Churchill, Roosevelt & Company: Studies in Character and Statecraft


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Historian and investment banker Lehrman (Money, Gold, and History) details the relationship between the U.S. and Great Britain during WWII, with a lesser emphasis on the two countries’ relationships with Stalin. His well-researched analysis begins with Roosevelt and Churchill demonstrating the differing styles of the two leaders: Churchill is depicted as straightforward, combative, and driven, with the singular and focused purpose of defeating Hitler; Roosevelt is seen as more of a politician, an opportunistic juggler who “tacked and trimmed with the political winds.” Lehrman also explores the roles of a long list of contemporaries, including American generals Eisenhower and Marshall; ambassadors Joseph Kennedy and W. Averell Harriman; and Roosevelt advisor Harry Hopkins. Their British counterparts, including Anthony Eden and John Maynard Keynes, also receive attention. Utilizing numerous sources, Lehrman conveys the complexities, jealousies, and challenges these men confronted during the war and how many disagreements—some petty, many substantial—were set aside in the interests of defeating Germany and Japan. Lehrman also begins each section with informative quotes from the principals that provide a useful frame for the narrative. This impressive and thorough history will appeal to those with an abiding interest in WWII, but not to casual readers. (Feb.)