

# VICTORY HAS HIS FACE: AMERICA AND CHURCHILL'S LEGEND

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But essence of American journalism is vulgarity divested of truth. Their best papers write for a class of snotty housemaids and footmen & even the nicest people here have so much vitiated their taste as to appreciate the style.<sup>1</sup>

Winston S. Churchill, 1885

For the purpose of this essay it is necessary to start with a question: what makes an icon these days? Is it eminent personality? Fabulous appearance? Innovative ideas? His extraordinary life story? On the other hand, maybe the fame of modern idols depends more on media's hard work, rather than the person alone. We will not try to provide answer to these questions, but we will refer to a thesis that says, that popular connotations associated with Marilyn Monroe (sex appeal), Albert Einstein (brain), or Ernesto "Che" Guevara (revolution), have taken roots in our awareness, moreover gained widespread recognition primarily thanks to media. We can assume that media transformed these people into everlasting symbols, which have been used for many different purposes, and a commonplace opinion about these people has little to do with their real biography.<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill could be another example. In the circumstances of the beginning of the Second World War, together with the question of American involvement in European crisis, U.S. media generated easier public support for a particular person, rather than trying to win support for abstract ideas. Media put great effort in the creation of Churchill's symbolic picture, fully appreciating his extraordinary personality and political position. Since then, America has adopted its larger than life image, which has become commonly recognizable synonym of freedom, liberty, and opposition to all evil and final victory. This phenomenon outlived the war and Churchill's death in 1965. After

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill to his brother Jack, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/wc-trans19.html>. There is no need to comment Churchill's observation, but we should stress a specific character of American media and their role in creating popular culture. See: J. Chalasiński, *Kultura amerykańska*, Warszawa 1970; J.R. Dominick, *The Dynamics of Mass Communication*, New York 1990; D.J. Boorstin, *Amerykanie. Fenomen demokracji*, Warszawa 1995.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the subject see: R. Barthes, *Mit i znak. Eseje*, Warszawa 1970; idem, *Mitologie*, Warszawa 2000; J. Campbell, *Potęga mitu*, Kraków 1994; *Mitologie popularne. Szkice z antropologii współczesności*, D. Czaja (ed.), Kraków 1994.

September 11<sup>th</sup> American President, George W. Bush, realized once again how helpful Churchill's image could be for controlling a state, and he has been using most of it. What should be of no surprise, his actions met strong opposition, and media has faced lately a hot discussion concerning Churchill. Historians must agree that referring to a legend, while ignoring history is a kind of misrepresentation, but what matters in history are not only the analysis of facts, but also of what is *considered* a fact. Taking this into consideration, in this paper we will try to study the key elements in the process of the creation of the outstanding British Prime Minister's legend, and examine its influence on public opinion and political life in the USA.

## LEGEND TAKES ITS SHAPE

The third decade of the last century was disastrous time for Winston Churchill. Out of office, old enough to see the afterwards of his life under the explicit title *Churchill. A Study of Failure*,<sup>3</sup> focused on his writing, which would later gain him a nickname "Cassandra," he was a loser in the eyes of many. Remembered for his arrogance, controversial decisions, unusual political career and radical opinions, he seemed to have finished his adventure with history in a deep shadow.<sup>4</sup> While reading Churchill's interwar observations it is difficult to resist the feeling that he had a gift to predict the future, and at the same time it is not so hard to understand why only so few were able to see his arguments. But as the time went by, Churchill's warnings, presented clearly in his articles, published not only in Great Britain but also in the USA,<sup>5</sup> were dangerously coming true, as dictatorships in Europe were getting stronger and more possessive.

It is not the purpose of this essay to discuss the policy of appeasement,<sup>6</sup> so we will just stress the fact that when that policy was found a complete failure, the only acceptable person to have been appointed as wartime Prime Minister of Great Britain was Winston Churchill himself. The Cassandra's curse was finally due to fade away when he came to power on May 10th, 1940. By his fellow citizens he was seen to be on duty to save the world from tyranny in the dark times, although it is not far from truth to observe, that the only tool he possessed was the fact that "he enters office with the tremendous advantage of being the man who was right."<sup>7</sup> As the war continued, and British position was getting worse, all Churchill's thoughts were directed at the United States. His long relationship with America had made him

<sup>3</sup> R.R. James, *Churchill. A Study of Failure*, London 1939.

