Parliament (MP). Neglected by him and his mother, young Winston found solace in toy soldiers and played out tales of his ancestor John Churchill—the first Duke of Marlborough—who helped lead England’s Glorious Revolution.

At school, Winston was not a high achiever. In 1893, while celebrating his elevation to cadet at Sandhurst, the elite military academy, Lord Randolph wrote him a scathing letter stating:

“Never have I received a really good report of your conduct in your work from any master or tutor you had from time to time to do with. Always behind hand, never advancing in your class, incessant complaints of total want of application....With all the efforts that have been made to make your life easy and agreeable and your work neither oppressive nor distasteful, this is the grand result that you come up among the 2<sup>nd</sup> rate and 3<sup>rd</sup> rate class who are only good for commissions in a cavalry regiment...I no longer attach the slightest weight to anything you may say about your own acquirements and exploits. Make this position indelibly impressed on your mind, that if your conduct and action at Sandhurst is similar to what it has been in the other establishments in which it has sought vainly to

impart to you some education. Then that my responsibility for you is over.”<sup>[3]</sup>

From this moment on, proving his father wrong proved to be Winston’s main goal in life.

## Cheerleader for Imperial Wars

In 1895, Churchill obtained leave from his regiment to become a military observer and then reported on the Spanish-Cuban War with a bias toward the Spanish who were trying to retain their last colonial holdings in South America.

Churchill underplayed the immense suffering of the Cuban people under Spain’s scorched-earth policies that had been modeled after General William Tecumseh Sherman’s tactics en route to Atlanta during the U.S. Civil War.

On his return from Cuba in 1896, Churchill went to Sudan where he witnessed the British victory over native forces at the Battle of Omdurman, which he described as “the last link in the long chain of those spectacular conflicts whose vivid and majestic splendor has done so much to invest war with glamor.”<sup>[4]</sup>

The battle was not so glamorous for the Sudanese, however, who lost 10,000 men and had 5,000 more taken prisoner.



Battle of Omdurman and the British conquest of Sudan. [Source: [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)]

Churchill filed similarly upbeat reports for *The Morning Post* about the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902) that was fought between Dutch and British settlers who wanted to access South Africa’s gold mines and other mineral wealth.

Churchill captured a popular audience with the story of his daring escape from Boer

[descendants of the Dutch] captivity. In his assessment, the Boers were “the most humane people where the white men were concerned; to the Boer mind, the destruction of a white man’s life, even in war, was a lamentable and shocking event.” The story was different, however, for the Kaffirs, a derogatory term Churchill used for Blacks.<sup>[5]</sup>

### **“The Wicked Chancellor”**

Capitalizing on his fame as a war correspondent, Churchill was elected as a Tory MP in 1900 in Northwest Manchester and then defected to the Liberal Party and became Home Secretary, a Cabinet position in which he developed a reputation for aggressively stifling the efforts of the working class to organize itself.

Churchill became particularly hated in South Wales where he called in military troops to help crush a miners strike in September 1910 that became known as the Tonypany riots. Even in the Second World War, people in local cinemas heckled news images of him there.

Churchill was equally hated in Glasgow, Scotland, where in January 1919 he ordered the deployment of the British Army to avert more labor unrest.

Appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer during the late 1920s, Churchill opposed social reforms that would have benefited the poor while promoting ideas advanced by top bankers—backed by Montague Norman, Governor of the Bank of England—who wanted to prevent any drift of the British Empire.



