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The Role of Griots in Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali

By William Gries

The most basic description of griot could be summed up in a griot’s own words when he says “I teach kings of the history of their ancestors so that the lives of the ancients might serve them as an example, for the world is old, but the future springs from the past” (Niane 1). However truthful such a definition may be, it is lacking in many a significant area. Griots are more than just walking history books made necessary by a supposedly illiterate society. Even the dullest student could recite some passage about Alexander the Great or Caesar Augustus but griots look on such confined learning with distain saying “other people use writing to record the past, but this invention has killed the faculty of memory among them” (Niane 41). Griots therefore, do not just recite the past, but “rescue the memories of kings from oblivion” (Niane 41) and along with this rescuing comes all the fanfare, intrigue, and learning of that past ancient time. For a griot it is important not just to tell the truth but to “teach only what is to be taught and to conceal what is to be kept concealed” (Niane 84) and that which they do share must be sheared in a beautiful, musical, way. It is their job not just to present history, but to use it as a tool for teaching in specific situations and philosophizing about life in general. Clearly then, it can be seen that griots, in African society, are more than just scholars of history. Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali demonstrates the griot’s multiple roles as historian, teacher, advisor, philosopher, and, ever important, musician.

The text offers three main examples of a griot. First there is Gnankouman Doua, the griot of Sundiata’s father. Next comes Balla Fasseke, the griot presented to Sundiata by his father and the son of Doua. Less obvious, but very important, is Mama Kouyate, the griot that is actually
relating Sundiata’s story for the reader. Each of these griots participates in the many roles of their position, beginning with Kouyate as he says “I know the list of all the sovereigns who succeeded to the throne of Mali (Niane 1). It is here, by listing Sundiata’s lineage that the role of the griot as a historian is shown. Kouyate demonstrates that Sundiata is a descendant from a prominent Islamic heritage as well as the prominent ancient kings of Mali. The griots are very aware of their role as historian. A fact made evident by Balla Fasseke when Sundiata’s host marches off to confront Soumaoro as he says to the great leaders “I salute you. But what will I have to relate of you to future generations” (Niane 59). This interaction, between the royal griot and the warriors, was an intentional motivation strategy as “Sundiata arranged a great military review in the camp so that Balla Fasseke, by his words, should strengthen the hearts of his sofas” (Niane 58). The griot than, can wield his power as historian to spur men to great acts, such as “pierc[ing] through and through” (Niane 59) a mountain with just a sword. Lastly, it is through knowledge of the past that kings gain wisdom and Sundiata is not an exception to this rule. From his griot, Sundiata “listed to the history of the kings which Balla Fasseke told him; enraptured by the story of Alexander the Great, the mighty king of gold and silver whose sun shone over half the world” (Niane 23). The lasting effects of this myth are shown throughout the epic as Sundiata compares himself to, and elevates himself above, the great Greek hero.

The stories of a griot also serve an educational purpose. Within the story itself Balla Fasseke is shown to give “the child education and instruction according to Mandingo rules of conduct. Whether in town or at the hunt, he missed no opportunity of instructing his pupil” (Niane 23). Just as Balla misses no opportunity to teach his young king, Kouyate constantly weaves lessons into his tale of Sundiata. Through the story of the buffalo woman from the land of Do, Kouyate accomplished his duel goal of telling the history of Sundiata’s birth while also
presenting the moral lesson that kindness can overpower strength or, as the buffalo woman says, “your generosity has vanquished me” (Niane 8). What is more, this tale also reiterates the old proverb ‘do not judge a book by its cover’ for Sogolon is “a very ugly maid-uglier than you can imagine” (Niane 8), yet it is from her that the great king will be born. The tale of Sundiata’s first steps, presents the lesson that “the more a wife loves and respects her husband and the more she suffers for her child, the more valorous will the child be” (Niane 22). In this story, Sogolon, Sundiata’s mother, is shown to be a moral exemplar while Sassouma Berete is cast as wicked. The former’s death as a honored queen while the latter’s death in obscure disgrace support this dichotomy and help perpetuate the lesson for the listener of Sundiata’s tale. Yet another example of Kouyate using Sundiata’s tale to teach moral lessons can be seen in the episode of the witches and the garden. Sassouma gathered the nine witches of Mali together with the intent of setting them against Sundiata. To accomplish this the queen mother sent them to steal from the garden of Sogolon, hopping that her son would retaliate with violence. Instead Sundiata, upon seeing the old women in his mother’s garden says “what is the matter with you to run away like this. This garden belongs to all” (Niane 25). Just as he demonstrated the value of kindness, Kouyate shows, for his pupil, the value of generosity. Actions such as this, make clear the griot’s role as teacher and educator.

Often throughout the epic, the special relationship that exists between a king and his griot is shown. The griot is, from an early age, the closest friend and advisor to the king. This close connection is demonstrated when Dankaran Touman sends Sundiata’s griot away to which the young king responds “you have taken away our part of the inheritance. Every prince has had his griot, and you have taken away Balla Fasseke” (Niane 27). Additionally, it is not until Soumaoro took Balla as his own that “war between Sundiata and Soumaoro became inevitable” (Niane 40).
There are other, less dramatic, examples of the kinship between a griot and his king though. For instance, when Sundiata is being born Nare Maghan “sent all his courtiers away and only Gnankouman Doua stayed by his side” and “tried to distract the sovereign with his one-stringed guitar” (Niane 13). Additionally, it is Doua who announced to the town upon the birth of his king’s child that “the child of Sogolon will be called Maghan after his father, and Mari Djata, a name which no Mandingo prince has ever born” (Niane 14). This idea that “I [the griot] am the word and you [the king] are the deed” (Niane 58), is made very literal when Balla acts as Sundiata voice when speaking as Mansa, for the ruler of an empire “does not speak like a town-crier” (Niane 77). There are multiple instances throughout the epic of the griot acting for the king, in both personal and public situations, when the king is at a loss for direction. When Sundiata reconnects with his step sister after seven years he is unsure how to garner from her the information necessary to defeat Soumaoro. It is here that Balla steps in saying “wipe away your tears and tell your story, speak to your brother. You know that he has never thought ill of you” (Niane 57). Alternatively, when Sundiata is born, his father is sent into such a state of awe that he knows not how to react. Doua, however, “realizing the king’s emotion, got up and signaled to two slaves who were already standing near” (Niane 13) to beat the ceremonial drums and alert the town to the birth of the new prince. These instances show the deep connection between a king and his griot. Often, it seems, the latter is present at the critical moments in the former’s life. What is more, a separation between these two, between the word and the deed of history, is a great transgression worthy of war.

Both the griots in and outside of the legend fulfill another role in African society as philosophers and the philosophy they put forth is rather unique. It is a philosophy of fate or destiny. As Kouyate says “God has his mysteries which none can fathom…each man finds his
way marked out for him and he can change nothing of it” (Niane 15). This strong sense of destiny pervades the epic. For instance, the fact that Sogolon would be presented to Nare Maghan as a wife was destiny as foretold by the hunter-soothsayer. Particularly though, it is a philosophy precipitated by the griots, even when such a philosophy is forgotten by others in society. When Nare Maghan throws Sogolon out of his household for the disgrace that her crippled son, Sundiata, has brought upon him, “Doua never ceased reminding him of the hunter’s words” (Niane16) that proclaimed Sundiata a great king. In short, Doua tries to remind Nare Maghan that “man is in a hurry but time is tardy and everything has its season” (Niane 6) or, in other words, that everything is predetermined and it is only man’s duty to play out the grand scheme. Balla Fasseke reminds the banner-men of Sundiata what will happen to those that try to contradict this philosophy of fate saying “each kingdom has its childhood, but Soumaoro wants to force the pace, and so Sosso will collapse under him like a horse worn out beneath its rider” (Niane 62). In the eyes of the griot, to go against this philosophy of fate is to provoke downfall, just such a downfall as that which befalls Soumaoro when he contradicts the destiny of the great Sundiata. A destiny to rule all of Mali.

Just as important as his duty to history or philosophy, the griot is always inextricable linked to music. Throughout the epic, music is often a requisite part of African society’s important moments. As such, the griot is tied to these moments as both their chronicler and their orchestra. During the wedding of Nare Maghan and Sogolon for instance, “Doua, standing amid the eminent guests, held his great spear in hand and sang the anthem of the Mandingo kings” (Niane 10). Music is also an integral part of both war and hunting. It is the griot that provides this music as is demonstrated by the crowd that would greet a young Sundiata as he returned from his day’s hunt singing “the ‘Hymn to the Bow’ which Balla Fasseke had composed” (Niane
23). This war song is seen again when Sundiata convenes his council at Ka-Ba. Here the great host of Sundiata celebrates its victory and newly established empire by having “at a signal from Balla Fasseke, the musicians, [give] off muted notes while the griot’s voice gave the throng the pitch for ‘Hymn to the Bow’” (Niane 76). Both war celebrations and weddings fall into the griots domain of musical talent. These critical moments in the life of the community are underscored by the songs that accompany them. Songs that exists to the present day and, as such, link the old stories of Mali to the present day descendants of the great empire. The epic says that “music is the griot’s soul” (Niane 39). This may be made most evident by Balla Fasseke’s weakness for the great enchanted balafon of Soumaoro. This magical balafon demonstrates the power of the griot as a musician for it is through his “improvised song in honor” (Niane 40) of the soccer king that he is accepted into Soumaoro court and avoids punishment. Music than, is a major component of the griot’s role in the community.

The concept of a griot presents a radically different conception of history than that normally found in the western world. The west is the home of analysis, and history has not been spared from this vice of reason and debate. Academic history in western culture is something to be rigorously checked and rechecked for factualness and accuracy. It is a study of hypothesis and data. The African griot with its multiplicity of roles including historian, teacher, advisor, philosopher, and musician, brings life back into the study of life’s story. While western history seeks to tear away all the social and cultural debris that may contaminate the truth of history, the griot seeks to bring these lost world of culture and society back into being. It is for this task that the griot hold so many roles in a community. They are engrained in a community with the hope or reproducing a shadow of that community for some distant later world.
The American Revolution: A Brief Overview

By Jacob Hafer

The history of the United States of America has its origins all the way back to the Colonial Era during the eighteenth century. The late eighteenth century was a time of revolutionary change for the British colonies in North America. This change was based on the ideas of liberty, freedom, independence, and equality for all people. The revolution was more than just a war for independence, it was a war fought to preserve the rights for future generations of Americans. The American Revolution has a lasting impact then and now because the revolution introduced a democratic form of government, started the fight to end colonialism, and exemplifies the need for basic human rights.

The American colonists felt that they needed to sever all ties to Great Britain due to its repressive system and authoritarian government. King George III, leader of the British Empire at the time of the revolution, came from a class of virtuous rulers who were determined to conform subjects to their policies whether they like it or not.¹ The colonists believed that they were being treated unfairly, especially when it came to taxes and lack of representation to British parliament. Taxes such as the Stamp Act and Tea Act infuriated the colonists because they felt that these taxes were too much of a burden and they never had any diplomats to represent the colonies in parliament to provide feedback on the new taxes². The American colonists believed that the British government were infringing upon their rights and believed that it is time for them to

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govern themselves. After declaring independence from British rule and succeeding in beating the British military in the Revolutionary War, the United States of America were formed with a democratic republican government that would be always be represented by the people.\(^3\)

Another reason why the American Revolution is so significant is that it was one of the first conflicts that was fought to end colonialism. Ever since the discovery of the Americas, European nations raced to colonize the newly discovered lands so that they can profit of the valuable resources like furs, silver, sugar, cotton, etc. However colonial communities were always left out of the global market so that the mother countries like Great Britain may profit off the resources acquired by the colonists\(^4\). This was another reason why the American colonists distrust the British; they felt that they were being used just so their British authorities could become rich off of the hard work of the colonial people. Thomas Paine, an English-American political activist, wrote “Common Sense” where he influenced the colonists by his idea that one country should not control another from across the ocean.\(^5\) Anti-colonialism became another theme in the revolution and would inspire many revolutions later in history such as decolonization in Africa and Asia by European powers in the twentieth century.\(^6\)

The fight to for basic human rights is another theme to why the American Revolution is so important in history. Before the War for American Independence, all subjects had to submit to the will of the King, who was believed to be ordained by God.\(^7\) Over time, some philosophical thinkers like John Locke believed that government should only exist to protect the

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\(^5\) Francis Jennings. *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire*. 123-125

\(^6\) Ibid, 273-280.

basic rights of the people, not to influence the power of monarchs. Locke’s ideas inspired the colonists to fight for the protection of their rights given by God. This led the American Continental Congress to adopt the Declaration of Independence which outlined the unalienable rights of every human being including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. After the end of the War for American Independence, the newly formed American government established the Constitution which guaranteed the protection of rights of every citizen in the United States. The idea to protect basic human rights became a theme for other revolutions through the next 250 years for nations experiencing abuse of government power and persecution of ethnic groups.

The significance of the American Revolution is indeed greater than it can be possibly imagined. The revolution exemplifies the fight to stop a tyrannical government abusing its authority on the common people. It was also the first conflict that inspired many others that dealt with fighting colonialism by large empires. And if not for the War for American Independence, there would be no laws or policies that guarantee the basic rights of all people based on equality, freedom, and liberty. The American Revolution did not just shape the United States, it also reshaped how the world works even to this day.

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The Significance of the Crusades: A Brief Overview

By Jacob Hafer

What comes to mind when we think of the Crusades? Noble knights and warriors fighting for the glory of God, a series of military campaigns lead by ambitious kings, or a clash of civilizations? Whatever we may think of these conflicts, they will always be thought of as just another medieval power struggle between feudal lords. However this statement is untrue, in fact the Crusades are considered to be the most pivotal series of events in all of medieval history. The Crusades are significant in because they showed how powerful the Catholic Church became in the middle ages, displayed how Europeans developed intellectually through the transition of ideas from the East, and we learn how animosity started between Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

The origins of the Crusades starts with Islam’s expansion throughout the Middle East in the 8th century. By the 11th century, the Byzantine Empire, which had Christianity as the state religion, had just lost Syria-Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa to Islam.¹ The Byzantines needed outside help in order to save the empire so Byzantine Emperor Alexios Comnenos sent ambassadors to Pope Urban II, leader of Western Christendom, asking for help against the Islamic threat.² The Pope hoped that by assisting the emperor, he could improve repair relations between the Church in Constantinople and the Church in Rome, uniting Christendom once again³. In 1095, Pope Urban II called for a Crusade to retake the Holy Land from the Islamic


³ Ibid, 6.
Turks, rallying thousands of devout Christians under the authority of the Church. Dozens of Christian kingdoms were now under the influence of the Christian Church, which granted the papacy more power than ever before. The Church ordered the Crusaders to occupy the Holy Land, where they benefited from the learning about the Islamic world.

As the Crusaders conquered major portions of the Holy Land and especially Jerusalem, the holiest city in all of Christendom, they became influenced by the vast knowledge of art, technology, trade from the indigenous population. Many churches that were built by the Crusaders were inspired by classical Syrian architecture from painted panels to illuminating mosaics.\(^4\) The Crusaders also discovered that the abundance of natural resources such as wine, olives, and sugarcane were essential in building up the crusader economy.\(^5\) The Christian soldiers soon found out that trading these resources can help bring in a great deal of funding for the war effort, prompting the Europeans’ interest in trading. The longer the Crusaders stayed in the Holy Land, the more they learned from their Muslim counterparts. For centuries Islamic nations had kept their vast quantity of knowledge from the rest of the known world, refusing to share what they know. However, as the Crusaders were able to obtain scrolls and books containing the studies of mathematics, philosophy, and medicine, they brought their discoveries back to their European homeland.\(^6\) These educational ideas were brought back to Europe, prompting the construction of universities like Cambridge and Oxford so that knowledge can be available for everyone.


\(^5\) Ibid, 150.

Despite the acquisition of knowledge by the Christian Europeans, the Crusades created long-term cynicism between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Ever since the First Crusade, Christians started to despise both Jews and Muslims as they saw them as inhuman monsters who did not follow the true faith\textsuperscript{7}. Jews had been accused of stealing the sacred Eucharist, looting holy relics from churches, and they were even falsely charge for murdering a Christian.\textsuperscript{8} Christians became afraid of Muslims because of the Catholic Church’s constant talk of the Islamic Empire expanding daily and the accusations that Muslim Turks were vandalizing holy sites throughout the Holy Land.\textsuperscript{9} Christians wanted to punish those responsible for the desecration of holy shrines so during the First Crusade, the Crusaders took it upon themselves to kill anyone who wasn’t Christian in Jerusalem. This resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent Jews and Muslims which prompted a jihad (Islamic word for holy war) by all Muslims in the Middle East to fight the Christian invaders.\textsuperscript{10} The constant persecution of Jews in Europe and the atrocities on Muslims instigated a fierce distrust of Christians long after the Crusades ended. In present times, the historic hostilities and suspicion between Christianity, Islam, and Judaism have prompted efforts by world leaders of the three faiths to promote mutual understanding.\textsuperscript{11}

The effects the Crusades had on the world can be seen up to the present day. If not for the Crusades, the Catholic Church would not have seen its rise to power in the western world and expanded its influence through its military campaigns. Europeans would not have gained new ideas and technologies from the Islamic world that would improve Europeans intellectually and

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, 374.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid, 434.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid, 150.
\textsuperscript{10} Thomas Madden. \textit{Crusades: The Illustrated History}. 47
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, 211.
economically if there had been no call to fight in the Holy Land. However, in hopes of improving the relations between the religious sects of Catholicism, Islam, and Judaism means looking at the problems the Crusades caused and how to repair what the conflicts have destroyed. This is why the Crusades are extremely significant in world history. There is much more insight to the legacy of the Crusades than just calling them pointless destructive military conflicts, and that legacy is something everyone should be aware about.
Bibliography


Why the French Revolution Was Not So Revolutionary: A Brief Overview

By Jacob Hafer

The French Revolution is often regarded as one of the most radical upheavals in world history. It was a period of social and political unrest as the people of France struggled to transform their government from an absolute monarchy to a democracy that would represent the people. From the storming of the Bastille in 1789 to Napoleon Bonaparte’s rise to power in 1799, thousands of Frenchmen died in the name of “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.”¹ In modern times, we tend to think of the French Revolution as a highlight of the struggle for basic human rights and the spread of intellectual ideas throughout the world. However, the revolution was not as revolutionary as we think of it to be. The origins of the revolution were not inspired by enlightened ideas until much later on. Food shortages, economic depression, and heavy taxes on the lower class instigated the revolution.² Tens of thousands of innocent people were killed during this time of power struggle. Also, the French government actually fluctuated from having the absolutist leader, King Louis XVI, to a militaristic leader, Napoleon Bonaparte.³ The French Revolution was not groundbreaking because it did not live up to its liberal ideals as it is perceived to be.

One way why the revolution was not radical, was the false origin of the conflict where the revolution was believed to be inspired by ideas of the Enlightenment. Prior to the revolution

in the 1790s, France was a rural society where 98 percent of the population lived off the land as farmers or craftsmen. Those who resided in urban communities were primarily the nobility and clergy of the Catholic Church. The social order of France was made up of three estates; the clergy, the nobility, and then everyone else in French society (notably peasants). This system called the Estates General gave the third estate, which were the commoners and those who were not part of the nobility nor the clergy, an unfair advantage when voting because the first and second estates, clergy and nobles respectively, could always outvote the third estate on certain legislation. During the American Revolution, King Louis XVI devoted almost 50 percent of France’s national budget to funding the fight in order to diminish the power of its colonial rival: Great Britain. In 1787, France declared bankruptcy and the king was forced to raise taxes on the lower classes, but excluded the clergy and nobility from taxation. Following food shortages after a famine plagued France, the king decided to call for the Estates General and discuss how to deal with the country’s financial crisis. The aristocracy and clergy refused to allow the king to tax them, and they outvoted the third estate on legislation that would favor the nobles and clergy. The third estate, furious at how unfair the Estates General is, decided to form the National Assembly that aimed to represent the people and not just the elites. The reason for a clamor for revolt against the aristocracy was due to economic depression and a broken tax system that relied heavily on the common people. Ideals of the enlightenment were not introduced until much later

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during the climax of the conflict. Also, the French people intended to keep Louis XVI as their king rather than establishing a republic at the start of the revolution. The revolution really started off as a call for reforming the economic system of France, not a call for a full-scale radical change.

Another reason why the revolution was not radical, was the way the revolution was carried out among the French people. After King Louis XVI was guillotined by his subjects, a power struggle ensued with various political factions like the Girondins and the Cordeliers emerged as they attempt to gain control.\textsuperscript{8} One radical political club called the Jacobins, led by Maximillien Robespierre, sought to preserve the leftist radical ideas and spread the zeal of the revolution by hunting anyone who is considered to be a traitor to the cause. Tens of thousands of innocent French people were killed in the event known as the Reign of Terror (1793-1794).\textsuperscript{9} The control of the French government swayed from one radical faction to another as each group established their own policies and laws. Some outlandish policies ranged from reorganizing the calendar by renaming the days and months of the year, establishing a church called the Cult of Reason, and declaring war with powerful European nations even though France was bankrupt and its army disorganized and unfit for fighting.\textsuperscript{10} France was always in a constant state of anarchy as the government failed to maintain control and protect public safety. The revolution failed to uphold many of the enlightened ideas that it would later introduce due to its constant persecution of Frenchmen and destruction many communities. It is ironic how one movement


\textsuperscript{9} Jones, Colin. \textit{Voices Of The French Revolution}, 161-166.