<sup>4</sup> For Winston Churchill's life and career see e.g.: M. Gilbert, *Churchill*, Poznań 1997; R. Jenkins, *Churchill*, London 2002; A. Kastory, *Churchill*, Wrocław 2004; J. Charmley, *Churchill. End of Glory. A Political Biography*, London 1995.

<sup>5</sup> See: W. Churchill, *Step by Step*, London 1969; idem, *Czas dyktatorów*, Łódź 1993; in the United States he published numerous articles for "Collier's" in the 1930s.

<sup>6</sup> The goal of the policy of appeasement was to pacify aggrieved nations, such as Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, through negotiations in order to prevent war. See: H. Batowski, *Między dwiema wojnami*, Kraków 1998; M. Gilbert, *The Roots of Appeasement*, London 1966.

<sup>7</sup> CBS broadcast, 10 May 1940. E.R. Murrow, *A Reporter Remembers: The War Years*, vol. 1, New York 1966; *In Search of Light: The Broadcasts of Edward R. Murrow, 1938-1961*, E. Bliss (ed.), New York 1967, p. 24.

believe, that it was the only country which could help Britain to defeat the enemy. Creation of the 'Special Relationship' between the UK and the USA was a long-term process in which Churchill participated whole-heartedly. His efforts in receiving moral and economic support, personal correspondence and meetings with American President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, were all of great importance, but it was America's full involvement into the war together with Brits that Churchill intended to achieve.<sup>8</sup>

Achieving this goal was difficult because most Americans were supporters of the policy of isolationism, which excluded any direct involvement in European affairs.<sup>9</sup> When searching for ways how to talk Americans into the war, Churchill advised to mold the public opinion more efficiently.<sup>10</sup> Already having achievements as a war leader and qualities as a statesman, he proved to be also a born showman, hence it could be said that he had an easier task than one might think in flattering the United States and its citizens. He was doing it very carefully; stressing that he was not only a real leader of his nation, but that he also embodied British determination in the time of war. He was enjoying growing popularity,<sup>11</sup> but it was not Churchill's efforts alone, what let him become a real sensation in the USA. It must be stress here, that in connections with his endeavors to drum up American support for his policy and concurrently to the official political line, the process of creation of a living symbol was going on.

The discussion about American non-alignment policy had started long time before Pearl Harbour and, since 1939 many of the U.S. media were telling stories about Churchill's predictive powers and glorified his prophecies, creating impression that he was the only just man in the world, standing alone against Nazi Germany for, as mentioned before, it was far more easy to get the support for a real person than for an abstract. Churchill's character, more complex and interesting, compared to most politicians, his extraordinary speech talent, non-controversial acceptance which he received in U.S, and his American ancestors, all these factors made him perfect for propaganda purposes. American newspapers wrote at length about Churchill's virtues, which are valued highly in the U.S, such as individualism, laboriousness, generosity or independence. A collection of Churchill's public statements between May 1938 and February 1941 was published in the book titled *Blood, Sweat And Tears*, which became a national best seller. Reviews presented him as the greatest statesman of the

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<sup>8</sup> For 'Special Relationship' see e.g.: W. Kimball, *Churchill, Roosevelt i Druga Wojna Światowa*, Warszawa 1999; W. Churchill, *Drugą Wojnę Światową*, Gdańsk 1995; J. Lash, *Roosevelt and Churchill, 1939-1941: The Partnership that Saved the West*, New York 1976; D. Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-1941*, Chapel Hill 1982.

<sup>9</sup> For isolationism see e.g.: W.S. Cole, *America First, The Battle Against Intervention 1940-41*, Wisconsin 1953; idem, *Roosevelt & the Isolationists, 1932-45*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1983; R.E. Powaski, *Toward an Entangling Alliance: American Isolationism, Internationalism, and Europe 1901-1950*, New York 1991; H. Lavine, J. Weshsler, *War Propaganda and the United States*, New Haven 1940.