Police blocking streets during Tonypany riots. [Source: [wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)]

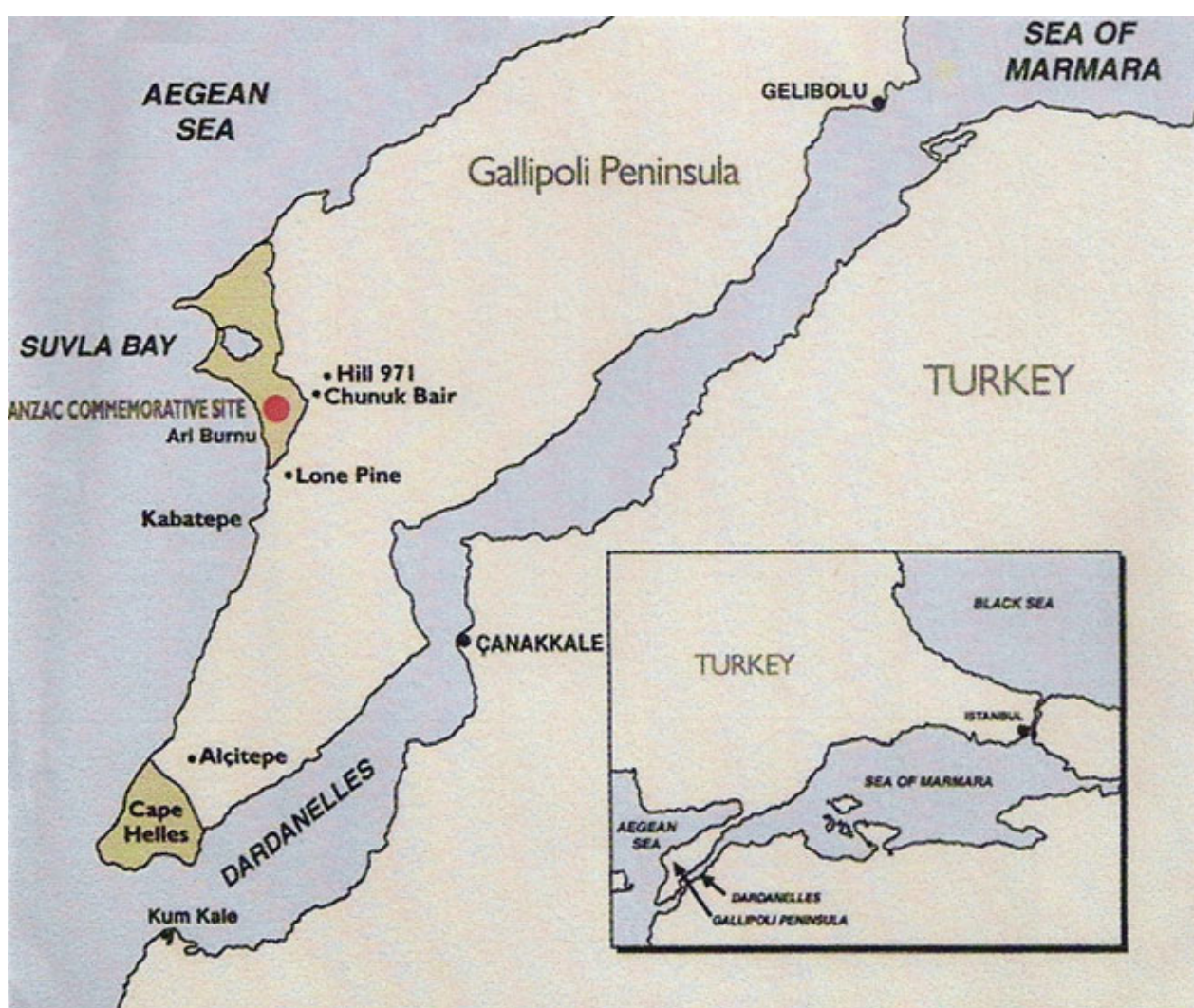
Famed economist John Maynard Keynes dubbed Churchill “The Wicked Chancellor.” Keynes published a pamphlet demonstrating the fallacy of his economic policies and the injustice that they entailed for workers.<sup>[6]</sup>

During the 1926 General Strike in England—a display of working class militancy precipitated by wage reductions—Churchill launched a newspaper that branded the strikers as “Bolshevik-inspired agitators” intent on creating a “Soviet of Trade Unions that would take over the economic and political life of the country.”

