A couple of years ago I happened to be reading the World War II memoirs of Sisley Huddleston, an American journalist living in France. Although long since forgotten, Huddleston had spent decades as one of our most prominent foreign correspondents, and dozens of his major articles[1] had appeared in The Atlantic Monthly, The New Republic, and Harpers, while he had authored some nineteen books. Given such eminence, his personal relationships reached far into elite circles, with one of his oldest and closest friends being William Bullitt, the American ambassador to France, who had previously opened our first Soviet embassy under FDR.

Huddleston’s credibility seemed impeccable, which is why I was so shocked at his firsthand account of wartime Vichy, totally contrary to what I had absorbed from my introductory history textbooks. While I had always had the impression that Petain’s collaborationist regime possessed little legitimacy, this was not at all the case. Near unanimous majorities of both houses of the duly-elected French parliament had voted the elderly field marshal into office despite his own deep personal misgivings, regarding him as France’s only hope of a unifying national savior following the country’s crushing 1940 defeat at Hitler’s hands.

Although Huddleston’s sympathies were hardly with the Germans, he noted the scrupulous correctness they exhibited following their overwhelming victory, policies that continued throughout the early years of the Occupation. And although he had on a couple of occasions performed minor services for the nascent Resistance movement, when the 1944 Normandy landings and the subsequent German withdrawal suddenly opened the doors of power to the anti-Petain forces, they engaged in an orgy of ideological bloodletting probably without precedent in French history, far surpassing the infamous Reign of Terror of the French Revolution, with perhaps 100,000 or more
civilians being summarily butchered on the basis of little or no evidence, often just to settle personal scores. Some of the worst of the bloodshed came at the hands of the Communist exiles of the Spanish Civil War, who had found shelter in France after their defeat and now eagerly took an opportunity to turn the tables and massacre the same sort of “bourgeois” class-enemies who had defeated them in that previous conflict just a few years earlier.

As I sought to weigh Huddleston’s testimony against the traditional narrative of wartime France I had always fully accepted, most of the factors seemed to point in his favor. After all, his journalistic credentials were impeccable and as a very well-connected direct observer of the events he reported, his statements surely counted for a great deal. Meanwhile, it appeared that most of the standard narrative dominating our history books had been constructed a generation or so later by writers living on the other side of the Atlantic ocean, whose conclusions may have been substantially influenced by the black-and-white ideological framework that had become rigidly enshrined at elite American universities.

However, I couldn’t help noticing one huge, gaping flaw in Huddleston’s account, an error so serious that it cast grave doubts upon his entire credibility as a journalist. Towards the beginning of his book, he devotes a page or so to casually mentioning that in the early months of 1940, the French and British were preparing to launch an attack against the neutral Soviet Union, using their bases in Syria and Iraq for a strategic bombing offensive meant to destroy Stalin’s Baku oil fields of the Caucasus, one of the world’s leading sources of that vital commodity.

Obviously, all military organizations produce a wealth of hypothetical contingency plans covering all possible situations and opponents, but Huddleston had somehow misunderstood such possibilities or rumors as outright fact. According to him, the Allied bombing of the Soviet Union had been scheduled to begin March 15th, but was initially delayed and rescheduled for various political reasons. Then a few weeks later, the German panzer divisions swept through the Ardennes forest, surrounded the French armies, and captured Paris, aborting the planned Allied bombardment of Russia.

Given that the USSR played the leading role in Germany’s eventual defeat, an early Allied attack upon the Soviet homeland would surely have changed the outcome of the war. Although Huddleston’s bizarre fantasies had somehow gotten the best of him, he was hardly incorrect in exclaiming “What a narrow escape!”

The notion that the Allies were preparing to launch a major bombing offensive against the Soviet Union just a few months after the outbreak of World War II was obviously absurd, so ridiculous a notion that not a hint of that long-debunked rumor had ever gotten into the standard history texts I had read on the European conflict. But for Huddleston to have still clung to such nonsensical beliefs even several years after the end of the war raised large questions about his gullibility or even his sanity. I wondered whether I could trust even a single word he said about anything else.

However, not long afterward I encountered quite a surprise in a 2017 article published in *The National Interest*, an eminently respectable periodical. The short piece carried the descriptive headline “In the Early Days of World War II, Britain and France Planned to Bomb Russia.”\(^2\) The contents absolutely flabbergasted me, and with Huddleston’s credibility now fully established—and the credibility of my
standard history textbooks equally demolished—I went ahead and substantially drew upon his account for my long article “American Pravda: Post-War France and Post-War Germany.”[3]

I hardly regard myself as a specialist on the history of World War II, but I initially felt deeply embarrassed to have spent my entire life completely ignorant of that crucial early turning-point in the huge conflict. However, once I had carefully read that National Interest article, my shame quickly dissipated, for the it was obvious that the author, Michael Peck, along with his editors and readers had been equally unaware of those long-buried facts. Indeed, the article had originally run in 2015, but was republished a couple of years later due to enormous reader demand. As near as I can tell, that single 1100 word essay constituted the first and only time the momentous events described had received significant public attention in the seventy years since the end of the war.