<sup>10</sup> Harriman Averell to Churchill, April 15 194, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/wc-hour.html>; see also: S. Brewer, *To Win the Peace: British Propaganda in the United States during World War II*, Cornell University Press 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Among Churchill Papers in Churchill Archives Centre, we can find many letters from American citizens.

modern era, saying "If British democracy wins the war, Winston Churchill will rank with Abraham Lincoln in the annals of freedom." In 1941, Churchill was named "Man of the Year" by "Time." Most articles portrayed him as the personification of all that was good: "there are no neutral hearts, Winston Churchill, except those that have stopped beating!". Americans generally agreed that Churchill "passed the true test of democratic leadership by reaching the masses without resorting to demagoguery or compromising his principles."<sup>12</sup> Such enthusiastic characterizations encouraged Americans to see admirable qualities not only in the British leader but also in British nation, what seemed to be inevitable to guarantee public support for direct involvement into European affairs. Newspaper articles made a good job, but it was the radio, which strengthened Churchill's image and position. Since his Premiership, it was the main channel by which he communicated with the English public, and his messages were transferred to the United States. Possessing great oratory skills, he easily charmed the audience and got up its courage.

The famous American radio reporter in wartime London, Edward Murrow noticed that Churchill would have been the best broadcaster in Britain.<sup>13</sup> Murrow also observed aptly that Churchill had "mobilized the English language and sent it into battle to steady his fellow countrymen and hearten the Europeans upon whom the long dark night of tyranny had descended."<sup>14</sup> His most famous speeches such as "Give us tools and we will finish the job" addressed directly to the United State's audience,<sup>15</sup> were masterpieces of oratory skills. We should notice, that it was not only the content of the speech but also its style, what was of great importance, and it helped to gain him common support and sympathy. However, it was not before the Pearl Harbour attack, when American media started to show Churchill's warrior portrait in full. While in England it was already well known, in the USA before December 7<sup>th</sup> 1941, even on theaters or cinemas such an announcement could be read "no war news shown here." However, it should be of no surprise that with American access to the war, public opinion in USA had full access to the war news, so also to the Churchill's picture. British prime minister appeared regularly in films since the beginning of 1942, where he was shown conferring with Allied leaders, inspecting allied troops and positions, and parading before cheering crowds. He was presented when he visited all important places for war-time industry such as factories or shipyards, but he also in dangerous

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<sup>12</sup> For characterizations of Churchill during the first two years of the war see; "Time," September 30, 1940; January 26, 1941; August 25, 1941; "Life," January 27, 1941, April 21, 1941; "Saturday Evening Post," October 21, 1939; "Reader's Digest," January 1941; June 1941; "New York Times Magazine," May 19, 1940, September 8, 1940, September 14, 1941; December 28, 1941; "New Republic," June 10, 1940. See: J. Sikorsky, *From British Cassandra to American Hero. The Churchill's Legend in World War II in American Media*, Autumn 2002, <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=360>, (3.01.2006).

<sup>13</sup> Edward R. Murrow, the head of CBS's European bureau. He becomes famous for his reportage of events leading to and during Second World War. He assumed that Churchill's Premiership was the most important event of 1940. For the American people, Murrow showed how the war had transformed Britain into a bastion of democracy, thanks mainly to Winston Churchill.

<sup>14</sup> D.F. Wenden, *Churchill, Radio, and Cinema* [in:] *Churchill*, R. Blake, W.R. Louis (eds.), p. 222.

