

Chapter 15



FASCIST FRAUD

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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“When the war drums rolled a great golden veil came down upon the American scene through which its actors would be viewed. Behind it they postured—statesmen and generals and admirals—in the role of heroes. And lifted above them all, posing in the full glory of the stage lights, decorated by propaganda with the virtues of a national god, was the figure of the Leader.” So wrote journalist John T. Flynn about Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1948—though his words sound more appropriate for Adolf Hitler or Benito Mussolini. That was the point. To Flynn and many other Americans in the 1930s and 1940s, Roosevelt was the American version of a European-style dictator. He used crises to build his political career on the blood, toil, and hardships of the American people and was nothing more than a demagogue, an opportunist. But this is not the image most Americans have of the thirty-second president.

Leftist historians love him, and for every negative account of his career, personality, programs, and foreign policy, there are shelves of books in his defense. Roosevelt is inevitably in the top three of any “historical ranking” of the presidents, is viewed as the man who “saved America from the Great Depression” and “liberated Europe” from totalitarian fascism, and is seen

Did you know?

- ★ FDR refused to help Herbert Hoover ameliorate the Great Depression, and then his own New Deal made it worse
- ★ Roosevelt admired Mussolini
- ★ Before Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt's Secretary of War wrote about maneuvering the Japanese into “firing the first shot”
- ★ By the end of World War II a quarter of Americans depended on government for some income

as a hero for the common American. He deserves none of this. Roosevelt should not even sniff the top half of presidential rankings. The New Deal made the Great Depression worse, and Roosevelt's foreign policy went from devious manipulations to get America into World War II to embroiling the United States in a decades-long Cold War with the Soviet Union. He was a notorious philanderer and duplicitous showman. There needs to be a serious historical correction about Franklin Roosevelt.



Books You're Not Supposed to Read

The Roosevelt Myth by John T. Flynn (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1948).

The Politically Incorrect Guide™ to the Great Depression and the New Deal by Robert Murphy (Washington DC: Regnery, 2009).

The People's Pottage by Gareth Garrett (Caldwell, OH: The Caxton Printers, 1953).

The American Aristocrat

Roosevelt was born in 1882 in New York. His family was one of the oldest and most prominent in American history, having been in New York since the days of early Dutch settlement. One ancestor fought in the American War for Independence, and the family had made millions in real estate and trade. As a result, young Roosevelt led a charmed life, one that most Americans cannot relate to. He traveled Europe and attended the finest schools. His undeserved image as a hero of the common man hardly jibes with his aristocratic lineage. We

are perpetually reminded of the privileged background of almost every other wealthy American—particularly the Founding Fathers—but Roosevelt gets a pass.

Roosevelt was never considered to be much of a thinker, but he was a superb politician, and he expertly used his family name and connections to advance his political career. He served as state senator, assistant secretary of the navy, and governor of New York. At each stop, Roosevelt built his political empire and waited for an opportunity to shine on the

grand American political stage. He was a showman who loved the spotlight and craved attention. Women flocked to him. Roosevelt married his fifth cousin Eleanor Roosevelt in 1905 and had six children, but that did not stop him from seeing other women. In fact, his long-term mistress Lucy Mercer, not his wife, was with him the day he died in Georgia in 1945. That was the most conspicuous affair, but there were others. Roosevelt was no model of marital fidelity.

Roosevelt was nominated for president in 1932 during one of the worst economic crises in American history. He had the support of Joe Kennedy and several other prominent Democrats. His election was assured, but Roosevelt had no interest in saving the American economy—at least not before becoming president. The outgoing president, Herbert Hoover, contacted Roosevelt weeks before his inauguration in 1933, begging him to work with the Hoover administration to solve the banking crisis. Roosevelt stuffed the private note in his pocket and showed it to his political advisers only as a way of showing up Hoover. What Roosevelt wanted was to be seen as the savior of the American people, the knight in white armor riding in to Washington, D.C., in March 1933. Meanwhile, Hoover could go down in flames, and the American economy with him. Roosevelt didn't care, as long as he could be the one to provide the solutions—solutions he unfortunately stole from... Herbert Hoover. As Barack Obama's henchman Rahm Emanuel said in 2008, "Never let a good crisis go to waste." Decades earlier, Franklin Roosevelt was already acting on that principle.

The American Dictator

In his Inaugural Address, Roosevelt promised to circumvent Congress if they failed to act in accord with his wishes. "I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will confront me," he thundered. He bullied Congress to change the Constitution without the benefit of amendments, arguing that

the “emergency” of the Great Depression made emergency measures necessary. So Congress usurped power from the states, and Roosevelt in his turn from Congress. The end result was a centralization of American political and economic life unprecedented in American history. If the federal republic was not dead before 1933, it certainly died a swift death in the “First Hundred Days” of Roosevelt’s administration. He was nothing short of an American dictator.