\textsuperscript{10} McPhee, Peter. \textit{The French Revolution, 1789-1799}. 131-154.
appeared to promise radical hope and change, suddenly becomes “authoritative” as its radical ideas are embraced.

What is even more ironic is that the one thing that made the revolution a complete failure, is its transition from one authoritarian regime to another authoritarian regime. After the death of King Louis XVI, several European nations such as Austria, Prussia, Great Britain, and Spain were shocked to discover that the French abolished their monarchy. Fearing that similar revolutionary acts might be carried out in their own nations, the monarchs of Europe formed a coalition to attack France and contain the spread of revolutionary ideas.\(^{11}\) The coalition of European countries suffered many defeats by a commander who would later dominate Europe in the near future: Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon was an ambitious leader who believed he was destined for greater things, even if it meant taking control of the French government by force.\(^{12}\) In 1799 in the event known as the Coup of 18 Brumaire, Napoleon led his battalion of French soldiers in a coup against the Council of Five Hundred, which was the governing head of France at the time. Following the coup, Napoleon declared himself First Consul under a new French constitution.\(^{13}\) Napoleon was granted almost unlimited executive power, giving him the ability to govern like an absolute monarch.\(^{14}\) Under the new French Republic, Napoleon declared himself Emperor of France and waged war against the major powers in Europe in the series of conflicts famously known as the “Napoleonic Wars”.\(^{15}\) Napoleon was never democratically elected by the French people. By the end of the revolution the ideals of democracy, where a


\(^{13}\) Ibid, 104-112.


\(^{15}\) Ibid, 200.
government is led by the people and for the people, were entirely ignored when Napoleon became head of state. Napoleon will rule like a king until his defeat in 1815 at the Battle of Waterloo.\textsuperscript{16}

Despite the reasons why the revolution was not very radical, there is the argument that revolution did inspire enlightened ideas. For example in 1793, the National Assembly wrote the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens” which abolished the feudal system and made all men equal, despite socioeconomic backgrounds.\textsuperscript{17} Even though this document is a sign of influence of the enlightenment, it is not proof that enlightened ideas were the main cause that started the French Revolution. Food shortages, economic depression, and unfair treatment of the common people by the aristocracy and clergy instigated the revolution. There is also the argument that any revolution is subject to violence, such as the American Revolution and even the Russian Revolution one hundred years later. While it is true that a conflict during the French Revolution would be necessary, it was a conflict along with the persecution of thousands of innocent people in France. The French government killed anyone who was even suspected of being an enemy to the revolution, and many were put to death without a trial to prove their innocence.\textsuperscript{18} These massacres were called the “Reign of Terror” because the people were terrorized by radical leftists trying to seek control and solidify their power.

The legacy of the French Revolution should be remembered as a conflict where the ideologies of freedom and equality failed to become a reality. In very few ways has the revolution actually introduced enlightened ideas, but in many more ways it had become a chaotic disaster. The causes of the revolution were not based on ideas from the Age of Reason until the

\textsuperscript{16} Herold, J. Christopher. \textit{The Horizon Book Of The Age Of Napoleon}, 350.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 59.
\textsuperscript{18} Jones, Colin. \textit{Voices Of The French Revolution}, 159.
height of the revolution. Also, in no way is it revolutionary for tens of thousands of innocent Frenchmen be slaughtered like animals in the name of “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity”. The results of this bloody conflict reverted right back to another authoritarian regime under Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, who would dictate France until his abdication in 1815. With these reasons in mind, we should take time to learn from the mistakes of the French Revolution and not aspire to emulate it for future political movements.
Bibliography


Introduction

“A War to End All Wars”-this was the phrase imparted to the suffering caused by the Great War. Yet, it would not be realized. It has become a matter of pure fact that World War II emerged from the previous war’s misdeeds, creating its own ruinous path, which led inevitably into the era of Cold War. Some may argue whether or not the Cold War was inevitable, the fact that it did occur may alone answer this question. One thing that cannot be argued is that the Cold War was indeed that which would put an end to all war—at least to a pattern of warfare that was worldwide and total in destruction. This is why, after all, it is deemed the Cold War for it failed to fire bullets and bombs—most notably even, the Atomic Bomb. For the first time, with the advent of this fatal invention, men truly realized that war was not romantic nor painless and man himself had the potential to destroy every form of life that existed upon the earth. Indeed, a fear of the nuclear age continues today, and numerous other effects ranging from political division to racial misconception and even, national supremacy and infiltration can still be felt decades after the official end of the Cold War in 1991. So then how had man come to this, such a dangerous and volatile point in human history?

It should be known that with the end of World War II there was produced in Europe a power vacuum as the once great powers, among them Britain, France, Germany and Italy, yielded to the intense pressures of war. Only the Soviet Union and the United States remained as
the only dominant forces able to reestablish a new world order both in and out of a devastated Europe. It was as a result of this, the desire to emerge supreme in the affairs of the world, which erupted into the Cold War. But why was it that these two countries who had worked together and oftentimes got along so well in order to defeat the Axis enemy during the war, that they could not now partner up in the rebuilding of Europe’s prewar structures? What had happened to make this once “Grand Alliance” crumble into adversaries? And more importantly, whose fault was it? Historians ever since the onset of the Cold War have tried to solve this question, though with uncertain luck. The group of Traditionalist historians who wrote immediately following the end of World War II through the 1950s placed blame solely on Russia; Plagued by bias and haunted by the recent horrors of war, men like Arthur Schlesinger and George Kennan were quick to portray the person of Joseph Stalin as a paranoid madman who by initiating an aggressive expansionist foreign policy for the Soviet Union to follow, was intent on stirring up a worldwide Communist takeover. America on the other hand, was hailed as the great defender of democracy and freedom and all its efforts should be seen as an attempt to spread such liberties throughout the world. With the social revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, new theories concerning the Origins of the Cold War emerged. William Appleman Williams’ *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* published in 1959 was the first of many Revisionist works of the Cold War which argued against traditional theory, insisting instead that America was as much or even more to blame than the Soviet Union in the start of the Cold War. In their unique interpretation of events, Revisionists place great emphasis upon the study of economics in hopes of proving that America’s “mission to defend and extend democracy” was nothing but mere rhetoric designed to conceal self-interest on the higher levels of government. It was then, the “needs [and interests] of American businessman” which exerted the greatest influence on American foreign policy,
leaving no room for negotiation with the Soviet Union. Finally, since there must always be
criticism, the Post-Revisionist school began in 1972 so as to refute Revisionist claims that
America was essentially an empire while at the same time widening the supposed narrow
economic approach taken by their predecessors. John Lewis Gaddis is the father of the Post-
Revisionist movement of Cold War theory. His book, The United States and the Origins of the
Cold War 1941-1947, serves as a well-researched synthesis of those events which precipitated
the Cold War. In an attempt to step away from the economic standpoint held dear to by
Revisionists, Gaddis instead focuses on “many other forces-domestic policies, bureaucratic
inertia, quirks of personality, perceptions, accurate or inaccurate, of Soviet intentions-[that] also
affected the actions of Washington officials.”

Though Gaddis’ research is worth referring too, the quality of later Post-Revisionists work has declined. The school is often criticized for simply synthesizing facts and therefore, lacking substance in the form of an opinion or argument.

Surely, there remains something to be hailed and criticized for each school of thought
regarding the Origins of the Cold War. Nevertheless, in going forth to set down one’s own
analysis, it is vital to keep these interpretations in mind. It was for this purpose that a brief
reflection on prior supposition was given. The essay that will follow should be considered part of
the Revisionist school of interpretation since it is, in the opinion of the author, the only theory
that is both free from prejudice and modes of conventional thinking while at the same time,
ample for further substantive development of Cold War theory. The essay itself will attempt to
explore three major areas of concern in regards to Cold War origins. Each of the following areas
holds not only significance in Revisionist thought but has also been considered to some degree,
in each of the three aforementioned schools of historiography, thereby increasing its all-around relevance in the subject.

The first section of this survey will focus on U.S. conceptions of the Soviet Union, especially during the period of World War II from 1939-1945. It will take into account not only the making but the influence of public opinion on American foreign policy, ultimately hoping to shed light on the cynicism of government dominated by interest while at the same time perhaps, showing that the people are as much to blame in a country’s affairs as the ruling body. This chapter should bring the reader to a more limpid view of history which involves not only top officials but the viewpoints and actions of every man in the making of historical events. The second chapter will shift to a more Russian view of Cold War origins in analyzing the true person and motives of Joseph Stalin, in a way that is most free from bias. It will examine the Soviet Union’s capabilities and compare this to the perceived threat felt by American officials. Finally, it will attempt to reveal, in all fairness, Soviet attitudes of America. All of this, in hopes that the information that is to be revealed will stand alone, and incite an attitude of open-mindedness in the reader. And lastly, in what may be considered perhaps, full Revisionist style the third section will focus on economics. Here, a brief overview of U.S. and Russian trade relations will be explored, a survey which will range well before the start of World War II and into the early Cold War era. The evidence that will be referred to should again elicit an open response from all audiences as it is key that the objective relevance of such information be realized by the close of the chapter. Indeed, this seems a monumental task and one can only pray that such goals be attained in so short a survey. Keeping the brevity of the account in mind, may the reader excuse any omissions of which there are to be many, since even more narrowed accounts of Cold War Origins stretch into the hundreds of pages.
The twentieth century was a period marked by incessant warfare. Though most of the secrets surrounding both World Wars have been realized, there still continues to be much debate over the Origins of the Cold War. This essay attempts to resolve certain key matters by perhaps, being one of the first American Revisionist studies to incorporate economics, public opinion, and a fresh impression of Joseph Stalin that is lacking in a world which still feels the effects and hostilities of those tumultuous Cold War years.

I. The Other

Ever since the dawn of time, men have viewed one another with a harrowing eye of suspicion. It is perhaps, a weakness of human tendency to realize not what may be many similarities but instead that one grave difference, contrived to erect an everlasting gap and pattern of opposition among men. In this belief, America is no exception. Despite its rhetoric of acceptance and freedom for all, the American people’s relationships with those of other countries still contain an air of misgiving and superiority. Its relationship with Russia was, and continues to be, a perfect example. This section is devoted to the exploration of American public opinion from 1939 to 1945, as a means of determining exactly what went sour between these two wartime allies who, no sooner than making peace, rocketed into the age of Cold War. This chapter will revolve around three main points. First, defining the American perception of the Soviet Union. Second, exploring the causes in the creation of such an attitude. And thirdly, the overall effect of this attitude on American foreign policy.

Norman E. Saul, a professor of Russian history, once described the relationship between the U.S. and Russia as being “distant friends.” See, as much as the respective histories of each country were alike in that they both took on a policy of internal expansion or had developed an economic system of captivity such as slavery or serfdom within their countries, or that they both
found themselves located at a pivotal geographical point which was indicative of individualism for example, there was always a greater source of tension that prevailed between the two. The greatest aperture between the U.S. and Russia always seemed to deal with country politics. From the start of international relations in 1809 with the United States’ receipt of Russian ambassador Andrei Dashkov, “the two systems of government were antipathetic in the highest degree”, one being a democracy and the other a hated form of monarchy. Such a political abyss only widened with time, when in 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution initiated a new and dangerous ideology, which for many Traditionalists, is taken as a harbinger to the hostilities which exploded during the Cold War. Leading Orthodox writer Arthur Schlesinger expresses this opinion when he states, “Leninism and totalitarianism created a structure of thought and behavior which made postwar collaboration between Russia and America…inherently impossible”-mostly, due to the undeniable fact that Marxist theory found its provenance in the existence and opposition to capitalist states. Schlesinger wasn’t the only one to express this attitude. George Kennan too, a U.S. diplomat and historian, also places Communist ideology at the root of conflict stating, “The political personality of Soviet power as we know it today is the product of ideology and circumstance.” In other words claiming that the only way to understand Soviet actions is to understand Leninist belief itself which pervaded every Soviet official-including Joseph Stalin and so, seeped its way into Soviet foreign policy. Now the question remains: What exactly did Americans know and understand about Communism? Well, it has been determined that

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“a majority of Americans regarded Fascism as less an evil than Communism…since they showed much more respect for private property, they did not enshrine atheism, they were not preaching world revolution, and they did not maintain a branch of the Comintern in our country for the sole purpose of fomenting dissension.” \(^5\)

Even if Communism had its supporters, it could be argued that most of them were again, due to the popularity of Fascism. Despite America being at odds with the notion of a dictatorship, in the 1920s while Mussolini was establishing his new regime he was regarded by those in America as a hero-singlehandedly attempting to restore order and stability to his country after the Great War. Evidence for this praise can be found in several articles of popular culture, such as *Fortune* and *Life* magazine, both of which devoted large portions to the “powerful icon.”\(^6\) As a result, some came to regard Stalin’s Soviet Union and his Five Year Plans, introduced in 1928, with a same sort of admiration; however, this was the minority.

The majority’s opinion held. Of course, it had basis. Stalin’s implementation of a collective farming method as part of his Five Year Plan was just one example of the Socialist’s disdain for private property. The “closing of religious publishing houses and the forbidding of religious propaganda” throughout the Soviet Union gave further credence to the state’s stance on atheism.\(^7\) Truth behind the accusation of the Comintern creating conflict can be found in the many strikes and extremist attacks which characterized the Red Scare during the early 1920s. “Bombs sent through the mail to high officials and…talk about seizing power” even aroused fear

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\(^5\) Bailey, *America Faces Russia*, 277.


in U.S. law enforcement officials. And as for belief in a worldwide Communist revolution, before tales of such a happening became exaggerated, there was reason to fear such a thing. Lenin stated it clearly in a speech delivered at a meeting of Activists of the The Moscow Organization of the R.C.P. (Revolutionary Communist Party) in December of 1920. Here he spoke of the day when “socialism finally triumphs all over the world.”9 He spoke with urgency of the “development of the revolution in capitalist countries” with the aid of supporters, “propaganda and preaching.”10 Indeed, this serves as just one of many speeches wherein Lenin created an atmosphere of war among his adherents with whose aid, he hoped to restructure the world. “While capitalism and socialism exist side by side they cannot live in peace: one or the other will ultimately triumph.” 11

Given this, it is no wonder that Orthodox historians like George Kennan warned of “a duel of infinite duration” that would take place between the Americans and the Russians in the years to come.12 And so much was his fear and concern that he felt the need to propose the infamous Containment policy as expressed in the Long Telegram in the year 1947, “United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.”13 The Soviet Union’s early history then, provided

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10 Lenin, “Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Activists of The Moscow Organization of the R.C.P.”

11 Lenin, “Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Activists of The Moscow Organization of the R.C.P.”

12 Kennan, *Sources of Soviet Conduct*, 862.

13 Kennan, *Sources of Soviet Conduct*, 861.
a dark image of the state and what it would become, as it was a state dominated by Communism. Justifiable or not, this ideology had already aroused in many Americans a sense of unending fear and suspicion towards not only the Soviet Union but Communist sympathizers everywhere that would continue to have a great impact in the early years following the close of World War II.

“This animosity that the overwhelming majority of Americans felt towards…Communists between 1917 and 1944” is crucial in attempting to explain why the Cold War began “so swiftly after the wartime alliance with Russia ended.”14 From the rise of Lenin, the Soviet Union’s activity was always viewed through the shady lenses of Communism. Orthodox writers have often blamed Stalin as “[He] alone could have made a difference” in preventing the outbreak of Cold War. Yet, went on to pity him for never being anything more than “a deep and morbid man…who saw everything through the lenses of Marxism.”15 But the events leading up to the wartime alliance and even through the war tell a different tale. If Communism permeated Soviet activity, then the notion of liberty and freedom inundated that of Americans so much so that they were never able to realize an ounce of sincerity that may have been born from the intimate bonds of warfare. Though more will be said of Stalin the next section of this essay, let it at least be said that he was no Lenin. “The era of militant, world-revolutionary communism [that had gripped so many Americans in years before] had evidently passed” with Lenin’s death.16 As Joseph Stalin took on the helm, it seemed as if “some form of

16 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 267.
capitalism in Russia [was] on its way back”, although most Americans remained skeptical.\(^{17}\) When in 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt took the oath of office however, he was more optimistic. Roosevelt believed that a level of “amicability with the second superpower” could be achieved and should be achieved for a variety of reasons.\(^ {18}\) First, economics; because Stalin increased the processes of industrialization in the Soviet Union, an opportunity for trade arose between the USSR and U.S. who would supply the former “with American technology…for a good price.”\(^ {19}\) Second, both countries viewed Japan and Germany as rivals in the world sphere. Therefore, “in terms of foreign policy, recognition of the USSR seemed to be a real means of strengthening the American position in opposition to a greater evil.”\(^ {20}\) For these, and other reasons that may be elaborated on in section three, Roosevelt fought for official recognition of the Soviet Union. Yet despite his claims, a host of “powerful Americans opposed official recognition…to the bitter end.”\(^ {21}\) Their arguments were many, but the strongest cause being perhaps the simple fact that “Soviet propaganda still inspired fear.” Evidence for this can be found in several forms of American media. Refer to Image A in the appendix, taken from a Chicago Tribune newspaper in 1933.\(^ {22}\) Notice that many Americans are preoccupied with domestic affairs. In this way, many believe that if America opens the door to the USSR then

\(^{17}\) Bailey, America Faces Russia, 267.


\(^{19}\) Sogrin, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and the USSR: An Interpretation”, 214.

\(^{20}\) Sogrin, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and the USSR: An Interpretation”, 214.

\(^{21}\) Bailey, America Faces Russia, 262.

\(^{22}\) Unknown. Aren’t We Having Enough Trouble With the Machinery Without Letting Somebody Throw a Wrench Into It? 1933. Chicago Tribune Archives.
there arises a great risk that would indeed, compromise U.S. security. “The opening of an embassy would allow for further dissemination of their poisonous ideology.” Moreover, “to lend her money would finance further subversive activity in the United States.” The disheveled figure who represents the USSR appears rather treacherous as well, holding a wrench behind his back; a clear signal of suspicion confirming the stalwart stance of Americans to disregard any “avowal of world revolution which was merely designed to lull us into a false sense of security.” Still, FDR “believed in the ability of a person to change the course of history” and he took it upon himself to try and change this fatal American mentality towards the Soviet Union. War proved the perfect opportunity to do so.

In the meantime, in the midst of those forgetful years before the outbreak of World War II, Stalin attempted to boost the reputation of the Soviet Union in world affairs. Stalin took on a nationalist agenda and became more active in what may considered, capitalist domains internationally. In September 1934 the USSR was admitted into the League of Nations; the organization initially adjudged to be “the holy alliance of the bourgeoisie for the suppression of the proletariat revolution” during those early years of Lenin’s reign. The Kremlin “continued its ardent support of disarmament”; surprising the world when in 1935, Stalin condemned, more strongly than the rather weak League of Nations, Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia. Again, in 1936, the USSR “advocates for vigorous measures” to be taken against Adolf Hitler and his

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23 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 264.
24 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 264.
25 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 264.
26 Sogrin, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and the USSR: An Interpretation.”, 226.
27 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 276.
takeover of the Rhineland. So as it seemed that the Soviet Union was “emerging from her isolationist cocoon to espouse international cooperation”, the U.S. on the other hand, and in spite of the president’s earnestness in shaping a friendship, retreated deeper. Americans remained unsympathetic to the Russian people, unseeingly expressing the same old doubts and fears in regards to Soviet sincerity.

This sincerity would be called into question time and time again during those calamitous wartime years. The year 1939 in particular brought about two catastrophic events. First, the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact between German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and Russian diplomat Vyacheslav Molotov. To many Americans, this treaty confirmed Soviet doubts since how could it be that “after having long and loudly proclaimed itself to be the leading opponent of Nazi Germany,[ the USSR should now] “…change course and become Hitler’s ally.” This was a stab in the back to the western powers who had conceded some of their trust to the USSR in the past years. Now it seemed as if Stalin was betraying them and forming friendly relations with Germany, instead. Moreover, in signing the pact, Stalin had allowed for Hitler’s war against Europe’s democracies to take place. The Chicago Tribune criticized FDR’s efforts friendly efforts toward Stalin, mockingly stating “Mr. Roosevelt’s great Russian…friend has turned despot.” While the New York Herald Tribune asserted the belief, “they [communists] have always been the tools of a dictator whose principles and objectives

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28 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 277.
29 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 276.
30 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 11.
31 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 12.
differ only in nomenclature to that of Hitler.” The more open-minded minority however, put forth claims to defend Stalin’s action. They contended that Stalin had “acted defensively so as to keep his enemy, Hitler, as far as possible; while at the same time recovering Russian territory.”

The second major setback in Soviet opinion that occurred in 1939 was the USSR’s invasion of Finland. In what could be seen as another defensive measure taken against Germany, the attack on “poor little Finland” as it was advertised, outraged Americans. This time the U.S. took action: the people showed their support for Finland by participating in relief programs and even, Franklin Roosevelt condemned Soviet action by placing a “moral embargo on the shipment of aircraft to Russia”. At this point, the future looked even more fearful as Americans surmised, in thinking about the war in Europe, that the Russian “dictatorship” would join the war on the side of Hitler.

