

## BOOK DISCUSSION: DAUGHTERS OF YALTA FEB 6, 2022

Whether you have read, are finishing the book, or have not yet had an opportunity to delve into this incredible history, these notes and video links should help orient you for a stimulating discussion at our up-coming gathering.

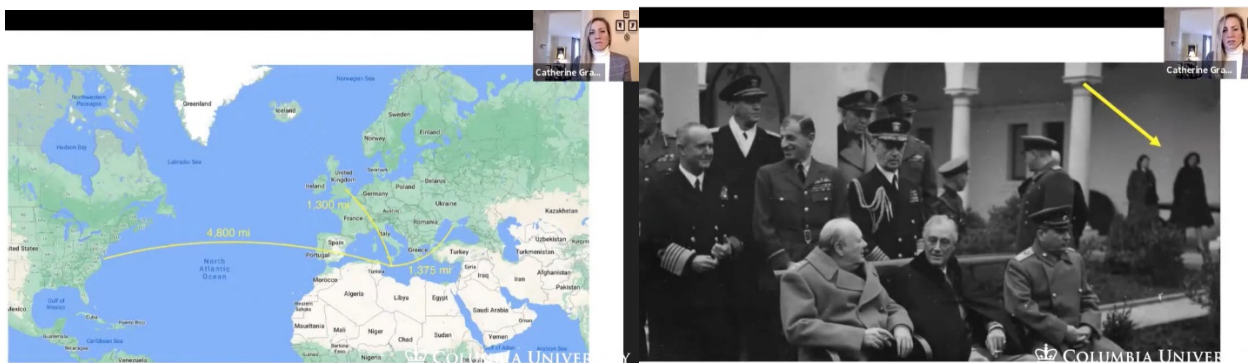
**Topic:** Even though victory was within reach, tensions during the Yalta Conference in February 1945 endangered the wartime alliance between Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin. Three daughters were chosen to accompany their fathers to Yalta; glamorous young women whose intelligence, loyalty and political savvy would serve them well. Catherine Grace Katz reveals the previously untold story of Kathleen Harriman, Sarah Churchill, and Anna Roosevelt, figures who became surrounded by the dramatic political tumult of the moment, each tested and strengthened by what they experienced during the last days of World War II.

**Background of the author, Catherine Katz:** “While an interest in WWII history may have been some of the impetus for her book, a serendipitous meeting at Chartwell Booksellers led Catherine to research and write about three extraordinary women: Sarah Churchill, Kathleen Harriman, and Anna Roosevelt. Working as a financial analyst in New York City, she got to know the owner of Chartwell. He introduced her to the International Churchill Society (ICS). The Churchill family had recently opened the archive of Sarah Churchill to the public, and they were looking for a young historian to mine the treasure trove of new documents. The more she researched, the more Catherine realized there was a wonderful story waiting to be told not only about Sarah Churchill, but the two other women who had accompanied their fathers to Yalta. As she says, **‘Each daughter was intelligent, savvy, and had a lifetime of experience in her father’s world of politics and government.’** She refers to the three of them as “daughter-diplomats.” Each of them came to be trusted advisors to their fathers, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Averell Harriman (the US Ambassador to Russia), and President Franklin Roosevelt.” Source: <https://www.womanaroundtown.com/sections/reading-around/the-daughters-of-yalta-take-a-bow/>

### On-line hour-long interviews with the author which are very informative!

Highly recommended: Harriman Institute at Columbia interview with Catherine Katz:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mB6tiETJC4Q> (55 minutes) or C-Span: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?478232-1/the-daughters-yalta>



Screen shots from Katz' talk with Harriman Institute: *Journey to Yalta; Two of the daughters in background at conference; Livadia Palace*



### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What would it be like to be the child of a “Great Man” of history?
2. Why might each of these fathers have chosen to bring their daughters to Yalta to serve as their aides? Were their reasons the same or different?
3. At its heart, this is a story about relationships: how do personal relationships affect geopolitical decisions at the highest level?
4. How are the relationships between each of these pairs of fathers and daughters similar? How are they different?
5. It is inevitable that elected officials will turn to their family as some of their most trusted advisors and confidantes. What is the appropriate role for the unelected family members of elected officials to play in their public duties? More specifically, what is the appropriate role for “first children”?
6. Each of the daughters plays a multifaceted role: diplomat, confidante, keeper of her father’s secrets. How did each daughter contribute to her father’s mission at Yalta? Which daughter is most successful in each of these roles?
7. How did the three daughters influence history, both before and during the Yalta Conference?
8. The role of women in politics and government has changed significantly since 1945. By bringing their daughters to Yalta, were these three fathers ahead of their time in recognizing their daughter’s abilities and potential, behind their time, or somewhere in between?
9. Before and during World War II, leaders in the United States had very little knowledge or expertise about the Soviet Union, as the United States had broken off diplomatic relations with Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. Few Americans spoke Russian, and American (and British) intelligence capabilities in the USSR were practically non-existent. How might history have been different, had there been deeper knowledge about this ally-turned-adversary?
10. Livadia Palace and Yalta’s surroundings convey a strong sense of place. In what way are physical surroundings a character in this story?
11. How did a lack of specific information about certain issues related to foreign policy at Yalta affect the world order in the aftermath of World War II? What are the ramifications of the Yalta Conference on the world today?
12. We are now 75 years past the Yalta Conference: to what extent are we still living in a world ordered by the decisions made at Yalta?

Source: <https://www.catherinegracekatz.com/book-club-guide>

