

MODULE 2 :

Page 119 : The man with the cigar and WW II

Winston Churchill (1874-1965), the man with the cigar was the major British political figure during the Second World War. He was born in 1874 at Blenheim Palace, to an aristocratic family. His father Randolph was an unsuccessful politician and his mother a beautiful American and a descendant of the Duke of Marlborough (a 'condottiere' of '600).

He entered the army and worked as a war correspondent, as a journalist and later as a politician. In September 1939 Germany invaded Poland and Britain entered the war. In 1940 he became both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and with determination and courage convinced the British to fight with a memorable discourse: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight on the hills; we shall never surrender ...!"

The terrible World War II ended in 1945, but a very high price had been paid: millions of Jews, soldiers and civilians had been killed. On 8th May 1945, Churchill was informed that the Wehrmacht¹ had surrendered.

The bells of London began to ring. Tears came to Churchill's eyes. He said to his faithful Thompson: "I haven't got my cigar with me! Go and fetch it! Now I need it!" then, he went to Parliament and made a speech to the country. He ended with these words: "Let us all go to St. Margaret's Westminster, to present our humble and respectful thanks to Almighty God who has freed us from the menace of German domination!!" On the day he was eighty he was made Father of the Country². Deeply touched³ during the ceremony, his comment was "You were the true lions, i have only roared⁴!"

Activity

Answer these questions:

1. Who was Winston Churchill?
2. When was he born and when did he die?
3. What were his jobs during the war?
4. When did Britain enter the World War II?
5. Who was Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence during World War II?
6. Did he encourage British people to fight?
7. When did World War II end?
8. Was the number of the war victims very high?
9. What title did Churchill receive at the age of eighty?

Notes

1. Forze armate
2. Padre della Patria
3. Comosso
4. Ruggito