

Secret History



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Former President Herbert Hoover meticulously documented U.S. diplomacy before and during WWII, and he shows how FDR caused decades of unnecessary suffering and death.

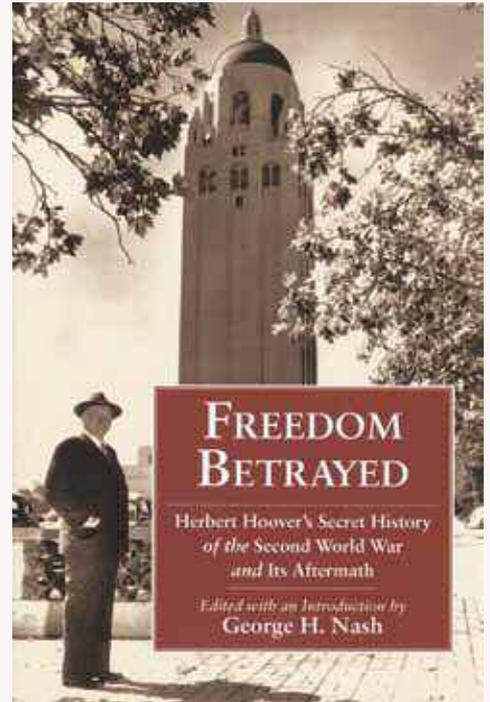
by Fr. James Thornton

Freedom Betrayed: Herbert Hoover's Secret History of the Second World War and Its Aftermath, by Herbert Hoover, Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2011, 957 pages, hardcover.

Freedom Betrayed is a massive volume. Referred to by the former President as his “magnum opus,” it was written during the years following the Second World War, undergoing many revisions throughout the 1950s and early '60s, as the author gained access to new information. By late 1963, the manuscript was complete, and Hoover began preparations for its publication. Had it been published as planned by the author, it would likely have caused a sensation, quite possibly changing the unhappy course of events of that period. Unfortunately, Hoover died before *Freedom Betrayed* could be published, and his heirs decided not to proceed with its publication. Thus it was consigned to storage for the better part of a half-century.

The book, published last year by Hoover Institution Press, is an astonishing *tour de force*, heavily researched, and fully documented in all details. Reading this 957-page work, one quickly realizes that the conventional understanding of the history of America's pre-war diplomacy, our entry into World War II, and the policies that shaped the post-war world have been hugely distorted, distorting as well our perception of the events that ensued after the period considered by Hoover. The scope of this book is vast, so much so that it is possible to offer only samples that will serve to give an idea of its tremendous value as a historical document.

It is a fact, noted by the author, that the American people were absolutely opposed to our involvement in the European war that began with the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. Many Americans remembered that the United States had been fraudulently maneuvered into the First World War, to a large extent by British propaganda. We may cite, for instance, the lurid stories spread by the



Former President Herbert Hoover opposed U.S. involvement in the Second World War, correctly predicting that with our entry Stalin and international communism would be the only real winners.

British that the “Huns” (as the forces of Kaiser Wilhelm II were described) were roasting and eating Belgian babies, that they were crucifying Canadian POWs, and that the Kaiser aimed to conquer the world. A few years after the war, British writers revealed, and even boasted, that they had lied, and as a result Americans became quite skeptical about such things. Moreover, at the conclusion of the “war to make the world safe for democracy,” as Woodrow Wilson called it, dictatorships suddenly popped up everywhere, and vanquished nations were mindlessly carved up in ways that virtually guaranteed future wars of revenge. So, in 1939, few Americans relished the thought of again getting involved in Europe's seemingly endless quarrels. To them, Europe had made a thorough mess of things; therefore, Europe should solve its own problems. Polling between September 1939 and July 1941 indicated that a huge majority of Americans opposed our involvement in the war, those numbers hovering between 96.5 percent and 79 percent. That opposition

to our involvement remained extremely high despite President Franklin D. Roosevelt's ceaseless efforts at whipping up war hysteria.

Whipping Up War

For an example of that (and there are numerous examples), let us recall Roosevelt's radio address of October 1941, an address in which he claimed to have in his possession a "secret map" that allegedly showed how Germany was planning to carve up Central and South America after a soon-to-be-launched invasion of that part of the world. That map, and most of the President's remarks that evening, were figments of his fertile imagination designed to frighten his listeners and kindle the fires of war. When, after the war, Hoover consulted experts who had combed through captured German archives, he was told that neither the German government nor its military had any plans for an invasion of the Western Hemisphere. If they were unable to cross the English Channel, which is only 21 miles wide at the Strait of Dover, it is obvious they were in no po-

sition to cross the Atlantic Ocean and simultaneously face the combined power of the British and American navies. In other words, Roosevelt lied, and lied repeatedly, though, fortunately, the American people remained unconvinced.