December 7, 1941—“A day that will live in infamy”—changed the course of the war in many ways. For one, the U.S. was now forced to enter World War II. In doing so, their position in world affairs was perfect in terms of reconciling with the Soviet Union for Roosevelt was now able to lend his open support to the USSR, most notably in terms of finance and technology, which were obviously enough to keep Stalin on the side of democracy. From here, the Grand Alliance begins. In its early phases, popular support remained cynical, indeed the New York Post anxiously exclaimed “There are those who will now say we are allied with Communism.” But

32 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 12.
33 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 281.
34 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 12.
35 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 12.
it wouldn’t take long for Americans to at least warm-up to the idea of a partnership with Russia. As soon as July 1941, public opinion polls show that “in the present war between Germany and Russia” 72% of Americans wanted Russia to win. In October 1942 Fortune magazine performed its own survey asking “Regardless of how you feel toward Russia, which of these policies do you think we should pursue towards her now?” 51% replied in favor of working alongside Russia. As this last polling source may suggest, “Americans were changing their attitude towards Russia in response to the way their foreign policy-makers [within the realm of mass media] presented the circumstances.” Images B, C, and D in the Appendix may be used to further support this claim. These images depict magazine covers from the most widely read periodicals (Time, Life, and NewsWeek) through the years 1940-1943, which all place Joseph Stalin in a seemingly favorable limelight. No doubt, this certainly had an effect on opinion. Still, it seemed that such examples of praise were superficial at best. Despite desires for Russia to win the war, nearly half of Americans (47%) believed that Germany would have the ultimate victory. While there are surely many reasons for this response, it can definitely serve as a sign of skepticism in regards to Soviet sincerity in collaborating with the U.S. in order to achieve victory against the Nazi enemy. In another poll conducted in 1941, when asked “Should the U.S.


38 Levering, American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 60.


C: LIFE, Special Issue USSR. March 29, 1943.

D: NEWSWEEK The Magazine of News Significance, One Year Against Hitler, Stalin Proved His Name Meant Steel. June 22, 1942.

government supply Russia with arms, airplanes and other war materials on the same basis that we supply them with Great Britain”, a whopping 53% of Americans responded no (though of course, Roosevelt dismissed this survey in establishing his own rather generous Lend-Lease arrangement with the Soviet Union.)

As President Roosevelt paid much heed to such public opinion polls, he became ever more determined to create a pro-Soviet attitude among Americans. His famous fireside chats were perhaps the most ideal method of communicating a positive image of the Russian war effort. Polls show that a majority of his listeners, 86%, came from the upper classes, thus suggesting that “the better educated were considerably more sympathetic toward Soviet Russia.”

Perhaps, Roosevelt’s most infamous attempt at cultivating pro-Soviet attitudes was his sponsorship of a movie entitled Mission to Moscow. Released in 1943, the film “stirred a storm of criticism” among viewers. The image of the Soviet Union in the movie appeared rather soft, as the publicists who had a part in making the film, “generally avoided the sensitive issues of Socialism and Stalin” so as to shape a new and improved vision of the Soviet Union. Many were also “disturbed by the movie’s departure from the historical record”; as it attempted to “rationalize aspects of past Soviet behavior (such as that of the purges)” that had long ago been denounced by Americans. Roosevelt pushed to convey an image of the Soviet Union that could be comparable to that of the U.S.; One review claiming that the film “presents the Russian

people most sympathetically…that Russians and Americans aren’t so different after all.” And above all things, he wished to portray the Russians as heroes in their wartime effort to secure liberty alongside the United States.

Despite such great aspirations, Roosevelt’s *Mission to Moscow* was, at least for Americans, a great failure. Life magazine, which had just recently placed Stalin on the cover of one of its latest issues, now wrote scathingly about the film, “U.S.S.R., its leaders and its foreign policies are whitewashed.” Clearly, America’s relationship teetered with the Soviet Union during these years. Opinions shifted rapidly, and often due not to the efforts of President Roosevelt but through the influence of the media, in all its forms ranging from radio news to the press. “All successful politicians seem to realize that the media form the very heart of the system through which opinions are circulated…to the public.” Although a majority of Americans had warmed up to a partnership with the Soviet Union during those wartime years, past perceptions still prevented a genuine alliance from forming, in both the American public and even on the higher levels of government. There was nothing Roosevelt could do to reverse that. Still, his efforts should warrant praise. Roosevelt’s open-minded optimism in dealing with the Soviet Union surely aided in a successful collaboration that led to ultimate victory. Though he would never realize it, he was regarded as the Russian people’s “greatest foreign friend.” The Truman administration that would succeed him, rolled back all of Roosevelt’s advancements in foreign policy toward Russia. And if President Roosevelt’s efforts aided even in the slightest degree to a

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49 Sogrin, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and the USSR: An Interpretation”, 226.
more sympathetic stance toward the Russians, Truman’s distrust of Stalin and the Soviet Union leaked its way through the media into the minds of the American people. Images E and F in the Appendix serve as just a couple examples of the increased tensions and retreat of positive perceptions that took place in those years immediately following World War II, which no doubt reawakened a sense of pre-war animosity.  

The first cartoon published in 1947 is entitled “Rival Buses”. As can be gained from the title, this clearly conveys a message of hostile rivalry not only between the United States and the USSR but between Joseph Stalin and Harry Truman in particular. Truman of course, is drawn pleasantly welcoming the countries of Europe towards liberty and democracy, a lifestyle of “comfortable accommodations.” While Stalin is portrayed as aggressively pushing his satellites onto another bus, offering no room for accommodation or freedom just “inclusive terms”. The next image entitled “Believe it or Knout”, printed sometime in the early 1950s, offers an image of Stalin’s brutality. He is the disheveled schoolmaster, holding a Knout in his hand, which is essentially a whip used to inflict punishment in imperial Russia. He is shown trying to brainwash his fellow Communist satellites (depicted as school children), teaching them that “Truman is a warmonger.”

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50 E: Punch Magazine. Rival Buses. 1947. Punch Archives. http://punch.photoshelter.com/image/?_bqG=4&_bqH=eJxtj19LwzAUxT_NjKEqUSphTxkve12Z5tL_kz6FGY3dKMoTGVf39wytDjw38vnJuTcHdVzj9wdw_zcXq5mtVvc5fs1DV_bmc50V5x2bl7SxViVE5ybv3fic9b0_TDKNw0ELZpmwhQGUqRodTIalORSWey4W8UrqPw1Sib4PfBoTSBO0t21EZ0ga6DTDI0miS5aqEE4UBf5ONbOWM.t0A_ZsFl8UWcHPxMGBjah4oN2P6OB2ec3H1_SalPWB1FHsOQrw7qURmnflmR500QnG7TVLzaEOmr.sd_eutdsM6SXQ5fUvwGDjHGUG&GI_ID=

F: Punch Magazine. Believe It or Knout. 1950. Punch Archives. http://punch.photoshelter.com/image/?_bqG=2&_bqH=eJxtj09rzAMxT9Nc27KzCDgg2urRUttjZ7bTk1EV0r_UHpiAx379LNC2cl2heTie_Kz0XPhtLQ73j0TKnrv_edbhVsv&UtWvm3ru7i7vY1WnRT1MVScZoeuu39M1QwpGRZileVvNuhEjw5g2jBzbsO2.Uw2_J7C3yj8H9UY2.GzmMYM2jU2.pYwOJb09g0Q2dZYiAKP1ABzEPWYx2c9frW2bDqSxkX3iJoAnNLhx8v55Pw79cLHuojT42akVqCVa3fCkjPSdMD6foA5tv9IsrBiVjyK233a7Y7Ye0suhu.5fmA5yWA--&GI_ID= 
Depictions such as these, emerging so soon after the bonds of a wartime alliance have been broken, offer more evidence that points to the shaky American perspective towards Russians. The wartime collaboration could do nothing to free from the minds of American citizens the Bolshevik stereotypes which characterized the Soviet Union in the 1920s. “Numerous [other] opinion polls during the war years revealed that the bulk of our citizens still entertained mistaken ideas about their new ally…They were unaware, that Russia was Communists who had long ceased [to be so]”. 51 In moving forward, the next section will attempt to investigate just how much truth stood behind such perceptions, mistaken as they often were. It will also consider the impact of this perception on fueling the events of the Cold War. As this first chapter comes to close, it is worth most remembering perhaps, best said in the words of writer Eugene Lyons, that “The original ideals of the Russian revolution are in the stream of human thought: not a million Stalin’s and G.P.U.’s can change that…What happened in Russia twenty years ago will remain…” 52 And so it would seem, in an ironic twist of events, that America’s (often denied) sense of prejudice erected a barrier between the two nations that is inextricably linked to the start of the Cold War.

II. The True Stalin

Nearly a hundred years has passed, and yet the image of Joseph Stalin as that obscure and evil dictator, rivaling only Adolf Hitler and Mao ZeDong, continues to persist. An explanation for this can most definitely be found in those lethal preconceptions held by Westerners, and in

51 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 290.

52 Levering, American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 18.
particular Americans, that was discussed in the previous chapter. For since the close of World War II, Stalin’s image as a paranoid man, “of deep and morbid obsessions and compulsions” has been memorialized by Traditionalist writers whose influence on the study of Cold War history for generations, cannot be denied. Yet, with the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been a great bundle of information slowly released to the public. This material, previously held to be confidential, has aided in the creation of a new outlook on Cold War Origins, and especially, on the person of Joseph Stalin, who played such a critical and often misunderstood role in such affairs. It is the aim of this section to rethink Stalin’s conventional image as it appears at this time, utilizing both new and old sources, which together may reveal a much different man. While at the same time, it seems pertinent to also evaluate anew the status of Russia during the early years of the Cold War, in terms of Soviet capabilities which ultimately relied upon the skillfulness of Stalin himself.

First, let something be said in accordance with the biography of Stalin. He was born in Gori, Georgia as Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili on December 6, 1878. He was born into the peasant estate; his father was a cobbler and his mother held “menial jobs as house cleaning and sewing to support her family” but they still remained poor.\(^53\) It is also noted that both his parents were abusive, often beating their son, which perhaps led to his “defiant attitude towards his superiors” and a hatred for authority which would reveal itself in his later years.\(^54\) Yet, as a young man he was still rather calm. The young Stalin proved to be very smart and aimed at being a monk. He had also developed political attitudes at a young age, expressing his Georgian nationalism (and at times paranoia) in a number of poems such as this one, already translated:

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\(^{54}\) Kuromiya, *Stalin*, 2.
“The mob set before the outcast, a vessel filled with poison…and they said to him ‘Drink this, o accursed, this is your appointed lot! We do not want your truth nor these heavenly tunes of yours!’ where one can notice “a paranoiac conviction that great prophets could only expect conspiracy.”

55 Stalin may have developed his notions about rulers through his love of Russian history which was to influence him the rest of his life. It was in 1898 when Joseph truly got involved in politics and so, joined the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party. No one knows for sure what initially attracted him to the Party, though it has been argued by at least biographer that in a rather peculiar way, the principles of socialism complemented his own strong sense of nationalism. If “nationalism [meant] salvation through a particular group called a ‘nation’,…then Marxism with its universal salvation for all mankind proved more attractive than nationalism.”

56 Though Stalin would never lose the nationalist fervor that he had developed as a child, his experiences after joining the Party mark a critical moment in the forming of Stalin’s unique and often perplexing mindset. For one, the various encounters with other “cosmopolitan Marxists” would open his mind to a much richer Russian culture, which he soon came to adopt with great zeal. 57 Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, his political viewpoints became, from this point forward, a unique amalgamation of Marxist and Nationalist sentiment; a rather risky paradox which would often cause much conflict between himself and Lenin.

It was for these reasons primarily, which produced a life-changing effect on Stalin that he decided to leave the seminary in 1899 and instead follow the course of a revolutionary. In 1900, Stalin was arrested for the first time and it wouldn't be long until he was arrested and exiled to

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55 Kuromiya, Stalin, 5.
56 Kuromiya, Stalin, 6.
57 Kuromiya, Stalin, 6.
Siberia in 1902. The pattern of being arrested, exiled and escaped was one he would continue to follow for several years. By 1912, Iosif Dzhugashvili would take on the pseudonym by which he would be made known to history—“Stalin” or “man of steel” became the infamous pen name used to publish his many works. By now, Stalin had spent years as a revolutionary, collaborating with some of the most notable names in Marxist history, especially Vladimir Lenin. In 1917, Lenin appointed Stalin the Peoples Commissar of Nationalities. It was while occupying this position, that Stalin’s original ideology was able to manifest itself, “due to the great chagrin of Lenin.”

In essence, Stalin’s role was to serve as a “unifier of nationalities” for various groups of non-Russians within Russia. “Like Lenin, Stalin acknowledged the right of nations to self-determination…and that nations were also obsolete, ultimately absorbed into a ‘larger universality’ but like a true Nationalist and in support of Lenin’s opponents, Stalin also argued that it was right for “nations to possess cultural identities.” Despite these differences, in 1922, Stalin was elected General Secretary of the Party and so, seemed to secure the “first critical step towards a dictatorship.”

At this time, another crucial aspect of Stalin emerged: His staunch belief that “both internal and external peace were imperative for the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union.” In a speech delivered in January 1925, Stalin makes it apparent that the “peasantry is the only ally that can be of direct assistance to our revolution at this very

58 Kuromiya, Stalin, 20.
59 Kuromiya, Stalin, 20.
60 Kuromiya, Stalin, 50.
61 Kuromiya, Stalin, 57.
moment.” In so doing, he not only lays the groundwork for his Five Year Plan which was to commence in 1928 and so, “improve to the utmost the condition of the peasant economy”, but such a conviction would set the tone for any future policy actions adopted by Stalin, and ultimately used to benefit Russia, for the rest of his reign.  

At this point, it would be appropriate to end any biographical points about Joseph Stalin, who of course, succeeded in becoming one of the world’s most notorious leaders. And though partial, the information provided should prove adequate enough in the making of Joseph Stalin’s image as it will appear in this chapter. Joseph Stalin “regarded himself [not only] as the founder of the new Soviet empire but [also] as the heir to the traditional Russian empire.” Surely, like other Marxists, he believed in the power and intent of worldwide revolution but the impetus behind such a revolution depended primarily, on the strength and security of the Soviet state. For Stalin, “who identified himself more with the czars than Lenin”, his chief goal was to “regain the territories lost to [Imperial] Russia”. Not only would the “imperial acquisition” of these lands fulfill what Stalin perceived as “eternal Russian dreams” for greatness but they would also serve as protective buffers against the West, from which direction Russia had developed a terrifying history of invasion, both concrete and ideological. As for the strength needed to build up the Soviet state, this did not imply merely economic improvements on which Stalin placed a great

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63 Stalin, Concerning the Question of the Proletariat and the Peasantry.


65 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 16.
emphasis but more importantly, on the concept of a national identity. Russia was a multiethnic nation that lacked a “universal system of public schooling.” As a result, regional differences prevailed over a “common heritage and [collective] awareness of a glorious past.” With so much division, the Socialist Party found it increasingly difficult to gather the popular support needed in order to put the wheels of the revolution in motion. Stalin’s former position as the Peoples Commissar of Nationalities couldn’t be more helpful in attempting to resolve this dilemma. “Realizing that such [socialist] concepts were too abstract and bloodless to effectively rally the USSR’s poorly educated population, Stalin began to look for a more pragmatic, populist alternative…that would focus on the questionable notion of a Marxist fatherland.”

This alternative emerged during the 1930s and took on several forms. “A wave of books and artwork began rolling off the presses…assembling a new pantheon of Soviet heroes, socialist myths and modern-day fables”. Films promoted new images of Soviet heroism while poems too sought to hail “this country of heroes.” Even magazines like Pravda popularized in the Russian people a general feeling of “Soviet patriotism as a burning feeling of boundless love, selfless devotion to one’s motherland and a profound responsibility for her fate and defense.”

But perhaps the most notable effort in establishing a national identity was the work performed by Joseph Stalin and the Commissariat of Education whereby the history of the USSR was rewritten

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in a way that often blurred Russian and Soviet histories respectively; The combination of Bolshevik imagery with Russian nationalism sentiment created in the minds of each Russian citizen an imperial-revolutionary paradigm similar to that of Stalin. It was in this context, that Stalin began to exert his state-building power on the international arena, in “pursuit of achieving a balance of power [between the USSR and the Western states] that would allow for a means of fulfilling his most central aim-territorial security.”72 When in 1939 representatives of both Germany and the USSR signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, Stalin saw it as yet another means of extending Soviet influence—this time into eastern Poland—while recapturing those prized lost territories of the old regime. And while Americans perceived this agreement as one which harbored a suspicious friendship between the two forces of Nazism and Communism, Stalin instead viewed his “action [as a means to] prevent Germany from aligning itself with the Western democracies against the USSR.”73 Similarly, in that same year, Russia’s attack on “poor little Finland” which produced a great outcry in America was actually considered an act of national defense. Prior to the invasion, “…on November 1939, Finland rejected Soviet demands for bases and territory”; Stalin’s only option it seemed was to use force as the only means to secure his nationalist aspirations.74 Taking all of this change into account it would seem that by the end of the 1930s, the Soviet Union had embarked on a truly nationalist policy. War would serve to further stall the momentum of the revolution; after all it was Soviet nationalism that would serve as the rallying cry to victory.

72 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 18.
73 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 18.
74 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 12.
Indeed, the tone of this imperial and nationalistic attitude can be felt in many of Stalin’s public addresses. As early as July 3, 1941, in a radio broadcast addressing the nation’s current situation facing the Nazi invasion Stalin is able to provide a great sense of morale by basing the conflict as none other than a “patriotic war.”

He urges the “Soviet people to rise…in defense of their native land.” By 1942, as Soviet armies begin to overcome the Nazi war machine, the flame of nationalism burns even brighter as he declares this fight necessary in order “to…safeguard the honor and independence of our Motherland.” In comparing the rhetoric used here to that of other imperialist nations throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there can be no doubt that at least under the reign of Stalin, “Marxist ideology had been overshadowed by Russian nationalism”. The notion of the Motherland, of honor and defense clearly prevail in order to bolster the Soviet war effort and in doing so, achieve Stalin’s own war aims. There is a sense of superiority that emerges among the Russians with “their fighting spirit, staunchness and discipline” to reinforce their determination in overcoming adversity. And perhaps, most reminiscent of all is the Soviet appeal to a glorious past to which Stalin alluded when he exclaimed, “The people of our country…will keep the sacred memory of their heroes who fell in the battles for their Motherland.”


76 Stalin, Radio Broadcast.


78 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 87.


his messages to the public, that deal with the spread of Communism; but Bolshevik imagery is always compounded with symbols of Russian nationalism. It was in this way, that Stalin rallied his people against the Nazi enemy during the war. And perhaps, it was even his sense of nationalism that allowed for relatively easy relations as he sought to be a part of the Allied Grand Alliance, alongside Churchill and Roosevelt.

This section will not deal much with wartime relations since the concept itself is too extensive a survey to accomplish at this time. However, countless sources reveal that despite suspicion and even downright hatred toward the Soviets as expressed by Winton Churchill’s famous declaration “If Hitler invaded hell, I would make a favorable reference to the devil…” before allying with Stalin, the Grand Alliance was a most successful collaboration of leaders. Though each kept a somewhat different goal in mind to achieve by the war’s end, they got on as “equals.”81 So much so, that Stalin even sent birthday wishes to Roosevelt.82 It seemed as long as the Alliance held together, “there remained the chance for an international regime of cooperation” after the war.83 With Roosevelt’s death (and Churchill’s defeat in the reelection), came a “turning point in Soviet-American relations”.84 Stalin had “lost his two equals” and indeed, his greatest foreign friend on which he learned to rely. For the Soviets, it was the end of the war which wrought enough opposition to spur on the Cold War.85

81 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 39.
83 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 39.
84 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 39.
85 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 39.
If anyone were to be cynical, it was Joseph Stalin and the Russian people, not the Americans. By the war’s end, and even though “red banners flew victoriously over the entire Soviet land”, the Soviet Union was exhausted. Unlike the United States, which emerged as the world’s wealthiest superpower, the Soviet Union “lost about 25% of all its reproducible wealth”, not to mention the deaths of approximately “11,000,000 soldiers and somewhere between 7,000,000 and 20,000,000 civilians”. Its infrastructure was totally destroyed, since the “German invasion left in ruins the most populous and developed parts of the country.” America, on the other hand, could claim only 400,000 military deaths with barely any statistics on civilian losses. And though they had faithfully supplied the Soviet Union with a very generous “$9\frac{1}{2} billion of Lend-Lease materials” during the war, there remained much resentment in Russia over the failure of an Allied promise to open a second front in Europe; one that could’ve reduced the horrendous amount of Soviet losses. Now, “the Soviet people longed for nothing more than peace and security” and in trying to grasp both of these wishes, Joseph Stalin yearned for something more—“compensation for wartime losses.”

In an Order of Day speech in 1946, Stalin announced “we have to heal the wounds inflicted on our country by the enemy… and raise the economic and military ability of the Soviet

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86 Stalin, Order of the Day No. 55.
87 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 86.
89 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 86.
91 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 86.
state.”  His hopes for rebuilding the Soviet Union, laid in the consistent generosity of American economic aid, which came in the form of Lend-Lease. Lend-Lease had been crucial in sustaining the Soviet war effort and it was also considered essential to the rebuilding of the Soviet Union in the postwar world; so much so that reports were drafted by American advisors suggesting that the Soviets were feigning their need for assistance in order to stockpile supplies that would be needed for postwar reconstruction. Rumors also came about that “they were giving or selling to other countries, American supplies…in order to boost their own political influence in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.” Former President Roosevelt had refused to acknowledge these reports, but President Truman was quick to act on them. “After the German surrender in May, President Truman abruptly cut off Lend-Lease aid.” Three months later, Stalin requested a one billion dollar loan as well as “$400 million credit to buy Lend-Lease goods for Russia still in the United States but cut off as a result of Truman’s abrupt termination of Lend-Lease shipments.”

