

PDF | Winston S. Churchill: Finest
Hour, 1939–1941 (Volume VI)
(Churchill Biography Book 6)

by Martin Gilbert



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This volume starts with the outbreak of war in September 1939 and ends with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. In it, Martin Gilbert reveals not only how each decision was reached, but what influences lay behind it, whether of individuals or of information reaching Churchill from the most secret source of British Intelligence.

Drawing on a remarkable diversity of material, including the War Cabinet and other Government records, as well as Churchill's own archive, the diaries and letters of his private secretariat, and the recollections of those who worked most closely with him, Martin Gilbert reveals the full extent of Churchill's personal contribution to every aspect of the struggle.

On the day Hitler invaded Poland, Churchill, aged sixty-four, had been out of office for ten years. Two days later, on 3 September 1939, he became First Lord of the Admiralty, in charge of British naval policy and at the center of war direction. On 10 May 1940 he became Prime Minister, leading his nation during a time of grave danger and setbacks. His first year and a half as Prime Minister included the Dunkirk evacuation, the fall of France, the Battle of Britain, the Blitz, the Battle of the Atlantic, the struggle in the Western Desert, and Hitler's invasion of Russia.

By the end of 1940, Britain under Churchill's leadership had survived the onslaught and was making plans to continue the war against an enemy of unlimited ambition and ferocious will.

One of Churchill's inner circle said: "We who worked with Churchill every day of the war still saw at most a quarter of his daily tasks and worries." Martin Gilbert has pieced together the whole, setting in context much hitherto scattered and secret evidence, in order to give an intimate and fascinating account of the architect of Britain's "finest hour."

About the Author

SIR MARTIN GILBERT was born in England in 1936. He was a graduate of Oxford University, from which he held a Doctorate of Letters, and was an Honorary Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. In 1962 he began work as one of Randolph Churchill's research assistants, and in 1968, after Randolph Churchill's death, he became the official biographer of Winston Churchill. He published six volumes of the Churchill biography, and edited twelve volumes of Churchill documents.

During forty-eight years of research and writing, Sir Martin published eighty books, including *The First World War*, *The Second World War*, and a three-volume *History of the Twentieth Century*. He also wrote, as part of his series of ten historical atlases, *Atlas of the First World War*; and, most recently, *Atlas of the Second World War*.

Sir Martin's film and television work included a documentary series on the life of Winston Churchill. His other published works include *Churchill: A Photographic Portrait*, *In Search of Churchill*, *Churchill and America*, and the single volume *Churchill, A Life*.

About the Work

In the official biography of Sir Winston Churchill, his son Randolph—and later Sir Martin Gilbert, who took up the work following Randolph's death—had the full use of Sir Winston's letters and papers, and also many hundreds of private archives. The work spans eight volumes, detailing Churchill's youth and early adventures in South Africa and India, his early career, and his more than fifty years on the world stage. No other statesman of modern times—or indeed of any age—has left such a wealth of personal letters, such a rich store of private and public documentation, such vivid memories in the minds of those who worked closest to him. Through these materials, assembled over the course of more than twenty years, one is able to know Churchill in a way never before possible.



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