One of the most interesting, and disturbing, disclosures in *Freedom Betrayed* is the story of the Japanese government's intense efforts at reaching a negotiated settlement in 1941 to avoid a Pacific war with the United States, a war that they knew they were unlikely to win given the enormous productive capacity and almost limitless manpower of the United States at that time.

Japan's government, then under Prime Minister Prince Fumimaro Konoye, desperate to avoid war with the United States, proposed, with the blessing of Emperor Hirohito, that he and Roosevelt personally meet somewhere in the Pacific, perhaps Hawaii or Alaska, to settle all differences between the two countries. Japan, Konoye said, was willing to do everything necessary to satisfy the concerns of the American government,

including total withdrawal from China. For the Japanese Prime Minister, this was a risky move since, he had been told, he would likely be assassinated by militants were he to give much ground to the Americans. However, he was prepared to take the risk, he said, to avoid war since he wished to prevent the ruin of his country. U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Joseph C. Grew, understanding the Japanese and their mindset, repeatedly cabled Washington urging the administration to take Konoye's offer seriously. However, Roosevelt and his advisors, upon receiving this offer, dismissed it contemptuously. To refuse the opportunity to avoid, or at least to explore the possibility of avoiding, war with Japan can only mean that the Roosevelt administration *wanted* war, despite the President's promise to the American people during his 1940 campaign: "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars."

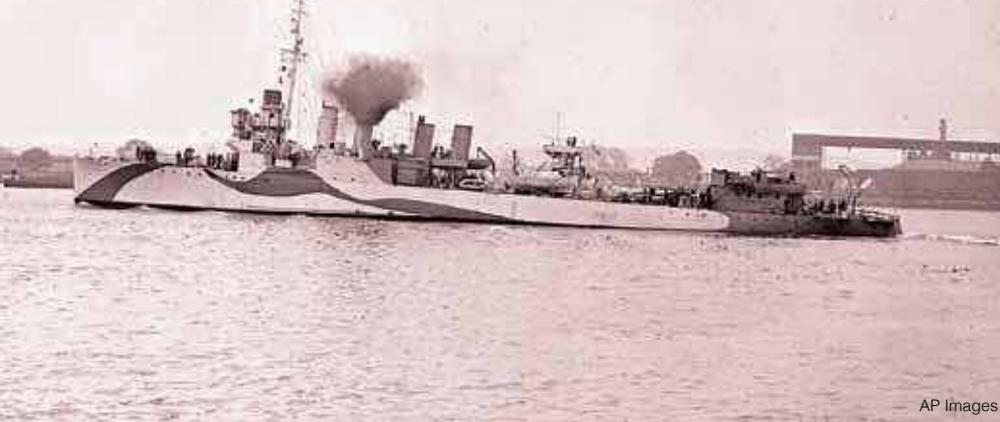
That the President wanted war is additionally proven by his numerous orders designed to provoke war, e.g., the freezing of Japanese assets, the declaration of a trade embargo against Japan, and the issuing of an ultimatum to Japan by Secretary of State Hull on November 26, 1941, an ultimatum that no self-respecting nation could obey, least of all Japan, at that time thoroughly inculcated with the belief that in all cases death was preferable to dishonor. The ultimatum demanded that Japan withdraw from China and French Indo-China and strongly implied that Japan would be required to abrogate the Tripartite Pact into which she had entered with Germany and Italy in September 1940. Those conditions were required before the United States would resume normal trade relations and unfreeze Japanese assets. It must be remembered that in October 1941 the moderate Prince Konoye resigned after his failure to secure a settlement with the United States. He was replaced by General Hideki Tojo, a hardliner. Hull knew quite well what that signified and commented, after issuing the ultimatum: "There is practically no possibility of an agreement being achieved with Japan." Since Japan was being choked by the trade embargo, particularly with respect to oil and gasoline, its options were



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Unprovoked attack or setup by Roosevelt? Evidence shows that the Pearl Harbor disaster was the result of deliberate provocations by Roosevelt and that he was fully aware that a Japanese attack was imminent, but failed to alert our military.

