

CONVERSATIONS

WITH BILL KRISTOL

Conversations with Bill Kristol

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I: Churchill and Statesmanship (0:15 – 30:46)

KRISTOL: Hi. I'm Bill Kristol. Welcome to CONVERSATIONS. I'm joined today by Steve Hayward, visiting professor at the University of California at Berkeley. I just can't quite say that with a straight face, but it's great. It's great. Congratulations.

HAYWARD: Well, I'm an inmate is what I usually say.

KRISTOL: I'm sure Berkeley's benefitting from your presence.

HAYWARD: Well, I hope so.

KRISTOL: I'm sure. I'm sure they are. And author of famous – many, many things worth reading, most famously a multi-volume biography of Ronald Reagan, which really is a must read to understand American politics, in my opinion, for a long period, really, since you deal with the pre-Reagan situation and Reagan.

And two books, I think, on Churchill?

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: As well as essays. *Churchill on Leadership*, a book I'd highly recommend. Is it in print, actually?

HAYWARD: It is in print.

KRISTOL: Okay. Perfect. Well, then they can just buy it.

HAYWARD: It was 20 years ago, but it's still in print.

KRISTOL: Yeah. No. It's an excellent book. And then you did a short book, I think also on Churchill and Reagan?

HAYWARD: Yeah. The publisher called it *Greatness: Reagan, Churchill, and the Making of Extraordinary Leaders*. I didn't really like that title, but trade publishers call the tune on it. And it grew out of my Reagan

work. I was startled to discover, in doing a word search, that Reagan quoted Churchill more often than all other presidents combined, and I started noticing parallels.

KRISTOL: He quoted Churchill more often than he quoted all the presidents?

HAYWARD: No, than other presidents. Right.

KRISTOL: Oh, that's interesting. Uh-huh.

HAYWARD: You know, I counted them. I even extrapolated the John F. Kennedy quotation rate over a prospective two terms and Reagan still beat him. And I started noticing some similarities between them, which I thought marked out an outline of statesmanship.

KRISTOL: Oh, that's good. Well, people should read that, too.

And so let's talk about Churchill. I've been a long-time Churchill fan. You've studied him in depth. Let's begin with the most famous – Well, Churchill always comes back. That's what strikes me, right? I mean so we've had the movie recently, *The Darkest Hour*, which you wrote about actually; and then controversy about the movie and whether it should have won the awards and whether it papered over less nice aspects of Churchill's politics, I suppose.

But talk about that a little bit. And then we'll talk about the '30s and '40s in particular, which is such a – for me, is such an extraordinary and endlessly interesting and endlessly educational period.

HAYWARD: Well, I think sort of two opening points to make. One is that period that people take as the apex of his career in the '30s – warning about Nazi Germany and then his war leadership – that's not just a matter of historical fascination. There are timeless lessons to be drawn from that about the nature of political life, about the nature of statesmanship, international relations. I think it's quite relevant today to what we're facing, for instance, with Iran and North Korea, among other problems.

And then the second thing is, to put it bluntly, for the modern left, Churchill is politically incorrect.

KRISTOL: Yeah.

HAYWARD: And this is really an outrage, I think. I mean it used to be liberals liked him – a lot.

KRISTOL: Well talk about that a little because no one really – We think of him as a Tory, conservative, imperialist and all that, but –

HAYWARD: Right. Well, he was – he really was – we'll come back to this later. He really was a liberal in a lot of ways. An English liberal is the way he described himself. But, you know, Arthur Schlesinger loved him. John F. Kennedy really liked him. In fact, one of Kennedy's great disappointments is that he could not lure Churchill to the White House when Churchill made his last visit to the United States, I think in 1961, when he was very old and in poor health. And Isaiah Berlin wrote a famous essay about Churchill's greatness.

And meanwhile, conversely, a lot of American conservatives were lukewarm to him and sometimes even hostile. William F. Buckley changed his mind about Churchill, but for a long time in the fifties and into the sixties he didn't feel very fondly towards Churchill. The obituary he wrote for Churchill in *National Review* is really quite harsh and completely wrongheaded I think.

KRISTOL: That's interesting.

HAYWARD: And then, you know, part of it was that the isolationists, or the old Bob Taft wing of the conservatives in America, thought that Churchill dragged us into two wars, or at least certainly the second one.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: And that's the main thing they didn't like about him.

Buckley used to say his alliance with Stalin bothered him; I think thinking way too narrowly about the circumstances. And as I say, Buckley changed his mind later about that, but –

KRISTOL: And the revisionist, if I'm not mistaken, the revisionist, sort of anti-Churchill historical work in the eighties, nineties, maybe seventies even when we were reading up on Churchill was mostly from sort of Tory historians, right?

HAYWARD: Yes.

KRISTOL: Or not mostly, but at least partly, right? It was sort of pro-Chamberlain. There was more of a case for appeasement than one realized. But that was a conservative of a kind of attack on Churchill. No? I mean –

HAYWARD: No, that's correct. I think that might have been the early innings of what we nowadays call the Alt Right.

KRISTOL: Well, that's an interesting point.

HAYWARD: It's people like David Irving, who was actually convicted on some European anti-Semitism statutes.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: John Lukacs told me once that he thinks Irving actually fabricated some documents.

KRISTOL: Oh.

HAYWARD: And, but then John Charmley was more skeptical. He wasn't quite as bad as Irving.

But then here in this country it's Pat Buchanan, who wrote a full book attacking Churchill in the typically clever way that Pat does, concealing a lot of bad motives, I think. But he said it was Churchill's unnecessary war. Should have made a deal. That lingers on in certain precincts of the right.

KRISTOL: And then on the left – we'll talk about – you mentioned this to me. So let's talk about the left. I mean, he wasn't a liberal hero, but he was a liberal in many ways, right?

HAYWARD: Right. Well, I think maybe the best marker of this is *Time* magazine. It's hard to get much more establishment than *Time* magazine. In 1950 they named Churchill "man of the half century." That's back when they did "man" of the year. Now it's "person of the year."

When they got to 1999 and had to do a "person of the century," they said well, "Why is Churchill not our person of the century?" They said, "Well, times changed, you know. We have different views of things now." And they wanted to say that he was – I can quote this almost directly from memory: that "He was a refugee from another era who was out of step with the path of history."

So they went to that very progressive-style language we're so familiar with—and in other words he was politically incorrect, right? And so he gets charged with colonialism, racism, but some of the things said after the movie won so much attention, as well: "He was a mass murderer." They wrench all kinds of things out of context about the Bengal famine, about him supposedly advocating the use of poison gas. That's not true. He meant tear gas, and other things.

And so, you know, we have to correct the record on all of these. But beyond that is the wider, I think, modern, radical-egalitarian dislike of human excellence. I think that's what it really reduces to. He is quite simply – your mother used to like to quote the British historian Geoffrey Elton who said, "My test of a historian is how they judge Winston Churchill." That no matter how many faults, how many mistakes, he still remains quite simply a great man. And I first saw your mother quote that somewhere.

KRISTOL: Yeah. I remember she did, in a review, I think, of a Churchill biography. Yeah. It's funny, you mentioned that about the liberals.