<sup>15</sup> W. Churchill, *Staume mowy*, Poznań 2001, p. 152.

war areas. Always in hurry, gluted to his cigar and flashed his Victory signs, he seemed to move the war theatre by all his actions as well as by the power of his will. As it was observed, none of the other war leaders, Stalin, Hitler, or even Roosevelt, were able to make "such heart warming populist appearance" which could "raise the morale of cinema audiences."<sup>16</sup>

However, what was of the prime importance for the completion of Churchill's portrait in America was his visit to the United States to meet Roosevelt, in order to coordinate strategy. This visit followed Japan's attack and Germany's declaration of war on the United States. As should be said here, Churchill's situation changed, as now he played a part of a coalition partner, not of a friend asking for a help. His presence in Washington seemed to be the crowning of the alliance between English-Speaking Countries. The most significant moment of his visit to States was his appearance before a joint session of Congress in the Senate Chamber on December 26<sup>th</sup>. It was the first time by a British Prime Minister during wartime to address Congress.<sup>17</sup> We thought it is worth reading a longer passage of Churchill's speech, thus one can realize how powerful and influential his words could be, but at the same time, we will notice that the speech itself was less revealing than the media's coverage of the address:

(...) Five or six years ago it would have been easy, without shedding a drop of blood, for the United States and Great Britain to have insisted on the fulfillment of the disarmament clauses of the treaties which Germany signed after the Great War. In addition, that would have been the opportunity for assuring to the Germans those materials-those raw materials-which we declared in the Atlantic Charter should not be denied to any nation, victor or vanquished. The chance has passed, it is gone. Prodigious hammer-strokes have been needed to bring us together today. If you will allow me to use other language, I will say that he must indeed have a blind soul who cannot see that some great purpose and design is being worked out here below of which we have the honor to be the faithful servants. It is not given to us to peer into the mysteries of the future. Still, I avow my hope and faith, sure and inviolate, that in the days to come the British and American peoples will, for their own safety and for the good of all, walk together in majesty, in justice and in peace.<sup>18</sup>

At the end, he signaled "V" for Victory and he received "the greatest ovation which has been accorded to any person in that chamber in living memory (...)." In addition, his words received enthusiastic reception. One journalist described this historic address as "full of bubbling humour, biting denunciation of totalitarian enemies, stern courage-and facts."<sup>19</sup> "Life" commented how Churchill had triumphantly "uncovered some of the most telling oratory that ever echoed within the Senate walls," as "he held erstwhile isolationists spellbound with the power of his prose." "Time," wondering

<sup>16</sup> D.F. Wenden, op.cit., p. 236.

<sup>17</sup> The first British Prime Minister who addressed Congress was Ramsay McDonald in 1929. The first British mission at the White House was in 1814, and the one arrived for an entirely different purpose, see: R. Kłosowicz, *Wojna amerykańsko-brytyjska 1812-1914*, Kraków 2003, pp. 227-233.

<sup>18</sup> W. Churchill, *Stauwe mouy*, p. 175; for the original speech in English see: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/ww2/churchill122641.html>

<sup>19</sup> Churchill Addresses Congress, December 26, 1941 [http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Churchill\\_Addresses\\_Congress.html](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Churchill_Addresses_Congress.html), (3.01 2006).

whether the gallery had ever before heard "such a moving and eloquent speech," believed "it was not so much the speech as the personality that put it over." The next morning, the front page of "The New York Times" showed Churchill in various poses during his address with the headline: "British Prime Minister Speaks and Members of Congress and Cabinet Listen." "Time," beneath the photo of "Churchill before Congress," had a caption that stated, "This was a man Americans liked." The following article observed that Churchill's arrival had been like "a breath of fresh air, giving Washington new vigor, for he came as a new hero."<sup>20</sup> It had been never more visible; to what extent British Prime Minister fascinated American media. As it can be seen, it was not only the image of Churchill The Warrior, but also Churchill The Star, which was seen as a gold mine for articles, quotations and stories. Although not of terrific appearance, the media transformed him into an affable figure. Photographers focused on his cigars, walking sticks and V-signs, all of which became his symbols, showing his vital energy and firmness in fighting enemy.