Peck’s discussion greatly fleshed out Huddleston’s brief, offhand remarks. The French and British high commands had prepared their enormous bomber offensive, Operation Pike, in hopes of destroying Russia’s oil resources, and their unmarked reconnaissance flights had already overflown Baku, photographing the locations of the intended targets. The Allies were convinced that the best strategy for defeating Germany was to eliminate its sources of oil and other vital raw materials, and with Russia being Hitler’s leading supplier, they decided that destroying the Soviet oil fields seemed a logical strategy.

However, Peck emphasized the severe errors in this reasoning. In actual fact, only a small fraction of Hitler's oil came from Russia, so the true impact of even an entirely successful campaign would have been low. And although the Allied commanders were convinced that weeks of continuous bombardment—apparently representing the world’s largest strategic-bombing campaign to that date—would quickly eliminate all Soviet oil production, later events in the war suggested that those projections were wildly optimistic, with vastly larger and more powerful aerial attacks generally inflicting far less permanent destruction than expected. So the damage to the Soviets would probably not have been great, and the resulting full military alliance between Hitler and Stalin would surely have reversed the outcome of the war. This was reflected in the original 2015 title of the same article “Operation Pike: How a Crazy Plan to Bomb Russia Almost Lost World War II.”[6]

But although hindsight allows us to recognize the disastrous consequences of that ill-fated bombing plan, we should not be overly harsh upon the political leaders and strategists of the time. Military technology was in tremendous flux, and facts that seemed obvious by 1943 or 1944 were far less clear at the beginning of the conflict. Based upon their World War I experience, most analysts believed that neither the Germans nor the Allies had any hope of achieving an early breakthrough on the Western front, while the Soviets were suspected of being a feeble military power, perhaps constituting the “soft underbelly” of the German war machine.

Also, some of the most far-reaching political consequences of an Allied attack upon the Soviet Union would have been totally unknown to the French and British leaders then considering it. Although they were certainly aware of the powerful Communist movements in their own countries, all closely aligned with the USSR, only many years later did it become clear that the top leadership of the Roosevelt Administration was honeycombed by numerous agents fully loyal to Stalin, with the final proof
awaiting the release of the Venona Decrypts in the 1990s. So if the Allied forces had suddenly gone to war against the Soviets, the total hostility of those influential individuals would have greatly reduced any future prospects of substantial American military assistance, let alone eventual intervention in the European conflict.

Thus, if the Germans had for any reason delayed their 1940 assault on France for a few weeks, the pending Allied attack would have brought the Soviets into the war on the other side, ensuring their defeat. It seems undeniable that Hitler’s fortuitous action inadvertently saved the Allies from the disastrous consequences of their foolish plans.

Although exploring the dramatic implications of the 1940 outbreak of an Allied-Soviet war may be an intriguing instance of alternative history, as an intellectual exercise it has little relevance to our present-day world. Far more important is what the account reveals about the reliability of the standard historical narrative that most of us have always accepted as real.

The first matter to explore was whether the evidence for the planned Allied attack on the Soviets was actually as strong as was suggested by the National Interest article. The underlying information came from Operation Pike, published in 2000 by Patrick R. Osborn in an academic series entitled Contributions in Military Studies, so I recently ordered the book and read it to evaluate the remarkable claims being made.

Although rather dry, the 300 page monograph meticulously documents its case, with the overwhelming bulk of the material being drawn from official archives and other government records. There seems not the slightest doubt about the reality of the events being described, and the Allied leaders even made extensive diplomatic efforts to enlist Turkey and Iran in their planned attack against the Soviet Union.

While the primary Allied motive was to eliminate the flow of necessary raw materials to Germany, there were broader goals as well. Forced collectivization of Soviet agriculture during the 1930s had led to the widespread slaughter of farm animals, which were then replaced by tractors requiring gasoline. The Allied leadership believed that if they succeeded in eliminating the Soviet oil supply, the resulting fuel shortage would lead to a collapse in agricultural production, probably producing a famine that might sweep the Communist regime from power. The Allies had always been intensely hostile to the Soviets, and the planned operation was actually named for a certain Col. Pike, a British officer who had died at Bolshevik hands in the Caucuses during a previous military intervention twenty years earlier.

This anti-Soviet planning rapidly accelerated after Stalin’s brutal attack upon tiny Finland in late 1939. The unexpectedly fierce Finnish resistance led the Western powers to expel the USSR from the League of Nations as a blatant aggressor, and inspired widespread demands for military intervention among both the political elites and the general public, with serious proposals being considered to send several Allied divisions to Scandinavia to fight the Russians on behalf of the Finns. Indeed, during much of this period Allied hostility seems to have been far greater towards the Soviets than towards Germany, despite the nominal state of war against the latter, with French sentiments being particularly strong. As one British elected official remarked, “One has the impression that France is at war with Russia and merely on very unfriendly terms with Germany.”
The Allies intended to use Polish exile forces in their ground combat against the Soviets, perhaps even sparking a Polish uprising against the hated Communist occupiers of their homeland. Osborn notes that if word of this plan had leaked to Stalin, that might explain why it was at this time that he signed the official orders directing the NKVD to immediately execute the 15,000 Polish officers and police whom he already held as POWs, an incident eventually known as the Katyn Forest Massacre, which ranks as one of the world’s worst wartime atrocities.