So we at the *Weekly Standard* in 2000 – maybe reacting to *Time* magazine; I can't remember anymore – made Churchill, you know – we don't really do "man of the century" type, "people of the century" type thing, but we did it in this one case, and we made Churchill our man of the century. And you know who wrote the cover story, which was not perfect, from our point of view, but a good story; very proud to publish it on the cover? I wrote a little editorial and actually reproduced Leo Strauss's eulogy for Churchill. But the actual cover story was written by Chris Matthews.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: And it showed – and Chris's appreciation for Churchill showed. He is a liberal of a certain generation, you know, and he's – I mean, he pretends when he's on TV perhaps to be totally in touch with contemporary liberalism, but he really is a liberal more of an Arthur Schlesinger type, you might say, and John Kennedy type. He worships the Kennedys.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: And it was interesting. It's worth going back, and people can look it up, Chris's appreciation of Churchill, which is a kind of old-fashioned liberalism. He has some disavowal of imperialism and so forth, but he really understands what Churchill meant.

HAYWARD: Yeah. I mean another contemporary liberal admirer of Churchill is Dick Durbin, a senator from Illinois, who normally I can't stand for two seconds, but so he admires Churchill. He may not have the best grasp of him, but there are still a few around who haven't completely surrendered to the historicism and political correctness of progressives.

KRISTOL: And also, yeah, I mean, so out of – whatever they might disagree with him on one thing or another, like saving Western civilization, you think, would overwhelm that.

But so let's talk about that. What are – you said there were lessons from the thirties and forties.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: I mean when you go back and reread that history, what stands out to you: which moments, which decisions, which speeches? I mean what should people look at?

HAYWARD: Right. So I think the general theme would be this: the heart of statesmanship is having attachment to principles. You could talk about what were Churchill's core two or three principles, and a profound grasp of the circumstances. In other words, understanding what's going on around you. It's one

thing to be for liberty or democracy. It's another thing to understand all the moving parts of what threatens it and what ought to be done.

So, the first thing I think you want to take in is that Churchill understood the character of the Nazi regime and the defects of appeasement. Churchill was not categorically opposed to appeasement. He always had supported appeasement, including of Germany. He thought the Versailles Treaty had treated Germany too harshly and unjustly and thought that ought to be remedied. But he changed his mind once the Nazis came to power because he realized that appeasing them would make the problem worse.

So he understood the character of the regime, which is something that we ought to keep in mind in talking about North Korea, Iran, and so forth today.

And then secondly, he understood that what is necessary is an alliance of free nations and arming yourself sufficiently to deter aggression. You know, "containment" we'd later call it. And a lot of confusion about this. Disarmament was very popular. Passivism was very popular. And, you know, you see that as a recurring temptation. So one of his great phrases was, "We're following the path of least resistance." If that doesn't sound like what the Obama administration did with Iran, I don't know what is.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: But there are lots of modern examples. So, it's a tendency to follow the path of least resistance, to give in to wishful thinking, just mere talk from foreign leaders who know very well how to play the democratic sensibilities.

And I think – plus there's all those great speeches he gave. There's the one from 1936, '37 about "the years the locusts have eaten" about our neglect of defense preparation – *ours* being the British neglect of it. And that's the one where he ends that, so we are "adamant for drift, resolved to be irresolute, all-powerful to be impotent." He was always so good at those kind of phrases.

And then my own opinion is the very best speech he ever gave – not the wartime speeches, you know, Dunkirk and some of those – I think it was the speech after the Munich Agreement. That's the one I always recommend to students and to people to read, and that's the one where he said, We've suffered "a defeat without a war," and this is just the first "sip of a bitter cup." Now Hitler is just going to be served his meals course by course. And how ashamed we should feel for betraying the Czechs. It was not popular.

You know, the agreement, which they thought was going to avoid war was very popular with the British, and Churchill was not popular for dissenting. But I think that was his finest moment.

KRISTOL: Yeah. That's early October '38.

HAYWARD: 1938. Yes.

KRISTOL: Yeah. That is a wonderful, wonderful speech. There's the earlier speech in February or March of '38 also that's a really fantastic: sort of indictment of his own party.

And for me, that's something people forget. We, I think people who, you know, the image of Churchill – I mean this world-historic figure, unbelievably revered except for some critics, but, you know, the victor of World War II, Nobel Prize, this – I mean they forget how unpopular – I mean that for me is also – not just that he was right about Nazi Germany and about appeasement, but he stood against it when it was unpopular to do so and stood against his own party.

HAYWARD: He only had maybe a dozen people in his own party who were with him. Others may have been somewhat sympathetic. But one of the things that *The Darkest Hour* movie brings out very well,

which has been known for a while to historians like Andrew Roberts and others, is how unpopular Churchill was as a successor to Chamberlain in May of 1940.

KRISTOL: As late as that.

HAYWARD: As late as that.

KRISTOL: As late as that he wasn't yet vindicated. Yeah.

HAYWARD: Right. And in fact he might not have become prime minister if the Labour Party had not said he's the only Tory we will serve under. Because they decided to form an All-Party government, and they said it's Churchill or we're not going to do it. Because I think the party preferred someone else. There's lots and lots of diary entries from the time of Tory members of House saying, "Well, Churchill won't last very long. There'll be somebody more sensible coming along soon. Halifax. Maybe we'll bring Chamberlain back."

And the movie does demonstrate quite accurately that Churchill's first appearance in the House on May 13th, day three, he was received very coolly by his own party and he was cheered by the Labour benches. And so it took a while for him to win around his own party.

KRISTOL: It is, yeah, and just standing up against your own party for year after year, when the party's popular. Again, it's one thing – some of us are critics of Trump and honestly that's, you know, not so hard because Trump has a mixed view even among conservatives and Republicans to some degree. But Chamberlain? Baldwin, Chamberlain, that was the total consensus, right? I mean they were well-respected leaders. They were serious people. They weren't embarrassments in any way, I guess. I mean I –

HAYWARD: Well, that's right. They had a big majority in the House.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: And but for the sensibility that the British have of having an All-Party government, which is something Churchill always liked, by the way, was All-Party governments in a crisis. Yeah.

The big majority – and Churchill had served under Baldwin in the 1920s as Chancellor of the Exchequer – that's their secretary of the treasury. And but he'd been frozen out in the '30s. Another thing to remember, this is the period they call "the wilderness years," is everyone thought Churchill's career was over.

KRISTOL: Yeah.

HAYWARD: That he was done and finished. He'd made too many mistakes, he had too much baggage, he was too old. He was 65 in 1940. It does remind me a little bit of what was said about Ronald Reagan in 1980: He's too old, he's too extreme, he's too unreliable.

KRISTOL: Why had Churchill not been in the governments after – in the Conservative governments in the thirties? He had broken already with the party or –

HAYWARD: Yes. The main reason was around 1929 or 1930, when they're out of power – the Labour Party had a brief majority. Churchill was the shadow chancellor I think still. But he opposed the party's agreement to go along with the Labour Party in initially granting Dominion status to India, which was the first step to independence for India. And he posed that very vigorously. He reminds me a bit of Ronald Reagan opposing the Panama Canal Treaty in the 1970s against the party leadership.

And that caused him to be tossed out of the shadow cabinet, and he was never brought back in. And so that when the Conservatives came back into power under Baldwin, he was left out. Even when the Baldwin and later Chamberlain governments thought, “maybe we should start rearming a bit because Germany is making us nervous,” the thought of making Churchill Minister of Supply, which he had been in World War I briefly, or some other ministry, they shot the idea down every time. And part of the reason was well, “That will offend Hitler, and we want to get along with him so we can’t have Churchill in the cabinet.”

KRISTOL: Yeah, that’s amazing. What’s impressive about those speeches in the late ’30s, for me too, when you read them now, is there’s very little sugarcoating of how difficult the situation is. I mean he understands that Britain is now in a much weaker position than they would have been three or five or eight years earlier, and it’s not going to be easy to fix. It’s not even obvious always exactly what to do tactically to deal with the currents of the situation.

