

Primary Sources: April 1945

News Report—*The New York Times*, April 27

“The United States and Russian armies have met on the Elbe. The Western and Eastern fronts are at last linked up and Germany is cut in two.... Two armies of plain men who had marched and fought from the blood-splashed beaches of Normandy and the shattered streets of Stalingrad have met on the Elbe in the heart of Germany, splitting the Third Reich and sealing the doom of the German army, whose tread shook the world only three short years ago.”

Statement by President Harry S. Truman, April 27

“The union of our arms in the heart of Germany has a meaning for the world which the world will not miss. It means, first, that the last faint desperate hope of Hitler and his gangster government has been extinguished. The common front and the common cause of the powers allied in this war against tyranny and inhumanity have been demonstrated in fact as they have long been demonstrated in determination. Nothing can divide or weaken the common purpose of our veteran armies to pursue their victorious purpose to its final Allied triumph in Germany.

“Second, the junction of our forces at this moment signalizes to ourselves and to the world that the collaboration of our nations in the cause of peace and freedom is an effective collaboration which can surmount the greatest difficulties of the most extensive campaign in military history and succeed. Nations which can plan and fight together shoulder to shoulder in the face of such obstacles of language and of communication as we have overcome, can live together and can work together in the common labor of the organization of the world for peace.”



Harper in the Birmingham Age-Herald, copyright April 1945. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

He can't break this handclasp!

Editorial—*The New York Times*, April 28

“The junction of the Russian and American armies, which came halfway around the world to meet on a common battlefield, is a symbol of this new unity. It is a symbol great enough to represent the power and the purpose, not only of the two nations immediately involved, but the power and purpose of all the peoples of all the United Nations who have joined hands in winning this war and safeguarding the peace that lies ahead.... Before the armies of the United States and Russia could meet on the banks of a German river, mutual suspicion of long standing had to be overcome, a new basis of confident friendship had to be constructed.”

Primary Sources: March 1946

Speech delivered by former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, March 5

Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri

(President Truman was on the platform when the former British leader spoke)

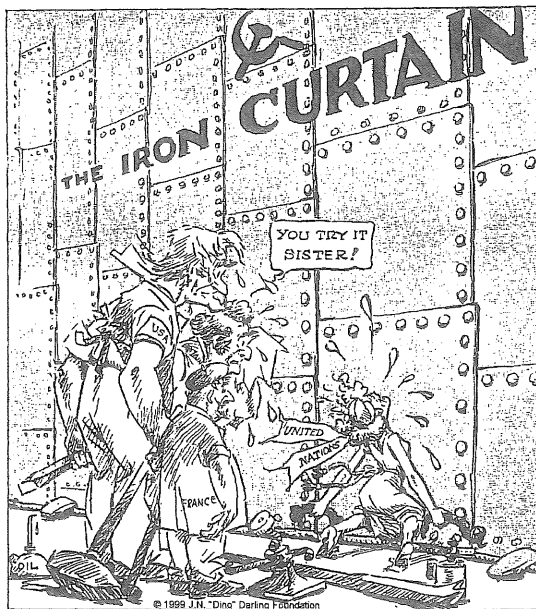
“The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American democracy. With primacy in power is also joined an awe inspiring accountability to the future.... A shadow had fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future.... I have a strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my war-time comrade Marshal Stalin.... It is my duty, however, to place before you certain facts about the present position in Europe.

“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow.... Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy....

“At the end of the fighting last June, the American and British armies withdrew westward, in accordance with an earlier agreement, to a depth at some points 150 miles on a front of nearly 400 miles to allow the Russians to occupy this vast expanse of territory which the western democracies had conquered.... Whatever conclusions may be drawn from these facts—and facts they are—this is certainly not the liberated Europe we fought to build up. Nor is it one which contains the essentials of permanent peace.

“I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines.... I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness.

“There never was a war in all history easier to prevent by timely action than the one which has just desolated such great areas of the globe.... It could have been prevented...but no one would listen.... We surely must not let that happen again.... Let no man underrate the abiding power of the British Empire and Commonwealth.... If the population of the English-speaking commonwealth be added to that of the United States, with all that such cooperation implies in the air, on the sea and in science and industry, there will be no quivering, precarious balance of power to offer its temptation to ambition or adventure. On the contrary, there will be an overwhelming assurance of security.... The highroads of the future will be clear, not only for us but for all, not only for our time but for a century to come.”



**We Tried Everything
But Dynamite.**

Jay N. Darling, 1948. Courtesy the J.N. "Ding" Darling Foundation. Used with permission.