This request apparently was lost in the State Department, and when the issue resurfaced again the U.S. government agreed to “discuss the loan only if Soviets would pledge ‘nondiscrimination in international commerce’.” It was then clear that the U.S. was trying to use “Lend-Lease aid as a bargaining lever to protect American interests.” Such ill-judged changes in policy can not

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94 La Feber, *America, Russia and the Cold War,* 22.


96 La Feber, *America, Russia and the Cold War,* 22.

only be attributed to Truman-who was himself always distrustful of the Soviets-but perhaps more so to his advisors such as Ambassador Averell Harriman and Major General John H. Deane. Both of these men convinced Truman of the belief that the Soviet Union regarded Roosevelt’s Lend-Lease policy of “unconditional aid” to Russia as a sign of weakness, and a measure obviously taken for granted. Instead, “a policy of cooperation with Russia could not work unless it was based on mutual respect.”

That sort of respect would not be gained in this fashion. For Stalin, such behavior evoked sentiments of capitalist suspicion, which had otherwise been suppressed by Roosevelt’s acts of goodwill and a greater sense of nationalism. In response to the State Department’s request to negotiate, Stalin “bluntly refused the American offer.”

Opting instead for yet another Five Year Plan that would speak to the “technical and economic independence of the Soviet Union.”

In the months that followed the close of World War II, Truman’s skepticism toward the Soviet Union shown ever more clear. The Potsdam Conference which took place in the summer of 1945, was surrounded by much controversy. It is believed that Truman, in attempting to create another source of bargaining power, urged the dropping of the Atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima-not out of necessity to end the war, since there had already been talk of a Japanese surrender before the bombs were dropped-but simply to threaten the Soviet Union. Stalin however, seemed to remain unfazed by the United States’ possession of the Atomic bomb. Indeed, Stalin’s own intelligence network had succeeded in secretly obtaining nuclear

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99 La Feber, America, Russia, and the Cold War, 22.
100 La Feber, America, Russia, and the Cold War, 22.
information from “the famous physicist Niels Bohr…[upon] his return to Denmark from the USA.”\textsuperscript{101} Therefore, he felt as confident as Truman in putting forth his demands for a postwar Europe. The weightiest demands discussed in the Conference dealt with the division and remaking of Europe. For the Soviets, the issue of security was particularly paramount; their ideology-a combination of Marxist rhetoric and nationalism derived from the tales of an Imperial Russia-fostered a deep sense of insecurity and danger. Even before the start of the war, Stalin proved eager to regain lost territory. Their “maximum spheres of security included Finland, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the…Balkans, as well as Turkey.”\textsuperscript{102} As for Germany, it was to remain economically weak and neutral. For Americans, Soviet designs for a postwar Europe seemed just too expansive; the Soviet Union came to be viewed as a rival in the domination over world affairs. “Whether in private meetings or in public…Truman could not conceal his strong antipathy toward Soviet policy.”\textsuperscript{103} Truman was determined to make “the world depend on us (United States).”\textsuperscript{104} Perhaps sensing the sourness of Soviet-American relations, Stalin is said to have remarked, “Whoever occupies a territory also imposes in it his own social system.”\textsuperscript{105} Force, by way of military presence, it seemed would be the determining factor. And so, as the Red Army set out in defense of Russia’s strategic aspirations, an “iron curtain” seemed to fall over Eastern Europe. Every attempt by the United States to penetrate it, would signal a conflict in the new era of Cold War.


\textsuperscript{102} Ralph Levering et al., \textit{Debating the Origins of the Cold War}, 96.

\textsuperscript{103} Kolko, \textit{The Limits of Power}, 42.

\textsuperscript{104} Kolko, \textit{The Limits of Power}, 42.

\textsuperscript{105} Ralph Levering et al., \textit{Debating the Origins of the Cold War}, 97.
This was by no means the outcome Stalin desired. The establishment of the Grand Alliance proved extremely promising for postwar peace. Indeed as is seen in the last chapter, it was through the efforts of President Roosevelt, whom Stalin had come to regard as his only true friend and partner, that Soviet-American relations improved dramatically. The death of Franklin D. Roosevelt reversed such gains in international relations. Some may argue that Roosevelt “failed to prepare the American people for the realities of the rapidly approaching postwar world.” And though Roosevelt’s strategies during the war were undoubtedly idealistic at times, the fact of the matter is that he planned according to the moment; his untimely death prevented any real attempts at postwar preparation. Rather, what should appear evident is that Truman’s sudden and aggressive foreign policy designs took the Soviet Union by surprise. And though Joseph Stalin may have reacted coolly to some of his tactics, for instance in regards to the dropping of the A-bombs, one can be sure that those old Soviet fears reemerged. This “new pattern in American behavior” erased the “perception of the United States as a remote and harmless giant” to a nation that posed a real and urgent threat to Soviet security. Stalin had truly “lost his two equals”; there was no hope in negotiating. He perceived America’s policy changes as “the first offensive” in what would be a Cold War. Truman’s policies not only affected relations between America and the Soviet Union, but perhaps more importantly his actions influenced American public opinion. In the spring of 1945, “American goodwill

107 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 106.
108 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 39.
109 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 107.
toward Russia declined sharply.”

Gallup polls show that “trust in Russia’s willingness to cooperate after the war dropped from 54%-45%”. In comparing Roosevelt’s presidency to that of Truman’s one fact for certain is shockingly similar: “The only American who had the power and prestige to alter these…attitudes” was the President of the United States. Roosevelt may have failed to prepare the people for peace, but Truman by “refusing to accept Russian predominance” in parts of the world, instead rallied the people for more war.

Despite Truman’s twisted preconceptions about the Soviet Union, Stalin was not ready for war nor did he want it. In a number of interviews taken by U.S. diplomats, Joseph Stalin repeatedly expressed his desire for a continued cooperation with the United States. As early as December 1946, in an interview between Stalin and Elliot Roosevelt (the son of former President Roosevelt), Roosevelt asked straightforwardly, “Do you consider it possible that a democracy like the U.S. can live peacefully side-by-side with a communist form of government?” Stalin’s response:

“Yes, of course. This is not only possible. This is reasonable and entirely feasible. During the tensest times of the war the differences in the forms of government did not hinder the two countries in allying and defeating our enemies. Preserving these relations is possible to an even greater extent during peacetime.”

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A similar interview done in 1947 shows consistency in Stalin’s outlook when he states, “I want to bear testimony to the fact that Russia wants to cooperate.” Moreover, when asked if he “looked forward to a greater exchange of ideas, news, etc.” Stalin replied in the affirmative. “This will inevitably happen if cooperation is established. The exchange of goods will lead to the exchange of people.” This remark is especially significant since it proves that American fears over a Russian “closed door” policy were unfounded. More will be said of the economic situation in relation to the United States and the Soviet Union in the next chapter, but what is now pertinent to express is that the United States, without cause, reverted to an opinion which puts forth the notion of the Soviet Union’s intent to spread Communism worldwide. The views of the United States shine through perfectly in the National Security Council 68 report (NSC 68), when in describing the “fundamental design of the Kremlin” it is written that “Soviet efforts are now directed toward the domination of the Eurasian landmass.” Moreover, Washington viewed Stalin’s attempts to rebuild the Soviet Union as “not an end in itself but…to contribute to the war-making capacity of the Soviet system.”

In reality, Stalin’s desire to regain territory had its origins prior to the outbreak of the war. Though it might have at first meshed with revolutionary ideals, for Stalin its greater aim of


helping rebuild Russian strength and pride overpowered any other agenda. “Not that Stalin gave up on spreading Communism but he subordinated those interests to his larger strategic goals.”

In regards to economic superiority, though “Russians leaders talked of surpassing the United States…such promises remained in the realm of useful fantasy.” Stalin was most definitely aware of America’s “awesome military-industrial potential and global strategic reach”. He did “not want to make that world an enemy”. Besides, as the Lend-Lease incident made manifest, “the mighty and prosperous America was seen as a potential source of desperately needed economic assistance for the postwar reconstruction of the Soviet economy.” Clearly, the Soviet Union was in no position to face-off against the United States. Stalin needed the hope of a “continued cooperation with the West.” Sadly, this hope would never be fulfilled as America once again found itself in the pre-war frenzy against Communism, determined to protect “and defend its way of life.”

III. Economics

In full Revisionist style, a report concerning the origins of the Cold War could not be complete without some reference to the economic aspect which surely had a great impact on the breakdown of Soviet-American relations after the war. Though many may criticize the Revisionist school for being too reliant on economics in their interpretations, this section hopes

119 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 97.
120 Kolko, The Limits of Power, 52.
121 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 96.
122 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 96.
123 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 96.
to discredit such a belief by instead elucidating the “long term economic considerations” that seemed to be always at the heart of American foreign policy relations.\textsuperscript{124} Granted much can be said concerning such a topic but since conciseness is the goal, the following should be considered a brief survey of Soviet-American economic relations, with more weight poured onto the American economic perspective designed to reinforce the notion that American self-interest in the private sector fueled expansionist efforts which prompted the outbreak of the Cold War.

It is rather ironic to view the United States as an empire. For years, heeding the words of first President George Washington, the nation advocated an isolationist policy. The mighty belief in the principles of freedom and self-determination for all stood as the true markers of government. And complementary to all of this, was the great disdain its citizens shown for monarchy or imperialist ventures. However, somewhere along the line, all of this changed and America became perhaps the most camouflaged form of a full-fledged empire. The turning point came about with the so-called Crisis of 1890. It was during this decade that two major events occurred which would forever alter the course of American history. The first was the closing of the frontier, since the census of 1890 revealed that all lands from east to west in the United States had been claimed. Without any more space on the continent to discover, what may be considered the most “rapid and effective [form of ] Americanization”-expansion ceased to exist.\textsuperscript{125} The Turner thesis, given in 1893, is just one of countless debates addressing the anxiety which concerned the fate of American development without the frontier line. The Panic of 1893 became


\textsuperscript{125} Fredrick Jackson Turner, \textit{The Significance of the Frontier in American History.}, 1893 University of Virginia.\url{http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/}
yet another watershed in the field of American industry, which “quickly developed in a severe and double-cycle depression which lasted until 1898.” Newspaper reports from across the country described the “sudden and striking cessation of industrial activity…mills, factories, furnaces and mines nearly everywhere shut down in large numbers.” Something had to be done in order to quell the feeling of “chaos and revolution” which threatened American society due to such privations. It wasn’t long before “conservatives and reformers came to share the same conviction that…an expansionist foreign policy would provide such relief”. Upon this consensus, the Open Door Policy of American relations was born which sought to enforce the equal privileges of free trade for all countries. And so it seemed that by the start of the twentieth century there had emerged, with the adoption of this new method of foreign policy, a rather “dogmatic belief that America’s domestic well-being depended upon such sustained, ever-increasing overseas economic expansion.” The result of so staunch a conviction would mean, “first…a neglect of internal developments which are nevertheless of primary importance. And second, this sort of externalizing evil [which occurs when] there is the tendency to externalize the sources of good.” The second outcome would prove especially disastrous for Soviet-American relations in the wake of World War II.

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128 Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, 22.
129 Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, 22.
130 Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, 11.
131 Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, 11.
One cannot really begin to consider the magnitude of Soviet and American trade relations until the year 1933. Prior to World War I, “American trade with Russia had risen to only a little more than one percent of our total” and even after 1918, the gains in commercial trade were not very considerable.132 Doubtlessly the fears revolving around Communist strategies for a world revolution coupled with Soviet sentiments of extreme insecurity of the outside (capitalist) world amplified by Marxist doctrine, contributed to such a pattern. But with the onset of the Great Depression in October 1929 and the election of the optimistic Franklin D. Roosevelt to presidential office - a new and friendlier era in Soviet-American relations commenced. As discussed previously, Roosevelt’s monumental decision to offer official recognition to the Soviet Union, in spite of the hordes of opposition, contained both practical and idealized reasons. One of such reasons, which is most relevant to the conversation of economics, is Roosevelt’s hope in the “possibility of repairing U.S. economic hardships with the help of the U.S.S.R.”133 With Joseph Stalin at the helm, the Soviet Union was intent on following the path of industrialization in order to strengthen itself. In a note written by the Soviet ambassador to the United States A.A. Trojanovskii regarding the reasons why the “U.S.S.R. should cultivate a friendship with the United States”, he writes that “The U.S. in the past few years as far as technology is concerned has taken major strides forward…we can get something…we need to make concerted efforts to keep up.” Realizing such interest “in acquiring American technology”, America welcomed the opportunity to sell “industrial goods for a good price” to the Soviet Union.134 Clearly, economics was at the basis of initiating a relationship that would form into a friendship.

132 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 265.
World War II and the formation of the Grand Alliance produced an even greater bond of friendship between the two nations. And once again at the heart of this partnership lay the concept of economics. By way of officially recognizing the Soviet Union in 1933, both the U.S.S.R. and the United States entered into a sort of alliance based on the hope of mutual economic assistance. Given this, it wasn’t a surprise that when America entered World War II in 1941 it quickly developed a “unique manner in which to aid Russia” throughout the war which of course, became known as Lend-Lease. The details of such an arrangement are as follows:

First, Roosevelt “assigned highest priority” to maintaining a steady and ever-increasing flow of supplies to the Soviets despite any shortages or issues in shipping that may come about from factorial over-exertion. Secondly, Soviet requests for Lend-Lease aid “were accepted at face-value; no supporting evidence was required.” This arrangement was especially conspicuous since when in the process of distributing Lend-Lease aid to other nations such as Great Britain, each “recipient of aid was to file elaborate evidence which justified their need for and indicated their ability to use each item requested.” When the war began to subside in 1944, Lend-Lease aid was significantly reduced in other nations, but the program had already been renewed for the Soviet Union in 1943.

As has already been discussed to some extent in the previous chapter, Washington officials were infuriated by what they saw as Roosevelt’s policy of “unconditional aid”. They

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137 Herring, “Lend-Lease to Russia and the Origins of Cold War”, 95.
argued that the “Russian military position was no longer desperate and the Soviets seemed to be exploiting American generosity” which made the U.S. appear weak.\textsuperscript{140} Presidential advisors, such as Averell Harriman, begged Roosevelt to use the policy of Lend-Lease as an “instrument of pressure” in response to wild claims that the Soviets were actually wasting wartime supplies by hoarding them away for plans of Soviet postwar reconstruction.\textsuperscript{141} Despite such pleas, Roosevelt “vigorously resisted any efforts to modify” the program.\textsuperscript{142} One can easily assume why no modification was done during the war; the U.S.S.R. and the United States were allies. And in the event that efforts to open up a second front failed (which they did), Lend-Lease was considered the only other “means of support available.”\textsuperscript{143} But the renewal of Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union towards the end of the war can only be understood in terms of mutual economic assistance, which fixed the new path of Soviet-American relations that had begun in 1933. The most telling piece of evidence to support this notion is section 3c of the Lend-Lease Act to the U.S.S.R. in 1943. In this clause, is stated the “allowance of a steady flow of industrial equipment to Russia even if the equipment did not contribute directly to the war effort or could not be made operational before the end of the war.”\textsuperscript{144} In other words, this statement lends its support to the Soviet Union’s plans for postwar economic development. It is a clause that appeals to the continuation of the promise of mutual aid that came to be established with official recognition of the U.S.S.R. in 1933. No wonder Roosevelt felt “that he could not modify it without risking a

\textsuperscript{140} Herring, “Lend-Lease to Russia and the Origins of Cold War”, 96.

\textsuperscript{141} Herring, “Lend-Lease to Russia and the Origins of Cold War”, 97.

\textsuperscript{142} Herring, “Lend-Lease to Russia and the Origins of Cold War”, 95.

\textsuperscript{143} Herring, “Lend-Lease to Russia and the Origins of Cold War”, 94.

\textsuperscript{144} Herring, “Lend-Lease to Russia and the Origins of Cold War”, 98.
break in the relationship he had built with the Soviets” ever since.\textsuperscript{145} Roosevelt’s hope that economic assistance would “convince the Russian leaders of American good will” and wipe away any cause for Soviet suspicion may have been idealistic but it came to bear truth. Kept in this regard, the role of Lend-Lease takes on even greater significance since it seems that Truman’s abrupt cessation of economic aid did more than just terminate a wartime agreement, it rocked the very foundations of Soviet-American amity.

Truman’s decision to stop Lend-Lease was the first of many blatant acts of American aggression to follow in the wake of World War II. By the end of the war, America had emerged “by far as the strongest power on earth.”\textsuperscript{146} The pressures of war, it seemed, reinvigorated American industrial and economic power; and as the sole surviving power governed by the kind of Wilsonian ethics which constituted Europe’s prewar structure, America took it upon herself to rebuild and reform the world order. The only obstacle that stood in the way of such restoration was the Soviet Union. Now the condition of the Soviet Union has been already hinted at in this report, and so, it is safe to say that the Soviet Union-though it emerged as the world’s other leading superpower-was not nearly as strong as the United States since it had undergone horrendous losses of both man and machine power during the war, figures not nearly comparable to those of the U.S. The people of Russia were “war-weary” and “the emphasis in the Soviet press, was overwhelmingly domestic…economic…affairs.”\textsuperscript{147} Despite, long-lived desires for the Soviet Union to catch-up and overtake the United States, “the immense…lead of the United

\textsuperscript{145}Herring, “Lend-Lease to Russia and the Origins of Cold War”, 98.


\textsuperscript{147}Kolko, \textit{The Limits of Power}, 54.
States over Russia [as late as] 1949 was never in doubt."\(^{148}\) What is most surprising is that even the NSC 68 report drafted in 1950 reveals such incapabilities. Concerning the realm of economics, the report lists productions statistics between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., concluding that “even granting optimistic Soviet reports of production, the total economic strength of the U.S.S.R. compares with that of the U.S. as roughly one to four.”\(^{149}\) Such a statistic was given considering that the Soviet Union was “near maximum production basis.”\(^{150}\) The report also states that “in other field-general technological competence, labor resources, productivity of labor force-the gap corresponds to that of production.”\(^{151}\) Only in the realm of “scientific research…is the superiority of the United States unclear.”\(^{152}\) It seems that for Americans what certainly remained most fearful was the unsure trajectory of Soviet efforts.

Despite such weakened conditions, Americans believed firmly that the Soviet Union was capable of extending military force throughout the world; it had already launched its Red Army into parts of Europe in response to American impediments on its territorial sphere of security thereby initiating the construction of an “iron curtain”. Like in those decades before the war, when Communist suspicious ran rampant, the greatest concern Washington expressed dealt with the means by which the Soviet Union could achieve world domination. In investigating their


military capacity, this fear is clearly stated, “The Soviet Union is developing the military capacity to support its design for world domination.”\textsuperscript{153} However, once again, an examination of Soviet strengths would prove that “armed forces are not yet sufficient to initiate a war with the United States.”\textsuperscript{154} Instead, what the Soviets did possess was a check on the United States’ envisioned monopoly of the atomic bomb. This is what proved most frightening to the Americans, so much so that it was believed that “the…strength [in armed forced] coupled with an atomic capability [could] provide the Soviet Union with great coercive power…in furtherance of its objectives.” \textsuperscript{155} Now, there of course remained questions concerning the accuracy of Soviet atomic capabilities. What is mentioned for certain in the report is the possession of Soviet aircraft that could deliver an atomic bomb overseas for an attack (though this is followed by a statement suggesting the Soviets are poor at target practice) along with estimates of Soviet atomic stockpiles, that are not to be exaggerated. As was discussed in the last chapter, Stalin’s aims in further developing nuclear technology were posed according to signs of American aggression. He didn’t plan on war with the United States even if it was a possibility, but he sure wanted to be prepared if a threat came from the United States.

In accordance with this security report, it seems as though for Americans the Soviet Union represented the unknown; a force clearly weaker but still capable of vying for the world power America so desperately desired on the pretext of reconstructing the former world order. But in taking into account what is perhaps the most important document, on behalf of Soviet

\textsuperscript{153} James S. Lay and Harry Truman, \textit{National Security Council Report, NSC 68, ‘United States Objectives and Programs for National Security’},\textsuperscript{17.}

\textsuperscript{154} James S. Lay and Harry Truman, \textit{National Security Council Report, NSC 68, ‘United States Objectives and Programs for National Security’},\textsuperscript{17.}

\textsuperscript{155} James S. Lay and Harry Truman, \textit{National Security Council Report, NSC 68, ‘United States Objectives and Programs for National Security’},\textsuperscript{17.}
sentiments, in the early years of the Cold War one is quickly able to realize that what the United States only imagined, the Soviets actually witnessed in attempts to gain worldwide domination. The telegram of Soviet Ambassador to the United States- Nikolai Novikov- vividly describes the status of the U.S. in its attempts toward achieving a global takeover. Novikov explains that the “expectation of the U.S. during World War II…was that [the war] would crush its main rivals weaken them to such a degree…and that due to this circumstance the U.S. would be the most powerful factor in deciding the main issues of the postwar world.”\footnote{156 Nikolai Novikov, \textit{Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. to the Soviet Leadership}, September 27, 1946. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. Wilson Center Digital Archive.\url{http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110808}} Seeing as though the Soviet Union, after the war, retained “independence from the outside world and is restoring its economy by its own means” America began to view the Soviets with contempt and fought ever harder in carving a prominent place for herself in the world system.\footnote{157 Novikov, \textit{Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. to the Soviet Leadership.}} Taking advantage of the “shattered European economy…America sent enormous deliveries of goods and the importation of capital to be introduced” into those broken countries which needed to rebuild.\footnote{158 Novikov, \textit{Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. to the Soviet Leadership.}} As in the case of Italy, and many other countries with a torn system of government, America injected herself into that nation’s politics-attempting to rid it entirely of any Communist influence-in the belief that politics formed the underpinning of an economic system. In addition, the “increase in peacetime military potential and the organization of a large number of naval and air bases in the U.S. and beyond its borders are clear indicators of the U.S. desire to establish world domination.”\footnote{159 Novikov, \textit{Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. to the Soviet Leadership.}} He notes that “the colossal growth of expenditures for the [American] Army and Navy…are more
than 10 times those in the 1938 budget.”¹⁶⁰ There has also been seen with Great Britain a “partial division of the world”¹⁶¹ The “U.S. is not interested in helping or supporting the British Empire but...in penetrating the Mediterranean...which attracts them with its natural resources, primarily oil.”¹⁶² This is the world in which the Soviet Union was forced to face-off against the United States. It was not a world formed by mere speculation, but by real threats.