Although Americans overwhelmingly opposed our involvement in the war, Roosevelt schemed ruthlessly to involve the U.S. Pictured here is one of 50 destroyers given Britain under Roosevelt's Lend Lease Act, which undermined American neutrality.



reduced to two: dishonorable capitulation or war. Thus, the administration knew that its actions were virtually certain to provoke a Japanese attack, which, of course, they did, plunging us into a war that ultimately cost the lives of more than 400,000 Americans. Hoover quotes Admiral Robert A. Theobald, commander of the Destroyer Division at Pearl Harbor: "President Roosevelt's strategy of forcing Japan to war by unremitting and ever-increasing diplomatic-economic pressure, and by simultaneously holding our fleet in Hawaii as an invitation to a surprise attack, was a complete success." Hoover himself comments that, "Ambassador Grew's repeated warning that the Japanese would commit hara-kiri rather than submit to American dictation or starvation came true."

There was much controversy during, and especially after, the war regarding how much Roosevelt and his administration knew in advance of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Evidence shows that there is no question whatever that the President and several members of his Cabinet knew that the attack was forthcoming. The author quotes U.S. General Albert Wedemeyer as follows: "When, on December 6, our intercepts told us that the Japanese were going to strike somewhere the next day ... the President of the United States, as Commander in Chief of our military forces ... could have gone on the radio and broadcast to the world that he had irrefutable evidence of an immediate Japanese intention to strike. This would

have alerted everybody from Singapore to Pearl Harbor." The author also quotes historian George Morgenstern: "With absolute knowledge of war, they [the Roosevelt administration] refused to communicate that knowledge, clearly, unequivocally, and in time, to the men in the field upon whom the blow would fall."

Both before and during our involvement in the Second World War, Roosevelt continuously spoke of the necessity to save "democracy." Yet, not at all surprisingly, at the end of it all, the only real winner was Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, who vastly expanded his Soviet empire in Eastern Europe and, additionally, overran large tracts of East Asia, setting the stage for the communist conquest of China. How did all of that happen?

Salutations to the Soviets

Roosevelt's policy of pandering to the USSR began in 1933, when he extended diplomatic recognition to the Soviet government. Prior to that, four American Presidents refused flatly to recognize what was, in actuality, a worldwide criminal conspiracy masquerading as a legitimate government. Even President Wilson — hardly a conservative — refused to dignify the mass murderers in the Kremlin by the recognition of their government, noting that they had achieved power by "force and cunning," and characterizing

their rule as "savage." Furthermore, he declared, the Soviets sought "revolutions in all other great civilized nations, including the United States" and were "determined and bound to conspire against our institutions."

Throughout the 1920s, the administrations of Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover strictly maintained that policy. Although Roosevelt must have been aware of the Soviet involvement in efforts to undermine the American government, he opted for full recognition, inviting the infamous Maxim Litvinov to come to Washington for negotiations. Recognition was extended in November 1933, the Soviets having promised in the bargain never to conspire against the U.S. government, a promise that was violated within hours and which Litvinov later described as "a scrap of paper which will soon be forgotten." So, in that act of recognition, Roosevelt set down a foundation for his later pro-Soviet policies and, the author writes, "touched off an era of uninhibited growth and activity for the Communists in the United States."

The second great boost to the world communist conspiracy was in connection to the German invasion of the USSR on June 22, 1941. Hoover himself remarked that the leaders "of the world's two great aggressor nations were locked in a death struggle. If left alone, these evil spirits were destined, sooner or later, to exhaust each other." Roosevelt ignored this sage counsel and, even before we had entered the war, began shipping millions of dollars in aid to the communist government, a dictatorship that Hoover in a radio address at that time rightly called "one of the bloodiest tyrannies and terrors ever erected in history," aid to which, he added, "makes the whole argument of our joining the war to bring the four freedoms

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to mankind a gargantuan jest.” In the same address, Hoover was remarkably prophetic when he said, “If we go further and join the war and we win, then we have won for Stalin the grip of communism on Russia, the enslavement of nations, and more opportunity for it to extend in the world.”

We now leap forward in time to the wartime conferences attended by Roosevelt and various of the principal Allied governmental leaders, usually Churchill, or Churchill and Stalin. For the sake of brevity, I will mention only certain salient aspects of four of these: Casablanca, Tehran, Quebec, and Yalta. *Freedom Betrayed* systematically considers all of the conferences and provides valuable documentation on all of them.