What was helping to charm public opinion was Churchill's great sense of humour and wit and Americans were truly amused by anecdotes concerning Churchill. According to one of the classic one, British Prime Minister appeared naked in front of his unexpected guest, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Having realized that, he said with dignity: "you see, Mr. President, I have nothing to hide."<sup>21</sup> Another one reports Churchill's reply to Lady Astor's remark: "Sir, if you were my husband, I would poison your drink:" "Madam, if you were my wife, I would drink it."<sup>22</sup> Other stories which helped to shape Churchill's characteristic image involved tales of his smoking and drinking. The most brilliant responses were given to General Montgomery's statement: "I don't smoke, I don't drink, and I am 100 percent fit," to which Churchill replied, "I both smoke and drink, and I am 200 percent fit,"<sup>23</sup> and to Lady Astor exclamation: "Mr. Churchill, you're drunk!": "Yes, and you, Madam, are ugly. But tomorrow, I shall be sober."<sup>24</sup> As one historian observed, drinking, and especially smoking, did not have the same negative connotations with Americans in the 1940s that they do today. Prohibition was abolished, and the dangers of smoking were not known. During the war, rumors of Churchill's drinking capability promoted his strong image, his cigars were very picturesque, and both of his "bad habits" served to enhance his popularity. It became part of the legend that Churchill "outdrank the Russians and out-smoked the Americans, but at the same time had the prowess to out-fight the enemy."<sup>25</sup> That last opinion dominated in media, and in people's minds. It must be stress here that Churchill's warrior image remained intact, although his political position weakened as the war went on.<sup>26</sup> It can be said that he had already secured the admiration and gratitude of the American people, for whom

<sup>20</sup> See J. Sikorsky, op.cit.

<sup>21</sup> W.H. Thompson, *Assignment Churchill*, New York 1955, p. 248.

<sup>22</sup> [www.anotherpointless.com/archive/2002/04/12/astor\\_to\\_churchill](http://www.anotherpointless.com/archive/2002/04/12/astor_to_churchill)

<sup>23</sup> Cited in J. Sikorsky, op.cit.

<sup>24</sup> [www.anvari.org/fortune/Quotations\\_1/294.html](http://www.anvari.org/fortune/Quotations_1/294.html)

<sup>25</sup> J. Sikorsky, op.cit.

<sup>26</sup> For Churchill's critics in American media see: "The New Republic" and "The Nation." These journals represented a leftist ideological viewpoint. Both praised Churchill's defiance of Hitler, but criticized his support of British imperial interests and manipulating of relations with the Soviet Union.

he was a personification of unshaken faith in just victory. In media he continued to be portrayed in a positive manner and remained popular, even when he became the minor partner to the American Presidents, and when American officials started to criticise his policy severely.<sup>27</sup> After the ending of the war, and his retiring from public life,<sup>28</sup> Churchill would have remained a hero in the United States. He travelled to America few times and he was always warmly welcomed by U.S. politicians and citizens, and he could still influence American political life by making comments on the situation in the world affairs, and he continued to symbolize the friendship between English-Speaking Countries. In 1949, "Time" honored him once again with the title "Man of the Year," especially for his strong opposition to communist world and ideology.<sup>29</sup> For his the symbolic climax of his relationship with United States was in 1963, when he received Honorary Citizenship of the United States. On that solemn occasion the president John F. Kennedy said:

By adding his name to our rolls, we mean to honor him – but his acceptance honors us far more. For no statement or proclamation can enrich his name – the name Sir Winston Churchill is already legend.<sup>30</sup>

His legend, which pictures Winston S. Churchill very superficially, and differs in many aspects from reality, overlived not only the time of the Second World War and its outcome, but also Churchill's death in 1965, arousing strong emotions even in the present days.

## LEGEND LIVES

Trying to understand the reasons for which Churchill's image could be recently noticed in American media, one has to take into consideration a role which it played in the past in making and discussing politics, and at the same time the present situation in the United States. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, President George W. Bush, found himself in an extremely difficult position. Having in mind the impact, which Al Qaeda's attacks would have on American foreign policy, the President realized the importance of having the supporters who could help to promote and justify his actions. It should be of no surprise that trying to create his charismatic and powerful picture of a war leader, he recalled an icon and a speechmaster of the Second World War. He was not exceptional, thus many politicians before him were quoting Churchill for propaganda purposes, but no one was doing to such extent. What seems certain, Bush junior in the cultivation of Winston Churchill followed neoconservatists, who had strong position in his

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<sup>27</sup> J. Channley, op.cit., p. 622; M. Gilbert, op.cit., pp. 855–857; D. Dimbleby, D. Reynolds, *An Ocean Apart*, New York 1988, pp. 151–174.

