



All Behind You, Winston: Churchill's Great Coalition 1940-45

Roger Hermiston

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All Behind You, Winston tells the story of the most remarkable gathering of leaders in modern British history: the War Ministry that saw the country through its darkest - and finest - hour.

When Winston Churchill became Prime Minister on 10 May 1940, it was not with the unanimous support of Westminster or the country. For many, Lord Halifax was the obvious choice to succeed Neville Chamberlain, and Churchill's grasp of the Home Front appeared uncertain at best. He assembled around him, however, a Cabinet of 'all the talents'; which would variously mobilise, arm, feed, fund, shelter, evacuate, heal and, ultimately, save Britain. Among these remarkable men - and women - were Churchill's rivals Lord Halifax and Sir Stafford Cripps, the loyal and dogged Clement Attlee, titanic egos such as Lord Beaverbrook and John Reith, the popular department store owner Lord Woolton (the man who kept the nation fed), the propagandist and playboy Duff Cooper, and many of the statesmen who would go on to build the New Jerusalem in peacetime. By 1945 they had not only steered the country to victory, they had also ensured Churchill's inviolable position in our national myth - an outcome that had seemed far from likely five years earlier.

In a series of character-driven chapters, Roger Hermiston, a former deputy editor on Radio 4's Today and the author of *The Greatest Traitor*, tells the behind-closed-doors story of the key figures and key ministries, delving deep into the archives to bring to life a Cabinet that was both the brain and the conscience of the nation.

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