



SECRET SESSION SPEECHES

[1946]

(Cohen A221) (Woods A114)

Herbert Morrison was responsible for this book. On 19 December 1945, Morrison, Leader of the House of Commons in the Labour Government which had replaced Churchill's, moved to lift the ban on revealing the proceedings of five wartime Secret Session debates. Six months later Churchill published his seventh and final volume of war speeches, containing all five of his contributions to those sessions. It earned him over \$50,000.

"It is impossible to guarantee that the speeches as now printed are a completely accurate, word-for-word report of what Mr. Churchill said in Secret Session," notes the book's editor, Charles Eade. "It is likely that he occasionally changed words and phrases to suit the mood and temper of the House but such alterations must have been

only of a minor character....[The speeches] form a necessary contribution to the history of the War and explain many events which were puzzling at the time."

Four speeches are on the life-and-death "Battle of the Atlantic"; the fall of Singapore, probably the greatest single disaster and disappointment of Churchill's wartime Premiership; and the inside story of the Darlan episode in North Africa. Most fascinating is the first speech, "The Fall of France," delivered 20 June 1940, for which there was no complete record. Instead, the book offers the nine pages of typewritten notes and headings, edited and annotated by Churchill, which he actually held in his hand as he spoke. They form a singular example of what Churchill called "Speech Form," in which the cadence is established by picking out each group of words or sentences and indenting to show where the pauses should be, creating that marvelous sense of timing which was the key to Churchill's oratory.

Churchill's deletions are as fascinating as what he said. After stating, "[In] my view always Govt. strengthened by S[ecret]. S[essions].," he wasn't utterly sure, so he crossed out the following line: "Quite ready to have others." His powerful optimism is abundant, even at this depressing time, with France wiped out. "I hope it is not so," he starts to say of some grim possibility, but then quickly crosses those words out—why suggest unpleasant developments? As always, there are lighter notes: "Goering. How do you class him? He was an airman turned politician. I like him better as an airman. Not very much anyway."

Typing the four later speeches for the printer was the first assignment of Elizabeth Gilliatt, a secretary who would serve Churchill nearly a decade. Conventionally typeset, the four lack the impact and immediacy of the typescript speech, but still constitute important reading: "Parliament in the Air Raids" (17 Sep 40), "The Battle of the Atlantic" (25 Jun 41), "The Fall of Singapore" (23 Apr 42) and "Admiral Darlan and the North Africa Landings" (10 Dec 42).

It is not coincidental that the need for Secret Sessions ended in 1943, when the war started to turn in favour of the Allies.

-Richard M. Langworth

From the Reviews

“More representative of the Churchill who will be remembered are the five major addresses he delivered to the House of Commons at secret sessions. Mr. Churchill had no text from what he told the House of Commons on that solemn day in June 1940, when France had fallen; the speech is reproduced only from his notes. It was his conviction that if Britain could weather the storm of the next three months, by which time, it is obvious now, Mr. Churchill hoped that Providence in the form of intervention from the New World would help redress the balance of the Old. In September when, with the bombs raining down on London, there was another secret session of the House, the Prime Minister revealed that a vast enemy armada of 1,700 self-propelled barges and 200 oceangoing ships capable of transporting an invading wave of 500,000 men was gathered across the narrow channel awaiting the order to attack. Expressing his confidence in a victory as ‘sure as the sun will rise,’ Mr. Churchill added, ‘Anyhow, whatever happens, we will all go down fighting to the end.’

“Even then, long before he delivered his radio speech asking for American aid and declaring ‘give us the tools and we will finish the job,’ the Prime Minister was hoping for more direct assistance from the United States. Nothing, he declared, would so arouse American opinion as the news of fighting in the British Isles.”