It reminds me a little bit of our predicaments today, in a way. Once you’ve given away a lot, it’s not so easy to – you can’t just snap your fingers and turn it around, you know. It’s one thing to rally the country when you’re – not to minimize it – but when you’re under the Blitz or when you’re just at – your back’s to the wall and you have no choice. But that really wasn’t the situation in the late ’30s. They thought they had a choice of how to move forward.

HAYWARD: Well, right. But again, I mean it was usually, as he said, the path of least resistance.

KRISTOL: Yeah.

HAYWARD: One of the things about Churchill that makes him so interesting is – and also this idea that he was a man of the past is so wrong – is that he was very much oriented to technology and innovation. So he was a big champion of radar. You know, one of his best friends was a physics professor from Cambridge I think, maybe Oxford, Frederick Lindemann.

And at a very early – in fact, as early as the age 26 Churchill wrote an essay – sorry, not age 26, 1926, pardon me. He writes an essay anticipating nuclear weapons. He says that we may be not far away from a time when a bomb no longer than an orange can destroy a whole city. This was before you have any of the even practical work that led up to the atomic bomb, right?

And so he was a champion of radar, of air defenses. Even before that, if you go back, Churchill is sometimes called “the father of the tank.” That’s not exactly right. He’s more of its uncle.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: But he’s the person who pushed the development and deployment of the tank in World War I because he understood, as he put it, “the mechanical problem,” which is that defensive firepower in the trenches, “needs a mechanical remedy.” And they weren’t used very well because people didn’t understand tank tactics. That’s something we learned over time, but he saw that and pressed for it very hard.

He loved the airplane. When he heard about the Wright brothers inventing the airplane, he wrote a memo saying, “We must get in touch with the Wright brothers right away because this is really important.” So there was at least that aspect of his – of what should be done is we should be pressing our scientific and technological advantages to the maximum because that’s one thing that can be done in any circumstance.

KRISTOL: Yeah. Such an unusual combination of that kind of respect, appreciation of the past and ability to evoke it and so movingly in so many of his speeches, but a pretty, I mean a genuine belief in the

importance of science and progress and a determined willingness to push forward on that. It's an unusual combination.

HAYWARD: Well, he liked to say, "The farther you look back, the farther you can look forward." And I think when he was around age 70, some schoolboy asked him what's the best preparation for becoming a politician or someone in public life, and he said, "Study history." And of course he wrote lots of it, right.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: And he learned a lot from the writing of history I'm convinced.

KRISTOL: Is that right? *Marlborough* I guess is considered his greatest historical work.

HAYWARD: Yeah. And it's, you know, it's very – what's that famous line of Leo Strauss is "It ought to be required reading of every political science student." I've sometimes thought to try and find out if anybody's ever assigned the book for a class. I'm sure the number is zero because it is very large.

KRISTOL: I think there's a one version – one-volume abridgement of it maybe. I've never really looked at it.

HAYWARD: There is. It's not very good. Henry Steele Commager did an abridgement and he took out all the interesting parts, which is sort of typical. I think what you see in all of Churchill's historical writing, you know, the world crisis about World War I and six volumes on World War II, is he gives you a great narrative and he's such a wonderful stylist. But at various points he pauses to talk for a while about the lessons that should be drawn from it, and that's where I think he really becomes interesting and where it really comes to life.

So I always recommend to people, and I show the students, his chapter on the Munich Agreement in *The Gathering Storm*, where he talks with a great subtlety, I think, about trying to understand how you deal with a circumstance when you can't predict the future. But there he finally comes down on the side of honor. He says, "Honor pointeth the path of duty," and if we'd followed the old principle of honor, we would have avoided the mess that – we would have avoided making it worse.

KRISTOL: Yeah. It seems to me in those books too he tries to – I mean there's a certain amount of, of course, fudging of history where he doesn't want to offend other people who are –

HAYWARD: Yes.

KRISTOL: I think he's polite, and also allies he doesn't want to offend and so forth. So those things can't be taken as kind of quite straightforward history. But in so far to say as to appear to try to be educational, don't you think he really tries hard to give you the sense, which most historians in my opinion don't, of being in the moment and seeing the uncertainty of what lays before?

Because the trouble with history is just because of the way it's written, a biography or a narrative of a certain period, there's a certain way in which you know what's going to happen and you start to think to yourself, and I think the historian often starts to think to him or herself, you know, that this *had to happen this way* or this is, you know? It's a thing, unspooling in some predictable way as opposed to these decision points. And Churchill I think is very conscious of that.

HAYWARD: Yes. You mentioned he sometimes fudged over things out of prudence and consideration for his contemporaries, for President Eisenhower, in one case. He was finishing his World War II books when Eisenhower was elected president, and he went back and cut out some criticisms of Eisenhower as head of the Supreme Allied Forces. But one of the things that we did lose from that is the story that *The Darkest Hour* movie tells. You know, he formed a war cabinet, had Attlee, the Labor leader –

KRISTOL: So he's called by the – so Chamberlain doesn't lose a vote of confidence.

HAYWARD: He steps down. Right.

KRISTOL: Chamberlain loses a lot of Conservative members, famously, on May 10th or whatever that may be.

HAYWARD: Right. May 9th.

KRISTOL: May 9th in the vote of confidence in the House.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: And then they realize they can't sustain the Chamberlain government.

HAYWARD: Right. And the Labour Party says, we'll serve under Churchill.

KRISTOL: Okay.

HAYWARD: And they reluctantly agreed to give Churchill a try, but he forms a war cabinet of just five or six people. Chamberlain was kept in the war cabinet.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: Churchill always had good personal relations with Chamberlain, but it also had the foreign minister, Lord Halifax. And then as I say Clement Attlee and Herbert Morrison from the Labour Party and right away – oh, and this is when the British Army, the British Expeditionary Force is trapped at Dunkirk and they're not sure if they're going to be able to get any of them out or very, very few. It looked like it may be the worst disaster in British military history.

So it's before the miracle of the boatlift, which Churchill helped think up. And Lord Halifax was saying, "you know, we better think about negotiating with Hitler for some terms. And I've been talking to the Italians," who are not yet in the war on Hitler's side, "and they're willing to mediate this." And Churchill thinks this is a terrible idea. He said, "once we start down that slippery slope, it's going to be all downhill and we'll never get out of it."

Well, they have some very bitter words over this, and Halifax at one point threatens to resign, which might have brought down the government if he did. And the movie dramatizes this pretty well. They've made up some things because we don't quite know what passed between them because what the minutes say is that they both left the room together and walked in the garden for a great long time. We still have no idea what passed between them. We can only guess at that.

But then what happens is – and the movie doesn't quite get this right and they've invented some things, but I think the larger story is correct. Churchill says, "I think I need to tell the whole cabinet what's going on," and he assembles – and he hadn't met with the whole cabinet yet. This was May 28th. So he's been in office 18 days. And the whole cabinet comes in and –

KRISTOL: And the Netherlands have been overrun.

HAYWARD: That's right.

KRISTOL: France is falling.

HAYWARD: France is falling and they've –

KRISTOL: And Dunkirk's about to be –

HAYWARD: About to happen, but they haven't gotten very many people off yet and it's still uncertain whether they will. So still, things are very bad. And Churchill, remember is – the movie shows him being somewhat doubtful about things and maybe hesitant, and some people have criticized that. There's some contemporaneous evidence that there is something to that. We know that he told his bodyguard on May 10th, "Going to see the king. I hope it is not too late. I very much fear that it might be." So, like I say, there's some evidence that that depiction has some truth to it.

