

Book Reviews

Churchill and Orwell: The Fight for Freedom, by Thomas E. Ricks, 348pp, hardback, \$16.10, ISBN-13: 978-0143110880, New York, N.Y., Penguin Press, 2017.

How can someone find a commonality between an iconic British prime minister and a fire-breathing apparent socialist author-journalist who fought on the communist side in the Spanish Civil War? That's the puzzle Thomas Ricks lays out in this lucid, informative book about both men.

Winston Churchill was an upper-class politician who disdained socialism. George Orwell was a writer with some stature and success who represented the left end of the political spectrum, who lived a hardscrabble life and wrote two extraordinary political novels. Churchill served as prime minister twice and lived into his ninth decade, while Orwell suffered an early death from tuberculosis. Their lives' common thread is that they both cherished liberty.

There is no evidence that Churchill and Orwell ever met, although Churchill read Orwell and was positively impressed.

Thomas Ricks has a first-class pedigree as a writer on politics and military and other history. I bought the book because I liked both characters, Churchill obviously for political and military achievements that saved Britain from the Nazis, and his well-known erudition and eloquence, and Orwell because his eloquence was focused on sounding the alarm about totalitarianism.

Churchill and Orwell both predicted the two greatest threats to human freedom in the 20th century: fascism (in the form of Nazism), and communism. Churchill was also prescient about the problem of Islamism. This shared insight and eloquence led Ricks to choose the appropriate subtitle for the book: *The Fight for Freedom*.

Both Churchill and Orwell nearly met premature deaths in their early days of adventuring. Orwell sustained a gunshot wound to his neck in the Spanish Civil War. Churchill was hit by an automobile in New York City, after surviving combat in Sudan and time as a prisoner of war in the Boer War.

Neither found success easily. Churchill's

warnings of Germany's rearmament fell on many deaf ears, and he was pressed to accede to appeasement, and then even to acquiesce to Nazi aggression, by many in his own government.

Orwell's warnings about Stalinist totalitarianism were not well received by his socialist brethren, who were outraged at his formidable and eloquent efforts to expose the authoritarian oppression and tyranny of Soviet Communism. *Animal Farm* was his first major warning. Soviet agents tried to suppress *Animal Farm* but failed. Millions were printed, and it became part of Baby Boomers' high-school reading lists. It would also be on any list of the 20th century's iconic books.

While documenting some of their failings or weaknesses, Ricks credits both men for their fortitude and prudence. Churchill said in a cabinet meeting, "If this long island story of ours is to end at last, let it end only when each of us lies choking in his own blood on the ground." Orwell was threatened and persecuted by the communists.

Today when we talk of government tyranny, intrusive intimidation, and elimination of freedoms, we use the language of 1984—"Big Brother," "thought police," "doublethink," the "memory hole," and "Room 101." Who can forget the classic *Animal Farm* quotation from Napoleon the pig, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." There are few people in history who have been eponymously linked to an adjective, but all literate people are aware of the meaning of "Orwellian." At a higher level of analysis and narrative, Orwell showed how language can be used to manipulate the populace—lies used to create thought manipulation: "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength," and the idea of the thought police and the Ministry of Truth where history is erased and deposited in the memory hole.

Churchill was one of the great orators and writers of all time and his commentaries, aphorisms, and excerpts from his speeches will live forever. As with Orwell, Churchill's eloquence and public conduct created another eponymous adjective, "Churchillian." As has been said, he mobilized the English language and sent it to war.

Winston Churchill, Myth and Reality: What He Actually Did and Said, by Richard M. Langworth, 256 pp, paperback, \$29.95, ISBN-13: 978-1476674605, McFarland & Company, 2017.

Richard M. Langworth has spent the better part of a lifetime studying, documenting, interpreting, and promoting the words, deeds, and legacy of Sir Winston Churchill. Langworth's efforts are manifest in the lectures, publications, and websites of the International Churchill Society, which he founded, and the Churchill Project of Hillsdale College, founded in 2006. He took on a major leftist effort to discredit and condemn and vilify Churchill in this 2017 book, a refined and distilled version of Langworth's life's work that is readily accessible, highly readable, and most necessary for anyone seeking the flesh-and-blood Churchill behind the legends and caricatures. In effect, this book is the legal brief for Churchill's defense in any tribunal, earthbound or cosmic, pleading "Not Guilty" or "Guilty with an Explanation."