The United States’ role in World War II-fighting against regimes that were considered hostile to true freedom—had allowed for a more “assertive and expansive tone” of America’s good old mission to protect and defend.¹⁶³ But after the war had ended, it seems America was ill-prepared to live in a peaceful society. Its major attempts to infiltrate nearly all corners of the globe, reflected its own desire for security in wishing to set up governments based upon the American model which was sure to bring peace-and economic prosperity—to the United States. The Open Door Policy became more of a “Good Neighbor Policy...infused with the rhetoric of America’s mission to defend and extend democracy.”¹⁶⁴ But in view of the origins of such a policy, as was discussed earlier in this chapter, the actual context of such a mission was “defined by the immediate and specific needs of American businessmen and by the long-range objective of a broad integration of the U.S. economy”—hence, the schemes put in place to control portions

¹⁶⁰ Novikov, Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. to the Soviet Leadership.

¹⁶¹ Novikov, Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. to the Soviet Leadership.

¹⁶² Novikov, Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. to the Soviet Leadership.

¹⁶³ Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, 164.

¹⁶⁴ Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, 165-166.
of the Middle East rich in natural resources or the investment of American capital into Europe’s shattered societies. 165

So it was in this way, that those three basic concepts outlined in the beginning of this section were transformed to represent a new set of ideals, though a contradictory one. Since the close of World War II, American policy has been guided by three basic notions. “One, is the warm, generous, humanitarian impulse to help other people solve their problems.”166 Second, is the “principle of self-determination on the international level that asserts the right of every society in establishing its own goals or objectives.”167 And third, is the unwavering belief that “other people really cannot solve their problems and improve their lives unless they go about it in the same way as the United States.”168 And it is this third belief that really erases the sense of righteousness which accompanies this American mission. After all, the “insistence that other people ought to copy America contradicts the humanitarian urge to help them” and it also nullifies belief in the principles of self-determination which America was supposed to be upholding.169 To state it very clearly, “the American way of doing things simply does not work for other people.”170 Perhaps, this was the biggest problem in postwar relations with the Soviet Union. For no matter how much leverage America seemed to flaunt or the aggressive foreign policy measures carried out in order to mold the world’s countries into dare one say, American

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165 Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 166.
satellites, Stalin’s U.S.S.R. remained almost unperturbed and kept on following its own path to independence.

**Conclusion**

For now, our investigation into the origins of the Cold War must come to end. Looking back on the various sections of this paper, it is hoped that a clear and newfangled interpretation for the era has begun to take root. Section One, entitled *The Other*, explored the popular perception of Americans toward Russia (and then, the Soviet Union) in the period roughly stretching from 1809 to 1950. Throughout the course of Soviet-American relations, it seemed that popular attitude was quite teetering. Despite the great efforts of former President Roosevelt in trying to strengthen ties between the two countries and thereby aid in altering public opinion, the inauspicious impressions created by Lenin’s early regime could not be overcome. Section Two, *The True Stalin*, reexamined the role and mindset of Joseph Stalin as leader of the U.S.S.R. What should be obtained from this section is a grand image of Stalin as a nationalist. Though some of his strategies were originally founded in the hope of worldwide revolution, this desire to spread Communism no doubt subsided during the campaign to build up a sense of Russian nationalism in the 1930s and then, even further after his exploits during World War II and the partnership with Roosevelt and Churchill. Rather, Truman’s abrupt change of policy acted as a major cause for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance which was sure to have contracted peace for the postwar. Lastly Section Three, labeled *Economics*, unveiled the grave economic considerations that were very much at the heart of Soviet-American relations, and in some instances actually formed the basis of amity between the two countries. This section attempted to describe the transformation of American foreign policy objectives; a change that can again, most
decidedly can be seen in the abrupt foreign policy changes that took place after 1945. The overall image of both countries should be seen as strikingly unequal; America was an overly aggressive fanatical power dominated by self-interest and a contrived sense of righteousness in its attempt to set the whole world right. The Soviet Union on the other hand, was a broken and divided nation desperately seeking economic aid in order to achieve independence and so strengthen itself from the aggression of other nations, namely the U.S.

Again, the reader is asked to forgive any omissions made apparent throughout the work. The major themes of this piece, revolving around popular perception and economics as well as individual mindsets, are in themselves very complex areas of study that require extensive investigations. Still, it is hoped in reading that there has been a mark of originality surrounding the interpretation found in the preceding chapters. Finally the overall goal of this text should also be communicated in consideration of the work’s length. This goal was simply to elucidate, what seem to be, the most significant factors pertaining to the origins of the Cold War; and to present them in a somewhat different light than is often told so that future historians may be encouraged to break the status quo, and form their own opinions about yesterday’s events. With that said, this text summarizes the understandings of the author on what exactly launched the Cold War, the most dangerous and volatile point in human history, thus far.
Image A

AREN'T WE HAVING ENOUGH TROUBLE WITH THE MACHINERY WITHOUT LETTING SOMEBODY THROW A MONKEY WRENCH INTO IT?
One Year Against Hitler: Stalin Proved His Name Meant 'Steel'
The warmonger Truman has launched a brutal and unpunished attack upon the defenceless peoples of North Korea.

BELIEVE IT OR KNOUT
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A Historiography on the Origins of the Cold War

By Juliana Mastrangelo

The twentieth century was a period marked by almost incessant war. World War I saw the world’s first mechanized form of total warfare. World War II saw the rise and fall of regimes. But the Cold War was much different, as it proved to be the ultimate showdown of two very different yet abiding ideologies known to man. One may reflect on the causes responsible for producing nearly a century of conflict and devastation and while the answers may seem rather straightforward in regards to both World Wars, there has been much debate on the origins of the Cold War. Prior to developing one’s own hypothesis on the matter, it is important to delve into the opinions of those who came before us, and who actually lived through this icy conflict. The purpose of this report then, is to examine the various historiographical schools associated with the exploration of Cold War origins.

It is said that “History is written by the victors”. Though the Cold War was far from being won when it began in 1945, the U.S. had undoubtedly emerged from World War II stronger than any other one of its allies, being Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Despite a wartime loss of 400,000 brave souls (rather trifling when compared to that of the Soviet Union), one could virtually agree that America was unscathed and embarking on a route to unforeseen prosperity upon which rested the hopes of thousands of war-weary peoples in Europe as they tried to rebuild their societies. It is in this context that the first writers of Cold War history are found. Members of this group are most often referred to as Traditionalists or Orthodox. Though each of their interpretations vary, their writings nonetheless reflect a sense of congruity in the belief that the actions of the Soviet Union, as directed by its leader Joseph Stalin, should be
viewed as aggressive with expansionist aims that threaten the sense of freedom fostered by the United States and is therefore responsible for the breakup of the Grand Alliance. Perhaps one of the greatest proponents of the Traditionalist theory is George F. Kennan, former American ambassador to the Soviet Union. Besides the “Long Telegram”, one of his most influential writings is entitled *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*, written under the pseudonym X, in which he becomes the first to call for a policy of containment in the upcoming struggles with the Soviet Union. Throughout the article, Kennan constantly harks on the importance of Marxist theory and ideology in attempting to understand the causes of Soviet behavior. For Kennan, it was communist ideology that created a deep sense of insecurity which drove the need for expansionist policy in the Soviet Union. Kennan makes his thoughts clear when he asserts that “Ideology…taught them that the outside world was hostile and that is was their duty eventually to overthrow the political forces beyond their borders.”¹ He goes on to explain this hostility which centers around “belief in the basic badness of capitalism and in the inevitability of its destruction.”² Further, because of this perceived struggle which deluges the Soviet mind, Kennan argues that there can never be cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union let alone even a degree of sincerity in their relations since “Marxian ideology” has so tainted the Russian perception of the world. For the author, the struggle between communism and democracy has just begun. In looking back on Russian history, he posits the limit of Soviet security in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. “They alone believed they knew what was good for society and that they would accomplish that once their power was secure and

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² Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”, 858.
unchallengeable.” This very phrase speaks volumes since it accomplishes three things: 1) Conceivably traces the origins of the Cold War back to this episode in Russian history. 2) Recognizes the source of Soviet insecurities and its link to ideology. 3) Represents to what great lengths the Soviets would go to secure their power. Taking into account all of these factors just mentioned and also aware that, for the Russians, this is essentially a “duel of infinite duration” (Communist ideology only refers to the inevitable breakdown of capitalist states), Kennan advises that the best long term route in combating this rival is by finding the “strength and resourcefulness to contain Soviet power.”

Kennan never ceases in depicting a hostile image of the Soviet Union. His opinion is clear, “Soviet policies do not reflect...a love of peace or stability.” He warns that there should be absolutely no hope in deliberation since Marxist ideology naturally fosters a sense of insecurity in its followers which in turn expresses itself through insincere motives. “If the Soviet government occasionally sets its signature to documents...it should be taken in the spirit of caveat emptor.” By the end of his “X article”, Kennan champions America’s role as the great defender of freedom and democracy. In order “to avoid destruction” the United States must “confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point” where the hopes of a free and peaceful world are endangered by the iron-fist.

Similar to Kennan’s views, are those of another very influential Traditionalist named Arthur Schlesinger. In his article The Origins of the Cold War, Schlesinger too realized the

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3 Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”, 855.
4 Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”, 862.
5 Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”, 867.
6 Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”, 868.
striking connection between Leninist ideology and the Soviet sense of insecurity. This sense of insecurity again, could be found both within the Soviet Union itself and in its villainous view of the outside world, manifested through Soviet foreign policy actions. In contemplating the root causes of the Cold War, Schlesinger expresses quite clearly his opinion that “Leninism and totalitarianism created a structure of thought and behavior which made postwar collaboration between Russia and America-inherently impossible.” However, unlike Kennan Schlesinger posits another theory that would prove invaluable in shaping the initial Cold War atmosphere, and that is Joseph Stalin.

Schlesinger elaborates much more on the character and personality of Stalin as well as the role he played in major events which arguably can be said to have sparked the onset of the Cold War. He mentions the violations of the promises at Yalta. Stating that in 1945, “Stalin himself was of two minds:…internal reconstruction and development of Russia; the other its external expansion.” Clearly, placing Stalin’s priorities out of line with those of Britain and the U.S. who were focused on consolidating plans for a peaceful postwar coalition as well as immediate tactics to end the war in the Pacific. He then mentions the Russian request to be granted six billion dollars for postwar reconstruction; a request that was misplaced by the American government, although the Soviets would never believe such a thing. Lastly, the topic of Lend-Lease is introduced as a cause of preliminary tension when in May 1945, the abrupt cessation of aid was perceived by Stalin to be “pressure on the Russians in order to soften them up.” Each one of

these incidents resulted in an increase of mutual suspicion however, that suspicion became further amplified in Russia by Stalin’s own intense feelings of paranoia. For him, the preceding events were proof that the “West was resuming its old course of capitalist encirclement” and therefore, the “Russians saw no choice but to consolidate their security in Eastern Europe.” ¹⁰ Schlesinger’s portrayal of Stalin as a man who “expressed terrifying instabilities of the mind” and who was prone to deep obsessions and a fiery temperament has persisted for more than fifty years in Cold War scholarship.¹¹

Still despite such an eccentric personality, Schlesinger and others (who shall be mentioned later) believe that Stalin alone could have prevented the start of the Cold War. As leader of the Soviet Union, he exercised total control over government politics—namely foreign policy—and had the power to brand a new image of Western states into the minds of the Soviet people. President Roosevelt realized this and the hope of bringing the Russian people closer to the establishment of a democracy fueled most of his generous foreign policy in regards to Russia. Yet, despite the president’s efforts and even those of former President Truman, there was nothing that could loosen the grip that Leninist ideology had on the minds of the Soviets, and especially that of Stalin. “Stalin and his associates were bound to regard the United States as the enemy because of the primordial fact that America was the leading capitalist power and thus, by Leninist syllogism…hostile to Soviet Russia.”¹² So the Cold War, according to Schlesinger one could say, was preordained by Communism and its impact on the minds of Soviet leaders.

In total agreement with the interpretations of both Kennan and Schlesinger, William Hardy McNeill appears as another one of the great Traditionalists. Recently deceased in July 2016, McNeill retired as professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago where he taught history since 1947. In his book *America, Britain, and Russia: Their Cooperation and Conflict 1941-1946*, McNeill provides an in-depth and extensive review of the “Anglo-Russo-American” Alliance of World War II. Again, in discerning the possibility of maintaining postwar cooperation, McNeill insists that the alliance was ill-fated from the start due to the forces of communist thought which imbued Soviet policy. “The weight of a life-long Marxist indoctrination resisted the thought that British and American capitalists could for their part be really sincere.”¹³ This chasm reflected itself in nearly all aspects of state to state relations during the war from the Lend-Lease Act to the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, in particular. McNeill stresses the inconsistency in regards to prime concerns held by the three world leaders for the end of World War II and postwar functioning. He lists very clearly Stalin’s demands at Yalta which at first glance seem fairly reasonable. “He wanted what help he could get for the economic reconstruction of the Soviet Union…Secondly, in return for his intervention against Japan, Stalin wished to acquire the territories which the Tsarist Government had lost…and to lay the basis for the future of security of his country.”¹⁴ It was this last demand that the Allies didn’t quite understand. So hopeful for a peaceful postwar alliance and the promise in aid against Japan, Roosevelt overlooked the consequences of Stalin’s wishes; the heart of which lied in the fact that “future security of the Soviet Union required the establishment of governments friendly to

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Russia…a government which satisfied the Soviets…could hardly at the same time satisfy Western powers.” 15 Consequently, McNeill goes on to condemn Russian preemptive actions in Eastern Europe that would’ve threatened the spread of democracy and with it, capitalism; while instead praising the efforts of the Anglo-American pact against Russian aggression. He berates the personality of Joseph Stalin stating that “the concentration of authority in the person of Joseph Stalin was the dominant characteristic of the Soviet system. In effect, negotiation was…impossible.”16 And though he recognizes the amount of disillusionment which guided the alliance on all sides in the first place, he can not help but express a deep annoyance (for lack of better words) in the effects of Marxist-Leninist ideology which formed the foundation of the deep gap which lay between Soviet and Western values, of which no amount of cooperation could bridge.

Herbert Feis is an Orthodox observer of Cold War origins who, similar to McNeill, also focused his interpretation on the breakdown of the Grand Alliance and state to state relations as they were during World War II. What appears most striking in Feis’ novel entitled Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought is his harsh critique of the Soviet spread in Eastern Europe. Feis denounces any Soviet actions in the region, which apparently “evidenced an unwillingness to trust the outcome of the democratic political contest”, as containing within them a propensity for a worldwide communist takeover.17 Perhaps overstating his point, Feis refers to the build up of Soviet “satellites and armies, and additional

15 McNeill, America, Britain & Russia,533.
16 McNeill, America, Britain & Russia, 79.
economic resources” as a way to gain “a favorable chance for Communism to spread its influence.”

Meanwhile, he condones American and British interference in these regions “as they were willing to respect the rights of other peoples to choose” and generates an impression that American acts were performed defensively, in order to protect their interests and those proving most beneficial to the world as a whole after the despoliation of the war. Though it may seem a bit far-fetched, the idea that the Communist Party in Russia was bent on leading a revolutionary takeover of the whole world was actually a deeply held conviction in the minds and hearts of the American people at the time. The final Orthodox historian to be mentioned in this essay, Thomas Bailey, offers great insight into popular opinion and its effects on foreign policy which drove the Cold War. Bailey’s book America Faces Russia is remains one of the more innovative expounders of Cold War origins. Published in 1950, Bailey’s analysis of popular opinion which defined Russian-American relations stretches from its inception in 1809 to what was considered modern-day. Bailey focuses largely on “diplomatic problems…and American attitudes towards such problems” in hopes of enlightening his audience on the true nature of the “Russian menace” throughout Russian-American history. By beginning his inspection of relations in the Tsarist period of Russian history, Bailey becomes one of the first to stretch the origins of the Cold War or rather, the imminent threat of dissension, way past the Grand Alliance of World War II. He points to men like George Kennan the Elder whose pilloried

18 Feis, Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, 563.
19 Feis, Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, 563.
20 Thomas Bailey, America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations from Early Times to Our Day (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950) V.
accounts of a Tsarist Russia “held more weight because he spoke as an American citizen” or the many editors of American newspapers who often revealed a distorted image of Russian politics to U.S. citizens.\footnote{21 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 132.} It was this continuous flow of denunciation, for example found in the following quote from New York’s \textit{Herald Tribune} which read: “Soviet lies have made Russia’s word as good as her bond”, that stuck in people’s minds and fostered Soviet hostility which was bound to erupt into the Cold War despite Roosevelt’s many efforts to decrease anti-Soviet sentiments.\footnote{22 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 264.} Now, despite what may seem as a fairly pleasant approach to Russian-American relations, Bailey utilizes these examples to form his argument that foreign policy towards Russia as was carried out through World War II, was absolutely affected by American public opinion.

Roosevelt is well known for making decisions based upon opinion polls. He takes into account the amount of negative stereotypes conveyed to the public, in order to cast blame on media persons and even government officials who were responsible for creating these images. Perhaps if their depictions of Russia were different, the Cold War could’ve been avoided altogether. Yet, despite what may seem as a fairly pleasant view of Cold War origins, Bailey’s writings still hold a degree of prejudice against the Soviets as is typical in Orthodox thought. He takes into account the usual major events associated with the onset of Cold War, including the Lend-Lease Act and the broken promises at Yalta whereby “Americans were disturbed by the inability of the Soviets to agree with the Western world in terms of peace.”\footnote{23 Bailey, America Faces Russia, 325.} Bailey mentions how the “Russians persistently declined to join many of the organizations set up by the United Nations” thus further

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\item Bailey, America Faces Russia, 132.
\item Bailey, America Faces Russia, 264.
\item Bailey, America Faces Russia, 325.
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alienating themselves from the world and efforts designed to ensure peace. And in referring to the postwar problems of Eastern Europe, he laments the “Soviet darkness which descended…” upon many Eastern European nations. Ultimately, Bailey too recognizes and scorns the amount of “Soviet distrust and obstruction” which alone, could’ve determined the course of events to come.

In spite of the lingering prejudice, the originality in Bailey’s account would continue to be observed and followed in future representations of Cold War origins, most especially in post-revisionist accounts. However, before moving further one must stop to evaluate the validity of Traditionalist theory as it has been described in this report. Firstly, the orthodox line of thought in regards to the origins of the Cold War should by now be evident. Though some works were elaborated upon more than others or manipulated in such a way as to show their diversity in terms of interpretation, the key elements to each argument are as follows:

1. Soviet aggression in terms of expansionist policies primarily in Eastern Europe did not correspond to the dispositions adhered to in the Grand Alliance, this recalcitrance destroyed any hope of a peaceful postwar cooperation among nations.

2. Communist ideology and Russia’s history of invasion produced a paranoia in regards to security. This mindset imbued Soviet foreign and domestic policy, and especially Soviet leaders were in control of such. As a result, the clash between capitalist and communist countries became inevitable to all involved. There could be no hope of negotiation.

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3. The United States sought only peace and cooperation. When it was clear this could not be achieved on account of the doggedness of Russian aims, America acted to defend the principles of freedom and democracy around the globe from communist aggression which was intent on leading a worldwide revolution.

It was in these ways, the origins of the Cold War evolved to place blame solely on Russia. As the first school of meaning, the Orthodox explanation continues to carry much weight in Cold War discussions. It was obviously born from a very strong sense of patriotism that emerged after the Allied success of World War II and so, found its way easily into the hearts and minds of many Americans as well as other patrons of democracy across the globe, who accepted its veracity without question. And a degree of truthfulness much exist considering the quality and amount of sources used to build such arguments. Thomas Bailey quotes almost entirely from *Public Opinion Quarterly* and each one of these men also utilized a great deal of State Department and archival records, which provides great insight into the workings of the American government. Letters from Churchill, Roosevelt, and other top officials are examined along with a host of secondary sources and even political cartoons as well; in some instances, the Traditionalists are even seen referring to each other’s works. But while all this may seem like very impressive research, the fact of the matter is that the information being conveyed is one-sided. Very rarely do one of these men incorporate Russian resources to fit their arguments. In McNeill’s 789 page book, it is hard to find more than 2 Russian sources; One comes from Voznesensky, the Soviet economic planner, and the from other Colonel Kalinov. Both are used to cite a claim of the inaccuracy of Soviet economic reports. However, the overall confidentiality of the USSR must be taken into consideration as well, so it could very well be that circumstances did not make for a balanced analysis. A few of these men like George F. Kennan and Herbert
Feis, also started their careers not as historians but as government officials. While this was certainly helpful in obtaining the amount of resources to form their arguments, it also prevented an objective view of events to be communicated to the American public. In an atmosphere built upon suspicion and staunch patriotism, the Traditionalist theory worked very well almost as another source of war propaganda.