All of these military plans and internal discussions by the British and French were kept entirely secret at the time, and their archives remained sealed to historians for many decades. But in the opening of his fascinating account, Osborn explains that after the victorious German armies moved towards Paris in 1940, the French government attempted to destroy or evacuate all its secret diplomatic files, and a trainload of this very sensitive material was captured by German forces 100 miles from Paris, including the complete record of the plans to attack the USSR. In hopes of scoring an international propaganda coup, Germany soon published these crucial documents, providing both English translations and facsimile copies of the originals. Although it is unclear whether these disclosures received any significant Western media coverage at the time, Stalin surely became aware of this detailed confirmation of the information he had already gotten in bits and pieces from his network of well-placed Communist spies, and it must have deepened his distrust of the West. The story would also have quickly become known to all well-informed observers, explaining why Huddleston was so confident in casually mentioning the planned Allied attack in his 1952 memoirs.

After Hitler’s Barbarossa invasion of the USSR in June 1941 suddenly brought the Soviets into the war on the Allied side, these highly-embarrassing facts would have naturally dropped into obscurity. But it seems quite astonishing that such “politically correct” amnesia became so deeply entrenched within the academic research community that virtually all traces of the remarkable story disappeared for the six decades that preceded the publication of Osborn’s book. More English-language books may have been published on World War II during those years than on any other subject, yet it seems possible that those many tens of millions of pages contained not a single paragraph describing the momentous Allied plans to attack Russia in the early days of the war, perhaps even leaving Huddleston’s brief, offhand remarks in 1952 as the most comprehensive account. Osborn himself notes the “precious little attention” given this matter by scholars of the Second World War, citing a 1973 academic journal article as one of the very few notable exceptions. We should be seriously concerned that events of such monumental importance spent more than two generations almost totally excluded from our historical records.

Moreover, even the release of Osborn’s massively-documented academic study in 2000 seems to have been almost completely ignored by World War II historians. Consider, for example, Absolute War published in 2007 by acclaimed military historian Chris Bellamy, an 800 page work whose glowing cover-blurbs characterize it as the “authoritative” account of the role of Soviet Russia in the Second World War. The detailed 25 page index contains no listing for “Baku” and the only glancing reference to the indisputable Allied preparations to attack the USSR in early 1940 is a single obscure sentence appearing 15 months and 150 pages later in the aftermath of Barbarossa: “But on 23 June the NKGB reported that the Chief of the British Air Staff, Sir Charles Portal, had suggested cabling the commands in India and the Middle East ordering them to stop planning to bomb the Baku oilfields, which, it had been feared, might be used to supply the Germans.”
Osborn’s revelations seem to have vanished without a trace until they were finally noticed and publicized 15 years later in The National Interest.

While it is quite easy to understand why historians avoided the subject for the first couple of decades following the end of the Second World War, once a generation or two had passed, one might reasonably expect to see some reassertion of scholarly objectivity. Operation Pike was of the greatest possible importance to the course of the war, so how could it have been almost totally ignored by virtually every writer on the subject? Allied preparations in early 1940 to unleash the largest strategic bombing offensive in world history against the Soviet Union hardly seems the sort of boring, obscure detail that would be quickly forgotten.

Even if the first generation of war chroniclers carefully excluded it from their narratives to avoid ideological embarrassment, they must surely have been aware of the facts given German publication of the documents. And although their younger successors had seen no mention of it in the books they studied, one would expect that their mentors had occasionally whispered to them about some of the “hidden wartime secrets” left out of the standard narrative. Moreover, Osborn notes that discussion of the facts did very occasionally appear in professional academic journals, and one might assume that a single such instance would have spread like wildfire within the entire academic community. Yet even after Osborn’s massively documented volume appeared in a respectable academic series, the silence remained absolutely deafening. The case of Operation Pike demonstrates that we must exercise extreme caution in accepting the accuracy and completeness of what we have been told.

Such conclusions have obvious consequences. My website tends to attract a large number of commenters, of widely varying quality. One of them, an immigrant from Soviet Armenia calling himself “Avery” seems quite knowledgeable and level-headed, though intensely hostile to Turks and Turkey. A couple of years ago, one of my articles on World War II provoked an intriguing comment[7] from him:

During the Battle of Stalingrad, Turkey, which was officially neutral but was secretly cooperating with Nazi Germany, had assembled a huge invasion force at the border of USSR (Armenia SSR). If Germans had won at Stalingrad, Turks were going to invade, race to Baku and link up with the German forces there, coming down from Stalingrad to grab the oilfields.

When Paulus’s army was surrounded and annihilated, Turks quickly left the border for their barracks.

Stalin never forgot the Turk treachery and never forgave.

When Germany surrendered, Stalin assembled huge armies in Armenia SSR and Georgia SSR. The plan was to invade and throw the Turks out of East Turkey/West Armenia.