-Raymond Daniell, *New York Times Book Review*, 25 August 1946

Comments

The arrangements by which Churchill dropped Putnam’s for Simon and Schuster as publisher of this volume are intricate (readers should consult the Cohen Bibliography for more details). While relaxing in Miami before his ‘Iron Curtain’ speech in Fulton, Missouri in March 1946, Churchill sent Simon and Schuster the typescript, as part of his agreement with Marshall Field, owner of the *Chicago Sun*, who planned to serialize the *Secret Session* speeches upon publication. But after Fulton, the *Sun* attacked Churchill with what he viewed as ‘stock Communist output,’ and Churchill withdrew from their serialization deal. This turned out well enough: while Simon and Schuster paid him £1,000 (\$4,035), Henry Luce, publisher of *Life*, bought the serialization rights for £12,500 (\$50,000), though only the last two speeches were published. (See Sir Martin Gilbert, *Never Despair*, Vol. VIII of the official biography, pages 194, 204-05, 255, 258).

Appraisal

Contrary to Woods, the American Edition preceded the English by over a month and is therefore the true First Edition. Its small press run has rendered it scarce today, and it will soon be quite rare, especially in jacketed form. The gilt lettering was not of good quality and is usually found quite dull. A really fine copy with some sparkle left to the gilt and a clean, unchipped dust jacket is quite a prize.

-EDITIONS-

[SECRET SESSION SPEECHES]
First Edition: Cohen A221.2 / ICS A114b

Publisher: Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York 1946

Grey cloth blocked gilt. 'WINSTON CHURCHILL'S | Secret Session Speeches' appears on top board, 'Winston Churchill's SECRET SESSION SPEECHES [four spacer dots] and publisher's name appear on spine, reading down. 8vo, 126 pages numbered (i) -(viii) and (1)-113 (+5). Published 22 August 1946 at \$2.

Impressions and Quantities

One impression of 5910 copies.

Variants

None noted

Dust Jackets

Jackets are printed rust-red and dark green on white stock with titles on spine and front face and promotional blurbs on flaps and back face. On the front face the jacket designer signs his name: 'Woods' (no relation!). No variations noted.

[SECRET SESSION SPEECHES]
First English (Illustrated) Edition: Cohen A221.2 / ICS A114b

Publisher: Cassell and Company Ltd., London 1946

Light blue cloth blocked gilt on spine: || CASSELL || SECRET SESSION SPEECHES || CHURCHILL || (reading up); three vertical gilt rules at left side of top board. 8vo, 96 pages numbered (i) -(v) and 6-96, plus sixteen photographs on sixteen coated paper leaves inserted between pages 48-49. Published 26 September 1946 at 6s. (\$1.50).

Impressions and Quantities

One impression of 48,500 copies.

Variants

The edition exists bound in dark blue leatherette. Publisher's presentation copies bound uniformly with previous such copies of war speech volumes may exist but are not reported.

Presentation cards: Churchill presented many copies of this work, unsigned but accompanied by a 2 1/4 x 3 3/4' white card printed in black, 'WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF Winston S. Churchill' (name in script), surrounded by a light blue decorative border. Most of these were accompanied by a second card of the same size, reading 'THE REFERENCE to 'American Authorities' in the Introduction refers to the United States Government and General Eisenhower.' and surrounded by a thin light blue rule. Churchill apparently thought it proper to be more specific on this point than editor Charles Eade, who wrote in the Introduction, 'Acknowledgment is expressed of the courtesy of the American authorities concerned for permission to publish the documents quoted.'

Dust Jackets

Jackets, which are not uniform with other Cassell war speech volumes, are printed black and light blue on white paper. On the front flap, each jacket has the original intended price of 7/6 blacked out in two places, and replaced by the 6/ price. No jackets with the 7/6 price have been found.

Comments

Cassell became more generous with photographs with this title, which should be acquired for them alone. Arranged to chronicle the war, most of the photos are rarely seen elsewhere: the PM bidding farewell to French President Reynaud as the Germans closed in; Churchill with troops and defence workers, inspecting Blitz damage, touring warships and working over maps and papers.