Eventually, however, that suspicion grew into understanding and patriotism dismembered itself to form instead the basis for worldwide unity, love, and peace. The Social Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s brought with it the spark that would fuel a whole new Cold War perspective. The Revisionist theory of Cold War origins was introduced in 1959 by William Appleman Williams’ *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* and stands as a direct counterargument to the Orthodox explanation. In his groundbreaking book, Williams performs a re-examination of American foreign policy since the supposed “Crisis of 1890” whereby it was assumed that the American frontier had come to an end and so in order to “sustain their freedom and prosperity”, America adopted the Open Door Policy aimed at overseas economic expansion.  

In doing so, Williams becomes the first to point out the hypocrisy which surrounds the cherished American identity as the ultimate defender for freedom and righteousness. Contrary to its anti-imperialist stance, he argues that America’s actions abroad have come to resemble those of a “secular and missionary empire”. Further, America’s encouragement for self-determination, propagated by former President Wilson after the Great War, is but a hoax designed to further and protect American business interests. Williams asserts, “The crucial point

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is this: the idea that other people ought to copy America contradicts the humanitarian urge to help them and the idea that they have the right to make such key decisions for themselves”. In other words, “The American way of doing things simply does not work for all people”, and to force American ideals and institutions on peoples of other nations and cultures is not only degrading to those people but violates the very notion of self-determination which the United States claims to support, making them no better than the Soviet Union whose similar actions they condemn and ridicule.  

Williams’ main argument however, centers around the goals associated with the Open Door Policy in which all of America’s dissimulation are seen to be melded together. By his rather thorough examination of American foreign policy as has been executed since 1890, Williams is able to describe nature of the Open Door (or Good Neighbor Policy) as being “infused with the rhetoric of America’s mission to defend and extend democracy, but its context was defined by the immediate and specific needs of American businessmen.” On the proposition that “political line-up followed economic lineup”, attempts to secure democracy wherever possible throughout the world would allow for the elimination of trade and financial barriers, thus generating a degree of economic power to America which would undoubtedly prove beneficial in domestic recovery but also aid in “overcoming competitors and wrong-headed revolutionaries and bestow prosperity and democracy on the entire world.” During the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, in which he faced not only the threat of war but also the need for economic recovery brought on by the Great Depression, this sense of mission to extend

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31 Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 120.
the Open Door Policy took on a more forceful and expansive tone”, influencing much of Roosevelt’s foreign policy plans. For example, the United States’ official recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933 along with the generous Lend-Lease conditions allowed to Russia certainly reflected hope in a postwar economic partnership with even the possibility of Russia converting into a democracy like the United States. When suspicion arose at the end of the war toward such a reality, the newly inaugurated Truman administration shifted their policies and began to view the Soviet Union as an economic rival. Hence, Williams essentially concludes that it was the aggressive nature of American foreign policy after World War II that forced Russia to act defensively in building up spheres of influence in order to safeguard Soviet interests.

American activity in Vietnam during the 1960s served as the ultimate stimulus for the production of additional Revisionist works regarding the origins of the Cold War. Though the government advertised the fighting as a necessary evil in order to prevent the spread of Communism, many Americans regarded the war in Vietnam as an imperialistic example of unnecessary meddling into foreign lands and cultures; the perfect backdrop for Williams’ fresh view of an American empire as it underlined American insincerity in international affairs. Joyce and Gabriel Kolko’s book, *The Limits of Power*, emerges as one of the most well researched examples of Revisionist theory. Like Williams, their book also investigates American foreign policy, though in a much narrower time frame, covering only the postwar years from 1945-1952 when the Cold War is essentially in its infancy. The Kolkos’ waste no time in asserting their belief that “The United States’ ultimate objective at the end of World War II was both to sustain

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and to reform world capitalism.”33 By the end of World War II America, compared to the rest of the world, had emerged virtually unscathed from the horrors of war. The United States was the strongest nation on the globe and only continuing to prosper. Fully confident in this newfound status, American leaders took it upon themselves to rebuild the rest of the world in their image. The Kolkos follow Williams’ emphasis on the Open Door Policy which, after World War II, was especially heightened given the opportunities which arose from a war-torn Europe. The need to reconstruct “prewar world capitalism— to the elimination of trade and financial barriers, exclusive trading blocs, and restrictive policies of every sort” so that American business could not only operate but flourish, put them in direct opposition to leftist political movements which were spreading throughout Europe.34 And since “The Left and Russia appeared as synonymous in America’s litany”, it was only inevitable given the idealistic aims of an American postwar peace that a cold war should begin between the two powers. 35

It was also clear to the Americans that economic stability in Europe required a political prerequisite—Democracy. In rebuilding Germany and Western Europe, America unfairly asserted itself into the elections of other countries to ensure the election of democratic leaders who would implement trading policies to match those of the United States. The Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrines were yet another example of “enlightened self-interest… and part of an effort to forestall Communist penetration by raising the living standards…in Europe, and to reestablish


34 Kolko, The Limits of Power, 12.

normal trading patterns through which the whole world would realize prosperity and peace.” 36 It was these plans for worldwide peace and prosperity, founded on the assumption that the United States could easily “limit the independence and development” of countries whose policies would otherwise “conflict with the interests of American capitalism”, that drove American foreign policy in these years that the Kolkos hold to be unrealistic and naive. 37

The Kolkos emphasize this naivety by providing insight into the Russian perspectives on power at the time. Though it was true “Russian leaders talked of surpassing the United States in output and per capita consumption…such promises remained in the realm of useful fantasy.” 38 There was no doubt that the “immense material and military lead of the United States over Russia in 1949” existed. 39 Proper governmental investigation into Soviet fiscal forms would have revealed an empty threat. Rather, the Soviets desired economic stability as a signifier of the “precondition of internal stability and ultimately, international security” which the Soviets so desperately believed they needed. 40 In their defense of Russia, the Kolkos explain that the “dominant theme in Soviet proclamations in the three years after the war was the possibility and likelihood of coexistence between Russia and the West” and that the danger of war was unreal…for any future conflicts would be between only capitalist nations.” 41 Thereby, the Kolkos remove any former blame placed on Russia for the start of the Cold War, shifting blame instead on American foreign policy clouded by economic self-interest.

36 Kolko, The Limits of Power, 359.
37 Kolko, The Limits of Power, 2.
38 Kolko, The Limits of Power, 54.
40 Kolko, The Limits of Power, 54.
41 Kolko, The Limits of Power, 56-57.
Though an economic approach to American foreign policy seems to be the trademark of Revisionist theory, not all works are limited to this field. Walter La Feber is perhaps one of the greatest Revisionist historians of the twentieth century. And though he too realizes the importance of the Open Door Policy as a central feature of American foreign policy, his main argument concerns the expansionist desires of both Russia and America throughout their respective histories. LaFeber takes note of the ideological and governmental differences which had always separated the two countries but he claims that these differences only exaggerated the principle source of conflict, which relates back to the fact that Russia and the United States were expanding world powers. It was the way in which each sought to achieve its own sense of aggrandizement that since 1890, pushed them towards confrontation. As has already been discussed by prior Revisionists, 1890 marks a great change in American foreign policy with the adoption of the Open Door Policy which placed emphasis on the extension of overseas markets. Russia, on the other hand, “developed an empire that was more political than commercial” and often “tried to control it…by closing the markets to foreign businessmen”.42 The outcome is a battle between Open Door and Closed Door policies; a battle which inescapably culminates in a stalemate when the Open Door meets the Iron Curtain. It was precisely from this state of affairs that the Cold War was bound to emerge after Europe had been decimated by World War II. Stalin however, remained confident in the continuation of the wartime alliance. La Feber repudiates the notion that Stalin was a “paranoid and mentally ill” man whose inconsistent policies brought the world into a whole different form of warfare.43 He believes “his foreign

43 La Feber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 20.
policy displayed a realism, a careful calculation of forces and a diplomatic finesse…Stalin’s priority was not world revolution but, once again, Russian security and his own personal power.”

His policy then, was consistent with his goals, which the West, having different aims, could not understand or did not try to understand. Rather it is Western policy that should be given a further critique. La Feber argues that while “Stalin’s policies were brutally consistent, Truman’s were confused.” He states the obvious example of “the United States, opposed to a sphere of interest in Europe yet strengthening its own sphere in the Western Hemisphere.” Such instability manifested itself in the “thousands of troops which had poured into Russia between 1917 and 1920…reneged on promises about the second front, and in 1945 tried to penetrate areas Stalin deemed crucial to Soviet security.” For these reasons and more, the Soviets were right to be suspicious of the West. “They were realistic, not paranoid.” So again, it seemed to be the obstinacy Western Powers, namely that of the U.S. whose persistent “attempts to open Eastern Europe rekindled earlier fears” which once again, forced the separation of Russia and the United States.

If one is to talk about the leadership of Stalin when referring to the origins of the Cold War then, it seems only appropriate that an examination of Franklin D. Roosevelt should also exist. Amos Perlmutter was a professor of political science at the American University in Washington D.C. and has written perhaps the best critical account of Roosevelt’s foreign policy.

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44 La Feber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 21.
45 La Feber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 22.
46 La Feber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 22.
47 La Feber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 21.
48 La Feber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 21.
49 La Feber, America, Russia, and the Cold War, 18.
actions in the events preceding the end of World War II from 1943-1945. In his book, FDR and Stalin: A Not so Grand Alliance, Perlmutter coolly devalues the legacy of former president Roosevelt who has been hailed by generations of patriots as the champion of democracy. Rather, in a detailed analysis of his diplomatic policy, especially in regards to Russia, towards the end of the war Roosevelt-“the great war leader” is given “full and direct responsibility for America’s diplomatic failures during World War II.”\(^{50}\) He mocks the generous conditions of the Lend-Lease contract to Russia, claiming it was “not foreign policy” as much as an agreement cast in the hope of “good faith” which ultimately backfired creating in the mind of the Soviets a weak image of American statesmanship. \(^{51}\) He debunks the argument that FDR was considering using Lend-Lease as a source of economic leverage against the Soviets, stating “nothing the president said or did supports this argument…not even the monopoly over the atomic bomb”.\(^{52}\) He faults Roosevelt for going back on his promise to open up a second front, believing that “…it gave Stalin propaganda opportunities in the Soviet Union…” since it fed into fears of capitalist treachery. Perlmutter views Roosevelt’s efforts to form an effective foreign policy as based solely on the principle of appeasement.\(^ {53}\) So focused on his own goals for a peaceful postwar partnership with Soviet Russia, Roosevelt more often made allowances for examples of unsettling Soviet activity (I.e. Invasion of Finland, Nazi-Soviet Non Aggression Pact, Purges…) and above all, in doing so failed to recognize Stalin’s true intentions as they were presented at

\(^{50}\) Amos Perlmutter, FDR & Stalin: A Not So Grand Alliance 1943-1945, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 217.

\(^{51}\) Perlmutter, FDR & Stalin, 16.

\(^{52}\) Perlmutter, FDR & Stalin, 16.

\(^{53}\) Perlmutter, FDR & Stalin, 101.
Yalta. This grave misunderstanding is exemplified in Roosevelt’s concessions to Stalin over the fates of Poland, Germany and the Far East, which continue to be criticized by many Revisionists. Under the guidance of President Roosevelt, “The United States was concerned primarily with lofty goals, not balance-of-power issues” and so it would seem that in an ironic twist, the idealism of Roosevelt failed miserably in preparing the way for a peaceful postwar world.  

A final topic which should be considered when dealing with Revisionist studies of the origins of the Cold War is the Atomic Bomb. Nearly every Revisionist touches on this controversial subject, but none so much as historian Gar Alperovitz. His book, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam: The Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation with the Soviet Power*, as can be inferred by the title focuses on the usage of the Atomic Bomb as a source of military leverage against the Soviet Union. The time period is very narrow, covering the most pivotal weeks in the summer of 1945, prior to the convening of the Potsdam Conference. By employing a fantastic amount of primary sources, Alperovitz is able to assert his view that the deployment of the Atomic Bombs over Japan were first and foremost intended to be a show of American diplomatic strength directed towards Russia; meaning, they were not necessary to defeat the Japanese Imperial Army. This decision was the result of a general consensus among government elites in the newly inaugurated Truman administration who wished to get tough with Russia, and so reverse the image of American weakness which had been demonstrated by Roosevelt’s overly generous policies. Records by Henry Stimson, U.S. Secretary of War, to President Truman in the weeks before the Potsdam Conference, urge him to consider “this highly secret matter…which has such a bearing on our present foreign relations”,

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54 Perlmutter, *FDR & Stalin*, 178.
for the author seem to be indicative of the fact that President Truman delayed the Potsdam Conference until the first test of the Atomic Bomb proved successful.\textsuperscript{55} Truman, who had already planned on renegotiating Roosevelt’s promises made at Yalta, may have wanted the backing of so deadly a weapon in order to increase his own confidence in the United States’ diplomatic position. The overall effectiveness of this so-called “‘Atomic Diplomacy” could of course, be debated but for Alperovitz, the flaunting of the Atomic Bomb intensified Russian efforts for security, and triggered responses that could only be understood in a Cold War context.

Hopefully, the examples provided have offered a clear insight into the postulations of Revisionist interpretations regarding Cold War origins. Still, to sum up in a rather neatly fashion, Revisionist arguments contain the following major components which should all be regarded as the antithesis to Traditionalist thinking:

1. Russia is not solely responsible for the start of the Cold War.

2. The United States was not passive but instead pursued and more often imposed its own economic and ideological agenda in its dealings with other nations.

3. The mission, adopted by the U.S., to spread democracy and encourage self-determination for all peoples is therefore, adjudged to be hypocritical based on the ulterior motives above mentioned.

4. The Atomic Bomb continues to be viewed as a source of military leverage against the Soviets which forced them to enact defensive foreign policy measures in order to secure their security, which was now even more threatened.

5. The Roosevelt and Truman administrations played a critical role in the commencement of Cold War affairs. There policies, though entirely different, failed to promote a peaceful postwar partnership with the Soviet Union.

In evaluating these points, from both a professional and personal standpoint, the Revisionist theory does seem most sensible. First of all, unlike contributors to the Traditionalist school of interpretation, the Revisionist writers mentioned here are all historians. This means that there is a greater amount of objectivity presented in their theories which is essential to the proper study of history. Secondly, there exists a temporal gap which undoubtedly also bears an influence on the open-mindedness proffered in these texts since time has cooled the passions evoked by World War II, most especially that of American patriotism so markedly catered too in Orthodox interpretations. Again, the ability to conduct a retrospective analysis of events is an extremely important interpretive tool. Now this same time gap which certainly proves beneficial in one regard, may also fall to victim to criticism since it can be argued that the theories put forward by Revisionists are no less influenced by the events occurring in their own time than were those of the Traditionalists. Unfortunately, this is one of the plights associated with studying history. The historian can never separate his/herself from the influence of contemporary events. Others may also argue that Revisionists interpretations are too narrow; focusing for the most part on economics. Certainly, this is a major element of Revisionist thought and deservedly so, since these historians have employed a tremendous deal of sources to support their theories. Yet, our breakdown of examples should reveal a certain amount of diversity that does surely exist in Revisionist thought. Lastly, since it has already been hinted upon, it is important to stress the variety of sources used by the Revisionist school. These men and women have not only incorporated the standard primary and secondary U.S. based sources into their works, such as the
diaries of Henry Stimson and General Leahy, but they have made extraordinary efforts to utilize Soviet documents as well. Amos Perlmutter, in his bibliography, makes note of the fact that he “…is the first Western scholar to examine previously unpublished Soviet Foreign Ministry Archives”. \textsuperscript{56} Correspondence and speeches by Joseph Stalin and other Soviets are finally brought to light to unveil the truth that lay hidden behind the Iron Curtain. Even a few secondary Russian sources are referred too, despite the language barrier. Clearly, the passage of time was necessary for such developments in analysis to take place, though one ought to wonder if and how such documentation would’ve been used if available prior. Nonetheless, the fact that such materials were used serves as a testimony to the ongoing search for a balanced truth; and that should be the supreme goal of historical analysis.

Still for others, the perceived inadequacies present in the Revisionist school were simply not the desired route to achieving this balanced truth. This is where the Post-Revisionists make their mark. Perhaps one of the most stinging critiques of the Revisionist school is that it sends an un-American message about the United States by claiming, foremost that America is an empire. What’s more, they assert this empire is based on commercial interests and only uses democratic rhetoric as a pretext to interfere in foreign affairs. One of the leading Post-Revisionists, Geir Lundestad, fights this assumption declaring in a very Traditionalist light that America’s interference abroad was sought after by European countries. In his article, Empire by Invitation, Lundestad retains the Revisionist claim that the U.S. did emerge from World War II as the strongest power on the globe. With Europe weakened and devastated America, like Russia, saw an opportunity on which to capitalize. However, unlike Russia, who had to employ force in order to dominate parts of Europe so that it could compete with the U.S. as a world power; the U.S.

\textsuperscript{56}Perlmutter, \textit{FDR & Stalin}, 300.
was asked to provide their aid in European countries. The type of aid varied of course, but there can be no doubt that “There was desperate need for economic assistance in Europe and there was only major source-The U.S.”

Likewise, defense proved a dire issue in the war-torn countries of Europe, many of whom were still struggling against a combination of both internal and external foes. Take for example, Italy’s communist sector that threatened to seize power or the poor countries of Eastern Europe desperately trying to hold on to their independence in the face of Communist aggression. Finally he admits that some countries simply “admired what the U.S. stood for”. And while he recognizes the economic gains supplied to the U.S. as a result of their interference (a Revisionist focus) such as the establishment of several World Banks, Lundestad believes that “they were not really meant to promote American objectives but world economic progress and even peace.”

It was inevitable given the political, military and economic positions of the United States after the war, that it should expand. But the extension of capitalism and of a market were certainly ulterior motives, that came about by circumstance. “America was pure and it was powerful” and this fact certainly threatened the Soviet Union who also sought to fill the European vacuum.

Martin McCauley also seeks to evaluate the inevitability of the Cold War conflict. In his book, *The Origins of the Cold War*, McCauley also makes mention of the vacuum left in Europe and believes it would have been unavoidable for “the two countries who contributed most to the defeat of the Axis powers” to assert their newfound global standings and attempt to “reshape the

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58 Lundestad, “Empire by Invitation”, 268.

59 Lundestad, “Empire by Invitation”, 265.

60 Lundestad, “Empire by Invitation”, 265.
political configuration” of the world.⁶¹ Like most Post-Revisionists, McCauley steers away from placing a certain amount of blame on one party, as he evaluates the conditions on both sides which gave rise to the Cold War. The leading source of conflict, as he sees it, is the amount of misunderstanding which took place between the years of 1941-1949. These misunderstandings were the product of very different histories as well as ideologies. Roosevelt’s policies were clouded by Wilsonian ethics, which boosted the need to spread democracy and ensure open markets. Stalin’s policy reasoning was very different, focusing on the security of Russia, a concern which had deep roots in Communist ideology and in Russia’s history of invasion. The failure to identify these differences led to a build-up of misconceptions and the ultimate break in a postwar partnership. Despite such misconceptions and clouded visions for a postwar peace, McCauley regards Roosevelt as a “skilled expositor” who made great efforts to work with Stalin and ease any inkling of Soviet fear of the West.⁶² Though his generous policies toward Russia may have seemed promising for a time, Roosevelt’s death signified a turning point in American-Soviet relations. Truman’s get tough policy actions would only increase the nature of Soviet misconceptions, fostering a “Western fear of the Soviet Union” which would determine the future of America’s foreign policy for the next half a century. ⁶³

John Lewis Gaddis also emphasizes this Western fear in his Post-Revisionist analysis as one of many principal causes of the Cold War. Gaddis is considered the “father of post-revisionism” for his extensive and well-researched synthesis of events that precipitated the Cold War in his book, The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947. Here he makes

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⁶³McCauley, The Origins of the Cold War, 103.
an effort to understand the forces which moved American foreign policy during these most
critical years. Rebutting the narrow Revisionist focus on economic considerations, Gaddis makes
it clear that “many other forces-domestic policies, bureaucratic inertia, quirks of personality,
perceptions, accurate or inaccurate, of Soviet intentions also affected the actions of Washington
officials.” Like other Post-Revisionists of his time, he stresses the influence of the past on what
was then, modern-day policy making. For the United States, the lessons of World War I were
clear: in order to avoid the breakout of another world war Roosevelt had to make right all of
Wilson’s mistakes. The principles of self-determination had to be spread and the United Nations
needed to be a success in order to promise a sense of postwar security. Unconditional surrender
was sought to eliminate the seeds of envy and vengeance which had erupted into World War II.
And “American leaders regarded reconstruction of the world’s economy as important a goal as
self-determination” since “to them, the coincidence of world depression with the rise of dictators
seemed more than accidental.” Russia’s history of invasion, especially from the West,
formulated a much different set of foreign policy goals. The top priority was to “keep Russia
strong” by building a sphere of influence in its neighboring territory. However, the apparent
commitment to Communist ideology manifested significantly in the paranoid personality of
Stalin led “Washington policy-makers to mistake Stalin’s determination…for Russian security
through spheres of influence for a renewed effort to spread communism.” This is just one of
several explicit gaps between Russia and the United States. Language and culture among other

64 John Lewis Gaddis, The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-47, (New York: Columbia
University Press, 1972), viii.

