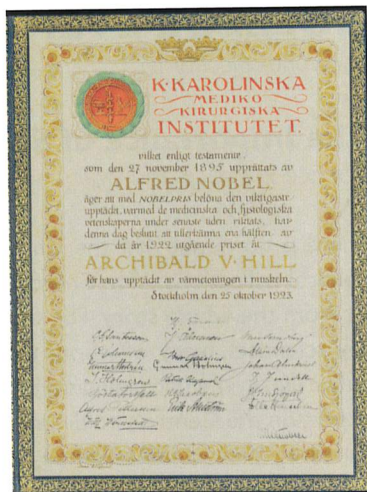


Archibald Vivian Hill, who preferred the moniker 'AV', was a Nobel Prize-winning physiologist who became a politician, serving as the independent Member of Parliament for Cambridge University during the Second World War. As such, he was a champion for science in peace and war, and on 16 November the Archives Centre was delighted to host a one-day symposium on his fascinating life and legacy organised by former Archives By-Fellow **Dr Andrew Brown**. It heralded the launch of his book *Bound by muscle: biological science, humanism, and the lives of A. V. Hill and Otto Meyerhof* (Oxford University Press, 2022).



Andrew talked about Hill's early life and Cambridge years (at Trinity), while **Professor Nancy Curtin** explained the importance of his pioneering work in physiology, **Professor David Zimmerman** Zoomed in to talk about his war work marshalling British scientists to fight the Nazis, **Professor Paul Weindling** highlighted his humanitarian work as a founder of the Academic Assistance Society, and **Dr Alison Hill** gave a personal portrait of her grandfather in old age.

The day drew heavily on **the Hill Papers** deposited in the Archives Centre and ended with a drinks reception and display at which we were able to show off a recent accession; the wonderfully illuminated citation for Hill's Nobel Prize, kindly given by the Physiological Society.

The series helped shine **a spotlight on our scientific collections**, and on some of the research that they have facilitated in recent years. It marked a welcome return to in-person events (though two of the sessions were also live streamed and recorded), but above all, it emphasised the importance of science and scientists to our public life and recent history. The College has an important dual role in perpetuating and recording this.

Allen Packwood

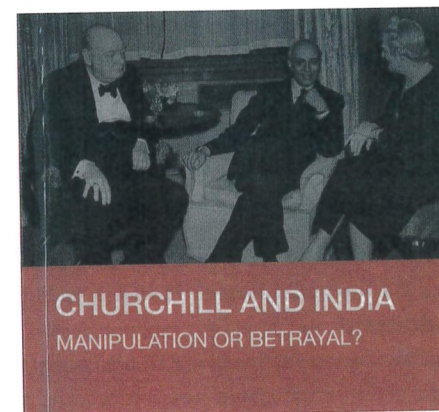
Churchill and India

A Conversation with Kishan S. Rana

Kishan S. Rana is a former high ranking Indian diplomat who came to Churchill College as an Archives By-Fellow in the Michaelmas Term of 2004. The research journey that he started then culminated this year with the publication of his book *Churchill and India: Manipulation or Betrayal?* (Routledge, 2023). Allen Packwood, the Director of the Churchill Archives Centre reports on an online conversation with Kishan S. Rana that focuses on Churchill's lifelong interaction with India, from his own experiences of the subcontinent as a young soldier till his impact on the country as Prime Minister.

The work is timely, given the **intense scrutiny of recent years on Churchill's views on empire and race**. It looks at Churchill's lifelong relationship with the Indian subcontinent; from the influence of his father, through his first impressions as a young cavalry officer, to his campaign against independence and his subsequent machinations as wartime Prime Minister. In doing so, **it charts the hardening of his attitude** and concludes that Churchill's refusal to engage with the Congress Party leadership, combined with his partisanship towards Jinnah, ultimately contributed to the disaster of partition.