The book focuses on the criticisms and condemnations of Churchill that Langworth considers poorly framed, based on lack of analysis and consideration of evidence to the contrary, but most of all criticisms that are a product of bias and animus—animus directed at Churchill because he was a full-fury British imperialist and devoted his life to his country. He was also right about his analysis of third-world dynamics and other cultures—something that the leftist multiculturalists and "postmodernist" identity politics advocates find as evidence of racism and intolerance.

Langworth's comprehensive review of the words, decisions, and actions of Winston Churchill should be considered a great reference for any library of the 20th century. Langworth is arguably the most authoritative living expert on Churchill, and his book takes down the lies while extolling the good about the legend of "the greatest Englishman."

John Dale Dunn, M.D., J.D.
Brownwood, Texas

Scare Pollution: Why and How to Fix the EPA, by Steve Milloy, softcover, 260pp, \$15.95, ISBN-13 978-0-9982597-1-0, Portland, Oregon, Bench Press, 2016.

My colleague and ally Steve Milloy and I have personal experience with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency misconduct on a breathtaking scale for more than 20 years. His sixth book, *Scare Pollution*, focuses on serial ethical misconduct by government-sponsored air pollution researchers.

Milloy earned a B.A. in natural sciences and a Master of Health Sciences (biostatistics) from Johns Hopkins University, a J.D. from the University of Baltimore, and a Master of Laws (securities regulation) from Georgetown University Law Center. He has worked for the federal government, including a project to evaluate cleanup methods for nuclear weapons testing sites in New Mexico.

Milloy's research experience in the early 1990s alarmed him because he saw that science and policymaking were being corrupted by political partisanship and bureaucratic bungling. He has spent his time as author, essay writer, media commentator, and blogger exposing federal agency junk science and bad policymaking. More than 20 years ago, he founded the website JunkScience.com, focusing on federal agency-sponsored scientific incompetence and deceit.

When Richard Nixon created the EPA in 1970, its founding statutes were about air and water, but the legislative language said it was not intended to produce "clean" air and water, but "safe" air and water. The clear intention of "safety" was quickly distorted by environmental fanatics and anti-business and industry partisans. An industry standard for "clean" was introduced, and the discovery of any risk of harm at any level of exposure resulted in EPA perpetrating the "precautionary principle" in which no risk is acceptable. This was not the act's intention, since there is no realistic way to eliminate all risk. Many toxins and naturally occurring air or water components cannot be eliminated, and many things are useful and safe at levels below thresholds for toxicity or harm.

Milloy's book focuses on air pollution regulations, but his criticisms of EPA apply to its approach to studying and regulating water pollution, insecticides, fungicides, pesticides, rodenticides, occupational safety, and oil pollution, and to setting hazardous materials (HAZMAT) and cleanup rules. The Toxic Substances Control Act was expansive and included asbestos, tobacco, chemicals, and nuclear

or other health risks that were established or suspected. Milloy exposes the resulting incompetence and dishonesty in EPA's toxicology and epidemiology.

He also explains EPA's cheating on economic risk and benefit analyses, showing that a 10-year research of all California deaths showed no statistical correlation of deadly effects of air pollution despite EPA assertions to the contrary about particulate-matter levels. Smog was not killing the young or the elderly.

Milloy and others, including this reviewer, testified to an investigative committee convened by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences about the ethical violations in research on human subjects under conditions the EPA told Congress could be lethal,¹ but the committee, composed of a number of EPA research grantees who should never have been appointed because of their conflicts, gave a pass to the EPA and its researchers.

The next time the government-media complex publicizes another fear-mongering pollution headline, you will be better informed if you read *Scare Pollution*.

John Dale Dunn, M.D., J.D.
Brownwood, Texas

1. Dunn JD. The Environmental Protection Agency's particulate matter rules: one physician's crusade against cargo cult science. *J Am Phys Surg* 2014;19:10-16. Available at: <https://www.jpands.org/vol19no1/dunn.pdf>. Accessed Nov 25, 2019.