<sup>28</sup> In 1951 Churchill became a Prime Minister of the Great Britain for the second time, in 1955, he retired definitely.

<sup>29</sup> Here should be mentioned the most significant moments such as the speech at Fulton in 1946 with the famous Iron Curtain, but also the Sues Crisis of 1956 and disagreements with the president Dwight Eisenhower over policy toward Soviet Union.

<sup>30</sup> See: <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=430>, Only five more foreigners received this honour: William and Hannah Penn, Marquise de Lafayette, Raul Wallenberg and Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

government.<sup>31</sup> What made the President even more willing to refer to the neoconservatist's views in the time of shaping the new political doctrine, was their strong belief in the ability to install democracy by conquest, the tendency to accuse those, who oppose them as being appeasers, and the perception of the world in 1939 terms. And, what is especially important for this essay, they compare adversaries as diverse as the Soviet Union, Osama bin Laden, and China to Nazi Germany, while American leaders such as Reagan and Bush stand in for Winston Churchill, who is seen as the most significant historical figure. Even the fullest account of neocon's views, "While America Sleeps," is a strict reference to Churchill's work *While England Slept*.<sup>32</sup> It is far more convincing that it were these analogies that inspired Bush's reflections, and not his fascination with Churchill, which was supposed to start during his studies at Yale University. Even if we have in mind his gestures such as the placement of the bust of British statesman in the White House Oval Office in 2000.

Although the fact that Churchill himself had to deal with, what can be said a similar challenge, was important, but what appears to be more decisive was the conviction, that references to British wartime Prime Minister would be interpreted according to Bush's intentions. Churchill had a role to play in Bush's war propaganda, and he played it well. As shown above, his image had already taken its shape and it had taken root in people's awareness. Making reference to this picture allowed Bush's administration to awake all connotation it brings, without going into details in presenting adopted political line. Having declared the war on terror, and consequently the war on Afghanistan and Iraq, Bush compared his views to Churchill's beliefs in order to gain wide support and convince his opponents. As we will see, George W. Bush and his team referred to Churchill as a symbol, not as a historical figure. Just like during the World War II, when Churchill's image helped to promote America's involvement in European's affairs and later embodied coming victory, in latest conflict it was used by authorities to prove government's actions being right.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Political doctrine called neoconservatism is a term referring to the political goals and ideology of the "new conservatives" in the United States. The "newness" refers either to being new to American conservatism (often coming from liberal or socialist backgrounds) or to being part of a "new wave" of conservative thought and political organization. Compared to other U.S. conservatives, neoconservatives are characterized by an aggressive stance on foreign policy, a lesser social conservatism, and weaker dedication to a policy of minimal government. See: [http://www.woridiq.com/definition/Neoconservatism\\_\(United\\_States\)](http://www.woridiq.com/definition/Neoconservatism_(United_States)); Ch. Krauthammer, *Neoconservatism and Foreign Policy*, "National Interest," Fall 2004; [www.euro-legal.org/useur/usneocon.html](http://www.euro-legal.org/useur/usneocon.html), (3.01.2006).

<sup>32</sup> D. Kagan, F. Kagan, *While America Sleeps, Self Delusion, Military Weakness and the Threat to Peace Today*, St. Martin's Press, 2000; W. Churchill, *While England Slept*, London 1938.

<sup>33</sup> For Bush's foreign policy see: B. Woodward, *Wojna Busha*, Warszawa 2003; R. Jarwis, *Understanding the Bush Doctrine*, "Political Science Quarterly," vol. 118, no. 3, Fall 2003; W. La Feber, *The Bush Doctrine*, "Political History," vol. 26, no. 4, Fall 2002; W. Michnik, *Bush's Brand-new Doctrine-Shaping the United States' Foreign Policy after September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001*, "Ad American," vol. 5, 2004.