65 Gaddis, The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 18.

66 Gaddis, The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 354.

things, enhanced the ideological separation between the two countries. Roosevelt’s “peculiar mixture of naivety and idealism” led him to make some of the most criticized decisions regarding the opening of the second front, Yalta, the Polish-Question and the overall secret of the atomic bomb. So fixated on America’s postwar agenda he failed to fully reconcile the differences that separated himself from Stalin and Russia’s own plans for a postwar world. After focusing on the issue of Cold War from nearly every point of internal and external development, Gaddis concludes that “though both superpowers sought peace”, the very different way in which each partner went about securing this peace-obviously impacted by a host of agents-created instead the path to a Cold War. 68

One thing that Gaddis laments all throughout his writing is the lack of information regarding the workings of the Soviet government which undoubtedly makes any genuine investigation into the Origins of the Cold War difficult. However, with the collapse of the Cold War, a great number of Soviet materials were unveiled. These declassified documents would prove invaluable to a current understanding of the Cold War. Ralph Levering is a recently retired professor of U.S. diplomatic history from Davidson College. In his book published in 2002 entitled Debating the Origins of the Cold War: American and Russian Perspectives, he becomes one of the first American historians to attempt a provide a clear and impartial amalgam of both American and Russian documents in evaluating the origins of the Cold War. Not surprisingly, he co-authors this book with C. Earl Edmonson and two Russian historians Vladimir Pechatnov and Verena Botzenhart-Viehe. The book is neatly divided into two sections, as can be inferred from the title: American Perspective and Russian Perspective. As is quite typical of the American Perspective, Levering expounds the source of un-easy Soviet-American relations with the year

68 Gaddis, The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 361.
1917. World War I was at its end, and the Wilsonian image of a free and democratic peace became challenged by Bolshevik revolutionaries who wished to spread communism and so, overthrow free capitalist nations around the world. Evidently, this triggered a rise in American animosity felt towards Russia and “domestic communists and their sympathizers” which would remain and define future perceptions of Russian actions, most especially throughout the years of World War II. In a way that is very fitting to Levering’s method of analysis, he goes on to examine through the use of Gallup polls etc. the ups and downs of American sentiment towards Russian actions. It is a very volatile ride. Prior to 1942, one could say that American attitude toward Russia was extremely negative. The “Soviet attack on poor little Finland” and the signing of the nonaggression pact outraged many Americans who now categorized Russia as being no better than one of Hitler’s allies. “The pact removed all doubt that is there is any real difference between Communism and Fascism.” However, this changed when between 1942-1944 as Russia was deeply embroiled in the fight against Germany, American opinion polls showed an “overall trend of positive responses” perhaps since by the fighting Germany, Russia proved its allegiance to the principles of the Grand Alliance. While Levering’s emphasis on popular culture and opinion polls allows for a unique and deeper insight into the long-held animosities “that developed so swiftly after the wartime alliance with Russia had ended” in essence, stating that any desire to retain such a pact was utterly unfounded; he does touch on previously held


70 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 12.

71 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 11.

72 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 19.
revisionist theory in his argument as well which classifies his work as Post-Revisionist. He very clearly states that “the economic interpretation’s great flaw, is that it is far too narrow and monocausal. Most Americans wanted friendly, democratic nations overseas not only for economic reasons but for political and strategic ones as well.” 73 He also backs up Lundestad’s theory of an empire by invitation by stating “Some individual Western occupiers acted improperly but in the main west Europeans welcomed the U.S. and British presence.” 74 Though he really doesn’t provide much analysis to support these statements.

As for the Russian perspective, again the central issues revolve around the need for Russian security. Clearly, this need arose from Leninist ideology but also from “having gone through the horrendous sufferings”, the Soviet people wanted nothing more than peace, security and relief. Despite such wartime hardships, Russia emerged from the “test of withstanding a titanic war and proved its ability to concentrate resources and maintain internal discipline.”75 Still, the fact that they had been invaded and came so close to defeat at the hands of a much smaller nation was cause for alarm. Their foreign policy was based upon “Barbarossa Syndrome.”76 In a manner from different from that of the American perspective, he analyzes Soviet government attitudes toward American behavior whose actions were more often seen as a breach in Russia’s quest to build-up security. The policy shift when Truman came to office, the confusion over Lend-Lend deliveries, the Potsdam Conference and the unleashing of the Atomic Bomb all confirmed Stalin’s prior misgivings about the new president. No longer was there seen

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73 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 25.
74 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 25.
75 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 86-87.
76 Ralph Levering et al., Debating the Origins of the Cold War, 89.
any attempt to foster a friendly partnership between the two nations. The Lend-Lease holdout on Russia reawakened the fear of a capitalist encirclement and the flaunting of the Atomic Bomb reversed the idea of “the United States as a remote and relatively harmless giant that would be unable to present a real threat to Soviet security” which Roosevelt had worked so hard to promote.  

He recognizes the classic claim that ideology guided Soviet foreign decisions but defends the notion of gaining security through expansion as “hardly new” and believes that in the Soviet case, “leaders could have hardly done other than they did in creating their Cold War empire.”

This sums up Post-Revisionist examples pertaining to the Cold War. As should have been evident the key points to this school are as follows:

1. Though recognizing the economic gains secured through American interference and expansion, the need to expand participants in the Open Door Policy was not the only cause of the Cold War.

2. The Cold War consists of many domestic and external factors; with particular emphasis on the impact of the past in guiding foreign policy for each.

3. The United States was a defensive empire.

4. Though ideology played a significant role in both Soviet and American policies, the primary reason that pitted Russia against America was the desire of both countries to fill the vacuum in Europe.

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77 Ralph Levering et al., *Debating the Origins of the Cold War*, 105.

78 Ralph Levering et al., *Debating the Origins of the Cold War*, 150.
Though Post-Revisionist theories do succeed in broadening one’s outlook on the origins of the Cold War through its multi-faceted approach, it is often seen as a “toothless revisionism” because in adopting multiple standpoints and refusing to cast blame, it makes it easy to lose oneself in the facts. The answer becomes simply whatever one wants it to be, and so a lack of substance permeates these reports. This fact can even be stated outright for example, in Levering’s book he encourages his readers “to undertake further study…and not only to weigh the perspectives offered in this book.” This may be a dangerous invitation, promising a wealth of rather subjective and impartial scholarship which ceases to make any new contribution to the topic. However, despite its shaky credibility, Post-Revisionist theory without a doubt, offers an unbiased evaluation of events as has never before been seen (and perhaps a bit too unbiased). The school also begins to make great use of declassified Soviet documents and other sources of information found here in the United States, such as those offered by popular magazines and opinion polls which will lead the way into a whole new category of Cold War theory.

The New Cold War Revisionist group represents the final and most recent area of Cold War scholarship. These writers focus mainly on the role of ideology when studying the causes of the Cold War, placing major emphasis also on the key players in such affairs namely Stalin and his aides, as well as Roosevelt and other officials who were in some way tied to the creation of public opinion. As we have already seen on the American side, there has been significant reasoning in arguing that public opinion certainly had a great impact on foreign policy and relations. The Traditionalist Thomas Bailey was the first in 1950 to utilize such popular resources in his evaluation of the Cold War Origins. Today, Ralph Levering follows his example. Besides his *Debating the Origins of the Cold War*, Levering’s book *American Opinion and the…*

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Russian Alliance 1939-1945 serves as another excellent example of New Cold War writings. He focuses specifically on American popular culture during World War II. This includes not only public opinion polls but a host of newspapers such as the New York Daily Worker or Washington Post, a series of periodicals including Commonweal, Ladies’ Home Journal and the Russian Review as well as radio recordings, interviews, and films popular in the day. By compiling all of these sources, Levering is able to piece together the causes for America’s rapidly changing attitude towards the Soviets so necessary for understanding the collapse of a wartime “friendship” which seemed always to be in question. His major points are not unlike anything that has been already alluded too for example, American outrage at the Russian invasion of Finland in 1939 as well as distrust at Russia’s signing of the nonaggression pact. However, he does explore other realms of opinion such as religion which he believed had an “all-pervasive influence” on Russian relations. 80 Catholics in particular were so reluctant to support Russia as an ally given the government’s atheistic agenda, that in order to help sway public opinion “Roosevelt wrote to Pope Pius XII in hopes of a promise of assistance.” 81 However, like Bailey, Levering concludes in a way that mixes Post-Revisionist sympathy with Revisionist thought that “opinion makers and indeed the people themselves shared responsibility for the failure to understand the probable realities of the postwar international order” and while recognizing Roosevelt’s many efforts in trying to cultivate a friendship with Russia by reversing public opinion both in and out of the United States, he ultimately “failed in preparing the people for a peaceful postwar world.” 82


81 Levering, American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 51.

82 Levering, American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 206-207.
Similarly, Professor Benjamin Alpers also experiments on the use of American public opinion in his understanding of the origins of the Cold War in his book *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture: Envisioning the Totalitarian Enemy 1920s-1950s*. Perhaps realizing that American and Russian relations have always been separated by the nature of their governments, Alpers attempts to survey “American understandings of dictatorship” in order to again, better explain the causes for hostility which doomed the Grand Alliance.\(^\text{83}\) Though the book is divided into several parts to discuss American attitudes towards other totalitarian leaders (Hitler and Mussolini), he does contribute greatly to the understanding of Soviet American perceptions by raising several interesting points. First, and though it may not come as something new, perceptions experienced constant change during this thirty year period of dictatorship. Though the concept of a totalitarian government had always run contrary to that of the U.S., there were periods when dictatorship did not seem to pose a danger and was so welcomed. He explains how Mussolini’s rise to power gained mostly admiration in the U.S. since it was he “who single-handedly brought order to Italy’s political life.”\(^\text{84}\) And as “Mussolini’s prestige rose in the U.S., the American image of the Soviet Union changed as well.”\(^\text{85}\) Stalin’s Five-Year Plan was also praised as a way to restore order in the midst of Russia’s “social chaos.”\(^\text{86}\) Alpers also analyses a great deal of American film that in some way was influential in conveying an image about Russia. Surprisingly, most movies “celebrated the Russian people” and their heroic fight


\(^{84}\) Alpers, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture*, 15.

\(^{85}\) Alpers, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture*, 33.

\(^{86}\) Alpers, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture*, 32.
against Nazi Germany. The Russians were presented in a manner similar to Americans perhaps in hopes of communicating a sense of oneness between the two nations but despite all this effort, there was always at least one significant divider between them—ideology. And any attempt to reconcile the principles of democracy and communism proved futile.

Quickly, it should go without saying that ideology was a central element in the development of the Cold War. Despite their differences, nearly every school of interpretation has commented on its importance. In still speaking of American ideological works, Naoko Shibusawa’s article entitled *Ideology, Culture and the Cold War* deserves some mention for its insightful disclosure of the role played by American ideology. Though most hardcore Americans prefer to think of themselves as being “immune to ideology”, and this was certainly the case after World War II, the fact remains that America does hold an ideology in the forms of freedom and democracy. Now perhaps to Americans these are not considered ideologies since from an American view of European events ideology has gone almost hand-in-hand with the danger of revolution and dictatorships, but nonetheless democracy too can be a danger especially when coupled with the notion of American Exceptionalism which for Shibusawa, forms the epitome of American ideology. He explains that throughout American history, the U.S.’s foreign (and domestic) policy actions have always been motivated by that sense of Manifest Destiny; the belief that America “spread the blessings of its liberty…i.e. U.S. liberal economic systems/democratic institutions” to people all over the world. And agreeing with William A. Williams, this is of course, nowhere more apparent than in American postwar actions. Where

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87 Alpers, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture*, 233.


89 Shibusawa, “Ideology, Culture, and the Cold War”, 40.
contrary to its opposition in forming spheres of influence, the U.S. interfered relentlessly in the affairs of Western Europe as it tried to rebuild itself, thereby consolidating an American presence. America never understood that “what’s best for America has not always been best for most people in America and in the world.” This idealistic vision of American supremacy, which obviously guided Roosevelt (and other American leaders), was just as harmful as they supposed Communism to be in the minds of their Soviet partners.

Finally, perhaps the most impressive contribution to the study of Cold War origins can also be found within the New Cold War Revisionist school. Appearing around the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, these historians were able to benefit much from an unprecedented volume of declassified Soviet archival materials. Vojtech Mastny is a professor of political science and international relations and considered one of the leading American authorities on Soviet affairs. In his book, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years*, Mastny attempts to re-evaluate the workings of Soviet foreign policy as it was dictated by Stalin in the years 1947-1953, with the use of such new and precious Russian documents. As can be inferred by the title, Soviet insecurity was a major factor in the carrying out of foreign policy. He explains that since the Soviet state was “created by a minority coup rather than by exertion of popular will, it was always intrinsically insecure.” Stalin’s deep ideological convictions toward Leninist thought increased this sense of insecurity. It becomes clear that he “aimed at ensuring his country’s security at the expense of all others.” And surely, in this “quest for security

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90 Shibusawa, “Ideology, Culture and the Cold War”, 44.


92 Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity*, 27.
Stalin…was inclined to take greater risks” but still there can be no doubt that Soviet leaders “never wanted to overstep the limits.”  

The so-called Soviet threat was nearly an empty one since Stalin’s distorted view of the world, “enhanced by ideological preconceptions”, also made him “prone to miscalculations” whether in estimating Soviet strength or the weaknesses of their enemies.  

Though it has been promulgated by many, Mastny confirms that Stalin “was given to illusions and wishful thinking” and so, was not all that sound in this policies.  

However, despite the apparent frailty in Russia’s condition, the fear of a Soviet threat in some form persisted and deeply impacted U.S. policymakers. For Mastny, this rather unfounded fear was a result of the “unbridgeable chasm between Stalinist and Western values” which eradicated even the “idea of genuine accommodation” with one another, especially in the case of Russia. Over-all, it was this fear that influenced the actions of both the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the events precipitating the Cold War.  

Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev also offers insight into the minds of Soviet policymakers. Russian historians Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov claim to be “the first generation schooled under the Soviet system but with some exposure to the West” to write a re-examination of Soviet foreign policy, as prompted by the “new revelations” being disclosed from Soviet and Eastern European archives. They first scrutinize the personality of Stalin, concluding without a doubt that he was deeply moved by Communist

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96 Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity*, 194.

ideology. However, “Stalinism” was a bit different in its aims; focusing more on “building a strong Soviet Union” than spearheading a world revolution of Communism. 98 “Stalin also regarded himself as the heir to the traditional Russian empire” and so, for both these reasons a territorial sphere of influence was majorly important. 99 Again, “Stalin’s deep suspicion of the motives of the Western Allies” played a part in forming a new era in East-West relations. 100 These suspicions only heightened after the death of FDR, whom Stalin had always “accepted as his partner”. 101 Turning to Khrushchev, his governing style was very different from Stalin. He too, was a staunch Communist and bent on hastening a worldwide revolution. Contrary to Stalin’s methods of “careful reflection and calm calculation”, Khrushchev was described as both “fierce and smart, but impulsive and prone to spontaneous reactions, unpredictable for outsiders.” 102 Much of Khrushchev’s policy motives stemmed from his firm belief that the “USSR had been wronged and mistreated by the United States after World War II.” He therefore spent his rule trying to affirm the “Soviets’ rightful place in the world.” 103

As is evident, the historiography of the Origins of the Cold War is as shifting as East-West relations themselves. The position of the New Cold War Revisionists seems indeed very promising. Certainly, with so much new information being brought out of the archives, especially in Russia, there is a great need for a re-evaluation of events precipitating the Cold

98 Zubok, Vladislav., and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 12-13.
99 Zubok, Vladislav., and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 16.
100 Zubok, Vladislav., and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 37.
101 Zubok, Vladislav., and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 39.
102 Zubok, Vladislav., and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 177.
103 Zubok, Vladislav., and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, 182.
War. Perhaps surprisingly, what Soviet authors had to say since much of their work seems to confirm American preconceptions of the Soviet Union. But this is not to say they cast blame on Russia for the start of the Cold War; these authors acknowledge that there were “other culprits in the conflict”, as we have seen, that can not be disregarded. Its emphasis on ideology, as important and undeniable a factor as it may be, may tend to limit its benefits.\textsuperscript{104} Nonetheless, it is a very important area to take into consideration since it is symbolic of the new direction of Cold War studies. As one goes on to perform his/her own research on this topic, it is important to always look at your sources such as those discussed not only to get an idea of where there can be room for breakthrough but also to help find more enlightening sources. Hopefully the contributions made by the New Cold War Revisionists underlines the importance of primary sources in developing new kinds of research. Though probably most students are limited to the American mainland, there are a few Russian databases that can be accessed through the internet such as that of the Russian Archives Online. In the United States, perhaps a trip to the U.S. National Archives in Washington D.C. or even to the Library of Congress can help shed light on Soviet-American affairs though probably offering a more Western perspective. Remember not to limit oneself to documents and papers but also to explore film, propaganda posters, and photos which can be found in each of these institutions already mentioned. Lastly, for those interested in public opinion and popular culture, it may be worth checking out the online archives of Public Opinion Quarterly or Ladies’ Home Journal, however, in order to fully access their collections one may need the help of a research librarian.

\textsuperscript{104} Zubok, Vladislav., and Constantine Pleshakov, \textit{Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War}, 276.
Again, hopefully this historiography has proven helpful in understanding the various interpretations of the Cold War origins. With our mind now elucidated in such knowledge, may we go on to explore and discover a more perfect picture of the past.
The ‘Hitler Myth’: Image and Reality in the Third Reich

By Caitlin Moser

Sir Ian Kershaw is a distinguished 20th-century German historian most celebrated for his works on Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. Kershaw received his BA from the University of Liverpool and his D.Phil from Merton College, Oxford. Originally having studied medieval history, Kershaw transitioned to modern German social history in the 1970s. In 1975, Kershaw began working with German historian Martin Broszat on his “Bavaria Project”, specifically examining how ordinary people viewed Hitler, before and during the Third Reich. This research resulted in Kershaw’s first book, Der Hitler-Mythos, Volksmeinung und Propaganda im Dritten Reich, which was originally published in German in 1980. Kershaw translated the book into English and republished it in 1987 for several reasons. The translated 1987 edition (The ‘Hitler Myth’: Image and Reality in the Third Reich) includes a new Introduction and Conclusion as well as a brand new Chapter titled, ‘Hitler’s Popular Image and the “Jewish Question”’. The book is organized into three parts: the making of the Hitler myth (1920-1940), the dissolving of it during World War Two (1940-1945), and the myth in relation to genocide.

The first two chapters focus on tracing the development of the ‘Führer myth’ from its early stages to around 1936. Kershaw notes that the year 1936 can be considered as the start of Hitler overestimating his powers, blinded by the delusions of his own fallibilities. The political

1 He was bestowed Knighthood for his Services to History in 2002.
2 Daniel Snowman, “Ian Kershaw,” History Today, vol. 51, issue 7, July 2001. 18. This transition was inspired by his travels to Bavaria in 1972. Kershaw met an old man, presumably a former Nazi, who told him, “You English were so foolish. If only you had sided with us. Together we could have defeated Bolshevism and ruled the earth!” He ended with, “The Jew is a louse!”
atmosphere in Germany post-World War I set the stage for Hitler’s rise in power.\(^3\) Finished with Weimar politics, there was a common belief throughout Germany of a desperate need for heroic leadership. The German people wanted a leader who would be “a figure of outstanding skill and political strength, decisive and bold in resolution, to whom his ‘following’ could look in admiration and devotion”.\(^4\) This was in the 1920s. However, fifteen years later, those very attributes were identical to those of the Hitler image. With an indifference to the fanatics forming in Bavaria as well as other parts of Germany, there are claims that Hitler appeared to be “preparing the way in order to give the dictator, when he should come, a people ready for him”.\(^5\) Whether it was all a ploy or truly genuine, these years of flattery and worship contributed to his transition to the Führer where Kershaw states, “The ‘Führer myth’ was a creation of his following before Hitler himself adjusted to the role”.\(^6\)

Chapter Two examines how Hitler became the “Symbol of the Nation” through the Nazi Party’s dedicated propaganda efforts. Hitler’s Propaganda Minister, Josef Goebbels, beautifully fabricated an image of Hitler presenting him as ‘the human Hitler’, a sad man of simplicity and loneliness who had sacrificed all personal happiness and private life for his people.\(^7\) Really what Goebbels’s merely did was take Hitler’s worst personality traits and transform them into admirable qualities. However, despite the best propaganda efforts, support and morale [of

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\(^3\) Dr. Ryan Johnson, “Lecture notes,” (Class lecture, Montgomery County Community College, Pottstown, PA, January, 2010). The Dolchstoßlegende, “stab-in-the-back”, was a popular conspiracy theory of betrayal that circulated after news of Germany’s defeat in World War I. The German population believed Germany did not lose the war, but rather that she was stabbed in the back. Representing the Weimar Republic were the conspirators deemed the “November Criminals” who signed the armistice with the Allies ending the war. As a result, the Treaty of Versailles was drawn up, further adding salt to Germany’s wounds and fueling this developing conspiracy theory which led to the extreme distrust and fragmentation of the Weimar Republic.