But in front of the whole cabinet he reviews how grim things are, and then says, "Nevertheless we must fight on. I've considered whether it is part of my duty to enter talks with that man." That's how he liked to refer to Hitler sometimes. "And I realize that to do so would be folly. He would demand our fleet. He would install Oswald Mosley," the leader of British Fascists at the time. And he says, "I'm convinced that every one of you here in the room would rise up and tear me down from this place if I thought for one moment about parley or surrender." And then the closing line, which no one knew about until the 1980s when I think Martin Gilbert found it, when he said, "If this long island story of ours is to end at last. Let it end only when each one of us is choking in his own blood on the floor."

And the cabinet rises up and cheers and shouts and they're patting him on the back, and Churchill just says "Oh, it was a demonstration of a cabinet meeting that showed their support," but he didn't tell any of that story. He didn't give the backstory of the conflict with Halifax.

So, you know, I sort of ascribe this to being an example of willfulness, or you might say, a Machiavellian deed, rightly understood, because that was the end of the cabinet revolt in the war cabinet. They all fell in line after that. And just to be sure, Churchill a few weeks later sent Halifax off to be ambassador to the United States to get him out of London, right?

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: "I need somebody really important in Washington. Our relations with Roosevelt are going to be crucial." And so it was all very plausible, but that was the key moment, you know. It could have gone another direction if he hadn't put his foot down, so to speak. And the movie does this wonderfully, I think.

KRISTOL: And then they survive 1940, which is not inevitable. I mean Dunkirk is certainly not inevitable. That's a pretty impressive feat; a little bit of luck, too, I suppose.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: Yeah. And then the Blitz and the bombing and they're alone. I mean Churchill says, I think somewhere later in the World War II book – maybe it's in his speech, but I think it's in the book – 19– what was it? There was never a year or something – "There was never a year like 1940," something like that.

That year for us Americans, you know, we get in the war in December of '41 and so most of our history I think, you know, begins with Pearl Harbor. I mean we know of course stuff happened before that. And then it's the – D-Day for us is, in a way, the moment of the war that's most, don't you think iconic especially with Roosevelt's speech, you know. And it deserves to be, God knows. And then of course the Pacific; Iwo Jima is the most famous monument.

But for the British certainly, but I would say in some ways – and it's a little distorting for us. We forget that we were – I don't mean to minimize, you know, some of the things Roosevelt was trying to do to help Britain – but we're sitting over here in 1940 not involved, and Britain *is* alone.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: And they've conquered Europe, the Nazis. Stalin is on Hitler's side.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: Everyone forgets that. And Britain is not a big country, right? So it's Britain against Germany and I mean Russia's not fighting really, but I mean that year is really an amazing moment, I think, in world history in some ways.

The whole war's amazing. D-Day's amazing, you know, the Pacific campaign's amazing, but for me that year of 1940 is just extraordinary.

HAYWARD: I think it's probably not an exaggeration or inaccurate to say that one theme of 1940 is Churchill playing for time waiting for America. So I think he knew that eventually we were going to have to get involved. He understood Roosevelt's political problems, because I think Roosevelt probably knew we had to be involved, but they both understood American public opinion.

In fact, back up a step, one of the more interesting things Churchill wrote was an article for *Collier's* magazine in this country in 1937, and the headline was, "Can America stay out of the next war?" It's a very clever piece because he writes with great sympathy about understanding why Americans did not, you know, had a bad feeling coming out of the involvement in the First World War – although he does note in passing that our losses were miniscule compared to Britain and France, and Germany for that matter.

But then he goes on and this gets back to the point of understanding the character of the regime. He has several paragraphs where he talks about what you have to understand about the Nazis is they – their destiny is to go to war since they – how did he put it? – since these grim rulers have taken control of this great country, they cannot go – they either face a choice of if they don't go on, they'll be thrown aside, right? It's either rule or ruin, right.

And so that's also the logic of this regime, you know, based on their hatred of ethnic minorities, no Jews, and of France. And so I think what he's trying to say is in a subtle way is, *Look, you may think you can avoid all this, but you really can't.* And in one of his speeches in 1940 he says essentially, if we go down, then America's going to be next. And, you know, we know the Germans were thinking about trying to spread into Latin America and so forth.

So there's that part of it, but as I say, he understood the problems of public opinion. But you can see step by step things like the conference in, what up near Iceland or Greenland on the battleship with Roosevelt where they signed the Atlantic Charter. Roosevelt was doing all he could to move us in the direction of helping and, you know, it took Pearl Harbor to finally break the barrier.

KRISTOL: Yeah. I still find it amazing looking back how late it was that we got in, in a sense. And it was lucky that Hitler declared war on us on December 8th. I'm not so sure Roosevelt could automatically have gone to war in Europe –

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: – if it just would have been Pearl Harbor.

HAYWARD: You know, we don't have – Roosevelt was actually talking – this is not very well known. Karlyn Bowman knows all this from all her knowledge of public opinion polling history, but Roosevelt was consulting with the very young George Gallup and the questions were "What's the state of American

public opinion. What are the kind of messages you need to keep us involved in the world? What are the limits to what I can do?"

And a lot of these meetings with – this is like '38, '39 – weren't entered on the White House logs, for example. I think they thought it was a little dodgy talking to pollsters. It sounds kind of grubby, which it is in a certain way. And so you can see that Roosevelt is seeing what's coming. The other thing I remember is my own father who signed up for the Navy in 1940 or '41 right out of college, '41 I think, and that's because he said, "I knew there was a war coming, and I wanted to learn to fly." He was a Navy flier.

Walter Berns, you know, the late Walter Berns talked about how, you know, he would say, "It looks," – about the same time, 1940, '41 before the war, before Pearl Harbor – "It looks to me like the war is going to happen. We should be in it and I want to be in uniform."

So there was a lot of that – so I'm not quite sure where the opposition was or whether it was Midwestern isolationists or exactly what the character of it was and, you know; we don't have a lot of polling data to know. But we do know that Congress passed a return to the draft by – what? – just a handful of votes. So it was that difficult to get that much preparedness going. You could see that it was going to be much harder to go into war.

KRISTOL: Yeah. I think intelligent people saw that it was likely. I don't mean to minimize it. But still, to take Pearl Harbor at the end. And America First was organized, mostly against the sense that we were – that Roosevelt was maneuvering us into war, and now that's Trump's slogan. I mean that's also kind of amazing if you had told me that a few years ago.

II: Churchill in Wartime and Peacetime (30:46 – 1:06:53)

KRISTOL: And his actual wartime leadership, lessons from that or particular moments that people should go back and read about? Or accounts that you particularly like apart from his own?

HAYWARD: Right. Well, I think two or three things. One is there's the realism about him, which should be understood in a serious way and not simply the compromise of necessity way. You know, when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June of 1941, Churchill immediately calls Stalin and says, "What can we do to help?" Right? He understood that you are going to need the help of the Soviet Union to defeat Germany. I think this is correct.

He gave a great speech in the House where he said, look, I think there's really no distinction in essence between Nazism and Communism. They're both horrendous totalitarian regimes. And he says, "I unsay nothing critical I've ever said about Bolshevism." He used to call it "Bolshevism." And very early on – at the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917 he recognized that this was a malignant form of politics that could not co-exist with the civilized world.

So he was always a strong anti-communist from day one. But he went on to say – the logic would be: the enemy of the enemy is my friend. He didn't put it that way. What he did say, in typical Churchillian fashion, was, "If Hitler invaded Hell, I would at least make a favorable reference to the devil in the House of Commons." And so this was an alliance of necessity and convenience.