An American Sickness: How Healthcare Became Big Business and How You Can Take It Back, by Elisabeth Rosenthal, M.D., 432 pp, paperback, \$10.79, ISBN-13: 978-0143110859, New York, N.Y., Penguin Press, 2017.

This book details the development, background, and history culminating in the current state of financial abuses found in the U.S. medical services delivery system. Dr. Rosenthal is a physician and *New York Times* writer with 22 years' experience providing detailed research on this topic. She presents a compendium of true, compelling, and exasperating patient stories, complete with patient names. She comprehensively describes the abusive facets of medical care, payment, and corporate structure, providing knowledge useful to patients and politicians concerned with reform of the system, or simply with navigating its exploding costs.

The book was written in 2017, and some information is outdated, such as the promises of "ObamaCare." The author tends to declare every aspect of medical care predatory: hospitals, insurance

companies, pharmaceutical sales, and yes, even politicians and medical organizations. These flaws do not reduce the compelling documentation of the corporatization and politicization of medicine as the primary basis of outlandish costs. The facts here stand on their own.

Part 1, which dissects the problems and their development, shows the intrusive corporate and political involvement in creating this system, in which everyone, especially those not actually providing the medical services, is attempting to profit from them. The bigger the entity, the greater the number of middlemen and excess salaries and costs, with the patient trapped as a pawn.

Dr. Rosenthal formulates "10 economic rules of the medical market," which appear to be as true as they are frightening. One is that there are no free choices and prices will invariably rise, even if the numbers of competitors increases, prices are transparent, technologies age, or consolidation into larger purchasing or insurance conglomerates occurs. Another is that while medical care historically developed as charitable institutions prevailed, it has become a huge marketplace in which corporate profits, data collection, political power structures, and multiple non-medical industries and mechanisms have found ways to become "essential components" of care. Examples include pharmacy benefit managers, the insurance and computer industries, and billing services, which all inflate costs by providing corporate means to fleece the system and provide no actual care to patients.

The book's most refreshing aspect is that it for the first time includes a short but on-message presentation of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) as being run by physicians "in service of money." Neither professional societies (ABMS, AMA, and specialty societies) nor philanthropic ("NON-profit") organizations are spared criticism of their actual predatory ethical conflicts.

The second part of the book makes recommendations on how to "take back our healthcare." While opening with the statement that this system is "rigged against you," Dr. Rosenthal suggests patient complacency as a basic problem. That "non-profit" organizations abound and are taking the lion's share of profits debunks any charitable intent. Dr. Rosenthal recommends that every patient become an active consumer, criticizing or questioning every bill, test, professional, politician, and of course, each organization involved in the individual's care. She seems to imply a needed return to the age before insurance, where patients meet directly with trusted

physicians (or “providers”) as the only two parties in the room, demanding accountability of the multiple corporations taking patients for a disastrous financial ride. Since this is impractical for most patients—the billing process being obscure and tangled by corporate design, Dr. Rosenthal’s soundest advice is to find a physician when you are healthy and build a long-term relationship of trust. This is a positive message reinforcing direct-patient-care practices. Continuity becomes otherwise impossible, when governments, employers, and insurances change coverage and “provider networks” yearly.

This part of the book departs from factual into more personal and often liberal interpretations. The suggestion that your doctor should be able to provide information on all medical costs, while a myriad of insurance, hospital, drug, and device organizations are fixing prices behind closed doors, is absurd. Such advice may be limited to direct-patient-care or concierge practices, where these aspects of care are incorporated in the practice. She draws on foreign systems and government programs as “solutions” to control costs, failing to recognize that waiting lists and rationing of care may be inherent. She offers political solutions without acknowledging that government intrusion is a central factor in creating this distorted marketplace.

References and suggestions in the appendix provide opportunities for further research into topics of financial abuses, and templates to contest questionable care. It appears that individuals will need to band together to create political forces to control big business—a monstrous task, given the financial influence of corporate lobbying inherent in the longstanding and progressive financial capture of the American patient in 2020.

This book provides patients who seek greater awareness with clear and frank examples of the multiple wasteful and fraudulent practices contributing to our exorbitantly expensive medical care.