(...) In some ways our current struggles or challenges are similar to those Churchill knew. The outcome of the war on terror depends on our ability to see danger and to answer it with strength and purpose.<sup>34</sup>

This passage can be understood as a warning about the danger of the policy of appeasement, and Bush drew a clear parallel between the present American situation and British situation before the Second World War. Even if the circumstances in which Churchill's lone voice was warning about Nazi danger was not remembered, there was no need to explain that historic facts to the public opinion in the United States. It was enough to show the war posters showing Churchill giving Victory sign, and present strict analogies between the Axis Berlin–Rome–Tokyo and the axis of evil to make clear, what sort of peril was thought to stand against US:

Think of all the countries that said, well we don't have enough evidence. Mein Kampf had been written. Hitler had indicated what he intended to do. Maybe he will not attack us. Maybe he will not do this or that. Well, there were millions dead because of the miscalculations.<sup>35</sup>

It is hard to say that it is a good example of oratory skills, but it shows clearly, why American politicians have turned to Winston Churchill and why Churchill's voice could be heard again. Bush's closest collaborators such as Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld or charismatic Mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani, recalled Churchill's remarks wanting to prove that the only possible way to protect America was a firm war on terror no matter at what cost, before it would be too late. American people were reminded that he was a person who was right; while everybody said he was wrong suggesting that, the same misjudgment might concern Bush. We thought important to quote a longer example of Bush's words, thus they bring resemblance to Churchill's speeches and, on the other hand, they express the government's intentions pointedly, as well as the idealistic side of the New Doctrine:

(...) And we know the work that has fallen to this generation. When great striving is required of us, we will always have an example in the man we honor today. Winston Churchill was a man of extraordinary personal gifts, yet his greatest strength was his unshakable confidence in the power and appeal of freedom. It was the great fortune of mankind that he was there in an hour of peril. And it remains the great duty of mankind to advance the cause of freedom in our time.<sup>36</sup>

These words were said during the opening of the exhibition titled "Churchill and the Great Republic." That occasion gave the President not only a chance to take on a lofty tone while talking about his policy, but also a possibility to remind the strong ties between Churchill and America. His goal was to stress the importance and meaning of Anglo-American alliance which can be said one of the most stable configurations in today's political map. Using Churchill as an excuse, Bush had an occasion to present Tony Blair as his closest ally, and to thank him for his support:

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<sup>34</sup> Bush's speech on February 4, 2004, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20020204-4.html>, (3.01.2006).

<sup>35</sup> Rumsfeld's speech to Marines at a military base in California, August 2002, <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/politicspast/story/0,9061,782304,00.html>, (3.12.2006); see also Giuliani's speech, <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,22194,wid,5679676,wiadomosc.html>, (3.01.2006).

<sup>36</sup> Bush's speech on February 4, 2004.

In his determination to do the right thing, and not the easy thing, I see the spirit of Churchill in Prime Minister Tony Blair.<sup>37</sup>

By recalling the "Churchill Spirit," he made it clear that 'Special Relationship' between English-Speaking Countries were crucial for American foreign policy. However, although the alliance with England plays an important role in the war on terror, the vital part is played by the USA itself. Bush needed Churchill's image mainly to gain support for his decision from his own country. What should be of no surprise, by saying Churchill's name in the connection with the present foreign policy, Bush's team provoked hot talks in media. It was not only the question of the justness of the war on terror, but also Bush's chances in forthcoming presidential election, what was brought into discussion. Journalists, who supported the president, were delighted drawing parallels between Churchill and Bush, and although they concluded their articles by saying that "Bush is no Churchill," it was certain that they saw strong similarities between those two statesmen, stressing only their positive traits.<sup>38</sup> Many as unacceptable abuses and alarmed heated protests read such opinions. Well-educated critics cried that Bush, knowing next to nothing about the British Prime Minister, was wrong in almost every word he was saying. According to them, the only Churchill's quotation he could sign with his name is the one that goes: "in wartime truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies."<sup>39</sup> They did even not hesitate to say, that Churchill presented by Bush was "for dummies."<sup>40</sup> Because in Churchill's papers one can find examples of almost any move or opinion, Bush's opponents had an easy task in proving the president ignorant. They confronted Bush's views with the Prime Minister's statements such as "to jaw-jaw is always better then to war-war,"<sup>41</sup> which are supposed to prove that in his heart Churchill was an appeaser himself. They stress his attitudes towards India's government, reminding that he called Gandhi "half-naked fakir," and denied Indian independence, which is read as a contrast to his faith in democracy. The most controversial and shameful opinions in Churchill's life, such as his support for using gas against uncivilized tribes, euthanasia of disabled people or his racist remarks has been pointed out, to ridicule Bush and his policy in the eyes of Americans.<sup>42</sup>