But of course, then as the war goes on, it becomes evident that the Soviet armies are going to occupy much of Eastern Europe and he's worried about that. He's trying to get the United States worried about that, trying to argue for a military strategy where our armies and the British armies and the Free French would press as far east as possible. We resisted. It would have been easy for Patton to have gone on to Vienna, possibly to Berlin even, ahead of the Soviet Union, and we didn't want to do that. Eisenhower thought there was no strategic significance to do this, which I think shows his shortsightedness in a couple of ways.

And so then what does Churchill do? Well, he goes off to meet Stalin one-on-one and tries to cut a deal with him, and it was the very controversial Percentages Agreement as it's been called. That's kind of murky, but Churchill understood that if they're going to have troops on the ground, they're going to be in charge and let's see if there's some way to limit that. And so what he said was let's agree on spheres of influence.

And so he said, "You'll have 90 percent" – it sounds kind of strange – "you'll have 90 percent influence in Poland and Czechoslovakia, I think, and Hungary and Bulgaria. The British will have 90 percent influence in Greece." This would have been in 1944, I think. "And then Yugoslavia will be 50/50." And Stalin puts a little checkmark on the piece of paper and shoves it back to Churchill who says, "Maybe we should destroy that piece of paper." And Stalin says no, you keep it. And it was kept actually. You can actually see a facsimile of it in some of the document collections.

It's not clear how it's to be enforced. Churchill was clearly trying to reach some kind of political understanding with Stalin. And in some senses, that's kind of how it fell out, right? Churchill forcibly intervened in Greece at Christmastime 1944 to keep the Communists from taking over the government there. And then Yugoslavia was always that weird thing in the Cold War with Tito and not completely aligned with the Soviet Union, but not really terribly friendly to us and you never could quite make it out, but it kind of looks like 50/50.

KRISTOL: Yeah.

HAYWARD: So a strange episode, but you can see the frustration Churchill had with the shortsightedness of Americans as to what it was going to mean to have Europe divided the way it was in practice going to be divided because of the war outcome.

KRISTOL: Do you think he knew that this was going to be Britain's greatest but last kind of – not last, it's too strong but in a way last moment of world greatness? I mean I've always wondered if the undertone of the, you know, if the British empire were to last 1,000 years –

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: – this will be – people will say – how does he put it?

HAYWARD: This was our finest hour.

KRISTOL: This was the finest hour. Did he know that – I always wonder if there was some undertone of that, that this is not going to last 1,000 years and, you know, that this is sort of – that after the war, just the facts, the brute facts of industrial strength and wealth on our part and strength and the size of the Soviet Union, they're going to start overwhelming Britain's ability to be the world power, and then –

HAYWARD: Well, that's a hard question. I think the two things to be said about it is – one is Churchill, like people who ascend to the summit in politics, often overconfident of their own personality and the force of their own personality, he's not the first person to say something like this, but in the last weeks of the war in Europe in 1945 when even Roosevelt before he died was starting to see there were some problems with Stalin, that "maybe I've underestimated what a bad guy he is." Churchill said, "If I could just have dinner with Stalin once a week, I could solve all these troubles just between us. We could figure it out."

I think that is an odd lapse for his otherwise very clear perception on the nature of regimes, right? I think maybe it's because he got along with Stalin in a certain way in the summits.

The other thing is if you look especially at the essays that he wrote in the twenties and thirties that are in those collections of great contemporaries, but also what's the other one?

KRISTOL: *Thoughts and Adventures*.

HAYWARD: *Thoughts and Adventures*. What he's very worried about from starting back to the 1920s is modern science. Well, the "Mass Effects of Modern Life" essay is really about the problems of scale in the modern world. And he is concerned that, you know, things like the atomic bomb, things like robotics – he anticipates robotics, which we're talking about today. He anticipates essentially cell phones, wireless telephones he says and even television. In 1930 he's talking about this.

But beyond sort of particular things he is saying that this presents a serious challenge because it may escape the capacities of human beings to control it. In other words, our scientific capacities may be outstripping our moral capacities. He actually put it in terms like that several times.

Related to that is, you know, he was not unalterably opposed to the independence of India or the colonies. He thought they weren't ready to rule themselves sensibly in a democratic manner. And he wasn't entirely wrong about India having a really nasty civil war –

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: – and partition, which is one of the consequences he foresaw of rushing into all that.

But I think again the prior point is the one that I think is the dominant one, which he worried about. And what do you get along with science? You get bureaucracy. He was against bureaucracy whether it's, you know, scientific socialism, which he always opposed from the earliest days or scientific bureaucracy, which is, you know, our form of it. I think he thought those were the bigger challenges facing us.

And I think that was secondary to whether the Empire lasted or Britain was preeminent. He did think in his second premiership in the 1950s that we ought to have a great big summit with Stalin and that will solve everything. And Eisenhower was very resistant. I think again that was him being way too optimistic about the force of his own personality. But he still thought, you know, as late as 1955 that he was a preeminent player in the world stage who could solve the Cold War.

KRISTOL: But the alliance of the English speaking peoples was a way of, you know, handing off leadership to America while making an Anglo-American – the Anglo American tradition. I think he thought a lot about that. I mean that somehow America would carry forward British liberty and so forth and leadership in the world.

HAYWARD: Yeah. So I think it is fair to say – now the left would take this as a criticism, but I take it as praise. I think it would be fair to say that individual liberty and democracy were the product of the English speaking peoples, right. That's the theme of his four volumes on *The History of the English Speaking Peoples*. That's something he thought we should be proud of. And certainly thought that could be spread to other peoples around the world.

But of course nowadays if you put it that way, as I say it gets back to being a problem of political correctness today.

KRISTOL: And do you recommend those four volumes? I mean –

HAYWARD: Yes.

KRISTOL: – they seem less – I mean Garry Kasparov in a Conversation [with Bill Kristol] said that when he was, I think knew less English, and was, you know, learning more about politics, having played chess quite well as a youth, that that book actually had as much impact on him as any other. Which was so

surprising because I think in our circles and in America it's not read nearly as much as the World War II, you know, history or some of the other memoirs.

HAYWARD: You know, it may be his most neglected work, but of course Americans don't read enough of their own history anyway by anybody. But among other things, he wrote those books mostly before the war but put it aside during the war and finished it in the fifties. But he goes on for a couple of pages about Federalist number 10. And he absolutely got Madison's understanding and expressed it very succinctly at a time when, I think this is right, the Federalist Papers were kind of neglected in this country. I mean I'd like to say that I think this is true, the Federalist Papers didn't come back into fashion until the late fifties with Martin Diamond's famous article.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: As Tocqueville was out of fashion for a long time too. He's very good on understanding the importance of the common law to the unfolding of the British constitution. So, you know, he had again a profound grasp of history and, you know, the nature of constitutionalism. You know, he –

Let me mention another great essay of his that I recommend to people and that I show to students is in 1934 he wrote – I think that's the year – he wrote an essay called "FDR From Afar," Franklin Roosevelt From Afar. And it's very complimentary. He has a lot of sympathy with the New Deal, but he has three worries.

One of them was, "I think the president is pushing this organization of labor unions faster than is practically possible." He was reflecting on the rise of the Labour Party in Britain, which he thought had been a problem, right.

Second, he says Roosevelt's got to be careful in his zest to hunt down rich men as he put it and why this was a mistake. But then the third one was – and he wrote separately another article on the same theme – is Roosevelt's got to be careful about his attacks on the Constitution and on the Supreme Court. And he was very critical later on of the court packing scheme.