Churchill in turn helped to organize blackleg labor, or scabs via far-right organizations, including the fascist League of St. George, and boasted later of helping to break the strike.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Churchill and the Great War

As First Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill was a gung-ho supporter of British participation in the Great War that cost the lives of more than 880,000 young British men. Churchill presided over a military debacle when he orchestrated the opening of a naval front in the Dardanelles to seize Constantinople and deal a death blow to the Ottoman Empire, which had joined the Central Powers.



Source: [mideastcartoonhistory.com](http://mideastcartoonhistory.com)

The first step was a military assault on Gallipoli, which resulted in the slaughter of thousands of British troops and devolved into a stalemate just as bloody and pointless as that on the Western front.

Churchill has long been at the center of conspiracy theories surrounding the sinking of the

Lusitania—a passenger liner carrying almost 160 Americans, 128 of whom died—which provided a pretext for U.S. intervention in the Great War.

According to historian Colin Simpson, Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, sent the *Lusitania* into German waters without its escort, *H.M.S. Juno*, which was pulled back, in order to maximize moral outrage at the German U-boat offensive that sunk the ship and to provoke U.S. military intervention that could ensure an allied victory.<sup>[8]</sup>

Churchill at the time had been [working in the secret Room 40 in an old Admiralty building in central London, the center of a covert operation run by Churchill that was monitoring and decoding German naval radio messages](#). Clearly, he knew all about the extreme danger the German U-boats posed to the *Lusitania*, though did nothing to protect the liner and its passengers—quite the opposite.

## Ireland

Rehabilitated after his demotion following the Dardanelles disaster, Churchill served as Secretary of War during the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921). On March 25, 1920, Churchill dispatched the notorious “Black and Tans,” paramilitaries attached to the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) who served as a torture and death squad.

Earlier, Churchill had denounced the Irish Republican Army (IRA) as a “gang of squalid murderers.” He praised the police and British troops whom he said were compelled to “fight enemies who could not be easily identified because they could blend into the population without a trace”—always a problem for imperial states confronting a popular resistance.<sup>[9]</sup>

In negotiations, Churchill helped to ensure a compromise favored by Britain which divided Ireland, split Sinn Fein (IRA political branch), helped institutionalize discrimination against the Irish-Catholic minority, and blocked the emergence of radical political parties.

## War on Russia

Churchill’s hostility to left-wing ideology was evident in his zealous support for the overthrow of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia at its inception. His colleague Lloyd George was concerned that Churchill’s Russia obsession was “upsetting his balance.”

Vowing to “strangle the Bolshevik baby in its crib,” Churchill proclaimed that “of all the tyrannies, the Bolshevik tyranny is the worst...the most destructive, the most degrading and...far worse than German militarism.”<sup>[10]</sup>

Under Churchill’s direction as Secretary of War, the British sent 15,000 troops to support ex-czarist officers in “one of the most ill-conceived and poorly planned campaigns of the twentieth century,” as historian Damien Wright put it. “It achieved little other than the loss of life and maiming of hundreds of soldiers, sailors and airmen who had already given so much during four years of war on the Western front and in other theatres.”

Many of the White army units backed by the British defected to the Bolsheviks whose Red Army was organized, efficient and motivated under the leadership of Leon Trotsky. On more than one occasion, “White Russian troops mutinied and murdered their British officers before going over to the enemy. Corruption and inefficiency from the lowest and highest

levels of leadership plagued the White Russian forces.”<sup>[11]</sup>



Source: [britannica.com](http://britannica.com)

Churchill was most livid that the War Office had barred British troops from using poison gas. He wrote to the chief of the Imperial General Staff on January 25, 1919: “What is the reason for this injunction given at Archangel? Because an enemy who has perpetrated every conceivable barbarity is at present unable, through his ignorance, to manufacture poisoned gas, is that any reason why our troops should be prevented from taking full advantage of their weapons?”

