

army plan, though it was some time before it was certain that Hitler would authorise it. When and why this happened is a much weaker part of the book, perhaps because for Müller's argument it is what the army did in 1940 that really matters.

This is nonetheless an important argument because it finally lays to rest the myth established after 1945 by the German generals that they had been forced along a path they had not wanted by a wayward commander who did not understand the risks he ran. Right through to the invasion in summer 1941, the army underestimated the Soviet Union and assumed that if they could knock out the French Army in six weeks, they must surely be able to do the same to Soviet forces. Of course, this is a narrowly military inter-

Hitler always harboured the idea that at some point Germany might need 'living space' in the East

pretation of events and although Müller does not ignore politics and ideology, it takes a back seat. Yet Hitler's vision of a new territorial empire, peopled by sturdy German peasants and governed with harsh colonial methods, nevertheless created a campaign for which the army leadership had not really been planning. Their concerns were generally governed by power-political considerations, while Hitler was motivated by a longing for a new German hegemony that would rescue Europe and European 'culture', create a new German imperial ruling class and solve Germany's tight economic and resources situation. The army's plan to smash the Red Army quickly and put the Soviet Union in its place was more modest, though it still seems as fanciful as Hitler's. But no doubt NATO was drawing up similar contingency plans 20 years later and may perhaps be doing it again today.

Richard Overy

POLITICAL SCULPTURE

THERE IS AN over life-sized bronze of Sir Winston Churchill in bullish pose to the left of the door from Members' Lobby into the House of Commons' Chamber. The dull, dark brown patina of the majority of this sculpture, has been rubbed away on the right foot to a shiny, light pinkie-brown: an indication of its role as talisman to nervous Tory maiden speakers. In recent decades, the feet of David Lloyd George, and Clement Attlee, have also received a good rubbing for similar reasons. Representative and symbolic, three-dimensional and tactile and, unlike a painting, intruding benignly or otherwise into our interior and exterior spaces, love it or hate it, public portrait sculpture matters.

If you walk from Members' Lobby out into Parliament Square and then along Whitehall to Trafalgar Square, you will pass many more memorials to various worthies, four of which (including Clement Attlee in Members' Lobby and Field Marshal Slim on Whitehall), are the work of Ivor Roberts-Jones (1913-1996), a name perhaps unfamiliar to *History Today* regulars, this reviewer included. And yet, during his lifetime, Roberts-Jones was regarded as Britain's leading figure sculptor for public monuments: the 'last icon maker'.

The present volume is the first in-depth study of his life and work – covering drawings and preparatory sketches, as well as sculptures – supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Henry Moore Institute. It will go a long way to restoring this lost reputation.

The dark brown patina of the over life-size bronze of Churchill has been rubbed away on the right foot by Tory maiden speakers

Abstraction and Reality contains a sequence of scholarly essays, followed by a catalogue raisonné, and is very well illustrated. Setting the scene, the opening chapter covers Roberts-Jones life and career. The future artist was born in Shropshire in 1913, initially studied painting at Goldsmiths College, London (1932-34), after which, having made the decision to focus on sculpture, he transferred to the Royal Academy Schools in Piccadilly. Here, he received a very

traditional art training, winning many prizes and scholarships, but he longed for something edgier. While expressing admiration for his contemporaries, notably Henry Moore, Alberto Giacometti, Elizabeth Frink, Charles Sergeant Jagger and Jacob Epstein, it was the grandfather of modern sculpture, Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), who was 'his God, his guiding star'.

On leaving the Royal Academy, Roberts-Jones established a studio in Chelsea, which was hit during the London Blitz, destroying most of the sculptor's pre-war work in the process.

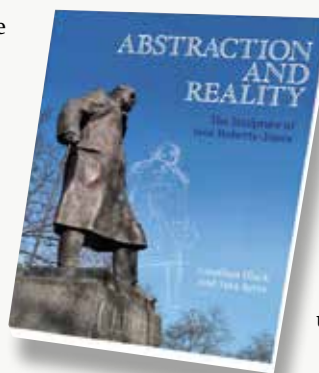
At the time he was serving in the Royal Artillery, initially stationed in Northern Ireland and later saw combat in Burma. Regarding the latter,

Roberts-Jones recalled, as paraphrased by Jonathan Black, that he had 'never been more frightened, and yet had never felt more alive and observant.' On his return, Roberts-Jones' experience and status as a war veteran, in tandem with his talent, was to give him the edge over his fellow sculptors in regard to public monument commissions.

The Churchill sculpture in Members' Lobby is by Oscar Nemon. In Parliament Square, however, you can view another mighty bronze figure of the great man by Roberts-Jones. Unveiled by Churchill's widow, Clementine, in 1973, it is arguably

the sculptor's masterpiece. In support of this, two of the five chapters in the current volume focus on this commission and then subsequent versions in Oslo, New Orleans and Prague. The authors rightly draw attention to the resonances between Roberts-Jones' depiction of Churchill – an imposing dark mass in his great coat, leaning on a walking stick and brooding into eternity – and Rodin's controversial bronze megalith of the writer, Honoré de Balzac (1896-8). That Roberts-Jones achieves such presence and gravitas is all the more surprising, when you discover that the sculptor was deeply ambivalent about his subject, describing Britain's redoubtable war leader as resembling 'a boiled sweet' in a uniform. But then many Britons, past and present, are similarly ambivalent. Yet, for Roberts-Jones, such contradiction was crucial. As he himself declared, in order for the portrait sculpture to truly 'live', it must possess 'dignity and caricature, a kind of irony', as well as 'edge and a suggestion of an inner life'.

Jacqueline Riding



Abstraction and Reality

The Sculpture of Ivor Roberts-Jones

Jonathan Black and Sara Ayres

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