Roosevelt’s blatantly unconstitutional actions during the “First New Deal” are legendary. He signed into law a “bank holiday” whereby all banks in the United States were shut down and then re-opened backed by the full faith and credit of the United States. No one could find the authority for a

“bank holiday” in the Constitution, but Roosevelt declared one anyway, of course with the blessing of his tame Congress. That made it acceptable. His New Deal programs, notably the National Industry Recovery Act (NIRA) and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), co-opted the American economy through central economic planning, price fixing, wage controls, and slash-and-burn agricultural policies. Americans were forced to pay more for industrial and agricultural goods at a time when over twenty million people were unemployed. Even President Jimmy

Carter, no conservative, recalled in his book *An Hour Before Daylight* that the AAA did serious damage to farmers across the South when they had to slaughter pigs and plow under crops to keep prices artificially high; he lived through the New Deal as a boy in rural Georgia.

Roosevelt continued the irresponsible policies of the 1920s by signing mountains of legislation that increased the federal debt tenfold. Ultimately,




A Book You’re Not Supposed to Read

America’s Great Depression by Murray N. Rothbard (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2000). A superb dissection of the causes of the Great Depression and the idiotic “solutions”—which actually made it worse—offered by state planners like Roosevelt.

the value of the dollar was cut in half. He signed unconstitutional legislation to seize private gold reserves in the United States, making it a crime for private citizens to own gold. He spent wildly, trying to revive the economy by “priming the pump.” All the while, unemployment remained above 14 percent for his entire first two terms in office. When the economy dipped again in 1936, Roosevelt and his economic minions simply called it a “recession”—a much softer term than depression—insisting that the economy would rebound. Roosevelt’s policies were failing, and he knew it. He attempted to pack the Supreme Court with sycophantic judges in 1937 in order to ram unconstitutional legislation through the judiciary review process. The court-packing plan crashed and burned, but not without giving Roosevelt the moniker “King Franklin.” What he needed was another good crisis.

Roosevelt believed he was greater than any man who had ever served as president—better than George Washington or Thomas Jefferson. How do we know that? In 1939, Roosevelt decided to break the long-standing precedent established by George Washington and run for a third term in the 1940 election. Roosevelt claimed that the military “crisis” in Europe made this necessary. He alone was best equipped to deal with a supposed threat from Germany. No matter that Roosevelt had been conciliatory toward Hitler throughout the 1930s, that Mussolini had been admired within the Roosevelt administration (the



A Play You’re Not Supposed to See

Knickerbocker Holiday by Maxwell Anderson and Kurt Weill. This play, which hit Broadway in 1939, was a thinly veiled attack on Roosevelt—comparing him to fascist dictators Hitler and Mussolini—using early New York history as a backdrop.



A Book You’re Not Supposed to Read

Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt’s America, Mussolini’s Italy, and Hitler’s Germany, 1933–1939 by Wolfgang Schivelbusch (New York: Metropolitan, 2006).

president himself had spoken of Il Duce as “that admirable Italian gentleman” to a reporter, and Roosevelt adviser Rexford Tugwell had called Mussolini’s Italy “the cleanest . . . most efficiently operating piece of social machinery I’ve ever seen. It makes me envious.”),² or that his economic plan

mirrored much of what Hitler and Mussolini had done in Germany and Italy respectively. Roosevelt needed a way to stay in power, and World War II offered that opportunity.

The Warmonger

Roosevelt began preparing for war with Germany long before 1941, though most Americans were unaware of his plans. Through legislation, Roosevelt began arming the United States and her eventual allies, quietly building up the American military while American banks became actively involved in helping fund the war for the British. By diplomatic channels, he was privately pushing the notion that the United States should serve as the driving force in a “one world” peace arrangement. That dream had been alive since World War I, but as in World War I, the United States had no

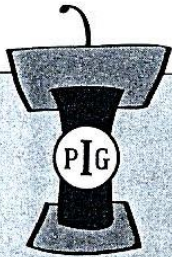
dog in this fight, save for what Churchill would later call our “special relationship” with the British. Germany had no interest in invading the United States, and with a large ocean between Germany and America’s shores, many Americans were asking what the United States had to fear. If Germany could not even conquer England, a close neighbor, by air power, how was it conceivable that Germany could attack the United States by air? And after

Hitler violated his non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union in 1941, a full six months before the bombing at Pearl Harbor, many asked whether it might not be better to let the two dictators slug it out in Europe. Roosevelt thought not, but he needed a kick, something to wake the Americans out of their anti-war slumber. Japan provided that impetus.