\(^5\) Ibid., 24.

\(^6\) Ibid., 25.

\(^7\) Ibid., 72.
Hitler] were decreasing throughout Germany between 1935 and 1936 due to the worsening of Germany’s economic crisis. As a cunning distraction, Hitler carried out the march into the Rhineland on March 7th. This was portrayed to the public as Hitler defying the Versailles treaty and only made Goebbels’s propaganda efforts easier. Kershaw makes the remarkable claim that “Hitler himself was a convert to the ‘Führer myth’, himself a ‘victim’ of Nazi propaganda. [...] What seems certain is that the day on which Hitler started to believe in his own ‘myth’ marked in a sense the beginning of the end of the Third Reich”.

Concentrating on thus far a new feature of the ‘Hitler myth’, Chapter Three examines the ‘Hitler believers’ and their contribution to manufacturing the myth, ‘from below’. Kershaw explores popular reactions to the most dramatic events in Germany in 1934: the massacre, on Hitler’s orders, of the SA leadership on 30 June 1934 following the so-called ‘Röhm Putsch’. This event that should have horrified the German people and ruined Hitler’s popularity, in fact, did the complete opposite. Instead, Hitler was praised, deified, and increased the overall confidence because he radically took action against Röhm and the SA. Analyzing the public’s opinion on the Putsch, the Sopade concluded three general points: first, the public did not understand the political significance of the event; two, majority of the population praised Hitler for his ruthlessness, and very few were shocked, and third, even the working class had fallen victim to the veneration of Hitler.

Delving into the religious aspect, Chapter Four illustrates the ideological struggle Hitler experienced with the major Christian denominations, primarily Protestant and Catholic, who

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8 Ibid., 82.
9 Ibid., 84. Often referred to as “the Night of the Long Knives”, the Röhm Putsch occurred in Germany from June 30 to July 2, 1934, when the Nazi party executed members of the Sturmabteilung (SA), extrajudicial killing style. In addition to continuing disagreements between Hitler and Röhm, Hitler saw the SA’s independence growing and sought to stop it. He feared their ability to remove him from power.
10 Ibid., 86.
were very influential to the population. Regarding this ‘Church struggle’, Kershaw concludes, “though stirring up a high level of animosity towards the Party and in a wider sense the Nazi regime, [it] had a far less negative impact on Hitler’s popularity than might be imagined”.

Hitler was not religious at all, but the façade he efficaciously put on helped maintain his religious image to the Church members of both major denominations. Kershaw explains this is why they were frequently able to exclude Hitler from their condemnation of the atheistic Nazi ideology and the anti-Christian party radicals. Up until Chapter Five, Kershaw examined the stark difference between the image of Hitler and that of the Party. Kershaw points out how the Party was perceived as very unpopular because they were involved the most in everyday matters and conflicts whereas the public separated Hitler and viewed him as dealing with the more important issues. Viewed this way, Hitler represented the sunny side of the regime.

It is well known that Hitler’s true intentions and actions to be taken were not matched by the words he spoke to the German people. This is easily seen as he slowly disregarded the Versailles treaty, breaking it down in front of an anxious but supportive audience, not yet ready for a Second World War. His ability to effectively unite Germany and Austria in the Anschluß without bloodshed would be the last effortless foreign policy success he would achieve as tensions grew. The Sudetenland crisis in 1938 was the first time Hitler’s popularity was threatened. Hitler recovered popularity in time for the war in 1939. Despite their unmistakable dread of another conflagration, […], they followed their Führer into a new war without enthusiasm, but also without protest or opposition. And far from going into decline, Hitler’s

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11 Ibid., 106.
12 Ibid., 109.
13 Ibid., 122.
14 Ibid., 133.
popularity was by the end of the year, four months into the war, as solidly based as ever.\textsuperscript{15}

Part Two spans the five years from 1940 to 1945 when the crumbling of the ‘Hitler myth’ began. Chapter Six begins with Hitler’s apogee of popularity from 1940 to 1941 when Germany had the most success in the war as Kershaw states, ‘The Führer’ was like a drug for the people, needed for reassurance whenever doubts, worries, and uncertainties began to mount.\textsuperscript{16} Between the disastrous Russian winter campaign when Hitler’s popularity began to dissipate and Germany declaring war on the United States, the morale of the German people was low. It seemed as if there would never be an end to the war which stirred up memories from World War I. As morale drastically plummeted, negative comments regarding Hitler, which had always been dangerous, were now considered treasonous and subject to punishment. However, what is most astonishing about all of this is that devotion to the ‘Hitler myth’ did not collapse sooner which Kershaw seeks to examine why within Chapter Seven.

Commonly accepted among historians is that Stalingrad, not only psychologically but militarily too, was the turning-point in the war. Kershaw includes it as a contributing factor to the further decline of the ‘Führer myth’ and notes this was the first time Hitler was directly implicated in the catastrophe.\textsuperscript{17} Concluding Part Two is Chapter Eight which follows the actual collapse of the myth. As the bombing raids against Germany worsened, so did the once fanatical support for Hitler, especially among families with young children. A woman with two young children taking refuge in the air-raid shelter said, “The Führer has it easy. He doesn’t have to look after a family. If the worst comes to the worst in the war, he’ll leave us all in the mess and

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 143-7. At the end of the chapter, Kershaw concludes that the longer the war lasted, and more the Germans sacrificed, the more the ‘Führer myth’ declined.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 158.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 193-201. Kershaw notes that Hitler’s earlier successes began to be seen in a new light, and he was now increasingly blamed for policies which had led to the war.
put a bullet through his head!”\textsuperscript{18} What the German people once idolized about Hitler, his sacrifice of “normal life”, was now used against him.

Part Three’s Chapter Nine is perhaps the most fascinating Chapter within the entire text, however 23 pages is inadequate for the material in discussion. With much difficulty, Kershaw explores the subject of anti-Semitism in relation to Hitler’s popular image. Hitler’s speeches from 1919 to 1924 maintain a ubiquitous anti-Semitic theme which attracted many of the early Nazi converts to the Party, though around 1922 he changed the theme to one of extreme anti-Marxism. Hitler soon changed the direction of his speeches during his run for Reich President and rarely mentioned the ‘Jewish Question’.\textsuperscript{19} It would not be until the Nuremberg Party Rally in 1935 that Hitler addressed the ‘Jewish Question’ publically where he put three anti-Jewish laws in effect. Even after 1935, he would not readdress the ‘Jewish Question’ again in major speeches until 1937. Hitler maintained his public image by separating himself from the anti-Jewish Nazi mobs and instead, staying on the legal side of matters. Kershaw says the year 1941 onwards, especially 1942, is when the ‘Final Solution’ was in full swing; during this time, Hitler began to associate the war with the destruction of the Jews.\textsuperscript{20} Kershaw makes the fascinating conclusion that “anti-Semitism, despite its pivotal place in Hitler’s ‘world view’, was of only secondary importance in cementing the bonds between Fuhrer and people which provided the Third Reich with its popular legitimation […]”.\textsuperscript{21}

Rightfully considered the “father” of Hitler biographies, Kershaw focuses more on the process of building propaganda and the German people’s perception of him. Kershaw’s main

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 205. \\
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 234. Between 1933 and 1934, the ‘Jewish Question’ was not touched upon in a single major public address. Kershaw states it appears hard to argue at this time that Hitler was gaining his widest electoral support that the ‘Jewish Question’ was the decisive element in his growing appeal. \\
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 243. \\
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 250.
sources are internal confidential reports on opinion and morale which were created regularly by German government officials, police and justice administrations, Nazi Party agencies, and the security service (SD). Recognizing how significant the information revealed by these sources is, the notion of legitimacy must still be brought into question as many opponents to Hitler were cautious as to not reflect their true sentiments during these polls. Kershaw addresses this problem and prompts the reader to remember this throughout the course of the book. Additionally, he addresses the geographical location of study primarily being in Bavaria but in the 1987 edition he includes research from other parts of the Reich. One of Kershaw’s most commonly referenced sources throughout The ‘Hitler Myth’ is another one of his works, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich*, which was published in 1983. The frequent references to *Popular Opinion* aid the reader in grasping a broader sense of Kershaw’s material presented and ought to be read as companion texts. Another important source referenced is the *Sopade* Reports which present readers with a bias opposite of the internal reports previously mentioned and reflect the anti-Nazi sentiment felt by Germans. While it almost seems an injustice to devote only one Chapter to that of genocide and the ‘Jewish Question’ and even more unfair that this Chapter was only added to the revised version of this book, Kershaw defends this action in the Preface by stating that it was an “area which I had deliberately, but mistakenly (I later felt), omitted from the German text”. Kershaw includes a glossary and list of abbreviations in the back of the book for readers not familiar with the German language. Also, included is an extensive Works Cited encompassing eleven pages, as well as a list of the archival

22 Ibid., 6.
23 Ibid., 6-8. Also known as SoPaDe; the exiled organization of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Germany. It operated in Prague, then Paris, and ended in London.
24 Ibid., vii. One seeking additional information beyond Chapter Nine can do so with Kershaw’s 2008 book, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*. 
sources and newspapers he consulted for the research.

*The ‘Hitler Myth’: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* is a seminal work, straying away from the conventional approach to the study of Adolf Hitler. Kershaw takes the ‘structuralist’ approach which means the structure of the Nazi state is far more important to understand than the personality of Adolf Hitler in explaining how Nazi Germany developed. Rejecting the Great Man theory of history, Kershaw fervently argues and criticizes anyone who attempts to explain the Third Reich by means of Hitler only.25 The importance of Hitler is not the person or dictator himself, but how the German people perceived him, which has been comprehensively and efficiently expressed throughout this work.

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Bibliography


How the Vietnam War Rolled Back American Civil Liberties
By Stephen Pierce

In post 9/11 America a major policy focus that the citizens, as well as politicians, have set their eyes on is illegal surveillance or government overreach. This is a reaction to the passing of the highly controversial Patriot Act in 2001 which gave President George W. Bush the authority to confiscate the property of any foreign person who is believed to have aided in a war or attack on the United States. Expansion of the government’s ability to conduct wiretaps, and perform searches without notification. Many Americans saw this as erosions of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments. The act also expanded the roles of the intelligence agencies such as the NSA, CIA, and FBI. Civil libertarians say that post 9/11 has seen the most crushing time for American civil liberties in American history. But after looking over America during the Vietnam era, it seems clear that overreach was at its highest during this period. In the book, Security V. Liberties author Daniel Farber says that the aftermath of the Vietnam Era, “seems to have permanently changed the degree of deference that courts, the press and the public are willing to give unilateral presidential action.”

The restriction of Civil liberties starts in the 1950’s with the Second Red Scare and the rise of Joseph McCarthy. The House of Un-American Activities Committee created the McCarren Internal Security Act, Communist Control Act of 1954, The Smith Act, or the McCarren-Walter Act. All of these acts made it easier for the J. Edgar Hoover to get away with
illegal actions against left leaning organizations. Out of this came COINTELPRO in the 50’s. This was a span of different covert operations were conducted by the FBI who spied on New Left that was in operation in four administrations from 1956 to 1971. COINTELLPRO stood for (COunter INTELligence PROgram). These illegal operations were being exposed at the same time as the Watergate Scandal and the Pentagon Papers but got no news recognition and had way more problems. The exposers of the COINTELLPRO program started with Haverford College physics professor William C. Davidson who was a part of the Committee for Non-Violent Action, The Harrisburg Seven and was a board member of the Philadelphia ACLU chapter. Davidson and eight other anti-war protestors decided to break into an FBI office in Media, PA to expose the FBI’s unconstitutional actions. These peaceful demonstrators were parts of draft board flyer destruction and were influenced by the Catonsville Nine. On March 8th, 1971 this anti-war group that called themselves The Citizens’ Commission to Investigate the FBI were successful at destroying draft board flies in Philadelphia. The night they broke in there was only two on duty guards at the FBI office. They picked March 8th, 1971 because that was the night that Muhammed Ali was fighting Joe Frazier in the “Fight of the Century” so the burglars knew that was their chance. They broke in quickly and got thousands of FBI documents. They were never caught, and some of them even participated in the Camden 28. After the burglary around 150, FBI agents raided the Powelton Village area trying to find the culprits of the break in. J. Edgar Hoover was furious about the break in. The documents were leaked to Washington Post Journalist Betty Medsger, who then gave the information to Carl Stern of NBC. Stern filed the documents under the Freedom of Information Act. The FBI said that such disclosure would be harmful to the bureau's operations and national security. Stern sued, and the judge found ruled in
favor of Stern, and the FBI gave them four documents that led to references to other documents that indicated that there was not just one COINTELPRO operation but 7. They released 50,000 documents later on. Ex-Attorney General Ramsey Clark called the program “deportable” those who took part in it should have been indicted. This would lead to the Church Committee; the Church Committee led to the first ever set of guidelines limiting the FBI’s powers. In the committee, they found evidence that the FBI did illegal surveillance on Martin Luther King Jr. Telling kill to himself 34 days before he would be awarded the noble peace prize. They also found evidence that the FBI was working with the Chicago police department to assassinate Fred Hampton leader of the Rainbow Coalition. Agents sent letters to college professors who did not have a firm position against the New Left anonymously, threatening them. The entire report stated that the FBI were doing nothing with crime but everything to do with creating political fear. There was another example of a married couple in an anti-war group on a college campus; an FBI agent started a rumor that the wife was sleeping with another man and they divorced, and the agent was proud of it. The FBI paid off a telephone operator at Swarthmore College to keep tabs on who were progressive teachers and radical groups and students. All of this evidence showed that the FBI were breaking the first and four amendments.

One of the most famous restrictions of civil liberties during the Vietnam Era was of Bobby Seale who was a Black Panther Party co-founder. He was a part of a group called the Chicago Eight; these were individuals accused of inciting riots during the Democratic National Convention of 1968. When the "Chicago 8" trial began, Bobby Seale claimed he had no lawyer to defend him since his usual lawyer Charles Garry was recovering from surgery. Seale
demanded to defend himself until Garry was at the trial and rejected William Kunstler, the appointed lawyer. Judge Julius Hoffman ignored this request and refused to allow Seale to make an opening statement, cross-examine witnesses, or speak to the jury in any way. Since the judge had denied Seale, the right to counsel, Seale begins to interrupt the proceedings. When he attempted to speak and to question witnesses, Judge Hoffman ordered him to remain quiet. Seale starts having a verbal confrontation with the Judge. On one occasion Seale called Judge Hoffman, "a bigot, a racist, and a fascist." Judge Hoffman ordered Bobby Seale chained to a chair with a gag in his mouth. His jaw was tied shut by a strip of cloth wrapped from the bottom of his chin to the top of his head. Defense attorney Kunstler declared, "This is no longer a court of order, Your Honor, this is a medieval torture chamber." Later on, the judge allowed Bobby Seale into court without his chains saying he will put them back on if he keeps interrupting. Seale continued to disrupt the case. Judge Hoffman then declared a mistrial in Bobby Seale's case. Judge Hoffman then found the Black Panther leader guilty of 16 acts of contempt of court sentencing him to four years in prison. The case did not end there. On May 11, 1972, the Court of Appeals sent the contempt convictions to a new judge for a trial. The appeals court also ruled that Judge Hoffman abused his power by rejecting Bobby Seale's claim that he lacked legal representation. Six months later, the same appeals court reversed the convictions of most of the accused. In Seale's case, the government dropped both the inciting to riot charges because he was denied his fifth and sixth amendment privileges. Finally, in 1973 Seale’s appointed defense attorney William Kunstler were found guilty of contempt. But the judge decided that prison sentences were unnecessary.
Another example of Civil Liberties being trampled upon during the war was Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers. Daniel Ellsberg worked for the RAND Corporation as a strategic analyst primarily focusing on nuclear strategy in 1959. As the war was starting up he was hired by the Pentagon in August of 1964 working under Secretary of State Robert McNamara he then went to South Vietnam for two years, working for the State Department under General Edward Lansdale. Ellsberg was ordered by McNamara to find atrocities made by Viet Cong, graphic details to pursued LBJ to do a systematic bombing campaign in Vietnam. He felt horrible about this because it started one of the heaviest bombing campaigns in human history. Daniel Ellsberg was one of the main contributors to changing McNamara’s opinion about the bombing campaign. On his return from South Vietnam, Ellsberg resumed working at RAND. In 1967, he was a part of a top-secret study of classified documents on the conduct of the Vietnam War that had been commissioned by Defense Secretary McNamara. These documents, completed in 1968, later became known collectively as the Pentagon Papers. He would marry his second wife Patricia Marx Ellsberg in 1970 who was a nationally syndicated reporter for public radio. She started to bring Daniel Ellsberg to anti-war rallies. Ellsberg said his life changed forever when he saw an activist named Randy Kehler refused to be a part of the draft in August of 1969 at the meeting of the War Resisters International, held at Haverford College. Kehler believed that conscientious objectors were just helping the U.S government, so he went to prison. Ellsberg and his RAND co-worker Anthony Russo photocopied the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times. Federal Courts placed an injunction against the times; this hadn’t happened to a media company in the United States since the Civil War. At the same time, Ellsberg was trying to get Senators William Fulbright and George McGovern who were staunch opponents of the
war to release these papers on the Senate floor, senators could not be prosecuted for anything he said on the record before the Senate. They never did anything, Republican Representative Pete McCloskey who ran against Richard Nixon in 1972 because he opposed the Vietnam War wanted to speak out about the importance of the papers but didn’t know how to. As the Supreme Court was looking over the New York Times injunction case, Ellsberg leaked the rest of the papers the Washington Post and 17 over newspapers before the F.B.I could catch him. Ellsberg would publish 47 volumes which were 7000 pages of the Pentagon Papers to the media. Alaskan Junior Senator Mike Gravel got the Pentagon Papers from Washington Post editor Ben Bagdikian to be used in a filibuster against the Vietnam War; Gravel had to stop at the end from crying getting emotional from the information in the Pentagon Papers. The day after the filibuster the Supreme Court ruled that the New York Times had the first amendment right to publish the Pentagon papers. Justice Hugo Black stated that “the press must be left free to publish whatever the source without censorship, injunction or prior restraint. The press was meant to serve the governed, not the governors.” Justice Thurgood Marshall stated that that the term "national security" was too broad to legitimize prior restraint. Making this a landmark supreme court case for the first amendment. Afterward, Ellsberg turned himself into authorities, both he and Anthony Russo were charged under the Espionage Act of 1917, but the case was dismissed after evidence of illegal wiretapping and evidence gathering by the F.B.I. To prevent future leaks Nixon aids Egil Krough, and David Young created the “White House Plumbers” to try to smear Ellsberg in the public eye by getting his mental health records. The plumbers would be known to be headed by G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt during the Watergate breakings. So many people give Ellsberg create in taking down Richard Nixon because he made
his administration create the Plumbers, hence is why Henry Kissinger called Ellsberg “the most dangerous man in America.”

Even before the Pentagon Papers were released, the Nixon administration was doing illegal wiretaps on certain private individuals. Like in 1969 after the New York Times exposed the secret bombings of Cambodia, White House aide Jack Caulfield arranges for a wiretap on a private citizen, syndicated columnist Joseph Kraft. He also gets the FBI to wiretap some of his National Security advisors in early 1970. Nixon aide Tom Charles Huston comes up with the “Hudson Plan”, giving the CIA, FBI, NSA, and military intelligence agencies to escalate their electronic surveillance against “domestic security threats”. Giving the agencies the power to read of private mail, lift restrictions against surreptitious entries or break-ins to gather information, plant informants on college campuses. Nixon approves the plan, but rejects one element that he personally authorizes any break-ins. CREEP (The committee to re-elect the President) is established in 1971. The Plumbers start to bug Democrats and in 1972 E. Howard Hunt and Virgilio Gonzales attempt to break into the Democratic headquarters but are unsuccessful. This leads to the entire Watergate scandal, Nixon’s resignation, The Watergate committee, and new anti-corruptions bills most notably the creation of the FEC in 1974 overseeing campaign finance.

Some other examples of Civil liberties being trampled on during the Vietnam Era included Operation CHAOS that took place from 1967-1974. This operation was conducted by the CIA within the United States which is illegal to start with because the CIA is not a law enforcement agency. It has no authority to arrest anyone or to enforce any laws, just gather information. It is also illegal for the CIA to investigate any US citizen or company inside the US,
unless an investigation is part of a foreign intelligence. Like a U.S citizen planning an attack in a foreign country. CHAOS was meant to find foreign influence in the protest movements. This was the CIA’s COINTELPRO and was disbanded after two former CIA agents were caught in the Watergate break-ins. Project MK Ultra was also planned experiments the CIA conducted on humans that the Supreme Court ruled were cruel and unusual against the eighth amendment.

During the Vietnam War, we see different examples on how presidents, intelligence agencies, and courts tried to undermine the Bill of Rights in order to keep dissent down during the Vietnam War. After a bunch of Supreme Court decisions, committee reports, and public outcry I think that the Vietnam Era actually strengthened American democracy along with its institutions. In the 21st century in the post 9/11 Era we see a lot of parallels like Edward Snowden to Daniel Ellsberg and the anti-war movement, but in my opinion, it seems that the Vietnam Era was more successful in fighting bringing back civil liberties because there was less corruption when it came to money interests in our government. We also have the internet which is a hub for potential terrorists, so it is hard to figure out how we can protect the civil liberties as well as getting intelligence to hunt down people who will do us harm.
Work Cited