Now he did say that he thought the British constitution, which is unwritten of course, is superior to the American Constitution, but he had great respect for the writtenness of the American Constitution and thought it was very important that that be held sacred and though it was very dangerous what Roosevelt was – the way Roosevelt was approaching shaping public opinion about the Constitution.

KRISTOL: Yeah, that's interesting. Let's talk about Churchill. We know much less or people know much less about his views on domestic politics, on all the topics we've just been discussing, but of course for much of his life he was Chancellor of the Exchequer; and in early political history he was concerned – not most – well, as much with domestic issues as with foreign policy, and he wrote a lot about that and thought a lot about that. So talk a little bit about Churchill.

HAYWARD: Well, in fact his first 10 years in parliament, almost 10 years was exclusively focused on domestic policy. And by the way, he held every significant cabinet post except for Foreign Secretary. So he was Home Secretary for a while, Chancellor – I forget some of the other ones that they have.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: And it's sometimes said that Churchill was an architect of the British welfare state. That's not quite true, but there's enough truth to that. And this is where you want to press a little further and see that he had the quality, which I think is the core to being a statesman, of moderation. And I don't mean moderation in being in the middle of the political spectrum the way we usually talk about it. But as a quality or disposition the way Aristotle meant it.

And so what he understood with the rise of industrial capitalism was it's producing great blessings. It's producing a rising middle class. But wage labor and just the nature of that kind of economy it means that you're one illness or injury away from destitution. So he thought we need social insurance. Not redistribution, not egalitarianism. We need social insurance. And he says if you don't have social insurance, you risk social revolution.

So he was for pensions. He was for worker's compensation. He was, you know, for early forms of health insurance. He was – actually when he was Chancellor in the '20s, he was something of a supply sider. He wanted to cut down the high income tax rates for exactly the reasons that Kennedy and Reagan later talked about in the '60s and the '80s, which not many people know about.

But he was – so he was a supporter of what you might call the moderate welfare state. Like I say, not redistribution but social insurance. And I think that's the great divide you see in our own country is between the idea of having social insurance or safety net. You know, I think Churchill may be the first person to use that phrase, safety net.

KRISTOL: That's interesting.

HAYWARD: Which fell out of use until Reagan brought it back in the '80s. But he said we need either a "safety net" or he'd say "a net over the abyss."

So he also used to say things like, "I would rather see finance less proud and industry more content." So he really understood that you really do need to have a balance between class antagonisms. He thought class antagonism was poisonous to politics, just as he thought international antagonisms were poisonous to an international order. So there's a unity between his foreign and domestic statecraft.

And it was the crisis in Agadir in 1911 that changed his focus from domestic to foreign policy. That was when the Germans sent some gunboats down the Gulf of Agadir, which is now, what Tunisia, I forget which, or Libya. I forget which one. And almost sparked a war then. And that's when Churchill thought ah, this is a problem. And so he switched his focus to foreign policy for most of the rest of his career.

But he always remained strong on property rights. He was a little too friendly to the nationalizations of railroads and things like that, but you forgive him on some of those things I think. It is in that first decade when he switched from the Conservative party to the Liberal party.

KRISTOL: Yeah. That's pretty startling. So he enters the party as a Conservative. His father had been a great Conservative leader, fallen short of the prime ministership, but very famous. A Tory democrat who, you know, the people, followed Disraeli I guess – So he enters as a Conservative but pretty quickly switches to the Liberal party –

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: – which –

HAYWARD: It took three years I think, two or three years, two years maybe.

KRISTOL: And the issue on which he defects?

HAYWARD: The proximate issue was free trade. Although, before that there's a couple of private letters from his earliest days. He was never happy in the Conservative party. He says, "I think I'm an English liberal." The main thing that kept him out of the Liberal party initially was he was against Home Rule for Ireland.

KRISTOL: As his father had been.

HAYWARD: Right, exactly. And that was a big call to the Liberal party. But when the Conservative party wanted to become sharply protectionist, which sort of sounds familiar today, right –

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: – he read a lot of the free trade literature, you know, Ricardo, Frédéric Bastiat. He would quote Bastiat in speeches on the floor, you know, people who are today sort of libertarian heroes of political economy. And then crossed the floor, which they say is a big step in England.

Now back in the 1920s he then moved back to the Conservative party when the Liberal party fell apart, which he foresaw. One of the things he saw was the rising enthusiasm for socialism, the rising Labour Party, which was explicitly based on sort of class antagonism and even proto-Marxist ideas. And the Tory Party he thought was becoming too much the party – a narrow party of the capitalists. And he says the Liberal party is going to get squeezed. He wrote that I think as early as 1902 or 1903.

And 15 years later the Liberal party starts to fall apart and is getting squeezed by the rising Labour party and the Conservatives. He had hoped that he could bring a lot of the Liberal party with him back into the Tory Party and I, you know, it's less clear if that was successful, but –

HAYWARD: The case for free trade that he makes is more than just an economic case though as I recall.

HAYWARD: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Well, he understood that, you know, it's – it's favoring special interests, right. You know, against the interests of the consumers and –

KRISTOL: It's a limited government case.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: And it's an international peace case too, an international order case.

HAYWARD: Right. Oh, yeah. It would lead to international – the things that we later – everyone acknowledged in the 1930s, that the trade wars in the 1930s made things worse for everybody, right. It was at those very earliest days you can see Churchill saying I wish we could have a party of “the center” he called it that would avoid the extremes of both parties.

In fact there's a line in the *Marlborough* book, which goes something like, “party or partisanship can be forgiven, but broad views and a more calm disposition is required at the summit.” I don't – that quote is not exactly right, but that's close. And he always had talked about how he would love to form a party of the center. He actually started a club, which still exists, in 1911 called The Other Club. I love the name.

KRISTOL: Yeah, that is good.

HAYWARD: And it was a place for people of all parties who were willing to get together and, you know, these days we'd say talk about your differences or have civil conversations, you know. We sort of overdo that language today. But that was its purpose.

And he did admit in a letter I think to his mother around that time, 1904, that, you know, Centrist solutions, Centrist parties really can't work, that they can never be made to work, but that's what he really – that was his inclination.

You know, at the end of a war in Europe in May of 1945 – of course the war in Japan's still going, but he wanted to continue in a Coalition government with Labour, you know, indefinitely until at least the war with Japan was over, and the Labour said no, we would like to have an election please and so they lost.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: To his surprise.

KRISTOL: Well, that's an astounding fact. I mean that for me is always a very good wakeup call too about politics, democracy, elections. I mean the greatest, surely the greatest active leadership in the twentieth century, and maybe God knows how many centuries, leading Britain for five years through the war and then he loses the election.

HAYWARD: It seems like a shocking act of ingratitude. I think there's two or three things to look at in that case. One is remember that in Britain you don't vote for a prime minister the way we do, right. If he had been alone on the ballot as you pick him for your prime minister, maybe he would have won. That's harder to know. Because we vote by party a lot of people rightly thought, "Look, it was the Conservative party that got us into this mess. Churchill may have been right about it, but this party should not be rewarded with our votes."

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: The Labour Party meanwhile was running on a land of milk and honey campaign. "We're going to have socialism, they'll be an end to rationing, end these privations which had gone on really for 15 years if you include the depression in that.

So how did Churchill respond to that? He gave maybe the worst speech of his career. This is interesting. Influenced partly by Hayek. He gave the speech in, I think, early June of the campaign saying –

KRISTOL: So this is '45.

HAYWARD: Forty-five, right. And as I said, we're still, the British are still in the field against Japan and he says, "Look, we cannot have socialism without some form of Gestapo. This is what the Labour Party is offering." So he just essentially called Nazis people he's been in a good coalition government with for more than five years.