Secretary of War Henry Stimson wrote in his diary on November 25, 1941, that “the question is how we should maneuver them [Japan] into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves.”³ That diary entry, less than two weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor, showed that the United States had been deliberately provoking the Japanese into war. By the end of November, the Roosevelt administration had given up attempting to find a peaceful solution to the problems with Japan—problems the United States had helped create in the first place.

Earlier in 1941, Cordell Hull, Roosevelt’s secretary of state, had drawn up ten demands that he knew the Japanese would reject, sat back, and waited for the inevitable. Unfortunately the administration’s preparations for the inevitable did not include warning the United States Pacific Fleet that the Japanese planned to attack. A week before Pearl Harbor, American listening stations in Hawaii had intercepted messages from the Japanese navy detailing a planned attack on Hawaii, and on December 4, 1941, just three days before Pearl Harbor, these same listening stations identified the code word for war. If Pearl Harbor was a surprise attack, as Roosevelt insisted, it sure wasn’t a surprise to him, his administration, or possibly even his military advisers. But there were no preparations made to ramp up American defenses. Roosevelt knew what he was doing. According to reports he was as calm as a summer breeze in the days leading up to the attack and even more so on the day of the attack, sitting in his study with *all incoming phone calls cut off*, studying his stamp album—not his usual habit.

In fact, warnings were delayed and the proper protocols ignored when messages relating to the attack began filtering into Washington. George C.



Heil Roosevelt!

“[I am] in accord with the President in the view that the virtue of duty, readiness for sacrifice, and discipline should dominate the entire people. These moral demands which the President places before every individual citizen of the United States are also the quintessence of the German state philosophy, which finds its expression in the slogan ‘The Public Weal Transcends the Interest of the Individual.’”

—Adolf Hitler, in a 1933 message to Franklin Roosevelt⁴

Marshall, Roosevelt's army chief of staff, was unreachable when attempts were made to contact him on December 7. The historian Charles Tansill, at a great cost to his career, wrote about this in 1952 with his typical wit and humor: "General Marshall... for some strange reason, suddenly decided to go on a long horseback ride. It was a history-making ride. In the early hours of the American Revolution, Paul Revere went on a famous ride to warn his countrymen of the enemy's approach and thus save American lives. In the early hours of World War II, General Marshall took a ride that helped prevent an alert from reaching Pearl Harbor in time to save an American fleet from serious disaster and an American garrison from a bombing that cost more than two thousand lives."⁵ The rest is history.

Tansill asks, "Was the preservation of the British Empire worth the blood, sweat, and tears not only of the men who would die in the agony of Pearl Harbor but also of the long roll of heroes who perished in the epic

encounters in the Pacific, in the Mediterranean area, and in the famous offensive that rolled at high tide across the war-torn fields of France?"⁶

Of course, Roosevelt used this new crisis to his advantage. While the New Deal centralized the American economy, World War II gave the government real teeth. Several new govern-

ment boards were created to manage production and consumption. If the Supreme Court could knock down the NIRA, then Roosevelt would simply use the war to circumvent the judicial branch. The War Production Board (WPB)—created unconstitutionally by a Roosevelt executive order—placed all industrial production under the supervision of the government. Certain products, such as major appliances, were prohibited from being produced, as metal, plastics, and even paper and gasoline were being rationed by the government for the war. People who voted for Roosevelt to end bread lines

in 1932 now had to wait in line for sugar. Inflation and government spending increased during the war, and the government-mandated wage and labor controls were in part a nod to Roosevelt's support for the mass unionization of American workers. Big government now became a leviathan—and not by accident.

And that was only part of the mess Roosevelt left in the wake of the war. His negotiations with Joseph Stalin set the table for the Cold War, and his insistence on a replacement for the useless League of Nations saddled the United States with the prospects of a "world government" under the United Nations. It has been argued that the UN has prevented World War III, but this has not stopped American soldiers from dying in several wars after the end of hostilities in 1945. Arlington National Cemetery is full of dead heroes who perished since the establishment of the United Nations. As the historian Philip Bobbitt illustrated in his *Shield of Achilles*, World War II was simply part of a larger war that began in 1914 and ended only with the fall of communism in 1990. Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt are responsible for hundreds of thousands of American lives snuffed out in that seventy-year period.

Roosevelt did not save or preserve anything in the United States, and he created only chaos in foreign policy. By the end of the war, one quarter of the American people were dependent on the government for some type of income. The debt had skyrocketed, and though Roosevelt never publicly advocated tax increases, the American people were saddled with new taxes from Social Security—and of course the hidden taxes of inflation, as the dollar lost half its value in this period. The United States economy has remained a wartime economy since. Progressives love "Guns and Butter." Perhaps it would be better to say fascists love them. Roosevelt fits that description nicely. The fact that Roosevelt is classified as a great president means that Americans have lost all connection with the founding generation. That is what the progressives always wanted.