The detonation of two American atomic bombs convinced Stalin to stand down. Some believe US detonated the two bombs not to force Japan’s surrender, but as a message to Stalin.
When questioned, he admitted he was unaware of any reference in a Western source, but added[8]:

> It was common knowledge in Armenia SSR, where I am originally from. WW2 war vets, old timers, discussed it all the time.....seeing more Red Army troops and military hardware assembling near the borders of Armenia SSR and Georgia SSR than they’d ever seen before. Then, they were all gone....

Under normal circumstances, weighing the universal silence of all Western historians against the informal claims of an anonymous commenter who was relying upon the stories he’d heard from old veterans would hardly be a difficult choice. But I wonder...

The official documents discussed by Osborn demonstrate that the British made considerable efforts to enlist Turkish forces in their planned attack upon the USSR, with the Turks going back and forth on the matter until Britain finally abandoned the project following the Fall of France. But if the Turks had strongly considered such a military adventure in 1940, it seems quite plausible that they would have been far more eager to do so 1942, given the huge losses the Soviets had already suffered at German hands, and with a very formidable German army approaching the Caucasus.

Soon after the war, Turkey became one of America’s most crucial Cold War allies against the Soviets, given a central role in the establishment of the Truman Doctrine and the creation of NATO. Any hint that the same Turkish government had come very close to joining Hitler’s Axis and attacking Russia as a Nazi ally just a few years earlier would have been extremely damaging to US interests. Such facts would have been scrupulously excluded from all our histories of the war.

Until a couple of weeks ago, I still probably would have leaned towards favoring the united front of all Western historians against the causal remarks of a single anonymous commenter on my website. But after reading Osborn’s book, I now think the anonymous commenter is more likely correct. This is a rather sad personal verdict upon the current credibility of our historical profession.

These important considerations become particularly relevant when we attempt to understand the circumstances surrounding *Operation Barbarossa*, Germany’s 1941 attack upon the Soviet Union, which constituted the central turning point of the war. Both at the time and during the half-century which followed, Western historians uniformly claimed that the surprise assault had caught an overly-trusting Stalin completely unaware, with Hitler’s motive being his dream of creating the huge German land-empire that he had hinted at in the pages of *Mein Kampf*, published sixteen years earlier.

But in 1990 a former Soviet military intelligence officer who had defected to the West and was living in Britain dropped a major bombshell. Writing under the pen-name Viktor Suvorov, he had already published a number of highly-regarded books on the armed forces of the USSR, but in *Icebreaker* he now claimed that his extensive past research in the Soviet archives had revealed that by 1941 Stalin had amassed enormous offensive military forces and positioned them all along the border, preparing to attack and easily overwhelm the greatly outnumbered and outgunned forces of the *Wehrmacht*, quickly conquering all of Europe.
As I summarized the Suvorov Hypothesis in an article[9] last year:

And so, just as in our traditional narrative, we see that in the weeks and months leading up to Barbarossa, the most powerful offensive military force in the history of the world was quietly assembled in secret along the German-Russian border, preparing for the order that would unleash their surprise attack. The enemy’s unprepared airforce was to be destroyed on the ground in the first days of the battle, and enormous tank columns would begin deep penetration thrusts, surrounding and trapping the opposing forces, achieving a classic blitzkrieg victory, and ensuring the rapid occupation of vast territories. But the forces preparing this unprecedented war of conquest were Stalin’s, and his military juggernaut would surely have seized all of Europe, probably soon followed by the remainder of the Eurasian landmass.

Then at almost the last moment, Hitler suddenly realized the strategic trap into which he had fallen, and ordered his heavily outnumbered and outgunned troops into a desperate surprise attack of their own on the assembling Soviets, fortuitously catching them at the very point at which their own final preparations for sudden attack had left them most vulnerable, and thereby snatching a major initial victory from the jaws of certain defeat. Huge stockpiles of Soviet ammunition and weaponry had been positioned close to the border to supply the army of invasion into Germany, and these quickly fell into German hands, providing an important addition to their own woefully inadequate resources.

Although almost totally ignored in the English-language world, Suvorov’s seminal book soon became an unprecedented bestseller in Russia, Germany, and many other parts of the world, and together with several follow-up volumes, his five million copies in print established him as the most widely-read military historian in the history of the world. Meanwhile, the English-language media and academic communities scrupulously maintained their complete blackout of the ongoing worldwide debate, with no publishing house even willing to produce an English edition of Suvorov’s books until an editor at the prestigious Naval Academy Press finally broke the embargo nearly two decades later. Such near-total censorship of the massive planned Soviet attack in 1941 seems quite similar to the near-total censorship of the undeniable reality of the massive planned Allied attack on the Soviets in the preceding year.

Although the Suvorov Hypothesis has inspired decades of fierce academic debate and been the subject of international conferences, it has been scrupulously ignored by our Anglophone authors, who have made no serious attempt to defend their traditional narrative and refute the vast accumulation of persuasive evidence upon which it is based. This leads me to believe that Suvorov’s analysis is probably correct.

A decade ago, a solitary writer first drew my attention to Suvorov’s ground-breaking research, and as an emigrant Russian Slav living in the West, he was hardly favorable to the German dictator. But he closed his review with a remarkable statement:
Therefore, if any of us is free to write, publish, and read this today, it follows that in some not inconsequential part our gratitude for this must go to Hitler. And if someone wants to arrest me for saying what I have just said, I make no secret of where I live.