His wife begged him not to use that line, Clementine, and he insisted on doing it. He went on to talk about, you know, "I know Herbert Morrison says it will all be very benign, and that's what socialists think, but it won't be. We'll have civil servants who are no longer civil and no longer our servants." It turned out he'd read – I think he had read maybe the Reader's Digest condensation of Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* and maybe the whole book. I'm not sure, which that –

And Hayek himself later said they met once in the fifties, Churchill and Hayek, and Hayek later said that "it was regrettable that he ran off with the book that way because that's really not what I meant. It didn't really apply to England." Hayek actually had second thoughts about his own book later, but that's for another day maybe.

And so it was a very imprudent speech. It reminds me of, you know, Barry Goldwater's "extremism in defense of liberty" remark, right. It may be cogent in the abstract but imprudent as a matter of practical politics. And so that didn't go down very well. It was a very poorly received speech and so he was turned out of office.

KRISTOL: And I think he says late in his career – I can't remember if this is the story, I think maybe Paul Johnson tells the story that he tells a very young member of parliament, right, who he doesn't know. I think he meets him in the elevator in the House of Commons or something?

HAYWARD: Yes.

KRISTOL: What is it, that I –

HAYWARD: “I’ve always been a Liberal.”

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: I don’t know if the young member is a Liberal himself or I don’t know how it comes up. Maybe he says, “What party are you in?” or something like that.

HAYWARD: I don’t remember the details either. I think if I remember this right, Paul Johnson was in the elevator as a young aide or a young journalist or something and heard it firsthand.

KRISTOL: Yeah. Yeah. But I guess an English or British liberal with a –

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: Of a certain classical liberal type I suppose, non-dogmatic but with a great respect for tradition and for history.

HAYWARD: Right. Well, that old Liberal party, which, you know, Asquith was really the last tribune of it, was very moderate in the sense that they liked reform but not radical reform, you know, disposition to the middle class. But then they really hit the rocks.

KRISTOL: Burke’s admirers in the 19th century if I’m not mistaken were Liberals.

HAYWARD: Yes.

KRISTOL: I mean “capital L” liberals, right? They thought they were the continuers of Burke’s work.

HAYWARD: Well, people forget that Burke was a Whig, right, not a Tory Party member.

KRISTOL: Right. Right.

What else on Churchill? I mean what should people read in terms of his own writings, and writings about him, apart from your book, books?

HAYWARD: Well, right.

KRISTOL: I mean there’s so much of course, but –

HAYWARD: Right. I mean most of his books are too forbidding for the average reader. You know, *The World Crisis* is four volumes. *Marlborough* is four volumes, right. I recommend a couple of the essays from the two collections. I think *Great Contemporaries* is great fun reading. It’s just portraits of people he knows. And the two that I already mentioned, the “Roosevelt from Afar.”

But the other one that’s interesting from 1935 is “Hitler and His Choice.” It makes for fascinating reading. He holds open the possibility – it’s almost like he’s making an invitation that maybe he could turn away from this dark path that brought him into office and has consolidated his power. It’s pretty clear he doesn’t think this is likely, and he has a whole paragraph about Hitler’s hatred of the Jews –

By the way, they almost met once, and it was that issue that caused the dinner not to come off. And then –

KRISTOL: Well, tell that.

HAYWARD: So it was when he was in – Churchill was in Germany in 1932 before the election that brought Hitler to power.

KRISTOL: Right. And Churchill's out of office.

HAYWARD: Was out of office, right.

KRISTOL: I mean he's a Member of Parliament, but he's –

HAYWARD: He was doing research for the *Marlborough* books. He was going to visit the battlefield where the Battle of Blenheim took place. And an intermediary, a German who knew his son Randolph, who had actually gone to Harvard, was going to broker a dinner, arrange to fix up dinner because Churchill was staying in a hotel where Hitler came to drink sometimes in the evening. And Churchill sends word saying, "Yes, I'd like to meet Mr. Hitler."

KRISTOL: Who's not yet in office.

HAYWARD: Not yet in office. "But among other things I want to ask him about is, you know, why – what he has against the Jews." And Hitler heard this and cancelled the dinner. And Churchill in his typical way in his memoir said, "Thereupon Hitler missed his chance to meet me." Okay.

The other essay collection is *Thoughts and Adventures*. There's two or three in there of great note. One is I think I mentioned briefly "Mass Effects in Modern Life." It's just a wonderfully wide-ranging issue where he says it's getting harder for people of excellence to actually control events and rise to preeminence. Now all our great celebrities are film stars. He attacks the media for its homogeneity and standardized views as he puts it.

And he ends on sort of a worrisome note. I think this essay was 1929 so Hitler's not around, but Mussolini is. He says, "I can understand why people are not satisfied with the state of affairs and why they look up and see the frowning crag of El Capitán," who would be Franco I guess, and Il Duce, and people crave that kind of leadership and greatness. And so he says we can't really do without it, but it's hard to see how we're still going to get it. I think he is his own refutation to this possibility, right.

And then the other essay I think mentioned, "Fifty Years Hence," which is all of his predictions about, like I mentioned, cell phones and robotics and even artificial meat, which we're talking about these days, he talks about. And another gloomy essay is "Shall We All Commit Suicide" from 1926. That's one where he says we may now have weapons that are so powerful that we wipe ourselves out at a stroke and he's very worried how we're going to deal with that.

And, you know, nuclear weapons was something that really was his central focus in the 1950s and why he wanted to resolve the Cold War.

So a lot of prescience there and of course great style in all those essays. And both *Great Contemporaries* and *Thoughts and Adventures* are out in brand new editions by our mutual friend Jim Muller, who's got wonderful annotations and gives you lots of background and explains all the names that we've all forgotten or never knew in the first place. So highly recommended.

KRISTOL: And I guess a book that had influence on me and I guess I read in college maybe was – but sort of by accident was *My Early Life*, which is sort of a biography about – I can't remember where it goes up to, but –

HAYWARD: I think age 30.

KRISTOL: Yeah.

HAYWARD: Yeah. I recommend that book to people. I've often thought that would be a great book that you assign freshmen to read as their over-the-summer reading before they go into college. You know how they always assign Tony Morrison or something today.

The Ashbrook Center used to assign it for their – when Peter Schramm was running it – but that's the only place. I think the key chapter in that book is a very important one. It's called "My Education at Bangalore." You know, he ships off as a young lieutenant in the Army and officers in the Army had the afternoons free and so most of his other officers would go ride horses or play cards or whatever, and he would read books all afternoon.

And essentially the point is it was a self-education. And he read all the classics, you know, modern Hegel, Plato, read Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, read Machiavelli I'm pretty sure, but didn't say so in that list. Sort of funny. We know he was a fan of *The Prince*.

But he says something very important in there. He says, "I didn't have somebody looking over my shoulder." In other words the graduate faculty saying you should read this on that person or that person. He said, "I formed my own views."

And in those days he started writing his own speeches. He would read the debates in the House of Commons and say, "Here's what I would have said if I had been in that debate." So as a young man of just 23, 24 years old, he's already practicing the arts of rhetoric, the arts of speechmaking and parliamentary give and take.

And so my point about that is that I think it's true of a great many people. Lincoln is another one in very different circumstances. He's self-educated. That's why he formed original views as opposed to sort of standard party-issue views. And I think the same thing is true of Ronald Reagan in one way. He becomes a conservative on his own in the fifties traveling around the country for G.E. And of course Lincoln I like to say is our first homeschooled president. He only had one year of formal schooling and read Shakespeare and the Bible and Euclid all on his own.