Immediately after the close of the official meetings of the Casablanca Conference, in January 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill held a press conference at the end of which the President said that he and Churchill “were determined to accept nothing less than the unconditional surrender of Germany, Italy, and Japan.” The demand for unconditional surrender was never discussed during the conference, and, therefore, Roosevelt’s comment surprised Churchill; but the British Prime Minister nonetheless felt compelled to go along with the President in this public forum, and it became official policy. The consequences of that brash declaration, however, were literally deadly, since it meant that even if the German people, or elements in the German military, were to repudiate and overthrow Hitler and his regime, they would be no better off, since the unconditional surrender requirement would leave Germany wholly at the mercy of the Allied powers, including the Soviets. Many Allied military leaders were appalled since the “demand for unconditional surrender would only weld

all of the Germans together,” as U.S. General Wedemeyer put it. Hence, virtually the entire German nation united behind the regime, despite the misgivings of many, and steeled itself for a fight to the bitter end, needlessly extending the European war for perhaps another year — long enough for the Red Army to occupy Eastern

Europe and eastern Germany.

At the Tehran Conference of November 28 through December 1, 1943, the author observes, agreements were concluded that “were the greatest blows to human freedom in this century.” Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia, Bukovina, a large portion of eastern Poland, and a slice of Finland, it was agreed by Roosevelt and Churchill, were to be annexed outright by the Soviet Union. Moreover, it was agreed that, for the sake of the security of the Soviet Union, “friendly border states” would be established all along the Soviet frontiers in Europe — i.e., that communist puppet governments would be installed in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Albania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Romania.

In the case of Poland, it was agreed to compensate her for the loss of her eastern provinces by granting her a huge portion of eastern Germany, all the way to the Rivers Oder and Neisse. From those formerly German territories, the German inhabitants were to be forcibly expelled. In that process of expulsion between 1945 and 1950, approximately 7.5 million men, women, and children were forced from their homes, their property and belongings confiscated. The death toll in that operation was between 500,000 and two million persons. Additionally, 500,000 Germans were transported to the USSR for forced labor, of which roughly half were never heard from again. Curiously, at the Nuremberg Trials it was established that forced deportation of civilian populations was both a war crime and a crime against humanity.

Upon his return to the United States, Roosevelt, in a message to Congress, lied that at Tehran, “there were no secret treaties or political or financial commitments.” It was also just after Tehran that the President, in a radio address to the American people, assured his listeners that Stalin was a wonderful man: “I may say that ‘I got along fine’ with Marshall

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More formidable than Hitler anticipated, the Russian Army halted the German advance on Leningrad and Moscow. Hoover suggested that America’s interests would best be served by remaining aloof and allowing the two dictators to exhaust one another.

Stalin.... I believe that we are going to get along very well with him, and the Russian people — very well indeed.” In truth, Roosevelt found it effortless to “get along” with Stalin by simply agreeing to every one of the dictator’s demands. Some months later, Roosevelt said, “I think the Russians are perfectly friendly. They aren’t trying to gobble up all the rest of Europe. They haven’t got any idea of conquest. These fears that have been expressed by a lot of people here that the Russians are going to try and dominate Europe, I personally don’t think there is anything in it.” One can only reflect that naïveté of that magnitude exceeds the bounds of credibility.

The Quebec Conference of September 1944 brought another shock. It was agreed by Roosevelt and Churchill to impose what was called the “Morgenthau Plan” on conquered Germany. The Morgenthau Plan, named for Roosevelt’s Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and approved by him, was actually authored by a Soviet agent, Harry Dexter White, an official in the U.S. Treasury Department. It was a program for the total de-industrialization of Germany and its reduction to a country “primarily agricultural and pastoral in character.” That plan, had it been carried out, would have required the systematic starvation or relocation of at least 25 million Germans. As it happened, the plan was leaked to the press shortly after the conference, published in the *Wall Street Journal*, and received unfavorably by the American people. Naturally, it was immediately seized upon by German Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels as evidence that the Allies planned not only to destroy Germany as an independent nation, but exterminate her people as well, and as proof that the Western Allies were no better than the Soviets, insofar as the future of Germany was concerned. Consequently, further fanatical (albeit hopeless) resistance was engendered, along with more needless deaths, destruction, and suffering.

Finally, let us consider the Yalta Conference of February 1945. Among many other things, it was agreed in a secret pact at Yalta that German war prisoners could be used as slave labor after the war, in violation of the Geneva



Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill at the Tehran Conference. Roosevelt boasted afterwards that he “got along fine” with Stalin, which he did by blithely handing Eastern Europe over to communism.

Convention. The conference formalized the previous agreement for the expulsion of ethnic Germans from those German territories to be annexed by Poland and the USSR, in violation of the Atlantic Charter, which charter declared that there would be no “territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.” Yet, the most noteworthy outcome of the conference, insofar as future history is concerned, involved the agreements regarding the Far East.