Appraisal

Although wartime economy standards were still in effect, *Secret Session Speeches* is more uniformly produced and seems to contain slightly better paper. Nevertheless, the truly fine, unspotted copy in bright cloth is a rarity. The white jackets soil easily, and bring the price well down when dirty or torn. Unjacketed copies are fairly common and inexpensive. The dark blue binding variant adds 25% to the price. A jacketed copy with both presentation cards laid in is certainly worth a premium.

[SECRET SESSION SPEECHES]
Canadian Edition: Cohen A221.3 / ICS A114c

Publisher: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto 1946

Red cloth blocked black and gilt. Title and author's name separated by thick rule blocked gilt on black inside thin gilt on top board. SECRET SESSION SPEECHES [spacer] CHURCHILL [smaller type] blocked gilt on black with thin gilt border on spine (reading down); publisher's name toward base and decorative wavy lines at spine ends. 8vo, 112 pages numbered(1)-108 (+4), plus four pages of photographs on coated paper in four leaves inserted between pages 32-33, 48-49, 80-81 and 96-97. Published Autumn 1946 in one impression.

Dust jackets printed red and black on white paper in the style of previous Little, Brown and McClelland and Stewart war speeches. The front face includes title, byline and a silhouetted photo of Churchill working on a train (final photo in the English Edition).

A most interesting production, this work was wholly reset (except for the typescript speech) in Canada and therefore constitutes a separate edition. Unlike its American counterpart, the binding and jacket are uniform with five previous North American war speech volumes. Undoubtedly the American Edition would have looked like this had Little Brown continued as publisher. Highly collectible as a true edition, but quite rare nowadays, it is the hardest Canadian war speech volume to find. Fine jacketed copies commands over \$100/£60 and can go higher. Unjacketed copies run about 50% lower.

[SECRET SESSION SPEECHES]
Australian Issue: Cohen A221.4 / ICS A114d

Publisher: Cassell and Company Ltd., Melbourne 1946

Bound in tan or pale blue cloth blocked dark blue on spine with publisher's name, title and author's name, reading up. 8vo, 96 pages numbered (1)-96 plus frontispiece and fourteen internal photographs on coated stock inserted between pages 16-17, 32-33, 36-37, 48-49, 64-65, 84-85 and 92-93. Offprinted from the English edition by William Brooks & Co. Ltd. All but two photographs from the English Edition are included. Published at A 12s. 6d. The title page verso contains the line ' First Australian Edition 1946'.

Only one impression was published.

Dust Jackets

While the Canadian Edition shows us the uniform North American jacket style, the Australian Issue displays the uniform British style which Cassell abandoned with this title in Britain. On thin white paper, it is printed black and yellow-orange fading into dark blue on the face only; the spine is blank except for the titles printed black.

Variants

There appear to be more tan bindings than pale blue.

Unlike previous Australian war speech volumes, this was not reset but offprinted from the English edition—a speedier production process, which saw this title appear before the Australian *Victory*.

Foreign Translations

Danish: CHURCHILLS HEMMELIGE TALER

Published by Berlingske: Copenhagen 1946 (card wrappers, supplied with pages untrimmed).

French: MES DESCOURS SECRETS

Published by DuPont: Paris 1947

German: GEHEIMSREDEN/BAND 7

Published by Europa Verlag: Zurich 1947; bound in coarse and smooth tan cloth with dust jackets

Spanish: LOS SECRETOS DE LA GUERRA

Published by Los Libros de Nuestro Tiempo: Barcelona 1946

Swedish: TAL INFOR LYCKTA DORRAR

Published by Skoglund: Stockholm 1946 (soft and clothbound)

TERMINOLOGY

This guide follows John Carter's *ABC for Book Collectors* commonly used terms:

Edition: "All copies of a book printed at any time or times from one setting-up of type without substantial change, including copies printed from stereotype, electrotype [we must now add 'computer scanning'] or similar plates made from that setting of type."