For almost thirty years, our English-language media has almost entirely suppressed any serious discussion of the Suvorov Hypothesis, and this is hardly the only important aspect of Soviet history that has remained hidden from public scrutiny. Indeed, on some crucial matters, the falsehoods and distortions have greatly increased rather than diminished over the decades. No example is more obvious than in the ongoing attempts to conceal the enormous role played by Jews in the Bolshevik Revolution and worldwide Communism generally. As I wrote last year:

In the early years of the Bolshevik Revolution, almost no one questioned the overwhelming role of Jews in that event, nor their similar preponderance in the ultimately unsuccessful Bolshevik takeovers in Hungary and parts of Germany. For example, former British Minister Winston Churchill in 1920 denounced the “terrorist Jews” who had seized control of Russia and other parts of Europe, noting that “the majority of the leading figures are Jews” and stating that “In the Soviet institutions the predominance of Jews is even more astonishing,” while lamenting the horrors these Jews had inflicted upon the suffering Germans and Hungarians.

Similarly, journalist Robert Wilton, former Russia correspondent of the Times of London, provided a very detailed summary of the enormous Jewish role in his 1918 book Russia’s Agony and 1920 book The Last Days of the Romanovs, although one of the most explicit chapters of the latter was apparently excluded from the English language edition. Not long afterward, the facts regarding the enormous financial support provided to the Bolsheviks by international Jewish bankers such as Schiff and Aschberg were widely reported in the mainstream media.

Jews and Communism were just as strongly tied together in America, and for years the largest circulation Communist newspaper in our country was published in Yiddish. When they were finally released, the Venona Decrypts demonstrated that even as late as the 1930s and 1940s, a remarkable fraction of America’s Communist spies came from that ethnic background.

A personal anecdote tends to confirm these dry historical records. During the early 2000s I once had lunch with an elderly and very eminent computer scientist, with whom I’d become a little friendly. While talking about this and that, he happened to mention that both his parents had been zealous Communists, and given his obvious Irish name, I expressed my surprise, saying that I’d thought almost all the Communists of that era were Jewish. He said that was indeed the case, but although his mother had such an ethnic
background, his father did not, which made him a very rare exception in their political circles. As a consequence, the Party had always sought to place him in as prominent a public role as possible just to prove that not all Communists were Jews, and although he obeyed Party discipline, he was always irritated at being used as such a “token.”

However, once Communism sharply fell out of favor in 1950s America, nearly all of the leading “Red Baiters” such as Sen. Joseph McCarthy went to enormous lengths to obscure the ethnic dimension of the movement they were combatting. Indeed, many years later Richard Nixon casually spoke in private[15] of the difficulty he and other anti-Communist investigators had faced in trying to focus on Gentile targets since nearly all of the suspected Soviet spies were Jewish, and when this tape became public, his alleged anti-Semitism provoked a media firestorm even though his remarks were obviously implying the exact opposite.

This last point is an important one, since once the historical record has been sufficiently whitewashed or rewritten, any lingering strands of the original reality that survive are often perceived as bizarre delusions or denounced as “conspiracy theories.” Indeed, even today the ever-amusing pages of Wikipedia provides an entire 3,500 word article attacking the notion of “Jewish Bolshevism”[16] as an “antisemitic canard.”

In a subsequent article[17], I summarized several of the numerous sources describing this obvious reality:

Meanwhile, all historians know perfectly well that the Bolshevik leaders were overwhelmingly Jewish, with three of the five revolutionaries Lenin named as his plausible successors coming from that background. Although only around 4% of Russia’s population was Jewish, a few years ago Vladimir Putin stated that Jews constituted perhaps 80-85% of the early Soviet government[18], an estimate fully consistent with the contemporaneous claims of Winston Churchill[19], Times of London correspondent Robert Wilton[20], and the officers of American Military Intelligence[21]. Recent books by Alexander Solzhenitsyn[22], Yuri Slezkine, and others[23] have all painted a very similar picture. And prior to World War II, Jews remained enormously over-represented in the Communist leadership, especially dominating the Gulag administration and the top ranks of the dreaded NKVD.

Perhaps the most utterly explosive and totally suppressed aspect of the close relationship between Jews and Communism regards the claims that Jacob Schiff and other top international Jewish bankers were among the leading financial backers of the Bolshevik Revolution. I spent nearly all of my life regarding these vague rumors as such obvious absurdities that they merely demonstrated the lunatic anti-Semitism infesting the nether-regions of Far Right anti-Communist movements, thereby fully confirming the theme of Richard Hofstadter’s famous book The Paranoid Style in American Politics. Indeed, the Schiff accusations were so totally ridiculous that they were never even once mentioned in the hundred-odd books on the history of the Bolshevik Revolution and Soviet Communism that I read during the 1970s and 1980s.
Therefore, it came as an enormous shock when I discovered that the claims were not only probably correct, but had been almost universally accepted as true throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

For example, *The “Jewish Threat”*[24] by Joseph W. Bendersky summarizes his years of archival research and he documents that Schiff’s financial support for the Bolsheviks was widely reported in the American Military Intelligence files of the period, with British Intelligence taking the same position. Kenneth D. Ackerman’s 2016 study *Trotsky in New York, 1917*[25] describes much the same material. In 1925, the British Guardian published this information and it was soon widely discussed and accepted throughout the 1920s and 1930s by numerous major international media outlets. Naomi W. Cohen’s 1991 hagiographic volume *Jacob Schiff*[26] devotes several pages to summarizing the various stories of Schiff’s strong Bolshevik ties that had earlier been published in leading American periodicals.