In addition to producing his book, Kishan kindly provided a chapter for *The Cambridge Companion to Winston Churchill* (Cambridge, 2023), which I have edited. This gave us the perfect reason to have an online conversation about his research. In the course of an hour, and in spite of technological challenges, we enjoyed discussing many of the following questions (Kishan has kindly summarised his answers, reframing responses with reference to his 2023 book).



Allen: **What led you to want to write about Winston Churchill?**

Kishan: Serendipity, in a word. Not one of the 2000+ books had fully addressed a connection that started with Churchill's three India years (1896–99), eventually becoming a dark spot on a great life (pp. xiv–xvi).

Allen: **Your book divides his connection with India into distinct phases of engagement (or in some cases lack of engagement) can you briefly summarise those?**

Kishan: 1. 1896–1921: Benign but superficial empathy. 2. 1922–39: Extravagant, unreasoning hostility. 3. 1940–45: Manipulation, attempted subversion of the Indian national movement. Finally, after 1945: Mellowed, yet not a whit apologetic (pp. 6–7).

Allen: **To what extent do you feel that Churchill's relationship with India was shaped by his admiration for his father, Lord Randolph Churchill? How was it then reshaped by his own experiences in the country between 1896 and 1899?**

Kishan: It is common knowledge that the father was a major influence. In what needs closer study is why Lord Randolph's more humane, understanding, and his critique of the lapses in Britain's treatment of Indians, even in that Victorian Era, was not picked up by Churchill (pp. 14–17).

Allen: **Do you think that Churchill's views of India change between 1900 and 1930, if so – how and why?**

Kishan: The inflection point? Probably Prince of Wales's India visit, 1921–22, coinciding with first *Satyagraha* movement launched by Gandhi. The Crown Jewel's autonomy demand became for Churchill an existential threat to the British Empire (p. 51–3).

Allen: **Why do you think Churchill becomes so intransigent over Indian independence? Is it his political philosophy, his character, his ambition?**

Kishan: For all his fine words, oft repeated, about looking far back to see the future, Churchill could not understand the inexorable march of history. He was not even aware of the living legacy of the Indian civilisation dating to a pre-Christian era, and its complex heritage of internal harmony and conflict (pp. 162–3).

Allen: **How would you describe Churchill's management of India during WWII? What are the consequences of his actions?**

Kishan: Documentary evidence (FDR's message to Churchill of 11 April 1942), reveals Britain's plan to partition India (p. 109). Churchill wasted three years (1942–45), doing nothing to prepare for that Partition, much less, anticipate and plan for inevitable chaos and carnage (pp. 169–70).

Allen: **To what extent do you feel that Churchill's response is motivated by his views on race?**

Kishan: Race was at the core of Churchill's 1922 assertion that Indians were incapable of self-governance (p. 53). He repeated that at the Bermuda Summit, December 1953, to US President Eisenhower and French Premier Laniel, (p. 155).

Allen: **In your view, how much blame should be attached to him personally for the Bengal Famine?**

Churchill (and Cherwell, czar of shipping allocations) did not release ships to take food to India, privileging the accumulation of Britain's 21-million-ton stockpile, for the War end. Churchill said the hardy Greeks needed food and, '...the starvation of anyhow underfed Bengalis is less serious...' (Amery Diary, p. 123).

Allen: **You have come to believe that Churchill was acting in concert with Jinnah. What has led you to that view?**

Kishan: The congruence in their political goals suggests that the two probably met in 1931–34, when Jinnah lived in London, a successful barrister at the High Court and Privy Council. Jinnah had sought entry to Parliament via by-elections. Further, the banality of their first surviving message, Jinnah's letter of 2 January 1940, suggests a history of direct communication. (Located at the British Archives, not among the documents sent to CAC). Churchill's patronage of Jinnah was the subtle message picked up by British officials in India, predicated on the divide-and-rule doctrine guiding Churchill (p. 81). Was hard evidence eliminated by the principals? (pp. 126–7, 172–4).