Impression: "The whole number of copies of that edition printed at *one* time, i.e., without the type or plates being removed from the press." A particular conundrum was posed by the discovery that the stated third impression of the Colonial *Malakand Field Force* (pressed November 1898) carried the same extensive textual corrections of the Silver Library Edition (pressed at the same time—indeed both these books used the same sheets). How then to classify the third Colonial? It is clearly not a new impression. Our solution was to make it part of a new entry, not cited by Woods, the "Second Edition," along with the Silver Library Edition.

State: "When alterations, corrections, additions or excisions are effected in a book during the process of manufacture, so that copies exhibiting variations go on sale on publication day indiscriminately, these variant copies are conveniently classified as belonging to different states of the edition." Example: the two states of the first English *My Early Life*.

Issue: "An exception [to the above] is the regular use of issue for variant title pages, usually in respect of the publisher's imprint...[also] when similar variations can be clearly shown to have originated in some action taken after the book was published, two [or more] *issues* are distinguished." Example: the two issues of *The People's Rights*, one with an index and appendix, the other with two appendices and no index.

We occasionally sidestep Carter's strict definitions for clarity. With *Savrola*, for example, Woods states that the first English "edition" was produced from a set of electroplates made up in Boston, a duplicate set to the First American Edition. The English "edition" might therefore be called an "issue," but we do not do so because no one else does, including Woods, and because this book is quite distinct in appearance.

Offprints: Carter defines this as "a separate printing of a section of a larger publication," which is not exactly how modern publishers use it. To us an offprint is a reprint, sometimes reduced but sometimes same-size, of *all* the pages of an earlier printing (for example the five Canadian offprints of American war speech volumes from *The Unrelenting Struggle through Victory*. In earlier years offprinting was accomplished by using plates from the original (like the Canadian issue of *My African Journey*) or by reproducing the type on negatives (like the Australian issue of *Secret Session Speeches*) In the latter case, the offprint usually exhibits heavy looking type, not as finely printed as the original. Offprints are not usually considered separate editions, but a contretemps arises with modern reprints of long out-of-print works made by photo-reproduction.

Proof copies: From *The World Crisis* on, proof copies bound in paper wrappers are occasionally encountered. This is a task best left to the bibliographer, except to say that in general they tend to lack illustrations, maps and plans that appear in the published volumes. Although not widely collected, proofs do usually command high prices when they are offered for sale.

Dust Jackets = Dust Wrappers: We generally use the term "dust jacket" to refer to what English bibliophiles usually call a "dust wrapper." The two terms are interchangeable, though words that describe the *parts* of the dust jacket, aside from "spine," are common to both countries. These are as follows: *Flap:* The parts of the jacket that fold in around the edge of the boards, front and rear. *Face:* The front or back panel of the jacket that you see with the book lying flat in front of you.

SIZE

Books vary—especially old books—and one finds variations between identical editions. Except where distinct size differences help identify various editions or impressions of the same title, one from another, this guide describes books by the traditional cataloguer's terms:

Folio (Fo.): Very large format, now commonly known as "coffee table" size; among Churchill folio works is the Time-Life two-volume *Second World War*, measuring 14 x 12 inches (365 x 305mm) which deserves this description.

Quarto (4to): Normally lying between folio and octavo in size, though varying considerably in this respect. A telephone directory is quarto; but so is *The Island Race*, A138(c), which measures 12 1/4 x 9 3/4 inches (310 x 248mm), although Woods calls it "octavo" and says it measures 12 x 9 1/2! Other quarto volumes are the Danish and Norwegian translations of *The Great War*, which measure 8 1/2 x 11 1/2."

Octavo (8vo): The commonest size of book since the early 17th century. A large (demy) octavo is about the size of *Frontiers and Wars*, A142/1, which measures 9 1/2 x 6 3/8 inches (232 x 162mm). A small (crown) octavo is about the size of the English *Young Winston's Wars*, A143(a), which measures 8 3/4 x 5 5/8 inches (222 x 143mm), although Woods calls it "16mo" and says it measures 8 1/2 x 5 1/2! (You see the problem...)