Writing nearly a century after the events under discussion, these three Jewish authors casually dismiss all the numerous accounts they provide by highly-credible observers—American and British Intelligence officers and prominent international journalists—as merely demonstrating the delusional nature of the extreme anti-Semitism that had infected so much of the world in those bygone days. Yet most serious historians would surely place far greater weight upon contemporaneous evidence than upon the personal opinions of those writers who happen to gather together that material evidence generations afterward.

Henry Wickham Steed was one of the foremost journalists of his era, and he had served as editor of the *Times of London*, the world’s most authoritative newspaper. A couple of years after his retirement, he published his lengthy personal memoirs, now conveniently online[27], which contain the following very intriguing passages:

Potent international financial interests were at work in favour of the immediate recognition of the Bolshevists. Those influences had been largely responsible for the Anglo-American proposal in January to call Bolshevist representatives to Paris at the beginning of the Peace Conference — a proposal which had failed after having been transformed into a suggestion for a Conference with the Bolshevists at Prinkipo. The well-known American Jewish banker, Mr. Jacob Schiff, was known to be anxious to secure recognition for the Bolshevists...

...the prime movers were Jacob Schiff, Warburg, and other international financiers, who wished above all to bolster up the Jewish Bolshevists in order to secure a field for German and Jewish exploitation of Russia.

Schiff’s own family later confirmed this widely-accepted history. The February 3, 1949 *Knickerbocker* column of the *New York Journal-American*, then one of the city’s leading newspapers, reported the account: “Today it is estimated by Jacob’s grandson, John Schiff, that the old man sank about
20,000,000 dollars for the final triumph of Bolshevism in Russia.” The present-day value of the figure quoted is probably some $2 billion, a very substantial sum.

Despite this enormous volume of convincing evidence, for the next half-century or more, Schiff’s name almost entirely vanished from all mainstream texts on Soviet Communism. As I wrote last year:

In 1999, Harvard University published the English edition of The Black Book of Communism, whose six co-authors devoted 850 pages to documenting the horrors inflicted upon the world by that defunct system, which had produced a total death toll they reckoned at 100 million. I have never read that book and I have often heard that the alleged body-count has been widely disputed. But for me the most remarkable detail is that when I examine the 35 page index, I see a vast profusion of entries for totally obscure individuals whose names are surely unknown to all but the most erudite specialist. But there is no entry for Jacob Schiff, the world-famous Jewish banker who apparently financed the creation of the whole system in the first place. Nor one for Olaf Aschberg, the powerful Jewish banker in Sweden, who played such an important role in providing the Bolsheviks a financial life-line during the early years of their threatened regime, and even founded the first Soviet international bank.

Perhaps the extreme caution and timorous silence exhibited by nearly all Western historians on these sensitive elements of World War II and the Bolshevik Revolution should not entirely surprise us given the professional and personal risks they might face if they strayed from orthodoxy.

Consider the very telling example of David Irving. During the first half of his professional career, his string of widely-translated best-sellers and his millions of books in print probably established him as the most internationally successful British historian of the last one hundred years, with his remarkable archival research frequently revolutionizing our understanding of the European conflict and the political forces behind it. But as he repeatedly demonstrated his lack of regard for official orthodoxy, he attracted many powerful enemies, who eventually ruined his reputation, drove him into personal bankruptcy, and even arranged his imprisonment. Over the last quarter-century, he has increasingly become an un-person, with the few occasional mentions of his name in the media invoked in the same talismanic manner as references to Lucifer or Beelzebub.

If a historian of such towering stature and success could be brought so low, what ordinary academic scholar would dare risk a similar fate? Voltaire famously observed that shooting an admiral every now and then is an excellent way to encourage the others.
The destruction of Irving’s stellar career came at the hands of Jewish activists, who were outraged at his balanced treatment of Hitler and his ongoing commitment to investigating many of the widely-accepted wartime myths, which he hoped to replace with what he called “real history.” In the introduction[34] to his new edition of Hitler’s War, he recounts how a journalist for Time magazine was having dinner with him in New York in 1988 and remarked “Before coming over I read the clippings files on you. Until Hitler’s War you couldn’t put a foot wrong, you were the darling of the media; after file, they heaped slime on you.”

As Irving was certainly aware, the unreasonably harsh vilification of enemy leaders during wartime is hardly an uncommon occurrence. Although it has largely been forgotten today, during much of the First World War and for years afterward, Germany’s reigning monarch, Kaiser Wilhelm, was widely portrayed in the Allied countries as a bloodthirsty monster, one of the most evil men who had ever lived. This vilification came despite Wilhelm having been the beloved eldest grandchild of Britain’s own Queen Victoria, who according to some accounts died in his arms.