The Contradictions of Winston Churchill

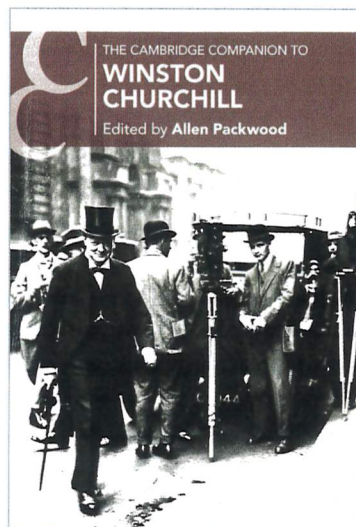
A Review of *The Cambridge Companion to Winston Churchill*

Professor Mark Goldie, an Historian and Churchill Fellow, reviews *The Cambridge Companion to Winston Churchill*, edited by Allen Packwood, Director of the Churchill Archives Centre (Cambridge University Press, 2023; hb and pb).

In 1980 an historian of the Left was offered a Fellowship at Churchill. He said he would accept on condition he would be free to criticise Winston Churchill in his publications. The College responded that it had not occurred to it that any Fellow should feel constrained in exercising academic judgement about Churchill. Even so, the College is unavoidably caught between two domains: **scholarship and icon-making**. It houses an Archives Centre where scholars confront whatever realities they find in the records. Yet it is also **a national memorial to a revered statesman**, with all the rigmarole of a cult: the busts and portraits, the toasts and chocolate-and-pink colours. And that cult is today drastically challenged. The statue-topplers confront the icon-makers.

Racist utterances

For professional historians, one puzzle about the recent furore over Churchill's reputation has been that his critics appear to have been surprised to discover that Churchill was a racist. That was well known. For a decade I taught a summer school on Churchill. I devoted a lecture to Churchill's worldview, explaining his debt to **Victorian Social Darwinism** and the pseudo-science of the hierarchy of civilisations. I quoted his uglier racist utterances. **This stands alongside facing down Nazi totalitarianism**. He was a person of contradictions. As are we. Everyone who denounces capitalist hegemony should ask where and for how little their T-shirts and trainers are made. Everyone who applauds 'EDI' initiatives should ask what the ratio is between



the highest and lowest salaries in their organisations. We are all complicit. **To live contradictions is the human tragedy.**

The remarkably compendious new book

Many facets and contradictions are displayed in the remarkably compendious new book, *The Cambridge Companion to Winston Churchill*, not least a first draft of a history of the recent passionate contest about Churchill's record. For our College, a striking aspect of the book is **how much is written by College members**. The contributors include four current Fellows, one past Fellow, four past Archives By-Fellows, and two former members of the Archives Committee. Namely: Piers Brendon, Martin Daunton, Warren Dockter, Gaynor Johnson, Sean Lang, Allen Packwood, Barry Phipps, Krishan Rana, David Reynolds, Peter Sloman, and David Woolner. And the Foreword is by the chair of the Sir Winston Churchill Archive Trust, Paul Boateng. While the book covers the Wars, it **aims especially to spotlight domestic policy**, global dimensions, and personal traits. Thus, for example: social and economic reform; the 'Irish Question'; 'Churchill, India, and Race'; Roosevelt, Churchill, and empire; Churchill as painter, writer, orator, and as Clementine's husband. The book admirably caters for the expert and inexperienced reader alike.

Churchill's many contradictions

The contradictions pile up. The Edwardian Churchill was a founder of the welfare state; but the anti-socialist Churchill voted against the NHS. The Edwardian Churchill fervently advocated Irish Home Rule and prepared to suppress Unionists by force; but in 1920 he sent the Black and Tans to brutally terrorise Irish nationalists. In 1920 Churchill searingly denounced General Dyer's Amritsar Massacre; but in 1942 he disregarded the Bengal Famine. Between the covers of this book, you will find the following statements. '... the significance of his achievements as a wartime leader in mobilising the global effort against the evils of fascism' (Paul Boateng). 'The famine resulted in the death of between 2 and 3 million people in Bengal ... almost half the number of Jews that perished in the Holocaust. This was not premeditated genocide, but it was symptomatic of systemic neglect and failure' (Kishan Rana).

Mark Goldie