Paul M. Kempen, M.D., Ph.D.
Weirton, West Virginia

Galileo Revisited: The Galileo Affair in Context, by Dom Paschal Scotti, 312 pp, paperback, \$15.96, ISBN: 978-1-62164-132-2, San Francisco, Calif., Ignatius Press, 2017.

Galileo was certainly an important scientist, but when his name is invoked these days, it generally is used as an example of a supposed incompatibility of reason and faith. Galileo is held to

represent truth, reason, and science, and the Roman Catholic Church to represent mysticism and irrationality.

As this book shows, the actual events were a complicated political struggle involving imperfect human beings. And the intellectual battle was not so much the Bible versus science, but Aristotle versus science.

The Renaissance marked the revival of classical Greek philosophy. Aristotle had been translated into Latin, partly from long-lost Greek texts and partly from Arabic translations and commentaries, and Aristotelian philosophy dominated the intellectual centers. Aristotelian physics was fundamentally wrong, so there was conflict between Aristotle and experimental science as well as between Aristotle and the Bible. Incidentally, Aristotelians also opposed Martin Luther; the recent Luther biography by Eric Metaxas recounts Luther’s amazement that the Catholic Church had swallowed Aristotle’s thinking for so long. Galileo lived in the Rome of the Counter-Reformation, when the Catholic Church was focusing on authority and obedience, as Scotti notes.

The Aristotelian model of the universe was geocentric, with the moon, sun, and planets in circular orbits around the earth. Ptolemy standardized the basic tenets of Greek geocentrism, and his astronomical predictions were used to prepare astrological and astronomical charts for more than 1,500 years. Galileo’s practice of astrology, frequently ignored, was normal for a mathematics professor into the early 17th century.

Scotti writes (p 172): “It is absolutely certain that Galileo was a practicing astrologer during most if not all his career, that he practiced it extensively, and that he was famous for it, with distinguished people coming to him for horoscopes and predictions, including the family of the Grand Dukes.” At the time, medical students were taught how to do horoscopes to ascertain what remedies would be needed.

The Church condemned astrology, except for navigation, agriculture, and medicine. Galileo’s brush with the Inquisition in 1664 included the accusation that he practiced a deterministic astrology that denied human free will.

At the time, the Papal States were important actors in a complex political situation in Italy. The Roman Inquisition, also known as the Holy Office, was a permanent bureaucratic organization that had jurisdiction not only over heresy, but also over witchcraft, superstition,

magic, and immorality of all sorts. Scotti notes that “while we would rightly now find abhorrent the pursuit and punishment of deviant beliefs..., it was an almost universal practice at that time by both church and state, ...with general popular support and very few serious critics.”

Scotti puts the actions of the Inquisition in the context of the times:

Given its due, when compared with the criminal justice system of early modern Europe, the Roman Inquisition holds up rather well, perhaps offering the best criminal justice available in early modern Europe. The rights of the accused were often better guaranteed with the procedures clearly outlined in manuals and with an integral right to counsel for the accused, whereas in France and England, the right to counsel was deliberately excluded (p 55).

A physician experienced with today’s sham peer review and criminal justice system in the U.S. has compared our system unfavorably with the Inquisition.

Scotti suggests that the attack on Galileo by Pope Urban was partly personal. The Pope’s “ferocious and implacable antipathy” may have been stimulated by Galileo’s *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems*. Galileo places the Pope’s arguments in the mouth of Simplicio, a character who was made to look ridiculous.

Scotti concludes that there was plenty of blame to go around. The Church had become, since the Reformation, more defensive, bureaucratic, and controlling. Galileo had faults too: vanity, ambition, a need to protect his scientific preeminence against all comers, and self-destructive pettiness and nastiness.

Scotti writes that he can do no better than follow the advice of St. Augustine, which Galileo also quoted:

Meanwhile, we should always observe that restraint that is proper to a devout and serious person and on an obscure question entertain no rash belief. Otherwise, if evidence later reveals the explanation, we are likely to despise it because of our attachment to our error, even though this explanation may not be in any way opposed to the sacred writings of the Old or New Testament (p 274).

Jane M. Orient, M.D.
Tucson, Ariz.