Moreover, although Allied propaganda routinely portrayed Wilhelm as a relentless warmonger, he had actually avoided involving Germany in a single major military conflict during the first twenty-five years of his reign, while most of the other leading world powers had fought one or more wars during that same period. Indeed, I recently discovered[35] that only a year before the Guns of August began firing, The New York Times had published a lengthy profile marking the first quarter-century of his reign and lauded him as one of the world’s foremost peacemakers:

> Now … he is acclaimed everywhere as the greatest factor for peace that our time can show. It was he, we hear, who again and again threw the weight of his dominating personality, backed by the greatest military organisation in the world – an organisation built up by himself – into the balance for peace wherever war clouds gathered over Europe. ‘(William II, King of Prussia and German Emperor, Kaiser 25 years a ruler, hailed as chief peacemaker,’ New York Times, 8 June, 1913)

That brief excerpt from the Times encomium points to another matter than I have never seen mentioned. I devoted much of the 2000s to digitizing and making available the complete archives of hundreds of America’s leading publications of the last 150 years, and when I occasionally glanced at the contents, I gradually noticed something odd. Although the English-language world today invariably refers to Germany’s wartime ruler as “Kaiser Wilhelm,” that was only rarely the case prior to the outbreak of war, when he was generally known as “Emperor William.” The latter nomenclature is hardly surprising since we always speak of “Frederick the Great” rather than “Friedrich der Grosse.”

But it is obviously much easier to mobilize millions of citizens to die in muddy trenches to defeat a monstrously alien “Kaiser” than “Good Emperor William,” first cousin to the British and Russian monarchs. The NGram viewer in Google Books shows the timing of the change quite clearly[36], with the Anglophone practice shifting as Britain became increasingly hostile toward Germany, especially after the outbreak of war. But “Emperor William” was only permanently eclipsed by “Kaiser Wilhelm” after Germany once again became a likely enemy in the years immediately preceding World War II.
Actual publications of the period also reveal numerous discordant facts about the First World War, matters certainly known to academic specialists but which rarely receive much coverage in our standard textbooks, being relegated to a casual sentence or two if even that. For example, despite its considerable military successes, Germany launched a major peace effort[37] in late 1916 to end the stalemated war by negotiations[38] and thereby avert oceans of additional bloodshed. However, this proposal was fiercely rejected by the Allied powers and their advocates in the pages of the world’s leading periodicals[39] since they remained firmly committed to an ultimate military victory.

War fever was certainly still very strong that same year in Britain, the leading Allied power. When prominent peace-advocates such as Bertrand Russell and Lord Loreborn urged a negotiated end to the fighting, and were strongly backed by the editor of the influential London Economist, they were harshly vilified and the latter was forced to resign his position. E.D. Morel, another committed peace advocate, was imprisoned for his activism under such harsh conditions that it permanently broke his health and led to his death at age 51 a few years after his release.

As an excellent antidote to our severely distorted understanding of both wartime sentiments and the domestic European politics that had produced the conflict, I would strongly recommend the text of Present Day Europe[40] by Lothrop Stoddard, then one of America’s most influential public intellectuals. Written prior to America’s own entry into the conflict, the work provides the sort of remarkable scholarly detachment which would soon become almost impossible.

Although the demonic portrayal of the German Kaiser was already being replaced by a more balanced treatment within a few years of the Armistice and had disappeared after a generation, no such similar process has occurred in the case of his World War II successor. Indeed, Adolf Hitler and the Nazis seem to loom far larger in our cultural and ideological landscape today than they even did in the immediate aftermath of the war, with their visibility growing even as they become more distant in time, a strange violation of the normal laws of perspective. I suspect that the casual dinner-table conversations on World War II issues that I used to enjoy with my Harvard College classmates during the early 1980s would be completely impossible today.

To some extent, the transformation of “the Good War” into a secular religion, with its designated monsters and martyrs may be analogous to what occurred during the final decay of the Soviet Union, when the obvious failure of its economic system forced the government to increasingly turn to endless celebrations of its victory in the Great Patriotic War as the primary source of its legitimacy. The real wages of ordinary American workers have been stagnant for fifty years[43] and most adults have less than $500 in available savings[44], so this widespread impoverishment may be forcing our own leaders into adopting a similar strategy.

But I think that a far greater factor has been the astonishing growth of Jewish power in America, which was already quite substantial even four or five decades ago but has now become absolutely overwhelming, whether in foreign policy, finance, or the media, with our 2% minority exercising unprecedented control over most aspects of our society and political system. Only a fraction of American Jews hold traditional religious beliefs, so the twin worship of the State of Israel and the
Holocaust has served to fill that void, with the individuals and events of World War II constituting many of the central elements of the mythos that serves to unify the Jewish community. And as an obvious consequence, no historical figure ranks higher in the demonology of this secular religion than the storied Fuhrer and his Nazi regime.

However, beliefs based upon religious dogma often sharply diverge from empirical reality. Pagan Druids may worship a particular sacred oak tree and claim that it contains the soul of their tutelary dryad; but if an arborist taps the tree, its sap may seem like that of any other.