We do not think it is necessary to go deeper into this discussion, but we must stress here, that although one might disagree with Bush's policy and his methods, at

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>38</sup> See e.g.: J. Buff, *Dubya and Winnie*, December 17, 2003, [http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,Buff\\_121703,00.html](http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,Buff_121703,00.html), (3.01 2006); P. Worthington, *Why George Bush is today's Churchill*, September 28, 2004, [http://www.canoe.ca/NewsStand/Columnists/Toronto/Peter\\_Worthington/2004/09/28/646211.html](http://www.canoe.ca/NewsStand/Columnists/Toronto/Peter_Worthington/2004/09/28/646211.html), (3.01.2006).

<sup>39</sup> It can be read as strict reference to the scandal with nuclear weapon that were said to be found in Iraq what served as the direct excuse for the intervention in Iraq. Later it occurred not to be true.

<sup>40</sup> M. Lind, *Churchill for Dummies*, "The Spectator," April 24, 2004, [www.antiwar.com?spectator/spec.280html](http://www.antiwar.com?spectator/spec.280html), (2.01 2006).

<sup>41</sup> Churchill's remark to American journalists, June 26, 1954, see: <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/w/winstonchu141781.html>

<sup>42</sup> See e.g.: "The Spectator," April 24, 2004; "National Interest," 2004; "The Guardian," August 29, 2002, November 28, 2002; "Investor's Business Daily," 2001. What might be curious is the fact that he was portrayed as racist who preferred Jews to Arabs, but at the same time, he was also criticized for his opinions on Jews.

the same time it is meaningless to criticize the President for referring to Churchill's image, created for propaganda purposes, which helped him to explain his actions to American people. And if it still appears as treating history as another political tool, not a learning discipline, it was Bush himself who defended his tactics best by confessing: "I'm not a historian. I'm a guy making history."<sup>43</sup> And Bush, one can like it or not, has still his chance to shape world's policy which will become history one day, not without a little help from Churchill's picture.

## CONCLUSION

The creation of Churchill's legend was something of an extraordinary meaning, and American media put great effort in it, gaining the British Prime Minister unquestionable popularity among Americans. Which must be emphasized, in the course of history and in the circumstances we presented, Churchill's image has separated from the historical figure, and thus a clear distinction between a person and his image must be made. The fact, that his legend survived such a long time can prove that Churchill, in a way, was perfect for being the everlasting symbol although, undoubtedly, the crucial moments of its influence were the days of the Second World War. What might seem interesting is that Churchill, although popular in Europe, has never received such uncontroversial approbation in the Old Continent and what is more, Europe has never turned widely to Churchill as a symbol created in America. Nevertheless, this is a topic for another discussion.

"History will be good to me for I intend to write it myself"<sup>44</sup> said Churchill once. American media, on the other hand, wrote Churchill's legend themselves. We can only discuss what was more abusing and impertinent.

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<sup>43</sup> Bush's Interview with "Time Magazine", August 29, 2004, [www.tashian.com/carl/archives/2004/08/](http://www.tashian.com/carl/archives/2004/08/), (3.01.2006).

<sup>44</sup> [www.http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Sir\\_Winston\\_Churchill](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Sir_Winston_Churchill)

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