



0. POTSDAM SHOCK - CHURCHILL VOTED OUT - Story
Preface

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Daniel Bishop created this image of Churchill, following his defeat in the UK's 1945 elections. Churchill received the shocking news when he was meeting in Potsdam with other Allied leaders. Entitled "Dropping the Pilot," Bishop based his illustration on another famous cartoon, by Sir John Tenniel, of Kaiser Wilhelm II dismissing German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Online via the Library of Congress.

Midway through the seventeen-day meeting, nearly everyone was stunned when Winston Churchill - Britain's war leader who assumed the reins of power on May 10, 1940 - was voted out of office.

Clement Atlee, the new prime minister, took over negotiations on behalf of the United Kingdom while Churchill went into seclusion for months. One can readily understand if the chemistry between the Allied leaders had changed. One can also understand Churchill's reaction to his loss.

During the mid-1930s, as Hitler greatly increased his power, Winston was nearly alone in his worries about the ultimate intentions of the Nazi leader. As Britain pursued a policy of appeasement with Hitler, Churchill gave speeches and wrote articles warning about such an approach.

Thinking it folly to even consider Hitler and his regime as the ascendant power in Europe, Churchill was alarmed by Germany's rearmament. "The Gathering Storm," as Churchill dubbed events leading to war, ultimately resulted in Winston regaining a position he'd held during World War I - First Lord of the Admiralty. Eight months later, he replaced Neville Chamberlain as prime minister.

Believing it was his destiny to lead Britain during a time of great trouble, Churchill led his country to victory. But those who were inspired by his leadership, during the conflict, wanted a different approach, now that war in Europe was over. At 70 years of age, Churchill had to reassess what came next for him.

Harry Truman also had important decisions to make. Attending his first war conference as president of the United States, Truman had an issue weighing heavily on his mind. The day before Potsdam discussions began, the American government had successfully tested a new weapon: the atomic bomb.

Joseph Stalin, the one leader who spoke for his country at every Allied conference, also harbored a secret. He never planned to remove his troops from the central-and-eastern-European countries they had liberated. In some of those lands, like Bulgaria, forced labor camps already existed.

Historians trace seeds of the Cold War to the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. To learn why, let's step back in time to examine decisions made during the summer of 1945.

We'll begin our journey in Berlin, the bombed-out German capital soon to become a city divided unto itself.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/POTSDAM-SHOCK-CHURCHILL-VOTED-OUT-Victory-in-Europe-End-of-WWII>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

Questions 2 Ponder

What Makes Political Cartoons So Effective?

After successfully rallying his fellow citizens throughout the war, and leading his country to victory, Winston Churchill was voted out-of-office less than three months after the war in Europe was finally over. Why do you think that happened?

Describe the political cartoon which illustrates this chapter page. Do you think it is effective, or not effective, in visually depicting what happened to Churchill in the UK's 1945 national election? Explain your answer.

Media Stream



Clement Atlee

Image online, courtesy the ww2aircraft.net website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Clement-Atlee>



Photo # USA C-1860 "Big Three" & Foreign Ministers at Potsdam, ca. July 1945

Negotiating Party at Potsdam

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Negotiating-Party-at-Potsdam>



Harry Truman with Churchill and Stalin

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Harry-Truman-with-Churchill-and-Stalin>



Trouble Spots: Russian Sphere of Influence

Image online, courtesy the University of California, Santa Cruz.

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Capture of Berlin by the Soviet Army

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

PD

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Bombed-Out Reichstag - April, 1945

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

PD

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Bombed-Out Berlin - Rubble Heap

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

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POTSDAM SHOCK - CHURCHILL VOTED OUT

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Churchill - The Gathering Storm, Part 1

Clip from *The Gathering Storm*, a [BBC-HBO television drama](#) based on Volume I of Winston Churchill's six-part, Noble-Prize winning WWII chronicle. (The first volume is also called *The Gathering Storm*).

For additional background, see [*Winston and Clementine - The Personal Letters of the Churchills*](#), edited by their daughter Mary.

Not everyone agrees with Churchill's analysis of events leading up to the war. See, for example, this [article by Professor John Charmley](#).

Clip from *The Gathering Storm*, online courtesy BBC's WorldWide Channel at YouTube. Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here for educational purposes.

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Churchill - The Gathering Storm, Part 2

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Churchill - The Gathering Storm, Part 3

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Churchill - The Gathering Storm, Part 4

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Churchill - The Gathering Storm, Part 5

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Churchill - The Gathering Storm, Part 6

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Churchill - The Gathering Storm, Part 7

Clip from *The Gathering Storm*, a [BBC-HBO television drama](#) based on Volume I of Winston Churchill's six-part, Noble-Prize winning WWII chronicle. (The first volume is also called *The Gathering Storm*).

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Churchill - The Gathering Storm, Part 8

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Churchill - The Gathering Storm, Part 9

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Churchill - Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat

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