Our current official doctrine portrays Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany as one of the cruelest and most relentlessly aggressive regimes in the history of the world, but at the time these salient facts apparently escaped the leaders of the nations with which it was at war. Operation Pike provides an enormous wealth of archival material regarding the secret internal discussions of the British and French governmental and military leadership, and all of it tends to suggest that they regarded their German adversary as a perfectly normal country, and perhaps occasionally regretted that they had somehow gotten themselves involved a major war over what amounted to a small Polish border dispute.

During late 1939, a leading American news syndicate sent Stoddard to spend a few months in wartime Germany and provide his perspective, with his numerous dispatches appearing in The New York Times and other top newspapers. Upon his return, he published a 1940 book summarizing all his information, seemingly just as even-handed as his earlier 1917 volume. His coverage probably constitutes one of the most objective and comprehensive American accounts of the mundane domestic nature of National Socialist Germany, and thus may seem rather shocking to modern readers steeped in eighty years of increasingly unrealistic Hollywood propaganda.

And although our standard histories would never admit this, the actual path toward war appears to have been quite different than most Americans believe. Extensive documentary evidence from knowledgeable Polish, American, and British officials demonstrates that pressure from Washington was the key factor behind the outbreak of the European conflict. Indeed, leading American journalists and public intellectuals of the day such as John T. Flynn and Harry Elmer Barnes had publicly declared that they feared Franklin Roosevelt was seeking to foment a major European war in hopes that it would rescue him from the apparent economic failure of his New Deal reforms and perhaps even provide him an excuse to run for an unprecedented third term. Since this is exactly what ultimately transpired, such accusations would hardly seem totally unreasonable.

And in an ironic contrast with FDR's domestic failures, Hitler's own economic successes had been enormous, a striking comparison since the two leaders had come to power within a few weeks of each other in early 1933. As iconoclastic leftist Alexander Cockburn once noted in a 2004 Counterpunch column:

> When [Hitler] came to power in 1933 unemployment stood at 40 per cent. Economic recovery came without the stimulus of arms spending...There were vast public works such as the autobahns. He paid little attention to the deficit or to the protests of the bankers.
about his policies. Interest rates were kept low and though wages were pegged, family income increased by reason of full employment. By 1936 unemployment had sunk to one per cent. German military spending remained low until 1939.

Not just Bush but Howard Dean and the Democrats could learn a few lessons in economic policy from that early, Keynesian Hitler.

By resurrecting a prosperous Germany while nearly all other countries remained mired in the worldwide Great Depression, Hitler drew glowing accolades from individuals all across the ideological spectrum. After an extended 1936 visit, David Lloyd George, Britain’s former wartime prime minister, fulsomely praised the chancellor as “the George Washington of Germany,” a national hero of the greatest stature. Over the years, I’ve seen plausible claims here and there that during the 1930s Hitler was widely acknowledged as the world’s most popular and successful national leader, and the fact that he was selected as Time Magazine’s Man of the Year for 1938 tends to support this belief.

Only International Jewry had remained intensely hostile to Hitler, outraged over his successful efforts to dislodge Germany’s 1% Jewish population from the stranglehold they had gained over German media and finance, and instead run the country in the best interests of the 99% German majority. A striking recent parallel has been the enormous hostility that Vladimir Putin incurred after he ousted the handful of Jewish Oligarchs who had seized control of Russian society and impoverished the bulk of the population. Putin has attempted to mitigate this difficulty by allying himself with certain Jewish elements, and Hitler seems to have done the same by endorsing the Nazi-Zionist economic partnership, which lay the basis for the creation of the State of Israel and thereby brought on board the small, but growing Jewish Zionist faction.

In the wake of the 9/11 Attacks, the Jewish Neocons stampeded America towards the disastrous Iraq War and the resulting destruction of the Middle East, with the talking heads on our television sets endlessly claiming that “Saddam Hussein is another Hitler.” Since then, we have regularly heard the same tag-line in various modified versions, being told that “Muammar Gaddafi is another Hitler” or “Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is another Hitler” or “Vladimir Putin is another Hitler” or even “Hugo Chavez is another Hitler.” For the last couple of years, our American media has been relentlessly filled with the claim that “Donald Trump is another Hitler.”

During the early 2000s, I obviously recognized that Iraq’s ruler was a harsh tyrant, but snickered at the absurd media propaganda, knowing perfectly well that Saddam Hussein was no Adolf Hitler. But with the steady growth of the Internet and the availability of the millions of pages of periodicals provided by my digitization project, I’ve been quite surprised to gradually also discover that Adolf Hitler was no Adolf Hitler.

It might not be entirely correct to claim that the story of World War II was that Franklin Roosevelt sought to escape his domestic difficulties by orchestrating a major European war against the prosperous, peace-loving Nazi Germany of Adolf Hitler. But I do think that picture is probably somewhat closer to the actual historical reality than the inverted image more commonly found in our textbooks.
American Pravda: Our Great Purge of the 1940s

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- American Pravda: Post-War France and Post-War Germany
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- The Remarkable Historiography of David Irving
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- American Pravda: Our Great Purge of the 1940s

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