Duodecimo (12mo, commonly called "twelvemo"): A bit smaller than 8vo but taller than 16mo: the size of a conventional paperback, say 6 7/8 x 4 1/4 inches (175 x 107mm).

Sextodecimo (16mo, usually pronounced "sixteenmo"): The smallest size of book covered herein, shorter but perhaps wider than a paperback, for example the 1915 edition of *Savrola*, which measures 6 5/8 x 4 1/2 inches (168 x 114mm).

My only other reference to size will be when an obvious difference can be ascertained between related editions or issues: I thought it useful to mention, for example, that the first edition *Malakand* bulks about 1 1/2 inches, while the first Colonial issue bulks only about 1 1/4 inches; or that there's about a half inch difference between the first impression Macmillan *Aftermath* and the later impressions. Even here, the key word is "about," since old books swell or shrink depending on storage conditions, and many were not uniform to begin with.

FOREIGN TRANSLATIONS

Collectors of editions in foreign languages are enjoying a little-known but rewarding branch of Churchill bibliophilia, not the least for the sometimes magnificent bindings of these works (leading examples: the Monaco edition of *Savrola*, Scandinavian editions of *The Great War* and the Belgian French edition of *The Second World War*). Foreign translations also often differ importantly from the English editions, depending on what Churchill wished to emphasize or de-emphasize. For example, Sir Martin Gilbert's official biography records that the Dutch, through Churchill's foreign language impresario Emery Reves, were offended by no mention in *The Grand Alliance* of the activities of Dutch submarines in the Allied cause. Churchill replied that he would make no alteration in his English text but had no objection to an amplifying footnote on this subject in the Dutch edition, which was duly entered. (*Winston S. Churchill*, Vol. VIII, "Never Despair," London: Heinemann 1988 page 549). While we have not gone into great descriptive detail, we have indicated the broad reach of Churchill's foreign translations.

MAJOR WORKS CITED

Three works are commonly referred to in this guide:

Woods is shorthand for *A Bibliography of the Works of Sir Winston Churchill, KG, OM, CH* by the late Frederick Woods, the Second Revised Edition, second issue (Godalming, Surrey:

St. Paul's Bibliographies 1975). The late Mr. Woods recognized that his work badly needed updating, and was beginning work on the update before his untimely death in 1994.

Frederick Woods, the pioneer bibliographer of Sir Winston, published his first edition in 1963, astonishing not only bibliophiles but also the Churchill family with the number of items he uncovered. Dissatisfaction with the completeness and accuracy of his work was inevitable as time passed, and Fred, to whom many of us passed our corrections and suggestions, characteristically recognized this. He was hoping to rectify the situation before his death. He can truly be said to have inspired everyone who has researched or seriously collected the works of Churchill.

Cohen is the new Ronald Cohen Bibliography, published by Continuum, a product of more than twenty-five years' labour by the author, aided and abetted by scores of bibliophiles and, through the pages of *Finest Hour*, journal of The Churchill Centre.

Both Frederick Woods, before he died, and Ronald Cohen kindly gave permission to quote their bibliographic numbers here as a cross reference.

ICS refers to a publication of the International Churchill Societies, *Churchill Bibliographic Data*, Part 1 ("Works by Churchill"). Pending release of the update, which he did not succeed in publishing, Mr. Woods also permitted the International Churchill Society to publish an "Amplified list" based on his numbers, but with more detailed sub-designations to pinpoint the various editions and issues. For example, *The World Crisis* has assigned three "Woods" numbers: A31(a) through A31(c). The ICS "Amplified Woods list" runs from A31a through A31k (in order to distinguish certain deservingly distinct editions and issues. Except for deleting the parentheses, in no case did ICS alter any basic Woods numbers. For example, even *Blenheim*, which undeservedly holds Woods number A40(c)—it is only an excerpt, and probably should not be among the "A" titles at all—is retained by ICS. Thus, "ICS" numbers are merely an extension of Woods numbers.

END