And that explains I think one of the reasons that they stand out for their independence of mind and originality of views and greater perception. Hard to teach that.

KRISTOL: Yeah. You think. Right. It does help to have a natural genius of a certain kind too. Yes.

HAYWARD: Well, Churchill did say he didn't think statesmanship could be taught.

KRISTOL: Is that right?

HAYWARD: Or generalship. Right.

KRISTOL: Yeah. He read a lot about Napoleon, right?

HAYWARD: The one big literary project he always said he wanted to do was a biography of Napoleon.

KRISTOL: Yeah. That would have been something.

HAYWARD: And the war. If we hadn't had World War II, he would have written that I think.

KRISTOL: Really?

HAYWARD: Yeah.

KRISTOL: I think there's a story, I think I got this right, that he had a bust of Napoleon in his office when he was – before World War I, what was he? He was Lord of the Admiralty or something like that?

HAYWARD: Yes, right.

KRISTOL: And when World War I began, he had it removed. He said it was sort of inappropriate to have a sort of conqueror of Europe when we're fighting – when Britain was fighting for, you know, against the attempt to, you know, conquer other countries so to speak.

But I think he was a big admirer of Napoleon. Though presumably didn't countenance everything Napoleon did. But I guess just as a general and as a figure.

KRISTOL: The best introduction of Churchill is to read Churchill, but secondary literature? Apart from your own.

HAYWARD: [Laughs] Well, mine's not a biography.

KRISTOL: There are so many biographies. There's so many studies of all the individual huge moments of his career and some of him and Roosevelt and him and others. Any two or three that leap out for –

HAYWARD: Yeah. I mean it depends on the ambition of a reader. I think the best short treatment is Paul Johnson's very short biography. You know, Johnson used to write these doorstops. In later years he's done short ones. It's only 150 or 175 pages and the first half is a very quick biography that sets the scene, and then he gives 10 lessons about Churchill. And Johnson is very good at that kind of thing I think.

And it's just called *Churchill* I think or *Churchill the Life*. I'm not sure. A couple other short biographies are good. I do tend to recommend the William Manchester and Paul Reid three-volume biography. It has its defects, but Manchester was such a great narrative stylist. He captured the context very well. And I think like the movie it's possible to look past the defects that are in it.

KRISTOL: Yeah. The Manchester account of the '30s, was that "The Wilderness Years" –

HAYWARD: Well, he called it "Alone." That was the Volume II. But right, yes.

KRISTOL: – is just gripping. I mean it's not as good history as Gilbert obviously or maybe some of the other books, actually I suspect. I mean I haven't looked at it closely, but it's more journalistic you might say.

HAYWARD: Right.

KRISTOL: But the narrative sweep that he's able to drive I suppose and he's able to convey is pretty –

HAYWARD: Right. And then, you know, Martin Gilbert, who was Churchill's official biographer, the official biography is eight volumes. So it's, you know, that big on the shelf. [Makes "yard" gesture]. But he did do a one-volume biography. It's still 1,100 pages. So it's a fairly serious reading commitment, but it's very good.

So I sort of recommend those. There's a book by Geoffrey Best called *Churchill: A Study in Greatness* that I think is a good analysis of him. That's another secondary book I recommend.

KRISTOL: I like my friend, Mike Makovsky's book on Churchill and Zionism [*Churchill's Promised Land*] which is an interesting particular issue. But Churchill always had a fondness for –

HAYWARD: Yes. And Martin Gilbert also had a book on –

KRISTOL: Similar title.

HAYWARD: Similar book. *Churchill and the Jews*. I'm not quite sure what the title is, but it was – I reviewed the both of them for *The Weekly Standard* when they came out a while ago now.

KRISTOL: Right. Right.

HAYWARD: And they're both very good. Right. That's another – that was another attack on Churchill at the time is that he was too fond of the Jews, right? Because back when anti-Semitism was, you know, not just accepted but even celebrated in some English circles.

KRISTOL: Right.

HAYWARD: It's hard to believe now, but –

KRISTOL: You read stuff from the '30s – I was discussing this with someone who likes old mystery novels and you read the mystery novels from the thirties. Dorothy Sayers I'd say is one particular instance of this.

And the degree of polite antisemitism – it's not that they wanted Jews killed or something like that, but the degree which was acceptable to express these kind of casual anti-Semitic sentiments is a little shocking actually for a very civilized society.

What about the obvious argument which Churchill himself [unintelligible] that we couldn't have a – Churchill was an amazing fluke, sort of brought up with this incredible family background, of course way back to the original Churchill, and then to Randolph Churchill. And an aristocratic sense of history and of what the nation meant, and education, even though much of it was done for himself, but still kind of that British society he lived in, but also able to adjust to democracy and embrace it at the cusp there – but that we couldn't have a Churchill today. That we are now living in the age of mass men and mass effects and no more Churchill is what you're –

HAYWARD: Yeah. See, I –

KRISTOL: Cheer me up and tell me that that's not right.

HAYWARD: Right. So I think that's mistaken for some very fundamental reasons, and that's actually one of my gripes with the Manchester biographies. Just think of the title, *The Last Lion*.

KRISTOL: Yeah. It has very much that tone.

HAYWARD: Right. And yeah, that's his theme in there, that as I say is a mistake, that Churchill was this throwback to a Victorian era. As I say, I think that's completely wrong.

I think the problem there is, I put it in actually my book about Churchill and Reagan, is that doesn't go back far enough. Churchill is the kind of magnanimous man you find in the pages of Aristotle. In fact, Leo

Strauss put it that way once in a letter to Karl Löwith saying that “Churchill reminds me of Aristotle’s description of the great-souled man exactly as it was written in the fifth century B.C.”

So that’s the point is that that sort of quality of character is a timeless human quality. And while the scale of things makes it harder to sort of have force over circumstances in front of you, I think you would have to say it’s not impossible.

You know, I think Ronald Reagan is a similar phenomenon. People said he’s a throwback to the ’50s. I think that was a mistake to think of him that way, right.

And in fact it was Clement Attlee who, you know, again has been Churchill’s opponent from the Labour Party, he said Churchill is like a layer cake. There’s certainly an eighteenth century and a nineteenth century part of him. But there’s also a twenty-first century part of him. Attlee could see this forward-looking capacity that he had.

So no, I don’t think that the idea of statesmanship is either unintelligible or impractical. It is harder. Gosh, I hate to put it this way, but I mean, you know, something as flukey and sort of out-of-the box as Trump ought to suggest to us that the possibilities are broader than we often think of, right? I mean I wish he was a better person, of course. But, you know, sort of his willfulness if channeled and qualified in the right way would, I think, suggest some things that we think are impossible otherwise.

KRISTOL: That’s a good note to end on to cheer me up about the current moment by citing one of the most depressing things about the current moment. But that’s a fair point. And that’s absolutely right.

And incidentally the number of people predicting that Winston Churchill would be prime minister in 19 what ’36, ’37, let’s say after he was on the wrong side of India, the wrong side of the abdication crisis, taking unpopular positions on appeasement, probably is similar to the number of people predicting Donald Trump would become president three or four years ago, right?

I mean we don’t appreciate I think how astonishing it is that Winston Churchill ends up as prime minister of Great Britain on May 10th, 1940.

HAYWARD: And then succeeds.

KRISTOL: And then succeeds. Right. On that note, Steve Hayward, thank you so much for joining me. This has been a terrific – I’ve learned a lot from this conversation on Churchill. I hope our viewers have too.

And thank you for joining us on CONVERSATIONS.

[END]