## Support for Fascism

Churchill’s hostility to Russian Bolshevism and organized labor resulted in his support for European fascists who crushed the political left in their countries. As late as 1938, he defended Adolf Hitler whom he said he admired for his success in “restoring Germany to the most powerful position in Europe,” and ensuring that it was “no longer prostrate at the feet of the victors [of World War I].”<sup>[12]</sup>

In 1927, five years after the fascists took over in Italy, Churchill went to meet Mussolini—whom he called “the Roman genius”—and said that, “if I had been an Italian, I am sure I would have been wholeheartedly with you from the start to finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism.”<sup>[13]</sup>

A decade later, following the outbreak of a civil war in Spain between fascist forces led by General Franco and a coalition of communists, anarchists and liberal republicans, Churchill proclaimed: “I will not pretend that, if I had to choose between Communism and Nazi-ism, I would choose Communism.”<sup>[14]</sup>

Churchill admitted that Franco’s gangs in Spain “regularly shoot a proportion of their prisoners taken in arms,” but insisted this was not comparable to what he called the “tortures and fiendish outrages in the lowest pit of human degradation” committed by Republicans.” There, he concluded, “it would be a mistake alike in truth and wisdom for

British public opinion to rate both sides at the same level.”<sup>[15]</sup>

## **Tyrant and Butcher**

Churchill’s support for fascists extended past the Second World War. In post-war Greece, he backed the royalist elite that had collaborated with the Nazis against the Greek Left.

Tariq Ali points out that Churchill is still remembered today in Greece as a “tyrant and butcher.” He is the one who instructed General Ronald Scobie to treat Athens as a “colonial city,” and to neutralize and destroy EAM-ELAS (left-wing groups) bands approaching the city.

Churchill said: “We have to hold and dominate Athens. It would be a great thing for you to succeed in this without bloodshed if possible, but also with bloodshed if necessary.”<sup>[16]</sup> Which there was.

British soldier Chris Barker, interviewed for a 1986 Channel 4 documentary, said: “I thought we’d come to liberate the Greeks, but within what seemed to be a short space of time, we were actually killing them. And, more to the point, British chaps were dying in a cause that I couldn’t quite understand. This was the source of the outrage.”<sup>[17]</sup>

## **Bengal Famine**

More outrage has been legitimately directed at Churchill for his role in the 1943 Bengal famine in India, which resulted in three million deaths.

At the peak of the famine, rain levels were actually above average, meaning it had resulted from bad public policies—a combination of wartime inflation, speculative buying and panic hoarding, which pushed the price of food out of the reach of poor Bengalis.

The famine was exacerbated by the decisions of Churchill’s wartime cabinet, which was warned repeatedly that the exhaustive use of Indian resources for the war effort could result in famine, but opted to continue exporting rice from India to elsewhere in the British Empire.

Churchill himself blamed the famine on the fact that Indians were “breeding like rabbits,” and asked how, if the shortages were so bad, his nemesis Mahatma Gandhi was still alive.

## **The Times They Are a-Changin’**

Churchill’s imperialist views and contempt for the working class live on today among his heirs and in the halls of power in Washington and London.

Winston would no doubt approve their championing of NATO expansion and a new cold and potentially hot war with Russia; and recolonization of Africa.

The geopolitical winds nevertheless are beginning to shift. That pro-imperialist views are no longer in fashion throughout society was evident in the spraying of Churchill’s statue in London’s Parliament Square with paint during anti-capitalist demonstrations in 2000 and painting of the slogan “Churchill was a Racist” by Black Lives Matter activists on one of his busts in 2020.

The emperor, as they say, has no clothes, but the question lingers as to what new icons and



heroes will replace him after the revolution is consummated and the era of Anglo-American global domination ends.

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## Notes

1. Tariq Ali, *Winston Churchill: His Times, His Crimes* (London: Verso, 2022), 398.
2. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 6.
3. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 21.
4. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 45.
5. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 53.
6. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 167.
7. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 170, 171.
8. See Colin Simpson, *The Lusitania: A Shocking Second-By-Second Account of the Single Most Important Event in the Outbreak of World War I* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972), 118, 119, 120.
9. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 124.
10. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 154.
11. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 155.
12. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 189, 190.
13. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 184.
14. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 196, 197.
15. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 201.
16. Ali, *Winston Churchill*, 318.
17. *Idem*.

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