It was agreed that after the defeat of Germany, the USSR would enter the Pacific war against Japan. In return, the Soviets would receive the whole of Sakhalin Island and the Kuril Islands, and, most significantly, it was agreed that the Soviets would be given joint control, with China, of the crucial Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South-Manchurian Railroad, once Manchuria was occupied. Amazingly, those agreements were made without the knowledge and consent of our Nationalist (anti-communist) Chinese allies. In carrying out his half of the bargain, Stalin waited to enter the Pacific war until Japan was effectively prostrate and ready to surrender, her great cities gutted by carpet bombing, an atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, and the once mighty Japanese navy and merchant fleet obliterated.

Soviet forces grabbed Manchuria and northern Korea, as well as southern Sakhalin and the Kurils. Huge stores of captured Japanese armaments and other military equipment were eventually turned over to the Chinese communists, and Soviet-occupied Manchuria turned over to the Chinese communists as a base to attack and eventually defeat the forces of the pro-American Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek. The northern half of Korea was quickly and brutally communized.

The long-term consequences of Roosevelt’s policies are as horrifying as the policies themselves. With Roosevelt’s encouragement of Soviet expansionism in both Eastern Europe and the Far East, the United States was forced by the resulting Cold War to spend astronomical sums of money on armaments to protect what was left of the non-communist world. Our atomic bomb secrets were passed to the USSR by the very people Roosevelt allowed to occupy vital posts in the U.S. government. In addition to that, communist expansionism led to further wars, precisely the opposite of what Roosevelt promised. The United Nations was set up ostensibly to prevent future wars, an objective at which it has failed as miserably as the old League of Nations. To make matters worse, that

By realizing the frequent duplicity of our national leaders, their penchant for fear mongering, and their use of fabricated international crises to direct attention away from failures in domestic policies, the American people still have the power to change the future.

international organization by its very nature undermines the security and sovereignty of this country.

Mistakes Magnified

We must also take cognizance of the wars that the United States has fought trying to contain the virulent communist pestilence let loose on the world by this President. To the approximately 400,000 American deaths in the Second World War, we must add the American deaths in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, which together amount to nearly 100,000. All of

these were needless deaths in needless wars brought about by a man who was, at best, criminally incompetent, a man who was apparently more interested in the security of the Soviet Union and the interests of the bloodiest tyrant in modern history than he was in the security and interests of his own nation and people.

Roosevelt died April 12, 1945, his disastrous policies, on the whole, carried on by the Truman administration. The author writes, in fairness to Truman, that he “inherited an undermining, disloyal and traitorous group of American Communists and fellow travelers, who had infiltrated most of the agencies of the government during the Roosevelt Administration” (*Freedom Betrayed* devotes an entire chapter to a list of communist agents in important U.S. government positions during the Roosevelt years). But Truman’s policies *vis-à-vis* the USSR were as lamentable

as those of his predecessor. Hoover calls this period an “Era of Vacillation.” For example, Truman announced in October 1945 that the United States would refuse recognition to communist puppet governments imposed by Soviet force on Eastern European countries. Two months later that policy was reversed and recognition was extended. With regard to the outcome of the policies of the two Presidents, Roosevelt and Truman, the author says that, “before the war, there was one Communist country. By 1946 there were 23 nations or parts of nations dominated by Communism.” And, of course, after 1946 China, Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and other nations fell before the communist juggernaut. In those nations, as a result of communist victories, tens of millions went to their deaths and millions more ended their lives in hellish Gulags, scattered about the communist world.

As I wrote at the beginning of this review, this is a massive tome. The portions that I have reviewed here only touch the surface of President Hoover’s superb *magnum opus*. Suffice it to say that this remarkable book deserves a thorough reading. It will be argued by some that the information presented here is dated and is no longer relevant to the situation that prevails in our contemporary world. To that thesis I would respond that today’s world is the child of the world surveyed by Hoover in this work, the world of the 1930s through the early 1950s, and that events of the past are the material out of which the present is fashioned. If at the time these events occurred the whole truth had been revealed to and understood by the American people, it is unlikely that Roosevelt and his administration could have survived the resulting explosion of outrage, and the world of today would be far, far different from the one that we face. That, of course, is now water under the bridge, so to speak, since we cannot alter the past. Nevertheless, by realizing the frequent duplicity of our national leaders, their penchant for fear mongering, and their use of fabricated international crises to direct attention away from failures in domestic policies, the American people still have the power to change the future. ■

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While the German Army swept over western Europe with relative ease, the invasion of the USSR, with its savage fighting, horrifying weather, primitive roads, and vast distances, brought unexpected reverses to Hitler’s military machine.